

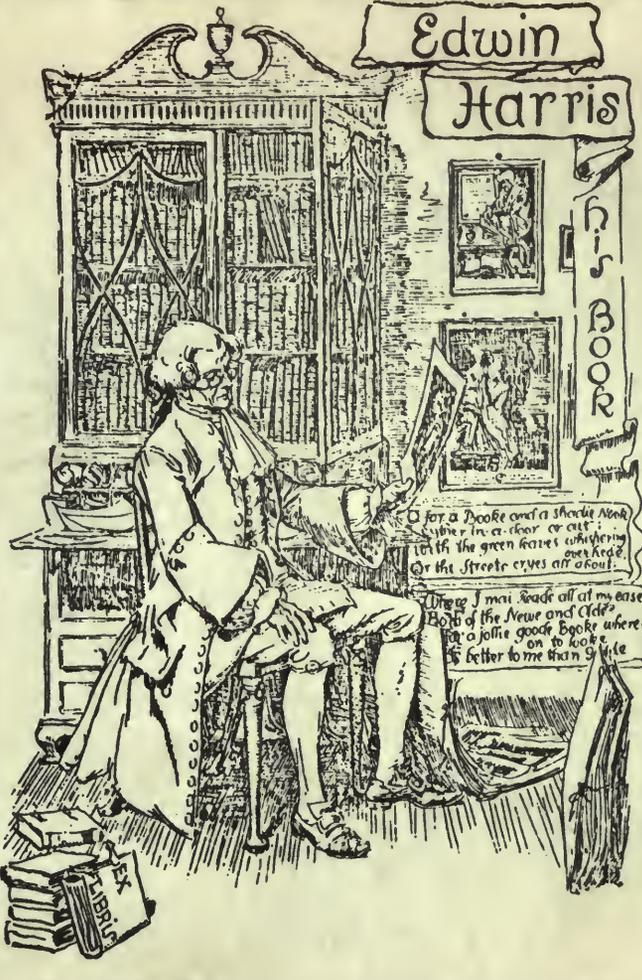
WILSON'S
TALES OF
THE BORDERS
HISTORICAL AND
& IMAGINATIVE



Edwin

Harris

his BOOR



O for a Dooke and a shorie Abooke
Liber in a chour or case
With the green leaves whispering
Or the streete eyes all about

Where I may reade all at my ease
Booke of the Newe and Olde
Or a jollie good booke where
on to looke
Is better to me than anye



KATE KENNEDY.



WILSON'S
TALES
OF THE
BORDERS.
HISTORICAL,
TRADITIONARY,
AND IMAGINATIVE.

WILLIAM & MACKENZIE
LONDON GLASGOW & EDINBURGH



W I L S O N ' S

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONAL, AND IMAGINATIVE

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF

S C O T L A N D ;

WITH AN

Illustrative Glossary of the Scottish Dialect.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, 69 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.;
GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH.

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WILSON'S
Historical, Tradictionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

KATE KENNEDY.

INNERKEPPLE was, some three hundred years ago, as complete a fortification as could be seen along the Borders—presenting its bastions, its turrets and donjon, and all the appurtenances of a military strength, in the face of a Border river, with that solemn air of defiance that belongs to the style of the old castles. Many a blow of a mangonel it had received; and Scotch and English engines of war had, with equal force and address, poured into its old grey ribs their destructive bolts: every wound was an acquisition of glory; and, unless where a breach demanded a repair for the sake of security, the scars on the old warrior were allowed to remain as a proof of his prowess. The very bullets whose sides appeared in the walls, had their names—being christened after the leaders of the sieges that had been in vain directed against it; and, among the number, the kings of England might have been seen indicated by the futile instruments of vengeance they had flung into the rough ribs of old Innerkepple. But let us proceed. The proprietor, good Walter Kennedy, better known by the appellation of Innerkepple, was not unlike the old strength which he inhabited; being an old, rough, burly baron, on whose face Time had succeeded in making many impressions, notwithstanding of all the opposing energies of a soul that gloried in all manner of ways of cheating the old greybeard of his rights and clearing off *his scores*. As a good spirit is said to be like good old wine, getting softer and more balmy as it increases in age, old Innerkepple proved, by his good humour and jovial manners, the sterling qualities of his heart, which seemed, as he progressed in years, to swell in proportion as that organ in others shrivelled and decreased. He saw nothing in age but the necessity it imposes of having more frequent recourse to its great enemy, the grape; and that power he delighted to bow to, as he bent his head to empty the flagon which his forebear, Kenneth, got from the first King James, as a reward for his services against the house of Albany. Yet the good humour of the old baron was not that of the toper, which, produced by the bowl, would not exist but for its inspiring draught; the feeling of happiness and universal good-will lay at the bottom of the heart itself, and was only swelled into a state of glorious ebullition by the charm of the magic of the vine branch—the true Mercurial *caduceus*, the only true magic wand upon earth.

Though the spirit of antiquarianism is seldom associated with the swelling affections of the heart that is dedicated to Momus, old Innerkepple had, notwithstanding, been able to combine the two qualities or powers. Sitting in his old wainscotted hall, over a goblet of spiced Tokay, there were three old subjects he loved to speculate upon; and these were—his old castle, with its chronicled wounds, where the Genius of War sat alongside of the “auld carle” Time, in grim companionship: secondly, the family tree of the Innerkepples—with himself, a good old dry branch, kept green by good humour and Tokay, at the further verge; and a small green twig, as slender as a lily stalk issuing from the old branch—no other than the daughter of Innerkepple, the fair Kate Kennedy, a buxom damsel, of goodly proportions, and as merry, with the aid of health and young

sparkling blood, as the old baron was with the spiced wine of Tokay: and, in the third place, there was the true legitimate study of the antiquary, the ancient wine itself, the mortal years of which he counted with an eye as bright as Cocker's over a triumphant solution. As this last subject grew upon him, he became inspired, like the old poet of Teos, and the rafters of Innerkepple rung to the sound of his voice, tuned to the air of “The Guidwife o' Tullybody,” and fraught with the deeds, active and passive, of the barons of Innerkepple and their castle.

The fair Katherine Kennedy inherited her father's good humour, and, maugre all the polishing and freezing influences of high birth, retained her inborn freedom of thought and action, heedless whether the contortion of the *buccæ* in a broad laugh were consistent with the placidity of beauty, or the scream of the heart-excited risibility were in accordance with the formula of high breeding. Buxom in her person, and gay in her manners, she formed the most enchanting baggage of all the care-killing damsels of her day—the most exquisite ronion that ever chased Melancholy from her yellow throne on the face of hypochondria, or threw the cracker of her persiflage into the midst of the crew of blue devils that bind down care-worn mortals by the bonds of *ennui*. She was no antiquary, even in the limited sense of her father's study of the science of cobwebs; being rather given to *neoterics*, or the science which teaches the qualities of things of to-day or yesterday. Age in all things she hated with a very good feminine spirit of detestation; and, following up her principles, she arrived at the conclusion that youth and beauty were two of the very best qualities that could be possessed by a lover. Her father's impassioned praises of the old branches of the tree of the Innerkepples—comprehending the brave Ludovick who fell at Homildon, and the memorable Walter who sold his life at the price of a score of fat Englishmen at the red Flodden—produced only her best and loudest laugh, as she figured to herself the folly of preferring the rugged trunk to the green branches that suspend at their points the red-cheeked apple full of sweetness and juice. Neither cared the hilarious damsel much for the reverend turrets of Innerkepple. Her father's description, full of good humour as it was, of the various perils they had past, and the service they had done their country, seemed to her, as she stood on the old walls, listening to the narrative, like the croak of the old corbies that sat on the pinnacles; and her laugh came again full of glee through the loopholes, or echoed from the battered curtain or recesses of the ballium.

That such a person as merry old Innerkepple should have a bitter and relentless foe in the proprietor of the old strength called Otterstone, in the neighbourhood, is one of the most instructive facts connected with the system of war and pillage that prevailed on the Borders, principally during the reign of Henry VIII. of England, and James V. of Scotland, when the spirit of religion furnished a cause of aggression that could not have been afforded by the pugnacious temperaments of the victims of attack. Magnus Fotheringham of Otterstone had had a deadly feud with Kenneth Kennedy, the father of the good old Innerkepple, and ever since had nourished against his neighbour a deadly spite, which he had taken many means of gratifying. His

opponent had acted merely on the defensive; but his plea had been so well vindicated by his retainers, who loved him with the affection of children, that the splenetic aggressor had been twice repulsed with great slaughter. Most readily would the jovial baron, who had never given any cause of offence, have seized upon the demon of Enmity and, *obtoro collo*, forced the fiend into the smoking flagon of spiced wine, while he held out the hand of friendship to his hereditary foe; but such was Otterstone's inveteracy, that he would not meet him but with arms in his hands, so that all the endeavours of the warm-hearted and jolly Innerkepple to overcome the hostility of his neighbour, were looked upon as secret modes of wishing to entrap him, and take vengeance on him for his repeated attacks upon the old castle.

Some short time previous to the period about which we shall become more interested, Innerkepple, with twenty rangers, was riding the marches of his property, when he was set upon by his enemy, who had nearly twice that number of retainers. Taking up with great spirit the plea of their lord, the men who were attacked rallied round the old chief, and fought for him like lions, drowning (perhaps purposely) in the noise of the battle the cries of Innerkepple, who roared, at the top of his voice—

"Otterstone, man—hear me!—A pint o' my auld Canary will do baith you and me mair guid than a' that bluid o' your men and mine. Stop the fecht, man. I hae nae feud against you, an' I'm no answerable for the wrangs o' my father Kenneth."

These peaceful words were lost amidst the sounds of the battle, and Otterstone construed the contortions of the peace-maker into indications of revenge, and his bawling was set down as his mode of inspiriting his followers. The fight accordingly progressed, old Innerkepple at intervals holding up a white handkerchief as a sign of peace; but which, having been used by him in stopping the wounds of one of his men, was received with its blood-marks as a signal of revenge, both by his men and those of the aggressor. The strife accordingly increased, and all was soon mixed up in the confusion of the *melee*.

"Has feud ran awa wi' yer senses, Otterstone?" again roared the good old baron. "I'll gie yer son, wha's at St Omers, the hand o' my dochter Kate. Do ye hear me, man? If ye will mix the bluids o' oor twa hooses, let it be done by Haly Kirk."

His words never reached Otterstone; but his own men, who adored and idolized their beautiful young mistress, whose unvaried cheerfulness and kindness had won their hearts, heard the proposition of their master with astonishment and dissatisfaction. They were still sorely pressed by their enemy, who, seeing the stained handkerchief in the hands of Innerkepple, were roused to stronger efforts. At this moment, an extraordinary vision met their eyes. A detachment of retainers from the castle came forward in the most regular warlike array, having at their head their young mistress, armed with a helmet and a light jerkin, and bearing in her hand a sword of suitable proportions. A loud shout from the pressed combatants expressed their satisfaction and surprise, and, in a moment, the assistant corps joined their friends, and commenced to fight. The unusual vision relaxed for a moment the energies of Otterstone's men; but a cry from their chief that they would that day be ten times vanquished if they were defeated by a female leader, again inspired them, and instigated them to the fight.

"Press forward, brave vassals of Innerkepple!" cried Katherine. "Your foes have no fair damsel to inspire them; and who shall resist those whose arms are nerved in defence of an old chief and a young mistress? He who kills the greatest number of Otterstone's men shall have the privilege of demanding a woman's guerdon from Katherine Kennedy. If this be not enough to mak^e ye fight like

lions, ye deserve to be hung in chains on the towers of Otterstone."

Smiling as she uttered her strange speech, she hurried to her father, who was still making all the efforts in his power to bring about a parley. He had got within a few yards of Otterstone, and it required all the energies of Katherine to keep him back, and defend him from insidious blows—an office she executed with great agility, by keeping her light sword whirling round her head, and inflicting wounds—not, perhaps, of great depth—on those who were ungallant and temerarious enough to approach her parent.

"See, Otterstone, man," cried the laird, still intent on peace, and sorry for the deadly work that was going on around him. "Is she no fit to mak heirs to Otterstone? Up wi' yer helm, Kate, and shew him yer fair face. Ha! man, stop this bluidy work, and let us mend a' by a carousal. Deil's in the heart and stamack o' the man that prefers warring to wassailing!"

"He does not hear you, father," cried Kate. "We must defend ourselves. On, brave followers! Ye know your guerdon. Gallant knights have kneeled for it and been refused it. You are to fight for it, and to receive it. Hurrah for Innerkepple!" And she swung her light falchion round her head, while the war-cry of the family, "*Festina lente!*" arose in answer to her inspiriting appeal, and the men rushed forward with new ardour on their foes.

"You are as bluid-thirsty as he is, Kate," cried the baron. "What mean ye, woman? Haste ye up to Otterstone, and fling yer arns round his neck, and greet a guid greet, according to the fashion o' womankind. Awa! haste ye and say, ma rowre, that ye'll be the wife o' his son, and join the twa baronies that are gaping for ane anither. Quick, woman; tears are mere water—thin aneuch, Gude kens!—but thae men's bluid is thicker than my vintage o' the year '90."

"Katherine Kennedy never yet wept either to friend or foe, unless in the wild glee of her frolics," replied the maiden. "By the bones of Camilla! I thought I was only fit for sewing battle scenes on satin, and laughing as I killed a knight with my needle; but I find I have the Innerkepple blood in my veins, and my cheek is glowing like a blood-red rose. Take care of yourself, good father, and leave the affair to me. A single glance of my eye has more power in it than the command of the proudest baron of the Borders. On, good hearts!" And she again rode among the men, and inspired them with her voice and looks.

The effect of the silvery tones of the voice of a beautiful female on the hearts of her father's retainers, was electric: they fought like lions, and it soon became apparent to Otterstone that a woman is a more dangerous enemy than a man. The cry, "For the fair maid of Innerkepple!" resounded among the combatants, and soon exhibited greater virtue than the war-cry of the house. Against men actuated by the chivalrous feelings that naturally arose out of the defence of a beautiful woman, all resistance was vain; the ranks of Otterstone's men were broken, and this advantage having been seized by their opponents, whose energies were rising every moment, as the sound of Katherine's voice saluted their ears, a rout ensued, and the usual consequences of that last resource of the vanquished—flight—were soon apparent in the wounded victims who fell ingloriously with wounds on their backs. The pursuers were inclined to continue the pursuit even to the walls of Otterstone; but Katherine called them back.

"To slay the flying," said she, with a laugh, as the usual hilarity of her spirits returned upon her, "is what I call effeminate warfare. When men flee, women pursue; and what get they for their pains more than the wench got from Theseus, whom she hunted for his heart, and got, as our hunters do, the kick of his heel? Away, and carry in our

wounded, that I may, with woman's art, cure the wounds that have been received in defence of a woman."

The men obeyed with alacrity, and Innerkepple himself stared in amazement at his daughter, who had always before appeared to him as a wild romp, fit only for killing men with her beauty, or tormenting them with the elfin tricks or bewitching waggeries of her restless, salient spirit.

"I'll hae ye in the wainscotted ha', Kate," said the father, as he entered his private chamber, leaning on the arm of his daughter, "painted wi' helm, habergeon, and halberd, and placed alongside o' Lewie o' Homildon and Watt o' Flodden."

"I care not, father," replied Katherine, "if you give the painter instructions to paint me laughing at those famous progenitors of our house, who were foolish enough to give their lives for that glory I can purchase for nothing, and get the lives of my enemies to boot; but I must go and minister to the gallant men who have been wounded."

"Minister first to yer faither, Kate," replied Innerkepple, with a knowing look.

"And to your father's daughter, you would add," replied she, with a smile. "A bridal and a battle lack wine." And, hastening to a cupboard, she took out and placed on the table a flagon and two cups, the latter of which she filled.

"Rest to the souls of the men I have slain!" said she, laughing, as she lifted the wine-cup to her head, while her father was performing the same act.

"What! did ye kill any o' Otterstone's men?" said Innerkepple.

"Every time I lifted up my visor," replied she, "I scattered death around me. Ha! ha! what fools men are! Their bodies are tenantless; we women are the souls that live outside of them, and take up our residence within their clayey precincts only when we have an object to serve. The tourney has taught me the power of our sex; and there I have thrown my spirit into the man I hated, to gratify my humour by seeing him, poor caitiff! as he caught my hazel eye, writhe and wring, and contort himself into all the attitudes of Proteus."

"Wicked imp!" said Innerkepple, laughing.

"And when he had sufficiently twisted himself," continued she, "I have, with a grave face, given the same hazel eye to his opponent, and set his body in motion in the same way. The serpent-charmer is nothing to a woman. By this art, I to-day gained the victory; and I'll stake my auburn toupee against thy grey wig, that I beat, in the same way, the boldest baron of the Borders."

"By the faith o' Innerkepple, ye're no blate, Kate!" said the old baron, still laughing; "but come, let us see our wounded men"—taking his daughter's arm.

"Leave their wounds to me, father," said she. "The sting of the tarantula is cured by an old song. We women are the true leeches; doctors are quacks and medicasters to us. We kill and cure like the Delphic sword, which makes wounds and heals them by alternate strokes."

"Ever at your quips, roisterer," said Innerkepple, as they arrived at the court.

The wounded men had been brought in, and were assigned to the care of one of the retainers, skilled in medicine; Katherine's medicaments—her looks and tones—being reserved for a balsamic application, after the wounds were cicatrized. The other retainers were, meanwhile, busy in consultation, as might have been seen by their congregating into parties, talking low, and throwing looks at Innerkepple and his fair daughter, as they stood on the steps of the inner door of the castle.

"The guerdon! the guerdon!" at last said one of the vassals, coming forward and throwing himself at the feet of Kate.

"Ha! ha! I forgot," replied she, laughing; "but, turn up thy face—art thou the man?"

"So say my companions, fair leddy," replica he. "I brocht doon wi' this arm five o' Otterstone's men."

"With that arm!" replied she; "and what spirit nerved the dead lumber, thinkest thou?"

"Dootless, yours, fair leddy," answered he, smiling knowingly; "but, though the spirit was borrowed, I'm no the less entitled to my reward."

"A good stickler for the rights of your sex," answered she, keeping up the humour; "but what guerdon demandest thou?"

"That whilk knights hae sued in vain for at your fair feet," answered the man, smiling, as he uttered nearly the words she had used at the battle.

"Caught in my own snare," replied she, laughing loudly.

"Ah, Kate, Kate!" said the baron, joining in the humour, "hoo many gallant barons, and knights, and gentlemen hae ye tormented by thae fair lips o' yours, which carry in their cunnin words a defence o' themsels sae weel contrived that nane daur approach them! Ye're caught at last. Stand to yer richts, man. A kiss was promised, ye, and, by the honour o' Innerkepple! a kiss ye'll hae, if I should haud her head by a grip o' her bonny auburn locks."

"Hold, hold!" cried Katherine—"this matter dependeth on the answer to a question. Art thou married, sirrah?"

The man hesitated, fearful of being caught by his clever adversary.

"Have a care o' yersel, Gregory," said Innerkepple. "Ye're on dangerous ground."

"What if I am or am not?" said the man, cautiously, turning up his eye into the face of the wicked querist.

"If thou art not," said she, "then would a kiss of so fair a damsel be to thee beyond the value of a croft of the best land o' the barony o' Innerkepple; but if thou art, then would the guerdon be as nothing to the kiss of thy wife, and as the weight of a feather in the scale against an oxengate of good land."

"I'm no married," replied the man; "but, an't please yer Leddyship, I'll tak the oxengate."

"Audacious varlet!" cried Kate, rejoicing in the adroitness she exhibited—"wouldst thou prefer a piece of earth to a kiss of Kate Kennedy—a boon which the gayest knights of the Borders have sued for in vain? But, 'tis well—thou hast refused the guerdon. Ha! ha! Men of Innerkepple, ye are witnesses to the fact. This man hath spurned my guerdon, and sought dull earth for my rosy lips."

"We are witnesses," cried the retainers; and the courtyard rang with the laugh which the cleverness of their fair mistress had elicited from those who envied Gregory of his privilege.

"Kate, Kate!" said the old baron, joining in the laugh, "will ever mortal be able to seize what are sae weel guarded? I believe ye will be able to argue yer husband oot o' his richts o' proving whether thae little traitors be made o' mortal flesh or ripe cherries. But wine is better than women's lips; and since Kate has sae cleverly got quit o' her obligation, I'll mak amends by giein ye a *surrogatum*."

Several measures of good old wine were served out to the men by the hands of Katherine, who rejoiced in the contradiction of refusing one thing to give a better. Her health, and that of Innerkepple, were drunk with loud shouts of approbation; and the wassail was kept up till a late hour of the night.

Meanwhile, Otterstone was struggling with his disappointment, and nourishing a deep spirit of revenge. The shame of his defeat, accomplished by a girl, was insufferable; and the gnawing pain of the loss of honour and men, in a cause where he had calculated securely on crushing his supposed enemy, affected him so severely that he sent, it was reported, for his son, who had lived from his infancy at St Omers, to come over to administer to him consolation.

When Innerkepple heard of these things, he marvelled greatly at the stubbornness of his neighbour, whom he wished, above all things, to drag, *nolente volente*, into a deep wassail in the old wainscotted hall of his castle, whereby he might drown, with reason itself, all their hereditary grudges, and transform a foe into a friend. These feelings were also participated in by the warlike Kate, who acknowledged that she did not, on that memorable day, fight for anything on earth that she knew of, but the safety of her father, and the sheer glory of victory. She entertained the best possible feelings towards Otterstone, though she admitted, with a laugh, that, if his men had not that day run for their lives, she would have fought till they and their lord lay all dead upon the field, and the glory of Otterstone was extinguished for ever.

A considerable period that passed in quietness, seemed to indicate that the anger of the vanquished baron had escaped by the valves appointed by nature for freeing the liver of its redundant bile. Meanwhile, Innerkepple's universal love of mankind increased, as his friendship for the juice of the grape grew stronger and stronger, and his potatoes waxed deeper and deeper; so that he was represented, all over the Borders, as being the most jovial baron of his time. The fame of Kate also went abroad like fire-flaughts; but no one knew what to make of her—whether to set her down as a beautiful virago, or as a merry imp of sportive devilry, who fought her father's enemy with the same good-will she felt towards the lovers whom she delighted with her beauty and gaiety, and tormented by her cruel waggeries and wiles.

This apparent quietness, and the consequent freedom from all danger, induced the old baron to comply with a request made to him by King James, to lend him forty of his followers, to aid in suppressing some disturbances caused by a number of outlawed rieviers at that time ravaging the Borders. Katherine gave her consent to the measure; but she wisely exacted the condition that the men should not be removed to a greater distance from the castle than ten miles. When James' emissary asked her why she objected this condition to her father's agreement, she answered, with that waggish mystery in which she often loved to indulge, that she had such a universal love for his—the emissary's—sex that she could not suffer the idea of her gallant men being farther removed from her than the distance on which she had condescended. A question for explanation only produced another wicked quodlibet; so that the royal messenger was obliged to be contented with a reason that sounded in his ears very like a contempt of royal authority—a circumstance for which she cared no more than she did for the mute expression of admiration of her beauty, that her quick eye detected on the face of the deputy.

The men having been detached from the castle for the service of the King, there remained only a small number, not more than sufficient for occupying the more important stations on the walls of the strength. There was, however, no cause for alarm; and old Innerkepple continued to speculate over his spiced Canary, on his three grand subjects of antiquarian research; while Katherine followed her various occupations of listening to and laughing at his reveries, sewing battle scenes on satin, and killing her knights with her needle, in as many grotesque ways as her inventive fancy could devise. One day the sound of a horn cut right through the middle a long pull of Canary in the act of being perfected by the old baron's powers of deglutition; and, in a short time, the warder came into the hall, and said that a wine merchant, with sumpter mules and panniers, was at the end of the draw bridge, and had expressed a strong desire to submit his commodity to the test of such a famous judge of the spirit of the grape as the baron of Innerkepple, whose name had gone forth as transcending that of all modern wine drinkers.

"A wine merchant!" ejaculated Innerkepple, smacking

his lips after his interrupted draught of vintage '90. "What species o' sma potation does he deal in? Ha! ha! It suits my humour to see the quack's een reel, as he finds his tongue and palate glued thegither wi' what I ca' wine, and gets them loosed again by his ain coloured water. Shew him in, George."

"Whar is my Leddy, yer Honour?" said the seneschal, looking bluntly. "Will she consent to the drawbridge bein raised at a time when the castle's nearly empty?"

"She has just gane into the green parlour in the wes tower," said the baron. "But I'll tak Kate in my ain hands. She likes fun as weel as her auld faither, and will laugh to see this quack beaten wi' his ain bowls."

The seneschal withdrew, though reluctantly, and casting his eyes about for the indispensable Katherine; but she was not within his reach, and he felt himself compelled, by the impatience of the old baron, to admit the merchant. The creaking hinges of the bridge resounded through the castle, and the merchant and his mules were seen by Katherine, looking through a loophole, slowly making their way into the castle. It was too late for her now to consider of the propriety of the permission to enter; so she leant her chin on her hand, and quietly scanned the stranger, as he crossed the bridge, driving his mules before him with a large stick, which he brought down with a loud thwack on their backs—accompanying his act with a loud Whoop, ho! and occasionally throwing his eyes over the walls as he proceeded.

"Whom have we here?" said she, as she communed with herself, and nodded her head, still apparent through the loophole. "By'r Lady! neither Gascon nor Fleming, or my eyes are no better than my father's, when he looks at *antiques* through the red medium of his vintage of '90. Perchance, a lover come to run away with Kate Kennedy. Hey! the thought tickles my wild wits, and sends me on the wings of fancy into the regions of romance. Yet I have not read that the catching and carrying off of *Tartars* hath anything to do with the themes of romantic love-errantry. I'm witty at the expense of this poor packman; but, seriously, Katherine Kennedy must carry off her lover. True to the difference that opposes me to the rest of my sex, I could not love a man whom I did not vanquish and abduct, as a riever does the chattels of the farmer."

Continuing her gaze, as she laughed at her own strange thoughts, she saw the merchant bind his mules to a ring fixed in the inside of the wall, and take out of his panniers a vessel, with which he proceeded in the direction of the door that led to the hall. When the merchant had disappeared, she saw one of the retainers of the castle examining intently the mules and their panniers. He looked up and caught her eye; and, placing his finger on his forehead, made a sign for her to come down. She obeyed, with her usual alacrity, and in a moment was at the side of the retainer, who, slipping gently under the shade of the castle, so as to be out of the view of those within the hall, communicated to the ear of Katherine some intelligence of an important nature. The man looked grave; Kate snapped her fingers; the fire of her eye glanced from the balls like the sparks of struck flint, and the expression of her countenance indicated that she had formed a purpose which she gloried in executing.

"Hark ye, Gregory," said she; "I am still your debtor, but I require again your services." And, looking carefully around her, she whispered some words into the ear of the man; and, upon receiving his nod of intelligence and assent, sprang up the steps that led to the hall.

The wine merchant was, as she entered, sitting at the oaken table, opposite to the old baron, who was holding up in his hand a species of glass jug, and looking through it with that peculiar expression which is only to be found in the face of a luxurious wine-topper in the act of passing sentence

"Wha, in God's name, are ye, man?" cried the baron, under the cover of whose speech Kate slipped cleverly up to the window, and sat down with her cheek resting on her hand, in apparent listlessness, but eyeing intently the stranger. "I could have wad the picture o' my ancestor, Watt o' Flodden, or King Henry's turret, in the east wing o' Innerkepple, wi' its twenty bullets, mair precious than goold, that there wasna a cup o' vintage '90, in Scotland, except what I had mysel. Whar got ye't, man? Are ye the Devil? Hae ye brocht it frae my ain cellars? Speak, Satan?"

"Vy, *mon cher* Innerkepple," replied the merchant, "did I not know that you were one grand biberon—I mean drinker of vin? It is known all over the marches—I mean the Bordures. Aha! no one Frenchman could cheat the famous Innerkepple; so I brought the best that vas in all my celliers. Is it not grand and magnifique?"

"Grand an' magnifique, man!" replied Innerkepple, as he sipped the wine with the gravity of a judge. "It's mair than a' that, man, if my tongue could coin a word to express its ain sense o' what it is at this moment enjoying. But the organ's stupified wi' sheer delight, and forgets its very mither's tongue; an' nae wonder, for my very een, that dinna taste it, reel, and get drunk with the sight." And the delighted baron took another pull of the goblet.

"Aha! Innerkepple, you are von of the grandest biberons I have ever seen in all this contrée," said the merchant. "It is one great pleaisir to trafique vit von so learned in the science of *bon gout*. That grand smack of your lips would tempt me to ruin myself, and drink mine own commodity."

"Hae ye a stock o' the treasure?" said the baron; "I canna suppose it."

"Just five barrils in my celliers, at Berwick," answered the merchant, "containing quatre-hundred pints de Paris, in each one of them."

"I could walk on my bare feet to Berwick, to see it and taste it," said the baron; "but what clatter o' a horse's feet is that in the court, Kate?"

"Ha! sure it is my mules," said the Frenchman, starting to his feet in alarm.

"Oh! keep your seat, Monsieur Marchand," cried Kate, laughing and looking out at the window. "Can a lady not dispatch her servitor to Selkirk for a pair of sandals, that should this day have been on my feet in place of in Gilbert Skinner's hands, without raising folks from their wine?"

The Frenchman was satisfied, and retook his seat; but the baron looked at Kate, as if at a loss to know what freak had now come into her inventive head. The letting down of the drawbridge, and the sound of the horse's feet passing along the sounding wood, verified her statement, but carried no conviction to the mind of Innerkepple. He had long ceased, however, the vain effort, to understand the workings of his daughter's mind; and on the present occasion he was occupied about too important a subject to be interested in the vagaries of a mad-cap wench.

"By the Virgin!" she said, again, "my jennet will lose his own sandals in going for mine, if Gregory thus strikes the rowels into his sides."

Covering by these words, the rapid departure of the messenger, she turned her eyes to continue the study of the merchant, whom she watched with feline assiduity. The conversation was again resumed.

"Five barrels, said ye, Monsieur?" resumed Innerkepple. "Let me see—that, wi' what I hae mysel, may see me out; but it will be a guid heir-loom to Kate's husband. What is the price?"

"One merk the gallon of four pints de Paris," answered the merchant.

("Yet I see no marks of Otterstone about him," muttered Kate to herself. "How beautiful he is, maugre his disguise! Had he come on a message of love in place of war, I would

have taken him prisoner, and bound him with the rays of light that come from my languishing eyes.")

"That's dear, man," said Innerkepple. "But ye're a cunning rogue; if I keep drinking at this rate, the price will sink as the flavour rises, and ye'll catch me, as men do gudgeons, by the tongue."

"Aha! *mon cher* Innerkepple," said the merchant, "you have von excellent humour of fun about ye. If I vere not *un pauvre marchand*, I would have one grand pleaisir in getting *mouillé*—I mean drunk—vit you."

("Ha! my treacherous Adonis, art on that tack, with a foul wind in thy fair face?" was Kate's mental ejaculation. "If thou nearest thy haven, I am a worse pilot than Palinurus.")

"Wi' wine like that before ane," responded the baron, "the toppers alongside o' ye may be Frenchmen or Dutchmen, warriors or warlocks, wraiths or wassailers, merchants or mahouns—a's alike. It will put a soul into a ghaist, a yearning heart into a gowl, and a spirit o' nobility in the breast o' ane wha never quartered arms but wi' the fair anes o' flesh an' bluid that belong to his wife. I'll be oblivious o' a' warldly things, before Kate's sandals come frae Selkirk; but yer price man, I fear, will stick to me to the end."

"I cannot make one deduction," said the merchant; "but I will give to the men in the base-court one jolly debauch of very good vin, vich is in my hampers."

("The kaim of chanticleer is in the wind's eye," muttered Katherine. "Thou pointest nobly for the direction of treachery; but my sandals will be back from Selkirk, long before I am obliged to march with thee to the prison of Otterstone.")

"Weel, mak it a merk," said Innerkepple, "for five pints, an' a bouse to my retainers, wha are as muckle beloved by me as if they were my bairns; an' I will close wi' ye."

"Well, that is one covenant *inter nous*," said the merchant; "bot I cannot return to Berwick until *demain*—I mean the morrow; and we vill have the long night for one jolly carousal. I will go *sans delai*, and give the poor fellows, in the meantime, one leetle tasting of the grand cheer."

("Then I am too long here," muttered Kate. "Alexander told his men that the Persian stream was poisonous, to prevent them from stopping to drink, whereby they would have fallen into the hands of the enemy. One not less than he—ha! ha!—will save her men, by telling them there is treachery in the cup.")

She descended instantly to the base-court, and, passing from one guard to another, she whispered in their ears certain instructions, which, by the nodding of their heads, they seemed to understand; while those she had not time to visit received from their neighbours the communication at second-hand; and thus, in a short space of time, she prepared the whole retainers for the part they were destined to play. She had scarcely finished this part of her operations, and got out of the court, when the wine merchant made his appearance on the steps leading to the hall. He nodded pleasantly to the men, and, proceeding to his mules, took out of one of the panniers a large vessel filled with wine. This he laid on the flag-stones of the base-court, and alongside of it he placed a large cup. He then called out to the retainers to approach, and seemed pleased with the readiness with which they complied with his request.

"Mine very good fellows," said he, "I have sold you'r master, Innerkepple, one grand quantity of vine; and he says I am under one obligation to treat you vit a hamper, for the sake of the grand affection he bears to you. You may drink as much as ever you vill please; and ven this is brought to one termination, I vill supply you vit more."

We're a' under a suitable obligation to ye, sir," replied the oldest of the retainers, a sly, pawky Scotchman—"and

winna fail to do credit to the present ye've sae nobly presented to us; but do ye no hear Innerkepple callin for ye frae the ha' ? Awa, sir, to the guid baron, and leave us to our carouse."

"Ay," said another; "a'e'll inform ye when tuis is finished."

"Finished!" said a third; "we'll be a' on oor backs before we see the end o't."

"Aha! excellent jolly troupe!" cried the merchant, delighted with his company.

The voice of Katherine, who appeared on the steps leading to the hall, now arrested their attention.

"My father waiteth thee in the hall, good merchant," said she.

"*Mon cher* leddy," replied he, "I will be there *a present*." And, looking up to see that she had again disappeared—"Drink, my jolly mates," he continued. "It is the grand matiere, the *bon* stuff, the excellent good liqueur. Aha! you will be so merry, and you know you have the consent of Innerkepple."

"We'll be a' as drunk as bats," said he who spoke first, with a sly leer.

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin o' us!" said another.

"So say I," added half-a-dozen of voices.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "unless I am saved by the power o' the wine; and, by my faith, I'll no spare't."

"Aha! very good! excellent joke!" cried the delighted merchant. "Drink and shame the Diable, as we say in France. Wine comes from the gods, and is the grand poison of Beelzebub."

And, after enjoining deep potations, the merchant returned to the hall amidst the laughter and pretended applause of the men. The moment he had disappeared, Katherine got carried to the spot a measure filled with wine and water; and, having emptied in another vessel the contents of the merchant's hamper, the thin and innocuous potation was poured in to supply its place. The men assisted in the operation; and, all being finished, they began to carouse with great glee and jollity.

"I said, my Leddy, to the merchant, that we would be a' as drunk as bats," said one of the humorists; "and sure this is a fair beginning; for wha could stand drink o' this fearfu strength?"

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin o' us!" said the other, laughing, as he drank off a glass of the thin mixture.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "unless I am saved by the power o' this strong drink."

And thus the men, encouraged by the smiles of Kate, who was, with great activity, conducting the ceremonies, seemed to be getting boisterous on the strength of the merchant's wine. Their jokes raised real laughter; and the noise of their mirth went up and entered into the hall, falling like incense on the heart of the merchant. Katherine, meanwhile, again betook herself to her station at the hall window, using assiduously both her eyes and ears; the former being directed to a dark fir plantation that stood to the left of the castle, and the latter occupied by the conversations of her father and the merchant.

"My men," said Innerkepple, "seem to be following the example o' their master. They are gettin noisy. I hope, Monsieur, ye were moderate in yer present. A castle fu o' drunk men is as bad as a headfu o' intoxicated notions."

("Hurrah for the French merchant! Long life to him! May he continue as strong as his liquor!")

"Aha! the jolly good fellows are feeling the sting of the spur" said the merchant, with sparkling eyes.

"Ungratefu dogs!" rejoined Innerkepple; "I treat them as if they were my sons, and hear hoo they praise a stranger for a bellyfu o' wine! My beer never produced sae muckle

froth o' flattery. But this wine o' yours, Monsieur, drowns a' my indignation."

("Long life to Innerkepple and the fair Katherine!")

"Now you are getting the grand adulation," said the Frenchman. "Ha! they are a jovial troupe of good chaps, and deserve one grand potation; but I gave them only one leetle hamper, for fear they should get *mouillé*."

"Very considerate, Monsieur; very prudent and kind," said the baron; "for twa-thirds o' my men are fechtin for Jamie, and we hae a kittle neebor in Otterstone, whase son I hear has come hame frae St Omers. By the by, saw ye the callant in France? They say he's sair ashamed o' the defeat o' his father, by the generalship o' my dochter Kate."

"Ha! did *mon cher* Leddy combattre Otterstone?" ejaculated the Frenchman, laughing. "Very good! ha! ha! ha! I did not know that, ven I sold him one quantity of vin yesterday; but I assure you, *mon cher* Innerkepple, he is not at all your enemy, and his son did praise *mon cher* Leddy as the most magnificent vench in all the *contrée*."

"Excellently sustained," muttered Katherine to herself. "How I do love the roll of that dark eye, and the curl of that lip covered with the black moustache! Can so much beauty conceal a deadly purpose? But the 'magnificent vench' shall earn yet a better title to the *soubriquet* out of thy discomfiture, fair, deceitful, sweet devil."

"I only wish I had Otterstone whar you are, man," said Innerkepple, "wi' the liquor as sweet, an' my bile nae bitterer. I would conquer him in better style than did my dochter, though, I confess, she manœuvred him beautifully."

("Perdition to the faes o' Innerkepple! and, chief o' them, the fause Otterstone, the ledly-licked loon!")

"Helas! The master and the men have the very different creeds," said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "but my vin is making the *bon* companions choleric. Ha! ha!"

("It is—it is!" muttered Katherine, as she strained her eyes to catch the signal of a white handkerchief, that floated on the top of one of the trees in the fir-wood.)

She now abruptly left the hall, and proceeded to the place in the court occupied by those who were wassailing on the coloured water she had brewed for them with her fair hands. They were busily occupied by the manifestations of their mirth, which was not altogether simulated. A cessation of the noise evinced the effect of her presence among those who deified her.

"Up with the merry strains, my jolly revellers!" said she, smiling; and immediately, "Bertram the Archer," in loud notes, rung in the ballium:—

"And Bertram held aloft the horn,
Filled wi' the bluid-red wyne;
And three times has he loudly sworn
His love he winna tye.

"My Anne sits in yon eastern tower,
An' greets baith day and night,
An' sorrows for her lover lost,
An' right turned into might.

"Then hie ye all, my merry men,
To yonder lordly ha!
An' if they winna ope the gate,
We'll scale the burly wa'."

"Hurra! then shouted Bertram's men;
And loudly they hae sworn,
That they will right their gallant knight
Before the opening morn."*

Under the cover of the noise of the song, which was sung with Bacchanalian glee, Katherine communicated her farther instructions to the man who had assumed the principal direction, and, retreating quickly, lest the wine merchant should come out and surprise her, she left the revellers to continue their work. She was soon again at her post at the window. The boon companions within the hall were still

* Pinkerton gives only one verse of "Bertram the Archer," but Innerkepple's men were more successful antiquaries.

busy with their conversation and their wine; and by this time the shades of evening had begun to darken the view from the castle, and envelope the towers in gloom; the rooks had retired to rest; the owls had taken up the screech note which pains the sensitive ear of night; and the bats were beginning to flap their leathern wings on the rough sides of the old walls.

The sounds of the revellers in the court-yard began gradually to die away, and the strains of "Bertram the Archer" were limited to a weak repetition of the last lines, somewhat curtailed of their legitimate syllables:—

"And we will right our gallant knight
Before the opening morn."

These indications of the effect of the wine increased, till, by and by, all seemed to be muffled up in silence. The circumstance seemed to be noticed at once by the wine merchant; but he took no notice of it to Innerkepple, whom he still continued to ply with the rich vintage '90. Kate's senses were all on the alert, and she watched every scene of the acting drama, set agoing by her own master mind. A noise was now heard at the door of the hall, as if some one wished to get in, but could not effect an opening.

"Who's there?" cried Kate, as she proceeded to open the door.

"It's me, your Ledyship's Honour," answered George, the seneschal, as he staggered, apparently in the last stage of drunkenness, into the hall.

"What means this?" cried Innerkepple, rising up, and not very well able to stand himself. "The warder o' my castle in that condition, an' a' our lives dependin on his prudence!"

"Your Honour's maist forgiving pardon," said the warder. "I am come here, maist lordly Innerkepple"—hiccup—"to inform your Highness that a' the men o' the castle are lying in the base-court, like swine. I am the only sober man in the hail menyie"—hic—hic. "But whar's the ferly? The strength o' the Frenchman's wine would have floored the strongest hensure o' the Borders"—hiccup—"an' I would hae been like the rest, if I hadna been the keeper o' the keys o' Innerkepple."

("As well as Roscius, George," muttered Kate, as she, with a smile, contemplated the actor.)

"George, George, man," said the baron, "ye're just as bad as the rest. You've been owre guid to them, Monsieur; but this *mooliness*, as ye ca' it, has a' its dangers in thae times, when castles are surprised an' taen like sleepin mawkins in bushes o' broom. Awa to yer bed ahint the gratin, man, an' sleep aff the wine, as fast as it is possible for a drunk man to do."

George bowed, and staggered out of the hall, to betake himself to his couch.

"Aha! this is one sad misadventure," said the merchant. "I did not know there vas half so much strength in this vine. Let us see the jolly topers, mon noble Innerkepple. It is one grand vision to a vendeur of good vin to see the biberons lying on the ground, all *mouillé*. Helas! I vas very wrong; but, mon noble baron will forgive the grand fault of liberality."

The merchant rose, and, giving his arm to Innerkepple, who had some difficulty in steadying himself, proceeded towards the court, where they saw verified the report of the warder. The men were lying about the yard, apparently in a state of perfect insensibility. The wine measure was empty and overturned; several drinking horns lay scattered around; and everything betokened a deep debauch.

"This maun hae been potent liquor," said the baron, taking up one of the cups, in which a few drops remained, and drinking it. "Ha! man, puir gear after a A man might drink three gallons o't, and dance to the tune o' Gil-quhisker after he has finished. What's the meaning o' this?"

"Aha! your tongue is *mouillé*, mon noble Innerkepple," said the merchant.

"It may be sae," replied the baron; "but it wasna made mooly, as ye denominate it, by drink like that. I canna understand it, Monsieur."

As he stood musing on the strange circumstance, he caught the eye of Kate at the window, and felt his stupefaction and bewilderment increased by a leer in that dark bewitching orb, whose language appeared to him often—and never more so than at present—like Greek. His attention was next claimed by the merchant, who proposed that the men should be allowed to sleep out their inebriety where they lay. This proposition was reasonable; and it would, besides, operate as a proper punishment for their exceeding the limits of that prudence which their duty to their master required them to observe. The baron agreed to it, and, seeking again the support of the Frenchman's arm, he returned to the hall.

The night was now fast closing in. An old female domestic had placed lamps in the hall, and some supper was served up to the baron and the merchant. Kate retired, as she said, to her couch; but it may be surmised that an antechamber received her fair person, where she had something else to do than to sleep. The loud snoring of the men in the courtyard was heard distinctly, mixing with the screams of the owls that perched on the turrets. The two *biberons* sat down to partake of the supper, and prepare their stomachs, as Innerkepple said, for another bouse of the grand liquor. The conduct of the two carousers now assumed aspects very different from each other. The baron was gradually getting more easy and comfortable, while the merchant displayed an extreme restlessness and anxiety. The praises of his wine fell dead upon his ear, and the jokes of the good Innerkepple seemed to have become vapid and tiresome to him.

"That's a grand chorus in the court-yard, Monsieur," said the baron. "Singing, snoring, groaning, are the three successive acts o' the vassailers. They would have been better engaged eating their supper. Yah! I'm gettin sleepy, Monsieur."

"Helas! helas!" ejaculated the merchant. "You prick my memory, mon noble Innerkepple. My poor mules! They have got no souper. Ah! cruel master that I am to forget the *pauvre* animals that have got no language to tell thir wants."

("So, so—the time approaches," ejaculated Kate, mentally, as she watched behind the door.)

"Pardon me, *mon cher* baron," he continued, "I vill go and give them one leetle feed, and return to you a *present*. I have got beans in my hampers."

"Humanity needs nae pardon, man," replied the baron, nodding with sleep. "Awa and feed the puir creatures; but tak care an' no tramp on an' kill ony o' my brave men in yer effort to save the lives o' yer mules."

"Never fear," said the other, taking from his pocket a small lantern, which he lighted. "Travellers stand in grand need of this machine," he continued. "I will return on the instant."

He now left the baron to his sleep, and crept stealthily along the passage to the door leading to the court. He was followed, unseen, by Katherine, who watched every motion. He felt some difficulty in avoiding the men, who still lay on the ground; but with careful steps he reached the wall, and suddenly sprung on the parapet.

"Prepare!" whispered Katherine into the ears of the prostrate retainers; "the time approaches."

While thus engaged, she kept her eye upon the dark shadow of the merchant, and saw with surprise a blue light flash up from the top of the wall, and throw its ominous glare on the surrounding objects. A scream of the birds on the castle walls announced their wonder at the strange vision, and Katherine concluded that the merchant had thus produced his signal from some phosphorescent mixture.

which he had ignited by the aid of the lantern. The light was followed instantly by a shrill blast of a horn. With a bound he reached the floor of the court, and, hastening to the warder's post, threw off the guard of the wheel, and, with all the art and rapidity of a seneschal, prepared for letting down the bridge. All was still as death; there seemed to be no interruption to his proceedings; but he started as he saw the rays of a lamp thrown from a loophole over his head, upon that part of the moat which the bridge covered. He had gone too far to recede; the creaking of the hinges grated, and down came the bridge with a hollow sound. A rush was now heard as of a body of men pressing forward to take possession of the passage; and tramp, tramp came the sounds of the marching invaders over the hollow-sounding wood. All was still silent within the castle, and the sound of the procession continued. In an instant, a dense, dark body issued from the fir-wood, and rushed with heavy impetuous force on the rear of the corps that were passing into the castle; and, simultaneously with that movement, the whole body of the men within the castle pressed forward to the end of the bridge, and met the front of the intruders, who were thus hedged in by two forces, that had taken them by surprise, in both front and rear.

"Caught in our own snare!" cried the voice of old Otterstone.

"Disarm them," sounded shrilly from the lips of Katherine Kennedy.

And a scuffle of wrestling men sent its fearful, death-like sound through the dark ballium. The strife was short and comparatively silent. The men who had rushed from the wood, and who were no other than the absent retainers of Innerkepple, coming from behind, and those within the strength meeting them in front, produced such an alarm in the enclosed troops, that the arms were taken from their hands as if they had been struck with palsy. Every two men seized their prisoner, while some holding burning torches came running forward, to shew the revengeful baron the full extent of his shame. Ranged along the court, the spectacle presented by the prisoners was striking and grotesque. Their eyes sought in surprise the form of a female, who, with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other, stood in front of them, as the genius of their misfortune.

The hall door was now opened, where the old baron still sat sound asleep in his chair, unconscious of all these proceedings. The prisoners were led into the spacious apartment, and ranged along the sides in long ranks. Innerkepple rubbed his eyes, stared, rubbed them again, and seemed lost in perfect bewilderment. All was conducted in dumb show. The proud and revengeful Otterstone was placed alongside of the good baron, his enemy; and Kate smiled as she contemplated the strange looks which the two rivals threw upon each other.

"Right happy am I," said Katherine, coming forward in the midst of the assembly, "to meet my good friends, the noble Otterstone and his men, in my father's hall, under the auspices of a healing friendship. Father, I offer thee the hand of Otterstone. Otterstone, I offer thee the hand of Innerkepple. Ye have long been separated by strife and war, though, on the one side, there was always a good feeling of generous kindness, opposed to a bitterness that had no cause, and a revenge that knew no excuse. Born nobles and neighbours, educated civilized men, and baptized Christians, why should ye be foes? but, above all, why should the one strike with the sword of war the hand that has held out to him the wine-cup? My father has ever been thy friend, noble Otterstone, and thou hast ever been his foe. How is this? Ah! I know it. Thou wert ignorant, noble guest, of my good father's generous and friendly feelings, and I have taken this opportunity of introducing ye to each other, that ye may mutually come to the knowledge of each other's better qualities and intentions."

"What, in the name o' heaven, means a' this, Kate?" ejaculated Innerkepple, in still unsubdued amazement. "Am I dreamin, or am I betrayed? Whar is the wine merchant? Hoo cam ye here, Otterstone? Am I a prisoner in my ain castle, and my ain men and dochter laughing at my misfortune? But ye spoke o' friendship, Kate. Is it possible, Otterstone, ye hae repented o' yer ill-will, and come to mak amends for past grievances?"

"Thou hast heard him, Otterstone," said Kate. "Wilt thou still refuse the hand?"

The chief hesitated; but the good-humoured looks of Innerkepple melted him, and he held out the right hand of good-fellowship to the old baron, who seized it cordially and shook it heartily.

"Now," said Kate, "we must seal this friendship with a cup of wine. Bring in the wine merchant."

The Frenchman was produced by the warder, along with the remaining hampers of the wine that had been left in the court-yard. As may have been already surmised, he was no other than the son of old Otterstone. Surprised and confounded by all these proceedings, he stood in the midst of the company, looking first at his father, and then at Innerkepple, without forgetting Kate, who stood like a majestic queen, enjoying the triumph of her spirit and ingenuity. Above all things, he wondered at the smile of good humour in the face of his father; and his surprise knew no bounds when he saw every one around as well pleased as if they had been convened for the ends of friendship.

"Hector," said old Otterstone, looking at his son, "the game is up. This maiden has outwitted us, and we are caught in our own snare. Off with thy disguise, and shew this noble damsel that thou art worthy of her best smiles."

Hector obeyed, and took off his wig, and the clumsy habiliments that covered his armour, and stood in the midst of the assembly, a young man of exquisite beauty.

"The wine merchant, Hector Fotheringham!" cried Innerkepple. "Ah, Kate, Kate! is this the way ye bring yer lovers to Innerkepple ha'?—in the shape o' a wine merchant—the only form o' the Deevil I wad like to see on this earth? Ha! ye baggage, weel do ye ken hoo to get at the heart o' yer faither. But whar was the use o' secrecy, woman? And you, Hector, man, I needed nae bribe o' Tokay to be friendly to the lover o' my dochter. A fine youth—a fine youth. Surely, surely, this man was made for my dochter Kate."

"And thy daughter, Kate, was made for him," cried Otterstone.

The retainers of both houses shouted applause, and the hall rang with the noise. The wine, which was intended for deception and treachery, was circulated freely, and opened the hearts of the company. Innerkepple was ready again for his Tokay, and, lifting a large goblet to his head—

"To the union o' the twa hooes!" cried he. "And I wish I had twenty dochters, and Otterstone as mony sons, that they might a' be married thegither; but, on this condition, that the bridegrooms should a' come in the shape o' wine merchants."

"Hurra, hurra!" shouted the retainers. The night was spent in good humour and revelry. All was restored; and, in a short time, the two houses were united by the marriage of Hector Fotheringham and Katherine Kennedy.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PROVOST OF STARVIESTON.

IN no place was the general joy that pervaded the kingdom at the Restoration more sincerely felt, or at least more loyally expressed, than in the little burgh town of Starvieston in the west of Scotland. On that occasion, the worthy Provost of the town, David Clapperton, proposed in council that a dutiful address should be forthwith prepared and sent up to his Majesty, congratulating him on the happy event, and pledging the faith and loyalty of the ancient burgh of Starvieston for all occasions and in all time coming.

"A guid move, Provost, a guid move," replied Bailie Snodgrass, to this loyal proposition of the chief magistrate; "and I most cordially second it. But, dinna ye think we could slip in, at the same time, a word or twa about the charter anent the superiority o' the lands o' Tullywhustle that was promised us by his present Majesty's faither? I think this a guid opportunity for gettin a haud o' something or ither; and I dinna ken o' onything that wad be mair beneficial to the burgh than gettin a grant o' that superiority."

All the members of council, including the Provost, agreed that Bailie Snodgrass' suggestion was a prudent one, and shewed a praiseworthy concern for the interests of the burgh; but it was also agreed that, on the whole, such a request might not be thought a very graceful appendage to an address which affected to be one merely of congratulation, and to express sentiments only of loyalty and devotion. This being the general opinion of the council, it was resolved that Bailie Snodgrass' motion should be allowed to lie in abeyance in the meantime, and that such an address as was originally proposed, one entirely free from all solicitations for favours, should be immediately prepared and transmitted to St James'. Having come to this resolution in this important matter, the town-council of Starvieston broke up; a circumstance which affords us an opportunity of speaking more fully of its chief member, Provost Clapperton, the only one of the august body alluded to with whom we have anything particular to do.

Provost Clapperton, or, simply, Davy Clapperton, as he was most irreverently called by the vulgar rabble of the town over whose affairs he presided with such credit to himself and such benefit to the public interest, was to business a hosier; and in this business he had waxed rich. The Provost was reckoned worth a good round sum. In personal appearance and manner, the worthy Provost was not naturally particularly dignified. He was short, broad, and rather corpulent. Easy circumstances, and an easy mind, had contributed, each in their several ways, to impart to his figure a certain rotundity in front which looked fully more comfortable than graceful. The Provost, at this time, might be about fifty-five. In disposition, our worthy magistrate was kind, humane, and affable. He spoke to everybody with the utmost familiarity, and, we may add, with great volubility. This last, in truth, was one of the worthy man's failings. He talked a vast deal more than was necessary, and a great deal more, sometimes, than was understood, as he spoke both very thick and very fast, and had,

moreover, a habit of repeating his words, which formed a large addition to the amount of matter he delivered, without conveying an iota of additional sentiment along with it.

The Provost, in short, was a lively, pert, good-natured, bustling little body, with a reasonably high opinion of his own importance, and, most especially, of the dignity of the office which he filled. If, however, any one should associate with the occupant of this office any aristocratic notions of gentility, birth, education, or accomplishments, they would be sadly out in the case of Mr Clapperton, who was, in truth, just as homespun a provost as you might readily meet with anywhere. The worthy magistrate had had little or no education. His birth was as humble as could well be; and, as to gentility and accomplishments, we verily believe he did not know what the words meant. At any rate, he had none of them, and never dreamt of pretending to them. Plain in his habits; plain, although substantial, in his living; plain in his manners; and plain in his dress—all proceeding from a natural homeliness and simplicity of character—Provost Clapperton exhibited no outward indications of his greatness; but, on the contrary, looked fully as like a chief butler as a chief magistrate.

Having thus described, as well as we can, the person, manners, dispositions, &c., of our worthy civic dignitary, we revert to the circumstance with which our story opened—namely, his proposal of an address of congratulation to his Majesty, Charles II., on the occasion of his restoration to the throne of his ancestors. Now, with regard to this address, we will not say that the idea of getting up such a thing was not one proceeding from the genuine feelings of Provost Clapperton's heart, from his affection to his sovereign, and from a sincere joy at his once more filling the regal chair; but it is certain that it accorded marvelously with certain views on a certain subject, entertained by no less a personage than his wife—that is to say, it accorded so far with these views as to promise being a likely means of their accomplishment. But this affair will be best explained by quoting a conversation which took place between the worthy Provost and his better half, as they sat together and alone, one night, by the fire, talking over various domestic and other matters, previous to retiring to bed. It occurred some two or three days before the Provost made the celebrated proposition in council, to which we have already more than once alluded.

"Davy, man," said Mrs Clapperton, "if ye had been worth yer lugs, ye micht hae dune something for the honour o' the family, since ye war made a provost. Ye micht hae made me a leddy, Davy. Noo, yer time 'ill sune be oot, and a' yer glory 'ill pass awa like the last flicker o' a fardin caunle."

"What do ye mean, guidwife? what do ye mean? what do ye mean?" inquired her husband, speaking in his usual rapid way, and really in want of the light he asked for.

"I mean, Davy, that ye micht hae got yersel made a knight if ye had been half clever," replied Mrs Clapperton. "There's been twa provosts o' this burgh knichted, and deil a one can tell for what; for they never did onything in their lives that was fairly worth thrippence for either kirk or state, unless it was gaun up to Lunnun wi' a screed o' loyalty and zeal in their pouches, frae the toon, whilk they

ca'ed an address, to our late king, Charles I., whan he was in his diffeiculties, pur man! Confound a thing else they ever did; for they war baith feckless bodies, wi' nae mair gumption in them than's in an oyster."

During the delivery of this speech, which he neither by word nor deed attempted to interrupt, the Provost kept looking steadily at the fire, and twirling his thumbs round each other. He was thinking profoundly; and that, too, on ideas suggested by and in accordance with his wife's remarks. The notion of aspiring to knighthood had never struck him before; but now that it was presented to him, it excited the stirrings of ambition within him, and appeared before his mind's eye of a very engaging and comely aspect. But how was it to be obtained? There was the difficulty. The worthy Provost felt that he had never done anything to warrant him in aspiring to so high an honour, and he felt, moreover, that he, in all likelihood, never would or could do anything to deserve it; and it was under this feeling that he at length spoke, premising with an affected undervaluing of his fitness to be invested with such a dignity:—

"Mak a knicht o' me, Peggy!" he said. "Mak a knicht o' a dealer in stockings and comforters!—a dealer in stockings and comforters! I doot that wad be considered rather degradin to the order—degradin to the order, Peggy."

"And what for suld it, Davy?" replied his ambitious spouse. "What for no mak you a knicht as weel as blin' Tammy Craig, the haberdasher, wha was Provost o' Starvieston in the year o' God saxteen thretty-aught, or doited Archy Manderston, the cheesemonger, wha was provost in forty-twa? I'm sure such a pair as thae war to mak knichts o' never was seen—and yet knichts they war made. Gude save the mark!"

"Ay, but, guidwife, they did something for the honour—did something for the honour. Mind that—mind that, guidwife."

"Did something for the honour!" repeated Mrs Clapperton, in a tone of the utmost contempt. "What did they do, but gang up to Lunnun, as I said before, wi' a screed o' loyalty in their pouches? Deil a thing else either o' them ever did that was worth a sheep's trotter."

"But even that, guidwife, even that," replied the Provost, who seemed to state objections merely to have them obviated, "I hae nae opportunity o' doin. There's nae ca' 'enow for addresses to the throne—nae ca' 'enow—nae ca' 'enow."

"Nae ca'!" repeated Mrs Clapperton—"I just think there never was a better—the King's restoration. Get ye up, Davy, an' ye tak my advice, a palaver about the joy an' satisfaction o' the magistrates an' inhabitants at large o' Starvieston, at the restoration o' his most gracious Majesty to the throne, an' get ye the carryin o't up to Lunnun—an' the thing's dune. Ye'll come doon a knicht as sure's your name's Davy Clapperton."

"No a bad notion, guidwife," said the Provost—"no a bad notion. I wadna care to try't, after a'; for it wad be a decent, respectable thing—a decent, respectable thing. But me a knicht! It wad be queer—it wad be queer!" And the worthy magistrate chuckled at the idea of his transformation into a character so dignified.

We do not suppose it necessary to prolong this discourse, to shew the connection between it and Provost Clapperton's proposition in council, of a congratulatory address to the King. This, we presume, will appear sufficiently evident from what we have already given; and it will appear still more evident, when we mention that the proposition in question was made the very day after the colloquy just quoted took place.

The address proposed by the Provost was accordingly drawn up. It was written by Archy Morton, the town clerk, who was reckoned, in Bailie Snodgrass' phrase,

"just an extraordinary fist at the pen; his quill gaun soopin ower the paper, like a scythe through clover, an' the words comin doon as fast an' thick as groats oot o' a mill." Such, then, was the redoubted penman who drew up the address in question, and which ran as follows. (We give it as a curious specimen of the style then in use in such matters.) After a preliminary flourish of titles, that would of themselves occupy half of one of our columns, this precious document proceeded: "We, the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council of Starvieston, on our own parts, and on that of the loyal inhabitants of this burgh, with great contentment and joy of the heart, beg to kneel at the footstool of your most dread Majesty, to impart to your Highness the unspeakable delectation with which your Majesty's happy restoration to the throne of these realms has filled us, and for which we would gladly testify, by what means we can, our thankfulness and joy. That your Majesty, who is to us as a crown of rejoicing, as the breath of our nostrils, may long reign over us, we humbly pray, and that it continue till it be brought to a full and blessed conclusion; being willing, on our part, to contribute what lieth in our power, by our earnest care and best endeavours," &c. &c.

Such, then, was the address penned by Archy Morton, town-clerk of Starvieston, on which rested Provost Clapperton's hope of knighthood. The document being prepared and ready, the next question with the council was, how it was to be conveyed to his Majesty; and on this subject there was some pretty smart debate in the council-room—some proposing one way, and some another; but it having been soon discovered, from certain hints which he threw out, that the Provost had an eye to the job, it was at once conceded to him, and a day forthwith fixed for his departure on his loyal mission to St James'.

On the Provost's returning home from the meeting which had decided that he was to be the bearer of the congratulatory address—"Weel, guidwife—weel, guidwife," he said, "it's a' settled noo, an' I'm aff to Lunnun the day after the morn. But, to tell ye a truth, I'm no very clear o' the job, after a'—no very clear o' the job, after a'—noo that it's come to a point; for I'm no just sae weel acquaint wi' your court tricks an' fashions, an' I may mak a fule o' mysel—I may mak a fule o' mysel. I'm tell't there's an unco paveein, an' serapin, an' booin about thae sort o' places—an unco paveein, an' serapin, an' booin. Noo, I never had ony mair practice in that way, in my life, than just giein a bit nod to a customer frae behind the counter—just a bit nod frae behind the counter."

"Tuts, man," replied Mrs Clapperton, "thae's but sma matters to concern ye. Ye'll do as weel's the laye, nae doot. Just do as ye see ithers doin, an' ye canna gang far wrang. But ye micht practeese a wee before ye gaed. Let me see ye mak a boo, Davy. I mind hoo the laddies used to do't at Mr Langleg's dancin schule, whan I was a gilpie o' saxteen; an' I'll tell ye if ye be richt."

Approving of his wife's suggestion, the worthy magistrate forthwith perpetrated a "boo," or at least what was intended for one although there was very little trace of such a thing in the strange uncouth motion he made.

"Very weel, Davy—very weel, my man," said his wife, marking, with amiable and laudable satisfaction, her husband's efforts to "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art." "But could ye no bend yersel a wee thing mair, think ye? Ye hae dune't a wee ower stiffly."

"I'll try't, Peggy—I'll try't—I'll try't," replied the anxious and willing pupil—and he essayed another obeisance; but, as his bodily condition forbade more than the very slightest possible departure from the perpendicular, we cannot say that he was much more successful in accomplishing the inclination desired by his wife, than in the first instance, although he certainly made the attempt, as was sufficiently obvious from the sudden and excessive

redness that overspread his countenance. The Provost's performances, on the whole, however, were pronounced very passable, by his judge; and, with a recommendation to him, to be "booin" whenever opportunity occurred, the worthy pair proceeded to other matters connected with the Provost's impending journey.

"Noo, ye maun gang like yersel, Davy," said Mrs Clapperton, thus opening the new department of the discussion. "Ye maun gang respectable—decent and respectable in everything, as becomes yer means, and yer station, and yer expectations. Ye maun tak John Yuill, to ride behint ye wi' yer saddle-bags and yer ither spare gear; and ye maun get a pair o' new boots and spurs, and a cocked hat, and an embroidered waistcoat, and a' ither things apperteenin' thereto."

"Ou, surely, surely, guidwife—surely," replied the Provost. "We maun mak a decent appearance before Majesty—a decent appearance, for the credit o' the burgh—for the credit o' the burgh. Sae, see ye, guidwife, to be gettin' a' things ready—a' things ready; and busk oot John Yuill as weel as ye can, and see and mak him look something Christian like, although I doot that'll waur ye, guidwife—that'll waur ye."

And, in good truth, well might the Provost say, or imply rather, perhaps, that to impart to John Yuill the exterior of a civilised being was a matter beyond the reach of his wife's ingenuity; for such another coarse, uncultivated specimen of the human race as Johnny Yuill, could not readily be found even by the most assiduous inquirer after such living curiosities.

Johnny was a dependent of the Provost's, and was usually spoken of as the "Provost's man." His duties in this capacity were various: sometimes acting as porter in the shop; sometimes taking a day of the plough, or doing other farm work on a small property of the Provost's; sometimes walking in procession before his Lordship, as a halberdier, in the fringed and party-coloured coat, flaming red waistcoat, and cocked hat, which was the livery of the town of Starvieston—an appointment this into which he had been introduced through the Provost's influence. In person, Johnny was tall and gaunt—the direct antipodes of his master—broad-shouldered and stalwarth, and of great bodily power; but without a corresponding energy or activity. Uncouth and ungainly in appearance, rough and blunt in speech, forward through ignorance, without one single idea beyond those suggested by his immediate duties, and wholly illiterate and uninformed, Johnny Yuill will be allowed to have been, altogether, a most fit and desirable companion on a journey of some four or five hundred miles. But, in the present case, the association was not altogether so discordant as might be imagined; since, neither in intellectual capacity nor in acquired knowledge, was the difference between master and man by any means so very great as to unfit them altogether for each other's society. On the contrary, they were like to put up remarkably well with each other on their journey. The more so, that, notwithstanding the difference of their positions, and the mighty distance between the several grades to which they belonged, they had always been so perfectly familiar in their intercourse that, had not a distinction of dress pointed it out, it would have been impossible for a stranger to tell which was the master and which the man. The Provost spoke to Johnny in all respects as if he had been his equal, and Johnny spoke to the Provost with precisely the same utter disregard of all distinctions of rank; and this friendly familiarity, it was not doubted, would distinguish all their intercourse during their travels and absence from home.

All proposed and necessary preparations having been made for her husband's departure, by the active, stirring, indefatigable Mrs Clapperton, the morning fixed on for the latter event found Johnny Yuill standing at the Provost's

door, at an early hour, holding two saddled horses by the bridle. The one was for the Provost; the other, loaded with an enormous and well-stuffed pair of saddle-bags, was for Johnny himself. In a few minutes after, out came the Provost, with a huge cocked hat on his head, a pair of boots that came half-way up his thigh, on his legs, a silver-mounted whip in his hand, a sword by his side, and, around all, including his own respected person, an ample brown cloak of French cloth. The Provost mounted; and his example being immediately followed by his man, the two started, cheek by jowl—for neither of them had any idea of marking their respective ranks by distance—at a gentle jog-trot pace, on their journey to the metropolis; and a more odd-looking or more original pair certainly never went in quest of knighthood.

On clearing the town, and getting a little familiarized with their seats, neither of them being very splendid equestrians, Johnny opened a conversation, to which the meek temperaments of their steeds—both heavy, dull, ungainly, hairy-heeled brutes—offered every facility.

"Weel, this is a graun business we're gaun upon, Provost," quoth Johnny. "Wha'll haud their heads higher than us whan we come doon? My faith! we'll keep the cantle o' the causey then, I think, Provost."

"We aye did that, Johnny, man—we aye did that; we war aye able to do that—aye able to do that," replied the chief magistrate of Starvieston, chuckling good-humouredly.

"Ay, but there'll be a differ then. Whan ye come doon, ye'll come doon a gentleman; and ye're 'enow but a hosier, Provost though ye be. But, I say, Provost," continued Johnny, "can ye tell me hoo the King manages to mak gentlemen oot o' plain folk like you and me? Hoo's the thing done, I wad like to ken? It strikes me that he wad need to put them through a mill, and bake them up again. I'm sure it wad bother him to mak a gentleman o' me, if he should tak it in his head to try't; and there's nae sayin' what he may do whan he sees me along wi' ye."

With such conversation they beguiled the way. On reaching the city, our original pair of travellers repaired to the Lion and Unicorn, at that time one of the most respectable inns in London, and to which the Provost had been recommended by the town-clerk of Starvieston, who had put up there on some occasion of his visiting the metropolis, and who always spoke in raptures of the bacon and beans he used to have there for dinner—this being one of the dishes for which the house was most celebrated, and a great favourite with the town-clerk, who had some tolerably correct notions on the subject of good living. On arriving at the Lion and Unicorn, the Provost and his man were shewn into a parlour—the same parlour; for, as they seemed to make no distinction of rank themselves between each other, none was made between them by others.

"Lassie," said the Provost, addressing the girl who had ushered them into the apartment above alluded to, and just as she was about to retire, after having performed this duty, "hae ye such a thing in the hoose as Lunnun porter?"

The girl looked with some surprise in the worthy magistrate's face, to ascertain whether he was in jest or earnest, in making an inquiry to which he ought to have been so certain of an affirmative; and, perceiving that he was to all appearance in the latter, as, indeed, he really was, having put the question oblivious of his being in London—

"Why, to be sure, sir," she said, "we have. It would be a very odd thing, indeed, if we hadn't."

"Aweel, maybe, lassie," replied the Provost. "Bring us a bottle, then."

"Bring twa," here interrupted Johnny Yuill, in a loud voice; "for I'm dooms dry, and 'll sen' owre a bottle to my ain share at a waucht, and I'm sure ye'll manage the ither yersel, Provost; and, if ye canna, I'll help ye wi' that too."

"Weel, weel, since Johnny's sae dry, bring twa bottles, lassie—bring twa bottles," said the Provost.

"We don't bottle our po'ter, sir," replied the girl.

"No!—what then do ye wi't?—what then do ye wi't?" inquired the Provost, a little puzzled.

"All draught, sir," said the girl. "All in draught."

"Draught? draught? What's that? what's that, lassie?" said the Provost, still more perplexed.

"In the cask, sir," replied the girl.

"Ou, ay, ou, ay," rejoined the Provost, now somewhat more enlightened on the subject. "Aweel, aweel; in Gude's name, bring it ony way ye like, lassie—ony way ye like; but bring't fast, for I'm as dry's a whustle. I'm just gaizenin."

A mutual understanding having been come to on this important matter, the desiderated beverage was produced, and, in due time, discussed, when the Provost bethought him of ordering some supper for himself and his man—they still continuing, and intending to occupy the same premises—and for this purpose rang the bell. It was answered by the same girl who had conducted the porter discussion. On her appearance—

"We want a bit chack o' supper, my dear—a bit chack o' supper, a bit chack o' supper," said the Provost.

The girl appeared at a loss. She had made out supper distinctly enough; but "bit chack o'" puzzled her sadly; and, thinking it expressed some distinguishing quality of the supper wanted, she aimed at getting a translation, by saying—

"Chacko, sir? chacko? I don't know what that means. We have nothing of that kind in the house, sir; but we have great variety of other excellent dishes. We have roast lamb, veal pie, roast beef, roast mutton, roast fowls, and salmon; but no chacko, sir."

"Tuts, tuts, lassie!—tuts, tuts!" said the Provost, laughing, and now seeing how the land lay. "I see ye dinna understand oor Scotch way o' speakin. We want, in plain English, just a bit supper, just a bit supper."

"Oh!" replied the girl, blushing and smiling at once, "just so, sir. Well, what should you like to have, sir?"

"Ou, just a bit salmon—just a bit salmon, my dear—oor any bit thing o' that kind," replied the Provost.

The girl made a slight courtesy, and retired; but, in a minute afterwards, returned, and said—

"My master, sir, has desired me to say, that, as you are from Scotland, you are not, perhaps, aware of the price of salmon in London, and may be under a mistake about it."

"And what is the price o' salmon in Lunnun, my dear? What is the price o't?—what is the price o't?" said the Provost.

"Three guineas a-pound, sir," replied the girl.

Both the Provost and his man held up their hands in mute astonishment at the astounding enormity of the price. At length—

"Three guineas the pun'!" came the Provost out with, when he got breath to express himself.

"Three guineas the pun'!" repeated Johnny Yuill, in the same tone of overwhelming surprise. "God preserve us! was the like o' that ever heard tell o'? Saumont three guineas the pun'! That's nearly wecht for wecht. Goad against fish. It's awfu. Lassie, when we left Starvieston, saumont was just a groat the pun' o' twenty-twa unces—just a groat the pun'; and ye nicht hae got ten cart-load o't at that. I wish to guidness I had brocht twa or three o' them slung at my back. I could hae dune't fine."

Here the Provost interfered, saying that, since salmon was out of the question at that price, they would "just tak a bit caul juck." The girl gave the old look of non-comprehension at the mysterious word "juck." Johnny saw her difficulty, knew its cause, and hastened to explain.

"It's a cauld duke the Provost means, lassie—a cauld

duke; but, an' ye haena that, the breast o' a bubbly-jock, or ony ither fule, 'ill do just as weel."

We need not say that Johnny Yuill's attempt to explain made matters not a whit better, nor that the proffered alternatives with which he followed it up were just as unintelligible as anything that had preceded them. It was, in truth, the longer the worse, the further in the deeper; and the girl, finding it so, resigned all hope of making anything of the orders of the travellers, and ran down stairs for her master. The landlord of the Lion and Unicorn immediately appeared, and, being more accustomed to the lingo of North Britain than his maid, at once made out what was wanted, and gave his guests every satisfaction in the matter of supplying their wants. Both the Provost, however, and his man, had made a discovery. This was, that the language current at Starvieston was not so in London—and the fact a good deal surprised them, and a good deal lessened their opinion of the English nation, and of the people of the metropolis in particular.

On the following morning, the Provost prepared to commence the serious business of his visit to the capital; but here was a great difficulty at the outset. He did not know very well where to begin, or how to set about it. He had started with very vague and indefinite notions on this subject; and it was only now that he discovered that he ought to have had his course, after he should have arrived in London, more clearly defined, and the process by which he was to obtain access to the King more distinctly ascertained. Something, indeed, had been suggested to the council about his calling on the Earl of Linlithgow; but, as the suggestion had been made in a desultory way in the course of conversation, nothing definite had been said on the subject. The matter was altogether a strange oversight; but so it was.

On the Earl of Linlithgow, however, the Provost had determined to call; he resolved on making it his first step. They found the Earl from home—a great disappointment; but they resolved instantly upon going to the King direct. Their direction, now, was St James'; and, having inquired their way, they very shortly found themselves at the principal entrance into that ancient abode of royalty, and were about to pass through the gate, without any ceremony, when their progress was suddenly arrested by a sentinel, who, placing his carbine across the Provost's breast, demanded their business.

"Private business wi' the King—private business wi' the King. I'm Provost o' Starvieston—I'm Provost o' Starvieston," said that worthy personage.

"I wadna redd ye to interrupt us, lad," added Johnny; "we're on business o' importance frae the town o' Starvieston, an' he's its chief magistrate"—pointing to the Provost; "so it'll be at yer peril if ye refuse us admittance."

The soldier, rather respectfully impressed with the big words employed by Johnny—"business of importance—town's business—chief magistrate," &c.—after some hesitation allowed them to pass into the quadrangle of the palace into which the gate they had entered opened. This was so far good, but it was not much after all; for they did not now know what hand to turn to. They were surrounded with doors and windows, and were greatly at a loss which of the former they should take; and in this difficulty they continued for fully half an hour, sauntering about, and staring up from time to time at the windows of the quadrangle, when a sudden stir began to manifest itself about a certain broad staircase that opened on the side opposite the outer entrance; military guards, and other persons, strangely but gorgeously attired, took up formal positions at the foot of the said staircase, and it became crowded with powdered lackeys, in splendid liveries, running up and down, with looks full of bustle and importance. In a short while thereafter, carriages, and other conveyances of various kinds,

filled with ladies and gentlemen, superbly dressed, began to arrive in great numbers, and in rapid succession. These, as they arrived, drew up at the foot of the staircase alluded to, which the persons by whom they were occupied immediately ascended, on being set down. It was evident to both the Provost and Johnny Yuill, that there was something going on here of no ordinary character, and they were very curious to know what it could be; but, seeing nobody at whom they could make the inquiry, they were obliged to be content, for some time, merely to look on and wonder.

At length, Johnny espied a person at some little distance, whose appearance, altogether, indicated his being a menial, and of such rank as he might take the liberty of speaking to. Under these impressions, Johnny made up to him; having previously apprized his master of his intentions, and desired him to remain where he was till he returned.

"What's a' this collyshangy aboot, friend?" he said to the person whom he had proposed to make his informant. The man did not understand the very elegant and classical word which Johnny had employed; but he understood, generally, the purport of the inquiry, and replied, that it was a levee.

"A levee?" said Johnny. "What's that?"

The man looked unutterable things at Johnny's ignorance, but had the civility to explain that it was the King seeing company.

"And is the King up there?" said Johnny, pointing to the great staircase.

"To be sure, he is," was the reply. This was enough for Johnny. He and his master were now all right; for he knew where they ought to go; and it was with a glad face that he returned to the former, to tell him of the happy discovery he had made.

"I've fand out whar he's noo, Provost!" said Johnny, smiling, as he approached the latter. "He's up there!" pointing to the stair; "an' we couldna hae come in a better time, for he's seem company at any rate, so that we'll no put him to ony inconvenience."

"That's fine—that's fine, Johnny!" replied the Provost, not less pleased than his man with their unexpected good luck. "Then, we'll just go up wi' the lave—just go up wi' the lave, Johnny;" and, saying this, they proceeded towards the great staircase, and were about to enter it with perfect confidence and deliberation, when their progress was again suddenly arrested, but in this instance by half a dozen in place of one. Both the Provost and his man spoke at once, on the occasion of this interruption, and endeavoured to gain admittance by the same statements they had made before; but it would not do. Their obstructors would by no means allow them to proceed. The Provost, manfully seconded by Johnny, insisted on getting in. The guards insisted they should not. Johnny's choler was excited.

"What!" he said, "wad ye refuse admittance to the Provost o' Starvieston, the chief magistrate o' ane o' the maist ancientest bruchs in Scotland? My faith, ye're no blate! But we'll go in spite o' them," continued Johnny, and was shoving the Provost before him. This was a violence not to be endured—and it was not. It was met by equally strong measures. Both the Provost and Johnny were instantly collared. Johnny began to strike, the Provost to kick—for he felt highly offended, too, at this treatment, and forgot his dignity in his irritation. But their opponents could strike, and kick also, and they did so. These were again returned in kind, by Johnny and his master, until the whole affair waxed into a regular hubbub, which was enlivened by Johnny's calling out, every now and then, in the midst of the struggle—"Stick up to them, Provost!—stick up to them—dinna let Starvieston be beat yet!—that's it, Provost—that's it! Gie them't i' the pit o' the stamak." Johnny, in this particular, alluded to the weapons his master was using in the combat, which were

his feet and little short legs, which he was plying with great vigour and activity. The odds, however, were so greatly against the strangers, that it was impossible the struggle could be of long continuance. Neither was it. Both the Provost and Johnny were flogged in a twinkling, and there held down, each by four or five persons, incapable of farther resistance. It was at this moment—that is, while the chief magistrate of Starvieston was lying on the breadth of his back, with his clothes and linens grievously torn and soiled, and half a dozen of his enemies upon him—that a person pressed into the crowd by which he was surrounded, and asked what was the matter.

"It's two fellows, my Lord, who would force their way up stairs, whether we would or not," replied one of the guards.

"Who are they?" said the noble inquirer.

"We don't know, my Lord; but from the tongue we take them to be from Scotland."

"Ah! from Scotland!" said the titled stranger, with increased interest; and he now stretched over the crowd to obtain a view of the prostrate personage whom they surrounded. This proceeding procured him a peep of the degraded Provost's countenance, which, on obtaining—"I should know that face," he muttered; "I have surely seen it before. Stand about, and let me have a closer view of the man, and allow him, in the meantime, to rise to his feet." Both these orders were obeyed, and the Provost instantly regained his perpendicular. On his doing so—

"Have you ever seen me before, think you, friend?" said the Provost's emancipator. "I think I have seen you somewhere."

The Provost looked earnestly at the inquirer for a second or two, and said, although with some hesitation, "Indeed I'm no sure, sir—I'm no sure, but I think ye hae some resemblance, if my recollection serves me anything faithfully, to the Earl o' Linlithgow."

"Right, friend—right," replied the Earl—for it was, indeed, he; "I'm the Earl o' Linlithgow."

"An' I'm the Provost o' Starvieston, Davy Clapperton," shouted the delighted magistrate, and, at the same time, seizing joyfully the readily-yielded hand of his noble friend. "Faith, my Lord, but ye hae come in fine time to save me an' Johnny frae a hecklin'."

"Provost, I am glad to see you—very glad to see you, indeed," replied the Earl, shaking him cordially by the hand; "but what on earth has brought you into this predicament? These are strange circumstances to meet the first magistrate of Starvieston in."

"Faith, ye may say that, my Lord—ye may say that, but it's odd what queer scrapes folk'll get into that's awa frae hame," replied the Provost.

"So it would appear," said the Earl; "but come along, Provost, and tell me all about it." And he took the Provost's arm, and would have led him out of the crowd, but the latter quietly resisted, saying—"My Lord, my Lord, ye maun relieve Johnny first—ye maun relieve puir Johnny—puir Johnny, wha's still in the hands o' the Philistines?"

"Who's Johnny, Provost?" said the Earl, in some surprise.

"Ou, ye'll no ken Johnny, my Lord, I dare say—ye'll no ken him. He's my man, my Lord—my man."

"And where is he?" inquired the Earl.

"They hae him doon among them there," pointing to the group among whom Johnny was entombed, "on the broad o' his back, I daresay—on the broad o' his back, as they had me."

The Earl, now understanding what his worthy friend would be at, immediately proceeded to the rescue of Johnny, and, having effected this service, rejoined the Provost, when the whole three adjourned to a retired part of the quadrangle, when the Provost fully informed the Earl of all circumstances connected with his visit to the metropolis.

When he had concluded, the Earl at once undertook to render him every service in his power, towards enabling him to discharge the duties on which he came.

"I will procure you the presentation you desire, Provost," said the Earl; "but you must appear in a court dress. You could not be admitted to the presence of the Sovereign in your present attire, even although the guards at the bottom of the staircase had passed you, which, however, they neither could nor dare do. It would be out of all rule. A court dress you must have."

"A court dress, my Lord?—a court dress—a court dress? What's that?" inquired the Provost.

"My tailor will explain to you, Provost, if you will do him the honour to consult him," replied the Earl, smiling. "But I will manage all that for you, too, Provost, if you will do me the favour to call at my house, to-morrow forenoon. In the meantime, I must leave you, to attend the levee." And, having said this, and again shaken the Provost by the hand, with a repetition of his injunctions that he should call upon him in the forenoon of the following day, the Earl walked away; but had not proceeded far, when he was pursued and overtaken by the Provost and his man together.

"My Lord, my Lord, beg yer pardon," said the former, tapping the Earl on the shoulder, to draw his attention, and who immediately turned round; "but I forgot. Wadna I require to get a court dress for Johnny too?"

"Has Johnny an address to deliver too?" said the Earl, smiling.

"Ou no, no, no; but ye see he wad like to stick by me, puir fallow, during the hail business," replied the Provost; "an', as ye say naebody can get in but in a court dress, I had best get a shute for him too."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Provost," said the Earl, laughing: "no dress for Johnny." And, without explaining himself farther, proceeded on his way.

"Nac dress for Johnny!" repeated that person indignantly, on the departure of the Earl; "an' what for no, I wad like to ken, as lang as ye're able an' willin' to pay for't, Provost?"

"Richt there, Johnny—richt there," said the Provost; "but we needna camstairy the Yearl ony way aboot it, Johnny. We'll just get a shute made for ye quately, without saying onything about it to onybody but the tailor."

Next day, they called on the Earl, and got the necessary instructions, and, at same time, the Earl's tailor came by his orders, and took the Provost's measure. On the following night, the tailor, with the Provost's dress, appeared at the Lion and Unicorn, and, having been introduced to his customer, requested that he would do him the favour to try it on, that he might see if there was anything amiss. Saying this, he turned out of a bag all the paraphernalia of court attire, and, in a few minutes after, the worthy Provost was arrayed, or rather disguised in such a way as hardly to know himself, and in such a way as greatly to amaze, and puzzle, and bewilder his ancient friend Johnny, who stared at him with open mouth and in silent astonishment. At length—

"God preserve us, Provost, but this is grand wark!" he said, as he gazed on the short, satin Spanish cloak in which his master was arrayed, the slashed pantaloons, silk hose, with large roses at the knee, waistcoat embroidered with gold, beaver and feathers, and, last, though not least, long glittering small sword which depended from his side; the tailor furnishing this indispensable article also. "This is grand wark," he said. "My faith, we're gettin up the brae finely. What wad the folk o' Starvieston say if they saw their Provost noo, I wonder? My word, but they wad be proud o' him, and nicht match him against the Provost o' ony burgh in Christendom, let alone Scotland."

"Tuts, tuts, Johnny, man," said the Provost, smiling complacently, but affecting some displeasure at this freedom

in the presence of the tailor. "Ye're a foolish man—a foolish man, and speak a heap o' nonsense—a heap o' nonsense."

"But I say, friend," he said, now addressing the architect of his present outward structure, "could ye mak a shute, the same as this, for this man here?"

"Oh, to be sure, sir, for anybody," replied the man of broad cloths and buckram.

"Aweel, I wus ye wad just mak him a shute, then, and I'll pay them baith thegither."

The man looked a good deal surprised.

"Do you mean precisely the same in all respects as your own, sir?"

"Surely," interposed Johnny, rather angrily—"and what for no?"

"Oh, no reason at all, sir—only, only, I like to have my orders particular, that there may be no mistake—that's all, sir."

(Pretty dexterously turned off, Mr Tailor.)

"Quite richt, quite richt," interferred the Provost—"quite richt. Weel, then, just measure Johnny for a shute."

The tailor did so; and, while he did it, it occurred to him that he had never measured so uncouth a figure for such a dress before.

To avoid a great deal of uninteresting detail, we will now carry the reader forward at once to the presentation day. On that day the quadrangle and staircase at St James' formerly spoken of, exhibited precisely the same scene as that already described. But let us enter this staircase, and let us lean over the balustrade on the first landing-place, and mark those that ascend. The very first pair attracts our attention in a most particular manner. They are, indeed, a singularly strange-looking couple. The one is a short, little, fat man; the other, a tall, gaunt figure, who seems to walk in these fine clothes as if he was gyved, and appears either afraid or unable to move his joints. He is evidently grievously oppressed with his own finery. Who can they be? Why, we dare say you have a guess, good reader. They are no other than the Provost of Starvieston, and his man, Johnny Yuill. Their dress alone had carried them unchallenged past the guard at the foot of the stair. Let us observe, however, that, in bringing Johnny in this guise along with him, it was not the Provost's intention openly to contemn the Earl of Linlithgow's objective remarks on that subject; nor was it his intention to drag him conspicuously forward. What was aimed at by both was, that he should be slipped, smuggled in, and thus obtain a peep of all that passed, without attracting notice. This was the plot between the two, and they hoped to get through with it successfully.

On the Provost and his man reaching the first landing-place, on which opened the entrance into the suite of apartments that led to the audience chamber, there was a considerable crowd pressing for admission; so great as to distract the attention of the ushers, and thus to enable several to pass without question, who had no motive for desiring the privilege, and who did not desire it. Pushing into this crowd, the Provost was quickly carried into the apartment; but, on looking round, missed Johnny. He was still on the outside, either afraid or unable to come further. Seeing this, the Provost went as near the door again as he could, and gave him a wag of his finger, accompanied by a nod of encouragement, exclaiming, at the same time, but under breath—

"Johnny, Johnny. Come forrit, man—come forrit."

Thus encouraged, Johnny edged more resolutely into the crowd by which the door was still thronged, and finally succeeded in getting fairly into the first apartment beside his master. A similar occurrence of similarly favourable circumstances carried them into the next apartment, and finally into the audience chamber, crowded with peers and

pecesses, and ladies and gentlemen of various ranks and degrees. Here the Provost and Johnny began to walk up and down, and to occupy themselves in gazing at the various splendours, animate and inanimate, with which they were surrounded. We need not say that the scene was new to them, nor that it excited in both the utmost amazement and admiration. It had been previously arranged between the Provost and the Earl, that the latter should seek out the former in the audience chamber when the proper time came for his introduction, and that he should then present him to the notice of the King. The Provost, then, had nothing now to do but to await this call, on the taking place of which it was again understood between him and his man, that the latter should slip away amongst the crowd, to avoid the notice of the Earl.

Leaving our two worthies thus employed, then—that is, in walking about and staring around them—we shall direct our attention, for a moment, to some other proceedings of interest which took place in the audience chamber about this time. In about half-an-hour after the Provost and Johnny had entered the apartment just named, a buzz suddenly arose that the King was coming; and, in the next instant, the folding doors on the right of the throne flew open, and a flourish of trumpets heralded the advent of the monarch, who immediately ascended the steps that led to it, and placed himself in the regal chair. Having seated himself, he glanced in silence for a moment around the glittering assemblage, when his eye was observed suddenly to become fixed in one particular direction. In this direction he gazed intently for a second or two, a smile mantling on his lips; then, turning round to the Earl of Linlithgow, who was at his right hand—

“In heaven’s name, my Lord, who are these two persons close by the door at the further end of the apartment? They are the oddest-looking pair I ever saw in my life,” he said, in a whisper, and struggling to suppress a laugh which was threatening to make itself most indecorously manifest. The Earl looked in the direction indicated, and recognised in the figure of one of the persons alluded to by the King, his friend, the Provost of Starvieston. The other he could not make out. Having made these observations, he, in a low voice, communicated the result to Charles.

“One of these persons, your Majesty,” said the Earl, smiling, and speaking with ironical pleasantry, “is the worthy Provost of your Majesty’s very loyal burgh of Starvieston, regarding whom I spoke to your Majesty, and who, your Majesty will recollect, is this day to have the honour of presenting a congratulatory address from the good town of which he is chief magistrate, and for which he expects the honour of knighthood at your Majesty’s royal hands.”

“Oh, so! I recollect,” replied the King. “But which of the two is he, pray, my Lord?—the tall, or the short man?”

“The short man, please your Majesty. Who the tall man is, I don’t know.”

“Why, they are both odd-enough looking figures,” replied the King; “but the tall fellow is the greater oddity of the two. I never saw such a figure in my life.” And again Charles struggled to suppress the laugh which was racking him within. “Who, in heaven’s name, can he be? ‘Od’sfish, my Lord, you must make me out who he is. I shall die of curiosity till I know. The foolish, dismal gravity of that man’s face is beyond all endurance.”

“If your Majesty can only contrive to live for five minutes, your curiosity shall be gratified,” replied the Earl; “for I see my friend, the Provost, appears to be intimately acquainted with him, and he’ll tell me all about him, I dare say.”

Having said this, the Earl stepped down from the elevated position he was in beside the throne, and proceeded to thread his way towards the Provost and his companion, the

object of the King’s curiosity. Both of these worthies having had their eyes on the Earl from the moment of his entering the audience chamber with the King, marked his movements, and took their measures accordingly.

“He’s comin noo—he’s comin noo, Johnny,” said the Provost, on seeing the Earl making towards him. “Cut oot o’ the way as fast’s ye can, and I’ll meet ye at the stair fit whan a’s owre.”

Obedient to the hint of his master, Johnny slunk away amongst the crowd, and both believed that no danger from discovery need to be apprehended, as the warning of the latter to get out of the way had been sufficiently timely. On the Earl’s approach—

“Hoo are ye, my Lord?—hoo are ye, my Lord?” said the Provost, smirking and scraping the floor with his right foot. “Ye’re very attentive—very attentive, I’m sure; and I’m a’ ready for ye—a’ ready for ye, my Lord.”

“Byand by, Provost—by and by,” replied the Earl. “The proper moment for your presentation has not yet arrived. When it has, I will be with you. In the meantime, Provost, I have come merely to inquire who the tall gentleman is with whom you were speaking a few moments ago?”

“Me, me, my Lord! Wha, wha?” said the Provost, in great confusion. “What tall gentleman, my Lord?—what tall gentleman?”

“Why, the tall gentleman, Provost, who was speaking with you an instant ago,” replied the Earl, in considerable surprise at the Provost’s too evident embarrassment.

“Ou, ay—ou ay—the lang man, my Lord—the lang man; just an acquaintance—just an acquaintance; that’s a—that’s a.”

“Well, that’s enough, Provost,” replied the Earl, somewhat impatiently—“that’s enough to enable you to tell me who and what he is. The truth is, Provost, the King desires to know.”

This was what the Provost himself would call “waur and mair o’t.” If his embarrassment and uneasiness were great at the idea of Johnny’s intrusion becoming known to the Earl, they were infinitely more so at the prospect of that enormity’s reaching the ear of the King—this being a result which he had never for an instant contemplated; and the consequence of its probability at this moment was to suggest to him certain vague, but sufficiently unpleasant ideas of heading, hanging, or imprisonment for life—the least, he believed, he might now expect. Under these awkward impressions, and with a countenance and manner which very faithfully represented them, the Provost laid his hand on the Earl’s arm with a deprecatory motion, and said—

“Weel, my Lord—weel, my Lord, I’ll just tell ye the truth—I’ll just tell ye the truth; but, as ye hae ony regard for me, dinna tell his Majesty o’t—it might lead me into muckle mischief. The man ye speak o’ is nae ither than my man Johnny Yuill.”

“Your man, Provost!—your serving man!” replied the Earl, with the slow, distinct enunciation of overwhelming surprise. “Impossible, Provost!—impossible!”

“Na, faith, my Lord; it’s true—it’s owre true; it’s just Johnny, I assure ye.”

“Why, he’s dressed like a lord,” said the Earl, who had now again got sight of, and was looking hard at the unconscious culprit, as he was talking about the room, and staring gravely about him, much as if he was going through a fair.

“Ou ay, ou ay,” replied the Provost; “he’s gayan weel put on, my Lord—just the same as mysel, my Lord—just the same as mysel.”

“So I see,” said the Earl, smiling. “But pray, Provost, what is the meaning of this strange affair? What is the purpose of it? And how did you get him past the guards and ushers? I thought you might not have passed yourself, Provost, without sending for me, as I told you to do, on your being stopped.”

The Provost answered all these queries, including another as to where and how Johnny had come by his fit-out, by detailing the whole circumstances of the case as already before the reader, concluding the whole by another most urgent and earnest entreaty, that the Earl would say nothing of the affair to "his most gracious Majesty." To this entreaty, however, the Provost could obtain only an evasive and smiling reply. The joke was too good a one, the Earl felt, to be concealed from the "merry monarch" whom it so much concerned, and he, therefore, determined that he should have it in full and unimpaired perfection. Leaving the Provost, therefore, in great trepidation, because he had declined, or rather evaded, promising positively that he would not inform the King of what had just been told him, the Earl returned to his Majesty, when the latter, inclining towards him said, in a whisper—

"Well, my Lord, have you made him out? Who on earth is he?"

"Why, your Majesty, he is a person of very high degree, I assure you. And I rather wonder that your Majesty, who is so quick-sighted in these matters, did not discover this in his bearing."

"A joke, a joke," exclaimed the King, laughing. "Come now, my Lord, tell me the whole truth of the matter."

Thus conjured, the Earl of Linlithgow informed the delighted monarch of Johnny's real standing in society, and of all the circumstances connected with his appearance in the presence chamber.

"Od'sfish, what a couple of originals!" said Charles, now giving full swing to the mirth which the information he had just received had excited. "Secure them, my Lord—secure them both. We must have a private audience of them after the presentations are over. I would not miss it for a thousand pounds."

Having said this, the King addressed himself to the business before him, and the Earl of Linlithgow hastened to rejoin the Provost, to prevent him suggesting the escape of Johnny, which he thought very probable, or to prevent its execution if already suggested. Nothing of the kind, however, had taken place, or even appeared to be contemplated, when the Earl rejoined the chief magistrate of Starvieston; but Johnny had, in the interim, been made aware by the latter of the discovery that had taken place regarding his, the said Johnny's identity; and it was, therefore, with a face ten times more grave and dismal than before, that he stood beside his master, whose face was scarcely less serious than his own, awaiting the advance of the Earl, whom both saw now approaching them with, as they were more than half inclined to believe, their death-warrants in his pocket. The Earl, however, had nothing of the kind; but, on the contrary, a polite invitation from the King to favour him with a private audience when the levee should have broken up.

"Me too!" said Johnny, in much surprise, and still greater trepidation, on finding himself included in the same invitation. "Did he say me too? What can he want wi' me?"

Then turning to his master—

"It's a' owre wi' us, Provost—it's a' owre wi' us. I see hoo it is. We're gann to be baith packed off to the Tower, and 'll never be heard tell o' again."

"Tuts, you fool!" interposed the Earl, laughing; "the King has no such intentions towards you. He means to treat you kindly. Why, man, I wouldn't be surprised if he made a Knight of you too."

"The Lord forbid!" exclaimed Johnny, with great gravity and solemnity; "that wad be an awfu' misfortune."

"Well, well, we shall see by and by," said the Earl, and he folded his arms across his breast, and began to scan over the assemblage before him, but keeping his eye on his two protégés beside him, and by whom he now meant to remain till the levee broke up. On this event taking place,

and when the King had retired to one of his own private apartments, the Earl of Linlithgow, telling his two friends to be of good courage—a commodity which he saw both, at this moment, much lacked—and to follow him, conducted them to the chamber to which Charles had retired. Being all three admitted by the ushers—

"This, please your Majesty," said the Earl, addressing the King, with an affected gravity, which the latter was struggling as hard as he could to imitate—"this is my worthy friend, Mr David Clapperton, Provost of your Majesty's loyal burgh of Starvieston, North Britain, who craves the honour of being permitted to lay at your Majesty's feet, a congratulatory address from the said burgh, on your Majesty's happy restoration to the throne of these realms."

"Delighted to see Provost Starvieston," replied the monarch, presenting his royal hand with great condescension and familiarity to the worthy magistrate; "both himself and his mission are right welcome to me. But who is this gentleman, my Lord?" said the King, looking with well affected ignorance of his quality, at Johnny Yuill, who was standing quaking in every limb, as if he had been in a fit of the ague.

"That gentleman, please your Majesty, is the Provost's right, trusty, and well-beloved squire, Mr John Yuill, whom his master has been desirous of shewing all that was worth seeing in your Majesty's city of London, and, amongst the rest, the splendours of your Majesty's court."

"Ah, so!" said Charles, whose gravity was sorely tried during this scene. "A native of Starvieston too, I presume."

"Yes, sir, yes, your Majesty," here interposed the Provost, whose courage the King's familiar and condescending manners had by this time restored; "we're baith frae the same place—frae the same place, your Majesty. An' a bonny place it is in simmer, if your Majesty wad but come down an' see't. I'm sure we wad be a' blythe to see ye—baith the council and the inhabitants."

"Much obliged, Provost—much obliged," replied the monarch. "In the meantime, Provost, I will be glad to receive the dutiful address of our good town of Starvieston with which you have been charged."

The Provost pulled from his pocket, after some rather ungraceful fumbling, the required document, and, approaching the King with a constant succession of the bowing and scraping which he had practised at home, put it into the monarch's hands, and again retired to a respectful distance. Having read the paper, the King returned a gracious answer, and, immediately after, intimated his intention of conferring the honour of knighthood on its bearer. On this intimation being made, Johnny, who entertained some serious fears that it might be extended to him, edged behind his master, in order to be as much as possible out of harm's way. From these fears, however, he was soon relieved, by the Provost being called on to come forward, and receive the honour alluded to at his Majesty's hands, while he himself was not named. In five minutes after, the Provost of Starvieston was transformed into Sir David Clapperton, was graciously dismissed from the royal presence; and, eventually, returned in safety to Starvieston—to the great joy of his wife, and his own no small gratification—a regular and indisputable Knight.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RESTORED SON.

On the banks of the Esk, in the county of Dumfries, stood, some years since, a handsome, substantial-looking mansion, bearing all the marks of plenty and comfort; while the neat and elegant arrangement of the grounds around, bore evidence to the refined and chaste taste of its proprietor, Gavin Douglas. He was a gentleman by birth, and, "if merit gave titles, he might be a Lord," for a more kind-hearted, amiable Christian never existed. He had succeeded to his father's property, nearly thirty years before the time of which we write, and had constantly resided upon it ever since, growing daily in the love and respect of all who knew him. His appearance and address were particularly prepossessing: he was tall and upright in his person; his manners were bland and gentleman-like; and his fine expanded forehead and mild expressive eye told of a warm and benevolent heart. He was a widower; and his family were at a distance—the sons in the pursuit of their respective professions, and the daughters all happily and comfortably married, with the exception of the eldest, who resided under his roof with her three fatherless children. His eldest son, Edward, had been for some years settled in a mercantile house in Calcutta, where he had lately married, and had been admitted as one of the partners of the firm. Gavin Douglas well supplied the place of a father to his little grandchildren; his whole aim seemed to be, to study their happiness, and to soothe the sorrow of their bereaved parent.

One summer evening, the family party at Eakhall were seated in their comfortable drawing-room, engaged in that cheerful, affectionate conversation which forms the peculiar charm of a well-educated, well-regulated family circle. The day had been one of the most sultry and oppressive of the season; but the clouds, which gathered round the setting sun in dark and gloomy masses, seemed as if waiting in silent silence for his disappearance, to pour their fury upon the scenes to which his rays had given beauty. Now did they threaten in vain; all the wonderful energies of nature seemed to have awakened at the very hour when man and beast were about to seek repose. The rain descended in torrents, and poured forth, more like a continued stream than a collection of single drops. The vivid, forked lightning, appeared, in its ragged and eccentric course, to tear asunder the veil of darkness, only to render it doubly visible, while, glancing ten thousand reflections from the falling rain-drops, it flashed across the eyes of the family party, starting and dazing them with its sudden and excessive brilliancy. The children clung to their grandfather in mute and breathless awe, and the whole party sat in silence, uninterrupted, save by involuntary ejaculations, which escaped them at each successive flash. Not a breath of wind was stirring, not a sound was to be heard, but the dull, monotonous, incessant pattering of the rain, and the loud, clear, crackling burst of the thunder, as it rolled peal after peal over their heads, and apparently in dangerous proximity. At length, the rain began to relax in its violence, the flashes of lightning became less and less vivid, and the thunder died away in faint and distant murmurings.

"Grandfather!" said little Gavin, leaving his strong-

hold between Douglas' knees, "was not that an awful storm?"

"Yes, my boy," replied the old man; "awful, indeed! and thankful ought we to be to the good Providence which has blessed us with a roof to shelter us, while many an uncovered head has been exposed to its violence. Such a night as this, ought to awaken in us a spirit of gratitude for the blessings we ourselves enjoy, and of charity towards the wants of others."

"Did you hear that strange noise during the storm, grandfather?" said little Emma; "it sounded like the bleating of a lamb close by; but I was so much frightened by the lightning at the time, that I did not mention it to you, and——there it is again!"

A low, wailing, stifled kind of cry was heard, which almost immediately ceased, and the whole party started up, with looks of surprise and alarm, and gazed at each other, as if mutely inquiring from whence the strange sound could proceed. Again the cry was heard; and Mr Douglas, seizing one of the candles, rushed to the front door, to ascertain the cause of their alarm. Great was his surprise to find, under the porch, a small wicker basket, covered with a coarse ragged shawl, on removing which, he started to behold the little chubby features of an infant, which stretched out his little arms, and crowed with delight at the sight of the candle. Mr Douglas' first impulse was to hurry into the parlour, where our little hero was safely deposited on a sofa, and exposed to the curious and inquiring gaze of the assembled party.

"O grandpapa!" shouted little Gavin, clapping his hands, and dancing round the baby, "I have often heard you say 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good'—and now see what a nice little brother the thunder storm has blown us."

"Inhuman wretches!" exclaimed Douglas, "to expose such a sweet infant, in a night like this! But they cannot be far off!" And, ringing the bell violently, he went out with some of the servants in pursuit of the supposed fugitives; but vain was their search; every nook and corner of the grounds were examined, but no traces of any such could be discovered; and Douglas returned, fatigued and disappointed, to the parlour. On examining the basket in which the child had been hid, a crumpled and dirty piece of paper was discovered, on which was written, in a trembling and almost illegible hand, "Be kind to the boy!—he comes of a good family. His name is Philip F. May heaven prosper you, as you behave to him!" There was likewise a silver ring, with a few Persian characters engraved upon it. The clothes in which the infant was dressed, were formed of the best materials, neatly and plainly made, but bore evident tokens of neglect and dirt.

"Poor boy!" muttered Gavin; "since your own unnatural father has deserted you, I will be a father to you. Here, Jane, my love," addressing his daughter, "I commit this stray lamb to your charge for the present; see that he is comfortably settled in the little crib in your room."

Years passed on; the little foundling had become a tall, handsome stripling of thirteen, as much beloved for his kind and amiable disposition as he was admired for his handsome form and bold and manly spirit, when Gavin Douglas received a letter from his son Edward, in Calcutta,

informing him that by the next ship he intended to send his eldest daughter, who was now seven years old, home to his care. The ship by which this letter had been forwarded, having met with a succession of light and baffling winds, had made so long a passage that the little stranger whose approach it announced might be now daily expected. At length, the newspapers gave notice of the arrival off the Start of the ship Cornwallis; and Gavin Douglas prepared to hasten up to town to receive his granddaughter. Philip, who was at home for his school holidays, and who was now as dear to Douglas as if he had been his own flesh and blood, entreated and obtained permission to accompany him. Owing to a long continuance of easterly winds, the Cornwallis made a tedious passage up the Channel, and our travellers were detained for some days at Gravesend, awaiting her arrival. To Philip this delay was most welcome; the bustling scenes around him seemed to arouse the latent energies of his nature. Accustomed to the quiet and peaceful monotony of a country life, he felt as if a new sphere of existence was opened to him; and everything he beheld, bore, in his eyes, the stamp of novelty and excitement. His great delight was to loiter for hours at the stairs, (Gravesend did not then boast of the handsome jetty which now adorns it,) and to gaze at the numerous craft floating on the bosom of the majestic Thames; some lying at anchor, and others taking advantage of the tide to hasten towards their various destinations. Frank and open in his manner, eager and anxious in his thirst for information, the watermen, who were always lounging in numbers about the stairs, felt a pleasure in gratifying his curiosity, and in initiating him into all the mysteries of river seamanship; and he soon learned to distinguish the different "riggs" of the passing vessels, from the lowly "peter-boat" to the majestic ship. One morning there was a dead calm; the river was gliding past unruffled by the slightest air; the cheerful "yo, heave, oh!" of the sailors, and the loud clanking of the windlass "pauls," were heard distinctly from some of the distant colliers, shortening in cable preparatory to making a start; while the rattling clattering sounds of the chains were heard from others, which were just "bringing up"—for it was high water, and the upward-bound vessels were obliged to come to anchor. Philip had been at his usual post for some time, when his attention was attracted by the heavy sluggish cloud of smoke which hung in the wake of two steamers, whose low painted chimneys were seen over the land, which they flitted past with great rapidity, while the tall, naked spars of a large ship towered far above them. At length their hulls became distinctly visible.

"Mand here the glass, Jem," said a waterman, who was anxiously observing them, to his comrade; "let me have a squint at her. Ah! I'd swear to her among a thousand! That's the old Cornwallis! Jump into the boat, Jem, and let's push out into the stream."

Away flew our friend Philip to the inn, to tell his father, as he called him, the welcome news. The old gentleman hurried down to the stairs, and the Cornwallis had hardly let go her anchor in Gravesend Reach, before he and Philip were on her quarterdeck, inquiring for Catherine Douglas. Captain M'Dougall of the Cornwallis received them with the greatest politeness, and, upon Gavin Douglas informing him of the cause of his visit, he was immediately ushered into one of the round-house cabins, where a little dark-eyed girl was playing with her ayah.

"Catherine, my dear," said Captain M'Dougall, "here is your grandpapa come to visit you."

Little Catherine, as we said before, was seven years old, and, like most Indian children, quick and clever beyond her years. She was a brunette in complexion—so much so indeed, that she might have been mistaken for a descendant from parentage of the climate in which she had been reared. Her eyes were dark, lively, and brilliant, and a profusion of rich black hair fell in clusters upon her shoulders. The moment

she heard Captain M'Dougall's announcement, she dropped the toy with which she was playing, and ran eagerly up to Douglas:—

"Are you really Grandpapa Gavin?"

"Yes, my love," said the old gentleman, almost smothering her with kisses.

"Are you quite sure?" said she: "then," looking smilingly up in his face, "I think I love you very much, Grandpapa."

Philip was now introduced, and, in five minutes' time, the two young people were sworn friends. Catherine had shewn Philip all her rich store of toys, and had answered all his eager questions about the voyage, the ship, the uses of various things in the cabin, &c. Be not impatient, gentle reader, at the details of this childish meeting; the happiness or misery of life often depends upon trifles light as air, and our friend Philip's future destiny took its hue from the consequences of that intimacy of which we have just been describing the commencement. In the course of a fortnight, the travellers with their young charge returned to Eskhall, where the little stranger met with the most affectionate welcome. The banks of the Esk were beautiful as ever; but, to Philip's eyes, they had lost great part of their attraction; he had had a glimpse of the scenes of active life, and he was eager to engage in them. The country sports in which he used to take such delight, began to lose their relish; and his principal amusement now was to wander in the green fields with little Catherine, and to listen to the tales she told of her recollections of the distant lands she had left. His curiosity was excited, and he burned with impatience to visit them, and to judge for himself; and he expressed to Gavin Douglas his predilection for a sailor's life, and his eager wish to commence his career as soon as circumstances would allow: Gavin's heart yearned towards the handsome and spirited boy, whose eye sparkled, and whose tongue became eloquent as he urged his suit; and he felt that the time was come, which he had long looked forward to with pain, when this young and ardent spirit must leave his guardian care, and be intrusted to its own impulses. He talked seriously and affectionately to the boy, on the subject of his wishes; told him, what had hitherto been kept a secret from him—the history of his first appearance at Eskhall; assured him that he always would be, as he hitherto had been, in the place of a father to him; and concluded with saying—"Reflect seriously upon what I have pointed out to you, my dear boy; I have laid before you, as far as my experience goes, all the advantages and disadvantages of the profession which you wish to adopt; weigh the matter carefully in your thoughts; and if, at the end of a week, you continue in the same mind, I will do all in my power to promote your wishes."

Poor Philip's astonishment and distress were unbounded, when Gavin informed him of the mystery that hung over his birth. He had always hitherto been known by the name of Douglas, and had been accustomed to consider himself as Gavin's grandson; and the truth burst upon him with the astounding effect of a thunderbolt.—Pale as ashes, with the tears streaming down his cheeks, he exclaimed—

"Not your grandson, sir? Then who am I? Good heavens! have I been living from my earliest years a poor dependant upon your bounty? O my generous benefactor! my more than father! how can I ever prove my gratitude to you for your unvaried affection and kindness?"

"You have already proved it, Philip, by repaying affection with affection; by your steady obedience, and constant attention to my slightest wish. I have a father's love for you, Philip; and, poor, and unknown, and alien as you are, you have made yourself as dear to me as if you were my own flesh and blood. I feared that this disclosure would fall like a blight upon your young spirit; but, painful as it is, it was necessary that it should be made. Cheer up, my

boy! brighter days will come. I feel a conviction that the secret of your birth will be one day discovered, and that you will have no reason to blush for your parentage."

"Heaven grant it may be so, sir! but I dare not hope. If I had not been a cause of shame to my parents, would they have deserted me?"

Douglas shook his head, and said—

"Time will shew. At all events, my dear Philip, look upon me as your father until you find a better."

"That can never be, my dear, dear gr——benefactor."

The week of reflection passed away; but not so Philip's resolution, which was now confirmed and strengthened by his eager desire to relieve Mr Douglas from the burden of his support, and by the hope that he might by some fortunate chance be guided to the discovery of his true parents. On his making known his decision, Gavin Douglas immediately wrote to a friend in town, through whose interest he obtained for him an appointment as midshipman on board an Indiaman which was on the point of sailing for Bengal and China, and which it was necessary for him to "join" immediately. Before he left Eskhall, Gavin delivered into his hands the ring and other articles that had been found in the basket in which he was exposed when an infant, that he might have some clue whereby to endeavour to trace out his parents. Delighted as Philip was at the prospect of entering upon his new profession, he felt the greatest sorrow at parting from his kind and liberal benefactor, and from those whom he had been so long accustomed to look upon as near and dear relations; but still more deeply was he affected at leaving his beloved little playmate, Catherine. Her grief on the occasion was excessive. Philip had been her constant companion in all her little rambles, and her resource and comfort in all her childish difficulties and sorrows. He had scarcely ever left her side; and now she was to part with him—perhaps for ever! Poor Philip himself was obliged to exert all the pride of precocious manhood, to resist the contagious example of her tears; but he did all in his power to comfort the little mourner, and at last partially succeeded, by reminding her that in a few months the voyage would be over.

"And then, dear Phil, will you come back again?"

"That I will."

"Oh! how glad I shall be to see you again!" And she jumped about, clapping her little hands for joy, till the recollection of the long separation that must intervene called forth a fresh torrent of tears.

At length the parting scene was over; and, freighted with the blessings and good wishes of all who knew him, Philip was fairly launched into the rough ocean of life, to be exposed to all its storms and quicksands, from which he had been hitherto safely sheltered in the calm haven of domestic peace. The first voyage passed safely and happily; and some years flew by in the same routine of leave-takings and glad meetings. Philip loved his profession enthusiastically; but, at every successive parting, he felt more and more unwilling to tear himself from Eskhall and its beloved inmates. Catherine was now a lovely elegant girl of eighteen; her childish preference for Philip had been gradually and imperceptibly gaining strength, till it had become the ruling passion of her heart. He loved her fondly and tenderly; but his fears were excited by her constantly increasing reserve towards him; there was such apparent inconsistency between the attentive kindness of her actions, and the distance and almost coldness of her manner, that he was puzzled, as well as surprised. But the eyes of Gavin Douglas' experience were open; and he had for some time read—in the changing complexion of Catherine whenever Philip approached her, in the embarrassment of her manner whenever she addressed him, and in the suppressed eagerness of her interest in whatever concerned him—that secret which she shrunk from confessing even to her

own heart. Though he dreaded the consequence of an attachment which he thought might be productive of only misery and disappointment, yet he had too much confidence in Philip's honour and discretion to fear any clandestine avowal of love on his part. He wrote to his son Edward in Calcutta, informing him of his suspicions and fears as to the state of Catherine's affections—telling him all the particulars of Philip's history, and leaving it to his own judgment to act as he thought circumstances required.

"In the meantime," wrote he, "I cannot openly interfere, lest, by striving to remedy, I should only increase the evil; but I will endeavour, quietly and unobtrusively, to keep the young people apart until I hear your decision. My opinion is, that a final separation will be the only means of weaning them from each other. Catherine has a father's home to receive her—when poor Philip leaves me he leaves his only earthly protector; and, even for my granddaughter's sake, I cannot part with one whose amiable and affectionate dispositions have rendered him dear to me as a son."

The result of this communication was a letter to Catherine, from her father, telling her that he was obliged to visit England for a few months, on business, and begging her to hold herself in readiness to accompany him on his return to Calcutta. Philip had just arrived from abroad when he received this news; and, as is often the case, it was not till he feared he was going to part with Catherine for ever, that he felt how deeply and fondly he loved her. He became restless and unhappy; and wandered away, day after day, alone, under pretence of seeking amusement in rural sports, but in reality for the sake of indulging the sorrow that was preying upon his mind. He shunned all society, even that of her whose image was ever present to him, and absented himself as much as he possibly could, from the family meetings at meals. His dejection began to have an evident effect upon his health, and the kind-hearted Gavin grieved to see his young favourite pining under the influence of his hidden sorrow.

"Philip, my son," said he to him one day, "why have you not confided in me, your oldest and dearest friend? I have penetrated your secret, Philip, and I honour you for endeavouring to confine it to your own bosom; but you must rouse all your energies to shake off the tyranny of a passion, which your high sense of principle must tell you cannot safely be indulged in, and is only likely to be productive of sorrow and disappointment." He then proceeded to remind him delicately of the cloud that hung over his birth, of his want of means to maintain the woman of his choice in comfort, and of the absolute necessity for his strenuous exertions to rise in his profession, as the only chance of bettering his condition in life; "for though," added the generous man, "it is my intention to make some provision for you in my will, yet there are so many claims of relationship upon me, that your proportion will, I fear, be but small."

Philip's heart swelled, and his eye glistened, as he pressed the old man's hand, in mute acknowledgment of his kindness; and some moments elapsed ere he could sufficiently command his feelings, to give expression to them in words. At length, in broken and hurried accents, he expressed his heartfelt gratitude; he confessed that he had long loved Catherine, but said that he had never "told his love," hoping that his prospects might brighten, and that he might then be enabled to prove himself worthy of the happiness he sought. He acknowledged the justice and propriety of all Mr Douglas had said, and expressed his conviction that it was his duty, however painful it might be to his feelings, to tear himself from the society of one whose presence was so dangerous to his peace, and to endeavour, however vain that endeavour might be, for her sake as well as for his own, to conceal, though he could not

stife, the passion which reigned in his heart. It was agreed upon, between the two friends, that Philip should employ his time while on shore in travelling, till his ship was again ready for sea, and that he should then join her, without taking leave a second time of his friends, except by letter. Poor Philip could hardly command his feelings, when taking what he considered to be his final farewell of Catherine. He knew that when he next returned home, Eskhall would have lost its principal charm in his eyes—that *she* would no longer be there, and that, in all human probability, they might never meet again. Catherine only felt, or appeared to feel, the uneasiness attending a temporary parting; but her voice trembled slightly as, with a pale but steady countenance, she bade him adieu; and, leaving the room with a calm though melancholy manner, she hurried to her chamber, and, securing the door, gave way to the sorrow which in his presence she had successfully endeavoured to restrain. Time passed slowly and heavily with Philip during a rambling tour which he made through different parts of England and Wales. He fought manfully against the sorrow that oppressed him, and endeavoured, by rapidity of motion, and constant variation of scene, to turn his thoughts into another channel; but in vain—the arrow was fixed too deeply in his heart. He hurried from place to place, and from change to change; but he could not fly from himself. In vain did Nature present her varied beauties to his eyes; he gazed listlessly and vacantly upon all he beheld—he looked as though he saw not, for his heart was elsewhere, and he felt that for him the charm of existence was over. In the meantime, Catherine's father had arrived at Eskhall, and had been informed by Gavin Douglas of Philip's noble struggle with his unfortunately placed passion, and of the anguish of mind which his resolution had cost him.

"Generous young man!" exclaimed Edward Douglas; "he deserves a happier fate. Would that I could favour his suit; but, poor, unknown, and perhaps basely born as he is, it is my duty as a father to oppose it."

Shortly before Philip's ship *came afloat*, Edward Douglas was obliged to go to London on business; and there he found out, and introduced himself to our young friend. Few young men of his age possessed greater powers of pleasing than Philip; there was a frank ingenuousness in his manner and address, which, seconded by the remarkable beauty of his features, immediately made a favourable impression upon a stranger—an impression which a further intimacy seldom failed to strengthen into affection and esteem. Such was the effect of his introduction to Edward Douglas. They were mutually pleased with each other, and every hour that Philip could spare from professional duties, was devoted to his new friend, rendered doubly dear to him by his near connection with her whose name he dared not mention, though ever in his thoughts.

"My dear fellow," said Douglas to him one day, "I am aware of the sacrifice you have made of feeling to principle, and I honour and esteem you for it. Would to heaven your circumstances and my own were different! Situated as you are, without the means of supporting even *yourself*, I think I know you too well already to imagine that you would willingly expose her you love, to poverty and humiliation. Were my circumstances such as to enable me to enrich my daughter, and to follow the inclinations of my own heart, I know no one for whom I would more willingly use a father's influence than yourself."

Philip's heart was too full for words; yet, though he felt the hardship, he acknowledged the justice, of Edward Douglas' objections, and felt greatly affected by his kind expressions of friendly feeling towards him. They parted with mutual regret; Edward to return to Eskhall, and Philip to join his ship at Gravesend.

"Ah!" said Gavin Douglas, one morning, about a fortnight after the above parting, as the family were seated

round the breakfast-table, "there is the post-bag! Bring it here, James"—(to the servant.) "It looks too thin to contain anything, I am afraid. Yes! here is a letter from dear Phil."

"When is he to return, grandfather?" asked Emma, now a full-grown woman. Catherine was seized with a sudden curiosity to look at a pamphlet which lay upon the table, and which she held very close to her eyes.

"Return, my love!" said Gavin; "when his voyage is over, I hope; this letter was sent on shore by the pilot, and is dated 'Off Scilly.' But, mercy upon us! what is the matter with Catherine?"

The pamphlet had fallen from her hand; the cheek which had flushed to crimson at the mention of Philip's name, was now of death-like paleness; and she was leaning back in her chair, with her eyes closed, and panting for breath.

"Thoughtless blockhead that I was!" muttered Gavin Douglas. And he then set himself to repair the mischief he had done, by bustling about to procure the necessary remedies, which at last succeeded in restoring Catherine to consciousness.

"It was a sudden spasm," said she; "I shall soon recover from it."

"Poor girl!" thought Gavin, "I fear not; the evil is more deeply rooted than I imagined."

From this period, Catherine became quite an altered character. A settled melancholy seemed to weigh upon her heart; she was mild, gentle, and affectionate as ever, but the buoyancy of her spirit was gone, and the smile which now but seldom brightened her countenance, was evidently but grief in disguise. Her friends, with delicate consideration, avoided all allusion to the cause of her sorrow, which was but too well known to them all; and her fond and grieving father hoped that time, and absence, and the novel scenes she was about to enter into, might work, imperceptibly to herself, a gradual cure.

Nearly nine months had elapsed since Philip's departure; Catherine, half broken-hearted, had accompanied her father on shipboard, and was far on her way to the East; and the *Recovery*, Philip's ship, was on her homeward voyage. One fine night in March, the *Recovery* was running along the Lagullas Bank, taking advantage of the current which sweeps round the Cape of Good Hope to the eastward. The wind was light, but steady from the S.E., and the night cloudy, when the look-out man on the fore-castle called out—"A light on the larboard bow, sir!" A small glimmering light was seen on the horizon to windward, which gradually enlarged to a broad flame, wavering and flickering in the breeze; and, almost immediately, the dull sound of a gun came faintly moaning over the waters, and a long train of arrowy light went rushing up into the sky, where it hung for a moment, and then burst into separate flashes, which gradually died away, as they descended. The officer of the deck ran in to the captain immediately—"I am afraid, sir, there is a ship on fire to windward. There is a strong light on our weather beam, and I heard the report of a gun, and saw the flash of a rocket."

"Indeed! Tell the gunner to clear away one of the guns. Call the hands out. I will be out in a minute."

The light, in the meantime, was gradually increasing in size, and it was evident, from the wavering outline which it presented, that the first conjecture respecting its origin was a correct one; and gun after gun confirmed it. The captain speedily made his appearance on deck, and, after a moment's glance to windward, called to the chief mate, "Run the stunsails in, Mr Waring! Brace sharp up, and bring the ship to the wind! Are you all ready with that gun, Mr Wad?"

"All ready, sir!"

"Then, fire! Bear a hand, clear away another gun!"

The *Recovery* was now hauled close to the wind, and

was slipping rapidly through the water in the direction of the light; all hands were on deck, and, after the bustle of taking in and stowing the studdingsails had subsided, the eyes of all were directed with the greatest anxiety towards the horizon on the weather bow, where the flame was now distinctly seen, sometimes barely visible above the water, and then bursting upward in broad and vivid jets, waving fitfully in the breeze. All at once it disappeared, and half suppressed murmurs and ejaculations burst from the excited crew of the Recovery.

"I fear we are too late, sir!" said Waring, the mate; "the light has disappeared."

"Very strange!" replied the captain, straining his eyes through the night-glass. "I hope not! Oh, no! I see how it is: dont you observe that the red fiery haze still hangs round the spot?—and, hark! there is another gun! She is on fire abaft, and is running down before the wind. She has heard our signals. Fire another gun!"

The vessel to windward still continued firing minnte guns, by the louder report of which it was evident she was rapidly approaching; and, in a short time, the dark mass of her canvass was distinctly visible, standing out in bold relief from its fiery back-ground.

"Have the quarter cutters clear for lowering, Mr Waring," said the captain. "Away aloft there, topmen; send down whips for the yard tackles, and have the large cutter all clear for tossing out."

These orders were instantly and actively obeyed; the crew seemed to vie with each other in their exertions, and strained every nerve in their eager emulation. They could now clearly discern the dark hull of the ship, the sails forward hiding the body of the flame, broad masses of which were seen, with every roll she took, flaring out from each side, alternately, of the dark screen of canvass.

"Man the gear of the courses!—up courses!—in royals and topgallantsails!—back the mainyard!"—were the orders which now rapidly succeeded each other; and, in a few moments, the Recovery lay as motionless as a log on the water.

"Call the hands—out boats!"

The large cutter was quickly hoisted out, the quarter-boats were lowered and manned, and kept alongside, in readiness to push off at a moment's warning. The burning ship was rapidly approaching, and was now within two miles of the Recovery.

"Fire a gun to windward, and burn a blue light," exclaimed the Captain; "she is quite near enough."

The stranger now came slowly and gradually up to the wind, and hove to, with her maintopsail to the mast, about a mile a-head and to windward of the Recovery. An involuntary shout of horror and admiration burst from the crew of that ship, when the change in the position of the stranger revealed to them the terrific extent of her danger—of horror for the imminent peril of her crew, and of irrepressible admiration of the splendid scene so suddenly unveiled to them. Broad masses of flame were bursting apparently from her gun-room, and waving over her quarter; while thick clouds of smoke, glittering with sparks, shot upwards, and were borne far off to leeward by the breeze. Every rope in the ship was as distinctly traceable by the glare of the flame, as if it had been broad daylight. Her mainsail was hauled close up; and her crew, seeming to have been aware that their only chance of rescue was in flight, had been actively employed in keeping her headsails wet with streams of water from the fire-engine, for it was very evident that no earthly power could check the progress of the flames abaft.

The dark forms of the crew were seen hurrying about her decks, apparently employed in clearing away the boats, one of which soon pushed off from her, loaded till her gunnels were within a few inches of the water, and pulled slowly towards them.

"Shove off in the boats," shouted the captain of the Recovery, "and give way, my hearties, with a will."

There was not a moment to lose: a spark caught the maintopsail; the canvass, as dry as tinder with the excessive heat, was in a blaze in a moment; and, with lightning-like rapidity, sail after sail on the mainmast caught fire, and, blazing for a moment with a broad and brilliant glare, shrivelled up, and flew in burning tatters to leeward. It was an awful sight, that pyramid of flame, rising as it were from the bosom of the deep. Not a sound was to be heard, but that of the rapidly-moving oars, and the rushing, moaning, and crackling sound of the flame. The men tugged at their oars in the silence of desperate energy; life and death depended upon their exertions, and their voices seemed to be hushed by the extremity of the danger. In the meantime, sail was made upon the Recovery, and the breeze having partially died away, she crawled slowly up on the weather-quarter of the stranger, and again hove to. Boat after boat soon joined her, and, having deposited their freight, hastened back to the scene of danger for more. The greater part of the crew of the burning ship were soon safely bestoved on board of the Recovery, when Philip, who had already made two trips to the stranger with the boat under his command, pulled towards her again, to bring off the remainder of her men. He was fast approaching her when he was hailed by the officer of one of the other boats, who told him that he had taken off the last of the crew. He was just on the point of returning to his ship, when he heard sounds of remonstrance and entreaty from another boat which was slowly approaching, the crew seeming undecided whether to proceed or return; and, at the same time, he observed by the light of the fire the officer of the boat struggling with a man in the stern-sheets, who was apparently endeavouring to jump overboard.

"It would be madness—downright madness to return," exclaimed the officer; "I will not risk the lives of my men—she will blow up immediately."

"Let me go!" shouted the stranger; "if I cannot save her, let me die with her." At this moment the stranger's eye caught sight of Philip, who was standing up in the boat, and, with a loud and startling cry, he shouted, "Philip, Philip, save her! Save Catherine!" It was Edward Douglas! At the same time a shrill scream came over the water, and a female form was seen at the gangway, waving her hands over her head, and wringing them in all the anguish of despair. For a moment Philip was paralyzed; it was but for a moment.

"We will save her or perish!" shouted he; "what say you, my lads?" The men answered him with a cheer as the boat sprung through the water under the impulse of their bending oars; and a few vigorous strokes brought them alongside the blazing ship. It was but the work of a moment, for Philip and one of the boat's crew to spring up the ship's side, and to lower the fainting Catherine into the arms of the men below. With careful haste she was laid down in the stern-sheets, and the water foamed beneath the bows of the boat as her gallant crew bent desperately to their oars. A handful of water sprinkled on Catherine's face revived her for a moment; she opened her eyes upon her deliverer, and, murmuring "Philip!" closed them again with a shudder, and relapsed into unconsciousness. The moment the boat reached the Recovery, the ship's mainyard was filled, the lower tacks were hauled on board, the small sails set, and she stood to windward, to widen her distance. The precaution, however, was scarcely necessary, as the blazing wreck was drifting fast to leeward. Almost immediately after the boat had left her, she had paid off before the wind, the sails on the foremast caught fire, and in a very short time the blazing wreck of spars fell forward over the bows. All eyes were now eagerly directed towards her, to watch the finale of the catastrophe. They were not kept long in sus-

pense: a dense cloud of smoke burst from her fore-hatchway, followed by a rush of bright flame, and a loud and deafening explosion, and then all was darkness—the hull had disappeared, and not a vestige of the unfortunate vessel remained, except the fragments of the wreck, which fell far and wide, pattering and hissing in the water.

It was with a feeling of breathless awe and silent thanksgiving that the rescued crew gazed upon the scene; and many a cheek among them was blanched with shuddering horror at the thought of the miserable fate they had so providentially and narrowly escaped. The most daring and reckless among them were sobered for a time, and many a half-suppressed expression of thankfulness to an overruling Providence, burst from lips to which oaths and curses had been but too familiar. As soon as all was over, sail was made upon the *Recovery*, the watch was called out, and arrangements were made for the accommodation of the unexpected addition to her crew. The name of the unfortunate ship was the *Victory*—a fine vessel of six hundred tons. The fire had been occasioned by the negligence of the steward, who, while unpacking a case of wine, had left a light burning in the after orlop, which had set fire to the loose straw, from whence the flame was soon communicated to the spirit-room.

“All that men *could* do, we did,” said the captain, when telling the story; “but, from the first, I had no hope of saving the ship, and slight was our chance of escape in the boats. When the sound of your gun reached us, it was as a messenger of hope—a promise of rescue; and three cheers burst from our crew, as we put our helm up, and stood away to join you. My men behaved nobly; with death staring them in the face, they never for a moment failed in their duty, or flinched from the danger, and exerted themselves to the utmost to keep the fire under, and to prevent its communicating to the sails. Thanks to a merciful Providence, and to you, its gallant agents, we have been rescued from a dreadful doom!”

In the meantime, our friend Philip had hastened to the cabin which had been appropriated to Edward Douglas, and, knocking at the door, was immediately admitted.

“Philip!” exclaimed Edward, grasping his hand, while the tears stood in his eyes, and his voice trembled with emotion; “my dear, my gallant deliverer!—what an awful fate have you saved us from! If I had lost my child, how valueless would have been my own preservation! To you, under Heaven, I owe both: how can I express my gratitude?”

“Oh, speak not thus to me, dear sir;—I but did my duty, and am I not already more than repaid? But how is Miss Douglas?”

“Miss Douglas!” said Edward; “cold and formal indeed! Why not Catherine?—your Catherine? Have you not earned a right to call her yours?”

Philip trembled, and turned pale; and then, when the warm blood, rushing to his cheeks again, flushed them with emotion, he exclaimed—

“Oh, Mr Douglas! My whole efforts, since we parted, have been to smother feelings and wishes which your words have again called into life.”

“And long may they live, my dear Philip!—my dear son I hope soon to call you. I will no longer strive against fate. You have saved Catherine’s life; and, if you still retain her love, you have a grateful father’s full and free permission to avail yourself of it. For the rest, we will trust to Providence, and to the exertions of your own active and energetic spirit.”

“Mr Douglas,” said Philip, “your kindness overpowers me. I would risk a thousand lives, if I had them, for such a recompense; but I must not take advantage of your excited feelings to obtain a boon, however dear to me, which your prudence would deny. The same obstacles remain which at first existed. I am still poor and friendless; the

obscurity of my birth has not been cleared up; and, circumstanced as I am at present, ought I to avail myself of an accidental advantage, and of your too generous appreciation of it, to fetter the free choice of your daughter, who probably may now see those obstacles with far different eyes than in her early days?”

“Better times may come, Philip; and, in the meanwhile, my daughter’s dowry will be sufficient to afford you both all the comforts, though not the luxuries of life; your own energy and industry must do the rest. But you must consult Catherine on the subject—gain her consent; mine you have, without further condition, already.”

After a consultation with his officers, the captain of the *Recovery* deemed it expedient to put into the Cape; and the ship’s course was accordingly altered. The wind continuing fair and steady, on the evening of the fourth day from the disaster she was close in with the coast; and the breeze dying away, and a thick fog coming on, she was hove to for the night. The next morning the fog still continued—nothing was to be seen of the land, though every eye was strained to penetrate the gloom, till at last the glad cry was heard from the mast-head—“High land ahead, sir! Close aboard of us!” All eyes were now turned upwards; and there, frowning above the bank of fog, appeared the dark outline of the Table-land. The fog soon cleared off; and, in an hour or two, the ship rounded Green Point, and came to an anchor in Table Bay. After Edward Douglas and the rest of the passengers were landed at Cape Town, Philip, being second officer and *idler*, obtained leave of absence for a couple of days, and went on shore to join his friends. The boarding-houses were all crowded; for there were several ships in the roads, one of which, full of passengers from Bengal, had arrived the day after the *Recovery*; but Edward Douglas had contrived to secure accommodation for Philip in the same house with himself. Several passengers by the newly arrived ship, had taken up their quarters there; and, among them a fine-looking, elderly man, a General Fortescue of the Bengal army. This gentleman happened, on his first arrival, to be shewn into the room where Philip and Edward Douglas were conversing together. They both rose at his entrance, and he returned the salutation of the latter with the free and unembarrassed air of a man of the world; but, when he turned to Philip, he started, and gazed at him, for some moments, with a look so fixed and earnest as to call the colour into his cheek.

“Excuse me, sir,” said he, at length—“excuse my involuntary rudeness. Your features awakened recollections of other times, and of long-lost and dearly-loved friends; and, for the moment, my thoughts wandered into forgetfulness of the courtesy due to a stranger.”

“I hope at least, sir, that the recollections I recalled were not unpleasing ones?”

“When you have lived to my age, young sir, bitter experience will have taught you that the ‘thread of life is woven of mingled yarn;’ and that shades of sorrow and disappointment may darken the brightest pictures in memory’s retrospect. Few, very few, can look back to the past years of life with unmingled pleasure, or forward to the future with unmixed hope.”

Both Edward Douglas and Philip became greatly interested in this new acquaintance, especially the latter, who in turn seemed to be the object of the General’s almost exclusive attention. He seemed to watch Philip’s every movement with eager interest, often cast upon him earnest and inquiring looks, and would then, with a heavy sigh, withdraw his gaze, as if his features had recalled some faint and shadowy image of the past, which his memory was in vain endeavouring to realize. A party was formed to visit the far-famed farm of Constantia, on which the well-known choice wine of that name is manufactured; and the three friends set off

together on horseback, after breakfast, next morning. General Fortescue, notwithstanding the habitual shade of melancholy which clouded his countenance, proved himself to be an animated and most agreeable companion. His mind was stored with varied knowledge, and his conversation was enlivened with anecdotes of events and characters which had come under the personal observation of a keen and penetrating mind.

"I know not how it is, Mr Douglas," said he, "but I have not felt for years such a springiness of spirit as I experience to-day. I suppose it is because this beautiful country recalls to my recollection our own dear England. Suppose we dismount, and ramble for a while among the trees; with our feet upon the soft grass, and under the cooling shade, our recollections of our distant home will return with greater warmth and freshness."

This proposal was gladly acceded to by his companions; and, having given their horses to the care of their attendant, they wandered about for some time, and at last finding a grassy spot sheltered from the rays of the sun, they seated themselves, and entered into an animated and cheerful conversation.

"Pray, Mr Douglas," said General Fortescue, addressing himself to Philip, "is your father a Scotchman? I should think so from the name."

Philip coloured painfully; and the General, perceiving his confusion, added, "Excuse the liberty I have taken in asking the question—it did not arise from idle curiosity. The dearest friend of my early days was a Douglas, and the name is connected in my remembrance with scenes in which I spent many of my happiest days, when hope gilded my visions of the future, alas! only to deceive me. Yes, if Gavin Douglas still survives, I must find him out."

"Gavin Douglas!" said Edward, in surprise; "was he a Douglas of Eskhall?"

"The same," replied he.

"My father!" said Edward.

"Is it possible! And are you really the son of my dearest and earliest friend? Wonderful are the mysterious sympathies of nature! How strangely was I attracted towards you both, but more especially towards your friend, whom I presume to be your younger brother?"

"No, he is not even a connexion, though I hope he soon will be one."

"Then whose son is he?"

Philip, with cheeks glowing, and eyes flashing with vainly resisted emotion, answered, in rapid and passionate accents—

"The son of one who was ashamed to own him; who deserted him in his infancy, and cast him, shelterless upon the casual bounty of strangers; the nameless son of a nameless father; perhaps—and his eye fell, and his voice trembled—"the offspring of shame, as of misfortune."

"Never, Philip!" said Edward; "the pure stream rises from the pure spring. Whoever your father may be, were he the highest in the land, did he know his son, he would be proud, not ashamed, to own him as such. But, as we have excited the General's curiosity, have you any objection to my gratifying it by reciting the history of your life?"

Philip made a movement of assent; and Edward proceeded to give a rapid sketch of the events which we have already narrated, from the time of Philip's desertion down to his gallant conduct on board the *Recovery*.

The General had listened to his narrative with breathless interest; and, when it was concluded, asked, in a hurried and agitated manner—

"Was there no clue by which to trace his parentage? No writing, or other notice of his birth?"

"Yes—a paper, stating his name to be Philip, and that he was born of good family; and a ring."

"Here it is," said Philip, producing it.

The moment the General's eyes glanced upon it, his

cheek turned deadly pale, he leaned for a moment backward against a tree, and then, with an eager and trembling hand, he touched a spring at the back of the seal, and the shield flying open, the initials "P. & M. F." appeared engraved behind.

"My son!" exclaimed the General, embracing Philip, while the tears poured down his cheeks—"my long-lost Philip! Merciful heaven! I thank thee! How blind I was, not to trace before, the resemblance to your sainted mother! The very eyes and forehead of my beloved Mary! My son, my son! This hour repays me for years saddened by the misery of uncertainty!"

Philip, with tears of grateful joy, warmly returned the embraces of his newly-found parent, and, even in that moment of agitation, his thoughts gladly reverted to the removal of that which had been the principal obstacle to Catherine, the mystery of his birth. Edward Douglas, much affected by the unexpected recognition, had retired to some little distance, to leave the father and son to the free expression of their mutual feelings; but he was soon recalled to his former station by the General, who, shaking him heartily by the hand, said—

"Son of my dearest friend, I owe it to myself and to my boy to narrate to you the history of my past life, and to account to you both, for what must appear my culpable and unpardonable neglect of him whose uncertain fate has caused me so many bitter moments."

The tale which followed we give in our own words, as our space will not allow us to be so diffuse as was the excited narrator.

The father of General Fortescue was a man of high family and extensive landed property in Ireland; proud of his only son, but prouder still of the ancient name and large possessions which he fondly hoped that son was destined to inherit. His mother had died in his early childhood, and his education was prosecuted under the superintendance of a worthy and excellent tutor, a Scotchman of the name of Campbell. The elder Fortescue, who had himself been brought up at Eton, and who had a strong prejudice in favour of public education, sent his boy, when he was sufficiently old, to finish his education at that college. There it was his good fortune to be associated with Gavin Douglas, who was two years his senior, and immeasurably his superior in talent and character. Mild and gentle in demeanour, but firm and uncompromising in principle, Gavin was generally respected and beloved; his society was courted by all his fellow students—but he distinguished young Fortescue with his particular friendship; and to the influence of that friendship, the latter was indebted for all the better traits that adorned his character. Philip, in his letters, had often written in the most glowing terms of youthful enthusiasm, of his talented and estimable friend; and his father, ever anxious to administer to his gratification, invited Gavin, whose parents were at the time on the Continent, to spend his vacation at Mount Fortescue, where he spent some weeks, delighted with his hospitable reception, but surprised at the luxury and profusion that surrounded him. But the scene was soon to change. Fortescue had been for years living in a style of splendour and careless hospitality, which had from time to time called forth ineffectual remonstrances from his faithful steward, and at last, affairs were brought to a crisis by the villany of one for whom he had become security to a very considerable amount. To meet the demands of his creditors, his estates were sold; and, with about ten thousand pounds saved from their wreck, he retired to a small town on the shores of the Frith of Clyde, and, having procured a cadetship for his boy, sent him out to Bengal. This was a severe trial to old Fortescue. The loss of his estates he could have borne with comparative firmness, as far as his own comforts were concerned; but his pride as well as his affection was wounded, when he thought that his son

would be obliged to seek in a *foreign* land that fortune which, but for his careless negligence and profusion, he would have inherited in his *own*. Philip, full of the energy of youthful hope, was but little affected by the change in his father's circumstances, for the future was to him bright of promise; but he was greatly grieved at parting with his father, whose many excellent qualities had endeared him to his son's affection, and whose chief weakness was his high aristocratic pride. After ten years' residence in India, young Fortescue returned home on furlough, with the rank of Captain, and found his father much altered in person, but equally unchanged in affection towards him, and in that pride of birth which had ever been his besetting sin—one of the fruits of which was, frequent invectives against ill-assorted marriages between those whose rank in life was unequal. After staying with his father for a short time, Captain Fortescue hastened to pay a long promised visit to his friend Gavin Douglas, whose wife had lately died, and who was now living with his family at Eskhall. On his return, Gavin accompanied him, and remained for several weeks at Mr Fortescue's. During one of their rambles in the neighbourhood, they discovered, accidentally, that a daughter of Mr Campbell, Fortescue's former tutor, was living near them, under the protection of a maternal aunt. The young men soon sought and obtained an introduction to these ladies, by whom they were most cordially received, as friends of the departed Campbell. Mary Campbell was a beautiful, highly-accomplished girl of eighteen, perfectly natural and unaffected, and unconscious of the power of her charms. Not so young Fortescue. In vain did his more quick-sighted and prudent friend, Douglas, warn him of his danger; in vain did he remind him of the obstacle which his father's pride would offer to the prosperous indulgence of his growing passion: he renewed his visits day after day; and, though he had not spoken of love, his heart was no longer his own. She who was ever present to his thoughts, became naturally the frequent theme of his conversation, until his father remarked it, and scornfully and bitterly taunted him with his love for one so much his inferior in rank.

"Think no more of her, Philip," said he; "for, with my consent, you shall never degrade yourself by marrying one so much beneath you."

It was easier, however, for the father to command than for the son to obey: love prevailed over duty, and the young people were privately married; the only persons in the secret being the minister who officiated, and Mrs Morgan, Mary's maternal aunt. When the time of Mary's confinement approached, she removed with her aunt to an obscure village in a distant part of the country, where she died in giving birth to the hero of our tale. Her husband was inconsolable, and it was some time before he could bear to look upon the innocent cause of his bereavement. After performing the last duties to his wife, and witnessing the baptism of the infant, Philip, whom he left under the care of his grand-aunt, Captain Fortescue went over to the Continent, hoping by travel to dissipate his grief. For a few months he heard regularly of his boy's welfare from Mrs Morgan; but soon her correspondence ceased; and, alarmed by her long-continued silence, he hastened home, to ascertain the cause. On his arrival in Scotland, he heard of the sudden and dangerous illness of his father. He just reached home in time to attend his deathbed; and, by his unexpected return and filial affections, cheered his last moments, and received his dying blessing. But another trial awaited him. He set off as soon as possible to the village where Mrs Morgan resided, little dreaming of the sad intelligence that awaited him. She had died about six weeks before, bequeathing all her small property to little Philip, who had always been considered as her adopted son, and the orphan child of a distant relation.

The morning after her decease, it was discovered that the nurse and child were missing, and that an *escritoire*, which was known to have contained a large sum of money, had been broken open and ransacked. Active search had been immediately made after them at first; but was discontinued when a woman's bonnet, known to have belonged to the nurse, and part of a child's dress, were found on the banks of a neighbouring swollen stream. Poor Fortescue was in despair; but at length a gleam of hope broke upon him. The *bodies* had not been found; and his child might still be in existence. Advertisements were inserted in all the papers, offering a large reward for the discovery of the infant; but in vain. The heart-broken father lost all hope; and, settling his affairs, hastened again to the East. As it too often the case, Fortune smiled upon one who had ceased to value her favours; and he rose steadily and gradually to the highest grades of his profession. The object of envy to others, he was miserable in himself. His thoughts brooded over the past; and, at last, after nearly a thirty years' residence abroad, his heart yearned to revisit before his death the scene of his past joys and sorrows; and he was thus far on his voyage when Providence threw in his way his long-lost son.

When the General had finished his narrative, the day was too far advanced, and the feelings of the party were too much interested otherwise, to allow them to prosecute their intended visit to Constantia; they therefore returned to Cape Town, where Catherine was anxiously expecting their return.

"Catherine, my love," said her father, "I expect a friend to visit me almost immediately. He is a young man of wealth and rank; and I beg you will give him a cordial welcome, as you must look upon him as your future husband, and think no more of Philip Douglas."

"Sir!" said she, with the colour fading in her cheek; "forget Philip! Never!"

At this moment the door opened, and a servant announced, "Mr Fortescue." Great was Catherine's surprise, when she raised her eyes, and beheld Philip.

"Philip!" exclaimed she; then, looking timidly and inquiringly around, she added—"But where is Mr Fortescue?"

"Here he stands, my dear Catherine; no longer the foundling Philip Douglas, but Philip Fortescue, the son of one whom he is proud to call father. Next to the joy of discovering *him*, is that of finding that you have bestowed your love on one whose birth will cast no discredit upon yours."

"The heart acknowledges no distinctions of rank or fortune," replied she, blushing; "whether Douglas or Fortescue, you would still be my own dear Philip—the friend of my childhood—the preserver of my life."

"Nobly spoken, my fair young friend," said General Fortescue, who had entered unperceived. "Although I am not yet your father, allow me to claim a father's privilege." And he fondly kissed the blushing Catherine.

But we must hasten to the conclusion of our voyage, and of our tale. The following announcement appeared two months afterwards in the papers—"Married, at Eskhall, in Dumfriesshire, on the 13th inst., Philip, eldest son of General Fortescue of the Bengal army, to Catherine, daughter of Edward Douglas, Esq of Calcutta."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditio ary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. V.—THE CHERRY-STONE.

I HAVE always been anxious to avoid giving publicity to details of my profession which might harrow the feelings of mankind—than which, I believe, nothing is more easy of accomplishment by those who are, as I am, in the daily exercise of painful operations on the human body. Pain has been gifted to man as an inheritance, so ample, in so many forms and complexions, in so many directions, that we have only to think, and we feel it—we have only to look, and we see it—we have only to speak or act, and we rouse it. Yet so wonderfully are we constituted, that we do not hate it more than we *love* it; and, while we are all engaged in the general endeavours to banish it and conceal it, we have such a craving appetite for it, in the second-hand form of narrative, that we gloat over pictures of suffering with the feelings of an epicure, and seek and call for the stimulus of sighs, and groans, and tears, with an avidity only equalled by our desire of personal happiness. A final cause might be traced in this extraordinary feature of the human mind, if we were curious to know the ways of the Almighty, and the modes He has had recourse to, to fit us for life and prepare us for death; but this is not my object: nor, while I continue to draw pictures from life—charged with a moral that may instruct, truth that may edify, or results that may shew that there is good in evil, and wonderful deliverances from, apparently, irremediable wo—is it my desire to minister to the mysterious appetite for sorrow, according to its wants, or the abilities which a long experience might enable me to exercise with greater effect than many sensitive minds might approve.

Some time ago, I had been on a visit to a neighbouring town, where I had been called to give my professional advice to a patient who had more faith to place in me than in his neighbouring practitioners, and was returning with the stage-coach, along with a number of other passengers, when my attention was directed to a poor woman, sitting by me, with a young girl in her lap, apparently in great distress. The face of the invalid, who appeared to be about twelve years of age, was covered by a white napkin, which her mother, with a careful hand, lifted from time to time, to see how her daughter (for such she turned out to be) was affected by the motion of the vehicle. Two or three people around, from the same town, and who seemed to know the history of the pair, evinced a greater degree of anxiety and curiosity about the state of the poor girl, than might have been expected from the effects of a mere ordinary case of illness, on the minds of people of ordinary sensibilities. They spoke to each other in a low tone; and I could hear my own name mentioned in such a manner as indicated plainly that they did not know that he they were talking of was sitting beside them. Though I had not been a professional man, and had not had my curiosity roused by the mention of my name, I could not have refrained from inquiring into the state of the little victim of so much disease, and the object of so much solicitude, and, turning round, I asked the mother if she would allow me to remove the napkin, and look at her whose face it covered. She assented with a ready,

anticipative willingness; and I lifted softly the white covering. The sight was extraordinary, even to me, who was in the habit of daily seeing strange faces, strangely marked by the powers of the fell fiends that feed on the lacerated feelings of pain-stricken mortals. The girl, though twelve years of age, was reduced to the size and weight of a child of half her little period of life. Her face was as white as the snow-coloured covering which shaded it; her eyelids were closed as if she were in a deep slumber; her lips, wide apart, were as white as her cheek; and, notwithstanding of the destruction of all the natural lineaments of her countenance, there was such a regularity, or rather beauty of outline, lying in the calmness and composure of what one of fancy might conceive of a sleeping sylph, that I felt my sympathies more strongly roused by what may be termed the poetical accidents of the patient than could have been effected by the mere aspect of a cruel disease.

As I sat looking at the face of the half-lifeless being, and musing a little on the supposed nature of her complaint, previously to an inquiry at her mother for the particulars of her case, I saw rise, on a sudden, and as if by the power of some heart-born impulse, a feeling throughout all the fine attenuated muscles, that changed the angelic quietness of her countenance into the shrinking and contorted motions of a pain that seemed to bring despair on its wings, as a colleague that should strike as soon as its own pang was inflicted. I could see, also, that there was mixed with the expression of pain an indication of terror, as if the poor victim apprehended some onset of the enemy that had already laid her so low, similar to what she had been already in the habit of experiencing. In an instant it came; the whole chest, throat, and face were grasped by a convulsive spasm; and a cough, shrill and piercing, as if the breath passed with difficulty through the windpipe, accompanied by the long drawback of apparent croop, that sounded like the yell of a strangling dog, struck our ears, and produced a feeling of consternation among those who were, as yet, better acquainted with her extraordinary case than I was. I had never experienced anything of the same kind; for the symptoms that separated her complaint, whatever it was, from the most painful diseases of the windpipe known to us, were at first sight apparent. The sound prevented me from getting intelligence from her mother, who was, besides, under such alarm and anxiety, that she paid little attention to those around her. The rattling of the coach was a great aggravation of the attack; and the noise of a grating wheel, not unlike that wrung from the poor victim, mixed with it, and rendered the scene frightful. After lasting about ten minutes, the harrowing symptoms stopped suddenly, and, in a few minutes, I saw again before me the same placid countenance, with the closed eyelids, and the same lifeless appearance I had witnessed before the attack came on.

I now got an account from the mother of the cause of her daughter's distress. About two months previously, the girl had been eating cherries; and one of the stones having been involuntarily thrown back into her throat, she had endeavoured to prevent the operation of swallowing it, from a fear that it would injure her, and thus produced an irregular action among the muscles of deglutition, which

precipitated the hard substance into the windpipe. The first effects of this accident were grievous in the extreme; for the irritability of that exquisitely tender part of the body, roused the muscles to efforts of expectoration, and brought on fits of the most intense coughing, which lasted until the strength of the body having failed, the irritability of the passage died, through the pure inanition of the exhausted system. Every energy prostrated, she would be for a time quiet, until the *pabulum* of the irritability was again supplied by the mysterious operation of nature, when the same painful spasms of the muscles were renewed, with another long fit of coughing—every redrawn breath forcing its way with a shrill sound, and suggesting the fear that she was every moment on the eve of being choked. This was again succeeded by a calm, to be followed by a similar exacerbation; and thus was her life reduced to an alternation of agony, and rest without peace; and all the time the reductive process of famine (for she could scarcely swallow a morsel without the greatest pain) went on, till she was reduced to a perfect skeleton. Having been the pride of her parents, as well from her beauty as her amiable mind and manners, she was watched night and day with a solicitude scarcely less painful than her own dreadful condition; and, as both the doctors of the small town seemed irresolute as to the course to be pursued, the victim was left lying on her back, and suffering those violent and incessant attacks, for the period of six weeks, without any effectual effort being made for her relief. At last, however, the urgent nature of the case, which interested almost all the inhabitants of the place, forced the medical men to try, at last, the only evident operation that could be of any service; and an incision was made into the windpipe, with a view to get hold of the stone. Whether it was that they had calculated on wrong data, in regard to the locality of the peccant and cruel intruder, or whether the operation was otherwise unskilfully performed, I know not; but the result was, that, after putting her to so intolerable pain, they were obliged to sew up the opening they had made, and again resign her to her miserable fate. Many of the neighbours got angry at this issue, and blamed the surgeons; but no one would lend a helping hand to pay the expense of bringing a more successful operator to the spot; so that all was vain reproof, with still the same fate to the interesting sufferer. At last, the mother, who could stand no longer the appalling sight of her daughter suffering worse than thousand deaths, while a remedy on earth could be found, had come to the resolution of travelling by the coach, to the residence of one who might, by an extensive experience, be supposed to be able to yield relief; and, having got a letter of introduction to Dr —, (myself,) she was thus far on her way to my residence.

I heard the poor woman's story; and, when I took the letter from her, and told her that I was the individual she was travelling to, I could discover that her face was on the instant lighted up with hope; and even the poor sufferer on her knee lifted up her eyelids, and fixed her clear blue eye on my face, with a piteous supplication that I shall never forget. I told the mother that she should have come to me long before; but that she was not yet too late—for that I had strong hopes of being able to extricate the stone, and restore her child to health. My words fell on the ear of the patient; and I could see by the tear in her eye—the only indication she could give of her gratitude, for she was under a continual terror of moving a single muscle of her face—that she understood perfectly what I said. The passengers seemed to be as much moved as those more nearly interested, and turned their eyes on me as if I had been one gifted beyond ordinary mortals with the means of benefiting mankind. We got forward, luckily, without another attack of the ruthless foe that haunted the innocent victim with such unremitting hatred; and, on our

arrival at our place of destination, I made arrangements for the mother and daughter being lodged in a friend's house not far from my own, that my patient might be as much as possible under my eye, until I deemed it a proper time (for she required strength to perform the operation which I meditated.

I considered well what I had to do, and had no doubt of my success; but I was met by some untoward disadvantages. I found that there was no possibility of imparting to her strength—the incessant reductive workings of her spasms counteracting all my energies in this direction, and compelling me to a speedy application of my means of salvation. The prior wound had not been sufficiently cured, and the pain she had suffered under the mangling hands of her first tormentors left such a vivid impression on the tortured mind of the sufferer that, anxious as she was to get the stone extracted, and to breathe again freely the air of heaven, she shuddered at the thought of being subjected to the knife of the operator. I used every seductive artifice to soothe her fears; I shewed her the small instrument with which I would give her peace and health, and painted to her fancy the happiness she would again enjoy in romping among the green fields as in former days, freed from the terror of the slightest motion that now enslaved her. She lay and heard me, opened her eyes, sighed, and shut them again with a slight shake of her head, and a shudder, as if all arguments had failed; then, as I rose, threw after me a look of supplication, as if she wished me to try again to bring her to the point of resolution to free herself from the dreaded enemy that held her so firmly in his relentless grasp. She little knew that she was utterly powerless to resist—a child might have held her hands, while the operation was performed, against her will; but I wished to avoid compulsion; though I feared that, if she would not consent, I would be necessitated, from the gradual decay of the little remaining strength she had, to save her quickly, against her own fears of the means of her salvation.

In the afternoon of the same day I had appointed to perform the operation against her will, her mother came to me, and said that the invalid had made signs to her that she would now submit herself to my power. I lost no time in getting my assistants, and waiting upon her before the resolution should depart; but, what was my disappointment to find that she had, in the meantime, been seized with an attack of coughing, so much more serious than any she yet had, that I expected every moment to see her die of suffocation. Her mother sat beside her, weeping and looking on her with an expression of agony; and the little sufferer presented to me such an appearance of emaciation and weakness, that I doubted if I could venture to touch her with the knife, even if her relentless foe allowed her once more to escape from his grasp. The coughing and spasms again ceased; but she lay as one dead. I could scarcely feel a pulse in her, and her pale, beautiful face was as calm and benign as if she had been soothed by a divine aspiration, in place of being tortured the moment before by an agony that twisted every muscle of her countenance. She lay in this state about ten minutes, at the end of which time she again opened her eyes, and made a faint sign to her mother that she was prepared. I lost no time. In a moment I had made the incision; and so well had I calculated the locality of the stone, that I was able to seize it on the very first insertion of the nippers. I drew it out, and held it up to her eye. The sight of it operated like magic. She started up on her feet, and running a few paces, while the blood flowed plentifully down her white throat, clapped her hands and cried—"It's out—it's out!" She would have fallen instantly; for the impulse that had overcome her weakness was like a shock from a galvanic battery, that moves and in an instant leaves all dead as before,

I seized her, just as she was falling; and, having placed her again on the sofa, sewed up the wound. Before I left her I saw her breathing freely the unobstructed air. Her blue eye was illuminated with joy; and such was the immediate effect of giving a free passage to the breath of life, that one might have marked the rapid change of returning health going on throughout her whole system. In a short time she recovered, and returned home.

I saw this interesting patient three years afterwards—a fine, blooming young woman.

CHAP. VI.—THE HENWIFE.

I HAVE already, in a former paper, made some general observations on that extraordinary disease, hypochondria; and narrated a case where it presented the phasis of a false conception of the existing condition of external circumstances affecting the patient, accompanied by a terror of their operation on his fortunes and prosperity. That is a common case; and I conceive that it argues a lesser derangement of the cerebral functions, than where there occurs a total overturn of the conception of personal identity; and the conviction of *self* passes into a belief that the patient is actually something else than himself—nay, something else than a man at all—and even something else than an organized being. In both cases, there is, of course, a false conviction, and so far they range under the same head; yet, as the conception of identity is among the first, and strongest, and steadiest of all the states or acts of the mind, it may be presumed to require a stronger deranging impulse, to effect the overthrow of an idea that often remains unimpaired amidst the very wrecks of the intellect, than to produce those conditions of ordinary partial derangement of the rational or perceptive powers which daily come under our observation. Yet—and it is a curious feature of these pitiful states of the diseased mind, and one that argues ill for the superiority of man over the passing humours of a fluctuating temperament—that, wherever there is a false conception of identity, passing into an idea that the patient is something different from himself, he becomes an involuntary humourist; and, while the ordinary maniac brings tears to the eyes of the shuddering beholders, he (in his character of an animal or piece of inert matter) produces nothing but a tickling sensation of exquisite ludicrousness, passing often into broad laughter, certainly the greatest enemy of pity. Now, I approach a case of this kind with feelings entirely different; and while I thus confess that I can contemplate no state of derangement but with pity, I shall leave a grave narrative of an extraordinary instance of false conviction—true in all its details*—to be read and relished according to the fancies and humours of the public.

In a large old land of houses in — Street, commonly known by the name of the Ark, and occupied by a number of small families in the lower grade of society, an old woman, Margaret B—, had lived for many years, chiefly upon the bounty of a noble family in the country, whom she had served in the capacity of poulterer—*vulgariter*, henwife. She had been for some time ailing; and I was requested by those who took an interest in her, to pay her occasionally a visit, in the course of my professional rounds in the neighbourhood of her dwelling. I could discover, for a time, no marked complaint about her. Living lonely, she had fallen into a lowness of spirits, which, as one of her neighbours informed me, was most effectually removed or ameliorated for a time, by a recurrence to the remembered employments of her former years. She was, in

particular, curiously addicted to thinking and speaking of her former extensive establishment of fowls, at — House; and made reference to speckled favourites, by special name, as if she had treated them by distinctions of superiority, beauty, and utility, after the manner of fond mothers, who indulge a habit of fantastic favouritism among their children. I myself noticed this garrulous peculiarity; but, accustomed to all manner of eccentricities, as well healthy as morbid, I attributed her freaks to a foolish fancy, that sought for food among the cherished recesses of a fond memory of the past. By degrees, however, she underwent a considerable change; falling into moods of silent melancholy, which lasted for days, and rising from them, to luxuriate, with a fervour that engrossed her whole soul, on the favourite theme, which seemed to present every day new attractions for her moody mind.

As I passed one day along the passage that led to her humble dwelling, her nearest neighbour, a favourite gossip met me, and whispered, secretly and mysteriously, into my ear, that old Margaret, as she called her, had been, during the whole day, occupied with the regulation of an imagined establishment of her old favourites, the hens. She had been calling them to her by name; using all the technicalities of the domestic fowler's vocabulary; driving some of the more forward away, and endearingly encouraging the backward favourites to participate in the meal of scattered barley she threw upon the floor. The woman added, that she feared she was mad, and yet she laughed at the symptoms of her imputed insanity. I went forward, and, on opening the door, saw good evidence of the truth of my informant's story, in the grain that lay about in every direction; but the occupation was gone, the industrious fowler had sunk into a fit of melancholy, and sat, with a drooping head and heavy eye, looking into the fire. She was dogged and silent; and, though I touched gently the irritable chord, I got no response; the illusion was gone, and had left nothing in her mind but the darkness of a morbid melancholy, which I possessed no secret to remove.

This state of gloom lasted, I understood—for I could not get her visited in the meantime—for three days, during which she scarcely spoke to her neighbours, whose curiosity, roused by her previous conduct, supplied the place of the kindness which ought to have stimulated charitable attentions. At the end of that time, she awoke from her dream, and spoke with her accustomed sense on any subject that was started in her presence; but, during the night, she was heard again busy in her old occupation of feeding her feathered family; and several of the neighbours had even been at the pains to leave their beds and listen to her one-sided dialogue and strange proceedings, as a matter of intense curiosity. I got a second report of these acts from the same neighbours, and very properly set the patient down for one of those unfortunate beings, too common in our land, who are afflicted with temporary derangement, which sometimes shews itself in the form of a fancied presence of some familiar object, and a passing into a condition or position occupied in some prior part of the life of the afflicted individual. These objects are too common to excite in us any particular curiosity; and, having made a report to those interested in her, that I feared she was subject to temporary fits of insanity, I left to them the choice of the ordinary expedients in such cases.

Some weeks afterwards, the neighbour whom I had formerly seen, called and told me that the patient had not been attended to as her situation required, and that she had passed into a new condition, so extraordinary and incredible that she could not trust her tongue to tell it to a rational being, and therefore urged me to come and witness for the truth of what no mortal would otherwise believe, by the evidence of my eyes. I asked her to explain what she meant; but she replied by a laugh, and went away,

* We understand that another case of human incubation occurred, somewhere about the Crosscauseway or Simon Square, of Edinburgh, in Dr Gregory's time.—*Editor*.

stating that, unless I visited her soon, I might lose one of the most strange sights I had ever witnessed in the course of all my extended and long practice. I had seen so much of the wild vagaries of distempered minds, so many metamorphoses of fancied identities, and such extraordinary instances of imaginary metempsychoses and other freaks in lunatics, that I felt no more curiosity on the subject of the woman's excited report than I do in ordinary cases; but, in about an hour afterwards, I found leisure to call and make a proper judgment of what might, after all, be a matter exaggerated by the clouds of ignorance.

As I proceeded up the stair and along the passage, I observed several heads peeping out at me, and heard titters and whispers in all directions, as if the neighbours were all a-tiptoe with curiosity to enjoy the doctor's surprise at what he was to behold. The woman who had called me came running out from the middle of three or four old gossips like herself, and, holding away her head to conceal a suppressed laugh, perhaps mixed with a little affected shame, led the way before me to the patient's room. I was grave all the while, as becomes my profession; and I was, besides, displeased, as I ever am, when I see the misfortunes of my fellow-creatures made the subject of ill-timed mirth, merely because the most dreadful of all the visitations of man puts on grotesque appearances and ludicrous imperfections of fantastic characters.

When I entered, I observed no one in the room. The patient's seat by the fire was empty. A strange noise met my ear—"Cluck, cluck, cluck!" which the woman requested me to pause and listen to. It seemed to me a human imitation of the sounds of the feathered mother of a young brood in our barn-yards. I was astonished, and felt my curiosity rise as high as my conductress might desire. She proceeded to a dark corner of the room, where I saw a large tub half-filled with straw, with the poor victim sitting in it, in such a position that her head and shoulders only could be observed. I now ascertained that the strange sounds came from the occupant of the old seat of Diogenes; yet still my understanding was at fault. I stood and gazed at the spectacle before me, while my conductress seemed to enjoy my perplexity, and I heard the repressed laughter of those in the passage who had come near enough to listen to our proceedings.

"That is a strange seat, Margaret," said I. "What means this?"

I was answered by a repetition of the same extraordinary sounds—"Cluck, cluck, cluck!"

I looked gravely at the neighbour for a serious explanation. I could see no humour in the melancholy indications of drivelling madness, and added a stern expression to the gravity with which I intended to subdue a cruel and ill-timed levity. The woman felt awed and abashed, but it was only for a moment; she stooped down, and, putting her hands among the straw upon which the invalid sat, pulled out a couple of eggs. A louder repetition of the sounds, "cluck, cluck," followed, as if the incubator felt an instinctive parental anger at the temerity of the spoiler of her inchoate progeny. To satisfy her humour, the woman replaced the eggs, and the cluck ceased.

"There are two dozen of these beneath her," said the woman. "Lord ——'s gamekeeper brought them in to her four days ago, to serve for food to her. I saw her go out for the straw, and she borrowed the tub from me. She built her nest on the night afterwards, and she commenced sitting there immediately when it was completed, so that she has already sat three days and nights. We heard the 'cluck,' through the partition; and, upon coming in, found her as you now see her."

"Has she got any food?" said I, with a still graver aspect, as I saw my informant watching for a smile to repay her for her extraordinary information, and keep her in countenance.

"Nothing but some peas of barley," replied the woman, with something of seriousness assumed with great difficulty. "See here."

And she pointed to a small cap placed by the side of the tub, in which some of the grain mentioned was contained, and alongside of it was a small vessel of water.

The truth was now fully apparent. A false conviction of as extraordinary a nature as I had yet witnessed had taken entire possession of the invalid's mind. It was not difficult, on ordinary and vulgar data, to account for the peculiar turn of the malady in the case of this woman, because all her life had been spent among fowls; yet I must bear my professional testimony to the fact, that, among the many instances of false conceptions of identity I had previously witnessed, and have since seen, I never knew a case where the peculiarity of the conviction had any relation whatever to the prior habits of mind or body of the invalid. The deranging power, whatever it is, has often no respect to pre-existing habits or associations; but, on the contrary, seems to delight in a capricious triumph over all the ordinary acts of the mind, and delights to introduce an imagined form and character as widely opposed as the antipodes to the prior conceptions of the unfortunate individual. The case before me was, therefore, in this respect interesting; for as to the grotesque conditions of the metamorphosis, though calculated to produce an extraordinary effect on vulgar minds, I looked upon them, philosophically, as only another instance of the endless variety of melancholy changes to which our frail natures are exposed.

I proceeded to ask my informant if any means had been taken to draw the invalid from her position, and got for answer that several of the neighbours had come in and endeavoured to prevail upon her to renounce her charge; but that, having failed in their efforts, they had on several occasions removed her by force, and in opposition to strenuous struggles, and extraordinary sounds of mixed anger and pitiful sorrow. No sooner, however, were their backs turned, than she *flew* to her seat, and manifested the greatest satisfaction, by peculiar noises, at being again reinstated in her charge of her inchoate brood, which she was terrified would, by growing cold, be deprived of the principle of vitality she was busy in communicating to them. I tested, by my own efforts, her instinctive force of affection, by taking her by the arms and endeavouring to remove her; but she sent up such a pitiful cry, mixed with her imitative cluck and cackle, that I let her go, as much through a sudden impulse of fear as from an inability to lift her by the power of my arms. I then put down my hand, to remove some of the eggs, but was in an instant attacked, as fiercely as if the invalid had in reality been the creature she fancied herself to be; and the manner of the attack was so true to the habits of the feathered mother, that, even in the midst of my philosophy and concern for the unhappy being, I trembled for my professional gravity. She had fancied that the protuberance on her face was a beak, and used that organ with such effect, that, on missing my hand, she darted the fancied organ of defence on the corner of the tub, and produced a stream of blood, which I required to quench by the vulgar but effectual mode of placing down her back the key of the door. During all the struggle, the "cluck, cluck" was kept up, accompanied with a shaking of her clothes, as if she had been raising the feathers to evidence farther for her instinctive anger.

I now left this unhappy individual to the charge of the woman, with a recommendation (I could do nothing more) to endeavour to get her weaned from her situation and habit. Two or three of my brother practitioners having heard the circumstances, visited her during that afternoon, and witnessed, as they informed me, the same symptoms that had been seen by me. Two days afterwards, I visited her again, having, in the meantime, written to Lord ——'s

steward an account of the state of the family's poor *protégée*, with some advices as to how she ought to be disposed of. I found her still in the same position, and, if possible, more determined to defend her brittle charge. I expressed to the attendant some surprise that a human being should have been allowed to remain so long in a predicament which seemed to throw some discredit upon our vindicated superiority over the lower animals; but she answered me by stating that the patient had become so fierce and vindictive, when an attempt was made to remove her from the tub, or to take the eggs from under her, that every one was afraid to go near her. A prejudice had, moreover, taken possession of the neighbours, that she was under the power of some evil spirit; and those who ventured to look at her, as she sat clucking over her charge, gratified their intense curiosity by putting their heads in at the door. As I approached her, I saw plainly that a fiercer spirit had taken possession of her, probably from the attempts that had been made to displace her, and overcome her extraordinary instinct. Her eyes glanced as if fired by the impulse of strong anger, and her "cluck" sounded with a wilder and more unearthly sound than when I saw her before; but she spoke not a word, and, indeed, since ever she had betaken herself to the nest, she had been heard to utter no other sounds than those that are peculiar to the bird she personated. These symptoms imparted to her a most impressive and terrific aspect, altogether incompatible with any feeling of the ludicrous. I have seen mad people in every mood; and, although I have observed them assume attitudes and looks more suggestive, of course, of the terror of personal injury, I am quite free to confess that I never saw any one whose appearance was so productive of those indefinable feelings of pity, fear, and awe, so often roused within the walls of an asylum. Nature was not only changed—it was overturned; human feelings represented the instincts of the brutes that perish; and the organs, motions; and attitudes of our species, were made to subserve, with an intense anxiety that was painful to behold, the impulses of creatures in the lowest grade of creation. I confess that my feelings were, on this occasion, harrowed; and, if I were to search for any feature in the spectacle before me, more than another, that tended to produce in me this effect, I would say that it was the hideous intensity of the instinctive anxiety that beamed in her dull sullen eye, as I proceeded forward to the place where she covered and defended her charge, aided by the horrid interminable cluck that ground my ears with its unnatural sound.

I was obliged to leave her again, still in the same predicament; for the woman declared that she, for her part, would not again meddle with her, unless assisted by her neighbours; and they, possessed of the terror of the evil spirit, would not approach her. I got her, however, to promise to give her some meat; but this, she said, was of no easy accomplishment, for the invalid was possessed of the idea that nothing ought to be eaten by one in her "particular situation," but what a hen might pick up in its bill and swallow. She had discarded broths and butcher meat; and the few crumbs she had picked up off a platter that had been placed before her, would not suffice to keep in her life.

That same evening, an extraordinary scene took place, in the house of this demented creature. I had not been informed that she had any near relations; but it happened that, when she was still in the same extraordinary position, an only son, a fine open-hearted fellow, a sailor, who had been absent from her for seven years, arrived, buoyant with hope, and fired with desire to see his mother happy and well. Good heavens! what a sight was presented to him! I witnessed not the harrowing meeting; but the old neighbour was present, and attempted an inadequate description of it to me. She did not know her son; and

when he approached her, to greet her with a son's love, she exhibited the same symptoms of fury, and clucked the dreadful sounds of her defensive anger in his agonized ear. What he saw, and what he heard, opened up to him the hideous mystery. He rushed out of the house, and had not again returned.

Next day the butler of the family who took charge of her called on me. I accompanied him to the house, when one or two of the neighbours were prevailed upon to lend their assistance in getting her removed by force. The scene that followed was an extraordinary one. She resisted them to the last; as the struggle increased, her eye became more fiery, and her unearthly screams more loud and discordant—passing through all the notes of an incensed hen-mother, and attaining, at times, to the harsh scream which one may have heard from that feathered biped, when separated from her brood, and pursued by a band of urchins. The task of mere removal was not a difficult one, and was soon accomplished. Some curious observer examined the eggs, and found that not one of them was broken, so carefully had she performed her supposed duty of incubation. If she had sat the requisite time, there is not a doubt they would have been duly and legitimately hatched.

Such are the details of this extraordinary case. It is needless to say that it may transcend human belief. That is nothing, because belief is too much regulated by experience. I waited on the poor woman afterwards. The idea haunted her for about two months, and then gave place to some other wild conceptions, that in their turn gave way to others of a more rational character. Her son returned, and saw, with pleasure, the change that had taken place upon his parent. Latterly she became perfectly rational; but, if any one alluded in the remotest degree to her position in the tub, she shuddered with horror, and evaded the subject, as if it had terrors too dreadful to be borne.

CHAP. VII.—THE ARTIST.

IN the course of my practice, I have paid some attention to the effects of the two great stimulants, whisky and to bacco, on the bodies and habits of the votaries of excitement. There is a great difference in the action of the two substances; and I know no more curious subject for the investigation of the metaphysical physician, than the analysis of the various effects upon the mind produced by all the stimulating narcotics which are used by man, for the purpose of yielding pleasure or mitigating pain. I have myself committed to paper some thoughts upon this subject, which may yet see the light; and many of the conclusions I have deduced from my reasoning and experience, may be found to be curious, as well as instructive. I have found, for instance, that people of sanguine temperaments are greater drinkers than smokers; and those of a dull, phlegmatic cast are greater smokers than drinkers. A man that smokes will almost always drink; but a man that drinks will not always, nor indeed often, smoke. The two habits are often found combined in the same individual; but it is, notwithstanding, a fact, that, if the smoker and drinker could always command the spirit, he would very seldom or never trouble himself with the other. I am led into these remarks by a case that occurred in my practice not very long ago, where the two habits joined in an extraordinary manner their baneful influences in closing the mortal career of one of those unfortunate votaries.

I was first called to William G——, a very ingenious artist, when he lay under a severe attack of what we call *delirium tremens*, or temporary insanity, produced by or consisting of (for the proximate cause is often the disease itself) highly irritated nerves, the consequence of a succession of drinking fits. I found that he had been "on the

ball," as they say, for three weeks, during which time he had drunk forty-two bottles of strong whisky. Like many other people of genius, whose fits of inspiration (for artists have those fits as well as poets) make them work to excess, and leave them, as they wear out, the victims of *ennui* and lassitude, he was in the habit of applying himself to his business with too much assiduity, for the period, generally, of about a month. Exhausted by the excitement of thought and invention kept up too long, he fell regularly down into a state of dull lethargy, which seemed to be painful to him. He felt as if there was a load upon his brain. A sense of duty stung him, after a few days' idleness, poignantly; and, while he writhed under the sting of the sharp monitor, he felt that *he could not* obey the behest of the good angel; and yet could not explain the reason of his utter powerlessness and incapacity for work. If he had allowed this state, which is quite natural, and not difficult of explanation, to remain unalleviated by stimulants for a day or two, he would have found that, as the brain again collected energy, he would have been relieved by the *vis medicatrix* of Nature herself; but he had no patience for that; and drink was, accordingly, his refuge and relief. The first glass he took was fraught with the most direful power—it threw down the flood-gates of a struggling resolution; the relief of the new and artificial impulse raised his spirits; another application inflamed his mind; and then bottle after bottle was thrown into the furnace, until the drink-fever laid him up, and brought upon him the salutary nausea which overcame the rebellious desire. This system had continued for more than ten years. He had been gradually getting worse and worse; and, latterly, he had resigned himself to the cognate influence of the narcotic weed.

When I got an account of this young man—for he was still comparatively young—and saw some of the exquisite pieces of workmanship, both in sculpture and painting, he had executed, I felt a strong interest in his fate. He was, indeed, one example out of many where I had contemplated, with tears that subdued my professional apathy, genius, commonly supposed to be the rarest, if not the highest gift of mortals, working out, by some power inherent in itself, the ruin of the body, mind, and morals of its possessor. This victim I saw lying under the fell power of one of the most frightful of diseases, brought on by his own intemperance; and not far from his bed lay a half-finished Scripture-piece—a work which, if finished, would have brought him money and fame. He presented the ordinary appearances of his complaint. Emaciated and pale, he laboured under that union of ague and temporary madness which *delirium tremens* exhibits. All the motions of his nerves seemed to have been inverted; those servants of the will had got a new master, which kept them, by his diabolical power, in continual action. His arms were continually in motion, aiming at some object present or ideal; but, instead of making direct for it, vibrating in sudden snatches backward and forward; his legs were also in continual agitation—kicking up the bed-clothes, then being stretched forth as if held by a spasm; and his eyes, red and fiery, seemed to fly from object to object, as if the vision of a thing burned the orbs, and made them roll about for a resting-place. Thousands of *muscæ volitantes*, or the imaginary flies that swarm round the heads of victims of this complaint, tormented him by their ideal presence, and kept his snatching, quivering hands in continual play, till, by seizing the bed-posts, he seemed, though only for a moment, to get a relief from his restlessness. He knew no one; and sudden burning thoughts flashing upon his heated brain, wrung from him jabbering exclamations, containing intensive words of agony or mirth. The rest of his convulsed muscles was only purchased at the expense of such a morbid increase of the sense of hearing, that the scratch of a

pin on the wall pained him as much as if the operation had been performed on his brain—a symptom often so strongly marked in regular brain-fever, and often detected in this last stage of the drunkard's disease. The sense of the pupil of the eye was of the same morbid character. A stream of light produced in him a scream, suggesting the analogy of the sound of the night-bird, the owl, when light is suddenly let into a nest among the young brood. The delights of life, sunbeam and sound, were transformed into poisons; so that his own vivid pictures, or the most melodious of songs, would have produced a convulsive spasm. Food was nauseous to him, and water swallowed by gulps, in the intervals of spasms, was all that could be taken without pain, to quench the burning fires within.

Such is a faithful picture of a disease produced by ardent spirits. I recommend it to the votaries of intemperance. The moment I saw the patient I knew his disease; and the particulars furnished to me by an old woman who kept his house only corroborated my opinion. The remedies in such cases are well known to us, and were instantly applied. He remained in the same state nearly all the next day; but began to shew symptoms of recovery on the morning following. Nature prevailed, and he got gradually better; having, while his weakness was on him, a strong *antipathy* to ardent spirits—a symptom of the drunkard I have often observed. The interest I felt in him made me call often; and I had a long conversation with him on the philosophy and *moralé* of his intemperance. He went himself to the very depths of the subject; and I found, what I have often done, in regard to other drunkards, that no one knew better the predisposing causes, the resisting energies, the consequences—everything connected with the fearful vice; but all his philosophy and reasoning ended, as these often do, in the melancholy sentence that "there are powers within us greater than reason or philosophy."

After the fearful attack he had had, he remained sober for about a month, and got a great length with his Scripture-piece. I called often to see his progress, to inspire him in a continuation of his efforts, and support him in his self-denial. Matters seemed to be progressing well, and I hinted as much to his housekeeper; but she shook her head, and replied, calmly, "that she had seen the same scene acted, ten times a-year, for ten years." She added "that he would break out again, in a day or two;" and, accordingly, on the next day, I discovered he had begun to lag in his work, to draw deep sighs, and to exhibit a listlessness, all premonitory signs of a relapse. Knowing that he was at times a smoker, I suggested to him the trial of tobacco, at this critical period. He said, he had tried that remedy before; but acknowledged that perhaps he had not carried it far enough. I therefore set him a-going; advising him to keep to it steadily, for I had succeeded once before, in a very extreme case, in drawing out the one vice by the other—undoubtedly a lesser. So he began well, and persevered for about a week, during which time he had also got pretty well on with his works, having finished, in that time, two of the most difficult heads in the whole piece.

I had now some greater hopes of him, and told the housekeeper to do what she could to aid me in my efforts. Two days afterwards I called, and met the old woman at the door. She shook her head ominously as I passed her. I opened the door, and went in. On a chair opposite to his picture, sat the artist, with his pallet in his left hand—the brush had fallen from his right—his head was hung over the back of the chair, and his cravatless neck bent almost to breaking. Beside him sat a bottle empty: there was no glass beside it. I took up the vessel, and smelt it. It had been filled with whisky. I now looked at the picture. It was destroyed. His burin had been drawn over it like a mop, and dashed backwards and forwards, as if he had taken a

spite at it, and been determined to put an end, in one moment, to the work of six months!

There was now no occasion for a doctor; a drunkard fairly broken out is far beyond our help or care. I left him, and told the housekeeper to call and tell me when the fit was over. She did so; and I called again. I found him sitting on the same chair, perfectly sober, but so thin and wan that he seemed like one taken from that place "where one inheriteth creeping things, and beasts, and worms." His languid blood-shot eye was fixed on the picture, and tears were stealing down his white cheeks. When I entered, he held his hands up to his face, to cover the shame that mantled on his cheek, and deep sobs heaved his bosom. I was moved, and sat down beside him without speaking a word.

"O God!" he exclaimed, "what am I to do with myself? Is there no remedy against this vice?—has the great Author of our being thus left us with an inheritance of reason, and a power that sits like a cockatrice on our brains, and laughs at the God-sent gift? See—see the fruit of six months' hard labour! I expected fame from that, and money. I would have got both. The fiend has triumphed. When I awoke from my dream, I heard his laugh behind the canvass. I am undone."

And he wrung his hands like a demented person, and sobbed bitterly. I was still silent; for any words I could have uttered would have destroyed the impressiveness of the scene before me. When I had allowed the sensation of remorse to sink deeper into him, I spoke:—

"I am glad that you have wrought this destruction," said I. "You have produced an antidote to your own poison—let it work. I have no medicines in my laboratory that have half the efficacy of that once splendid emanation of your genius—now the monument of your folly, and to be, as I hope, the prophylactic to save you from ruin and death."

"Ah, God help me! it is a dear medicine," groaned he. "I feel that I never can produce such a work again."

And he hung down his head as if the blackest cloud that covers hope had thrown over him its dark shadow. I again observed silence, and he remained with his head on his breast for several minutes, without exhibiting a symptom of life beyond the deep sigh that raised his ribs.

"You must hang that picture upon the wall," said I. "It is the most valuable you ever painted. Look at it daily, and, before the sun goes down, begin another on the same subject."

My words produced no effect upon him, and indeed I knew that he was in a condition that entirely excluded external aid to his revolving thoughts. He was in the pit of dejection, which lies on the far side of the elevation of factitious excitement—a place of darkness, where the scorpions of conscience sting to madness, and every thought that rises in the gloomy, bewildered mind appears like a ghost that walks at midnight over open graves and the bones of the dead. To some, these spectres have spoken in such a way as to rouse the dormant principles of energetic amendment, that lie beyond the reach of precept, or even that of conscience; but to the greater part of mankind this place of wailing and gnashing of teeth yields nothing but an agony that only tends to make them climb again the delusive mount from which they had fallen, though only again to be precipitated into the dreadful abode where, in the end, *they must die*. I knew that words had no effect upon my patient. I rose accordingly, and left him to the unmitigated horrors of his situation, in the expectation that he might be one of the few that derive from it good. I had no fear of his falling again, immediately, into another fit; for the period of nausea was only begun, and he was safe in the keeping of a rebelling stomach, whatever he might be in that of burning conscience.

He remained as his housekeeper told me, in that state of

depression for two days, often recurring to the monument of his folly, the destroyed Scripture piece; weeping over it, and ejaculating wild professions of amendment, clenched by oaths in which the blessed name of God was made the guarantee of the strength of a resolution which the demon of his vice was standing with glaring eyes ready to overturn. I have no faith in outspoken resolves of wordy declamation: not sure of ourselves, we fortify our weak resolutions through the ear and the eye, by spoken and written adjurations, and promises of amendment. After the medicine of dejection had wrought its utmost effect, I waited upon him. He was arrayed in melancholy and gloom; but the agony of the lowest pit was gone, and he stood on a dangerous middle place, between a temporary fulfilment of his resolutions and a relapse. With a patient of this sort I never *continue* a system of argumentation and deportation. I am satisfied it does injury; for it reaches the moral sore only to irritate it, and an argument surmounted, or sworn resolution vanquished, is a triumph and a *pabulum* to the spirit of the foe greater than years of domination. I told him, what he confessed frankly, that he stood, for a day or two, on the dangerous ground from which he had so often fallen, and requested him authoritatively, as if I had assumed the reins of his judgment which he had thrown over the back of his bad angel, to begin instantly another painting, and try once more the American weed. Command sometimes, persuasion never succeeds with a drunkard. He set about stretching his canvass, and put on the first coat of the foundation of his picture. I told him I would call again in a week; but that, as it was not a part of my profession to reclaim drunkards, I would discontinue my efforts in his behalf, if I found that, at the end of that time, he had swerved from his resolution. The sense of degradation in the mind of these lost votaries of intemperance, while it inclines the unhappy individuals often to resign themselves to the command (from which, however, they often break) of those they respect, responds keenly to the manifestations of disregard and loss of esteem with which they are visited in consequence of their failing. He felt strongly the manner of my treatment, and I thought and observed even tears working for vent from his still blood-shot eyes.

"You, and all good men, have a privilege to despise him who has not the approval of his own conscience," he said. "I could bear your persuasive reproof; but the thought that I have rendered myself unworthy of the trouble of one I esteem, to save me from the ruin I have madly prepared for myself, sends me to that deep pit of despair, from which I have even now struggled to get free. You saved me from death; and I was no sooner cured than I plunged headlong again into the gulf from which my disease was derived. I have made myself an ingrate, and a beggar; spurned your advice, and destroyed the work from which I expected honour and reward. I see myself as through a microscope, and you have diminished me still farther. Heaven help me!"

"You have powers within you, sir," replied I, with affected sternness, "through the medium of which you might have surveyed yourself as through the telescope; and your size would not have been greater than that potential moral magnitude to which you might long ere now have arrived, and which is still within your own power. I exhort not—I leave you to yourself—*In te omne recumbit*."

"I know it, I know it," he cried, with a swelling throat. "My ruin or my salvation lies within my own breast. For ten years I have resolved, and re-resolved; and it is only three days since I destroyed that picture, and rose with fiery eyes and a burning heart to survey the consequences of my vice. O God! where is this to end? You saw what I suffered when extended on that bed, racked with pain; my brain on fire; my intellect overturned; my muscles twisted by spasms; my eyes and ears tortured by imaginary sights and sounds; with Conscience in the back-ground, waiting

till Reason should bring to the avenging angel its victim. In that every mortal on earth might have found a lesson, but a drunkard. I found none. The very fire of my fever filled my soul with a thirst which precipitated me again deeper than ever in my old sin. I have got my senses again; and my blood-shot eyes have surveyed, and shall survey, that sad monument of my vice and folly—that child of my dreams, with which my pregnant fancy travailed with a delightful pain, and to which my fond hopes of honour, wealth, and happiness were directed—now, alas! dead—killed by my rebellious hand. From that dead body I have extracted a virtue which, with the powers of the amulet, shall guard me more powerfully than the lesson of my bodily agony from further destruction. Believe me, sir. Aid me once again. If I fail this time, discard me for ever."

As he finished, he hung his head over the chair, and covered his face with his hands, to hide from me his agonized face. I told him that it was my intention to try what effect the destroyed picture would have upon him.

"You have made a fair beginning," said I. "Persevere—keep to the new picture to-morrow and to-morrow. I shall call in a week."

"You shall find me at work, and an altered man," he said; and a blush came over his face as he tried to open some subject to me of a delicate nature. "I—I have for some time thought," he continued, "that the way in which I live—a bachelor, with few domestic enjoyments—has a part of the blame of this horrid vice that has taken possession of my soul. Had I a wife, my sensibilities would be fed, my *ennui* relieved, my home made comfortable, and my ardour for my profession keeping my mind in the delightful bondage of fancy, I might thus satisfy all the cravings of my feelings, and be independent of the liquid fire and the envenomed weed."

"You are a perfect *Æsculapius*," replied I. "Had I lectured to you for a week from the manual of Galen, I could not have suggested a better medicine; but, mark you, I know not if you have properly described the manner of its operation. A wife will do all for you that you have described; but there is a greater virtue in her; and that is, that she *ought* to produce in you a salutary terror of making her unhappy. This is a part of love—and I know no greater conservative element of the pure passion. If you fall again into your old habits, you will render an innocent individual miserable; and that thought ought to make you fly the poison as if it were distilled with the herbs of Medea or Circe."

"Oh, I feel it, I feel it," he replied; "and am thankful to you for the suggestion. Like Pygmalion, I fell in love with a face that I sculptured last year. Every line I chiselled was engraven on my heart, and I have dreamed of her ever since. She is herself an artist, and paints beautifully. Our sympathies are kindred; and, though I never declared my passion, from a fear that my bad reputation for inebriety may have reached her, I have *looked* it, and have reason to think that I may succeed."

"Try," said I; "and I shall then have every hope of you."

I left him, and heard some time afterwards that he had married a very pretty young lady, the daughter of an old artist that lived in the same town. It was not, however, (as I understood,) till he had made a solemn promise and *oath* to the old gentleman, who was possessed of some eccentricities, that he would renounce his habit of drinking, that the young female artist was yielded to him. I felt still the same interest in the man of genius, and called shortly after the marriage, to see how his *medicine* had wrought. I found him as happy as the day was long. His picture was going on even during the honeymoon, and seemed to reflect a part of the sweet luminary's glory. The

young wife, who was really pretty, and imbued with a strong love for both the artist and his art, looked over his shoulder as he proceeded with his work. I was delighted with the couple, and told him that the moment he had finished the picture he was occupied with, I wished him to give me a portrait of "the doctor." He promised; and I left them, in the confidence—at times interfered with by my experience of the insidious power of the demon—that he would never again have recourse to his old habit.

"To go to see a cousin" is, as all married people know, a very pretty and very usual mode of keeping up the flame of love in the hearts of the young worshippers of Hymen. Mrs G—— went, accordingly, (so I learned at a future period,) to see a friend who lived in the country. The artist was left again by himself, and promised to his loving wife, who left him with a kiss of true affection, that he would have the piece he was engaged on finished by the time she returned, when he was to commence with my portrait.

"Never fear, Maria," he said, as he embraced her. "You have made me a new man. God bless you for it! I am happy now. Oh, that blessed thought, so opportunely confirmed by Dr ——! I shall paint him like an angel for it."

And, laughing through his tears, he again kissed her, and she left the house with the intention of returning in a week, with an affection increased, and the satisfaction of seeing the painting imbued with all the glory of his high genius.

I was, in the meantime, and while these love matters were going on, engaged in the pursuits of my profession. I knew nothing of them, but wished them happy, and thought all was right. I was sitting, after a day's labour, in my study. It was about eleven o'clock at night. I was startled by the artist's old housekeeper, who burst in upon me in great terror. Her eyes were absolutely starting from their sockets; and she stood before me with her mouth open, but without being able, for a time, to utter a syllable.

"What is the matter?" said I.

"Come to my master, for heaven's sake!" she cried, after some struggles of the throat. "He is vomiting fire."

"What can the woman mean?" said I, as I took up my hat, and hastened to the victim.

I soon found a sufficient explanation. The poor artist was lying on his back on the floor. There were a great number of empty bottles scattered *per aversionem* round him. A blue, flickering flame was burning in his mouth, which was as black as a piece of coal. His eye-balls were turned up, and convulsive movements shook his frame. I was at no loss for the cause. A tobacco-pipe and a candle were beside him. After he had filled his stomach with whisky for six days, and drunk no fewer than thirteen bottles, he had, in endeavouring to light his pipe, set fire to the spirit that lay on his lips and in his mouth—the flame sought its way down the pharynx till it came to the full body of liquid in his stomach, and all was, in a moment, on fire. I need not dwell on the issue of this case. The poor artist was dead in an hour. Where was his resolution? This is no overcharged picture of the effects of drunkenness



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND

THE MAIDEN FEAST

HE who has been present at a real Maiden, or Scotch feast of harvest-home, if it should happen that he belongs to the caste that makes the light fantastic toe the fulcrum of the elegant motions of the quadrille, and Hogarth's line of beauty the test of the evolutions of modern grace, might wish that the three sisters had long ago resigned their patronage of the art of dancing, and left the limbs of man, and their motions, to the sole power of the spirit of fun and good humour. Centuries have passed away since first the Maiden called forth the salient energies of the harvest-weary hinds and rosy-cheeked damsels of Scotland. We have only now amongst us the ghost of the old spirit-stirring genius of "the farmer's ha'." The modern vintage feast is only a shadow of the old *Cerealia*—the festival of festivals, as it has been called—at which the young and the old of ancient Greece and Rome resigned themselves to the power of the rosy god, and the *nil placet sine fructu* was seen in every bright eye, heard in every glad voice, and listened to in every tripping measure. The Scotch Maiden was once what the vintage feasts of the Continent were, and still are. The hinds and maids of one "town" were present at the harvest-home of another; reciprocal visits kept up the spirit of the enjoyment; the fields and farmers' ha's resounded with the merry pipe; the whirling reel mixed up the dancers in its "uniform confusion;" the flowing bicker was "filled and kept fou;" kisses, "long and loud," vindicated a place in the world of musical sound; and the Genius of Pleasure ran away with heart and soul to her happy regions—declaring that, for one solitary night in the year, the power of sorrow should have no authority over mournful man. The Maiden of Cairnkibbie, a farm on the property of Foulden—too long ago for the mention of a specific period, but while Maidens (to descend to a pun) were still in the height of their beauty and bloom—was one of the most joyous scenes that ever graced the green, or made the rafters of the barn ring with "hey and how rohumbelow." The farmer, William Hume—some far-off friend of the Paxton family—was rich, as things went in those days; and a gaucy dame, and a fair daughter, Lilly, blessed him with affection and duty. No lass ever graced a Maiden like Lilly Hume; and no free farmer's wife ever extended so hearty a patronage to the feast of fun as did the sleek and comfortable guidwife of Cairnkibbie. The pretty "damysell" was as jimp as "gillie"—

"As ony rose her rude was red,
Her lire was like the lillie;"

and far and near she defied all manner of bold competition in those charms that go to deck the blooming maids of Scotland. Natural affection made her the pride of her parents; and a simplicity that did not seem to have art enough to tell her of her own beauty, endeared her to those who might have been expected to have been smitten with envy, or crossed with a hopeless passion.

There was many a lass "as myld as meid" at the Maiden of Cairnkibbie, and many a Jock, and Steenie, and Robyne, as braw as yellow locks brushed bolt upright in the face of heaven could make any of God's creatures.

But many of the merry-makers did not trust to such ornaments of nature: for Steenie Thornton, from the town of Kelton, the gay lover of Jess Swan from the same town, had his locks tied behind with a yellow ribbon got from her fair hand, and his "pumps" boasted the same decoration; the sprightly Will Aitken, the best hand at a morris-dance in all the Merse, had his jacket "browden" with "fowth o' roses" stuck into the button-holes by Jean Gillies from Westertown; the fiercest wrestler of the Borders, Jock Hedderick, who cherished Bess Gibson, pushed forward his bold breast, to exhibit to the goggle eyes of wondering admiration a vest sewed by her delicate fingers at intervals stolen from cheese-making; and Pat Birrel, the noted scaumer, who was accounted more than "twa hen clokkis" by Kirsty Glen the henwife's daughter of Earlston, lifted his feet high in mid-air, to shew the gushets in his hose wrought by her lily hands. Nor did the screechin gilkie lack ornaments to set off their fair persons. Some had bright yellow gloves of "raffal right;" and many, with kirtles of "Lincome light, weel prest wi' mony plaits," pulled the trains in most menacing bundles through the pocket-holes, to shew at once how bright was their colours, and how many a "breid" was wasted in their amplitude. Many had ornaments that tongue could not describe—because they were the first of their kind, and required a new vocabulary to do justice to their beauties. But, ornamented or plain, the revellers were all alike filled with the spirit of the Maiden; and, if their "Tam Lutar," the piper, did not skirl them up to the point of enjoyment to which they all struggled, and danced, and drank, and screamed to get, sure it was that no fault was attributable to the merry-makers themselves: nor was the guidman's daughter, Lilly Hume, less joyous than the merriest. Although at her father's harvest-feast she was accounted a lady, she was the humblest of the "hail menyie;" and never refused to draw up through her pocket-holes the ends of her falling yellow kirtle, as a preparation for another reel, at the supplicatory bend or bow of the humblest hind, albeit he was adorned with neither bright crimson nor ochre yellow.

The "Tam Lutar" of the feast—a blind piper, who began to play when he first felt the incipient effects of the first bicker, blew stronger as the fumes of the potation rose higher, declined as the liquid impulse fell, and even stopped when the drink entirely sunk—was well supplied with the "piper's coig," a girded vessel of jolly good ale, that lay beside him, and was ever and anon filled, as the dancers felt the music beginning to lag in spirit. Away they flew, to the airs of "Gillquhisker," "Brum on tul," "Tortee Solee Lemendow," and other good old tunes, now forgotten, though their names are mentioned by Sir James Ingles; the resilient heels spurned the earth; the fore part of the foot, where the spring lies, dealt out those tremendous thuds on the suffering floor which heretofore were reckoned the true and legitimate soul of dancing, and now, alas! displaced by the sickly *slip* of the French grace; the "dancing whoop" rung around, inspired every soul, and lightened every heel; Jock Splaefut "bobbit up wi' bends;" and Jenny set to him, and "beckit," and set again, and turned, and away glided through the mazes of the reel—

"For reeling there nicht nae wench rest;"

and came back, and set and "beckit" again; till, "forfochtin faynt" with pure dancing toil, the reelers gave place to the country-dancers, who toiled and *swat* in the same degree for the period of their sweet labours. Then was the breathing time in the far corners appropriated to the cooling tankard, the dew of which left on the panting lips ran a considerable risk of being dried up by the heat of love; elicited from the kiss that smacked of love and ale.

At a corner in the end of the room, a crowd had collected; and some high words were passing between Will Aitken and Jock Hedderick, on a question that seemed to interest the dancers. Those standing about were washing down large mouthfuls of bannocks by draughts of strong beer, while they wiped the sweat from their brows, and listened to the subject in dispute. At intervals some one was heard at the door, playing and singing.

"He played sae schill, an' sang sae sweet,"

that Lilly Hume felt interested in the musician. He was a beggar, who boldly claimed admittance to the Maiden, by what he called the "auld rights o' the gaberlunzies of Scotland," who were declared entitled to enter into the feast of the harvest-home, to dance thereat, and drink thereat, and kiss the "damysells" thereat, with as much freedom as the gayest guest. This demand was resisted by Jock Hedderick, who besides disputed the authority of the ancient custom; which, on the other hand, was upheld by Will Aitken, whose supple tongue was so powerful over his opponents that

"He muddelt them down like ony mice;"

and, notwithstanding the terror of the scaumer's arm, prevailed upon the guidman and the company to hold sacred the rights of hospitality of the land, and admit the "pauky auld carle," with his pipes and his wallets. As soon as the decision was given, Lilly ran to the door, and, taking the gaberlunzie by the hand, brought him in. A loud laugh resounded throughout the room, to the profit of the proud and merry dancers, and at the expense of the jolly beggar, who, young and stalwart, and borne down by sundry appendages, containing doubtless meal and bread, "cauk and keil," "spinnals and quhorles," and all the et-ceteras of the wallet, stood before them, and raised in return such a ranting, roaring laugh, as well apparently at himself as his company, that, by that one effort of his lungs, he made more friends than many a laughtér-loving pot companion might make in a year. Then in an instant he struck this merry-maker on the back, and slapped that on the shoulder, and kissed the skirling kitties with such a jolly and hearty spirit of free salutation, that he even added flame to the already burning passion of frolic, and raised again the rafter-shaking laugh, till it drowned all the energies of Lutar himself, albeit his coig had that instant been filled.

But this was only vanity, while the stomach of the jolly gaberlunzie was as yet empty. A large stoup was brought to him by Will Carr, a good-looking young man of gentle demeanour, the only person who in that pairing assembly seemed to want his "dow." A shade of melancholy was on his cheek, and, as he offered the gaberlunzie the stoup, he cast an eye on Lilly, the meaning of which seemed to be read in an instant by the beggar.

"Ha! ha!" cried the latter; "ye are the true welcomer, my braw youth. Thae wild chieis an' their glaikit hizzies wad fill the beggar wi' the sound o' his ain laugh, as if he were a pair o' walking bagpipes. But, ho, man, this is sour yill.

"The bridegroom brought a pint of ale,
And bade the piper drink it.

"Drink it?" quoth he, "and it so staille!
Ashrev me, if I think it!"

Ye've anither barrel in the corner yonder—awa!—the beggar maun hae the best.

"This Maiden night it is his right,
And, faith he winna blink it."

And so he cadgily ranted and sang, swearing that the best ale and the prettiest lips in the whole house should that night be at his command.

While Will Carr brought him ale out of another cask, Lilly Hume took away his wallets, and laid them in a window-sole at his back. Having taken a waught of the ale so long that the bystanders looked on with fear, lest he might never recover his breath again, he returned the stoup empty to Will, telling him to fill it again, as he intended to assist the legitimate Lutar in blowing up the spirits of the company—a work which would require "fowth o' yill." Without farther preface, he blew up his bags with a skirl that seemed to shake the house, and, dashing fearlessly into the time, poured so much joyous sound into the thick air of the heated apartment, that the weary-limbed dancers threw off their languor, and fell to it again with a spirit that equalled that of their first off-set. But his musical occupation did not prevent his attention to the looks and actions of Lilly Hume and Will Carr.

"How dinna ye dance, hinny?" said he, in a low voice to Lilly. "How dinna ye dance, man?" he repeated, as he turned his head to Will. "Think ye yer sittin there's a compliment to me, wha am blawin awa my lungs here, for the very purpose o' makin ye dance?"

The two young people looked at each other, and then at the guidman, who sat at a little distance.

"Tell me the reason, my bonny hinny," he added; and, as he blew again, leant his ear to hear the answer. "Eh! come now, my white lily," he persisted. "I'm a safe carle, and can spae fortunes as weel as blaw up thae green bags wi' thriftless wind. I may tell ye o' a braw lot, if ye'll only open yer lips and gie me some o' yer secrets."

"My father winna let me dance wi' Will Carr," at last replied Lilly, blushing from ear to ear.

"How! how!" answered the gaberlunzie, taking the pipes suddenly frae his mouth—"no let ye dance wi' a decent callant, the bonniest hensure o' the hail menyie! What crime has he committed, hinny? Eh?"

"He's puir," answered Lilly, innocently.

"Ha! a red crime that, Lilly," answered he; "if he had killed a score o' God's creatures in a Border raid, he nicht hae been forg'en; but wha forgies poverty? But do ye like Will Carr, hinny?"

"My father and mither say sae," answered Lilly.

"Ay, ay—I see whar the wind blows," said the gaberlunzie. "But ye *will* dance wi' him. I, as a beggar, hae a right to the fairest hand o' the maiden—yer father daurna refuse ye to me; an' let Will tak yon quean wi' the yellow ribbons in her wimple, an' we'll a' mix in ae reel. Will, man, awa an' ask yon bloomin hizzy wi' the rose rude to dance wi' ye."

Will obeyed; and the beggar, having brought the tune to a termination, stepped boldly up into the middle of the floor, holding by the hand the fair Lilly Hume; while Will, with his blushing quean, Bess Gordon, took their stations opposite.

"Up wi' the 'Hunts o' Cheviot,' Tam," cried the beggar; "an' play as if ye wad blaw yer last. Gie him yill there, an' I'll blow for him a hail hour, if he gars the roof-tree o' Cairnkibbie dirl to the gaberlunzie's dance."

The expectation of a merry bout brought others to the floor, and even the guidman and guidwife of Cairnkibbie, themselves, rose and "buckled to the wark," as cleverly as the youngest gipsy of the whole assembly. Then up blew the "Hunts o' Cheviot," in the quickest of Tam's ale-inspired manner, and away banged the jolly gaberlunzie as if the spirit of Cybele's priests had seized his heart;

“and like a lyon lap,” as if he would have forelected Lightfute himself, and “counterfeited Frans.” He clapped his hands, till the echoes came back from the roof; and the exhilarating hoogh! hoogh! which can only be given forth by the throat of a Scotchman, when good liquor has wet it and fired the brain that moves it, was heard by every ear, and felt by every heart. The very piper was delighted with the ranting chield, and ever, as his clap, and hoogh! hoogh! resounded through the barn, the yells of the pipes seemed to rise higher and higher, and echoes of the same sounds came from the imitative spirits of the dancers.

“Hurra for the gaberlunzie!” shouted Will Aitken.

“The jolly beggar, for ever!” cried Steenie Thornton; and the smiles of the hizzies, and occasional slaps on the back, administered to the jolly roisterer, as they met and passed him in the midst of the reel, testified their most perfect satisfaction with the king of his tribe.

“Here, Will, here, man,” whispered the beggar, as he rioted in his wild humour, and twirled Will Carr about to face Lilly, while he left her for Bess Gordon. “Set to her, man, and dinna spare a kiss and a good squeeze o’ her hand, as ye see the auld anes’ backs to ye.”

And then he drowned his remark with his hoogh! hoogh! sprung up yard high, and clapped his knees opposite the blooming Bess, who would not have given her jolly new partner for a’ the Will Carrs in Scotland.

“Change the measure, Tam,” cried the beggar, as he foresaw the termination of “The Hunts of Cheviot.” “Up wi’ King William’s Note, man. Fill his coig, ye lazy loons! Noo, Tam!—hoogh, hoogh!—there up yet, higher and higher, man—hoogh, hoogh!”

The piper felt the inspiration, up mounted the notes to the highest and liveliest measure, and away again flew the merry dancers under all the impulse of the new tune. The clap on the beggar’s knee ever and anon rung along, and still he twirled round Will Carr to face Lilly—though not before he had taken her round the fair neck, and kissed her, “nothing loath”—and again presented himself to the welcome face of Bess, whose rosy lips he “pree’d” as often as his many laborious evolutions, hooghs, claps, and cries to the piper would permit. He even made *tacks* to the side reels, and, laying hold of the damsels of his neighbours, kissed them from lug to lug, and then came back with a roar of laughter behind him, to greet of new Bess Gordon, to whom he seemed more welcome for his gallantry. The guidwife of Cairnkibbie herself was violently laid hold of round the neck and saluted with a loud smack, which, sounding in the ears of the guidman, produced a hearty laugh at the boldness, which was excused by the reckless jollity of the extraordinary gaberlunzie. Nor did he yet allow them to flag.

“Keep at it, Will!” he cried to the young man. “Ye’ll hae aneuch o’ Lilly for ae nicht, or my name’s no Wat Wilson. Aneuch o’ King William’s Note, Tam. Come awa wi’ anither—In Simmer I mawed my meadow, wi’ dooble quick time. Look to his bicker there, ye cultroun knaves, wha’ll neither dance, drink, nor mak drink!”

The piper heard the appeal, and struck up the new tune with great glee—

“Gude Lord, how he did lans!”

And again the inspiring strain, coming in a new measure, filled the dancers with new energies. There never had been such a reel since ever reels were danced. Heaven knows how long it had lasted, and yet the performers felt no weariness, all through the inspiring devilry, as they termed it, of the gaberlunzie, whose war-cry was as loud and uproarious as ever, and his leaps in the air as high as they had been at the first off-go. He now played off a new trick. He twirled round the partner of the next reel,

and made him take his place before Bess Gordon, while he, ambitious of a new face, took the place of his neighbour, and continued the sport in his new locality and company. Bess regretted her change; but his new position was soon changed, for he played the same trick with the next reel-ing party, and so on through the whole four—for such was the number up at once; and he continued to “pree the mou’s” of every young maiden on the floor, and, returning with many a hoogh, and clap, and leap to his old position, he seemed inclined to keep up the sport till the elder dancers should drop to the ground with sheer fatigue. It seemed to the guidman of Cairnkibbie that there was no remedy but a nod to Piper Tam, who, himself almost blown out, observed with pleasure the master’s indication, and stopped the music even in the very midst of the leaping joy of the interminable gaberlunzie, who would have danced apparently till next moon if he could have got any one strong enough and willing enough to dance with him.

He was now a universal favourite; all flocked round him as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and declared they had never seen such a spirited dancer before. His name, Wat Wilson, flew through the barn, and every one wondered how they had never seen such a jolly beggar in those parts before. But Wat said nothing of his *unde*, his *ubi*, or his *quo*; he only drank to the crowd around him; and, with Lilly on one side of him, and Will Carr on the other, he seized again his own pipes, and, forcing Tam to his feet, and crying to a new party to start, struck up one of the liveliest airs that the folks of the Merse had ever heard. In an instant again the barn was resounding with mirth; his strains were irresistible.

“Then all the wenchies to he they playit,
And loud as Will Aitken leuche;
But nane cried, Gossip, hyn your gait,
For we have dansit aneugh.”

At least none cried they had danced enough while the beggar played; for the very heels seemed to obey the influence of his spirit, as if they had been gifted with some power of sympathy, independently of the bodies to which they were attached. The dance was kept up till the dancers tired—for the beggar’s lungs were as tough as his feet; and when all had, for a time, tired of dancing, they assembled round their guest, who, of his own accord, struck up many a ranting song, and, by his humour, made the laugh resound through the barn. So fond grew they of his song and his jokes, that they felt no inclination, for a time, to resume again the dance. They drank and laughed, and screamed at every new sally of his wit, and every humorous turn of his song; and no one knows how long this scene might have lasted—for the gaberlunzie seemed inexhaustible—when a sound of horses’ feet at the door, claimed the attention of the revellers, and some one cried out that a party of horsemen were come to demand the body of a thief, who had that day, at Dunse, stolen the silver mace of King James, and was suspected to be at this Maiden, under the assumed dress of a wandering piper.

“That is the man,” cried a belted knight, as, having dismounted, he trod forward into the middle of the barn, and pointed to the happy gaberlunzie, who had that instant finished his song.

“Ye lee,” answered the beggar, in an instant, as he stood up, surrounded by his friends.

“Ha, sirrah!” answered the stranger, “this boldness will avail thee nothing. I know thee; and these, thy new-made friends, will not save thee from the execution of our orders. There are witnesses against thee, who saw thee steal the silver mace. Forward, ye sooth-saying men!”

Two men entered, dressed nearly in the same style as the first, and bearing all the marks and insignia of the grade of Knights.

“Is not this the thief?” inquired the first.

"It is—we will swear to him. He snatched the mace from the royal mace-bearer, in the streets of Dunse, and made off with it amidst the hue and cry of the populace, whose speed he outran as he would that of the greyhound."

"Guid faith," replied the guidman of Cairnkibbie, "if our friend ran as cleverly as he has danced this nicht, a' the greyhounds o' the Merse wadna hae catched him."

"Will ye gie me up to the beagles, freends," cried the beggar, "or will ye stand by him wha has sought yer protection, and partaken o' yer hospitality?"

"Gie ye up!" ejaculated the spirited old farmer; "in faith, na. If King Jamie war the Cham o' Tartary, or had three kings' heads on his shouters in place o' ane, we'll defend ye while there's a flail in the barn o' Cairnkibbie."

A shout of approbation followed the speech of the old farmer. The maidens, whose chins still smarted from the rub of his jolly beard, flew for flail, and rung, and "hissil ryss," and in an instant every willing hand held a weapon.

"We'll defend him to the last drap o' oor bluid," cried Will Carr, as he manfully stood forward, and brandished a huge hazel rung.

"And, by my soul," cried the scaumer, Jock Hedderick; "if we fecht as he'll fecht, whether for auld feid or new, noytit pows and broken banes will tell the fortune o' the nicht, lang before the play's played."

"Ha, ha! guidmen, and true guidmen, and true!" cried the beggar, undaunted and laughing; "thank ye, my hinny, Lilly, for this green kevel! By the haly rude, come on now, ye silver-necklaced bull-dogs o' royalty:—

"The beggar was o' manly mak,
To meet him was nae mows,
There darena ten came him to tak,
Sae noyt will he their pows."

Ye should ken that sang, if ye hae lear aneugh in your steel-bound noddles. Come on, ye calroun caitiffs!"

"Search his wallet," cried the foremost of the strangers; and six or seven men rushed into the barn, and made direct for the window-sole pointed to by the chief; but Will Swan, and Will Carr, with half a dozen more stout hensures, flew forward and anticipated the searchers.

"Give me my meal-pocks," cried the gaberlunzie; and, having got hold of his wallet, he slung it over his shoulders, and, to the surprise of every one, took out the mace said to have been stolen, and, holding it in his left hand as a badge of his authority, continued, laughing like a cadger, to gibe the strangers—

"Beggars hae a king as weel as belted bannerets," he cried: "see ye my badge? Ken ye wha ye seek? Heard ye ne'er o' Wat Wilson the king o' the beggars, crowned on Hogmanay, on the Warlock's Hill near Dunse, in presence o' a' the tribe o' kaukers and keelars, collected from Berwick to Lerwick. This is the beggar's badge. Tak it if ye dare. By ae wag o't, yer bairns will be kidnapped, your kye yeld, and your mitthers' banes stricken wi' the black sickness."

"Guidman of Cairnkibbie," said the foremost knight, "thou hast now evidence in that bold beggar's own hand, that he hath stolen a part of the King's regalia—an act of high treason, incurring death to him and all that give him shelter. Take the badge, examine it, and thou'll find on it the royal arms. See to thy predicament. If I report a rescue, thou'rt ruined. James will punish thee as a resetter. These misguided men will fall in thy ruin, and sorely wilt thou repent having harboured and defended a thief and a vagabond. Wilt thou give him up, or must we take him at the expense of our blood and thine?"

"A' fair words," answered the guidman; "but this beggar is our guest. He says the badge is his ain, and truly I am bound to say that King Jamie himsel is nae mair like the King o' this auld land, than this jolly gaberlunzie is like the king o' his tribe. Every inch o'm's a

king. He sings like a king, dances like a king, drinks like a king, and kisses the lasses like a king—and, king as he is, feth we'll be his loyal subjects. What say ye, guid hearts?"

"The same, the same," cried many voices; and a brandishing of flails and kevels shewed that they were determined to act up to their pledge of defending the jolly gaberlunzie to the end. Matters now assumed a serious aspect.

"Thy ruin be on thine own heads!" cried the chief of the strangers. "Draw for the rights of King James, claim our prisoner, and take him through the blood of rebels who dispute the authority of their King!"

The men from without now began to rush into the barn with drawn swords; and seemed to expect that, when the steel was made apparent, no serious resistance would be offered. Their expectation, however, was vain; for the hinds did not seem to fear the naked swords, and several of them had already aimed blows at the heads of the enemy. The beggar was moving to the right and to the left with great rapidity; brandishing his huge kevel, and whispering something into the ears of his friends. The guidman was busy getting the women removed by a back door; and, in the midst of all the uproar, there seemed some scheme in operation on the part of the defenders, which would either co-operate with their warlike defence, or render the shedding of blood unnecessary. The assailants clearly did not wish to use the glittering thirsty blades; and continued to ward off the blows of the hinds, and to push them back, with a view to get hold of him who was the object of their search. He, in the meantime, was directing some secret operation with great adroitness and spirit. The confusion increased; the size of the barn, and the pressure of the assailants forward, apparently with a view to take away the power of the long sticks, prevented in a great measure the full play of the hinds' arms, and some of the King's men were engaged in a powerful wrestle, with the intention of disarming the hinds, and thus achieving a victory without loss of blood; but their efforts in this respect would have been attended with small success, if the tactics of the beggar had been a deadly contest. The assailants still pushed on, and it seemed that their opponents were fast receding, while the clanging of sticks on the swords, and the hard breathing and cries of those engaged, seemed to indicate a severe and equally-contested strife. The defendants were latterly pushed up to the very farthest end of the apartment, and it seemed apparent that, if they did not make a great effort to redeem their position, and acquire room for the circle of their staves, they must resign the contest. But an extraordinary evolution was now performed. The back door was opened; in an instant, every hind disappeared from the faces of their foes; the door was locked and bolted; and the King's men turned to retrace their steps and seek the enemy outside. That turn exposed their position, and the trick of the gaberlunzie. The front door was also shut, locked, and riveted. On every side they were shut in, confined in a dark barn, and all means of escape entirely cut off. It was in vain that they roared through the key-holes of the doors. The gaberlunzie, who regulated all the motions of the successful party, responded to them in words of cutting irony, and even set agoing the swelling notes of his pipes to celebrate his triumph by a pœan in the form of a pibroch.

"Ye may tell yer King," he cried, loud enough for them to hear—"that is, when ye get out, if ye ever experience that blessed fortune—that he is not the only King in these realms. And surely Scotland is wide enough for twa. I hae my subjects, he has his; an' Wat Wilson's no the potentate that wad ever interfere wi' Jamie Stuart, if Jamie Stuart will let alane Wat Wilson. If I happen to pass

Dunse on the morn, I shanna fail to report favourably o' yer prowess; an', abune a', I shall tell him o' the condition o' his belted knichts—how,

“There was not ane o' them that day
Could do ane ither's bidden,
And there lie three and thretty knights
Thru'land in ane midden.”

Come now, my friends, we'll adjourn the feast to the ha', an' let the knights tak their nicht's rest in the barn, after a' the toil o' their desperate battle.”

A loud shout responded to the spirited speech of the gaberlunzie; and the feelings of the kidnapped and discomfited men-at-arms, on hearing the triumph of the beggar, who had out-manœuvred them, may be conceived, but could not well be expressed by an ordinary goose-quill. The guidman of Cairnkibbie took as hearty a laugh as the rest, at the trick thus successfully played off upon the King's men, and his laugh was nothing the less for the quantity of good ale he had drunk before the fray began, and without which potation, perhaps, he would not have patronised an act which might bring him into trouble. There was one thing that, even through the fumes of the ale, struck him as very remarkable—the confined knights made scarcely any noise. There was no blustering or swearing of vengeance, nor threat of the King's displeasure, nor endeavours to break the doors. They submitted to their durance like lambs in a sheepfold, and seemed to have lost their spirits as well as courage, when they found themselves completely within the power of their enemy. What could this mean? There was a mystery in it, which the farmer, who was an arch old fox, could not explain; and when he put a question to the gaberlunzie, the answer increased his difficulty, for the beggar laughed, and attributed the quietness and meekness of the foes to the terror of his prowess, and the awe which his name inspired throughout a great part of Scotland.

“This is the maist extraordinary deevil,” said the farmer to himself, “that it has been my fortune to meet. His dancing, roaring, rioting, drinking, piping, singing, joking, fechtin, seem a' on a par; an' nane o' them are beat by his power o' winning the hearts o' young an' auld. He has forced me to like him, will I or nill I; an' my dochter Lilly, an' my guidwife Jean, are nae less fond o' him than I am. Here, noo, is oor Maiden broken up, my barn made a warhold, mysel a seneschal o' the King's troops, my head in a loop, an' my fortunes hanging in the wind o' the royal displeasure—a' brocht about by a wanderin beggar, who forced himsel into oor happy meeting at the very point o' the bauldest tongue that ever hung in man's head; an' yet sae soople that it has won the very hearts o' the men that strove to keep him oot, an' brocht me into the hardest scrape I ever was in in my life.”

Cogitating in this prudential way, the guidman was fast coming to the conclusion that he was in a position of great danger; and that it was necessary that he should take the proper steps for freeing himself from the consequences of his imprudence as soon as it was possible. He turned round to look for the gaberlunzie, that he might commune with him on the prudence of letting the King's men free. The greater number of the men and women had gone into the house; and some of them stood at a distance, their forms revealed by a glimpse of the moon, which, freed from a cloud, began to illumine the holms of Cairnkibbie.

“Where is the beggar?” inquired the farmer at Will Carr.

“Where is the beggar?” cried Will Carr to his neighbour.

“Where is the gaberlunzie?” shouted several voices at once.

The gaberlunzie was gone. Steenie Thornton said he saw a person mount one of the troopers' horses that stood at the door of the barn, and, turning round the corner of the steading, gallop off at the top of his speed. He

thought it was one of the hinds, who was trying the mettle of the King's horses, and would return instantly, after he had indulged himself with a ride. Now it was apparent to all that it was the strange gaberlunzie himself. He had crowned all his extraordinary actions of the evening by stealing one of the horses of the King, or his knights, and, with meal-pocks, wallet, pipes, and stolen mace, was “owre the Borders and awa,” and might never be seen or heard of again; while the farmer, who now saw the extent of his danger, must stand the brunt of the King's vengeance, and be tried for forcing the King's messengers in the execution of their duty, for shutting them up in his barn, and stealing (for he would be charged with it) one of the horses, the property of his sovereign. The whole company now assembled around the farmer, whose position was apparent to the bluntest hind that ever danced at a Maiden. Some proposed to follow the beggar, and bring him back again; but he had already exhibited such a power of locomotive energy and daring spirit in the former adventures of the evening, that it seemed vain to attempt to overtake him with the quickest steed that was at their command. The difficulty was great, and, apparently, insuperable; and the whole scene enacted by the gaberlunzie appeared like a dream. The farmer swore against him mighty oaths, and directed against himself a part of the objurgatory declamation. But how was he to get out of the scrape? If the doors were opened, and the armed knights let loose, the whole company might be slaughtered, in the fury of the enraged men-at-arms, who would attribute to the farmer and his men their discomfiture, the loss of the thief, their confinement, and the loss of the horse. To keep them confined was also a fearful resource; for they must be let out *some time*, and every minute of their confinement would add fuel to the flame of their resentment. Many opinions were given. Some were for getting assistance to enable them to stand on the defensive, against the expected attack, on the knights being let free. Some again were for striking a bargain “wi' the fou hand,” as the saying goes, and letting the pursuers free, upon their word of a knight that they would not molest them. This latter plan seemed the best; and a good addendum was made by the greatest simpleton of the whole meeting—viz., that they should include in this act of amnesty the loss of the horse. The farmer proceeded to act upon this resolution.

“We are friendly inclined to ye,” said he, in a tone o' voice that might reach the prisoners. “Your enemy was that accursed gaberlunzie, wha maun be the very Deevil himsel; for he it was wha blew us up against ye, and maene us, a parcel o' quiet men, fecht against the servants o' our lawfu King. The cunning rogue's awa, and left us to bear the dirdum o' his feint or folly; and, a' ungeared as we are for war, we wish, without either dewyss or devily, to ken the condition upon which ye will get yer liberty.”

A loud laugh from within was the reply to this speech. What next could this mean? The farmer was confounded, the hinds stared, and every one looked at another. Here were men who, five minutes before, were fighting like devils, who had been deceived and confined, struck and ill-used, indulging in a good jolly laugh at the broaching of a question concerning their liberty. The mystery was increased, the affair was more extraordinary, the development more difficult and distant.

“Ay, ay,” continued the farmer, “ye may laugh; but, maybe, the laugh may be on the ither side when ye get oot. This may be an assumed guid nature, to blind us. I'm as far ben as ye, though no in the barn. Come, come. It is a serious affair. Will ye pledge the honour o' a knight that, if I draw the bolts, ye'll let alane for let alane?”

“Surely, surely,” was the ready reply and another laugh accompanied the condition

"Right merry prisoners, by my saul!" continued the farmer.—"Will they laugh at the loss o' their horse I wonder?" (To his friends.)

"That's a' very weel," he continued, in a higher voice. "I hae witnesses here to the pledge; but I'm sorry to inform ye that that Deevil o' a beggar, wha stole yer King's mace, is aff and awa, the Lord kens whar, wi' the best horse o' a' yer cavalcade. Will ye forgie this to the boot?"

Another burst of laughter responded from the barn, mixed with cries of—

"Ay, ay; never mind the horse. Let him go with the mace. The king of the beggars deserveth a steed."

"Weel, these are the maist pleasant faes I ever saw," said the farmer; "but I hae a' my fears there's a decoy duck i' the pond. Haud firm yer kevels, friends, in case a' this guid nature may, like the blink o' an autumn sun, be followed by the fire-flaughts o' their revenge."

The men stood prepared to fight, if necessary; the bolts were withdrawn, and out came the knights, as merry as larks, making the air resound with their laughter. The farmer and his friends were still more amazed, as, for their very souls, they could see nothing in discomfiture and imprisonment to make any man laugh. But the fact was now certain, that the prisoners were right glad and hearty; and the sincerity of their good humour was to be tested in a manner that seemed as extraordinary as anything that had yet been witnessed on this eventful evening. Not one of them ever mentioned the beggar or the loss of the horse—a circumstance remarkable enough; and, not contented with this scrupulous regard of the treaty, the chief of them, slapping the farmer on the back, proposed that, as they had so unceremoniously broken up the sports of the evening, they should not depart till they saw the dancing again commenced, and till they each and every man of them should dance a reel with the blooming maidens they had seen on their entry. This request, though as remarkable as the former proceedings, was received with loud applause. The parties were again collected; Tam the piper again took his seat; the ale flowed in its former abundance; and, in a short time, the brave knights were seen tripping it gaily through the mazes of the merry dance. This was another change of the moral peristrophe panorama of that extraordinary evening; and, as the farmer looked at the merry knights with their surtouts of green, and their buff baldricks and clanging swords, busy dancing in that very barn where they had, a few minutes before, been fighting like devils, he held up his hands in wonder, and would have moralized on the chances and changes of life, if a barn had been a proper place, a Maiden a proper occasion, and the hour of relief from a great evil a proper time for the indulgence of such fancies.

The knights danced only for a very short time; and there can be no doubt that they did their best to please themselves, and to exhibit to their host and his friends the greatest triumphs of the gay art; but all their efforts only tended to bring into brighter contrast their best and most intricate evolutions, their highest and most joyous humours, their pleasantest and merriest tricks, with the devil-daring, jumping, roaring, laughing, kissing, and hugging of the jolly gaberlunzie, who outran all competitors in the production of fun as much as ever did an Arab steed the plough-nag at a fair gallop. There was not a knight among them that could, as the saying goeth, "hold the candle to him;" and as for the private opinions of the "damysells," the very best judges of the properties of man, they would not have given one hair in the beard of the jolly gaberlunzie for all the short crops of the chins of all the knights put together. His thefts and vagaries were lost, like spots on the sun, in the blaze of his convivial splendour; and, coming and flying off like a comet, as he had done, he had left them in a darkness which all the tiny lights of the good-

natured crew of bannerets could not illumine beyond the twinkle that only served to exhibit more clearly their gloom. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*—they might never see his like again.

The knights, after enjoying themselves in the manner we have mentioned, mounted their horses, (the one whose steed was stolen, having borrowed one from the farmer,) and having been supplied with a good stirrup-cup, galloped away, without ever having said one word, either of good or evil, of the mysterious gaberlunzie of whom they came in search. The Maiden was finished soon after, and the guidman of Cairnkibbie retired with his guidwife to rest, and in their waking moments to wonder at the strange events of the day. The fears of evil, resulting from his own conduct, had in a great measure ceased; but, alas! they ceased only to be revived in the morning, and increased to a degree that made him still lament having forced the King's messengers, and harboured a thief. About eleven o'clock of the succeeding day, a horseman, booted and spurred, arrived in great haste at the door of the farm-house of Cairnkibbie, and requested to see the guidman.

"What's your will, sir?" said the farmer to the messenger, as he went to the door.

"I bear his Highness the King's schedule, to be delivered to William Hume, the tenant of Cairnkibbie."

"The King's schedule!" answered William, as he took the paper out of the messenger's hands—"what hae I dune to offend the King?"

"Read it," said the messenger; and William complied.

"These are to shew our high will and pleaser that whereas ane gaberlunzie, of the name of Wat Wilson, or at least ane wandering yagabond to whom that denomination does by common use or courtesie effeir, did, in our guid town of Dunse, on Wednesday last past, of this current month of October, when our servitors and officers marching rauk-on-raw, before and behind our person, reft frae the hands o' our mace-bearer, our mace of authority, fabricat of real siller, and embossed with dewyssees of goold, wharwith he did flee trayterly to the protection and refuge of thee, William Hume, tenant of Cairnkibbie, wha, with thy tezants, domestics, and retainers, and others, did harbour him, even against our officers of justice, wham thou didst pummel, and lik, and abuse in a maist shameful manner, and thereafter didst confine in ane auld barn the whyle thou didst let off the said gaberlunzie, and steal ane o' the very choicest horses o' our knights; for all the whylk, thou (and eke thy aiders and abettors) shalt answer at our present ambulatory Court, at our auld burgh of Dunse wherto thou art summonit by this schedule, to attend in the day after thou receivest this, at 12 of the forenoon; whylk, if thou disregardest, thou shalt dree the punishment o' our righteous vengeance. Given at Dunse this — day of October 15—. JAMES R."

"The Lord hae mercy on the house o' Cairnkibbie!" ejaculated the farmer, as he read this fulmination of an incensed King's wrath. "What am I to do? How can I face the King after abusing his officers, and harbouring the thief wha stole the royal mace, as weel as the horse o' his officer? Can ye no intercede for me, sir, or at least gie me some advice how I am to act in this fearfu business?"

And the farmer stamped on the ground, and paced backwards and forwards in great distress. The officer who brought the schedule, seemed to sympathise with the unhappy man; but, looking over to the door of the farm-house, and seeing Lilly standing on the landing-place, combing her fair locks, he smiled as if some hope for the unfortunate farmer had broken in on his mind.

"Is that your daughter?" said he.

"It is," answered the farmer; "but that question has

sma' concern with this present misery that has overtaken the house o' her father."

"More than thou thinkest, mayhap," answered the horseman. "Bring her with thee, man, to Court. The King cannot resist the appeal of beauty. If that fair wench will but hold up that face of hers, while thou settest forth thy defence, I'll guarantee thy liberation for a score of placks. But see thou attendest; otherwise, messengers will be sent to force thy presence."

Saying these words, the messenger clapped spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in an instant, leaving the poor farmer in a state of unabated terror. He went into the house, and reported the direful issue of last night's adventure to his wife and daughter. The sympathetic communications of their mutual fears increased their sorrow and apprehension, till the females burst into tears, and the guidman himself groaned, at the prospect of his inevitable ruin. During the day and the night, the subject formed the continual theme of their conversation; and the terror of meeting the sovereign, the weakness of the defence, and the fear of ruinous consequences, alternated their influence over their clouded minds, without a moment's intermission of ease. The guidwife was determined she would not leave her husband in the hands of his enemies; Lilly agreed to accompany them, at the request of her father; and Will Carr, with one or two of the farm-servants, were to go as exculpatory witnesses. The farmer had in his grief resolved upon a candid defence. The truth, he was satisfied, might bring him off, while any attempt at concealment or falsification could not fail to hasten and increase the punishment he dreaded. At an early hour next day, the party were all on their way to Dunse; the farmer dressed in his long blue coat and blue bonnet, his wife with her manky kirtle and high-crowned mutch, bedizened with large beaus of red ribbons; and Lilly, with her "Lincolme gown" and wimple-bound hair, looking like the Queen of May herself. On their entry into the town of Dunse, they were met by two men having the appearance of officers, who claimed them in the King's name, as criminals, and conducted them to a small castle at the end of the town, at that time used as a garrison for the King's troops. After passing through a long passage (their hearts palpitating with terror and awe) they came to a room of a large and stately appearance, hung round, as they could see by their side glances—for they were terrified to look up—with loose hangings of rich cloth, whereon were many curious figures, that seemed to stand out apart from that on which they were set forth. About the middle of the room—so far as they might guess by their oblique investigation—they were seated on a species of "lang settle;" and when they found themselves seated, they began (after drawing nearer and nearer to each other) to look up and around.

There was a considerable number of individuals in the hall, some standing and some sitting, and all dressed in the most gorgeous style. On an elevated seat, covered by a temporary canopy of velvet, sat the august monarch of Scotland, the Fifth James; and at his feet were three or four individuals in the habiliments of barons. All this was little suited to calming the beating hearts of the simple individuals who were so strangely situated. There was not (and the circumstances seemed strange) an ordinary individual present. Those who acted as officers were clearly knights, or high gentlemen in the confidence of the King. All was silence for a few minutes, when a loud voice called out the name of "William Hume."

"Here," answered William, with a choking voice, while his wife and daughter shook till their very clothes rustled.

"Stand up, sir," cried the same fearful voice again.

William obeyed; and now, unimaginable awe! the voice of Majesty itself sounded through the hall.

"Read the indictment, Dempster," said the King.

The indictment was accordingly read.

"Is it true, sir," began his Majesty, "that thou didst harbour this man called Wat Wilson, knowing him to have stolen our mace, and thereafter didst bet and confine our messengers, who were sent to apprehend him?"

Like many other timid witnesses, William Hume regained his self-possession the moment he was fairly committed to giving evidence by a plain question being put to him.

"I cam here this day," replied William, looking up and around him with increasing confidence, "to tell your Highness God's truth. I canna deny the charge."

"Knowest thou the punishment of deforcing the King's messengers?" rejoined the King.

"No, yer Highness," replied William; "but my fears tell me it's no sma'."

"Hast thou anything to say in palliation of thy crime?"

"Owre muckle, I fear, yer Highness," answered William. "I say owre muckle; for now, when I look back upon the dementit proceedings o' that nicht, I have almost come to the conclusion that that gaberlunzie wha has brought me into a' this trouble, was neither mair nor less than his august Majesty wha"—

"Who, who?" cried the King impatiently; while several of the lords began to laugh, and whisper, "He knows him, he knows him."

"—Than his august Majesty," continued William, "wha haulds his court there—there"—(pointing his finger downwards.) "To be plain, yer Highness, I do on my soul believe he was the Deevil himsel!"

The King laughed a loud laugh, and all the Barons burst fair out into a hearty "guffaw;" while some of them muttered, "A compliment—a compliment, in good faith, to the King"—a whisper which, if William Hume had heard, he might have construed into a hint that the gaberlunzie was no other than the King himself; but, luckily for the naïvete of William's testimony, he remained in his ignorance.

"What, man!" exclaimed the King, when he had again arranged his jaws into something like gravity—"Dost thou believe he was the Devil?"

"Troth do I," replied William, now getting bolder by the laughter that had rung in his ears; "and the mair I think o' him and his wild and wonderfu feiks and freits, the mair satisfied am I o't."

William's adherence to his position produced another burst of merriment.

"What *did* he do?" continued the King, "to entitle him to that character? It would ill become us to punish a subject for the acts of the Evil One."

"What did he *no* do, your Highness?" ejaculated the farmer—"he did everything the Deevil could do, and man couldna. We were hauldin our Maiden when he cam to the door, and were determined no to let him in; but he turned a' oor hearts in an instant, and the enemies o' his entrance becam the friends o' his presence. Then began he to act his part: he played as nae man ever played; drank as nae man ever drank; danced, and ma'le ithers dance, langer and blyther than ever man did on the face o' this earth; caught men's hearts like bullfinches wi' his sangs, the women's by the rub o' his beard; and sent through a' and owre a' sic a glamour and witchery o' fun, and frolic, and enjoyment—ay, and luve o' himsel—that nae mortal cratur was ever seen to hae sic power since the days o' Adam."

William drew breath, and the King and lords again laughed heartily.

"But a' that was naething," continued William "I'm a plain man, as ye may see—and wha, looking at me, would say that a mortal gaberlunzie could twist me round his finger as easily as he could do a packthread? Yet this

beggar did that. Your Highness' troops cam to seize him—and wha before ever saw the guidman o' Cairnkibbie harbour a thief? The Deevil had thrown owre me and the hail menyie the charm o' his cantraps. We swore we would defend him—ay, even though we saw the stowen mace in his hand; we did defend him, and he had nae mair to do than to blaw in oor lugs, when clap went the barn-doors, and a' yer Highness' knights were imprisoned as if by magic. Could a beggar o' ordinar flesh and blude hae dune a' that, yer Highness?"

William again drew breath, and again the hall resounded with the laugh of the King and his Lords.

"But even a' that was little or naething," continued William again; "for to pay us for a' the guid we had dune him, he made himsel invisible, and rode aff like a fire-flaught on ane o' the knight's horses; and frae that eventfu hour to this, we hae ne'er seen his face."

"Art satisfied, my Lord o' Ross?" said the King in a whisper, to a lord that sat beside him. "Is our wager won? Have we, as we essayed, succeeded in our undertaking? Have we, in the form of a beggar, so wrought upon the hearts of the members of a Maiden feast, as to gain their love to the extent of making them defend the gaberlunzie against the King's knights, inspiring them to fight, and win the day in a fought battle, and latterly riding home on one of the enemy's horses? Ha! ha! we opine we have—what say our judges?"

"The game is up," replied the Lord of Ross. "I acknowledge myself beat. Your Highness has won the day."

Another laugh sealed the triumph of the King, and William Hume stared in amazement at the extraordinary mummery that was acted around him.

"William Hume," said the King, "this is an artifice, on thy part, to escape our vengeance. I go to put on the black cap, and to return to pronounce thy fate. Thou hast admitted the crime; and to lay it on the Devil's back, is only the common way of the wicked."

Lilly, on hearing the mention of the black cap, screamed, the mother cried for mercy, and the thunderstruck farmer waited to receive his doom. The King went out, and returned in a short time in the cap of Wat Wilson, holding in his hand the stolen mace. A new light broke in upon the mind of the criminal—he perceived at once the identity of the King and the beggar; and the fears of all were in a moment dispelled.

"Stand up, Lilly Hume and Will Carr," said the monarch.

The voice of royalty sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the maiden. Her mind ran back to that eventful hour when she told the beggar the secret of her love; and she felt even yet the hug of the King, and the royal kiss burning on her lips. She blushed to the temples, and could scarcely stand without the support of her father, who now, when he saw how the land lay, had recovered all his fortitude, with a portion of well-founded hope that the services he performed to the beggar-king would meet with their reward.

"So your father, Lilly, will not allow you to marry Will Carr," resumed James, "because he is puir?"

"Guid Lord!" muttered William to himsel—"hoo comes he to ken that too?—a family secret that I could scarcely breathe in my ain lug for its injustice, and now I see to be punished as it deserves."

Lilly hung her head. She could not open her lips. The mention of her humble love by a king, and in the presence of nobles, was so far beyond the ordinary experience of her obscure life, and held such a contrast to the secret breathings of her affection in her stolen meetings with her lover among the broom knowes of Cairnkibbie, that she thought the world itself was undergoing some extraordinary convulsion. Turning round, she caught the eye of Will Carr,

who, having more courage, infused some portion of his confidence into the blushing girl.

"Is that true, William Hume?" rejoined James, who despaired of getting an answer from Lilly.

"Deed, an' it's owre true, yer Highness," answered the farmer; "but I thought there wasna a mortal on earth knew the circumstance but mysel and my wife; for, begging your Highness' pardon, I was ashamed to tell it to the lassie hersel, for fear she micht hae communicated it to Will's freends, wha are decent people, and canna help their poverty."

"Dost thou still stand to thy objection to the match?" again asked James.

"If your Royal Highness, as Wat Wilson," replied the farmer, smiling, "could command me and the hail household o' Cairnkibbie to do yer bidding, and turn us round your finger like a piece o' pack-thread, I micht hae sma chance o' resistin yer authority as King o' Scotland. I hae nae objection noo to the match, secin that a King gies oot the bans."

"William Hume," resumed the laughing monarch, "hear thy doom. For the love thou didst extend and shew to our royal person, we give thee a free grant of the lands of Cairnkibbie, upon this one condition—that thou consentest to the union of Lilly Hume with Will Carr, to whom we shall, out of our royal purse, give, as a marriage portion, two hundred marks."

"I canna disobey the command o' Wat Wilson," replied William, with a dry smile. "He has already exercised great authority owre us a', and we winna throw aff our allegiance in this eventfu day."

A general laugh wound up the scene. The young couple were married, and a merry wedding they had of it; but there was one great exception to the general joy, and that was, that, although there was many a good dancer present, and Tam Lutar was not absent, there was not to be seen or heard the jolly beggar who had, on the former occasion, been the soul of the Maiden. James became afterwards engaged in more serious concerns, and there were few who knew anything of his nocturnal exploit. The Humes were told to keep it a secret; and the Lords who were present had too much regard for their King to expose his good-humoured eccentricities. When Hume became proprietor of Cairnkibbie, the people speculated; but little did they know, so well had the secret been kept, that the grant proceeded from the farmer's supposed misfortune, or that Wat Wilson the beggar, who danced so jovially at the Maiden, was the individual who had transformed William Hume from a simple farmer to one of the small Border lairds who held their heads so high in those days; and far less was it known that the same individual had brought about the marriage of Lilly Hume and Will Carr.

Thus have we attempted to describe one of those wild frolics in which the young King James V. of Scotland occasionally indulged. If he had lived to an advanced age, his subjects might have had as much reason to admire the King as they had to love the royal gaberlunzie, who, wherever he took up his quarters, whether "in a house in Aberdeen," or in the barn of Cairnkibbie, sent the fire of his spirit of love and fun throughout all with which he came in contact.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE LYKEWAKE.

I KNOW no place where one may be brought acquainted with the more credulous beliefs of our forefathers at a less expense of inquiry and exertion, than in a country lyke-wake. The house of mourning is naturally a place of sombre thoughts and ghostly associations. There is something too in the very presence and appearance of death, that leads one to think of the place and state of the dead. Cowper has finely said, that the man and the beast who stand together, side by side, on the same hill-top, are, notwithstanding their proximity, the denizens of very different worlds. And I have felt the remark to apply still more strongly when sitting beside the dead. The world of intellect and feeling in which we ourselves are, and of which the lower propensities of our nature form a province, may be regarded as including, in part at least, that world of passion and instinct in which the brute lives; and we have but to analyze and abstract a little, to form for ourselves ideas of this latter world from even our own experience. But by what process of thought can we bring experience to bear on the world of the dead! It lies entirely beyond us—a *terra incognita* of cloud and darkness; and yet the thing at our side—the thing over which we can stretch our hand—the thing dead to us but living to it—has entered upon it, and, however uninformed or ignorant before, knows more of its dark, and, to us, inscrutable mysteries, than all our philosophers and all our divines. Is it wonder that we would fain *put it to the question*—that we would fain catechise it, if we could, regarding its newly-acquired experience—that we should fill up the gaps in the dialogue which its silence leaves to us, by imparting to one another the little we know regarding its *state* and its *place*—or that we should send our thoughts roaming in long excursions, to glean from the experience of the past all that it tells us of the occasional visits of the dead, and all that in their less taciturn and more social moments they have communicated to the living. And hence, from feelings so natural, and a train of associations so obvious, the character of a country lyke-wake and the cast of its stories—I say a *country* lyke-wake, for in at least all our larger towns, where a cold and barren scepticism has chilled the feelings and imaginations of the people, without, I fear, much improving their judgments, the conversation on such occasions takes a lower and less interesting range.

I once spent a night with a friend from the south, a man of an inquiring and highly philosophic cast of mind, at a lyke-wake in the upper part of the parish of Cromarty. I had excited his curiosity by an incidental remark or two of the kind I have just been dropping; and, on his expressing a wish that I should introduce him, by way of illustration, to some such scene as I had been describing, we had set out together to the wake of an elderly female who had died that morning. Her cottage—an humble creation of stone and lime—was situated beside a thick fir-wood, on the edge of the solitary Mullbu, one of the dreariest and most extensive commons in Scotland. We had to pass, in our journey, over several miles of desolate moor, sprinkled with

cairns and tumuli—the memorials of some forgotten conflict of the past; we had to pass, too, through a thick, dark wood, with, here and there, an intervening marsh, whitened over with moss and lichens, and which, from this circumstance, are known to the people of the country as the *white bogs*. Nor was the more distant landscape of a less gloomy character. On the one hand, there opened an interminable expanse of moor, that went stretching onwards, mile beyond mile, bleak, dreary, uninhabited, and uninhabitable, till it merged into the far horizon. On the other, there rose a range of blue, solitary hills, towering, as they receded, into loftier peaks and bolder acclivities, till they terminated on the snow-streaked Ben Weavis. The season, too, was in keeping with the scene. It was drawing towards the close of autumn; and, as we passed through the wood, the falling leaves were eddying round us with every wind, or lay in rustling heaps at our feet.

“I do not wonder,” said my companion, “that the superstitions of so wild a district as this should bear in their character some marks of a corresponding wildness. Night itself, in a populous and cultivated country, is attended with less of the stern and the solemn than mid-day amid solitudes like these. Is the custom of watching beside the dead, of remote antiquity in this part of the country?”

“Far beyond the reach of either history or tradition,” I said. “But it has gradually been changing its character as the people have been changing theirs; and is now a very different thing from what it was a century ago. It is not yet ninety years since lyke-wakes in the neighbouring Highlands used to be celebrated with music and dancing; and even here, on the borders of the low country, they used invariably, like the funerals of antiquity, to be the scenes of wild games and amusements, never introduced on any other occasion. You remember how Sir Walter describes the funeral of Athelstane. The Saxon ideas of condolence were the most natural imaginable. If grief was hungry, they supplied it with food; if thirsty, they gave it drink. Our simple ancestors here seem to have reasoned by a similar process. They made their seasons of deepest grief, their times of greatest merriment; and the more they regretted the deceased, the gayer were they at his wake and his funeral. A friend of mine, now dead, a very old man, has told me that he once danced at a lyke-wake in the Highlands of Sutherland. It was that of an active and very robust man, taken away from his wife and family in the prime of life; and the poor widow, for the greater part of the evening, sat disconsolate beside the fire, refusing every invitation to join the dancers. She was at length, however, brought out by the father of the deceased. ‘Little, little did he think,’ he said, ‘that she would be the last to dance at poor Rory’s lyke-wake.’”

“We reached the cottage, and went in. The apartment in which the dead lay was occupied by two men and three women. Every little piece of furniture it contained was hung in white, and the floor had recently been swept and sanded; but it was on the bed where the body lay, and on the body itself, that the greatest care had been lavished. The curtains had been taken down, and their place supplied by linen white as snow; and on the sheet that served as a

counterpane, the body was laid out in a dress of white, fantastically crossed and recrossed in every direction, by scalloped fringes, and fretted into a species of open work, at least intended to represent alternate rows of roses and tulips. A plate, containing a little salt, was placed over the breast of the corpse. As we entered, one of the women rose; and, filling two glasses with spirits, presented them to us on a salver. We tasted the liquor, and sat down on chairs placed for us beside the fire. The conversation, which had been interrupted by our entrance, began to flow apace; and an elderly female, who had lived under the same roof with the deceased, began to relate, in answer to the queries of one of the others, some of the particulars of her last illness and death.

THE STORY OF ELSPAT M' CULLOCH.

"Elspat was aye," she said, "a retired body, wi' a cast o' decent pride aboot her; an', though bare an' puirly aff sometimes, in her auld days, she had never been chargeable to onybody. She had come o' decent, 'sponsible people, though they were a' low enough the day—ay, an' they were God-fearing people, too, wha had gien plenty in their time, an' had aye plenty to gie. An', though they had been a' langsyne laid in the kirkyard—a' except hersel, puir body!—she wouldna disgrace their guid name, she said, by takin an alms frae ony ane. Her sma means fell oot o' her hands afore her last illness. Little had aye dune her turn—but the little failed at last; an' sair, sair thoct did it gie her, for a while, what was to come o' her. I could hear her, in the butt-end o' the hoose, ae mornin, mair earnest an' langer in her prayers than usual—though she never neglected them, puir body!—an' a' the early part o' that day she seemed to be no weel. She was aye up an' down; an' I could ance or twice hear her gaunting at the fireside; but, when I went ben to her, an' asked what was the matter wi' her, she said she was just in her ordinar. She went oot for a wee; an' what did I do but gang to her amry, for I jaloused a' wasna richt there; an', oh! it was a sair sicht to see, neebors; but there was neither a bit o' bread nor a grain o' meal within its four corners—naething but the sealed up greybeard, wi' the whisky, that, for twenty years an' mair, she had been keepin for her lykewake; an', ye ken, it was oot o' the question to think that she would meddle wi' it. Weel did I scold her, when she cam in, for being sae close-minded. I asked her what harm I had ever done to her, that she wad rather hae died than hae trusted her wants to me; but, though she said nothing, I could see the tears in her ee; an' sae I stopped, an' we took a late breakfast thegither at my fireside.

"She tauld me that mornin that she weel kent she wouldna lang be a trouble to onybody. The day afore nad been Sabbath, an' every Sabbath morning, for the last ten years, her worthy neebor the elder, whom they had buried only four days afore, used to call on her, in the passing on his way to the kirk. 'Come awa, Elspat,' he would say; an' she used to be aye decent an' ready; for she liked his conversation; an' they aye gaed thegither to the kirk. She had been contracted, when a young lass, to a brither o' the elder's—a stout, handsome lad; but he had been ca'ed suddenly awa, atween the contract an' the marriage, an' Elspat, though she had afterwards mony a guid offer, had lived single for his sake. Weel, on the very mornin afore, just sax days after the elder's death, an' four after his burial, when Elspat was sittin dowie aside the fire, thinkin o' her guid auld neebor, the cry cam to the door just as it used to do; but, though the voice was the same, the words were a wee different. 'Elspat,' it said, 'mak ready, an' come awa.' She rose hastily to the window, an' there, sure enough, was the elder, turning the corner in his Sunday's bonnet an' his Sunday's coat. An'

weel did she ken, she said, the meanin o' his call, an kindly did she tak it. An' if it was but God's wull that she suld hae enough to put her decently under the ground, without going in debt to any one, she would be weel content. She had already the linen for the dead-dress, she said; for she had span it for the purpose afore her contract wi' William, an' she had the whisky, too, for the wake; but she had naething anent the coffin an' the bedral.

"Weel, we took our breakfast, an' I did my best to comfort the puir body; but she looked very down-hearted, for a' that. About the middle o' the day, in cam the minister's boy wi' a letter. It was directed to his master, he said, but it was a' for Elspat; an' there was a five-pound note in it. It was frae a man who had left the country, mony, mony a year afore, a good deal in her faither's debt. You would hae thought the puir thing wad hae grat her een out when she saw the money; but never was money mair thankfully received, or taen mair directly frae heaven. It set her aboon the warld, she said; an' coming at the time it did, an estate o' a thousand a-year wadna be o' mair use to her. Next morning she didna rise, for her strength had failed her at ance, though she felt nae meikle pain, an' she sent me to get the note changed, an' to leave twenty shillings o't wi' the wright for a decent coffin, like her mither's, an' five shillings mair wi' the bedral, an' to tak in necessaries for a sick-bed wi' some o' the lave. Weel, I did that; an' there's still twa pounds o' the note yonder in the little cupboard.

"On the fifth morning after she had been taken sae ill, I cam in till ask after her—for my neebor here had relieved me o' that night's watchin, an' I had gotten to my bed. The moment I opened the door I saw that the hail room was hung in white, just as ye see it now: an' I'm sure it staid that way a minute or sae; but when I winked it went awa. I kent there was a change no far off; an' when I went up to the bed, Elpat didna ken me. She was wirkin wi' her han' at the blankets, as if she were picking off the little motes; an' I could hear the beginning o' the dead rattle in her throat. I sat at her bedside, for a while, wi' my neebor here; an' when she spoke to us, it was to say that the bed had grown hard and uneasy, and that she wished to be brought out to the chair. Weel, we indulged her, though we baith kent that it wasna in the bed the uneasiness lay. Her mind, puir body, was carried at the time: she just kent that there was to be a death an' a lykewake; but no that the death an' the lykewake were to be her ain; an' whan she looked at the bed, she bade us tak down the black curtains an' put up the white; an' tauld us where the white were to be found.

"'But where is the corp?' she said; 'it's no there—where is the corp?'

"'O Elspat, it will be there vera soon,' said my neebor; an' that satisfied her.

"She cam to hersel an hour afore she departed. God had been very guid to her, she said, a' her life lang, an' he hadna forsaken her at the last. He had been guid to her whan he had gien her friens, an' guid to her when he took them to himsel; an' she kent she was now going to baith Him an' them. There wasna such a difference, she said, atween life an' death as folk were ready to think. She was sure that, though William had been ca'ed awa suddenly, he hadna been ca'ed without being prepared; an' now that her turn had come, an' that she was goin to meet wi' him, it was maybe as weel that he had left her early; for, till she had lost him, she had been owre light an' thochtless; an' had it been her lot to hae lived in happiness wi' him, she micht hae remained light an' thochtless still. She bade us baith fareweel, an' thanked an' blessed us; an' her last breath went awa in a prayer no half an hour after. Puir, decent body!—But she's no puir now."

"A pretty portrait," whispered my companion, "of one of a class fast wearing away. Nothing more interests me in the story than the woman's undoubting faith in the supernatural; she does not even seem to know that what she believes so firmly herself, is so much as doubted by others. Try whether you can't bring up, by some means, a few other stories furnished with a similar machinery—a story of the second sight, for instance."

"The only way of accomplishing that," I replied, "is by contributing a story of the kind myself."

"The vision of the room hung in white," I said, "reminds me of a story related, about a hundred and fifty years ago, by a very learned and very ingenious countryman of ours—George, first Earl of Cromarty. His Lordship, a steady Royalist, was engaged, shortly before the Restoration, (he was then, by the way, only Sir George Mackenzie,) in raising troops for the King, on his lands on the western coast of Ross-shire. There came on one of those days of rain and tempest so common in the district; and Sir George, with some of his friends, were storm-bound in a solitary cottage, somewhere on the shores of Loch Broom. Towards evening, one of the party went out to look after their horses. He had been sitting beside Sir George, and the chair he had occupied remained empty. On Sir George's servant, an elderly Highlander, coming in, he went up to his master, apparently much appalled, and, tapping him on the shoulder, urged him to rise. 'Rise!' he said, 'rise! There's a dead man sitting on the chair beside you.' The whole party immediately started to their feet; but they saw only the empty chair. The dead man was visible to the Highlander alone. His head was bound up, he said, and his face streaked with blood, and one of his arms hung broken by his side. Next day, as a party of horsemen were passing along the steep side of a hill in the neighbourhood, one of the horses stumbled, and threw its rider; and the man, grievously injured by the fall, was carried, in a state of insensibility, to the cottage. His head was deeply gashed, and one of his arms was broken, though he ultimately recovered; and, on being brought to the cottage, he was placed, in a death-like swoon, in the identical chair which the Highlander had seen occupied by the spectre. Sir George relates the story, with many a similar story besides, in a letter to the celebrated Robert Boyle."

"I have perused it with much interest," said my friend, "and wonder our booksellers should have suffered it to become so scarce. Do you not remember the somewhat similar story his Lordship relates of the Highlander who saw the apparition of a troop of horse ride over the brow of a hill, and enter a field of oats, which, though it had been sown only a few days before, the horsemen seemed to cut down with their swords. He states that, a few months after, a troop of cavalry actually entered the same field, and carried away the produce, for fodder to their horses. He tells, too, if I remember aright, that on the same expedition to which your story belongs, one of his Highlanders, on entering a cottage, started back with horror;—he had met in the passage, he said, a dead man in his shroud, and saw people gathering for a funeral. And, as his Lordship relates, one of the inmates of the cottage, who was in perfect health at the time of the vision, died suddenly only two days after."

THE STORY OF DONALD GAIR.

"The second sight," said an elderly man, who sat beside me, and whose countenance had struck me as highly expressive of serious thought, "is fast wearing out of this part of the country. Nor should we much regret it, perhaps. It seemed, if I may so speak, as something outside the ordinary dispositions of Providence, and, with all the horror and unhappiness that attended it, served no ap-

parent good end. I have been a traveller in my youth, masters. About thirty years ago, I served for some time in the navy. I entered on the first breaking out of the Revolutionary war, and was discharged during the short peace of 1801. One of my chief companions on shipboard, for the first few years, was a young man, a native of Sutherland, named Donald Gair. Donald, like most of his countrymen, was a staid, decent lad, of a rather melancholy cast; and yet there were occasions when he could be quite gay enough too. We sailed together in the Bedford, under Sir Thomas Baird; and, after witnessing the mutiny at the Nore—neither of us did much more than witness it, for in our case it merely transferred the command of the vessel from a very excellent captain to a set of low Irish Doctor's-list men—we joined Admiral Duncan, then on the Dutch station. We were barely in time to take part in the great action. Donald had been unusually gay all the previous evening. We knew the Dutch had come out, and that there was to be an engagement on the morrow; and, though I felt no fear, the thought that I might have to stand in a few brief hours before my Maker and my Judge, had the effect of rendering me serious. But my companion seemed to have lost all command of himself; he sung, and leaped, and shouted—not like one intoxicated—there was nothing of intoxication about him—but under the influence of a wild irrepressible flow of spirits. I took him seriously to task, and reminded him that we might both at that moment be standing on the verge of death and judgment. But he seemed more impressed by my remarking that, were his mother to see him, she would say he was *fey*.

"We had never been in action before with our captain, Sir Thomas. He was a grave, and, I believe, God-fearing man, and much a favourite with, at least, all the better seamen. But we had not yet made up our minds on his character—indeed, no sailor ever does, with regard to his officers, till he knows how they fight; and we were all curious to see how the parson, as we used to call him, would behave himself among the shot. But truly we might have had little fear for him. I have sailed with Nelson, and not Nelson himself ever shewed more courage or conduct than Sir Thomas in that action. He made us all lie down beside our guns, and steered us, without firing a shot, into the very thickest of the fight; and, when we did open, masters, every broadside told with fearful effect. I never saw a man issue his commands with more coolness or self-possession.

"There are none of our Continental neighbours who make better seamen, or who fight more doggedly than the Dutch. We were in a blaze of flame for four hours. Our rigging was slashed to pieces; and two of our ports were actually knocked into one. There was one fierce, ill-natured Dutchman, in particular—a fellow as black as night, without so much as a speck of paint or gilding about him, save that he had a red lion on the prow—that fought us as long as he had a spar standing; and, when he struck at last, fully one half the crew lay either dead or wounded on the decks, and all his scupper-holes were running blood as freely as ever they had done water at a deck-washing. The Bedford suffered nearly as severely. It is not in the heat of action that we can reckon on the loss we sustain. I saw my comrades falling around me—falling by the terrible cannon shot, as they came crashing in through our sides; I felt, too, that our gun wrought more heavily as our numbers were thinning around it; and, at times, when some sweeping chain-shot or fatal splinter laid open before me those horrible mysteries of the inner man which nature so sedulously conceals, I was conscious of a momentary feeling of dread and horror. But, in the prevailing mood, an unthinking anger, a dire thirsting after revenge, a dogged, unyielding firmness, were the chief ingredients. I

strained every muscle and sinew; and, amid the smoke, and the thunder, and the frightful carnage, fired and loaded, and fired and loaded, and, with every discharge, sent out, as it were, the bitterness of my whole soul against the enemy. But very different were my feelings when victory declared in our favour, and, exhausted and unstrung, I looked abroad among the dead. As I crossed the deck, my feet literally splashed in blood; and I saw the mangled fragments of human bodies sticking in horrid patches to the sides and the beams above. There was a fine little boy aboard, with whom I was an especial favourite. He had been engaged, before the action, in the construction of a toy ship, which he intended sending to his mother; and I used sometimes to assist him, and to lend him a few simple tools; and, just as we were bearing down on the enemy, he had come running up to me with a knife, which he had borrowed from me a short time before.

“Alick, Alick,” he said, “I have brought you your knife; we are going into action, you know, and I may be killed, and then you would lose it.”

“Poor little fellow! The first body I recognised was his. Both his arms had been fearfully shattered by a cannon shot, and the surgeon’s tourniquets, which had been fastened below the shoulders, were still there; but he had expired ere the amputating knife had been applied. As I stood beside the body—little in love with war, masters—a comrade came up to me to say that my friend and countryman, Donald Gair, lay mortally wounded in the cockpit. I went instantly down to him. But never shall I forget, though never may I attempt to describe, what I witnessed that day, in that frightful scene of death and suffering. Donald lay in a low hammock, raised not a foot over the deck; and there was no one beside him, for the surgeons had seen at a glance the hopelessness of his case, and were busied about others of whom they had hope. He lay on his back, breathing very hard, but perfectly insensible; and in the middle of his forehead there was a round, little hole, without so much as a speck of blood about it, where a musket bullet had passed through the brain. He continued to breathe for about two hours; and, when he expired, I wrapped the body decently up in a hammock, and saw it committed to the deep. The years passed; and, after looking death in the face in many a storm and many a battle, peace was proclaimed, and I returned to my friends and my country.

“A few weeks after my arrival, an elderly Highland woman, who had travelled all the way from the farther side of Loch Shin to see me, came to our door. She was the mother of Donald Gair, and had taken her melancholy journey to hear from me all she might regarding the last moments and death of her son. She had no English, and I had not Gaelic enough to converse with her; but my mother, who had received her with a sympathy all the deeper from the thought that her own son might have been now in Donald’s place, served as our interpreter. She was strangely inquisitive, though the little she heard served only to increase her grief; and you may believe it was not much I could find heart to tell her; for what was there in the circumstances of my comrade’s death to afford pleasure to his mother? And so I waved her questions regarding his wound and his burial as I best could.

“Ah,” said the poor woman to my mother, “he need not be afraid to tell me all. I know too, too well that my Donald’s body was thrown into the sea; I knew of it long ere it happened; and I have long tried to reconcile my mind to it—tried when he was a boy even; and so you need not be afraid to tell me now.”

“And how,” asked my mother, whose curiosity was excited, “could you have thought of it so early?”

“I lived,” rejoined the woman, “at the time of Donald’s birth in a lonely shieling among the Sutherland hills—a

full day’s journey from the nearest church. It was a long, weary road, over moors and mosses. It was in the winter season, too, when the days are short; and so, in bringing Donald to be baptized, we had to remain a night by the way, in the house of a friend. We there found an old woman of so peculiar an appearance that, when she asked me for the child, I at first declined giving it, fearing she was mad, and might do it harm. The people of the house, however, assured me she was incapable of hurting it; and so I placed it on her lap. She took it up in her arms, and began to sing to it; but it was such a song as none of us had ever heard before.

“Poor little stranger!” she said, “thou hast come into the world in an evil time. The mists are on the hills, gloomy and dark, and the rain lies chill on the heather; and thou, poor little thing! hast a long journey through the sharp, biting winds, and thou art helpless and cold. Oh! but thy long after-journey is as dreary and dark. A wanderer shalt thou be over the land and the ocean; and in the ocean shalt thou lie at last. Poor little thing! I have waited for thee long. I saw thee in thy wanderings, and in thy shroud, ere thy mother brought thee to the door; and the sounds of the sea, and of the deadly guns, are still ringing in my ears. Go, poor little thing! to thy mother—bitterly shall she yet weep for thee—and no wonder; but no one shall ever weep over thy grave, or mark where thou liest amid the deep green, with the shark and the seal.”

“From that evening,” continued the mother of my friend, “I have tried to reconcile my mind to what was to happen Donald. But, oh! the fond, foolish heart! I loved him more than any of his brothers, because I was to lose him soon; and though, when he left me, I took farewell of him for ever, for I knew I was never, never to see him more, I felt, till the news reached me of his fall in battle, as if he were living in his coffin. But, oh, do tell me all you know of his death. I am old and weak, but I have travelled far, far to see you, that I might hear all; and surely, for the regard you bore to Donald, you will not suffer me to return as I came.”

“But I need not dwell longer on the story. I imparted to the poor woman all the circumstances of her son’s death, as I have done to you; and, shocking as they may seem, I found that she felt rather relieved than otherwise.”

“This is not quite the country of the second sight,” said my friend; “it is too much on the borders of the Lowlands. The gift seems restricted to the Highlands alone, and it is now fast wearing out even there.”

“And weel it is,” said one of the men, “that it should be sae. It is surely a miserable thing to ken o’ coming evil, if we just merely ken that it is coming, an’ that come it must, do what we may. Hae ye ever heard the story o’ the kelpy that wons in the Conan?”

My friend replied in the negative.

THE STORY OF THE DOOMED RIDER.

“The Conan,” continued the man, “is as bonny a river as we hae in a’ the north country. There’s mony a sweet sunny spot on its banks; an’ mony a time an’ aft hae I waded through its shallows, when a boy, to set my little scantling-line for the trouts an’ the eels, or to gather the big pearl-muscles that lie sae thick in the fords. But its bonny wooded banks are places for enjoying the day in—no for passing the nicht. I kenna how it is; it’s nane o’ your wild streams that wander desolate through a desert country, like the Aven, or that come rushing down in foam and thunder, owre broken rocks, like the Foyers, or that wallow in darkness, deep, deep in the bowels o’ the earth, like the fearful Auldgraunt; an’ yet no ane o’ these rivers has mair or frightfuller stories connected wi’ it than the Conan. Ane can hardly saunter owre half-a-mile in its course, frae

here it leaves Contin till where it enters the sea, without passing ovr the scene o' some frightful auld legend o' the kelpy or the water-wraith. And ane o' the maist frightful looking o' these places is to be found among the woods o' Conan-House. Ye enter a swampy meadow, that waves wi' flags an' rushes like a corn-field in harvest, an' see a hillock covered wi' willows rising like an island in the midst. There are thick mirk woods on ilka side; the river, dark an' awesome, an' whirling round and round in mossy eddies, sweeps away behind it; an' there is an auld burying ground, wi' the broken ruins o' an auld Papist kirk, on the tap. Ane can still see among the rougher stanes the rose-wrought mullions of an arched window, an' the trough that ance held the haly water. About twa hunder years ago—a wee mair maybe or a wee less, for ane canna be very sure o' the date o' thae auld stories—the building was entire; an' a spot near it, whar the wood now grows thickest, was laid out in a corn-field. The marks o' the furrows may still be seen among the trees. A party o' Highlanders were busily engaged, ae day in harvest, in cutting down the corn o' that field; an', just about noon, when the sun shone brightest an' they were busiest in the work, they heard a voice frae the river exclaim—' *The hour but not the man has come.*' Sure enough, on looking round, there was the kelpie stan'in in what they ca' a fause ford, just fornent the auld kirk. There is a deep black pool baith aboon an' below, but i' the ford there's a bonny ripple, that shews, as ane might think, but little depth o' water; an' just i' the middle o' that, in a place where a horse might swim, stood the kelpie. An' it again repeated its words—' *The hour but not the man has come;*' an' then, flashing through the water like a drake, it disappeared in the lower pool. When the folk stood wondering what the creature might mean, they saw a man on horseback come spurring down the hill in hot haste, making straight for the fause ford. They could then understand her words at ance; an' four o' the stoutest o' them sprang oot frae among the corn to warn him o' his danger, an' keep him back. An' sae they tauld him what they had seen an' heard, an' urged him either to turn back an' tak anither road, or stay for an hour or sae where he was. But he just wadna hear them, for he was baith unbelieving an' in haste, an' wauld hae taen the ford for a' they could say, hadna the Highlanders, determined on saving him whether he would or no, gathered round him an' pulled him frae his horse, an' then, to mak sure o' him, locked him up in the auld kirk. Weel, when the hour had gone by—the fatal hour o' the kelpie—they flung open the door, an' cried to him that he might noo gang on his journey. Ah! but there was nae answer, though; an' sae they cried a second time, an' there was nae answer still; an' then they went in, an' found him lying stiff an' cauld on the floor, wi' his face buried in the water o' the very stone trough that we may still see among the ruins. His hour had come, an' he had fallen in a fit, as 'twould seem, head foremost among the water o' the trough, where he had been smothered—an' sae, ye see, the prophecy o' the kelpie availed nothing."

"The very story," exclaimed my friend, "to which Sir Walter alludes, in one of the notes to 'The Heart of Midlothian.' The kelpie, you may remember, furnishes him with a motto to the chapter in which he describes the gathering of all Edinburgh to witness the execution of Porteous; and their irrepressible wrath, on ascertaining that there was to be no execution—' *The hour but not the man is come.*'"

"I remember making quite the same discovery," I replied, "about twelve years ago, when I resided for several months on the banks of the Conan, not half a mile from the scene of the story. One might fill a little book with legends of the Conan. The fords of the river are dangerous, especially in the winter season; and, about thirty years ago, before the erection of the fine stone bridge below

Conan House, scarcely a winter passed in which fatal accidents did not occur; and these were almost invariably traced to the murderous malice of the water-wraith."

"But who or what is the water-wraith?" said my friend; "we heard just now of the kelpie, and it is the kelpie that Sir Walter quotes."

"Ah," I replied, "but we must not confound the kelpie and the water-wraith, as has become the custom in these days of incredulity. No two spirits, though they were both spirits of the lake and the river, could be more different. The kelpie invariably appeared in the form of a young horse; the water-wraith in that of a very tall woman, dressed in green, with a withered, meagre countenance, ever distorted by a malignant scowl. It is the water-wraith, not the kelpie, whom Sir Walter should have quoted; and yet I could tell you curious stories of the kelpie, too."

"We must have them all," said my friend, "ere we part; meanwhile, I should like to hear some of your stories of the Conan."

"As related by me," I replied, "you will find them rather meagre in their details. In my evening walks along the river, I have passed the ford a hundred times, out of which, only a twelvemonth before, as a traveller was entering it on a moonlight night, the water-wraith started up, not four yards in front of him, and pointed at him with her long skinny fingers, as if in mockery. I have leaned against the identical tree to which a poor Highlander clung, when, on fording the river by night, he was seized by the goblin. A lad who accompanied him, and who had succeeded in gaining the bank, strove to assist him, but in vain—the poor man was dragged from his hold into the current, where he perished. The spot has been pointed out to me, too, in the opening of the river, where one of our Cromarty fishermen, who had anchored his yawl for the night, was laid hold of by the spectre when lying asleep on the beams, and almost dragged over the gunwale into the water. Our seafaring men still avoid dropping anchor, if they possibly can, after the sun has set, in what they term *the fresh*—that is, in those upper parts of the Frith where the waters of the river predominate over those of the sea.

"The scene of what is deemed one of the best-authenticated stories of the water-wraith, lies a few miles higher up the river. It is a deep, broad ford, through which horsemen, coming from the south, pass to Brahan Castle. A thick wood hangs over it on the one side; on the other, it is skirted by a straggling line of alders and a bleak moor. On a winter night, about twenty-five years ago, a servant of the late Lord Seaforth had been drinking with some companions till a late hour, at a small house in the upper part of the moor; and when the party broke up, he was accompanied by two of them to the ford. The moon was at full, and the river, though pretty deep in flood, seemed no way formidable to the servant; he was a young, vigorous man, and mounted on a powerful horse; and he had forded it, when half a yard higher on the bank, twenty times before. As he entered the ford, a thick cloud obscured the moon; but his companions could see him guiding the animal; he rode in a slanting direction across the stream, until he had reached nearly the middle, when a dark, tall figure seemed to start out of the water, and lay hold of him. There was a loud cry of distress and terror, and a frightful snorting and plunging of the horse; a moment passed, and the terrified animal was seen straining towards the opposite bank, and the ill-fated rider struggling in the stream. In a moment more he had disappeared."

THE STORY OF FAIRBURN'S GHOST.

"I suld weel ken the Conan," said one of the women, who had not yet joined in the conversation—"I was born on

a stane's cast frae the side o't. My mother lived in her last days beside the auld Tower o' Fairburn, that stan's sae like a ghaist aboon the river, an' looks down on a' its turns and winding frae Contin to the sea; my father, too, for a twelvemonth or sae afore his death, had a boat on ane o' its ferries, for the crossing, on week days, o' passengers, an' o' the kirk-going folks on Sunday. He had a little bit farm beside the Conan; an' just got the boat by way o' eiking out his means—for we had aye enough to do at rent-time, an' had, maybe, less than plenty through a' the rest o' the year, besides. Weel, for the first ten months or sae, the boat did brawly. The Castle o' Brahan is no half a mile frae the ferry, an' there were aye a hantle o' gran' folk comin and gangin frae the Mackenzie, an' my faither had the crossin o' them a'. An', besides, at Marti'mas, the kirk-going people used to send him firlots o' bear an' pecks o' oatmeal; an' he soon began to find that the bit boat was to do mair towards paying the rent o' the farm than the farm itsel.

"The Tower o' Fairburn is about a mile and a half aboon the ferry. It stan's by itsel on the tap o' a heathery hill, an' there are twa higher hills behind it. Beyond, there spreads a black dreary desert, where ane might wander a lang simmer's day without seeing the face o' a human creature, or the kindly smoke o' a lum. I daresay nane o' you hae heard hoo the Mackenzies o' Fairburn an' the Chisholms o' Strathglass parted that bit o' kintra atween them. Nane o' them could tell where the lands o' the ane ended or the ither began, an' they were that way for generations, till they at last thoct them o' a plan o' division. Each o' them gat an auld wife o' seventy-five, an' they set them aff ae Monday, at the same time, the ane frae Erchless Castle, an' the other frae the Tower—warning them, afore han', that the braidness o' their maisters' lands depended on their speed; for where the twa would meet among the hills, there would be the boundary. An' you may be sure that neither o' them lingered by the way that morning. They kent there was mony an ee on them, an' that their names would be spoken o' in the kintra-side lang after themselfs were dead an' gane; but it sae happened that Fairburn's carline, wha had been his nurse, was ane o' the slampest women in a' the north o' Scotland, young or auld; an', though the ither did weel, she did sae meikle better that she had got owre twenty lang Highland miles or the ither had got owre fifteen. They say it was a droll sicht to see them at the meeting: they were baith tired almost to fainting; but no sooner did they come in sicht o' ane anither, at the distance o' a mile or sae, than they began to run. An' they ran an' better ran, till they met at a little burnie; an' there wad they hae focht, though they had ne'er seen ane anither atween the een afore, had they had strength enough left them; but they had neither pith for fechtin, nor breath for scoldin, an' sae they just sat down an' girmed at ane anither across the stripe. The Tower o' Fairburn is naething noo but a dismal ruin o' five broken stories—the ane aboon the other—an' the lands hae gane oot o' the auld family; but the story o' the twa auld wives is a weel-kent story still.

"The laird o' Fairburn, in my faither's time, was as fine an open-hearted gentleman as was in the hail country. He was just particular guid to the puir; but the family had ever been that—ay, in their roughest days, even when the Tower had neither door nor window in the lower story, an' only a wheen shot-holes in the story aboon. There wasna a puir thing in the kintra but had reason to bless the laird; an' at ae time he had nae fewer than twelve puir orphans living aboot his hoose at ance. Nor was he in the least a proud, haughty man; he wad chat for hours thegither wi' ane o' his puirrest tenants; an' ilka time he crossed the ferry, he wad tak my faither wi' him, for company just, maybe half a mile on his way out or hame. Weel, it was ae nicht aboot the end o' May—a bonny nicht, an' hour or sae

after sun-down—an' my faither was mooring his boat, afore going to bed, to an auld oak tree, when wha does he see but the laird o' Fairburn coming down the bank? 'Od, thoct he, what can be taking the laird frae hame sae late as this? I thoct he had been no weel. The laird cam steppin into the boat, but, instead o' speakin frankly, as he used to do, he just waved his hand, as the proudest gentleman in the kintra might, an' pointed to the ither side. My faither rowed him across; but, oh! the boat felt unco dead an' heavy, an' the water stuck around the oars as gin it had been tar; an' he had just aneuch ado, though there was but little tide in the river, to mak oot the ither side. The laird stepped oot, an' then stood, as he used to do, on the bank, to gie my faither time to fasten his boat an' come along wi' him; an', were it no for that, the puir man wadna hae thoct o' going wi' him that nicht; but, as it was, he just moored his boat an' went. At first he thoct the laird must hae got some bad news that made him sae dull, an' sae he spoke on, to amuse him, about the weather an' the markets; but he found he could get very little to say, an' he felt as arc an' erie in passing through the woods, as gin he had been passing alane through a kirkyard. He noticed, too, that there was a fearsome flichtering an' shriekin among the birds that lodged in the tree taps aboon them; an' that, as they passed the *Talisoe*, there was a colly on the tap o' a hillöck that set up the awfulest yowling he had ever heard. He stood for a while in sheer consternation, but the laird beckoned him on, just as he had done at the river side, an' sae he gaed a bittie farther along the wild rocky glen that opens into the deer-park. But, oh! the fright that was among the deer! They had been lying asleep on the knolls, by sixes an' sevens, an' up they a' started at ance, and gaed driving aff to the far end o' the park as if they couldna be fare enough frae my faither or the laird. Weel, my faither stood again, an' the laird beckoned an' beckoned as afore; but, Gude tak us a' in keeping! whan my faither looked up in his face, he saw it was the face o' a corp—it was white an' stiff, an' the nose was thin an' sharp, an' there wasnae winking wi' the wide open een. Gude preserve us! my faither didna ken where he was stan'in—didna ken what he was doing; an', though he kept his feet, he was just in a kind o' swarf, like. The laird spoke twa three words to him—something aboot the orphans, he thoct; but he was in such a state that he couldna tell what; an' whan he cam to himsel, the apparition was awa. It was a bonny clear nicht when they had crossed the Conan; but there had been a gatherin o' black cluds i' the lift as they gaed, an' there noo cam on, in the clap o' a han', ane o' the fearsomest storms o' thunder an' lightning that was ever seen in the country. There was a thick gurly aik smashed to shivers owre my faither's head, though nane o' the splinters steered him; an' whan he reached the river, it was roaring frae bank to brae like a little ocean; for a water-spout had broken among the hills, an' the trees it had torn down wi' it were darting along the current like arrows. He crossed in nae little danger, an' took to his bed; an' though he rase an' went aboot his wark for twa three months after, he was never, never his ain man again. It was found that the laird had departed no five minutes afore his apparition had come to the ferry; an' the very last words he had spoke—but his mind was carried at the time—was something aboot my faither."

THE STORY OF THE LAND FACTOR.

"There maun hae been something that weighed on his mind," remarked one of the women, "though your faither had nae poore to get it frae him. I mind that, whan I was a lassie, there happened something o' the same kind. My faither had been a tacksman on the estate o' Blackhall; an', as the land was sour an' wat, an' the seasons for

a while, backward, he aye contrived—for he was a hard-working, carefu man—to keep us a' in meat and claith, and to meet wi' the factor. But, waes me! he was sune taen frae us. In the middle o' the seed-time, there cam a bad fever intil the country; an' the very first that died o't, was my puir faither. My mither did her best to keep the farm, an' haud us a' thegither. She got a carefu, decent lad to manage for her, an' her ain ce was on everything; an' had it no been for the cruel, cruel factor, she micht hae dune gay weel. But never had the puir tenant a waur friend than Ranald Keilly. He was a toun writer, an' had made a sort o' livin, afore he got the factorship, just as toun writers do in ordinar. He used to be gettin the haud o' auld wives' posies when they died; an' there were aye some litigious, troublesome folk in the place, too, that kept him doing a little in the way o' troublin their neebors; an' sometimes, when some daft, gowked man, o' mair means than sense, couldna mismanage his ain affairs enough, he got Keilly to mismanage them for him. An' sae he had picked up a bare livin in this way; but the factorship made him just a gentleman. But, oh, an ill use did he mak o' the power that it gied him owre puir, honest folk. Ye maun ken that, gin they were puir, he liked them a' the waur for being honest; but, I dare say, that was natural enough for the like o' him. He contrived to be baith writer an' factor, ye see; an' it wad just seem that his chief aim in the ae capacity, was to find employment for himsel in the ither. If a puir tenant was but a day behind-hand wi' his rent, he had creatures o' his ain that used to gang half-an'-half wi' him in their fees; an' them he wad send aff to poind him; an' then, if the expenses o' the poinding werena forthing, as weel as what was owing to the master, he wad hae a roup o' the stocking twa three days after; an' anither account, as a man o' business, for that. An' when things were going dog-cheap—as he took care that they should sometimes gang—he used to buy them in for himsel, an' pairt wi' them again for maybe twice the money. The laird was a quiet, silly, good-natured man; an', though he was tauld weel o' the factor at times—ay, an' believed it too—he just used to say—'Oh, puir Keilly, what wad he do gin I were to pairt wi' him? He wad just starve.' An', oh, sirs, his pity for him was bitter cruelty to mony, mony a puir tenant, an' to my mither among the lave.

"The year after my faither's death, was cauld an' wat, an' oor stuff remained sae lang green, that we just thocht we wouldna get it cut ava. An' when we did get it cut, the stacks, for the first whilie, were aye heatin wi' us; an', when Marti'mas came, the grain was still saft an' milky, an' no' fit for the market. The term came round, an' there was little to gie the factor in the shape o' money, though there was baith corn an' cattle; an' a' that we wanted was just a little time. Ah, but we had fa'en into the hands o' ane that never kent pity. My mither hadna the money gin, as it were, the day, an', on the morn, the messengers came to poind. The roup was no a week after; an', oh! it was a grievous sight to see hoo the crop an' the cattle went for just naething. The farmers were a' puirly off wi' the late ha'rst, an' had nae money to spare; an' sae the factor knocked in ilka thing to himsel, wi' hardly a bid against him. He was a rough-faced, little man, wi' a red, hooked nose—a guid deal gien to whisky, an' vera wild an' desperate when he had taen a glass or twa aboon ordinar; an', on the day o' the roup, he raged like a perfect madman. My mither spoke to him, again an' again, wi' the tear in her ee, an' implored him, for the sake o' the orphan an' the widow, no to harry hersel an' her bairns; but he just cursed an' swore a' the mair, an' knocked down the stacks an' the kye a' the faster; an' whan she spoke to him o' the ane aboon a', he said that Providence gied lang credit an' reckoned on a lang day, an' that he wald tak

him intil his ain hands. Weel, the roup cam to an end, an' the sum o' the whole didna come to meikle mair nor the rent, an' clear the factor's lang lang account for expenses; an' at nicht my mither was a ruined woman. The factor staid up late an' lang, drinking wi' some creatures o' his ain, an' the last words he said on going to his bed was, that he hadna made a better day's wark for a twelvemonth. But, Gude tak us a' in keeping! in the morning he was a corp—a cauld, lifeless cord, wi' a face as black as my bannet.

"Weel, he was buried, an' there was a grand character o' him putten in the newspapers, an' we a' thocht we were to hear nae mair aboot him. My mither got a wee bittie o' a house on the farm o' a neebor, an' there we lived dowie enough; but she was aye an eident, working woman, an' she now span late an' early for some o' her auld freends, the farmers' wives; an' her sair-won penny, wi' what we got frae kindly folk wha minded us in better times, kept us a' alive. Meanwhile, strange stories o' the dead factor began to gang aboot the kintra. First, his servants, it was said, were hearing arc, curious noises in his counting office. The door was baith locked an' sealed, waiting till his freends would cast up, for there were some doots aboot them; but, locked an' sealed as it was, they could hear it opening an' shutting every nicht, an' hear a rustling among the papers, as gin there had been half-a-dozen writers scribblin among them at ance. An' then, Gude preserve us a'! they could hear Keilly himsel as if he were dictating to his clerk. An', last o' a', they could see him in the gloamin, nicht an' mornin, ganging aboot his hoose, wringing his hands, an' aye, aye muttering to himsel aboot roups an' poindings. The servant girls left the place to himsel; an' the twa lads that wrought his farm an' slept in a hay loft, were sae disturbed, nicht after nicht, that they had just to leave it to himsel too.

"My mither was ae nicht wi' some o' her spinnin at a neeborin farmer's—a worthy, God-fearing man, an' an elder o' the kirk. It was in the simmer time, an' the nicht was bricht an' bonny; but, in her backcoming, she had to pass the empty house o' the dead factor, an' the elder said that he would tak a step hame wi' her, for fear she michtna be that easy in her mind. An' the honest man did sae. Naething happened them in the passing, except that a dun cow, ance a great favourite o' my mither's, came up lowing to them, puir beast! as gin she would hae better liked to be gaun hame wi' my mither than stay where she was. But the elder didna get aff sae easy in the backcoming. He was passing beside a thick hedge, when what does he see, but a man inside the hedge takin step for step wi' him as he gaed? The man wore a dun coat, an' had a huntin whip under his arm, an' walked, as the elder thought, very like what the dead factor used to do when he had gotten a glass or twa aboon ordinar. Weel, they cam to a slap in the hedge, an' out cam the man at the slap; an', Gude tak us a' in keepin! it was, sure enough, the dead factor himsel. There were his hook nose, an' his rough, red face—though it was, maybe, bluer noo than red; an' there were the boots an' the dun coat he had worn at my mither's roup, an' the very whip he had lashed a puir gangrel woman wi' no a week afore his death. He was muttering something to himsel; but the elder could only hear a wordie noo an' then. 'Poind an' roup,' he would say—'poind an' roup; an' then there would come out a blatter o' curses—'Hell, hell! an' damn, damn!' The elder was a wee fear-stricken at first—as wha wadna? but then the ill words, an' the way they were said, made him angry—for he could never bear ill words without checking them—an' sae he turned round wi' a stern brow, an' asked the appearance what it wanted, an' why it should hae comin to disturb the peace o' the kintra, and to disturb him? It stood still at that: an' said, wi' an awsome grane,

that it couldna be quiet in the grave till there were some justice done to Widow Stuart. It then tauld him that there were forty gowd guineas in a secret drawer in his desk, that hadna been found, an' tauld him where to get them, an' that he wad need gang wi' the laird an' the minister to the drawer, an' gie them a' to the widow. It couldna hae rest till then, it said, nor wad the kintra hae rest either. It willed that the lave o' the gear should be gien to the pair o' the parish; for nane o' the twa folk that laid claim to it had the shadow o' a right. An', wi' that, the appearance left him. It just went back through the slap in the hedge; an', as it stepped owre the ditch, vanished in a puff o' smoke.

"Weel, but to cut short a lang story, the laird and the minister were at first gay slow o' belief—no that they misdoubted the elder, but they thocht that he must hae been deceived by a sort o' wakin dream. But they soon changed their minds, for, sure enough, they found the forty guineas in the secret drawer. An' the news they got frae the south about Keilly, was just as the appearance had said—no ane mair nor anither had a richt to his gear, for he had been a foundlin, an' had nae freens. An' sae my mither got the guineas, an' the parish got the rest, an' there was nae mair heard o' the apparition. We didna get back oor auld farm; but the laird gae us a bittie that served oor turn as weel; an', or my mither was ca'ed awa frae us, we were a' settled in the world, an' doin for oorsels."

THE STORY OF THE MEALMONGER.

"It is wonderful," remarked the decent-looking, elderly man, who had contributed the story of Donald Gair—"it is wonderful how long a recollection of that kind may live in the memory without one's knowing it is there. There is no possibility of one taking an inventory of one's recollections. They live unnoted and asleep, till roused by some likeness of themselves, and then up they start, and answer to it, as "face answereth to face in a glass." There comes a story into my mind, much like the last, that has lain there all unknown to me for the last thirty years, nor have I heard any one mention it since; and yet, when I was a boy, no story could be better known. You have all heard of the dear years that followed the harvest of '40, and how fearfully they bore on the poor. The scarcity, doubtless, came mainly from the hand of Providence, and yet man had his share in it too. There were forestallers of the market, who gathered their miserable gains by heightening the already enormous price of victuals—thus adding starvation to hunger; and, among the best known and most execrated of these, was one M'Kechan, a resdenter in the neighbouring parish. He was a hard-hearted, foul-spoken man; and aften what he *said*, exasperated the people as much against him as what he *did*. When, on one occasion, he bought up all the victuals on a market, there was a wringing of hands among the women, and they cursed him to his face; but, when he added insult to injury, and told them, in his pride, that he had not left them an ounce to foul their teeth, they would that instant have taken his life, had not his horse carried him through. He was a mean, too, as well as a hard-hearted man, and used small measures and light weights. But he made money, and deemed himself in a fair way of gaining a character on the strength of that alone, when he was seized by a fever, and died after a few days' illness. Solomon tells us that, when the wicked perish, there is shouting—there was little grief in the sheriffdom when M'Kechan died; but his relatives buried him decently; and, in the course of the next fortnight, the meal fell twopence the peck. You know the burying ground of St Bennet's—the chapel has long since been ruinous, and a

row of wasted elms, with white skeleton-looking tops, run around the enclosure, and look over the fields that surround it on every side. It lies out of the way of any thoroughfare, and months may sometimes pass, when burials are unfrequent, in which no one goes near it. It was in St Bennet's that M'Kechan was buried; and the people about the farm-house that lies nearest it, were surprised, for the first month after his death, to see the figure of a man, evening and morning, just a few minutes before the sun had risen, and a few after it had set, walking round the yard, under the elms, three times, and always disappearing when it had taken the last turn, beside an old tomb near the gate. It was, of course, always clear daylight when they saw the figure; and the month passed ere they could bring themselves to suppose it was other than a thing of flesh and blood like themselves. The strange regularity of its visits, however, at length bred suspicion; and the farmer himself, a plain, decent man, of more true courage than men of twice the pretence, determined, one evening, on watching it. He took his place outside the wall, a little before sunset, and no sooner had the red light died away on the elm tops, than up started the figure from among the ruins on the opposite side of the burying ground, and came onward in its round—muttering, incessantly, as it came—"Oh, for mercy sake! for mercy sake!" it said, "a handful of meal—I am starving! I am starving! a handful of meal!" And then, changing its tone into one still more doleful—"Oh," it exclaimed, "alas, for the little lippie and the little peck! alas, for the little lippie and the little peck!" As it passed, the farmer started up from his seat; and there, sure enough, was M'Kechan, the corn factor, in his ordinary dress, and, except that he was thinner and paler than usual, like a man suffering from hunger, presenting nearly his ordinary appearance. The figure passed, with a slow, gliding sort of motion; and, turning the farther corner of the burying-ground, came onward in its second round; but the farmer, though he had felt rather curious than afraid as it went by, found his heart fail him as it approached the second time, and, without waiting its coming up, set off homeward through the corn. The apparition continued to take its rounds, evening and morning, for about two months after, and then disappeared for ever. Mealmongers had to forget the story, and to grow a little less afraid, ere they could cheat with their accustomed coolness. Believe me, such beliefs, whatever may be thought of them in the present day, have not been without their use in the past."

As the old man concluded his story, one of the women rose to a table in the little room, and replenished our glasses. We all drank in silence.

"It is within an hour of midnight," said one of the men, looking at his watch; "we had better recruit the fire and draw in our chairs; the air aye feels chill at a lykewake or a burial. At this time to-morrow, we will be lifting the corpse."

There was no reply. We all drew in our chairs nearer the fire, and for several minutes there was a pause in the conversation, but there were more stories to be told, and before the morning, many a spirit was evoked from the grave, the vasty deep, and the Highland stream, whose histories we may yet give in a future number.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

DONALD GORM.

IN a remote corner of Assynt, one of the most remote and savage districts in the Highlands of Scotland, there is a certain wild and romantic glen, called Eddernahulish. In the picturesqueness of this glen, however, neither wood nor rock has any share; and, although it may be difficult to conceive of any place possessing that character without these ordinary adjuncts, it is yet, nevertheless, true, that Eddernahulish, with neither tree nor precipice, is yet strikingly picturesque. The wide sweep of the heath-clad hills whose gradual descents form the spacious glen, with the broad and brawling stream careering through its centre, give the place an air of solitude and of quiet repose that, notwithstanding its monotony, is exceedingly impressive.

On gaining any of the many points of elevation that command a view of this desolate strath, you may descry, towards its western extremity, a small, rude, but massive stone bridge, grey with age; for it was erected in the time of that Laird of Assynt who rendered himself for ever infamous by betraying the Duke of Montrose, who had sought and obtained the promise of his protection, to his enemies.

Close by this bridge stands a little Highland cottage, of, however, a considerably better order than the common run of such domiciles in this quarter of the world; and bespeaking a condition, as to circumstances, on the part of its occupants, which is by no means general in the Highlands.

"Well, what of this cottage?" says the impatient reader.

"What of it?" say we, with the proud consciousness of having something worth hearing to tell of it. "Why, was it not the birthplace of Donald Gorm?"

"And, pray, who or what was Donald Gorm?"

"We were just going to tell you when you interrupted us; and we will now proceed to the fulfilment of that intention."

Donald Gorm was a rough, rattling, outspoken, hot-headed, and warm-hearted Highlander, of about two-and-thirty years of age. Bold as a lion, and strong as a rhinoceros, with great bodily activity, he feared nobody; and having all the irascibility of his race, would fight with anybody at a moment's notice. Possessing naturally a great flow of animal spirits and much ready wit, Donald was the life and soul of every merry-making in which he bore a part. In the dance, his joyous whoop and halloo might be heard a mile off; and the hilarious crack of his finger and thumb, nearly a third of that distance. Donald, in short, was one of those choice spirits that are always ready for anything, and who, by the force of their individual energies, can keep a whole country-side in a stir. As to his occupations, Donald's were various—sometimes farming, (assisting his father, with whom he lived,) sometimes herring fishing, and sometimes taking a turn at harvest work in the Lowlands—by which industry he had scraped a few pounds together; and, being unmarried, with no one to care for but himself, he was thus comparatively independent—a circumstance which kept Donald's head at its highest elevation, and his voice, when he spoke, at the top of its bent.

The tenor of our story requires that we should now
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advert to another member of Donald's family. This is a brother of the latter's, who bore the euphonious, and high-flavoured patronymic of Duncan Dhu M'Tavish Gorm, or, simply, Duncan Gorm, as he was, for shortness, called, although certainly baptized by the formidable list of names just given.

This Duncan Gorm was a man of totally different character from his brother Donald. He was of a quiet and peaceable disposition and demeanour—steady, sober, and conscientious; qualities which were thought to adapt him well for the line of life in which he was placed. This was as a domestic servant in the family of an extensive Highland proprietor, of the name of Grant. In this capacity Duncan had, about a year or so previous to the precise period when our story commences—which, by the way, we beg the reader to observe, is now some ninety years past—gone to the Continent, as a personal attendant on the elder son of his master, whose physicians had recommended his going abroad for the benefit of his health.

It was, then, about a year after the departure of Duncan and his master, that Donald's father received a letter from his son, intimating the death of his young master, which had taken place at Madrid, and, what was much more surprising intelligence, that the writer had determined on settling in the city just named, as keeper of a tavern or wine-house, in which calling he said he had no doubt he would do well; and he was not mistaken. In about six months after, his family received another letter from him, informing them that he was succeeding beyond his most sanguine expectations—and hereby hangs our tale.

On Donald these letters of his brother's made a very strong impression; and, finally, had the effect of inducing him to adopt a very strange and very bold resolution. This was neither more nor less than to join his brother in Madrid—a resolution from which it was found impossible to dissuade him, especially after the receipt of Duncan's second letter, giving intimation of his success.

With most confused and utterly inadequate notions, therefore, of either the nature, or distance, or position of the country to which he was going, Donald made preparations for his journey. But they were merely such preparations as he would have made for a descent on the Lowlands, at harvest time. He put up some night-caps, stockings, and shirts in a bundle, with a quantity of bread and cheese, and a small flask of his native mountain dew. This bundle he proposed to suspend, in the usual way, over his shoulder, on the end of a huge oak stick, which he had carefully selected for the purpose. And it was thus prepared—with, however, an extra supply of his earnings in his pocket, of which he had a vague notion he would stand in need—that Donald contemplated commencing his journey to Madrid, from the heart of the Highlands of Scotland. In one important particular, however, did Donald's outfit, on this occasion, differ from that adopted on ordinary occasions. On the present, he equipped himself in the full costume of his country—kilt, plaid, bonnet and feather, sword, dirk, and pistols; and thus arrayed, his appearance was altogether very striking, as he was both a stout and exceedingly handsome man.

Before starting on his extraordinary expedition, Donald

had learned which was the fittest seaport whereat to embark on his progress to Spain; and it was nearly all he had learned, or indeed cared to inquire about, as to the place of his destination. For this port, then, he finally set out; but over his proceedings, for somewhere about three weeks after this, there is a veil, which our want of knowledge of facts and circumstances will not enable us to withdraw. Of all subsequent to this, however, we are amply informed; and shall now proceed to give the reader the full benefit of that information.

Heaven knows how Donald had fought his way to Madrid, or what particular route he had taken to attain this consummation; but certain it is, that, about the end of the three weeks mentioned, the identical Donald Gorm of whom we speak, kilted and hosed as he left Eddernahulish, with a huge stick over his shoulder, bearing a bundle suspended on its farthest extremity, was seen, early in the afternoon, approaching the gate of Alcala, one of the principal and most splendid entrances into the Spanish capital. Donald was staring about him, and at everything he saw, with a look of the greatest wonder and amazement; and strange were the impressions that the peculiar dresses of those he met, and the odd appearance of the buildings within his view, made upon his unsophisticated mind and bewildered sensorium.

He, in truth, felt very much as if he had, by some accident, got into the moon, or some other planet than that of which he was a born inhabitant, and as if the beings around him were human only in form and feature. The perplexity and confusion of his ideas were, indeed, great—so great that he found it impossible to reduce them to such order as to give him one single distinct impression. There were, however, two points in Donald's character, which remained wholly unaffected by the novelty of his position. These were his courage and bold bearing. Not all Spain, nor all that was in Spain, could have deprived Donald of these for a moment. He was amazed, but not in the least awed. He was, in truth, looking rather fiercer than usual, at this particular juncture, in consequence of a certain feeling of irritation, caused by what he deemed the impertinent curiosity of the passers-by, who, no less struck with his strange appearance than he with theirs, were gazing and tittering at him from all sides—treatment this, at which Donald thought fit to take mortal offence. Having arrived, however, at the gate of Alcala, Donald thought it full time to make some inquiries as to where his relative resided. Feeling impressed with the propriety of this step, he made up to a group of idle, equivocal-looking fellows, who, wrapped up in long but sadly dilapidated cloaks, were lounging about the gate; and, plunging boldly into the middle of them, he delivered himself thus, in his best English:—

“I say, freens, did you'll know, any of you, where my broder stops?”

The men, as might be expected, first stared at the speaker, and then burst out a-laughing in his face. They, of course, could not comprehend a word of what he said; a circumstance on the possibility of which it had never struck Donald to calculate, and to which he did not now advert. Great, therefore, was his wrath, at this, apparently, contemptuous treatment by the Spaniards. His Highland blood mounted to his face, and with the same rapidity rose his Highland choler. Donald, in truth, already contemplated doing battle in defence of his insulted consequence, and at once hung out his flag of defiance.

“You tam scarecrow-lookin rascals!” he sputtered out, in great fury, at the same time shaking his huge clenched brown fist in the faces of the whole group, their numbers not in the least checking his impetuosity—“You cowardly, starvation-like togs! I've a goot mind to make smashed potatoes o' the whole boilin o' ye. Tam your Spanish noses and whiskers!”

The fierce and determined air of Donald had the effect of instantly restoring the gravity of the Spaniards, who, totally at a loss to comprehend what class of the human species he represented, looked at him with a mingled expression of astonishment and respect. At length, one of their number discharged a volley of his native language at Donald; but it was, apparently, of civil and good-natured import, for it was delivered in a mild tone, and accompanied by a conciliatory smile. On Donald, the language was, of course, utterly lost—he did not comprehend a word of it; but not so the indications of a friendly disposition to which we have alluded; these he at once appreciated, and they had the effect of allaying his wrath a little, and inducing him to make another attempt at a little civil colloquy.

“Well,” said Donald, now somewhat more calmly, “I was shust ask you a ceevil question, an' you laugh in my face, which is not ceevil. In my country we don't do that to anybody, far less a stranger. Noo, may pe, you'll not know my broder, and there's no harm in that—none at all; but you should shust have say so at once, an' there would pe no more apout it. Can none of you speak Gaelic?”

To this inquiry, which was understood to be such, there was a general shaking of heads amongst the Spaniards.

“Oich, oich, it must pe a tam strange country where there's no Gaelic. But, never mind—you cannot help your misfortunes. I say, lads, will ye teuk a tram? Hooch, hurra! prof, prof! Let's get a tram.” And Donald flung up one of his legs hilariously, while he gave utterance to these uncouth expletives, which he did in short, joyous shouts. “Where will we go, lads? Did you'll know any decen' public-house, where we'll can depend on a goot tram?”

To this invitation, and to the string of queries by which it was accompanied, Donald got in reply only a repetition of that shake of the head which intimated non-comprehension. But it was an instance of the latter that surprised him more than all the others.

“Well, to be surely,” he said, “if a man'll not understand the offer of a tram, he'll understand nothing, and it's no use saying more. Put maybe you'll understand the sign, if not the word.” And, saying this, he raised his closed hand to his lips and threw back his head, as if taking off a caulker of his own mountain dew; pointing, at the same time, to a house which seemed to him to have the appearance of one of public entertainment. To Donald's great satisfaction, he found that he had now made himself perfectly intelligible; a fact which he recognised in the smiles and nods of his auditory, and, still more unequivocally, in the general movement which they made after him to the “public-house,” to which he immediately directed his steps.

At the head, then, of this troop of tatterdemallions, and walking with as stately a step as a drum-major, Donald may be said to have made his entrance into Madrid; and rather an odd first appearance of that worthy there, it certainly was. On entering the tavern or inn which he had destined for the scene of his hospitalities, and which he did much in the same style that he would have entered a public-house in Lochaber—namely, slapping the first person he met on the shoulder, and shouting some merry greeting or other appropriate to the occasion. This precisely, Donald did in the present instance, to the great amazement and alarm of a very pretty Spanish girl, who was performing the duty of ushering in customers, inclusive of that of subsequently supplying their wants. On feeling the enormous paw of Donald on her shoulder, and looking at the strange attire in which he was arrayed, the girl uttered a scream of terror, and fled into the interior of the house. Unaccustomed to have his rude but hearty greetings received in this way, or to find them producing an effect so contrary to that which, in his honest warm-heartedness,

he intended them to produce, Donald was rather taken aback by the alarm expressed by the girl; but soon recovering his presence of mind—

“Oich, oich!” he said, laughing, and turning to his ragged crew behind him, “ta lassie’s frightened for Shon Heelanman. Pair thing! It’s weel seen she’s no peen procht up in Lochaber, or maype’s no been lang in the way o’ keepin a public. It’s—

“‘Hant awa, bito awa,
Haut awa frae me, Tonal;
What care I for a’ your wealth,
An’ a’ that ye can gie, Tonal?’”

And, chanting this stanza of a well-known Scottish ditty, at the top of his voice, Donald bounced into the first open door he could find, still followed by his tail. These having taken their seats around a table which stood in the centre of the apartment, he next commenced a series of thundering raps on the board with the hilt of his dirk, accompanied by stentorian shouts of—“Hoy, lassie! House, here! Hoy, hoy, hoy!”—a summons which was eventually answered by the landlord in person, the girl’s report of Donald’s appearance and salutation to herself having deterred any other of the household from obeying the call of so wild and noisy a customer.

“Well, honest man,” said Donald, on the entrance of his host, “will you pe pringing us two half mutchkins of your best whisky. Here’s some honest lads I want to treat to a tram.”

The landlord, as might be expected, stared at his strange guest, in utter unconsciousness of the purport of his demand. Recollecting himself, however, after a moment, his professional politeness returned, and he began bowing and simpering his inability to comprehend what had been addressed to him.

“What for you’ll boo, boo, and scrape, scrape there, you tam ass!” exclaimed Donald, furiously. “Co and pring us the whisky. Two half mutchkins, I say.”

Again the polite landlord of the Golden Eagle, which was the name of the inn, bowed his non-comprehension of what was said to him.

“Cot’s mercy! can you’ll not spoke English, either?” shouted Donald, despairingly, on this second rebuff, and at the same time striking the table impatiently with his clenched fist. “Can you’ll spoke Gaelic, then?” he added; and, without waiting for a reply, he repeated his demand in that language. The experiment was unsuccessful. Mine host of the Golden Eagle understood neither Gaelic nor English. Finding this, Donald had once more recourse to the dumb show of raising his hand to his mouth, as if in the act of drinking; and once more he found the sign perfectly intelligible. On its being made, the landlord instantly retired, and in a minute after returned with a couple of bottles in his hand, and two very large sized glasses, which he placed on the table. Eyeing the bottles contemptuously—“It’s no porter—it’s whisky I’ll order,” exclaimed Donald, angrily, conceiving that it was the former beverage that had been brought him. “Porter’s drink for hoes, and not for human podies.” Finding it wholly impossible, however, to make this sentiment understood, Donald was compelled to content himself with the liquor which had been brought him. Under this conviction, he seized one of the bottles, filled up a glass to the brim, muttering the while “that it was tam white, strange-looking porter,” started to his feet, and, holding the glass extended in his hand, shouted the health of his ragged company, in Gaelic, and bolted the contents. But the effect of this proceeding was curious. The moment the liquor, which was some of the common wine of Spain, was over Donald’s throat, he stared wildly, as if he had just done some desperate deed—swallowed an adder by mistake, or committed some such awkward oversight.

This expression of horror was followed by the most violent sputterings and hideous grimaces, accompanied by a prodigious assemblage of curses of all sorts, in Gaelic and English, and sometimes of an equal proportion of both.

“Oich, oich! poisoned py Cot!—vinekar, horrit vinekar! Lanlort, I say, what cursed stuffs is this you kive us?” And again Donald sputtered with an energy and perseverance that nothing but a sense of the utmost disgust and loathing could have inspired. Both the landlord and Donald’s own guests, at once comprehending his feelings regarding the wine, hastened, by every act and sign they could think of to assure him that he was wrong in entertaining so unfavourable an opinion of its character and qualities. Mine host, filling up a glass, raised it to his mouth, and, sipping a little of the liquor, smacked his lips, in token of high relish of its excellences. He then handed the glass round the company, all of whom tasted and approved, after the same expressive fashion; and thus, without a word being said, a collective opinion, hollow against Donald, was obtained.

“Well, well, trink the apominations, and be curst to you!” said Donald, who perfectly understood that judgment had gone against him, “and much goot may’t do you! but mysel would sooner trink the dirty pog water of Sleevrechkin. Oich, oich! the dirts! But I say, lanlort, maype you’ll have got some brandies in the house? I can make shift wi’ that, when there’s no whisky to be got.”

Fortunately for Donald, mine host of the Golden Eagle at once understood the word brandy, and, understanding it, lost no time in placing a measure of that liquor before him; and as little time did Donald lose in swallowing an immense bumper of the inspiring alcohol.

“Ay,” said Donald, with a look of great satisfaction, on performing this feat, “that’s something like a human Christian’s trink. No your tam vinekar, as would colic a horse.” Saying this, he filled up and discussed another modicum of the brandy; his followers, in the meantime, having done the same duty by the two bottles of wine, which were subsequently replaced by other two, by the order of their hospitable entertainer. On Donald, however, his libations were now beginning to produce, in a very marked manner, their usual effects. He was fast getting into a state of high excitation; thumping the table violently with his fist, and sputtering out furious discharges of Gaelic and English, mingled in one strange and unintelligible mess of words, and seemingly oblivious of the fact that not a syllable of what he said could be comprehended by his auditory. This, then, was a circumstance which did not hinder him from entertaining his friends with a graphic description of Eddernahulish, and a very animated account of a particular deer-chase in which he had once been engaged. In short, in the inspiration of the hour, Donald seemed to have entirely forgotten every circumstance connected with his present position. He appeared to have forgotten that he was in a foreign land; forgotten the purpose that brought him there; forgotten his brother; forgotten that those associated with him were Spaniards, not Athole-men; in truth, forgotten everything he should have recollected. In this happy state of obfuscation, Donald continued to roar, to drink, and to talk away precisely as he was wont to do in Rory M’Fadyen’s “public” at Kilnichrochokan. From being oratorical, Donald became musical, and insisted on having a song from some of his friends; but failing to make his request intelligible, he volunteered one himself, and immediately struck up, in a strong nasal twang, and with a voice that made the whole house ring—

“Ta Heelan hills are high, high, high,
An’ ta Heelan miles are long;
But, then, my freens, rememper you,
Ta Heelan whisky’s strong, strong, strong!
Ta Heelan whisky’s strong!

“And who shall care for ta length o’ ta mite,
Or who shall care for ta hill,

If he shall have, 'fore he teukit ta way,
In him's cheek one Heelan shill, shill, shill—
In him's cheek one Heelan shill?
"An' maybe he'll pe teukit twa;
I'll no say is no pe tree;
And what although it should pe four?
Is no pussiness you or me, me, me—
Is no pussiness you or me."

Suiting the action to, at least, the spirit of the song, Donald here tossed off another bumper of the alcohol, which had the rather odd effect of recalling him to some sense of his situation, instead of destroying, as might have been expected, any little glimmering of light on that subject which he might have previously possessed. On discussing the last glass of brandy—

"Now, lads," said Donald, "I must pe going. It's gettin 'ate, and I must find out my broder Tuncan Corm, as decen a lad as between this and Eddernahulish." Having said this, and paid his reckoning, Donald began shaking hands with his friends, one after the other, previous to leaving them; but his friends had no intention whatever of parting with him in this way. Donald had incautiously exposed his wealth when settling with the landlord; and of his wealth, as well as his wine, they determined on having a share. The ruffians, in short, having communicated with each other, by nods and winks, resolved to dog him; and, when fitting place and opportunity should present themselves, to rob and murder him. Fortunately for Donald, however, they had not exchanged intelligence so cautiously as to escape his notice altogether. He had seen and taken note of two or three equivocal acts and motions of his friends; but had had sufficient prudence, not only to avoid all remark on them, but to seem as if he had not observed them. Donald, indeed, could not well conceive what these secret signals meant; but he felt convinced that they meant "no goot;" and he therefore determined on keeping a sharp look-out, not only while he was in the presence of his boon companions, but after he should have left them; for he had a vague notion that they might possibly follow him for some evil purpose.

Under this latter impression—which had occurred to him only at the close of their orgie, no suspicion unfavourable to the characters of his guests having before struck him—Donald, on parting from the latter at the door of the inn in which they had been regaling, might have been heard muttering to himself, after he had got to some little distance—

"Tam rogues, after all, I pelieve."

Having thus distinctly expressed his sentiments regarding his late companions, Donald pursued his way, although he was very far from knowing what that way should be. Street after street he traversed, making frequent vain inquiries for his "broder, Tuncan Gorm," until midnight, when he suddenly found himself in a large, open space, intersected by alleys formed by magnificent trees, and adorned by playing fountains of great beauty and elegance. Donald had got into the Prado, or public promenade of Madrid; but of the Prado Donald knew nothing; and much, therefore, did he marvel at what sort of a place he had got into. The fountains, in particular, perplexed and amazed him; and it was while contemplating one of these, with a sort of bewildered curiosity, that he saw a human figure glide from one side to the other of the avenue in which the object of his contemplation was situated, and at the distance of about twenty yards. Donald was startled by the apparition; and, recollecting his former associates, clapped his right hand instinctively on the hilt of his broadsword, and his left on the butt of a pistol—one of those stuck in his belt—and in this attitude awaited the reappearance of the skulker; but he did not make himself again visible. Donald, however, felt convinced that there was danger at hand, and he determined to keep himself prepared to encounter it.

"Some o' ta vinekar-drinking rascals," muttered Donald. "It was no honest man's drink; nor no goot can come o' a country where they swallow such apominable liquors."

Thus reasoned Donald with himself, as he stood vigilantly scanning the localities around him, to prevent a sudden surprise. While thus engaged, four different persons, all at once, and as if they had acted by concert, started each from behind a tree, and approached Donald from four different points, with the purpose, evidently, of distracting his attention. At once perceiving their intention, and not doubting that their purposes were hostile, the intrepid Celt, to prevent himself being surrounded, hastily retreated to a wall which formed part of the structure of the fountain on which he had been gazing, and, placing his back against it, awaited, with his drawn sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, the approach of his enemies, as he had no doubt they were.

"Well, my friends," said Donald, as they drew near him, and discovered to him four tall fellows, swathed up to the eyes in their cloaks, and each with a drawn sword in his hand, "what you'll want with me?" No answer having been returned to this query, and the fellows continuing to press on, although now more cautiously, as they had perceived that their intended victim was armed, and stood on the defensive—"Py Shoseph!" said Donald, "you had better keep your distance, lads, or my name's no Tonal Gorm if I don't gif some of you a dish of crowdy."

And, as good as his word, he almost instantly after fired at the foremost of his assailants, and brought him down. This feat performed, instead of waiting for the attack of the other three, he instantly rushed on them sword in hand, and, by the impetuosity of his attack, and fury of his blows, rendered all their skill of fence useless. With his huge weapon and powerful arm, both of which he plied with a rapidity and force which there was no resisting, he broke through their guards as easily as he would have beat down so many osier wands, and wounded severely at every blow. It was in vain that Donald's assailants kept retiring before him, in the hope of getting him at a disadvantage—of finding an opportunity of having a cut or a thrust at him. No time was allowed them for any such exploit. Donald kept pressing on, and showering his tremendous blows on them so thickly, that not an instant was left them for aggression in turn. They were, besides, rapidly losing relish for the contest, from the ugly blows they were getting, without a possibility of returning them. Finding, at length, that the contest was a perfectly hopeless one, Donald's assailants fairly took to their heels, and ran for it; but there was one of their number who did not run far—a few yards, when he fell down and expired. His hurts had been mortal.

"Oich, oich, lad!" said Donald, peering into the face of the dead man, "you'll no pe shust that very weel, I'm thinkin. The Heelan claymore 'll not acree with your Spanish stomach. Put it's goot medicine for rogues, for all that." Having thus apostrophized the slain man, Donald sheathed his weapon, muttering as he did so—"Ta cowardly togs can fight no more's a turkey hens."

And, cocking his bonnet proudly, he commenced the task of finding his way back to the city—a task which, after a good many unnecessary, but, from his ignorance of the localities, unavoidable deviations, he at length accomplished.

Donald's most anxious desire now was to find a "public" in which to quarter for the night; but, the hour being late, this was no easy matter. Every door was shut, and the streets lonely and deserted. At length, however, our hero stumbled on what appeared to him to be something of the kind he wanted, although he could have wished it to have been on a fully smaller and humbler scale. This was a

large hotel, in which every window was blazing with light, and whose rooms were filled with mirthful music. Donald's first impression was, that it was a penny-wedding upon a great scale. It was, in truth, a masquerade; and, as the brandy which he had drunk in the earlier part of the evening was still in his head, he proposed to himself taking a very active part in the proceedings. On entering the hotel, however, which he did boldly, he was rather surprised at the splendours of various kinds which greeted his eyes—marble stairs, gorgeous lamps, gilt cornices, &c., &c., and sundry other indications of grandeur, which he had never seen equalled, even in Tain or Dingwall, to say nothing of his native parish of Macharuarich; and he had been, in his time, in every public-house of any repute in all of them. These circumstances, however, did not disabuse Donald of his original idea of its being a penny-wedding. He only thought that they conducted these things in greater style in Spain than in Scotland; and with this solution of the difficulty suggested by the said splendours, Donald mounted the broad marble staircase, and stalked into the midst of a large apartment, filled with dancers. The variety and elegance of the dresses of these last again staggered Donald's belief in the nature of the merry-making, and made him doubt whether he had conjectured aright. These doubts, however, did not for an instant shake his determination to have a share in the fun. It was a joyous dancing party, and that was quite enough for him. In the meantime, however, he contented himself with staring at the strange, but splendid figures by whom he was surrounded, and who were, in various corners of the apartment, gliding through the "mazy dance." But, if Donald's surprise was great at the costumes which he was now so intently marking, those who displayed them were no less surprised at that which he exhibited. Donald's strange, but striking attire, in truth, had attracted all eyes; and much did those who beheld it wonder, in all the earth, to what country it belonged. But simple wonder and admiration were not the only sensations which Donald's garb produced on the masquers. His kilt had other effects. It drove half the ladies screaming out of the apartment, to its wearer's great surprise and no small displeasure. The guise which Donald wore, however, and which all believed to have been donned for the occasion, was, on the whole, much approved of, and the wearer, in more than one instance, complimented for his taste in having selected so novel and striking a garb. But even his warmest applauders objected to the scantiness of the kilt, and hinted that, for decorum's sake, this part of his dress should have been carried down to his heels. This improvement on his kilt was suggested, in the most polite terms, to Donald himself, by a Spanish gentleman, who spoke a little English, and who had ascertained that our hero was a native of Great Britain, and whom he believed to be a man of note. To this suggestion Donald made no other reply than by a look of the utmost indignation and contempt. The Spanish gentleman, whose name was Don Sebastiano, seeing that his remark had given offence, hastened to apologise for the liberty he had taken—assuring Donald that he meant nothing disrespectful or insulting. This apology was just made in time, as the irritable Celt had begun to entertain the idea of challenging the Spaniard to mortal combat. As it was, however, his good nature at once gave way to the pacific overture that was made him. Seizing the apologist by the hand, with a gripe that produced some dismal contortions of countenance on the part of him on whom it was inflicted—

"Is no harm done at all, my friend. You'll not know no petter, having never peen, I dare say, in our country, or seen a Heelman pefore."

The Spaniard declared he never had had either of these happinesses, and concluded by inviting Donald to an ad-

joining apartment, to have some refreshment—an invitation which Donald at once obeyed.

"Now, my good sir," said his companion, on their entering a sort of refectory where were a variety of tables spread with abundance of the good things of this life and of Madrid, "what shall you prefer?"

"Herself's not fery hungry, but a little thirsty," said Donald, flinging himself down on a seat, in a free and easy way, with his legs astride, so as to allow free suspension to his huge goat skin purse, and doffing his bonnet and wiping the perspiration from his forehead—"Herself's no fery hungry, but a little thirsty; and she'll teukit, if you please, a fery small drop of whisky and water."

The Spaniard was nonplussed. He had never even heard of whisky in his life, and was, therefore, greatly at a loss to understand what sort of liquor his friend meant. Donald, perceiving his difficulty, and guessing that it was of the same nature with the one which he had already experienced, hastily transmuted his demand for whisky into one for brandy, which was immediately supplied him, when Donald, pouring into a rummer a quantity equal to at least six glasses, filled up with water, and drank off, to the inexplicable amazement of his companion, who, however, although he looked unutterable things at the enormous draught, was much too polite to say anything.

Thus primed a second time, Donald, seeing his new friend engaged with some ladies who had unexpectedly joined him, returned alone to the dancing apartment, which he entered with a whoop of encouragement to the performers, that startled every one present, and for an instant arrested the motions of the dancers, who could not comprehend the meaning of his uncouth cries. Regardless, however, of this effect of his interference in the proceedings of the evening, Donald, with a countenance beaming with hilarity, and eyes sparkling with wild and reckless glee, took up a conspicuous position in the room, and from thence commenced edifying the dancers by a series of short, abrupt shouts or yells, accompanied by a vigorous clapping of his hands, at once to intimate his satisfaction with the performances, and to encourage the performers themselves to further exertions. Getting gradually, however, too much into the spirit of the thing to be content with being merely an onlooker, Donald all at once capered into the middle of the floor, snapping his fingers and thumbs, and calling out to the musicians to strike up "Caber Feigh;" and, without waiting to hear whether his call was obeyed, he commenced a vigorous exhibition of the Highland Fling, to the great amazement of the bystanders, who, instantly abandoning their own pursuits, crowded around him, to witness this, to them, most extraordinary performance. Thus occupied, and thus situated—the centre of a "glittering ring"—Donald continued to execute, with unabated energy, the various strongly marked movements of his national dance, amidst the loud applauses of the surrounding spectators. On concluding—

"Oich, oich!" exclaimed Donald, out of breath with his exertion, and looking laughingly round on the circle of bystanders. "Did ever I think to dance ta Heelan Fling in Madrid! Och, no, no! Never, by Shoseph! But, I dare say, it'll pe the first time that it was ever danced here."

From this moment, Donald became a universal favourite in the room, and the established lion of the night. Wherever he went, he was surrounded with an admiring group, and was overloaded with civilities of all kinds, including frequent offers of refreshment; so that he speedily found himself in most excellent quarters. There was, however, one drawback to his happiness. He could get no share in the dancing, excepting what he chose to perform solus, as there was nothing in that way to be seen in the room in the shape of a reel, nor was there a single tune played of which he could either make head or tail—nothing but

"your foreign trash, with neither spunk nor music in them." Determined, however, since his Highland Fling had been so much approved of, to give a specimen of the Highland Reel, if he could possibly make it out, Donald, as a first step, looked around him for a partner; and seeing a very handsome girl seated in one of the corners of the apartment, and apparently disengaged, he made up to her, and, making one of his best bows, solicited the honour of her joining him in a reel. Without understanding the language in which she was addressed, but guessing that it conveyed an invitation to the floor, the young lady at once arose and curtsied an acquiescence, when Donald, taking her gallantly by the hand, led her up to the front of the orchestra, in order that he might bespeak the appropriate music for the particular species of dance he contemplated. On approaching sufficiently near to the musicians—

"Fitters," he shouted, at the top of his voice, "I say, can you'll kive us 'Rothiemurchus' Rant,' or the 'Trucken Wives of Fochabers?'"

Then turning to his partner, and flinging his arms about her neck in an ecstasy of Highland excitement, capering at the same time hilariously, in anticipation of the coming strain—

"Them's the tunes, my lass, for putting mettle in your heels."

A scream from the lady, however, with whom Donald was using these unwarrantable personal liberties, and a violent attempt, on her part, to escape from them, suddenly arrested Donald's hilarity, and excited his utmost surprise. In the next instant, he was surrounded by at least half-a-dozen angry cavaliers, amongst whom there was a brandishing of swords and much violent denunciation, all directed against Donald, and excited by his unmannerly rudeness to a lady. It was some seconds before Donald could comprehend the meaning of all this wrath, or believe that he was at once the cause and the object of it. But, on this becoming plain—

"Well, shentlemen," he said, "I did not mean anything wrong. No offence at all to the girl. It was just the fashion of my country, and I'm sorry for it."

To this apology of Donald's, of which, of course, not a word was understood, the only reply was a more fierce flourishing of brands, and a greater volubility and vehemence of abuse; the effect of which was at once to arouse Donald's cholera, and to urge him headlong on extremities.

"Well, well," he said, "if you'll not have satisfaction any other way than py the sword, py the sword you shall have it."

And instantly drawing, he stood ready to encounter at once the whole host of his enemies. What might have been the result of so unequal a contest, had it taken place, we cannot tell—and this, simply, because no encounter did take place. At the moment that Donald was awaiting the onset of the foe—a proceeding, by the way, which they were now marvellously slow in adopting, notwithstanding the fury with which they had opened the assault—a party of the King's guard, with fixed bayonets, rushed into the apartment, and bore Donald forcibly out into the street, where they left him, with angry signs that, if he attempted to return, he would meet with still worse treatment. Donald had prudence enough to perceive that any attempt to resent the insult that had been offered him—seeing that it was perpetrated by a dozen men armed with musket and bayonet—would be madness; and, therefore, contented himself with muttering in Gaelic some expressions of high indignation and contempt. Having delivered himself to this effect, he proudly adjusted his plaid, and stalked majestically away.

It was now so far advanced in the morning, that Donald abandoned all idea of seeking for a bed, and resolved on

prosecuting an assiduous search for his brother. This he accordingly commenced, and numerous were the calls at shops, and frequent the inquiries he made for Tuncan Gorm; but unavailing were they all. No one understood a word of what he addressed to them; and thus, of course, no one could give him the information he desired. It was in vain, too, that Donald carefully scanned every sign that he passed, to see that it did not bear the anxiously looked for name. On none of them did it appear. They were all, as Donald himself said, Fouros, and Beuros, and Lebranos, and Dranos, and other outlandish and unchristian-like names. Not a Heeland or Lowland shopkeeper amongst them. No such a decent an' civilized name to be met with as Gorm, or Brolachan, or M'Fadyen, or Macharuarich, or M'Cullisky.

Tired and disappointed, Donald, after wandering up and down the street for several hours, bethought him of adjourning to a tavern, to have something to eat, and probably something to drink also. Seeing such a house as he wanted, he entered, and desired the landlord to furnish him with some dinner. In a few seconds two dishes were placed before him; but what these dishes were, Donald could not at all make out. They resembled nothing in the edible way he had ever seen before, and the flavour was most alarming. Nevertheless, being pretty sharp-set, he resolved to try them; and for this purpose drew one of the dishes towards him, when, having peered as curiously and cautiously into it for a few seconds as if he feared it would leap up in his face and bite him, and curling his nose the while into strong disapprobation of its odour, he lifted several spoonfuls of the black, greasy mess on his plate. At this point Donald found his courage failing him; but, as his host stood behind his chair, and was witness to all his proceedings, he did not like either to express the excessive disgust he was beginning to feel, nor to refuse tasting of what was set before him. Mustering all his remaining courage, therefore, he plunged his spoon with desperate violence into the nauseous mess, which seemed to Donald to be some villainous compound of garlic, rancid oil, and dough; and, raising it to his lips, shut his eyes, and boldly thrust it into his mouth. Donald's resolution, however, could carry him no farther. To swallow it he found utterly impossible, now that the horrors of both taste and smell were full upon him. In this predicament, Donald had no other way for it but to give back what he had taken; and this course he instantly followed, adding a large interest, and exclaiming—

"My Cot! what sort of a country is this? Your drinks is poison, and your meats is poison, and everything is apominations apout you. Oich, oich! I wish to Cot I was back to Eddernahulish again; for I'll pe either poisoned or murdered amongst you if I remain much longer here. That's peyond all doubt."

And having thus expressed himself, Donald started to his feet, and was about to leave the house without any farther ceremony, when the landlord adroitly planted himself between him and the door, and demanded the reckoning. Donald did not know precisely what was asked of him; but he guessed that it was a demand for payment, and this demand he was determined to resist, on the ground that what he could not eat he ought not to be called on to pay for. Full of this resolution, and having no doubt that he was right in his conjecture as to the landlord's purpose in preventing his exit—

"Pay for ta apominations!" said Donald, wrathfully. "Pay for ta poison! It's myself will see you at Jericho first. Not a farthing, not one tam farthing, will I pay you for ta trash. So stand out of the way, my friend, before worse comes of it."

Saying this, Donald advanced to the door, and, seizing its guardian by the breast, laid him gently on his back on

the floor, and, stepping over his prostrate body, walked deliberately out of the house, without further interruption; mine host not thinking it advisable to excite further the cholera of so dangerous a customer, and one who had just given him so satisfactory a specimen of his personal prowess. Another day had now nearly passed away, and Donald was still as far, to all appearance, from finding the object of his search as ever he had been. He was, moreover, now both hungry and thirsty; but these were evils which he soon after succeeded in obviating for the time, by a more successful foray than the last. Going into another house of entertainment, he contrived to make a demand for bread and cheese intelligible—articles which he had specially condescended on, that there might be “no mistake;” and with these and a pretty capacious measure of brandy, he managed to effect a very tolerable passover. Before leaving this house, Donald made once more the already oft but vainly-repeated inquiry, whether he knew (he was addressing his landlord) where one Tuncan Gorm stopped. It did not now surprise Donald to find that his inquiry was not understood; but it did both surprise and delight him when his host, who had abruptly left the room for an instant, returned with a person who spoke very tolerable English. This man was a muleteer, and had resided for some years in London in the service of the Spanish ambassador. His name—a most convenient one for Donald to pronounce—was Mendoza Ambrosius. On being introduced to this personage, Donald expressed the utmost delight at finding in him one who spoke a Christian language, as he called it; and, in the joy of his heart with his good fortune, ordered in a jorum of brandy for the entertainment of himself and Mr Ambrosius. The liquor being brought, and several horns of it discussed, Donald and his new friend got as thick as “ben’ leather.” And on this happy understanding being established, the former began to detail, at all the length it would admit of, the purpose of his visit to Madrid, and the occurrences that had befallen him since his arrival; prefacing these particulars with a sketch of his history, and some account of the place of his nativity; and concluding the whole, by asking his companion if he could in any way assist him to find his brother, Duncan Gorm.

The muleteer replied, in the best English he could command, that he did not know the particular person inquired after, but that he knew the residences of two or three natives of Britain, some of whom, he thought it probable, might be acquainted with his brother; and that he would have much pleasure in conducting him to these persons, for the purpose of ascertaining this. Donald thanked his friend for his civility; and, in a short time thereafter, the brandy having been finished in the interim, the two set out together, on their expedition of inquiry. It was a clear, moonlight night; but, although it was so, and the hour what would be considered in this country early, the streets were nearly deserted, and as lonely and quiet as if Madrid were a city of the dead. This stillness had the effect of making the smallest sound audible even at a great distance, and to this stillness it was owing that Donald and his friend suddenly heard, soon after they had set out, the clashing of swords, intermingled with occasional shouts, at a remote part of the street they were traversing.

“What’s tat?” exclaimed Donald, stopping abruptly, and cocking his ears at the well-known sound of clashing steel. His companion, accustomed to such occurrences, replied, with an air of indifference, that it was merely some street brawl.

“It’ll pe these tam vinekar drinkers again,” said Donald, with a lively recollection of the assault that had been made upon himself; “maype some poor shentleman’s in distress. Let us go and see, my tear sir.” To this proposal, the muleteer, with a proper sense of the folly of throwing him-

self in the way of mischief unnecessarily, would at first by no means accede; but, on being urged by Donald, agreed to move on a little with him, towards the scene of conflict. This proceeding soon brought them near enough to the combatants, to perceive that Donald’s random conjecture had not been far wrong, by discovering to them one person, who, with his back to the wall, was bravely defending himself against no fewer than four assailants, all being armed with swords.

“Did not I tell you so!” exclaimed Donald, in great excitation, on seeing how matters stood. “Noo, Maister Tozy Brozey, shoulder to shoulder, my tear, and we’ll assist this poor shentleman.” Saying this, Donald drew his claymore, and rushed headlong on to the rescue, calling on Tozy Brozey to follow him; but Tozy Brozey’s feelings and impulses carried him in a totally different direction. Fearing that his friend’s interference in the squabble might have the effect of directing some of the blows his way, he fairly took to his heels, leaving Donald to do by himself what to himself seemed needful in the case. In the meantime, too much engrossed by the duty before him to mind much whether his friend followed him or not, Donald struck boldly in, in aid of the “shentleman in distress,” exclaiming, as he did so—

“Fair play, my tears! Fair play’s ashewel everywhere, and I suppose here too.” And, saying this, with one thundering blow that fairly split the skull of the unfortunate wight on whom it fell, in twain, Donald lessened the number of the combatants by one. The person to whose aid he had thus so unexpectedly and opportunely come, seeing what an effectual ally he had got, gave a shout of triumphant joy; and, although much exhausted by the violence and length of his exertions in defending himself, instantly became the assailant in his turn. Inspired with new life and vigour, he pressed on his enemies with a fury that compelled them to give way; and, being splendidly seconded by Donald, whose tremendous blows were falling with powerful effect on those against whom they were directed, the result was, in a few seconds, the flight of the enemy; who, in rapid succession, one after the other, took to their heels, although not without carrying along with them several authentic certificates of the efficiency of Donald’s claymore.

On the retreat of the braves—for such they were—the person whom Donald had so efficiently served in his hour of need, flew towards him, and, taking him in his arms, poured out a torrent of thanks for the prompt and gallant aid he had afforded him. But, as these thanks were expressed in Spanish, they were lost on him to whom they were addressed. Not so, however, the indications of gratitude, evinced in the acts by which they were accompanied. These, Donald perfectly understood, and replied to them as if their sense had been conveyed to him in a language which he comprehended.

“No thanks at all, my tear sir. A Heelantman will always assist a freend, where a few plows will do him goot. You would shust do the same to me, I’m sure. But,” added Donald, as he sheathed his most serviceable weapon, “this is the tam place for fechtin I have ever seen. I thoct oor own Heelants pad enough, but this is ten times worse, py Shoseph! I have no peen more than four-and-twenty hours in Ma-a-treed, an’ I’ll have peen in tree fecht already.”

More of this speech was understood, by the person to whom it was addressed, than might have been expected under all the circumstances. This person was a Spanish gentleman of rank and great wealth, of the name of Don Antonio Nunnez, whose acquirements included a very competent knowledge of the English language, which, although he spoke it but indifferently, he understood very well. Yet it certainly did require all his knowledge of it, to recognise it in the shape in which Donald presented it to him. This, however, to a certain extent, he did, and, in English, now repeated his sense of the important obligation

Donald had conferred on him. But it was not to words alone that the grateful and generous Spaniard meant to confine his acknowledgments of the service that had been rendered him. Having ascertained that Donald was a perfect stranger in the city, he insisted on his going home with him, and remaining with him during his stay in Madrid, and further requesting that he would seek at his hands, and no other's, any service or obligation, of whatever nature it might be, of which he should stand in need during his stay.

To these generous proffers, Donald replied, that the greatest service that could be done him, was to inform him where he could find his brother, Duncan Gorm. Don Antonio first expressed surprise to learn that Donald had a brother in Madrid, and then his sorrow that he did not know, nor had ever heard of such a person.

"He'll keep a public," said Donald.

"What is that, my friend?" inquired Don Antonio.

"Sell a shill, to be sure—I'll thocht everypody know that," said Donald, a good deal surprised at the other's ignorance.

"Shill? shill?" repeated the Spaniard—"and pray, my friend, what is a shill?"

"Cot pless me! don't you'll know what a shill is?" rejoined Donald, with increased amazement. "If you'll come with me to Eddernahulish, I'll shew you what a shill is, and help you to drink it, too."

"Well, well, my friend," said Don Antonio, "I'll get an explanation of what a 'shill' is, from you afterwards; but, in the meantime, you'll come with me, if you please, as I am anxious to introduce you to some friends at home!"

Saying this, he took Donald's arm, in order to act as his conductor, and, after leading him through two or three streets, brought him to the door of a very large and handsome house. Don Antonio having knocked at this door, it was immediately opened by a servant in splendid livery, who, on recognising his master—for such was Donald's friend—instantly stepped aside, and respectfully admitted the pair. In the vestibule, or passage, which was exceedingly magnificent, were a number of other serving men, in rich liveries, who drew themselves up on either side, in order to allow their master and his friend to pass; and much did they marvel at the strange garb in which that friend appeared. Don Antonio now conducted Donald up the broad marble staircase, splendidly illuminated with a variety of elegant lamps, in which the vestibule terminated; and, on reaching the top of the first flight, ushered him into a large and gorgeously-furnished apartment, in which were two ladies dressed in deep mourning. To these ladies, one of whom was the mother, the other the sister of Don Antonio, the latter introduced his amazed and awe-stricken companion, as a person to whom he was indebted for his life. He then explained to his relations what had occurred, and did not fail to give Donald's promptitude and courage, a due share of his laudations. With a gratitude not less earnest than his own had been, the mother and sister of Don Antonio took Donald by the hand; the one taking the right, and the other the left, and, looking in his face, with an expression of the utmost kindness, thanked him for the great obligation he had conferred on them. These thanks were expressed in Spanish; but, on Don Antonio's mentioning that Donald was a native of Britain, and that he did not, as he rather thought, understand the Spanish language, his sister, a beautiful girl of one or two-and-twenty, repeated them, in somewhat minced, but perfectly intelligible English. Great as Donald's perturbation was at finding himself so suddenly and unexpectedly placed in a situation so much at variance with anything he had been accustomed to, it did not prevent him marking, in a very special manner, the dark sparkling eyes and rich sable tresses of Donna Nunnez, the name of Don Antonio's sister. Nor, we must add, did the former look with utter indiffer-

ence on the manly form, so advantageously set off as it was by his native dress, of Donald Gorm. But of this anon. In a short time after, a supper, corresponding in elegance and splendour to all the other elegances and splendours of this lordly mansion, was served up; and, on its conclusion, Donald was conducted, by Don Antonio himself, to a sleeping apartment, furnished with the same magnificence that prevailed throughout the whole house. Having ushered him into this apartment, Donald's host bade him a kind good-night, and left him to his repose.

What Donald's feelings were, on finding himself thus so superbly quartered, now that he had time to think on the subject, and could do so unrestrained by the presence of any one, we do not precisely know; but, if one might have judged by the under-breath exclamations in which he indulged, and by the looks of amazement and inquiry which he cast around him, from time to time, on the splendours by which he was surrounded, especially on the gorgeous bed, with its gilt canopy and curtains of crimson silk, which was destined for his night's resting-place, these feelings would appear to have been, after all, fully more perplexing than pleasing. It was, in truth, just too much of a good thing; and Donald felt it to be so. But still the whole had a smack of good fortune about it, that was very far from being disagreeable, and that certainly had the effect of reconciling Donald to the little discordance between former habits and present circumstances, which his position for the time excited.

While at breakfast on the following morning, with Don Antonio and his mother and sister, the first asked Donald if he had any particular ties in his own country that would imperatively demand his return home; and on Donald's replying that there were none, Don Antonio immediately inquired whether he would accept a commission in the King of Spain's body-guards:—"Because," said he, "if you will, I have, I believe, influence enough to procure it for you."

Donald said he had no objection in the world to try it for a year or two, at any rate—only he would like to consult his "broder Tuncan" first.

"True, true," said Don Antonio; "I promised to assist you in finding out your relative—and I shall do so."

As good as his word in this particular, and a great deal better in many others in which Donald was interested, Don Antonio instantly set an inquiry on foot, which, in less than two hours, brought the brothers together. The sequel of our story, although containing the very essence of Donald's good fortune, is soon told. His brother highly approving of his accepting the commission offered him, Don Antonio lost no time in procuring him that appointment; and in less than three weeks from his arrival in Madrid, Donald Gorm figured as a Captain in the King of Spain's body-guards, in which service he ultimately attained the rank of Colonel, together with a title of honour, which enabled him to ask, without fear of giving offence, and to obtain, the hand of Donna Nunnez, with a dowry second to that of no fair damsel in Spain. Donald never again returned to Eddernahulish, but continued in the country of his adoption till his death; and in that country some of his descendants to this hour bear amongst the proudest names of which it can boast.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT.

No. I.—THE GRANDMOTHER'S NARRATIVE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the researches of Woodrow, and the more recent enlargement and excellent annotations of Dr Burns, we are quite conscious that a volume somewhat interesting might still be collected, of additional and traditional atrocities, of which no written record remains, nor other save the recollections of *recollections*—in other words, the remembrance which we and a few others possess of the narratives of our grandmothers whilst we were yet children. Our own maternal grandmother died at ninety-six—we ourselves are now in our sixtieth year; so that, deducting eight or nine years for our age previous to our taking an interest in such concerns, we have our grandmother existing before (say) 1695, which, deducting eight years of infancy, brings us to 1703, which is only twenty-five years posterior to the conclusion, and fifty-three to the commencement of the atrocious twenty-eight years' persecution. It is then manifest, from this arithmetical computation, that our own grandmother, on whose truthful intentions we can rely with confidence, came into contact and conversation with those who were contemporaneous with the events and persons she referred to. This surely is no very violent or unsafe stretch of tradition; but, even though it were much more so, we would be disposed to yield to it somewhat more consideration than is generally done. Nowadays, the pen and the press are almost the only recorders of passing and past events and circumstances; but, in the age to which we refer, this was not the case. The children of Israel were bound by a holy and inviolate law to record *verbally* to their children, and those again to theirs, what the Lord had done for their forefathers. And on the same principle, and under the same comparative absence of written records, did our grandmothers receive from their immediate predecessors the revolting disclosures which they have handed down to us. There are here but two links in the chain—those, namely, which connect our grandmothers with their parents, and with us; but, had there been twenty—nay, fifty or a hundred links—we should not, on account of the high antiquity of such a tradition, have been disposed to dismiss it as altogether groundless, and not implying even the slightest authority. In illustration of this, we may adduce the facts sufficiently well known and authenticated, which were disclosed about thirty years ago at Burgh-head, the ultimate extent of Roman conquest in Scotland. In that promontory, now inhabited by a scattered population, there remained, from age to age, a tradition that a Roman well had existed on the particular spot. There being a lack of water in the place, the inhabitants combined to have the locality opened, with the view of disclosing so useful and essential an element. They dug twenty, and even thirty feet downwards, but made no disclosures; and were on the point of giving up the search, when the father of the late Duke of Gordon happening to pass, and to ascertain their object and their want of success, very generously supplied them with the means of making a further excavation. At last, to their no small surprise and delight, they came to a nicely

built and rounded well-mouth, with a stair downwards to the bottom, and the bronze statues of Mercury and other heathen gods stuck into niches! This well remains to this hour, and may be visited by the traveller along the Moray Frith, as an indisputable and indelible evidence of the value of traditions, in ages when almost no other means of record existed. True, such traditions are deeply coloured and tinged by the prejudices of the age in which they originated—allowance as to exaggeration must be made for excited feelings and outraged opinions; but still the ground-work may in general be depended on. The old and perhaps vulgar proverb—"There is aye some water where the stirkie drowns!" applies in this case with a conclusive force; and we may rely upon it, even from the collateral and written evidence of parties and partisans on all sides, that nothing which mere tradition has hinted at can exceed, in characters of genuine cruelty and downright bloodshed and murder, those historical statements which have reached us.

True, a writer lately deceased—whose memory is immortal and whose writings will survive whilst national feelings and the vitality of high talent remain—has given us a somewhat chivalrous and attractive character of the most distinguished actor in the atrocities of the fearful time; and it is to be more than lamented—to be deplored—that an early, and habitual, and ultimately constitutional, leaning to aristocratic and chivalrous views, should have induced such a writer as Sir Walter Scott to draw such an interesting picture of the really infamous "Clavers"—of him who, for a piece of morning pastime, could, with his own pistol, blow out a husband's brains without law or trial—and that in the presence of his wife and infant family! But the great body of historians are on the side of truth and tradition; and the recently published, and still publishing life by Lockhart has unfolded and will yet unfold those leanings of the great novelist which have occasioned so lamentable a deviation from real history.

Under the shelter, then, of these preliminary observations, we proceed with such notices and statements as we have heard repeated, or seen in manuscripts which have (as we believe) never been printed. And we shall give these notices and statements as they were given to us—surrounded by a halo of superstition, and involving much belief which is now, happily, or unhappily—we do not say which—completely exploded.

"O my bairn! these were fearful times"—(Grandmother *loquitor*)—"ay, and atveel war *they*. My own mother has again and again made my hair stand on end, and my heart-blood run cold at her relations.

"Ye ken Auchincain, my bairn, and maybe, whan ye were seeking for hawk's nests, ye hae searched the Whitestane Cleughs. Aweel, ye maybe hae seen, or maybe no—for young hearts and een like yours (O sirs! mine are now dim and sair!) tak little tent o' sic like things; but my bonny bairn, though tent it ye didna, true it is and of verity, that, at the very bottom o' that steep and fearfu linn, there is a rock, a stane like a blue whinstane; and owre that stane the water has run for years and years; and the winds and the rains of heaven have dashed and plashed against it; but still that stane remains—(dear me,

I'm amaisht greeting!—it remains stained and spotted *wi' bluid*. And that bluid, my dear bairn, is o' the bluid that rins in yer ain veins—it is the bluid of William Harkness, my own faither's brother. Weel, and ye shall hear—for my mother used to tell me the lang-syne stories sae aft that I can just repeat them in her ain words—Weel, it was the month of October, and the nights were beginning to lengthen, and the pair persecuted saints that had taen to the *outside* a' simmer, and were seldom, if ever, to be seen in the *inside*, were beginning to pop in again nows an' thans, when they thought Dalziel, and Johnston, and Clavers, and Douglas, and the rest o' the murdering gang, war elsewhere. Aweel, as I am telling ye, yer granduncle cam hame to his ain brother's house—it might be about the dawn o' the morning, whan a' the house, except his brother, were sleeping, and he had got a cog o' crap whey on his knee, wi' a barley scone—for glad, glad was he to get it; and he had just finished saying the grace, and was conversing quietly like, and in whisper, wi' his ain brother, when what should he hear, but a rap at the kitchen door, and a voice pouring in through the keyhole—

“ ‘Willie Harkness, Willie Harkness! the Philistines are upon ye!—they are just now crossing the Pothouseburn.’ ”

“ I trow when he heard that, he wasna lang in clearing the closs, and takin doun the shank, streight for the foot of the Whiteside Linn, where the cave was, in which he had for weeks and months been concealed. It was now, ye see, the grey o' the morning, and things could be seen moving at some distance. Just as my uncle was about to enter the bramble-bushes at the foot o' the linn, he was met by a trooper on horseback.

“ ‘Stand!’ said a voice, in accents of Satan—‘Stand, this moment, and surrender; or your life is not worth three snuffs of a Covenanter's mull!’ ”

“ My uncle kent weel the consequences of standing, and of being taken captive; and ye see, my bairn, life is sweet to us a'—sae he e'en dashed into the thicket, and in an instant o' time, and ere the dragoon could shoulder his musket, he was tumbling head-foremost (but holding by the branches) towards the bottom of Whiteside Linn. There lay my worthy uncle, breathless, and motionless, and silent, expecting every moment that the dragoon would dismount and secure him. However, the man o' sin contented himself wi' firing several times (at random) into the linn. The last shot which was fired, took effect on my uncle's knee—the blood sprung from it, and my uncle fainted. As God would have it, at this time no further pursuit was attempted, and my uncle was lame for life. The blood still remains on the stane, as witness against the unholy hand that shed it!—But, alas! we are a' erring creatures, and who knows but even a dragoon may get repentance and find mercy? God forbid, my wee man, that we should condemn ony ane, even a persecutor, to eternal damnation! It's awfu—it's fearfu!—But that's no a' yeshall hear. When the trooper came up to the house, and joined his party, he repeated what had passed, and a search was set about in the linn for my uncle; but William had by this time crippen into his cauld, dripping cave, over which the water spouted in a cascade, and thus concealed him from their search; sae, after marking the blood, and almost raving like blood-hounds, with disappointment, they tied up a servant girl—whom they had first abused in the most unseemly and beastly manner—to a tree, and there they left her, incapable, though she had been able, of freeing herself. She was relieved in an hour; but never recovered either the shame or the cruelty: she died, and her grave is in the east corner, near the large bushy tree in Closeburn churchyard. ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.’ ”

“ Muckle better, my dear, was her fate, though seemin' a hard one, than that o' the ungodly curate o' Closeburn

—o' him wha was informer against the pair persecuted remnant, and wha, through the instrumentality o' his spies an' informers, had occasioned a' this murder an' crulty. Ye shall hear. He—I mean, my bairn, the curate—had been hurlin the folk, whether they would or no, to the kirk, for weeks, in carts and hurdles—for, oh, they liked his cauld, moral harangues ill, and his conduct far waur. He had even got the laird to refuse burial in the kirkyard to ony who refused to hear his fushionless preachings. Puir Nanny Walker's funeral (she who had been sae horribly murdered) was to tak place on sic a day. The curate had heard o' this, an' he was resolved to oppose the interment. But God's ways, my wean, are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as ours; in his hands are the issues of life and of death; he killeth and he maketh alive—blessed be he his name, for ever, amen! Weel, as I was telling ye, out cam the curate, raging, running, and stamping like a madman; coming doun his ain entry like a roaring lion, an' swearing, for he stuck at naething, that Nanny Walker's vile, Covenanting heart should never rot in Closeburn kirkyard. Aweel, when he had just reached the kirkstie, an' was in the act o' lifting up his hand against them who were bearing the coffin into the kirkyard, what think ye, my bairn, happened? The ungodly man, with his mouth open in cursing, an' his hand uplifted to strike, instantly fell doun on the flagstones, uttered but one groan, an' expired! Ye see, my bairn, what a fearfu thing it is to persecute, an' then to fall into the hands o' an angry an' avenging God. Oh, may never descendant o' mine deserve or meet wi' sic a fate! But there is mair to tell ye still. Just at the time when this fearful visitation o' Providence took place, the family o' Auchincairn war a' engaged wi' the buik, whan *in* should rush wha but daft Gibbie Galloway, wha had never spoken a sensible word in his life—for he was a born innocent, he an' his mither afore him? Weel, an' to be sure, just about this time, for they compared it afterwards, *in* Gibbie stammered into the kitchen, whar they war a' convened, an' interrupted the guidman's prayer, wha happened at the time to be prayin to the Lord for vengeance against the ungodly curate:—

“ ‘Haud at him,’ said Gibby—‘haud at him! he's just at the pit-brow!’ ”

“ Ay, fearfu, sirs—thae war awfu times! ”

NO. II.—THE COVENANTERS' MARCH.

THE narratives of the Rev. Mr Frazer of Alness, as well as those of Quentin Dick, William M'Millan, and Mr Robert M'Lellan, laird of Balmagechan—all sufferers by, and M.S. historians of the same events—we have carefully perused; and it is from a collection of these hitherto unpublished M.SS. that the following paper is composed.

Mr Frazer had gone to London about the end of the year 1676, and had continued there till 1685, when he was seized, along with the laird of Balmagechan in Galloway, whilst they were listening to the instructions of the Rev. Mr Alexander Shields, the celebrated author of the “Hynd let loose,” and forwarded by sea, under fetter and hatchway, to Leith. After a variety of tossing and council-questioning, as was the order of the day at this time, they were marched from the Canongate Tolbooth, along with upwards of 200 prisoners, to Dunottar Castle in Kincardineshire.

Of the sudden and unexpected summoning which they experienced, the reverend autobiographer speaks in these terms:—

“ We were engaged, as was usual with us in our Babel captivity, in singing a psalm. It was our evening sacrifice, and whilst the sun was sinking ayont the Pentlands, The voice of a godly and much-tried woman, Eupha'

Thriepland, ascended clear and full of heavenly melody above the rest. The prison door was suddenly thrown open, and we at first imagined—alas!—that our captivity had ended; but it was not so. The Lord saw meet to put us to still severer trials. We were marched, under the command of Colonel Douglas, to Leith. This poor woman, who was labouring under great bodily weakness, pled hard and strove sair for leave to stay behind. But she was mounted behind a corporal, and, amidst many an obscene jest, and much blasphemous language, conveyed to the pier at Leith."

Next morning, we find the whole prisoners put up in the most indecent and uncomfortable manner in two rooms of the Tolbooth at Burntisland, and undergoing an examination before the laird of Gosford, as to their opinions of allegiance and absolute supremacy. Forty acknowledged King James as head of our Presbyterian Church, and superior lord over all law and authority in the kingdom; and the forty-first was standing in the presence of the oath-administrator, with his hand uplifted, and in the very act of following the example of his brethren, when his aunt, Euphan Thriepland, *ahas* M'Birnie, (for her husband's name was such,) advancing with difficulty towards the table, thus proceeded, with violent gesticulation, and in a firm tone of voice, to address her nephew. Here we use the words of the laird of Balmagechan, who has given the whole scene with singular force and fidelity:—

"Jamie M'Birnie, what's that ye're about? Down wi' yer hand, man!—down wi' yer hand, this moment!—or ye may weel expect it to rot off by the shackle-bane, man! Ye're but a young man, Jamie, and meikle atweel ye seem to require counsel. Had Peter M'Birnie, yer worthy faither—now with his Maker—stood where I now (though with tottering joints and a feeble voice) stand, he would neither have held his peace nor withheld his admonition. He would rather hae seen that hand—now stretched oot to abjure Christ and his Covenanted Kirk—burning and frying in the hettest flame, than hae witnessed the waeftu sicht I now see. It's weel wi' him!—oh, it's weel wi' him, that his eyes are shut on earth, and that, in heaven, is nae annoyance; otherwise, sair, sair wad his heart hae been to see my sister's wean devoting himsel wi' his ain uplifted hand to Satan. O Jamie, what says the Bible? It says awfu things to you, Jamie—it says, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, for it is better to go into Heaven with one eye than that the whole body'—Jamie, mark that! the whole body—'should be cast into hell fire.' And is not an eye dearer than a hand, and must not the dearest member be sacrificed, if it stand in the way of the soul's salvation? Ye may own King James, and muckle thanks ye'll get for't; and ye may abjure and renounce Christ, and ye'll sune see wha will gain or lose by that. An' ye may adhere to the King's curates, or to the bishops' curates, and starve at the breast o' a *yeld*, a milkless mither; but tak tent that ye dinna feed and nourish in your bosom a fearful *worm*, that winna die nor lie still, but will gnaw and gnaw as long as the fire burns and isna quenched."

Jamie M' Birnie's hand continued to fall gradually during this address, and, when his aunt had concluded, his arm hung pendulous and seemingly powerless by his side. At this instant, a young woman of uncommon personal attractions was seen hurrying from a boat which had just landed. She had scarcely set foot on shore when a commotion was observed in the court, and a face full of anguish and despair was presented to the party assembled in the Tolbooth. The laird of Gosford, after cursing the aunt for an old Covenanted hag, had just put the question of abjuration to Jamie, for the last time. Jamie now remained inflexible, and was immediately ordered to be handcuffed, and marched with the rest to Dunottar Castle. Hereupon, as the laird of Balmagechan expresses it—"The maiden, who was fair to look upon, pushed herself suddenly for-

ward, and rushed into the arms of her lover—for such he behoved, from her words and her conduct, to be.

"O Jamie, Jamie, tak the oath—tak the oath—tak ony oath—tak onything; do a' that they bid you do; say a' that they bid ye say—rather than leave yer ain Jeanie Wilson to break her heart wi' downright greeting. O Jamie, we were to be married, ye ken, at Martinmas; and I have a' thing ready, and the bit house is taen, and ye can work outby, an' I can spin within, an'—an'—but, O Jamie, speak man, just speak, and say ye'll take the oath. Haud up yer hand! Hereupon she lifted his seemingly powerless right hand, till it came to a level with his head. 'Look there, sir,' addressing Gosford; 'look there—swear him, man swear him, man; he's willing, dinna ye see, to swear—what for dinna ye swear him?'"

Being informed that the oath must be voluntary, and his hand not be propped, with great reluctance, and looking in Jamie's face with a look of inexpressible persuasion, she whispered something in his ear which was inaudible, and retired a few paces from her station. No sooner, however, had she done so, than the hand, as if by the law of gravitation, resumed its former position, and a loud scream indicated that the young heart of Jeanie had found a temporary stillness in insensibility. The poor creature was borne out of court, amidst some sympathy even from the hardened and merciless soldiery; and Jamie, now a stupid, passive clod, was handcuffed and ordered to march.

Lieutenant Beaton of Kilrennie commanded the detachment to which was entrusted the execution of the higher orders. They were all compelled to walk, with the exception of Euphan Thriepland, who was mounted, as formerly, behind a corporal, together with a poor lame schoolmaster, whose feet were closely and most cruelly tied down to the sides of a wild and unbroken colt. Upon these two helpless and tormented beings principally, did it please and amuse the commander and his men to exercise their wit and expend their jeers. At one time the schoolmaster was likened to a perched radish, and again he was "riding the stang" for his sins. Euphemia was designated "Dame Grunt," in humane allusion, no doubt, to the painful position which she occupied *a la croupe*, and which compelled her frequently to groan. Again she was acosted as the "Mother of all Saints," and the "True Blue Whigamore." One observed that the dominie would look wonderfully handsome in boots, (referring, no doubt, to the instrument of torture;) and another observed that the lady would wondrous well become a St Johnstone's cravat—namely, a halter. The foot-soldiers, who were armed with long pikes, made excellent application of their weapons; and, ever and anon, as some weary wretch lagged behind, or some hungry or thirsty one seemed inclined to turn aside to procure food or drink, the "*argumentum a posteriori*" was applied vigorously and unsparingly. The people of Fife, who were universally favourably disposed towards the prisoners, flocked in upon their retired and out-of-the-way route, with every kind of provision and refreshment; but, instead of being permitted to bestow them where they were needed, they were met with taunts, and, in some cases, with blows; and the food which was intended for the prisoners, was uniformly devoured by their tormentors, or wasted and destroyed in the very presence and under the very eyes of those who were almost famishing for hunger. A strolling piper, who happened to be crossing their route, was sportively enlisted into their service, and compelled, like Barton at Bannockburn, to play, very much to his own annoyance, such tunes as "The Whigs o' Fife," well known to be offensive to the friends of the Covenant.

"It was, indeed," says the Rev. Mr Frazer, with more of naïvete and good-humour than might have been expected—"it was, indeed, an uncommon sight to behold a large and mixed company of men and women, but indif-

ferently clad and ill-assorted, marching over moors and hill-sides, with a roaring bagpipe at their tail; the piper puffing and blowing, and, ever and anon, casting a suspicious look behind, towards the pike points, which were occasionally applied to his person in a manner the least ceremonious possible." Might not this group form an appropriate subject for an Allan, a Wilkie, or a Harvey? About dusk the party had skirted the Lomonts, and were billeted for the night in the poor but pleasantly situated village of Freuchy. Each head of a family was made answerable with his property and life for the persons of those prisoners who were committed to his charge. And it is worthy of notice that not one of those poor oppressed and insulted sufferers—who were all day long endeavouring to escape—once attempted to implicate a single individual amongst all their kind and hospitable landlords.

Upon rallying their numbers next morning, it was found that one aged individual, a forebear of ours, of the name of Watson, had died of over-fatigue; and that the poor schoolmaster was so much injured by his norsemanship that he could not possibly advance farther. When they arrived at the South Ferry on the Tay, the tide did not serve, and a most cruel and barbarous scene was exhibited. A young man, the son of the Rev. Mr Frazer, with the view of making interest for his father's release, had endeavoured to escape during the night. He was challenged by a sentinel in passing along the rocks, and, not answering instantly, was immediately shot dead on the spot. His head was cut from the body, and, with the return of day, presented to the unfortunate and horrified parent, with these words—"There's the gallows face of your son!" Mr Frazer's own reflections on this scene deserve to be extracted from his written manuscripts:—"O my Charles! my dear, heart-broken Charles! thy mother's joy and thy father's hope, and prop, and comfort! To be thus deprived of thee, and for ever! But I am wrong, very wrong: I had thee only as a loan from the Lord; and I know well that he gives—

"And when he takes away,
He takes but what he gave."

Thou hast perished in the ranks amidst the soldiers of Christ; and I doubt not that when the Captain of our Salvation shall appear, thou wilt appear with him."

It would only fatigue and disgust the reader to give one tithe of the atrocities which were perpetrated during the whole march to Dunottar Castle. Really, the manuscript narratives here concur in such statements as are calculated to make us conceive favourably of Hottentots and cannibals: children torn from their mother's arms, and transfixed on pike points; a woman in labour thrown into a pool in the North Esk; lighted matches applied betwixt the fingers of old Euphan Thriepland, because she ventured to denounce such atrocities, &c. &c. &c. Come we, then, after three or four days' march, to Dunottar Castle.

The Castle of Dunottar stands upon a rocky peninsula; and, at the time of which we are writing, was only accessible by a drawbridge. It has been, in successive years, the scene of much contention and bloodshed. It was here that Sir William Wallace is said to have burnt to the death not less than four thousand Southrons in one night. It was within these fire-seared and blackened walls that the unfortunate Marquis of Montrose renewed the horrors of conflagration; and it was here, too, that the brave Ogilvy so long and so determinedly defended our Scottish regalia against the soldiers of the Commonwealth. It was, too, from out these walls, that Mrs Granger, wife of the minister of Kinneff, conveyed away, packed up and concealed amidst a bundle of clothes, the emblems of Scottish independence; and that, after having concealed them till the Restoration, at one time beneath the pulpit, and at

another betwixt the plies of a double-bottomed bed, she returned them, upon the accession of Charles II., to Mr Ogilvy, who, along with the Earl Marischal and keeper of the regalia, Keith, were rewarded for their fidelity, the one with a baronetcy, and the other with the earldom of Kintyre; whilst neither this woman nor her husband, nor any of their posterity, have once yet been visited by any mark of royal or national gratitude:—

"Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores."

It is thus that the great man stands in the light of the small, and that the royal vision is prevented from penetrating beyond the objects in immediate juxtaposition.

This Castle of Dunottar, which had so recently been honoured as the receptacle of the regalia, was now about to be converted into a state prison, and, like the Bass, to become subservient to the views of an alarmed and fluctuating council, at a time when the rebellion of the unfortunate Monmouth in England, and of the haughty and ill-advised Argyle in Scotland, had set the whole kingdom in a ferment, either of hope or apprehension. Mr Frazer's narrative of the entrance of the prisoners into the Castle, upon Sabbath the 24th day of May 1685, is sufficiently graphic and intelligible:—

"We passed along," says he, "a narrow way or draw-bridge, and from thence ascended under a covered road towards the Castle, which stands high up, and looks down upon the sea from three of its sides. A person in the garb of a jailor, with a bunch of large and rusty keys in his hand, opened a door on the seaward side of the building, and we were very rudely and insultingly commanded to enter. 'Kennel up, there, kennel up, ye dogs of the Covenant!' were amongst the best terms which were applied to us.

"The laird of Balmagechan being amongst the last to penetrate into this abode of stench, damp, darkness, suffocation, and death, a soldier made a lounge at him with the point of his pike. Balmagechan was a peaceable man and a Christian; but this was somewhat too much—so, turning round in an instant, and closing at once with his insulting tormentor, he fairly wrested the pike from the soldier's grasp, and, splintering it in shivers over his head, he added—'Tak, then, that, in the meantime, thou Devil's gaet, to teach thee better manners!' The apartment into which, with scarcely room to stand, 177 (our numbers having thus diminished from 200, on the march) human beings were thrust, was, in fact, dug out of the rock, and, unless by a small narrow window towards the sea, had no means of admitting either light or air. As the night advanced, the heat became intolerable, and a sense of suffocation, the most painful of any to which our frail nature can be exposed, seemed to threaten an excruciating, if not an immediate death. In vain we knocked, and called upon the guard, and implored a little air, and asked water, for God and mercy's sake. We were only answered by scoffs and jeers. At last nature, in many instances being entirely worn out, gave way. Some turned their heads over upon the shoulder of the persons nearest them, as if in the act of drinking water, and expired—others lost their reason entirely, struck out furiously around them, tore their own hair and that of others, and then went off in strong and hideous convulsions. Happier were they, at this awful midnight hour, who entered this dungeon with a feeble step and in a wasted state of bodily strength; for *their* struggle was short, and their death comparatively easy—they died ere midnight. But far otherwise was it with many upon whom God had bestowed youth, health, and unimpaired strength. They stood the contest long; and frequently, after they appeared to be dead, awoke again in renewed strength and ten times increased suffering. After the fatal discovery was made, that the door was not to be opened, the rush toward the opposite window became absolutely intolerable. The

feble were trod down, and even the strong wasted their strength in contending with each other.

“Morning at last dawned, and our prison door flew suddenly open. The Governor’s lady had learned our fate; and, even at the risk of giving offence to her lord, she had ordered us air and water, whilst *he still slept*. ‘O woman, woman,’ exclaims Mr Quentin Dick, in his M.S. before me; ‘thou art, and hast ever been, an angel. What does not man—what do not we owe thee!’

“In a word, more than the half perished on that dreadful night, and amongst those who were ultimately liberated by order in council, were the individuals who have been particularized in this narrative.”

Reader, we inquire not into thy political creed—we ask not whether thou art a Whig or a Tory, a Conservative or a Radical—we can allow thee to be an honest and conscientious man, on all these suppositions: all we ask of thee is this, “*Art thou a man?*” The inference is inevitable.

Perhaps some may wish to know what became of Euphan Thriepland, Jamie M’Birnie, and Jeanie Wilson. We are happy that, owing to an accidental occurrence, we can throw some light upon the subject. Last time we were in Dumfriesshire, and in Closeburn, our native parish, we read upon the door of a change-house, in the village of Croalchapel, this inscription, “Whisky, Ale, and British Spirits, sold here, by James M’Birnie.” The coincidence of the name revived my long-observed recollection of the past, and led, in fact, ultimately to the whole of this narrative. We learned, from an old bedrid-woman, the grandmother of this James, that he of Dunottar celebrity, had returned to Edinburgh and married Jeanie Wilson; that they had taken auld aunt Euphan home to their dwelling; and had been employed for several years after the Revolution, as nursery and seedsmen, in Edinburgh; that, having realized a competency, they had ultimately retired to their native parish of Closeburn, and had tenanted a small farm called Stepends; that their son had been a drover, and unsuccessful even to bankruptcy; and that the family were now reduced to the condition which we beheld.

NO. III.—PEDEN’S FAREWELL SERMON.

WE believe there never was such a sad Sabbath witnessed as that upon which nearly four hundred of the established clergy of Scotland preached their farewell sermons and addresses to their several congregations. It was a day, as the historians of that period express it, of “wailing, and of loud lamentation, as the weeping of Jazer, when the lords of the heathen had broken down her principal plants; and as the mourning of Rachel, who wept for her children, and would not be comforted.”

On the 4th day of October 1662, a council, under the commission of the infatuated and ill-advised Middleton, was held at Glasgow; and, in an hour of brutal intoxication, it was resolved and decreed that all those ministers of the Church of Scotland who had, by a popular election, entered upon their cures since the year 1649, should, in the first instance, be arrested, nor permitted to resume their pulpits, or draw their stipends, till they had received a presentation at the hands of the lay patrons, and submitted to induction from the diocesan bishop. In other words, Presbytery, which had been so dearly purchased, and was so acceptable to the people of Scotland, was to be superseded by Prelacy; and the mandate of the prince, or of his privy council, was to be considered in future as *law*, in all matters whether civil or ecclesiastical. It was not to be supposed that the descendants and admirers of Knox, and Hamilton, and Welsh, and Melville would calmly and passively submit to this; and accordingly the 20th day of October—the last Sabbath which, without conformity to the orders in

council, the proscribed ministers were permitted to preach—was a day anticipated with anxious feelings, and afterwards remembered to their dying day, by all who witnessed it. It was our fortune, in our early life, to be acquainted with an old man, upwards of ninety, an inhabitant of the village of Glenluce, whose grandfather was actually present at the farewell or parting sermon which Mr Peden, the author of the famous prophecies which bear his name, delivered on this occasion to his parishioners. We have conversed with this aged chronicler so frequently and so fully upon the subject, that we believe we can give a pretty faithful report of what was then delivered by Peden.

“I remember well,” continued, according to my authority, the old chronicler, “I mind it well—it seems but as yesterday, the morning of this truly awful and not to be forgotten day. It had been rain in the night-time, and the morning was dark and cloudy—the mist trailed like the smoke o’ a furnace, white and ragged, along the hill taps. The heavens above seemed, as it were, to scowl upon the earth beneath. I rose early, as was my wont on the Sabbath morning, and hitched away towards the tap o’ the Briock. I had only continued, it might be, an hour, in private meditation and prayer, when I heard the eight-o’clock bells beginning to toll. Indeed, I could hear, from the place where I was, I may say, every bell in the Presbytery. The sound o’ these bells is still in my ears—it was unusually sweet and melodious; and yet there was something very melancholy in the sound. I thought on the blood of the saints by which these bells had been purchased; upon the many souls, now gone to a better place, who had been summoned to a preached gospel by these bells; and I thought, too, on the sad alteration which a few hours would produce, when the pulpits would be deserted by the worthy Presbyterian ministers who filled them, and be filled, it might be, by Prelatical curates—wolves in sheeps’ clothing, and fashionless preachers at the best. Even at this early hour, I could see, every here and there, blue bonnets, and black and white plaids, and scarlet mantles, mixing with and coming forth every now and then from the broken and creeping mist. The Lord’s own covenanted flock were e’en gaun awa to pluck a mouthfu (it might be the last) o’ hale-some and sanctified pasture.

“The doors of the kirk of New Luce had been thrown open early in the morning; but, owing to an immense concourse of people, a tent had been latterly erected on the brow face, immediately opposite to the kirk-stile, and the multitude had settled, and were, when we arrived, settling down, like bees around their queen, on all sides of it. Having advanced suddenly over the height, and come all at once within view of this goodly assembly, I found them engaged, as was their customary, till the minister’s appearance, in psalm-singing. A portion of the thirty-second psalm had been selected by the precentor, and he was in the act of *giving out*, as it is termed, these appropriate and comforting lines—

“Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt
From trouble set me free;
And with songs of deliverance
About shall compass me!”

when Peden made his appearance above the brow of the adjoining linn, where he had probably been engaged for some time in preparatory and private devotion. He advanced with the pulpit Bible under his arm, and with a rapid, though occasionally a hesitating step. All eyes were at once turned upon him; but he seemed lost in meditation, and altogether careless or unconscious of his exposed situation. His figure was diminutive, but his frame athletic, and his step elastic. He wore a blue bonnet, from beneath which his dark hair flowed out over his shoulders, long, lank, and dishevelled. His complexion was sallow, but his eyes dark, keen, and penetrating. He had neither gown nor band; but had his shirt-neck tied up with a narrow stock

of uncommon whiteness. Thus habited, he approached the congregation, who rose up to make way for him; ascended the ladder attached to the back-door of the tent; and forthwith proceeded to the duties of the day.

“Therefore watch and remember; for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.”

“These words of the text were read out in a firm, though somewhat shrill and squeaking tone of voice; and as he lifted up his eyes from the sacred page, and looked east and west around him, there was a general preparatory cough, and adjustment of position and dress, which clearly bespoke the protracted attention which was about to be given. And, truly, although he continued to discourse from twelve o’clock till dusk, I cannot say that I felt tired or hungry. Nor did it appear that the speaker’s strength or matter failed him—nay, he even rose into a degree of fervid and impressive eloquence towards the close, which none who were present ever heard equalled.

“‘And now, my friends,’ continued he, in a concluding appeal to their consciences—‘and now I am gaun to warn ye anent the future, as weel as to admonish you of the past. Ye’ll see and hear nae mair o’ puir Sandy Peden after this day’s wark is owre. See ye that puir bird’—(at this moment a hawk had darted down, in view of the whole congregation, in pursuit of its prey)—‘see ye that puir panting laverock, which has now crossed into that dark and deep linn, for safety and for refuge from the claws and the beak of its pursuers? I’ll tell ye what, my friends—the twasome didna drift down this way, frae that dark clud, and along that bleak heathery brae-face, for naething. They were sent, they were commissioned; and if ye had arisen to your feet, ere they passed, and cried ‘Shue!’ ye couldna hae frightened them oot o’ their mission. They cam to testify o’ a persecuted remnant, an’ o’ a cruel pursuin foe—of a kirk which will soon hae to betak hersel, like a bird, to the mountains, and of an enemy which will not allow her to rest, by night nor by day, even in the dark recesses o’ the rocks, or amidst the damp an’ cauld mosses o’ the hills. They cam, an’ they war welcome, to gie auld Sandy a warnin too, an’ to bid him tak the bent as fast as possible; to flee, even this very night, for the pursuer is even nigh at hand. But, hooly, sirs, we maunna pairt till oor wark be finished; as an auld writer has it—‘till our work is finished, we are immortal.’ I hae e’en dune my best, as saith an apostle, amang ye; an’ I hae this day the consolation, an’ that’s no sma’, to think that my puir exertions hae been rewarded wi’ some sma’ success. An’ had it been *His* plan, or *His* pleasure, to hae permitted me to lay doon my auld banes, when I had nae mair use for them, beneath ane o’ the through-stanes there, I canna say but I wad hae been content. But, since it’s no His guid an’ sovereign pleasure, I hae ae request to mak before we separate this night, never in this place to meet again.’ (Hereupon the sobbing and the bursting forth of hitherto suppressed sorrow, was almost universal.) ‘Ye maun a’ stand upon your feet, an’ lift up your hands, an’ swear, before the great Head an’ Master o’ the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland,’ (there was a general rising and show of hands, whilst the speaker continued,) ‘that, till an independent Presbyterian minister ascend the pulpit, you will never enter the door o’ that kirk mair; an’ let this be the solemn league an’ covenant betwixt you an’ me, an’ betwixt my God an’ your God, in all time coming. Amen!—so let it be!’

“In this standing position, which we had thus, almost insensibly assumed, the last prayer or benediction was heard, and the concluding psalm was sung—

“For he in his pavilion shall
Me hide in evil days,
In secret of his tent me hide,
And on a rock me raise.”

I never listened to a sound, or beheld a spectacle more overpowering. The night cloud had come down the hill above us—the sun had set. It was twilight; and the united and full swing of the voice of praise ascended through the veil of evening, from the thousands of lips, even to the gate of heaven. Whilst we continued singing, our venerable pastor descended from the tent—the Word of God in his hand, and the accents of praise on his lips; and, at the concluding line, he stood fairly and visibly out by himself, upon the entry towards the east door of the Kirk. Having shut the door and locked it; in the view and in the hearing of the people, he knocked upon it thrice with the back of the pulpit Bible, accompanying this action with these words, audibly and distinctly pronounced—

“‘I arrest thee, in my Master’s name, that none ever enter by thee, save those who enter by the door of Presbytery.’ So saying, he ascended the wall at the kirk-stile spread his arms abroad to their utmost stretch, and, in the most solemn and impressive manner, dismissed the multitude.”

Although Peden was thus banished from that pulpit to which, during the civil wars, he had been elected by the unanimous voice of a most attached people, he did not thereupon, or therefore, refrain entirely from exercising his function as a minister of the Gospel; but, having betaken himself to those fastnesses which lie betwixt Wigton and Ayrshire, he was in the habit of assembling, occasionally, around him, the greater part of his congregation, as well as many belonging to the neighbouring parishes. In the meantime, after several months’ vacancy, a young and half-educated lad from Aberdeen was appointed by the government in the capacity of curate. This person was, of course, hated by the parish; but this hatred was exalted to abhorrence, in consequence of his immoral and unclerical life and conversation.

William Smith and Jessie Lawson were the children, the first of a respectable farmer, and the other of a pious, though poor widow woman. There had been some difficulties in the way of the lovers—

“For the course of true love never yet run smooth;”

but these had at last been removed, and the young couple were about to be united, with the consent of relatives, in the honourable bands of matrimony. But the young and dissolute curate had caught a glimpse of Jessie; and, having been fascinated by her beauty, had not been backward in signifying, both to mother and daughter, his honourable (for they really were so in this case) intentions. Janet, however, was too sound a Covenanter to give her consent.

“Na, na,” she continued; “my bairn, I wot weel, has been baptized by the holy Mr Welsh, and she has lang sucked in the milk of the true and covenanted word, frae worthy and godly Mr Peden, and it will ill become her to turn her back on her first lover, for the sake o’ ony yearly concern whatever.”

In the meantime winter drew on, with its frosts, and its blasts, and its snows, and the lovers became more and more anxious to be united in the bands of hallowed love, in consequence of the pressing and importunate addresses of the curate. Here, however, a difficulty occurred; which was, however, overcome by bribing the schoolmaster, as session clerk, to proclaim them to empty benches, and by obtaining Peden’s consent to perform the marriage ceremony on their producing the requisite evidence of proclamation. The place appointed was the Bogle Glen, and the time midnight, on the second day of January 1684. The night—for such meetings were usually held during night—was stormy—there being a considerable degree of snow-drift; but Peden was not easily diverted from his purpose; nor was his audience unaccustomed to such exposures. So the night-meeting for religious worship took place beneath the

Gleds' Craig, from the brow or apron of which the minister officiated. Beneath him, huddled together under plaids, stood his devoted and attentive congregation, whilst the moon looked down, at intervals, on a landscape over which a frosty wind was ever and anon carrying the snow-drift. Beside the speaker were arranged, on chairs and stools, some young women bearing children to be baptized, and the youthful couple about to be united in marriage. The usual service proceeded; and the voice of psalms was heard amidst the solemn stillness of the midnight hour. The children were next baptized from an adjoining well, which presented itself opportunely, like the waters of Meribah, from a cleft of the rock. The young people had just been united, and Peden was in the act of pronouncing the usual benediction, when the tramp of horses' feet was suddenly heard, and in an instant a discharge of muskets indicated but too surely the nature of the assault. All was challenge, capture, and dispersion; through which the screams of the young bride and the menacing voice of the curate were distinctly heard.

About four o'clock of the same eventful night, the manse of New Luce was discovered to be on fire, and some hundreds of figures were seen congregated in frantic and menacing attitudes around it. At last a form was discovered, bearing off from the flames something which appeared to be inanimate. The curate's screams were heard from his bedroom-window; and, by the assistance of the military, who had now arrived, he was relieved, by a rope, from his critical situation; and the young lovers were next morning discovered, safe and uninjured, in their own home, and in each other's arms.

NO. IV.—THE PERSECUTION OF THE M'MICHAELS.

THE miseries of war are not confined to the battle-field and the actual return of the killed and wounded. There is an atmosphere of wo and intense suffering, which hangs dense and heavy over the whole theatre of war—the devastation and horrors of a wide marching enemy, advancing like the simoom of the desert, and converting into a howling wilderness the peopled and rejoicing district. Life is extinguished by terror and deprivation as well as by the sword; and with this difference, too, that the former process is so much the more severe that it is protracted and defenceless. Civil war is, in this respect in particular, the most revolting of all. The animosities and resentments of opposing parties are greatly exasperated by proximity of situation and community of country; and the revenge of the stronger directed upon the weaker party is uniformly marked by many atrocities. Of this character, was unhappily the latter period of the domination of Charles II., together with the whole four years of the Papistical infatuation of the second James. Men, women, and children were not only shot, drowned, and spiked; but thousands, who escaped this extreme fate, were so worn out by watchings, and cold, and hunger, and mental anxieties, as to fall under the power of diseases from which they never recovered.

An instance illustrative of these remarks occurred, according to invariable tradition, (partly oral, and partly written,) in the Pass of Dalveen, one of the wildest and most sublime localities in Dumfries-shire. In the days of which we speak, there were no mail-coaches, nor did the public road from Edinburgh to Dumfries pass, as now, through that most fearfully sublime ravine; all *then* was seclusion and solitude in that mountain retirement, where the winds met and mingled from many a converging glen; and the eagle and the raven divided the supremacy above. The site of the shepherd's sheiling is indeed still ascertainable, by the depth of verdure which marks the departed walls; and the traveller may see it by the burn side, almost half way down the pass.

The family which, during the latter period of the eight-and-twenty years' persecution, occupied this humble dwelling, was named M'Michael. There were two brothers of that name; Daniel, who was a bachelor, and Gilbert, who was married, and the father of a son, now a lad of ten or twelve, and two daughters, still younger. The mother of these children was a M'Caig, a name immortalized in the annals of persecution. The two brothers, Gilbert and Daniel, had rendered themselves peculiarly obnoxious to the spite and revenge of the curate of Durrisddeer, by their refusing to attend ordinances; and their obtaining baptism, and even, as times and occasions offered, the *scaling* ordinance of the Supper, from the hands of worthy Mr Welsh. Besides all this, when hard pursued one day in the pass, Daniel and Gilbert had defended themselves against a whole troop of Douglas' dragoons, by occupying the rocky summits of the Lowther Hills, and precipitating loose and rebounding rocks on the pursuers beneath. It was on this occasion that "Red Rob," of persecuting notoriety, had his shoulder-blade dislocated; and that Lieutenant James Douglas himself, in his extreme eagerness to scale the steep, had two of his front teeth dislodged.

Winter 1686 was peculiarly severe, and the proximity of Drumlanrig Castle, the residence of the Queensberry Douglasses, rendered it exceedingly unsafe for the two obnoxious brothers, in particular, to visit their home, unless it were by snatches, and at the dead hour of night. The natural consequence of all this was, that both brothers lost their health, and that Gilbert, in particular, who was constitutionally infirm, contracted, or rather exasperated, a bad cough, which threatened serious consequences. It is quite true that a warm bed and the comforts of home might have done much for the complaint; but Gilbert's ordinary bed-room was the damp extremity of a hollow in a rock, without fire, and with his plaid alone as a nightly couch and covering. It was on a cold and drifty day in the month of January, that Gilbert, in the presence of his family, and under hourly apprehension of a visit from the barbarous Douglas, called his family around him, and, leaning upon the bosom of his beloved wife, addressed them in words to the following effect:—

"My dearest wife, my dear children, and my beloved Daniel, stand round me, for I am dying." Thereupon, there was much weeping, and the poor woman had to be carried out of the room, nearly insensible. This pause was employed by Gilbert in secret prayer and ejaculation—

"Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!—Lord, comfort the widow and the fatherless!—Lord, give strength for trial, and faith for dying like a Christian!"

When the poor widow had been so far recovered as to be able to return to the bedside, the dying man proceeded, with frequent pauses and much weakness, thus:—

"I hope I may say, though at an infinite distance, with the Apostle Paul, I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith—the faith of my Saviour, of his holy Apostles, and of our Covenanted Kirk. I have kept it in bad report, as well as in good—in the day of her extreme suffering, as well as when godly Mr Brown was minister of Durrisddeer. They have driven me from my humble but happy home, and from my wife and children, to the mountain and the cave; but I have ever said—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid,
My safety cometh from the Lord."

And I have ever found it so. I have been shot at, pursued, hunted like a wild beast, and exposed to disease, and pain, and extreme weakness—whilst I was, unless at intervals, denied the voice that soothes, the truth that cheers, and the looks of sympathy that mitigate in the extremest suffering; and I am now, if it shall please God to withhold for a little the foot of the merciless and the ungodly—I am

now about to close my testimony by sealing it with my latest breath."

This exertion was too much for his exhausted strength ; and it seemed to all that life had fled ; when, after a few short and heavy respirations, he again proceeded—" Lord, give me strength for this last, this parting effort in this our covenanted cause !—Now, my dearly beloved, I leave you ; for I hear my Master's call ; and the Spirit and the bride say, Come ! I leave you with this last, this dying advice : Let nothing deprive you of your crown, hold fast your integrity ; for He whom you serve will come quickly, and terrible will His coming be to all his enemies."

" Enemies, indeed !" vociferated Lieutenant Douglas, who had unperceived entered the apartment—" those enemies, friend Gibby, are nearer, I trow, than ye wot, and ready, with leave of this good company here, to take special care that his Majesty's enemies shall be suitably provided for. Come, budge, old Benty, and you too of the lion's den. Come—my lambs, here, will be more difficult to manage than the lions of your Jewish namesake. Come, Mr Dan—up, and be going ; for the day breaketh apace, and it will be pleasant pastime just to give us a stave of the death psalm under the old thorn, on the brae face yonder. Red Rob's shoulder, here, has sworn a solemn league and covenant against you ; and, as to my two front teeth, they are complete non-conformists to Whigs and Whiggery, through all generations. Amen !"

In vain was all this profane barbarity poured on the ears of the dead man : old Gilbert had breathed his last at the very first perception of Douglas' presence—His God had in mercy withdrawn him from his last and most severe trial.

" Look there, look there, look there !" were the first articulate accents which crossed the lips of the distracted widow—" look, ye sons o' Belial—ye men o' bluid—on the pale an' lifeless victim o' yer horrid persecution. Ay, aff wi' him !"—(for Douglas had now approached the bed, as if to ascertain that no deception had been practised upon him)—" aff wi' him, to the croft, or to the maiden, or to the thorn-three ; shoot him, head him, hang him—ah !—ha !—ha !—ha !—ha !"—(Hysterically screaming.)—" He has escaped ye a'. Yer bullets canna pierce him ; yer flames canna scorch him ; yer malice canna reach him, yonder." (Pointing at the same time upwards.) " There, even there, whar ye an' yer band shall never enter, the wicked cease from troubling, an' the weary—ay, thank God !—the weary are at rest. Rest, *here*, indeed, they had none ; but *there* they shall rest, when ye shall lie tormented !"

" Come, come, Mother Testimony, give us no more of your blarney. Let us only over the shank yonder, and you and your whelps there may yelp and howl till the day of judgment, if you please. But, as for you, friend Dan," (speaking ironically, and imitating the Covenanting language and manner,) " does the Spirit move thee to budge?—has the Lord dealt bountifully with thee?—and will He ' save thee from six troubles, yea, from seven ?' Come, come, friend," taking him rudely by the arm, and pulling him, with the assistance of Red Rob, towards the door. "' The Spirit and the bride say, Come ;' there is a *maiden* longing for thy embrace—yea, a maiden whose lovers have been many, and whose embrace is somewhat close. But she, having taken up her residence in the guid town of Edinburgh, is afar off ; but, lest thou shouldst feel disappointment, my lambs, here, have become somewhat frisky of late, and they will be most happy to give thee a little matrimonial music, to the tune of ' Make ready, present, fire !' "

Daniel M'Michael had long been accustomed to view death as a messenger of peace. His days—now manifestly numbered—had been sorely troubled. His faith in his Saviour was, with him, not a fluctuating, but a fixed prin-

ciple ; like Stephen, he might ascend to see heaven opened—and his soul was long absent in fervent prayer. He prayed for a persecuted kirk, for a persecuted remnant, for his friends and for his enemies, even those whose hands were raised against his life.

" The guid Lord," said he, " forgive ye, for ye know not what ye do ! The thief on the cross was forgiven ; David, the murderer, was forgiven ; and e'en Judas himself may have obtained mercy. Oh, ye puir, infatuated, godless band ! it is not for myself that I pray—it is for you ; for when the day of wrath arrives, where will ye flee to. To the hills?—they will be cast into the sea. To the rocks?—they will have melted with fervent heat. To the linn and the glens?—but where will ye find them, in that great and notable day of the Lord ?"—

Daniel was proceeding thus, when Red Rob struck him over the head with the handle of his sword.

" Down to the earth with thee and thy everlasting jaw ! We want none of thy prayers and petitionings. We are King Charles' men, and our God is our captain, our reward our pay, our heaven is our mess-room, and our eternity an hour's kissing of a bonny lass."

Here the commander interfered, and the poor victim was raised, though scarcely able to stand on his legs, from the stun of the blow.

" And now," said Douglas, " for the last time, wilt thou conform and preserve thy life, or die ?"

The poor man groaned, and fell on his knees. The band was removed to a distance ; and, in a few seconds, the smoke rose white and whirling from the hill-side ! The work of death was done !

There is a small clump of old thorns which faces the highroad from Dumfries to Edinburgh, as it enters the Pass of Dalveen from the south. At the lower extremity of this woodland patch, there is a grey rock or stone, covered with a thick coating of moss. It was whilst resting against this stone, that Daniel M'Michael was shot, about half-an-hour posterior to the cruelties which have been narrated.

A stone, with a suitable inscription, has been placed over the mangled remains of this good man, in the churchyard of Durrisdeer, whilst a marble and gilt monument, of the most elegant and tasteful character, occupies the whole of the aisle or nave of the church. The latter monument perpetuates the memory and the virtues of the noble family of Douglas ; whilst the former rude and now mutilated flagstone mentions an act of atrocity perpetrated by a cadet of the family. In that day when the secrets of families and individuals shall be made known, it shall be manifested whose memory and virtues best deserve to be perpetuated.

The eldest daughter of Mrs Janet M'Michael, or M'Caig, was married, after the Revolution, to the second son (John) of Thomas Harkness of Mitchelslacks, from whom, in a lineal descent, the author of these scraps derives his birth. Is it to be wondered at, then, that we feel, through every drop of blood and ramification of nerves, a devotedness to the great cause of constitutional freedom and rational reform ? But we hope the cause of political liberty may never be mixed up with the concerns of that Church which our ancestors founded on the dead bodies of martyrs, and cemented with their blood. We may return to this subject again, for we have yet many recollections to record.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SLAVE.

SOME of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, who, some years since, were in the habit of enjoying the pure air and delightful prospects which the head of Burntsfield Links and the Burghmuirhead afford, may remember the person of whose eventful life I am about to narrate a few passages. He was a square-built, thick-set old man, short in stature, with a weather-beaten countenance; which, though harsh in its expression at the first glance, exhibited, in conversation, all the traits of a mind influenced by humane sentiments and benevolent feelings. He was often to be seen standing near the wells, at the south border of the Links, where the females bleach their linen; gazing steadfastly upon them, his rough features in continued change, as if some inward feelings completely engrossed his whole faculties, and indulging in frequent mutterings, as if the occupations of those whose motions he was observing, had roused some latent thoughts that had been laid up in his memory in former years. When I saw him first, he was busy looking at a few sprightly young females, whose loud laugh enlivened the scene of the bleaching-ground, as they were splashing the water on each other in merriment. His features had something fearful in them. Anger flashed from his dark blue eyes, his shaggy eyebrows which covered them were knit, his teeth were compressed; and such unaccountable passion I had never seen so fearfully expressed. I almost shrunk from him; yet curiosity detained me, and I saw his features gradually relax, and a languid smile succeed his fearful frown. The change was as unaccountable as the contrast was striking, and I could scarcely believe that I still looked upon the same individual. The circumstance prejudiced me against him; for I attributed his fixed gaze upon the females to a cause very different from the true one; though why he should frown upon them I was still at a greater loss to understand. I saw him every day on the golfing ground; I wished for no intercourse with him, though there was a strange anxiety in my mind to know more of him; and, often as I followed the game we were busily engaged in, my eyes would involuntarily turn to where he stood or walked; and so habituated did I become to his presence that, when he was absent, I felt as if all was not as it used to be on the golfing ground. No one of whom I made inquiries knew aught of him; all I could learn was, that he was known by the name of the Captain, and had a black servant, who, with an aged female, constituted his whole household at Morningside, where he resided in one of those small self-contained villas in that retreat.

One morning towards the end of September, I was up rather earlier than usual, as I had engaged to accompany some friends upon a small party of pleasure; and, taking a turn, I had sauntered down past Merchiston Castle, to see how the reapers were getting on with their labour in the harvest-fields. There I met the identical Captain, the subject of my curiosity, coming up the road, accompanied by a female, who leant upon his right arm as if she walked with difficulty; while in his left he carried a young child, whose head lay upon his broad shoulder, pillowed as if

asleep, or depressed with sickness; and his black servant, who bore a considerable burden, walked by their side. The female was evidently poor, but neat and clean; and her features were pale as death, with an expression of sickness and languor which roused my sympathy with my approbation of the Captain's benevolence—for I was satisfied he was engaged in an act of charity.

"Billy," I heard him say, "you had as well go on before, and tell Mary to make all ready for our arrival. Poor thing!—she is a sailor's wife, and one of us."

"Yes, Massa, I do so—gladly do so," replied the negro. And away he moved from them, past me, with the bundle upon his arm; the smile that lit up his black face, giving it, in my estimation, a look more interesting than I thought an African's could possess. The female looked gratefully at her supporter; and, as the Captain gazed first at her, then at her babe, I could see his clear blue eye glisten with tears—my own heart swelled, my bad impressions left me in a moment, and I could have put him in my bosom; I bowed to him with true reverence, as if I asked pardon for the injustice I had done him, and he looked at me as if he was gratified, and gently nodded his head—all the return he could make, so fully occupied was he with his benevolent labours.

"My good sir," said I, "since you seem to be engaged in a noble act, may I request to be allowed to lend my aid?"

"Certainly, with all my heart," replied he; "for I fear this good woman gets on but poorly with all the assistance I can give her."

"God bless you both," said the woman, as I gave her my arm, "for your kindness! Oh, my baby!—my poor baby, I fear, has got his death in the cold of this miserable night. My Willie! little did you think that your Peggy was so near, and exposed to the bare heavens, sick and houseless, or you would have come to her help."

I requested her not to exert herself; and, as we proceeded. I learned that the Captain and Billy, having been out early, had found the female and child in the middle of a group of reapers, who had discovered her at the entrance of the field chilled, and almost deprived of sense, with the infant wrapped up in her bosom; and they had in part restored her to some faint degree of consciousness, when the Captain arrived, and took the whole charge upon himself and his servant. The negro had used all the expedition in his power, and met us before we reached the house.

"Massa," said he, "you give me the picaninny—I carry it, if you please."

The child opened its languid eyes as he laid hold of it; and, looking in the negro's face, screamed with fright, leaned towards its mother, (who soothed it with her voice in vain,) and nestled once more upon the Captain's shoulder, clasping its little arms firmly round his neck.

"Let him remain, Billy," said he; "I think the young thing loves me."

In a few minutes, we reached the house, where Mary received the female and child with all a mother's care, while the Captain and I looked on with feelings of satisfaction. I bade him adieu, promising to call in the evening. The day on which I had anticipated to be so happy, hung

rather heavy upon my hands than otherwise; and I longed much for an interview with the Captain, expecting, when an intimacy was established, to be much amused with his conversation, as, from his appearance, he was no common character, and he had already roused my curiosity, by some broken hints of his adventures. I waited upon him, and found the female much restored, and the negro nursing the child, who appeared as much pleased with his nurse as he had been alarmed in the morning. After the first compliments were exchanged, I learned that the woman was the wife of a sailor, and on her way to Leith, to join him. She had journeyed on foot from Lanark, where she had been living with her mother, during the time he had been on a voyage to the South Seas. Having got accounts of his arrival in London, and his being to be in Leith, where he had got a berth in one of the Leith and London smacks, and where he wished her to come and reside, she had set out, but came off her road, to visit a relation she had, who resided in Colinton, and with whom she had intended to stay during the night; but, unfortunately, she found that her relation had been dead for some weeks. The shock and grief had a great effect upon her; and, having no other acquaintance in the place, she had resolved to proceed to Edinburgh, as she calculated there was sufficient time for her to do so before it would be dark, and the weather was delightful. Oppressed with her bundle, and sunk by her grief, she had plodded on, in the hopes of soon meeting the husband of her love; yet still her progress was slow, and the sun had set for some time, and the shades of evening had begun to thicken, ere she reached Craig-Lockhart; but the spires of the distant city began to rise in view, and she hoped soon to see the end of her toil, when, from over-exertion, or some other cause, she became sick and faint—her limbs bent beneath her—and with difficulty she made her way to a gate, to be off the roadside, in hopes that the attack would soon go off, and she would resume her way. She fainted; and, when she came to her senses again, her babe was crying piteously upon her bosom. It was completely dark; and, after stilling the child, she in vain attempted to rise and resume her journey. It was far beyond her strength; and fear, bordering on despair, took possession of her mind. It was very chill; and, covering her infant in the best manner she could from the cold, she, almost without hope, commended herself to God, and, weeping, resigned herself calmly to her fate. She never expected to survive until the morning. The tedious hours rolled on, she knew not how—her child slept soundly, and her heart was in close communion with that merciful God who sustained her in all this misery—until the voices of the reapers sounded upon her ears like heavenly music, and hope once more warmed her breast; yet she was, at their first coming up, so weak that she could scarcely speak—a symptom that surprised her, for she was unconscious of her extreme exhaustion, and her heart was hale from the manner in which she had employed her thoughts during the cheerless hours.

This is almost the words of the poor creature, who now was able to move about, and expressed a wish to proceed to Leith—a step that would not be heard of by the Captain, who said he would not allow her to depart until he had ascertained that her husband had arrived; and the name of the smack in which he sailed having been ascertained, we looked into the newspapers for the arrivals and departures at Leith, and found that the Czar had not arrived. The grateful Margaret agreed to remain, to the delight of the negro, who appeared as fond of the child as if it had been his own. At the Captain's request, I agreed, with pleasure, to stay supper.

"How I do love black Billy!" said my host; "this is a new trait of him; he is bold as a lion, faithful as a dog, and yet mild as a lamb."

"Sir," said I, "you appear to have a great regard for your black servant; I believe, from what I see, he is worthy of it."

"He is not my servant," said he—"he is my friend; yet it would grieve him to see any one do any little office for me, besides himself. He is as humble as he is good; and if you knew his history and mine, you would not be surprised at what I now say of him."

"Nothing that I know of would give me more pleasure," replied I, "than to know a little more of him and his friend, would he be so kind as oblige me."

"With all my heart," replied the old man, "if you have the patience to hear me."

Supper was at this time brought in by Billy, and soon dispatched, when we drew in our chairs, and, seated by the fireside, I felt as if I had been on intimate terms with him for many years.

"My name is William Robertson," he began; "I am a native of Edinburgh, born within the sound of St Giles' bells. My parents were once in a respectable line of business; but they died when I was very young, leaving me to the care of my paternal uncle—for I was an only child. This uncle, who has long since rendered his account at that judgment-seat where we must all appear, took possession of all my father's property, and became tutor to me. I was too young, at the time, to know my loss, but soon felt it in all its bitterness; for he used me very ill, so much so that I trembled at his voice. I was quite neglected, and allowed to ramble about as much as I pleased, amongst the other idle boys of the neighbourhood. I could read and write a little at the death of my parents, which was all the instruction I received. I was now nearly thirteen; and, as my uncle's abuse became quite intolerable to me, I left the house, boy as I was, and entered on board a trader at Leith, which was on the point of sailing for America. The captain, who was one of the best of men, waited upon my uncle before we sailed; and, I believe, as much by threat of compulsion by law, as any entreaty he used, got from him a few necessaries for me—for, besides his other ill usage, he kept me miserably clad. The five years I sailed in the *Bounty* of Leith, were the happiest I had ever spent—for my kind master had me taught navigation, and everything necessary for a seaman to know; but, in the middle of this prosperity, when I was to have been made his mate next voyage, the American war broke out, and I was impressed as soon as our vessel cast anchor in Leith Roads. I was only grieved to be parted from my kind captain, who was as vexed to leave me—but in vain he applied to have me set at liberty; and, to be short, I served out the period of the war, and was in a good deal of service. The seventy-four I was in, being on the West India station, I was not paid off for some months after the peace. On arriving at Portsmouth, I followed the usual course of sailors; and, having gone to amuse myself with some of my shipmates, I got robbed of all I had in the world; and, when I came to my senses, I found I had not even a sixpence in my pocket, a shoe on my feet, or a hat on my head. I was thus in a strange place, quite destitute; but I soon got a loan of some money from one of my comrades, who had been more prudent or more fortunate than myself, and set off for London, to proceed to Leith. I learned there, from a Leith trader, that the *Bounty* had been taken by the French, and that my old captain had left going to sea; so I gave up all thoughts of returning to Leith. Berths were at this time not to be obtained—the seamen were to be seen wandering upon the quays of every port, begging for employment in vain; and thus, young and vigorous as I was, I was reduced to great want. In this dilemma, I thought of writing to my uncle—being advised by one of my acquaintances, who knew much more of the world than I did, to do so, and threaten to

call him to account for his intrusions with my father's effects, if he did not send me, by return of post, a few pounds for my immediate wants. I waited most anxiously for an answer, which I duly received; but it brought me no supply, and I learned that he had been for a long time bankrupt, and was at this time, if possible, in greater want than myself. In a day or two after, I got a berth in a Bristol trader, whose master was an old messmate of mine, and who having told me I had a better chance in Bristol than in London, I cheerfully made the run; but I found berths as difficult to be obtained there as in London; and, in this desperate state of my affairs, I was persuaded to go a voyage to the coast of Africa, in a slaving ship—a species of employment that no seaman will engage in, if he can do better. The men are in general not well used; and the danger is great as regards life, both from fatigue and the climate. You must not judge of me by this voyage; for the slave trade was then as legitimate as any other branch of commerce, and much the same, for popularity or unpopularity, as it is in America at the present time."

"I don't think harshly of you on this account," replied I; "I only beg you to be as circumstantial as you can, regarding this inhuman branch of traffic, now so happily destroyed, by the unwearied efforts of Christian benevolence."

"To proceed, the vessel lay at King's Road, waiting my arrival on board, to overhaul her stores, to see what might be wanting. Her name was the Queen Charlotte; she mounted twenty-two guns; her captain was called by the seamen the Gallipot Captain, as he had formerly been doctor on board the same vessel, and, her captain having died in her last voyage, he was now the commander, in consequence of having brought her home. I went on board in the captain's boat, which was waiting for me, and, to my great joy, found an old messmate who had sailed in the Exeter man-of-war with me. He was now second-mate of the Queen Charlotte, and I was engaged as boatswain. We were soon ready for sea; and unmoored about eight o'clock, the wind chopping about to the east. The captain and pilot came on board through the night, and we set sail for the African coast on the morning of the 1st of May 1788. We passed the Island of Madeira on the 8th of the month; and, having got beyond the Canary and Cape de Verd Islands, all became bustle on board, making preparations for the coast; the carpenters fitting up barricades to keep the male and female slaves apart, and the cooper getting ready all the tubs and vessels for their use. Though in anticipation, I may say that the males are never allowed to see the females until they are put on shore. The children are with the women, in general; but are at times allowed to run at large all over the ship; and merry little creatures they are, and soon pick up a number of English words. The first land we made was Cape Palmas. Still steering along the coast, keeping a good offing, until we passed Cape Three Points and Cape Coast Castle, we crossed the Bight of Benin, and made the land again, which is so low that you can scarce distinguish it from the water—the tall palms resembling a large fleet of ships. The weather was so thick and hazy that we lay at the Bar five days before we could venture in—the tides running so strong, at full moon, that it is with difficulty the boats can pull against it. Upon our getting up, we found about thirty sail of large ships, some of them fitted up for one thousand slaves, all (save a few completely slaved) waiting for cargoes, several with none on board, and others half-full. There was one sad momento of the unhealthiness of this vile place, which made a deep impression on me, thoughtless as I was. There was a beautiful French ship lying at anchor off the town, without one single person alive on board that had come out in her from Europe—captain, doctor, and all had died; and the agent had written to the

owners to send out a new crew, either to complete the voyage or carry her back to France. This was a sad sight for us; and we all heartily wished ourselves safe out of a place where never a day passed without two, three, or more European sailors being rowed on shore, from the ships, to be buried. I shall not wound your feelings by all the details of this disgusting traffic. We longed much for King Peppel, the sovereign of the place, to come on board, to break trade, as it is called; for no native merchant dare either to buy or sell until he has got his 'dash,' or present, and made his selection of the goods that are on board, at the same time that he fixes the prices himself. At times, his Majesty is very backward, and a long time elapses before he comes on board—for he is as cunning and political as any European statesman that ever penned a protocol; but the captain, who had been often here before, knew well the customs of the place, and how to entice him quickly to his wishes. In the morning, after we were all prepared, he sent his boat to the town, under the command of the mate, who carried a private 'dash' for his Majesty, consisting of a blue uniform, all covered with gold lace, so stiff that it would scarcely fold. This had the desired effect; for the answer was, that he would visit the Queen Charlotte next day—and this was the ninth since our arrival.

"In the morning all was again bustle, preparing for a sumptuous dinner for the King, in which there behoved not to be forgot a huge plum-pudding, and a roast pig, two dishes upon which depend the good or ill humour of his Majesty; and the larger the fragments are, the better is his humour, as all that is not consumed at the time is taken ashore with him. It was necessary that everything of value should be carefully put out of sight; for the moment it attracts the attention of the King, he will immediately ask for it, and never cease to importune until he has obtained it. There is no use in refusing, if you mean to trade; and all you can do, is to make the best terms for yourself you can, on the principle of present for present.

"About eleven o'clock, we heard from the shore a confused sound of drums and horns; and, soon after, the royal canoe, formed of one single tree, put off in great state, with nearly one hundred men paddling her along, her colours flying, and about a dozen of musicians in her bow, some blowing upon antelopes' horns, others beating upon drums, and other things, and the remainder chanting or singing in a voice as melodious as the horns and drums. His Majesty sat upon a platform, in an arm-chair, in the centre of the canoe, surrounded by his favourites, all of whom he invites to his feasts. They were dressed agreeably to their tastes—his Majesty's uniform consisting of a cocked hat, a blue laced coat and red vest, with a shirt ruffled at breast and wrist-bands, and about six or seven yards of calico wrapped round his loins; while his legs and feet were wrapped in flannel, as he was at this time suffering from gout. He appeared to be about fifty years of age, portly in his appearance, but extremely fat. When he was hoisted upon deck, his attendants carried him, chair and all, into the cabin, where they passed a jovial afternoon, and matters were arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. The King had seven puncheons of brandy; and other articles in the same proportion, for his dash; which was immediately put on shore.

"Next forenoon, our decks were crowded by the native merchants, bargaining for the cargo, which was soon arranged, and the half of the value paid in advance—a custom rendered necessary, from the traders not having the slaves in the town, but being obliged to go up the river to purchase them, at the new moon. This being in a few days, we had to wait patiently. On the night before they set out, the sound of drums and horns never ceased, while parties with lighted torches were to be seen all along the beach, down to the

water's edge, placing offerings of fowls, manilla, and dried fish, upon stakes, for the use of their jew-jew or god, that he might give them a prosperous voyage. The object of their worship, is the guana, a creature having much the same appearance as the alligator, but smaller; and so completely domesticated, that they go out and into the huts at pleasure. Indeed, the natives build huts for them, where victuals are regularly placed every day.

"On the morning, they set off with their canoes loaded deep with goods, and well armed. Of the proceeds of this expedition, we only got twenty slaves, with assurance that our cargo would be completed next trip, as they had made arrangements up the country for more. Of those we received at this time, all had to get their hurts fomented and dressed, so much had they been injured, from the manner in which they had been secured by the traders; and it was some days before they were completely recovered. The gyes we put on did not gall the ancles while they were secure; but their greatest inconvenience was that, on whatever occasion one had to move, the companion of his chain had to accompany him. During our tedious stay, it was my duty often to go to King Poppel's town for water; and there I recollect well I met a handsome young female slave, who used to weep much, and importune me, in Negro English, to purchase and carry her to the West Indies with me. I was much surprised at this request, for the blacks are in general very averse to leave the country; and having made inquiry into her history, found it to be most cruel. I never was so sorry for a slave as I was for that young creature. She had been taken captive at the surprisal and plunder of her native town—her husband having escaped—and, being heavy with child, had been delivered on her way to the coast, where she and her infant were shipped for the West Indies. In the voyage out, the captain having taken a fancy to her person, kept her in his cabin, and did not sell her, but brought her again to Bonny, where he had come for a new cargo. It so happened that her husband had, like herself, been reduced to slavery, and was brought on board the very ship in which she was. Her feelings may more easily be conceived than described. Neither flattery nor punishment could make her comply with the captain's wishes; and he was so provoked, that he exchanged her for another slave with King Poppel, who had passed his word never to sell her to any one of the European traders. Her husband and child were meanwhile carried away, and she was left behind, to linger out a life of hopeless grief.

"Let me hasten to leave this horrible place. I could make your heart sick by relating a hundredth part of what I was forced to witness. As to what happened in our own ship, I cannot avoid. After next new moon, we received the remainder of our cargo—four hundred slaves, male and female. The receiving them on board, is the most heart-breaking and disagreeable part of the whole of a slaving voyage. When they come first on board, extreme terror is expressed in every feature; and their tears and groans while being put in irons few hearts can withstand, even though hardened by two or three voyages. This was my first and last; I cursed my folly a thousand times, and would have rejoiced to have been a beggar in Scotland rather than where I was. The men are chained by the ancles, two and two, then placed within their own barricade; so that husband and wife, sister and brother, may be in the same ship, and not know of it. When they come first on board, many of them refuse to eat or drink, rather choosing to die than live, and thinking we only wish them to feed, that they may become fat and fit for our eating—a prejudice many of them firmly believe in, and founded on the notion that the whites are men-eaters, and purchase them to carry to market, like bullocks. While this feeling is in their mind, which is called the sulky fit, there is much trouble with them. The men remain silent and sullen, the women weep and tremble.

Arguments, could we speak the different tongues, would be of no avail—the cat is the only remedy; and that is administered until they comply. The sight of it, or a few strokes, in general, is sufficient for the females; but many of the males will stand out a long time, and, during the flogging, never utter a groan—snapping their fingers in the face of their tormentors, and crying, "O Furrie! O Furrie!" (Never mind!) always a sure token of their despair and recklessness. We were very fortunate in getting our cargo so soon. We had two or three visits of King Poppel alongside, in his begging disguise—and wished no more. His custom was to visit each ship, meanly dressed, and in a whining voice, equivalent to a demand, beseech an alms—and he never begged in vain; for the royal beggar always got a handsome present; and, indeed, the ultimate success of the voyage required this, in consequence of his unlimited power over his subjects.

"Having got on board the lime-juice and other necessaries all we required was the royal leave to depart; and at length his Majesty came on board, in as great state as at first—the same scene was acted over again—his parting-present was little inferior to the former, the difference being, that this was called a farewell present, and was returned by a man-slave and two elephant's teeth. The price of a prime male slave was, at this time, in Bonny, equal to an elephants' tooth of sixty-five pounds weight, or one thousand billets of red wood—nearly £10 of English money.

"Next day we set sail for St Vincent, to our great joy, having lain here exactly six weeks and one day. Both the crew and the slaves began to grow very sickly. The duties of the crew were very severe, and, as disease prevailed, these became more and more disagreeable. As you seem interested, I will give you a faint unconnected sketch of the run; but I would much rather pass it over, though the Queen Charlotte was remarked for her care and humanity to the slaves. To proceed:—

"Next morning, the negroes were forced upon deck; and the place where they had passed the night upon the bare boards, naked as they were born, was scrubbed with lime-juice until every stain was removed. When upon deck, chained by the ancles, two and two, a strict watch behoved to be kept over them, to prevent them from throwing themselves overboard—a remedy for their sufferings they are keen to resort to, for the first fortnight; and, when the state of the weather would permit, the drum and fife being played, they were compelled to dance at least twice a-day, to make their blood circulate, and promote their health. At these times, there was such a clanking of chains and stamping upon the decks, you would have thought they would have been beaten to pieces by them; and no wonder, when there were about two hundred lusty fellows, all in violent exercise at one time. At first the cat was forced to be employed; but they are very fond of the drum, and soon call of themselves for "jiggery-jigg," as they term it; will take the instruments themselves, beat their own time in their own way, and dance away in their own fashion.

"We had four or five different nations on board. Of one nation we had only twenty; and these we found were more than enough, from the trouble they gave us, forcing us to confine them by themselves, as all the other nations were afraid of them, and said they were men-eaters. These stood nearly six feet high, and stout in proportion; their teeth were ground to a point, and fitted into each other like a rat-trap; their nails were long and strong; they were sullen and untractable, and of consequence often flogged to make them eat, at which times their looks, as they snapped their fingers in your face, and growled 'O Furrie!' to one another, were horrible. In vain was all our care and attention to them, and every indulgence consistent with the safety of the ship. They had each two glasses of brandy,

and sometimes three, per day; but some nations would not taste it, while others would drink as much as we would have given them. Those who did not take their allowance, would keep it in their bekka, (cocoa-nut shell;) and when any of the crew did them any little service, they would wait an opportunity, and beckon as slyly as possible, and give it to them. It was really beautiful to witness their kindness to each other of the same nation. If any of us gave one of them a piece of salt beef—of which they were very fond, but of which they were allowed none, for fear of creating thirst—he that got it, though it were no larger than my finger, would pull it, fibre by fibre, and divide it equally, making, with scrupulous accuracy, his own proportion no larger than any of the others; while the man that gave it would get the grateful negro's day's allowance of liquor, for it, when we went below to secure them for the night. Before they were turned below, they were carefully searched, lest they had concealed a nail, or any bit of iron, in their bekka, or little bag, by which they might have been enabled to undo their chains; and in the mornings, their irons and berths were as carefully examined. But what availed our care and attention, where sickness and death reigned triumphant? Never a day passed but one or two were thrown overboard, some days three; and, during our run to Saint Vincent, of six weeks, we lost, out of a cargo of four hundred, one hundred and twenty. Two of the crew also died, and I myself was given up for death by the captain; but, contrary to his and my own expectation, I recovered rapidly. After I began to get convalescent, I had picked up a few of the poor creatures' words, and did my best, weak as I was, to relieve their wants, which were very urgent. The captain, from the first, when he observed my dislike to the service I had engaged in, and the pity expressed in my looks, told me to take it easy, for that I would soon get accustomed to it. But I never could. Their complaints and piteous moans ceased not, night nor day. Although they were, in the night, confined below, and the crew had slung their hammocks on deck, under a spare sail, or anywhere they thought they would be most out of the sounds, still their moanings disturbed our sleep. Vain was the threat, 'Nappy becca—paum paum,' (Be quiet—I will beat you,) and the cat shaken over them. 'Eerie eerie cucoo' (I am sick plenty) was the reply. 'Biea de biea' (I want the doctor) sounded from every part; but 'Biea menie' (I want water) was the constant cry at all times—yet we were liberal in our allowance, and constantly supplying them with it.

"We gave them hot tea, when sick, made of pepper and boiled water, which they relished very much, crying often—'Biea de biea ocko menie—eerie eerie cucoo.' (I want the doctor and hot water—I am very sick.) This would often be repeated from twenty voices at once, in their soft, plaintive manner of speaking, as they gathered confidence from the time they had been on board. As long as they were able to move, we forced them to the deck; but we in general found them dead in the morning, when we went below to send them up. Often did the companion of the dead man's chain feign death, to be thrown overboard with him; but the cat was always applied to test him, and he was kept alive against his will. All this happened oftenest within the first fortnight or three weeks; for, by the fourth week, we had gained their confidence in a great measure, and their fears had worn off. The captain's custom was, when we found any one of them cheerful, and apparently easy in mind, to take off their chains, clothe them in a pair of trowsers and frock, and give them a charge over their fellows. Then they became proud, and stalked over the deck like admirals—and none more ready with the cat than they. Thus we gained upon them fast—the others envying those whom they saw dressed and trusted; so that, before we reached the end of the voyage, they were all, except some indomitable spirits,

clothed, and walking the deck. Though still strictly watched, we allowed some of them to go aloft; and they soon became useful, more especially the boys, who, before they left the vessel, were, some of them, no despicable seamen. When freed of their irons, and dressed, if they got the loan of a razor, or even a piece of broken bottle, they would shave, and cut their hair in their own fashion, and become, if possible, more vain and proud of their appearance. In the middle of this heart-rending misery, at least to me, there was one ray of light that enlivened the gloom.

"We had on board of us a son of Bonnyface, the prime minister or chief favourite of King Peppel. He had been intrusted to Captain Waugh, as a great favour, to take him to England for his education, and we were to take him out again next voyage. Billy Bonnyface acted on board like a ministering angel. He was a sweet boy, and of great service to the captain, in soothing and giving confidence to the slaves, and attending the sick. He felt most acutely for their distress, and was constantly pleading with the captain for some little comfort or other for them—the tears streaming down his ebonyface, in which the unsophisticated workings of his young mind were more moving than his words. All looked upon him as a friend, while by those whose language he spoke he was almost adored. All the crew, too, loved him; for to every one of them he had rendered some little service, by interceding for them with the captain, over whom his influence was great. A smarter or more active boy I never saw; he spoke English, for a negro, very well, and took great delight in teaching the black boy-slaves, who learned amazingly fast. I know not how it was, but little Billy loved me more than any other of the crew, and I can safely say there was no love lost. When he had a moment at leisure he was ever with me. You can judge by my looks if there was anything comely in them; yet the dear boy often hung round my neck and kissed me, while I held him to my bosom, and he called me Dad Robion."

Here the worthy captain paused, as if from extreme emotion. I felt as if I could have wept myself. He hastily resumed—

"I am an old fool. I shall go on, if I don't sicken you with my gossip."

"Proceed," I said—"in charity, proceed."

"I thank you," he replied. "Till now I had almost persuaded myself that no one cared for what I said, but Billy." And here he rung the bell, and the negro entered. "Billy," said he, "it wears late; bring an extra glass, and take your wonted seat."

"Thank you, massa," said the negro; "rather sit wit Mary. Picaninny no sleep yet."

"Well, Billy, as you please," he said, and resumed.

"On proceeding to the southward, we got becalmed eleven days in 2^o east longitude. After a few days lying logging and motionless upon the water, despondency began to take possession of our minds; our water and provisions were wearing fast away, and the slaves dying fast, three and four being often thrown overboard at once. The most gloomy and fearful ideas began to occupy our minds—death stared us in the face, and we were utterly powerless. On the tenth day, the men began to gather together in parties, and whisper what they feared to speak aloud. They looked with an evil eye upon our chief mate, who was both feared and hated; to the crew he was tyrannical, but to the slaves he was cruel in the extreme; and little Billy avoided him as if he had been a fiend. He was, indeed, a hardened slaver of many years' standing; but the circumstance that would have sealed his doom was, that, on his last voyage to the coast, the ship he was in had been becalmed in the same latitude for twenty weeks; the captain, doctor, and all on board perished, except himself, two boys, and two of the slaves.

out of forty-six Europeans and four hundred slaves, which they left the coast with. This was a subject he never wished to hear mentioned, and did all in his power to avoid being spoken to about; but he and I being on the best of terms, in consequence of my having laid him under deep obligation to me at Bonny, he yielded to my request, and gave me the following details:—

“‘We left the coast of Africa all well,’ he said; ‘in better health than common, and in high spirits. Nothing particular happened until we were about the place where we now are, when we had, first, variable winds for some days; then all at once it fell a dead calm, and our sails hung loose upon our masts. We felt no uneasiness at first, as such things are usual in these latitudes; and we only regretted the loss we were sustaining in our cargo, who had become very sickly, and were dying fast. Thus three weeks passed on, and despair began to steal upon us—our provisions and water began to threaten a short-coming, and it was now agreed to shorten our allowance of both, until a breeze sprung up. Our crew were listlessly loitering about the deck, and adding to the horrors of our situation by relating dismal stories which they had heard of vessels becalmed in these latitudes; and their spirits sank still lower and lower. Thus, week followed week, and no relief came—our despondency deepened—more than one-half of our slaves were already dead; and, by the fourteenth week, our water was almost spent, when it was debated by the crew whether we should not force the remainder of the slaves overboard. We were reduced to perfect skeletons by anxiety and want; and the slaves were much worse off than even we. When the result of the council was made known to the captain and mate, they gave a decided refusal, and armed themselves, threatening to shoot the first man who would again propose it; and it was again agreed to shorten yet farther our scanty allowance of water. On the sixteenth week, the Europeans began to die as fast as the slaves, who were now reduced to one hundred and four, the crew to thirty-six. Our sufferings were terrible. Our thirst parched and shrivelled up our throats. So listless were we, that the slaves were now allowed to be at large, and many of them leaped overboard, yelling fearfully as they splashed in the water, we not caring to prevent them, but rather wishing that they might all immolate themselves in the same way. We scarcely ever slept when we lay down; our torments were so great that we would start up in a state of stupefaction, and wander over the deck like ghosts, until we sank down again, exhausted. The eyes of all were dim, some glaring bloodshot, red as raw beef. Several of the crew leaped overboard in a state of wild derangement; others would be walking or conversing in their usual way, and suddenly drop down dead, expiring without a groan. Thus did we linger out eighteen weeks, when the captain took to his cabin, and died through the night. Death’s progress was fearful until the end of the nineteenth week, when all that remained alive out of such a number, were, of the Europeans, only myself and two boys, who kept up better than the men, and two young slaves. But by this time there was no distinction between black and white: we lay, side by side, looking over the bulwarks of the vessel upon the glassy expanse of water; then to our sails that hung upon our masts like sere-cloths; then at each other—and our hearts felt as if they had ceased to beat. The heat was intolerable. We had only half a barrel of water on board, and such water as none ashore would have allowed to remain in their house; it was putrid, yet we were grieved at the smallness of the quantity; for in our present condition it was more precious than gold or diamonds, and was to us most sweet. There was still a little appearance of a wind springing up as on the first day of the calm. I was thus in possession of the vessel, without the means of working her, should a breeze

spring up. The fear of this made me enlarge the allowance of water to the two slaves and boys, as on their lives my only chance of escape depended; for, were they to die, I must, like all my fellows, also die in the calm, or become the sport of the winds and waves, when this appalling stillness in nature should cease to chain me to this fatal spot. How could I express what we felt when we first beheld the ripple upon the distant waters, as the long-looked for wind came gently along! We stretched out our arms, we wept like children, and the burning drops smarted upon our chapped and blistered faces—the breeze reached our decks, we felt as if our thirst had fled and we were bathed in pure water, so balmy did it feel. The sails that had hung loose upon the yards for twenty weeks began to fill. The vessel moved through the water; I stood at the helm; and we soon left this fatal latitude far behind. I never left the deck until we arrived at Barbadoes. When overcome by sleep, one of the boys steered by the directions I gave, until I awoke again, and took the helm; and when the pilot came on board, as we neared the island, we had not one gill of water in the ship.’

“My heart sank within me,” continued the Captain, “at this recital. We were in the same place, and had every prospect of sharing a similar fate. We were on short allowance of water; and it is the remembrance of these few fearful days that, as I walk alone, will at times even yet come over my mind, and, while their horror is upon me, vivid as it was at the time, if I see water recklessly wasted, I feel angry, until the illusion has fled, and then I bless God that I am in the middle of green fields, and not that watery waste that glowed like a furnace from the intense rays of the sun, and where nothing met the anxious gaze of the sufferer but an expanse of water and sky, both equally bright and unvaried, without cloud in the one or swell in the other, all still as death, save any noise in the vessel, which, if ever so small, was, at this time, fearfully acute to our ears. On the afternoon of the eleventh day, fortunately for the mate, and equally so for us all, a breeze came rustling along the waters, our sails filled, and we glided along with joyful hearts. Great was the deliverance to us all, but greatest to that threatened victim; for, had we continued many days in the same situation, the ship’s crew would have made a Jonah of him and thrown him overboard, as the man himself did not hesitate to say our bad fortune was solely on his account.

“On our arrival at St Vincent, the slaves became very dull and low-spirited, especially when they saw from our decks the gangs of negroes at work in the fields, as we passed up along the shores of the islands. We were now all busy preparing them for the market—that is, giving them frocks and trowsers, and making them clean; while the captain sent on shore for the black decoys, to raise their spirits and give them confidence. These decoys are black women, who are some of them free, and others slaves. They make a trade of it, and are well paid; the money, if they are free, being their own—if slaves, their masters receive it. They come on board gaily dressed, covered with tinsel and loaded with baubles, of which they have a great many to give away to the slaves. As soon as they come on board, under pretence of looking for relations or former friends, (the decoys are of all the different nations that come from the coast,) they address each in their own tongue; tell them a number of cock-and-bull stories; point to themselves; profess all manner of joy to see them in this land of wealth and happiness, where they will soon be as gay and happy as they are; and, to shew their riches and friendship for them, distribute the baubles among them before they leave the vessel. This has all the desired effect. The poor creatures immediately become full of spirits, and anxious to get on shore. The business of the voyage was now accomplished; for they were all sold by the

agents on shore, and we knew no more of them. As soon as the ship was cleared of the slaves, the carpenters commenced to take down the barricades, and we to prepare for returning home, taking in water for ballast. I had no wish to return to Britain at this time, as berths were so difficult to be had when I left home, and I told Captain Waugh so; but he refused to let me leave the vessel, for he had not many good seamen in his crew; and I having signed the articles for the whole voyage, did not choose to forfeit my wages thus dearly won—so I at once made up my mind to return, and thought no more of it. We remained here for seven weeks before the captain got all his business settled, during which time I would have wearied very much, had it not been for little Billy, who was seldom from my side. As I went very little ashore, he preferred staying with me to going even with the captain, who was as well pleased at the choice, as his sole object was to be well spoken of by the boy to his father when they returned to the coast, that he might have the favour of old Bonnyface, who was King Poppel's chief minister, and had greater influence with him than any of his other favourites.

“Billy himself was one of the sweetest tempered and smartest boys of his age, I ever saw, yet irascible to madness at the least affront from any one; for his nature had never been subject to the least training, and his passions were under no control. His countenance was the true index of his heart; and if any of the men intentionally gave him offence, his large black eyes would flash in an instant, he would spring at them like a tiger, to tear them with his teeth, and it would be some time before we could get him appeased; but, when the rage died away, he would think no more of it, nor would he complain to the captain, as he knew that the man would have been punished. However, it was only when some of the crew returned on board the worse of liquor, that they ever meddled with him; for otherwise, there was not a man in the ship, but would have as soon thought of leaping overboard, as giving him the slightest offence.

“Billy began to weary to get under way as much as myself; and when I asked him why he was so anxious to get to Britain, he replied, simply—

“‘I much want to make book speak! You make book speak, Dad Robion, and all white man make book speak! Dat gives much power, dat make big man—so me wish to make book speak.’

“‘I am happy,’ I said, ‘to hear you say so. Will you learn if I teach you, Billy, while we lie here? It will be so far good for you that you will not have to begin when we reach Bristol.’

“‘You make my heart glad,’ he replied. ‘You teach me—me all heart, me all attention, me never tink but what you say.’ And he threw his arms round my neck.

“I was much affected, and seriously thought about what I had undertaken; for there were many difficulties to surmount—the greatest of which, was the want of a proper book to begin with. There was not such a thing on board; so I got from the carpenter a smooth board, and formed the letters, telling him their names, and giving them to him to form after me. This he took the utmost delight in, and learned amazingly fast, for he was ever at his board; and, before we left the island, he knew words of one and two syllables in my book of navigation, the only one I had, save my pocket Bible, which he took great delight to hear me read—putting occasionally such puzzling questions to me as made me blush. When I told him it was the book of the white man's religion, he used to shake his head, and say—

“‘Me no tink dat; for white man swear, white man steal, he drink over too much, he do what book say no: how dat?’

“I felt it quite impossible, from what he saw in our own crew, and what he had seen of the other white men at Bonny, to make him believe that white men had any rule of conduct but their own inclinations and avarice. I sighed, and gave up the task; for what is instruction or precept to an ingenuous mind, without example; and our profession is belied by too many around, who acknowledge and claim the faith as theirs by word, and yet give it the lie by their actions.—At length we sailed, and reached King's Road, on the 1st of January 1789.

“I was so fortunate as get a berth, as mate, on board a West Indiaman, which was taking her cargo on board. Billy was, meanwhile, put to school, and I saw him every evening, at his request, and by Captain Waugh's leave. When he heard I was going to leave Bristol, and not to go back to the coast in the Queen Charlotte again, he wept, and importuned me, in the most moving terms, to go to Bonny with him, where he would cause his father to give me as many slaves as I pleased, and he would send his own people to get them for me. I was vexed to part with him, and did what I could to soothe him before my departure; but still I left him disconsolate. I once more left Bristol in the beginning of February, and had a fine run to Jamaica, where I left the vessel, with the consent of my captain, having made an exchange with a lad belonging to Bristol, who was mate in an American trader, and wished to get home, as he did not keep his health well in these climates; and, as he was an acquaintance of the captain's, all parties were agreeable. I now continued for several years in the carrying trade between the different islands and the continent of America, saved money very fast, purchased a share of a large brig, and sailed her successfully as captain. The war was now raging between Britain and the French Republic; but it did not affect my prosperity; for, being now a naturalized American, my ship and papers were a passport to me, and I sailed unmolested by the fleets and privateers of both nations. But my heart was British, and I rejoiced in the superiority she held at sea, as if I had been in the British service, and fighting for my country. For ten years everything had prospered with me. I thought myself rich—for I never was avaricious—and had some thoughts of returning to Edinburgh, when the failure of a mercantile house in Charlestown reduced me once more to a couple of thousand dollars. There was no use of fretting. I had all to do over again, and to it I set. ‘I am yet not an old man, and, if I am spared, (a few years are neither here nor there,) I will be content with less this bout—so here goes.’ I made over my claim upon the bankrupts to the other creditors, for a small sloop that had belonged to them and began the coasting trade again. I sold my sloop soon after, bought a brig, and took a trip in her to Kingston in Jamaica—when, what was my grief and surprise, to see, in the first lighter that came alongside the vessel, my old friend Billy! I could at first scarcely believe my eyes; I thought I knew the face, but could not call to my recollection where I had seen it, yet I felt I had known it by more than a casual meeting. I was at this time sitting at my cabin window; I saw that the person who had attracted my attention so much, was a slave; and allowed the circumstance to pass out of my mind for the time, as I was busy with some papers, and had only been attracted by the sound of the oars as they passed under the stern of the vessel. On the second trip of the lighter, I was on deck, and the same individual was there. I caught again his eye, and, as I gazed upon him, he uttered a cry of surprise, stretched forth his arms for a second, then shook his head sorrowfully, and sunk it upon his bosom, as if in despondency. That it was Billy, I had not now the most distant doubt; my heart leaped to embrace him, slave as he was. But how he had come into his present situation I could not conceive. I requested the black who had charge of

the Double Moses, (the name of the craft,) to send Billy upon deck; and, as soon as he reached it, I held out my hand to him. I believe my eyes were not dry; his were pouring a flood of tears upon my hand, which he kissed again and again. The crew and others looked on in amazement. The captain of a brig shaking hands with a black slave! Such an occurrence they had never witnessed; for my crew were native Americans, and looked upon negroes as an inferior race of men. He was now a stout young man, but rather thin and dejected; he was naked, save a pair of old trowsers, and his shoulders and back bore the scars of many old and recent stripes. His former vivacity was now nowhere to be traced in his melancholy countenance—the independence of his former manner had all forsaken him—he was, in truth, a broken-in-spirit and crushed slave. I resolved at once to purchase his liberty, if within my power, and told him so, when he fell at my feet, wept, and kissed my shoes before I could lift him up. He had not, as yet, opened his lips—his heart was too full, emotion shook his frame; and, to ease the feelings that seemed like to choke him, I went from the cabin to the state-room, leaving him alone, while I sought out a jacket and light vest, for him. I staid longer than was necessary to give him time to recover. It is ever engraven upon my heart, that look of gratitude he gave me. His attempt to speak was still a vain effort. He was another man's slave, and liable to punishment. I requested him to go away to his duty, and not tell any one what I meant to do, lest his master should ask an exorbitant sum, if he thought I was resolved to purchase at any price. So he went into the Moses, and pulled ashore; but kept his gaze constantly on me.

“As soon as my business would permit, I went on shore before sun-down, to make inquiries about his purchase from his present master, and was pleased to find that he was the property of the merchant to whom my cargo was consigned. I told him at once frankly off hand, that I wished to purchase a slave of his, to whom I had taken a fancy. He replied, I was welcome to any of them at a fair valuation, and then called his overseer—for he himself cared little about his slaves, hardly knowing them by sight—and inquired if I knew his name. I told him the one I meant was called Billy, and described him. The overseer at once knew whom I meant, and said I would be welcome to him at cost, for he was a stubborn, sulky dog, and gave him much trouble, and, besides, was getting rather sickly; so that, if I chose, I might have him for two hundred dollars. I at once agreed, and, after supper, went on board, happy that I had succeeded so well; for Billy was to be handed over to me in the forenoon, as soon as the notary had made out the transfer. At length he came on board, joy beaming in every feature; but so much had his noble spirit been crushed and broken, that he still felt his inferiority, and stood at an humble distance. He had been taught the severe lesson of what it was to be a slave. When I met him first, all he knew of the white man was the most humble submission to King Peppel and his father's humours. Their word was law to them at Bonny—how great the contrast to him here! He was insulted, despised, and tortured by the lash, by those very whites he had been taught, when a child, to look upon as scarcely his equals. Had he been even a prince in the interior, his bondage to the whites would not have been half so galling. I beckoned him to follow me to the cabin, where I got from him an account of his adventures since I had left him in Bristol.

“The captain left him at school on his next voyage to the coast, and did not take him out until the second year, when Billy could read English well, and had learned to cipher and write a tolerable hand. On being delivered safe to his father, the prime minister was proud of his accomplishments. Captain Waugh was most liberally rewarded; King Peppel was glad to have one about him,

who could make ‘book speak.’ Billy had every appearance of rising into great favour; but, poor fellow, the accomplishments his father was so proud of, proved the ruin of them both, and of all their family. In King Peppel's court there was as much ambition, intrigue, and rivalry, as in the most civilised in Europe; nor were the political plotters less scrupulous in the means they used to overturn the influence of a rival. They first began to hint, in an indirect manner, that Bonnyface had sent his son to the white man's land, to learn obi, and write ‘feteche’ or charms. The King, for some time, only laughed at them; but their endless inuendoes gradually began to poison his mind; and, while he became cool and more cool in his manner, the secret enemies had bribed the priests, or ‘feteche’ men, who also envied Billy his accomplishments, and they openly declared that it was not good to have white man's ‘feteche’ in the black man's country. Old Bonnyface saw the storm gradually thicken around him, without the means of averting it; but this torturing state of uncertainty came to a close. The King, who had been ailing for some time, and applying to the surgeons of the slave ships without much relief, was advised to try the physicians of his own country. These were the priests and feteche men; and this was the opportunity so long desired by the enemies of Billy's family. It was declared by all that there was a white man's ‘feteche’ upon him, and they could not remove it; but gave no opinions as to who it was that had put it on the King. It could be none of the white men in the river, for they all were his friends for trade; and then they paused, and shook their heads, received their presents, and retired. No one gave the least surmise to the King who was the charmer; for this had been done months before. All that had been hinted of Bonnyface and Billy going to Britain rushed upon the King's mind, aggravated by fear. Next day saw Bonnyface's head struck off, to break the ‘feteche;’ and the interesting Billy, and all the members of the family, were sold for slaves to the Europeans, their wealth confiscated to the King, and a part of it bestowed upon those who had wrought their ruin. I brought Billy home with me—and here ends my narrative, at least for this evening.”

It being now rather late, I bade the Captain good night, and called again in the morning, after breakfast, when I found that the mother and babe were quite restored. Upon inquiry, we learned that the name of her husband was William Robertson. As the day was remarkably fine, I walked with the captain to the reading-room, and found that the Czar had arrived at Leith the day before. We took the stage, and rode down, and soon had the pleasure to see the husband of the Captain's guest. When they met, the Captain seemed much affected at sight of him, and, in an agitated manner, inquired of what part of Scotland he was a native. He said he was born in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh; and, upon further inquiry, we found that he was the Captain's cousin, the son of his uncle, who had married after his bankruptcy, and died, leaving his son destitute, who, from necessity, had gone to sea. To conclude, William Robertson came home to Morningside with us, a happy man. His wife and child resided with the Captain until his death, and that of Billy, who did not survive him many months. The cousin sailed his own vessel out of Greenock, and that was the last account I had from him.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THOMAS OF CHARTRES.

ONE morning, early in the spring of 1298, a small Scottish vessel lay becalmed in the middle of the Irish Channel, about fifteen leagues to the south of the Isle of Man. During the whole of the previous night, she had been borne steadily southward, by a light breeze from off the fast receding island; but it had sunk as the sun rose, and she was now heaving slowly to the swell, which still continued to roll onward, in long glassy ridges, from the north. A thick fog had risen as the wind fell—one of those low sea fogs which, leaving the central heavens comparatively clear, hangs its dense, impervious volumes around the horizon; and the little vessel lay as if imprisoned within a circular wall of darkness, while the sun, reddened by the haze, looked down cheerily upon her from above. She was a small and very rude-looking vessel, furnished with two lug-sails of dark brown, much in the manner of a modern Dutch lugger; with a poop and forecastle singularly high, compared with her height in the waist; and with sides which, attaining their full breadth scarcely a foot over the water, sloped abruptly inwards, towards the deck, like the wall of a mole or pier. The parapet-like bulwarks of both poop and forecastle, were cut into deep embrasures, and ran, like those of a tower, all around the areas they enclosed, looking down nearly as loftily on the midships as on the water. The sides were black as pitch could render them—the sails scarcely less dark; but, as if to shew man's love of the ornamental in even the rudest stage of art, a huge misshapen lion flared in vermilion on the prow, and over the stern hung the blue flag of Scotland, with the silver cross of St Andrew stretching from corner to corner.

From eight to ten seamen lounged about the decks. They were uncouth-looking men, heavily attired in jerkins and caps of blue woollen, with long, thick beards, and strongly-marked features. The master, a man considerably advanced in life—for, though his eye seemed bright as ever, his hair and beard had become white as snow—was rather better dressed. He wore above his jerkin a short cloak of blue, which confessed, in its finer texture, the superiority of the looms of Flanders over those of his own country; and a slender cord of silver ran round a cap of the same material. His nether garments, however, were coarse and rude as those of his seamen; and the shoes he wore were fashioned, like theirs, of the undressed skin of the deer, with the hair still attached; giving to the foot that brush-like appearance which had acquired to his countrymen of the age, from their more polished neighbours, the appellation of rough-footed Scots. Neither the number, nor the appearance of the crew, singular and wild as the latter was, gave the vessel aught of a warlike aspect; and yet there were appearances that might have led one to doubt whether she was quite so unprepared for attack or defence as at the first view might be premised. There ran round the but of each mast a rack filled with spears, of more knightly appearance than could have belonged to a few rude seamen—for of some of these the handles were chased with silver, and to some there were strips of pennon

attached; and a rich crimson cloak, with several pieces of mail, were spread out to the morning sun, on one of the shrouds.

The crew, we have said, were lounging about the deck, unemployed in the calm, when a strong, iron-studded door opened in the poop, and a young and very handsome man stepped forward.

"Has my unfortunate cloak escaped stain?" he said to the master. "Your sea-water is no brightener of colour."

"It will not yet much ashame you, Clelland," said the master, "even amid the gallants of France; but, were it worse, there is little fear, with these eyes of yours, of being overlooked by the ladies."

"Nay, now, Brichan, that's but a light compliment from so grave a man as you," said Clelland. "You forget how small a chance I shall have beside my cousin."

"Not jealous of the Governor, Clelland, I hope?" said the old man, gaily. "Nay, trust me, you are in little danger. Sir William is perhaps quite as handsome a man as you, and taller by the head and shoulders; but, trust me, no one will ever think of him as a pretty fellow. He stands too much alone for that. Has he risen yet?"

"Risen!—he has been with the chaplain for I know not how long. Their Latin broke in upon my dreams two hours ago. But what have we yonder, on the edge of that bank of fog? Is it one of the mermaidens you were telling me of yesterday?"

"Nay," said the master, "it is but a poor seal, risen to take the air. But what have we beyond it? By Heavens, I see the dim outline of a large vessel, through the fog! and yonder, not half a bow-shot beyond, there is another! Saints forbode that it be not the English fleet, or the ships of Thomas of Chartres! Clelland, good Clelland, do call up the Governor and his company!"

Clelland stepped up to the door in the poop, and shouted hastily to his companions within—"Strange sails in sight!—supposed enemies—it were well to don your armours." And then turning to a seaman, "Assist me, good fellow," he said, "in bracing on mine."

"Thomas of Chartres, to a certainty!" exclaimed the master—"and not a breath to bear us away! Would to Heavens that I were dead and buried, or had never been born!"

"Why all this ado, Brichan?" said Clelland, who, assisted by the sailor, was coolly buckling on his mail. "It was never your wont before, to be thus annoyed by danger."

"It is not for myself I fear, noble Clelland," said the master, "if the Governor were but away and safe. But, oh, to think that the pride and stay of Scotland should fall into the merciless hands of a pirate dog! Would that my own life, and the lives of all my crew, could but purchase his safety!"

"Take heart, old man," said Clelland, with dignity. "Heaven watches over the fortunes of the Governor of Scotland; nor will it suffer him to fall obscurely by the hands of a mere plunderer of merchants and seamen.—Rax me my long spear."

As he spoke, the Governor himself stepped forward from the door in the poop, enveloped from head to foot in com-

plete armour. He was a man of more than kingly presence—taller, by nearly a foot, than even the tallest man on deck, and broader across the shoulders by full six inches; but so admirably was his frame moulded that, though his stature rose to the gigantic, no one could think of him as a giant. His visor was up, and exhibited a set of high handsome features, and two of the finest blue eyes that ever served as indexes to the feelings of a human soul. His chin and upper lip were thickly covered with hair of that golden colour so often sung by the elder poets; and a few curling locks of rather darker shade escaped from under his helmet. A man of middle stature and grave saturnine aspect, who wore a monk's frock over a coat of mail, came up behind him.

"What is to befall us now, cousin Clelland?" said the Governor. "Does not the truce extend over the Channel, think you?"

"Ah, these are not English enemies, noble sir," replied the master. "We have fallen on the fleet of the infamous Thomas of Chartres."

"And who is Thomas of Chartres?" asked the Governor.

"A cruel and blood-thirsty pirate—the terror of these seas for the last sixteen years. Wo is me!—we have neither force enough to fight, nor wind to bear us away!"

"Two large vessels," said the Governor, stepping up to the side, "full of armed men, too; but we muster fifty, besides the sailors; and, if they attempt boarding us, it must be by boat. Is it not so, master? The calm which fixes us here, must prevent them from laying alongside and overmastering us."

"Ah, yes, noble sir," said the master; "but we see only a part of the fleet."

"Were there ten fleets," exclaimed Clelland, impatiently, "I have met with as great odds ashore—and here comes Crawford."

The door in the poop was again thrown open, and from forty to fifty warriors, in complete armour, headed by a tall and powerful-looking man, came crowding out, and then thronged around the masts, to disengage their spears. They were all robust and hardy-looking men—the flower, apparently, of a country-side; and the coolness and promptitude with which they ranged themselves round their leader, to wait his commands, shewed that it was not now for the first time they had been called on to prepare for battle. They were, in truth, tried veterans of the long and bloody struggle which their country had maintained with Edward—men who, ere they had united under a leader worthy to command them, had resisted the enemy individually, and preserved, amid their woods and fastnesses, at least their personal independence. Such a party of such men, however great the odds opposed to them, could not, in any circumstances, be deemed other than formidable.

"We are not born for peace, countrymen," said the Governor—"war follows us even here. Meanwhile, lie down, that the enemy mark not our numbers. That foremost vessel is lowering her boat, and yonder tall man in scarlet, who takes his seat in the bows, seems to be a leader."

"It is Thomas of Chartres, himself," said the master. "I know him well. Some five-and-twenty years ago, we sailed together from Palestine."

"And what," asked the Governor, "could have brought a false pirate there?"

"He was no false pirate then," replied the master, "but a true Christian knight; and bravely did he fight for the sepulchre. But, on his return to France, where he had been pledged to meet with his lady-love, he fell under the displeasure of the King, his master; and, ever since, he has been a wanderer and a pirate. You will see, as he approaches, the scallop in his basnet; and be sure he will be the first man to board us."

"Excellent," exclaimed the Governor, gaily; "we shall

hold him hostage for the good behaviour of his fleet. Mark me, cousin Crawford. His barge shoves off, and the men bend to their oars. He will be here in a twinkling. Do you stand by our good Ancient—would there were but wind enough to unfurl it!—and the instant he bids us strike, why, lower it to the deck; but be as sure you hoist it again when you see him fairly aboard. And you, dear Clelland, do you take your stand here on the deck beside me, and see to it, when I am dealing with the pirate, that you keep your long spear between us and his crew. It will be strange if he boast of his victory this bout."

The men, at the command of their leader, had prostrated themselves on the deck, while his two brethren in arms, Crawford and Clelland, stationed themselves at his bidding—the one on the vessel's poop, directly under the pennon, the other at his side in the midships. The pirate's barge, glittering to the sun with arms and armour, and crowded with men, rowed lustily towards them; but, while yet a full hundred yards away, a sudden breeze from the west began to murmur through the shrouds, and the belying sails swelled slowly over the side.

"Heaven's mercy be praised!" exclaimed the master, "we shall escape them yet. Lay her easy to the wind, good Crawford—lay her easy to the wind, and we shall bear out through them all."

"Nay, cousin, nay," said the Governor, his eyes flashing with eagerness, "the pirate must not escape us so. Lay the vessel too. Turn her head full to the wind. And you, captain, draw off your men to the hold. We must not lose our good sailors; and these woollens of yours will scarcely turn a French arrow. Nay, 'tis I who am master now"—for the old man seemed disposed to linger. "I may resign my charge, perhaps, by and by; but you must obey me now."

The master and his sailors left the deck. The barge of the pirate came sweeping onward till within two spears' length of the vessel, and then hailed her with no courtly summons of surrender. "Strike, dogs, strike! or you shall fare the worse!" It was the pirate himself who spoke, and Crawford, at his bidding, pulled down the Ancient. The barge dashed alongside. Thomas of Chartres, a very tall and very powerful man, seized hold of the bulwark rail with one hand, and, bearing a naked sword in the other, leaped fearlessly aboard, within half-a-yard of where the Governor stood, half concealed by the shrouds and the bulwarks. In a moment the sword was struck down, and the intruder locked in the tremendous grasp of the first champion of his time. Crawford hoisted the Ancient, yard-high, to the new-risen breeze; while Clelland struck his long spear against the pirate who had leaped on the gunwale to follow his leader, with such hearty good will that the steel passed through targe and corslet, and he fell back a dead man into the boat. In an instant the concealed party had sprung from the deck, and fifty Scottish spears bristled over the gunwale, interposing their impenetrable hedge between the pirate crew and their leader. For a moment, the latter had striven to move his antagonist; but, powerful and sinewy as he was, he might as well have attempted to uproot an oak of an hundred summers. While yet every muscle was strained in the exertion, the Governor swung him from off his feet, suspended him at arm's length for half a moment in the air, and then dashed him violently against the deck. A stream of blood gushed from mouth and nostril, and he lay stunned and senseless where he fell. Meanwhile, the crew of the barge, taken by surprise, and outnumbered, shoved off a boat's length beyond reach of the spears, and then rested on their oars.

"He revives," said the warrior in the monk's frock, going up to the fallen pirate. "Reiver though he be, he has fought for the holy sepulchre, and has worn golden spurs."

"I will deal with him right knightly," said the Governor. "Yield thee, Sir Thomas of Chartres," he continued, bending over the prisoner, and holding up a dagger to his face—"yield thee true hostage for the good conduct of thy fleet—or shall I call the confessor?"

"I yield me true hostage," said the fallen man. "But who art thou, terrible warrior, that o'ermasterest De Longoville of France as if he were a stripling of twelve summers? Art Wallace, the Scottish champion?"

"Thou yieldest, De Longoville," said the Governor, "to Sir William Wallace of Elderslie. But how is it that I meet, in the infamous Thomas of Chartres, that true soldier of the Cross, De Longoville? I have heard minstrels sing of thy deeds against the Saracen, Sir Knight, while I was yet a boy; and yet here art thou now, the dread of the wandering sailor and the merchant—a chief among thieves and pirates."

"Alas! noble Wallace, thou sayest too truly," said Sir Thomas; "but yet wouldst thou deem me as worthy of pity as of censure, didst thou but know all, and the remorse I even now endure. For a full year have I determined to quit this wild, unknighthly mode of life, and go a pilgrim as of old; not to fight for the sepulchre—for the battles of the Cross are over—not to fight, but to die for it. But I accept, noble champion, this my first defeat on sea, as a message from heaven. Accept of me as true soldier under thee, and I will fight for thee in thy country's quarrel, to the death."

"Most willingly, brave De Longoville," said the Governor, as he raised him from the deck; "Scotland needs sorely the use of such swords as thine."

"And deem not her cause less holy," said the monk—for monk he was, the well-known Chaplain Blair—"deem not her cause less holy than that of the sepulchre itself; nor think that thou shalt eradicate the stain of past dishonour less surely in her battles. The cause of justice, De Longoville, is the cause of God, contend for it where we may."

Wallace returned to De Longoville the sword of which he had so lately disarmed him; and the pirate admiral, on learning that the champion was bound for Rochelle, issued orders to his fleet, which, now that the mist rose, was found to consist of six large vessels, to follow close in their wake. The breeze blew steadily from the north-west, and the ships went careering along, each in her own long furrow of white, towards the port of their destination; the pirate vessels keeping aloof full two bowshots from the Scotsman—for so De Longoville had ordered, to prevent suspicion of treachery. He had set aside his armour, and now appeared to his new associates as a man of noble and knightly bearing, tall and stalwart as any warrior aboard, save the Governor; and, though his hair was blanched around his temples, and indicated the approach of age, the light step and quick sparkling eye gave evidence that his vigour of frame still remained undiminished. He sat apart, with the Governor and his two kinsmen, Clelland and Crawford, in the cabin under the poop. It was a rude, unornamented apartment, as might be expected, from the general appearance of the vessel; but the profusion of arms and pieces of armour which hung from the sides, glittering to the light that found entrance through a casement in the deck, bestowed on the place an air of higher pretension. A table with food and wine was placed before the warriors.

"It is now twenty-six years, or thereby," said de Longoville, "since I quitted Palestine for France, with the good Louis. I had fought by his side on the disastrous field of Massouna, and did all that a man of mould might to rescue him from the Saracens, when he fell into their hands, exhausted by his wounds and his sore sickness. But that day was written a day of defeat and disaster to the soldiers

of the Cross. Nor need I say how I took my stand, with the best of my countrymen, on the walls of Damietta, and maintained them for the good cause, despite of the assembled forces of the Moslem, until we had bought back our king from captivity, by yielding up the city we defended for his ransom. It is enough for a disgraced man and a captive to say that my services were not overlooked by those whose notice was most an honour; and that, ere I embarked for France, I received the badge of knighthood from the hand of the good Louis himself.

"You all know of how different a character Charles of Anjou was from his brother the king. I had returned from the crusade rich only in honour, and found the lady of my affections under close thrall by her parents, who had resolved that she should marry Loithaire, Lord of Languedoc. I knew that her heart was all my own; but I knew, besides, that I must become wealthy ere I could hope to compete for her with a rival such as Loithaire; and the good Pope Nicholas having made over the crown of the two Sicilies to Charles of Anjou, in an evil hour I entered the army with which Charles was to wrest it from the bastard Manfred—having certain assurance, from the tyrant himself, that, if he succeeded, I should become one of the nobles of Sicily. We encountered Manfred at Beneventura, and the bastard was defeated and slain. But I must blush, as a knight, for the honour of knighthood—as a Frenchman for the fair fame of my country—when I think of the cruelties which followed. Not the worst tyrants of old Rome could have surpassed Charles of Anjou in his butcheries. The blood plashed under the hoofs of his charger as he passed through the cities of his future kingdom; and, when he had borne down all opposition, 'twould seem as if, in his eagerness to destroy all who might resist, he had also determined to extirpate all who could obey. But his policy proved as unsound as 'twas cruel and unjust, as the terrible *Eve of the Vespers* has since shewn. The Princes of Germany, headed by the chivalrous Conradine of Swabia, united against us in the cause of the people. But the arms of France were again triumphant; the confederacy was broken, and the gallant Conradine fell into the hands of Charles. It was I, warriors of Scotland! to whom he surrendered; and I had granted him, as became a knight, an assurance of knightly protection. But would that my arms had been hewn off at the shoulders when I first beat down his sword, and intercepted his retreat! The infamous Charles treated my knightly assurance with scorn; and—can you credit such baseness, noble Wallace!—he ordered Conradine of Swabia—a true knight, and an independent prince—for instant execution, as if he were a common malefactor. My blood boils, even now, when I recall that terrible scene of injustice and cruelty. The soldiers of France crowded round the scaffold; and I was among them, burning with shame and rage. Ere Conradine bent him to the executioner, he took off his glove, and, throwing it amongst us, adjured us, if we were not all as dead to honour as our leader, to bear it to some of his kinsmen, who would receive it as a pledge of investiture in his rights, and as bequeathing the obligation to revenge his death. Will you blame me, noble Wallace! that, Frenchman as I was, I seized the glove of Conradine, and fled the army of Charles; and that, ere I returned to France, I delivered it up to Pedro of Arragon, the near kinsman of the last Prince of Swabia?"

"My king and friend, the good Louis, had sailed from France for Palestine, on his last hapless voyage, ere I had executed my mission. On my return to France, however, I found a galley of Toulon on the eve of quitting port, to join with his fleet, then on the coast of Africa, and, snatching a hurried interview with the lady of my affections, maugre the vigilance of her relatives, I embarked to fight under Louis, as of old, for the blessed sepulchre. We

landed near Tunis, and saw the tents of France glittering to the sun. But all was silent as midnight, and the royal standard hung reversed over the pavilion of the good Louis. He had died that morning of the plague; and his base and cruel brother, the false Charles of Anjou, sat beside the corpse. I felt that I had fallen among my enemies; for, though the young King was there, he was weak and inexperienced, and open to the influence of his uncle. The first knight I met, as I entered the camp, was Loithaire of Languedoc—now the wily friend and counsellor of Charles. There were lying witnesses suborned against me, who accused me of the most incredible and unheard-of practices; and of these Loithaire was the chief. 'Twas in vain I demanded the combat, as a test of my innocence. The combat was denied me; my sword was broken before the assembled chivalry of France; my shield reversed; and sentence was passed that I should be burnt at a stake, and my ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. But it was not written that I should perish so. Scarce an hour before the opening of the day appointed for my execution, I broke from prison, assisted by a brother soldier, whose life I had saved in Palestine, and escaped to France.

"I was a broken and ruined man. But how wondrous the force of true affection! My Agnes knew this; and yet, knowing all, she contrived to elude her guardians, and fled with me to the sea-shore, where we embarked, in a ship of Normandy, for the south of Ireland. From that hour De Longoville has fought under no banner but his own. I renounced, in my anger, my allegiance to my country—nay, declared war with the sovereign who had so injured me. The years passed, and desperate and dishonoured men like myself came flocking to me as their leader, till not Philip himself, or my old enemy Charles, had more kingly authority on land than De Longoville on the sea. But let no man again deceive himself as I have done. I had reasoned on the lax morality and doubtful honour of kings, and asked myself why I might not, as the admiral and prince of my fleet, achieve a less guilty, though not less splendid glory than the bastard William of Normandy, or Edward of England, or my old enemy Charles of Anjou. But I have long since been taught that what were high achievements and honourable conquest in the admiral of a hundred vessels, is but sheer piracy in the captain of six. I can trust, however, that the last days of De Longoville may yet be deemed equal to the first; and that the middle term of his life may be forgiven him for its beginning and its close. Not a month since, I carried my wife and daughter to France, and took final leave of them, with the purpose of setting out on my pilgrimage to Palestine. That intention, noble Wallace! is now altered; and I must again seek them out, that they may accompany me to Scotland."

"The foul stain of treason, brave Longoville, must be removed," said the Governor. "Charles of Anjou has long since gone to his account: does the Lord of Languedoc still survive?"

"He still lives," replied the admiral; "his years do not outnumber my own."

"Then must he either retract the vile calumny, or grant you the combat. The young Philip has pledged his knightly word, when he solicited the visit I am now voyaging to pay him, that he would grant me the first boon I craved in person, should it involve the alienation of his fairest province. That boon, brave De Longoville, will, at least, present you with the means of regaining your fair fame."

De Longoville knelt on the cabin floor, and kissed the hand of the Governor. The conversation glided imperceptibly to other and lighter matters; time passed gaily in the recital of stories of chivalrous endurance or exploit; and the gale, which still blew steadily from the north-west, promised a speedy accomplishment of their voyage. For four days

they sailed without shifting tack or lowering sail; and, on the morning of the fifth, cast anchor in the harbour of Rochelle.

On the evening of the second day after their arrival, a single knight was pricking his steed through one of the glades of the immense forest which, at this period, covered the greater part of the province of Poitiers. He had been passing, ever since morning, through what seemed an interminable wilderness of wood—here clustered into almost impenetrable thickets shagged with an undergrowth of thorn, there opening into long bosky glades and avenues that seemed, however, only to lead into recesses still more solitary and remote than those that darkened around him. During the early part of the day, the sun had looked down gaily among the trees, checkering the sward below with a carpeting of alternate light and shadow; and the knight, a lover of falconry and the chase, had rode jocosly on through the peopled solitude; ever and anon grasping his spear, with the eager spirit of the huntsman, as the fawn started up beside his courser, and shot like a meteor across the avenue, or the wild boar or wolf rustled in the neighbouring brake. Towards evening, however, the eternal sameness of the landscape had begun to fatigue him; the sun, too, had disappeared, long before his setting, in a veil of impenetrable vapour, mottled with grey, ponderous clouds, betokening an approaching storm; and the horseman pressed eagerly onward, in the hope of reaching, ere its bursting, the hostelry in which he had purposed to pass the evening. He had either, however, mistaken his way or miscalculated his distance; for, after passing dell and dingle, glade and thicket, in monotonous succession, for hours on hours, the forest still seemed as dense and unending, and the hostelry as distant as ever. A brown and sleepy horror seemed to settle over the trees as the evening darkened; the thunder began to bellow in long peals, far to the south, and a few heavy drops to patter from time to time on the leaves, giving indication of the approaching deluge. The knight had just resigned himself to encounter all the horrors of the storm, when, on descending into a little bosky hollow, through which there passed a minute streamlet, he found himself in front of a deserted hermitage. It was a cell, opening, like an Egyptian tomb, in the face of a low precipice. A rude stone-cross, tapestried with ivy, rose immediately over the narrow door-way.

"The saints be praised!" exclaimed the knight, leaping lightly from his horse. "I shall e'en avail myself of the good shelter they have provided. But thou, poor Biscay," he continued, patting his steed, "wouldst that thou wert with thy master, mine host of The Three *Fleurs de Lis*!—there is scant stabling for thee here. This way, however, good Biscay—this way. Thou must bide the storm as thou best may'st in yonder hollow of the rock." And, leading the animal to the hollow, he fastened him to the stem of a huge ivy, and then entered the hermitage.

It consisted of one small rude apartment, hewn, apparently with immense labour, in the living rock. A seat and bed of stone occupied the opposite sides; and in the extreme end, fronting the door, there was a rude image of the Virgin, with a small altar of mouldering stone, placed before it. The evening was oppressively sultry, and, taking his seat on the bedside, the knight unlaced and set aside his helmet, exhibiting to the fast-dying light, the brown curling hair and handsome features of our old acquaintance Clelland—for it was no other than he. The thunder began to roll in louder and longer peals, and the lightning to illumine, at brief intervals, every glade and dingle without, and every minute object within; when a loud scream of dismay and terror, blent with the infuriated howl of some wild animal, rose from the upper part of the dell, and Clelland had but snatched up his spear and leaped out into the storm, when a young female, closely pursued by an



THOMAS OF CHARTRES.

enormous wolf, came rushing down the declivity, in the direction of the hermitage; but, in crossing the little stream, overcome apparently by fatigue and terror, she stumbled and fell. To interpose his person between the poor girl and her ravenous pursuer was with Clelland the work of one moment; to make such prompt and efficient use of his spear that the steel head passed through and through the monster, and then buried itself in the earth beneath, was his employment in the next. The black blood came spouting out along the shaft, crimsoning both his hands to the wrists; and the tranfixed savage, writhing itself round on the wood in its mortal agony, and gnashing its immense fangs, just uttered one tremendous howl that could be heard even above the pealing of the thunder, and then belched out its life at his feet. He raised the fallen girl, who seemed for a moment to have sunk into a state of partial swoon, and, disengaging his good weapon from the bleeding carcase, he supported her to the hermitage in the rock.

She was attired in the garb of a common peasant of the age and country; but there was even yet light enough to shew that her beauty was of a more dignified expression than is almost ever to be found in a cottage—exquisite in colour and form as that which we meet with in the latter, may often be. There was a subdued elegance, too, in her few brief, but earnest expressions of gratitude to her deliverer, that consorted equally ill with her attire. On entering the hermitage, she knelt before the altar, and prayed in silence; while Clelland took his seat on the stone couch where he had before placed his helmet, leaving to his new companion the settle on the opposite side. Meanwhile, the storm without had increased tenfold. The thunder rolled overhead, peal after peal, without break or pause; so that the outbursting of every fresh clap was mingled with the echoes in which the wide spread forest had replied to the last. At times, the opposite acclivity, with all its thickets, seemed as if enveloped in an atmosphere of fire—at times one immense seam of forked lightning came ploughing the pitchy gloom of the heavens, from the centre to the horizon. The wild beasts of the forest were abroad. Clelland could hear their fierce howlings, mingled with the terrific bellowings of the heavens. The dead sultry calm was suddenly broken. A hurricane went raging through the woods. There was a creaking, crackling, rushing sound among the trees, as they strained and quivered to the blast; and a roaring, like that of some huge cataract, shewed that a waterspout had burst in the upper part of the dell, and that the little stream was coming down in thunder—a wide and impetuous torrent. Clelland's fair companion still remained kneeling before the altar. 'Twould seem as if her prayer of thanks for her great deliverance had changed into an earnest and oft-reiterated petition for still further protection.

In a pause of the storm, the frightful howlings of a flock of wolves were heard rising from over the hermitage, as if hundreds had assembled on its roof of rock. Clelland sprung from his seat, and, grasping his spear, stood in the doorway.

"We shall have to bide siege," he said to his companion. "I knew not that these fierce creatures mustered so thickly here."

"Heaven be our protection!" said the maiden. "They fill every recess of the forest. I had left my mother's this evening for but an instant—'twas in quest of a tame fawn—when the monster from whose murderous fangs you delivered me started up between me and my home; and I had to fly from instant destruction into the thick of the forest."

"And so your place of residence is quite at hand?" said Clelland. "In the course of a long day's journey, I have not met with a single human habitation."

"The hermitage," replied the maiden, "is but a short half-mile from my mother's—would that we were but safe there!"

As she spoke, the howling of the wolves burst out again, in frightful chorus, from above, and at least a score of the ravenous animals came leaping down over the rock, brushing in their descent the ivy and the underwood. Clelland couched his spear, so that nothing could enter by the narrow doorway without encountering its sharp point. But the wolves came not to the attack; and their yells and howlings from the hollow of the rock, blent with the terrified snortings and pawings of poor Biscay, shewed that they were bent on an easier conquest, and bulkier, though less noble prey. The animal, in his first struggle, broke loose from his fastenings, and went galloping madly past; and an intensely bright flash of lightning, that illumined the whole scene of terror without, shewed him in the act of straining up the opposite bank, with a huge wolf fastened to his lacerated back, and closely pursued by full twenty more.

It was, in truth, a night of dread and terror. Towards morning, however, the storm gradually sunk into a calm as dead as that which had preceded it, and a clear, starry sky looked down on the again silent forest. The maiden, now that there was less of danger, was rendered thoroughly unhappy by thoughts of her mother. She had left her, she said, but for an instant—left her solitary in her dwelling; and how must she have passed so terrible a night! Clelland strove to quiet her fears. There was a little cloud in the east, he said, already reddening on its lower edge; in an hour longer, it would be broad day, and he could then conduct her to her mother's.

"You have not always worn such a dress as that which you now wear," he continued; "nor have you spent all your days on the edge of the forest. Does your father still live?"

There was a pause for a moment.

"I am a native of France," she at length said; "but I have passed most of my time in other countries. My father, in fulfilment of a vow, is now bound on a pilgrimage to Palestine."

"And may I not crave your name?" asked Clelland.

"My name," she replied, "is Bertha de Longoville. Brave and courtly warrior, but for whose generous and knightly daring I would have found yester-evening a horrid tomb in the ravenous maw of the wolf, do not, I pray you, ask me more. A vow binds me to secrecy for the time."

"Nay, fear not, gentle maiden," said Clelland, "that what you but wish to keep secret, I shall once urge you to reveal. But hear me, lady, and then judge how far I am to be trusted. You are the only daughter of Sir Thomas de Longoville, once a true soldier of the blessed Cross, but, in his latter days, less fortunate in his quarrels. Your father is now in France, and in two weeks hence will be in Paris."

"Saints and angels!" exclaimed the maiden, "he has fallen into the hands of his enemies!"

"Not so, lady; he is among his best friends. The knightly word of Sir William Wallace of Elderslie, who never broke faith with friend or enemy, is pledged for his safe-keeping. With my kinsman, he is secure of at least safety—perhaps even of grace and pardon. But the day has broken, maiden; suffer me to conduct you to your mother's."

They left the hermitage together, and ascended the side of the dell. As they passed the hollow in the rock, a bright patch of blood caught the eye of Clelland.

"Ah, poor Biscay!" he exclaimed; "there is all that now remains of him; and how to procure another steed in this wild district, I know not. My kinsman will be at

Paris long ere his herald gets there. Well, there have been greater mishaps. Yonder is the carcase of the wolf I slew yester-evening, half eaten by his savage companions."

The morning, we have said, was calm and still; but the storm of the preceding night had left behind it no doubtful vestiges of its fury. The stream had fallen to its old level, and went tinkling along its channel, with a murmur that only served to shew how complete was the silence; but the banks were torn and hollowed by the recent torrent, and tangled wreaths of brushwood and foliage lay high on the sides of the dell. The broken and ragged appearance of the forest gave evidence of the force of the hurricane. The fallen trees lay thick on the sides of the more exposed acclivities—some reclining like spears, half bent to the charge, athwart the spreading boughs of such of their neighbours as the storm had spared; others lay as if levelled by the woodman, save that their long flexile roots had thrown up vast fragments of turf, resembling the broken ruins of cottages. And, in an opening of the wood, a gigantic oak, the slow growth of centuries, lay scattered over the soil, in raw and splintery fragments, that gave strange evidence of the irresistible force of the agent employed in its destruction. The trees opened as they advanced, and they emerged from the forest as the first beams of the sun had begun to glitter on the topmost boughs. A low, moory plain, walled in by a range of distant hills, and mottled with a few patches of corn, and a few miserable cottages, lay before them. A grey detached tower, somewhat resembling that of an English village church, rose on the forest edge, scarce a hundred yards away.

"Yonder tower, Sir Knight," said the maiden, "is the dwelling of my mother. Alas! what must she not have endured during the protracted horrors of the night!"

"There is, at least, joy waiting her now," said Clelland; "and all will soon be well."

They approached the tower. It was a small and very picturesque erection, of three low stories in height, with projecting turrets at the front corners, connected by a hanging bartizan, over which there rose a sharp serrated gable, to the height of about two stories more. A row of circular shot-holes, and a low narrow door-way, were the only openings in the lower story—the few windows in the upper, long and narrow, and scarce equal in size to a Norman shield, were thickly barred with iron. The building had altogether a dilapidated and deserted appearance; for the turrets were broken-edged and mouldering, and some of the large square flags had slidden from off the stone roof, and lay in the moat, which, from a reservoir, had degenerated into a quagmire, mantled over with aquatic plants, and with, here and there, a bush of willow springing out from the sides. A single plank afforded a rather doubtful passage across; and the iron studded door of the fortalice lay wide open. Clelland hung back as the maiden entered.

"My daughter! my Bertha!" exclaimed a female voice from within; "and do you yet live! and are you again restored to me!"

The Knight entered, and found the maiden in the embrace of her mother.

"That I still live," said Bertha, "I owe it to this brave and courtly knight. But for his generous daring, your daughter would have found strange burial in the ravenous maw of a wolf."

The mother turned round to Clelland, and grasped his mailed hand in both hers.

"The saints be your blessing and reward!" she exclaimed; "for I cannot repay you. God himself be your reward!—for earth bears no price adequate to the benefit. You have restored to the lonely and the broken in spirit her only stay and comfort."

"Nay, madam," said Clelland, "I would have done as much for the meanest serf; for Bertha de Longoville I could have laid down my life."

The mother again grasped his hand. She was a tall and a still beautiful woman, though considerably turned of forty, and though she yet bore impressed on her countenance no unequivocal traces of the distress of the night. She told them of her sufferings; and was made acquainted in turn with the frightful adventure in the hermitage, and, more startling still, with the resolution of her husband to confront his calumniators at the court of France.

"We must set out instantly on our journey to Paris, Bertha," said the matron; "your father, in his imminent peril, must not lack some one, at least to comfort, if not to assist him."

"Nay," said Clelland, "ere your setting out, you must first take rest enough, to recover the fatigues and watching of the night. And, besides, how could two unprotected females travel through such a country as this? Hear me lady: I was hastening to Paris in advance of my party; but now that I have missed my way and lost my good steed, they will be all there before me. It matters but little. My kinsman can well afford wanting a herald. I shall cast myself on your hospitality for the day; and, tomorrow, should you feel yourself fully recovered, you shall set out for Paris, under such convoy as I can afford you."

Both ladies expressed their warmest gratitude for the kind and generous offer; and there was that in the thanks of the younger which Clelland would have deemed price sufficient for a service much less redolent of pleasure than that he had just tendered. She was in truth one of the loveliest women he had ever seen; tall and graceful, and with a countenance exquisite in form and colour. But, with all of the bodily and the material that constitutes beauty, it was mainly to expression, that index of the soul, that she owed her power. There was a steady light in the dark hazel eye, joined to an air of quiet, unobtrusive self-possession, which seemed to sit on the polished and finely formed forehead, that gave evidence of a strong and equable mind; while the sweet smile that seemed to lurk about the mouth, and the air of softness spread over the lower part of the face, shewed that there mingled with the stronger traits of her character the feminine gentleness and sweetness of disposition, so fascinating in the sex. A little girl from one of the distant cottages entered the building with a milking pail in her hand.

"Ah, my good Annette," said the matron, "you left me by much too soon yester-evening; but it matters not now. You must busy yourself in getting breakfast for us—meanwhile, good Sir Knight, this way. The tower is a wild ruin, but all its apartments are not equally ruined."

They ascended, by a stair hollowed in the thickness of the wall, to an upper story. There was but one apartment on each floor; so that the entire building consisted but of four, and the two closet-like recesses in the turrets. The apartment they now entered was lined with dark oak; a massy table of the same material occupied the centre; and a row of ponderous stools, like those which Cowper describes in his "Task," ran along the wall. An immense chimney, supported by two rude pillars of stone, and piled with half-charred billets of wood, projected over the floor; the lintel, an oblong tablet about three feet in height, was roughened by uncouth heraldic sculptures of merwomen playing on harps, and two knights in complete armour fronting each other, as in the tilt-yard. The windows were small and dark, and barred with iron; and through one of these that opened to the east, the morning sun, now risen half a spear's length over the forest, found entrance, in a square slanting rule of yellow light, which fell on the floor under a square recess in the opposite wall. The little girl

entered immediately after the ladies and Clelland, bearing fire and fuel; a cheerful blaze soon roared in the chimney; and, as the morning felt keen and chill after the recent storm, they seated themselves before it. An hour passed in courtly and animated dialogue, and then breakfast was served up.

The younger lady would fain have prolonged the conversation—for it had turned on the struggles of the Scots, and the wonderful exploits of Wallace—had not her mother reminded her that they stood much in need of rest to strengthen them for their approaching journey. They both, therefore, retired to their sleeping apartments in the turrets; while the knight, providing himself with a bow and a few arrows, sallied out into the forest. The practice in wood-craft, which he had acquired under his kinsman, who, in his reverses, could levy on only the woods and moors, stood him in so good stead, that, when dinner-time came round, a noble haunch of venison and two plump pheasants smoked on the board. But Bertha alone made her appearance. Her mother, she said, still felt fatigued, and slightly indisposed; but she trusted to be able to join them in the course of the evening.

There was nothing Clelland had so anxiously wished for, when spending the earlier part of the day in the wood, as some such opportunity of passing a few hours with Bertha. And yet, now that the opportunity had occurred, he scarce knew how to employ it. The radiant smile of the maiden—her light, elegant form, and lovely features—had haunted him all the morning; and he wisely enough thought there could be but little harm in frankly telling her so. But, now that the fair occasion had offered, he found that all his usual frankness had left him, and that he could scarce say anything, even on matters more indifferent. And, what seemed not a little strange, too, the maiden was scarcely more at her ease than himself, and could find not a great deal more to say. Dinner passed almost in silence; and Bertha, rising to the square recess in the wall, drew from it a flagon filled with wine, which she placed before her guest, and a vellum volume, bound in velvet and gold.

"This," she said, "is a wonderful romaunt, written by a countryman of yours, of whom I have heard the strangest stories. Can you tell me aught regarding him?"

"Ah!" said the knight, taking up the volume, "the book of Tristram. I am not too young, lady, to have seen the writer—the good Thomas of Erceldoune."

"Seen Thomas of Erceldoune! Thomas the Rhimer!" exclaimed the lady. "And is it sooth that his prophecies never fail, and that he now lives in Elf-land?"

"Nay, lady, the good Thomas sleeps in Lauderdale, with his fathers. But we trust much to his prophecies. They have given us heart and hope amid our darkest reverses. He predicted the years of oppression and suffering which, through the death of our good Alexander, have wasted our country; but he prophesied, also, our deliverance through my kinsman, Sir William of Elderslie. We have already seen much of the evil he foresaw, and much, also, of the good. Scotland, though still threatened by the power of Edward, is at this moment free."

"I have long wished," said Bertha, "to see those warriors of Scotland whose fame is filling all Europe. And now that wish is gratified—nay, more than gratified."

"You see but one of her minor warriors," said Clelland; "but at Paris you shall meet with the Governor himself. Your father, Bertha, should he succeed in clearing his fair fame—and I know he will—sets out with us for Scotland. Will not you and the lady your mother also accompany us?"

"I had deemed my father bound on a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre," said Bertha.

"But he has since thought," said Clelland, "how much better it were to live gloriously fighting in a just quarrel beside the first warrior of the world, than to perish

obscurely in some loathsome pesthouse of the far east. I myself heard him tender his services to my kinsman."

"Then be sure," said Bertha, "my mother and I will not be separated from him. Might one find in Scotland, Sir Knight, some such quiet tower as this, where two defenceless women may bide the issue of the contest?"

"Why defenceless, lady? There are many gallant swords in Scotland that would needs be beaten down ere you could come to harm. And why not now accept of Clelland's? Scotland has greater warriors and better swords; but, trust me, lady, she cannot boast of a truer heart. Accept of me, lady, as your bounden knight."

A rich flush of crimson suffused the face and neck of the maiden, as she held out her hand to Clelland, who raised it respectfully to his lips.

"I accept of thee, noble warrior," she said, "as true and faithful knight, seeing that thy own generous tender of service doth but second what Heaven had purposed, when, in my imminent peril in the wood, it sent thee to my rescue. Trust me, warrior, never yet had lady knight whom she respected more."

Clelland again raised her hand to his lips.

"I have a sister, lady," he said, "whose years do not outnumber your own. She lives lonely, since the death of my mother, in the home of my fathers—a tower roomier and stronger than this, and on the edge of a forest nearly as widely spread. You will be her companion, lady, and her friend; and your mother will be mistress of the mansion. On the morrow, we set out for Paris."

The style in which the party travelled was sufficiently humble. Four small and very shaggy palfreys were provided from the neighbouring cottages: the ladies and Clelland were mounted on three of these; and the fourth, led by a hind, carried the luggage of the party. Before setting out, the lady had entrusted to the charge of the knight, a small, but very ponderous casket of ebony.

"It needs, in these unsettled times," she said, "some such person to care for it; and Bertha and I would fare all the worse for wanting it."

The journey was long and tedious, and the daily stages of the party necessarily short. Their route lay through a wild, half-cultivated country, which seemed to owe much to the hand of nature, but little to that of man. There was an ever-recurring succession, day after day, of dreary, wide-spreading forests, with comparatively narrow spaces between, which, from the imperfect and doubtful traces of industry which they exhibited, seemed as if but lately reclaimed from a state of nature. Groups of miserable serfs, bound to the soil even more rigidly than their fellow-slaves the cattle, were plying their unskilful and unproductive labours in the fields. They passed scattered assemblages of dingy hovels, with here and there a grim feudal tower rising in the midst—giving evidence, by the strength of its defences, of the insecurity and turbulence of the time. The travellers they met with were but few. Occasionally a strolling troubadour or harper accompanied them part of the way, on his journey from one baronial Castle to another. At times, they met with armed parties of travelling merchants, bound for some distant fair; at times with disbanded artisans, wandering about in quest of employment; soldiers in search of a master; or pilgrims newly returned from Palestine, attired in cloaks of grey, and bearing the scallop in their caps. The hind, their attendant, bore in his srip, from stage to stage, their provisions for the day; and their evenings were passed in some rude hostelry by the way-side. The third week had passed, ere, one evening on the edge of twilight, they alighted at the hostel of St Denis, and ascertained, from mine host, that they were now within half a stage of Paris.

The hostel was crowded with travellers; and the ladies and Clelland, for the early part of the evening, were fain to take

their places in the common room beside the fire. A young and handsome troubadour, whose jemmy jerkin, and cap of green, edged with silver, shewed that he was either one of the more wealthy of his class, or under the patronage of some rich nobleman, and who had courteously risen to yield place to Bertha, had succeeded in reseating himself beside the knight.

"The hostel swarms with company," said Clelland, addressing him—"pray, good minstrel, canst tell me the occasion? Is there a fair holds to-morrow?"

"Ah, Sir Knight," said the minstrel, "I should rather ask of thee, seeing thy tongue shews thee to be a Scot. Dost not know that thy countryman, the brave Wallace of Elderslie, is at court, and that all who can, in any wise, leave their homes for a season, are leaving them, to see him? It is not once in a lifetime that such a knight may be looked at. And, besides, have you not heard that the combat comes on to-morrow?"

"I have heard of nothing," said Clelland; "my route has lain, of late, through the remoter parts of the country. What combat?"

"Sir Thomas de Longoville, so long a true soldier of the cross—so long, too, a wandering pirate—has defied to mortal combat, Loithaire of Languedoc; and our fair Philip, through the intercession of Wallace, has granted him the lists."

Both the ladies started at the intelligence; and the elder, wrapping up her face in her mantle, bent her head well nigh to her knee.

"And how, good minstrel," said Bertha, in a voice tremulous from anxiety, "how is it thought the combat will go?"

"That rests with Heaven, fair lady," said the minstrel. "Loithaire is known, far and wide, as a striker in the lists; but who has not also heard of De Longoville, and his wars with the fierce Saracen? Many seem to think, too, that he has been foully injured by Loithaire. That soul of knightly honour, the good Lord Jonville, has already renewed his friendship with him, as his friend and comrade in the battles of Palestine, and will attend him to-morrow in the lists."

"May all the saints reward him!" ejaculated the elder lady.

"And at what hour, Sir Minstrel," asked the knight, "does the combat come on?"

"At the turn of noon," replied the minstrel, "when the shadow first veers to the east. I go to Paris, to find new theme for a ballad, and to see the good Wallace, who is himself the theme of so many."

The travellers were early on the road. With all their haste and anxiety, however, they saw the sun climbing towards the middle heavens, while the city was yet several miles distant. They spurred on their jaded palfreys, and entered the suburbs about noon. What was properly the city of Paris in this age, occupied one of the larger islands of the Seine, and was surrounded by a high wall, flanked at the angles by massy towers, and strengthened by rows of thickly set-butresses; but, on either side the river, there were immense assemblages of the dirtiest and meanest hovels that the necessities of man had ever huddled together. The travellers, however, found but little time for remark in passing through. All Paris had poured out her inhabitants, to witness the combat, and they now crowded an upper island of the Seine, which the chivalry of the age had appropriated as a scene of games, tournaments, and duels. Clelland and the ladies had but reached the opposite bank, when a flourish of trumpets told them that the combatants had taken their places in the lists, and were waiting the signal to engage.

"No further, ladies, no further," said the knight, "or we shall entangle ourselves in the outer skirts of the crowd, and see nothing. This way; let us ascend this eminence,

and the scene, though somewhat distant, will be all before us."

They ascended a smooth green knoll, the burial mound of some chieftain of the olden time, that overlooked the river. The island lay but a short furlong away. They could look over the heads of the congregated thousands into the open lists, and see the brilliant assemblage of the beauty and galiantry of France, which the fame of De Longoville and his opponent, and the singular nature of their quarrel, had drawn together. The sun glanced gaily on arms and armour, on many a robe of rich embroidery and many a costly jewel, and high over the whole, the oriflame of France, so famous in story, waved its flames of crimson and gold to the breeze. Knights and squires traversed the area, in gay and glittering confusion; and at either end there sat a warrior on horseback, as still and motionless as if sculptured in bronze. The champion at the northern end was cased from head to foot in sable armour, and beside him, under the blue pennon of Scotland, there stood a group of knights, who, though tall and stately as any in the lists, seemed lessened almost to boys in the presence of a gigantic warrior in bright mail, who, like Saul among the people, raised his head and shoulders over the proud crests of the assembled chivalry of France.

"Yonder, ladies—yonder is my kinsman," exclaimed Clelland; "yonder is Wallace of Elderslie; and the champion beside him is Sir Thomas de Longoville."

There was a second flourish of trumpets. Bertha flung herself on her knees on the sward, and raised her hands to her eyes. Her mother almost fainted outright.

"Nay," said Clelland, "that is but the signal to clear the lists; the knights hurry behind the palisades, and the champions are left alone. Fear not, dearest Bertha!—there is a God in Heaven, and—Ah, there is the third flourish! The champions strike their spurs deep into their chargers; and see how they rush forward, like thunder clouds before a hurricane! They close!—they close!—hark to the crash!—their steeds are thrown back on their haunches! Look up, Bertha! look up!—your father has won—he has won! Loithaire is flung from his saddle, the spear of De Longoville has passed through hauberk and corslet; I saw the steel head glitter red at the felon's back. Look up, ladies! look up!—de Longoville is safe; nay, more—restored to the honour and fair fame of his early manhood. Let us hasten and join him, that we may add our congratulations to those of his friends."

Why dwell longer on the story of Thomas de Longoville? No Scotsman acquainted with Blind Harry need be told how frequent and honourable the mention of his name in the latter pages of that historian. Scotland became his adopted country, and well and chivalrously did he fight in her battles; till, at length, when well nigh worn out by the fatigues and hardships of a long and active life, the decisive victory at Bannockburn gave him to enjoy an old age of peace and leisure, in the society of his lady, on the lands of his son-in-law. Need we add it was the gallant Clelland who stood in this relation to him? The chosen knight of Bertha had become her favoured lover, and the favoured lover a fond and devoted husband. Of the Governor more anon. There was a time, at least, when Scotsmen did not soon weary of stories of the Wight Wallace.



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AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WAGER.

THE intimate connection between the mind and the body has been often curiously exhibited, by the effects of certain strong exciting passions upon the physical economy. Anger, as we all know, has produced apoplexy; a paroxysm of fear has, in one night, bleached black hair to the colour of the driven snow; grief breaks the heart; and learning has made many a man mad. In that species of alarm which is roused by a fear of being under the dominion of a mortal disease, there resides a power with which doctors are well acquainted; but which is, perhaps, not so well known by mankind generally as to exclude the necessity of a limited development. That it has often produced death, there can be no doubt; and we pledge ourselves to the truth of one memorable instance, which we are now about to detail; but the question, What is the peculiar character of the passion?—its difference from ordinary alarm or fear being clear and indisputable—will long remain one which will occupy the minds of physiologists; and, letting these subtle points alone, we proceed to say that, about thirty years ago, the office of carrier between Edinburgh and a certain town on the north of the Tay, was discharged by a person of the name of George Skirving. At the time of which we speak, he might be about forty-five years of age, a man of considerable physical strength, and with as much mental firmness as will be found among the generality of mankind. His occupation, in travelling during night, required often the confirming influence of personal courage, to keep him from being alarmed; and his activity, and exposure to the fresh air of both land and water, were conducive to bodily health and elasticity of spirits. He was at once a faithful carrier and a good companion on the road, along which he was generally respected; and, by attention to business and economical habits of living, he had been enabled to realize as much money as might suffice to sustain him, with his wife and three children, in the event of his being disabled, by accident or ill health, from following his ordinary employment.

The day in which George Skirving left the northern town for Edinburgh, was Wednesday of each week; and he started at the hour of seven, both in winter and summer. On one occasion, in the month of August, he set out from his quarters at his usual hour, and having crossed the Tay with his goods, proceeded on his way through Fife. He had with him his dog Wolf, who usually served him as a companion; his waggons were loaded with goods, the proceeds of the carriage of which he counted as he trudged along; and he, now and then, had recourse to a small flask of spirits, which his wife had, without his knowledge, and contrary to her usual custom, placed in the breast pocket of his great coat. He was thus in good spirits; and, as he applied himself with great moderation, for he was a sober man, to his inspiring companion, he jocularly blamed Betty (such was the name of his consort) for defrauding his houses of call on the road of the custom he used to bestow on them.

"It was kind o' ye, Betty," he said; "but it saves naething; for if I, wha have travelled this road for sae many years,

were to pass John Sharpe's, or Widow M'Murdo's, or Andrew Gemmel's, without takin my usual allowance, I would be set doun as fey or mad. I maun gae through a' my usual routine—mak my ca's, order my drams, drink thcm, and pay for them, as I hae dune for twenty years. Men are just like clocks—some gae owre fast, and some owre slow; but the carrier, beyond a', maun keep to his time aye, and *chap* at the proper time and place, or idleness and beggary would soon mak time hang weary on his hands."

He had trudged onwards in his slow pace for a space of about eight miles, and was at the distance of about three from Cupar, when he was accosted by a person of the name of James Cowie, an inhabitant of Dundee, with whom he had, for a long time, been in habits of intimacy.

"You are weel forward the day, George," said Cowie. "Ye'll be in Cupar before your time. There's rowth o' parcels for ye at John Sharpe's door, yonder. But, mercy on me!" he continued, starting and looking amazed, "what's the matter wi' ye, man?"

"Naething," replied George. "I hae been takin a few draps o' Betty's cordial, here," pointing to the flask, "an' maybe the colour may have mounted to my face."

"The colour mounted to your face, man!" ejaculated Cowie. "Is it whiteness—paleness, ye mean by colour? Ye're like a clout, man—a bleached clout. There's something wrang, rely upon it, George; some o' that intricate machinery o' our fearfu' systems, out o' joint. Is it possible ye have felt or feel nae change?"

"Nane whatever, Jamie," answered the carrier, somewhat alarmed. "You're surely joking me—I never felt better i' my life. No, no, Jamie, there's naething the matter—thank God, I'm in guid health."

"It's weel ye think sae," replied Cowie, with a satirical tone; "but, if I'm no cheated, ye're on the brink o' some fearfu' disease. Get upon your cart, man—hasten to Cupar, an' speak to Doctor Lowrie. It's a braw thing to tak diseases in time."

"If a white face is a' ye judge by," said George, attempting to make light of the matter, "I can remove it by an application to Betty's cordial."

"Ay, do that," said Cowie, ironically, "and add fuel to the flame. If I werena your friend, I wadna tak this liberty wi' ye. I assure ye again, an' I hae some judgment o' thae matters, that ye're very ill. That's no an ordinary paleness; your lips are blue, an' your eyes dull an' heavy—sure signs o' an oncome. Haste ye to Cupar an' get advice, an' ye may yet ca' me your best friend."

As he finished these words, Cowie turned to proceed onwards towards Newport.

"Ye've either said owre little or owre muckle, James," replied George, after a slight pause, and resigning his carelessness.

"I hae just said the truth, George," added Cowie; "but I maun be in Dundee by one o'clock, an' canna wait. I'll say naething to Mrs Skirving, to alarm her; but, for God's sake, tak my advice, an' consult Doctor Lowrie."

He proceeded on his journey, leaving Skirving in doubt and perplexity. At first he was considerably affected by Cowie's speech and manner, because he knew him to be a

serious man, and averse to all manner of joking. It was possible, he admitted, that a disease might be lurking secretly in his vitals, unknown to himself, but discernible to another; and the circumstance of his wife having put the flask of cordial in his coat pocket, seemed to indicate that she had observed something wrong before he set out, and had been afraid to communicate it to him, in case it might alarm him. His spirits sunk, as this confirmation of Cowie's statement came to his mind; he put his right hand to his left wrist, to feel the state of the pulse, and, as might have been expected, discovered (for he overlooked the effects of his fear) that it was much quicker than it used to be when he was in perfect health.

Having been taken thus by surprise, he remained in a state of considerable depression for some time; but when he came to think of the inadequate grounds of his alarm, he began to rally; and his mind, rebounding, as it were, on the cessation of the depressing reverie, threw off the fear, and he recovered so far his natural courage as to laugh at the strange fancy that had taken possession of him.

"I was a fule," he said to himself. "What though my face be pale, and my eyes heavy, and my pulse a little quicker than usual, am I to dee for a' that? Cowie has probably had his *morning*; and truly his appearance, now when I think of it, didna assure ill wi' that supposition. Johnny Sharpe and he are auld cronies, and they couldna part without some wet pledge o' their auld friendship. I'll wad my best horse on the point.—Ha! ha! what a fule I was!" He accompanied these words by again feeling his pulse. The fear was greatly off, the pulsations had become more regular; and this confirmation enabled him to laugh off the effects the extraordinary announcements had made upon him.

He proceeded onwards to Cupar, and stopped at John Sharpe's Inn. The landlord was at the door. George looked at him narrowly, as he saluted him in the ordinary form. He thought the innkeeper looked also very narrowly at him, as he answered his salutation; but he was afraid to broach the question of his sickly appearance, and hurried away to get the goods packed that stood at the inn door. Having finished his work, during which he thought he saw the landlord looking strangely at him, he called for the quantity of spirits he was usually in the habit of getting, and, as he filled out the glass, asked quickly if James Cowie had been there that morning. The landlord answered that he had; but added, of his own accord, that he did not remain in the house so long as to give time for even drinking to each other. This answer produced a greater effect upon George than he was even then aware of; and it is not unlikely that this, and the impression that the landlord looked at him *strangely*, produced the very paleness that Cowie had mentioned. Be that as it may, he took up the glass of spirits and laid it down again, without almost tasting it; and his reason for this departure from his ordinary course, was, that he had already partaken sufficiently of his wife's cordial; and he had some strange misgivings about drinking ardent spirits, in case, after all, it might turn out that there was hanging about him some disease. The moment he laid down the full glass, the landlord said to him, looking in an inquiring and sympathetic manner into his face—

"George, I haena seen you do that for ten years. Are you well enough?"

"What! what! eh, what!" stammered out the carrier confusedly; "do you think I'm ill, John?"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the inn bell rang, and the landlord was called away, and, being otherwise occupied, did not return. After waiting for him a considerable time, Skirving became impatient, and, making another effort to shake off his fears, applied the whip to his horses, and proceeded on his journey. For

a time, his mind was so much confused that he could not contemplate the whole import of the extraordinary coincidence he had just witnessed; but, as he proceeded and came to a quieter part of the road, his thoughts reverted to the statements of James Cowie—who, he was now satisfied, had been quite sober—to the looks and extraordinary question of John Sharpe, and to the intention of his wife in providing him with the cordial. As he pondered on this strange accumulation of according facts, he again felt his pulse, which had again risen to the height it had attained during the prior paroxysm. The affair had now assumed a new aspect. It was impossible that this concurrence of circumstances could be fortuitous. He was now much afraid that he was ill—very ill indeed; perhaps under the incipient symptoms of typhus, or brain-fever, or small-pox, or some other dreadful disease. As these thoughts rose in his mind, he grew faint, and would have sat down; but he felt a reluctance to stop his carts, and a feeling of shame struggled against his conviction, and kept him walking.

This state of nervous excitement remained, in spite of many efforts he made to throw off his fears. Yet he was bound to admit that he felt no symptoms of pain or sickness; by and by, the feeling of alarm began again to decay, and by the time he got eight or ten miles farther on his road, he had conjured up a good many sustaining ideas and arguments, whereby he at least contrived to increase the quantum of *doubt* of his being really ill. He rallied a little again; but the temporary elevation was destined to be succeeded by another depression, which, in its turn, gave place to another accession of relief; and thus he was kept in a painful alternation of changing fancies, until he was within a mile and a half of the next place of call—a little house at some distance from the Plasterer's Inn.

He had hitherto been progressing at a very slow rate, and was in the act of raising his hand to apply the whip to his horses, when he saw before him Archibald Willison, a sort of itinerant cloth merchant, a native of Dundee, with whom he was on terms of intimacy. They had met often on the road, and had gossiped together over a little refreshment at the inns where the carrier stopped. At this particular time, George Skirving would rather have avoided his old friend; for he was under a depression of spirits, and felt also a disinclination, or fear, he could not account for, to submit his face and appearance to the lynx eye of the travelling merchant. He had, however, no choice.

"Ah, George," cried Archy, "it's lang since I saw ye. How are ye? What!"—starting, as if surprised—"have ye been lyin, man—confined—sick?—what, in God's name, has been the matter wi' ye? Some sad complaint, surely, to produce so mighty a change."

This address seemed to George just the very confirmation he now required to make him perfectly satisfied of his danger. It was too much for him to hear and suffer Staggering back, he leant upon the side of his cart, and drew breath with difficulty, attempting in vain to give his friend some reply.

"It's wrang in ye, man," continued Archy, as he saw the carrier labouring to find words to reply to him—"it's wrang in ye, George, to be here in that state o' body. How did Betty permit it? Wha wad guarantee your no lyin doun an' deein by the road side? I'm sure I wadna undertake the suretyship."

"I have not been a day confined, Archy," said George, as he slightly recovered from the shock caused by the announcement. "I have not been ill; and left home this morning in my usual health."

"Good God!" ejaculated Archy, "is that possible? Then is it sae muckle the waur. I thought it had been a' owre wi' ye—that ye had been ill, an' partly recovered; but now I see the disease is only comin yet. How deadly pale ye

are, man!—an' what a strange colour there is on your lips, round the sockets o' your een, an' the edges o' your nostrils!"

"I hae been told that the day already, Archy," said George; "I fear there's some truth in't. Yet, I feel nae pain—I'm only weak an' nervous."

"Ah, ye ken little about fevers o' the putrid kind—typhus, an' the like," continued the other, "when ye think they shew themselves by ordinary symptoms. I had a cousin who died o' typhus last week; an' he looked, when he took it, just as ye look, an' spoke just as ye speak. Tak the advice o' a friend, George; dinna stop at Widow M'Murdo's; ye can get nae advice there; hurry on to Edinburgh, and apply immediately on your arrival to a doctor o' repute. I assure ye a' his skill will be required."

After some conversation, all tending to the same effect, Willison parted from him, continuing his route to Cupar. All the doubt that had existed in the mind of the victim, was now removed, and a settled conviction took hold of him, that he was on the very eve of falling into some terrible illness. A train of gloomy fancies took possession of his mind, and he pictured himself lying extended on a bed of sickness, with the angel of death hanging over him, and an awakened conscience within, wringing him with its agonizing tortures. The nature of the disease which impended over him—the putrid typhus—was fixed, and put beyond doubt; and all the cases he had known of individuals who had died of that disease, were brought before the eye of his imagination, to feed the appetite for horrors, which now began to crave food. He endeavoured to analyze his sensations, and discovered, what he never felt before, a hard, fluttering palpitation at his heart, a difficulty of breathing, weakness, trembling of the limbs, and other clear indications of the oncoming attack of a fatal disease.

Moving slowly forward, under the load of these thoughts, he arrived at Widow M'Murdo's, where he fed his horses. He was silent and gloomy; and the fear under which he laboured, produced a *real* appearance of illness, which soon struck the eye of the kind dame.

"What ails ye?" asked she, kindly; and ran and brought out her bottle of cordial, to administer to him that universal medicine; but her question was enough—moody and miserable, he paid little attention to her kindness, and departed to Kirkaldy. Under the same load of despondency and apprehension, he arrived at Andrew Gemmel's, where it was his practice to remain all night. He exhibited the appearance of a person labouring under some grievous misfortune; and, deputing the feeding of his horses to the hostler, he seemed to be careless whether justice was done to them or not. The landlord noticed the change that had taken place upon him. "What ails ye, George?" was asked repeatedly; and the death-like import of the question prevented him from giving any satisfactory answer. Long before his usual period, he retired to his bed, where he passed a night of fevered dreams, restlessness, and misery.

In the morning, he was still under the operation of his apprehension, and was unable to take any breakfast. The hostler managed for him all the details of his business, and he departed in the same gloomy mood for Pettycur. Sauntering along at a slow pace, he met, half-way between the two towns, Duncan Paterson, a Dundee weaver, an old acquaintance, by whom he was hailed in the ordinary form of salutation; but he wished to proceed without standing to speak to his old friend; for he was so sorely depressed, and was so much afraid of another fearful announcement about his sickly appearance, that he could not bear an interview. This strange conduct seemed to rouse the curiosity of his friend, who, running up to him, held forth his hand, crying out—

"Ha! George, man!—this is no like you, to pass auld friends. What ails ye, man?"

"I dinna feel altogether weel," answered the carrier, in a mournful tone.

"I saw that, man, lang before ye cam up," replied the other; "and it was just because ye were looking so grievously ill, that I was determined to speak to ye. When were ye seized?"

"I was weel when I left the north, yesterday morning; but I hadna been lang on the road, when I began to gie tokens o' illness," replied the carrier, mournfully, and with a drooping head.

"If I had met you in that wae fu state," said the other, "with that death-like face and unnatural-like look, I wadna have allowed ye to proceed a mile farther; but now since ye're sae far on the road, it's just as weel that ye hurry on to Edinburgh, whar ye'll get the best advice. What symptoms do ye feel?"

"I'm heavy and dull," replied George; "my pulse rises and fa's, my heart throbs, and my legs hae been shakin under me, as if I were palsied."

"Ah, George, George! these are a' clear signs o' typhus, man," replied Paterson. "My mother died o't. I watched, wi' filial care and affection, a' her maist minute symptoms. They were just yours. I'm vexed for ye; but maybe the hand o' a skilfu doctor may avert the usual fatal issue."

"Was yer mither lang ill?" asked George, in a low tone.

"Nine days," answered Paterson. "By the seventh she was spotted like a leopard, on the eighth she went mad, and the ninth put an end to her sufferings."

"Ay, ay," muttered George, with a deep sigh.

"But the power o' medicine's great," rejoined Paterson. "Lose nae time, after ye arrive in Edinburgh, in applying to a doctor. Mind my words."

And Paterson, casting upon him a look suited to the parting statement, left the carrier, and proceeded on his way. The victim, now completely immersed in melancholy, progressed slowly onwards to Pettycur. His downcast appearance attracted there the attention of the people who assisted him in the discharge of his business. The question—"What ails ye, George?" was repeated, and answered by silence and a sorrowful look. In the boat in which he crossed the Forth, his unusual sadness was also noticed by the captain and crew, with whom he was intimately acquainted. As he sat in the fore-part of the vessel, silent and gloomy, they repeated the dreadful question—"What ails ye, George?"—that had been so often before put to him. To some he said, he felt unwell, to others he replied by a melancholy stare, and relapsed again into his melancholy.

When he arrived at Leith, he was assisted, according to custom, by porters, in getting his goods disembarked. The men were not long in noticing the great change that had taken place upon his spirits—"What ails ye, George?" was the uniform question; and every time it was put; it went to his heart, for it shewed more and more, as he thought, his sick-like appearance, which seemed to escape the eyes of no one. The men assisted him more assiduously than they had ever done before; and, having got everything ready, he proceeded up Leith Walk. The toll-man noticed also his dejected appearance, and the same question was put by him. He proceeded to his quarters, and, committing his carts to a man that was in the habit of assisting him, he went into the house and threw himself into a chair—"What ails ye, George?" exclaimed Widow Gilmour, as she saw him exhibiting these indications of illness. He said he felt unwell, and, rising, went away up to his bedroom, where he took off his clothes, and retired to bed.

The torture of mind to which he had been exposed for a day and a night, and a part of another day, with the want of food, and the exercise of his trade, had operated so powerfully on his body, that he was now in reality in a

fever. The landlady felt his pulse, and, becoming alarmed, sent for a doctor, a young man, who immediately bled him to a much greater extent than was necessary; but the statements of George himself, and the fevered appearance he presented, convinced the young doctor that nothing but copious bleeding would overcome the disease. The application of the lancet stamped the whole affair with the character of reality; and the sick man, still overcome by gloomy anticipations, was soon in the very height of a dangerous fever. Two days afterwards, his wife was sent for; but the poor man got gradually worse, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the doctor, was soon pronounced to be in a state of imminent danger. One day a man called at the house, and inquired, in a flurried manner, at Widow Gilmour, how George Skirving was.

"He is sae ill that I hae very little hope o' him," said the widow.

"Good God!" replied the man, "is it possible? I have murdered him." And he put his hand on his forehead, and groaned in great distress.

"What!" said the widow, staring at him; "did ye poison him?"

"Ay, ay," cried he; "go and tell Mrs Skirving to come to me instantly." And he threw himself on a chair in the kitchen.

Mrs Skirving came down from the sick-bed of her husband.

"George is very ill, I understand," cried the man, who was James Cowie; "an' I am the cause o' his illness. It was a wager, it was a wager." And he stopped, unable or ashamed to proceed.

"What do ye mean, James?" answered Mrs Skirving.

"Six o' us wagered, three against three, and twa to ane," he proceeded, "that our side wadna put your husband to his bed. We met him in Fife, at different places o' the road, and terrified him, by describing his looks, into an opinion that he was unwell. I'm come to make amends. What is the £10 to me when the life o' a fellow creature is at jeopardy? We are a' heartily sorry for our conduct, and God grant it mayna yet be owre late to save him!"

It was too late. We need say no more. The communication was made to the sick man; but he was too far gone to recover, and died in a few days afterwards. This is a true tale, and requires little more explanation. It may have been gathered from our narrative, that Cowie, Willison, and Paterson, were the only persons who were in the plot. John Sharpe, Widow M'Murdo, Andrew Gemmel, and the others, who merely noticed his dejection, were entirely ignorant of the cruel purpose. The poor man really appeared to be ill after Cowie's statement to him; and hence all the inquiries for his health, which contributed so powerfully in aid of the scheme.

THE EMPTY COFFIN.

THE truth of all the important incidents of the following tale, will be recognised by the inhabitants of a certain district of Fife. Our other readers may, and likely will, repudiate the extraordinary story as pure fiction; and such is the fate of all narratives that do not record merely the every-day incidents of vulgar life; yet no fiction ever transcended the workings of nature.

At about three miles' distance from the little village of L—— in the Kingdom of Fife, there lived a person of very great importance, in his way, of the name of John M'Whannel. He rented a farm of the laird of Whinnygates, for which he paid a rent altogether inadequate to the high value of the land; but he was a favourite with the proprietor, as, indeed, he was with all the people of the county, and got his possession at a great undervalue. He

lived in his farm-house, along with one maid-servant, who had been with him for many years, and bore the somewhat uncouth name of Jenny Gatherer. Two men assisted him with his farm, and lived in an outhouse at a little distance from that occupied by the farmer. He had been long in the possession of the Mains of Whinnygates, and was reputed to be very wealthy—a circumstance which had, perhaps, some share, in a certain great authority he exercised over the minds of his neighbours.

The most remarkable feature in the character of John M'Whannel, was his moral power over mankind. His large unworldly body, a deep hill-preaching species of voice, and confirmed Cameronian manners, might have produced their wonted effects in his intercourse with his friends, but never could have effected the extraordinary subjugation to his will, which existed in the minds of almost all his neighbours. To these personal attributes, he added a strong masculine mind, entirely devoted to morals; and the clearness of his conceptions enabling him to express himself in a straightforward, unhesitating manner and lucid order, he exhibited great power in solving the subtle questions connected with the moral relations of man, as well as those more delicate matters connected with religion. These bodily and mental qualities he had the art of combining, and a stern and somewhat dictatorial manner gave a force to the union, which, perhaps, contained the great secret of his universal authority in that part of the country where he resided.

With all this explanation, however, and taking into account his great size of body and strong mind, his authority over the minds of the people, was remarkable and extraordinary. He was made arbiter in all disputes and differences occurring for miles round; and what, perhaps, never before rewarded the labours of a judge, he was as much respected and beloved by the unfortunate submitters as he was by those in whose favour he decided the points referred to him. The authority of John M'Whannel was a guarantee and a passport for every opinion, whether sound or unsound; and, like many other great men, he was doomed to give an involuntary sanction and protection, to thousands of statements which never proceeded from his lips.

Remarkable as was this authority over the minds of his neighbours, thus exercised by the great man of wisdom, it is clear that it was utterly worthless to him in any view, save as contributing to his fame; and, altogether unlike ruling elders of the world, John cared no more for fame, *qua* fame, than he did for the breath that blew it through the clamorous trumpet of the noisy goddess. There was, however, a certain adjunct or appendage to this universal respect paid to his opinions, that pleased him much better than the empty sounds of empty adulation. The people had the most unbounded confidence in his honesty; and, as far as respected his pecuniary capabilities, the exchequer of the Emperor of China, the *Capsula gemmaria* of the King of Golconda, the Bank of England, or any other repository of immense wealth, might have given way, but the pecuniary affairs of John M'Whannel, regulated by a stern debit and credit, and confirmed by the holy religion of the Christian, never could become deranged. It very soon, therefore, became a practice in the parish where he resided, for poor people who had any money which they wished to preserve, or put beyond the power of their own temptation, to lodge the same in the *iron chest* of John M'Whannel. He told them all that he wanted it not, and that he had thousands he could not himself get disposed of, so as to yield him a return; but, struck to the heart with pity, as he saw improvident creatures spending heedlessly that which they ought to preserve for their old age, he consented, from a Christian principle, to become their savings' bank. He paid them a small modicum of interest, merely to induce them to follow their own good. Every penny he paid them was, as he

himself often told them, almost a dead loss; for he scarcely turned the capital to any account, in case he might lose the poor people's money. It was all placed (at least it was supposed so) in the great iron chest that lay in his bedroom, and the key of which he laid every night beneath his pillow, for the sake of the security of the poor creatures, whose all thus depended upon his fatherly care.

This small banking concern, or rather depository, was very far from being limited to a few individuals. Almost all the poor people in the county who had anything to deposit resorted to the guidman of Whinnygates, and got it deposited in "the big iron kist." In a large arm-chair, standing beside the strong repository, sat the venerable banker; there he received and counted the money, and paid at a stated period all the trifles of interest. It was a fair and creditable sight. His large senatorial-like figure, his grey locks falling a little way down his shoulders, his sincere devout visage, his deep Cameronian voice, and, above all, the prayer he uniformly delivered for the conservation of the cash and the prosperity of the proprietor, invested the living picture with attributes that could not pass from the minds of those who witnessed it, but with life itself.

It would not be easy to condescend on the number of individuals who thus lodged all they had in the world, in the hands of the good and godly man; nor would it be of any use. The father who provided for his rising children, the son who accumulated something for his aged parent, the widow who wished to retain, unbroken, the little residue of her husband's means, all confided in the saintly John, treasured up their miniature fortunes in the redoubted iron chest, and drew, with pride and gratitude, their items of interest. The want of the useful institutions of savings' banks, in these days, may be supposed to have contributed greatly to the extent of this confidence in a private individual; yet it may fairly be affirmed, that John M'Whannel would, with fair play, have beat any public institution of the kind that chose to rear its head within the circle of his power. The directors of a public institution could not have been known to the people; but who, within ten miles, did not know John M'Whannel? Directors of banks might fail—it was impossible that John M'Whannel ever could; they might be dishonest—he was beyond suspicion; they might die, and where would the money be found?—he might also die, but the iron chest was impenetrable.

This pleasant intercourse between the good man and his creditors went on for a long period. John continued as wise as ever; and his prayers on the occasion of the visits of his friends, when they received their interest, were as sincere and godly as ever. Stronger and stronger waxed his high character for all the eight cardinal virtues enumerated in the old books on Ethics; and, such was the mighty accumulation of his praises, that there never lived a man in the Kingdom of Fife, who possessed even one tithe of the exquisite perfections of John M'Whannel. If he had lived in Thibet he would have been the great Lama; if in China, another mighty Fo; and if in Egypt, the sacred bull Apis himself. But human perfections do not save the possessors from the common fate of humanity. The inhabitants of the three adjoining parishes were suddenly thrown into a state of great alarm by a report that John M'Whannel was taken ill, and that Gilbert M'Whannel, his brother, a writer or attorney from the neighbouring town, and possessing all those cardinal virtues for which writers are generally remarkable, had been kindly paying him attention. It was even said that none but the writer was admitted; and, extraordinary announcement! it was surmised that the man of the law had been actually seen *sitting upon* the iron chest in which the wealth of one half of the people of the parish was deposited.

That such a statement as that last mentioned should

rouse the parish, no one who has *felt* the effects of a writer's virtues could be surprised at. Many of the poor people accordingly called at the house of their banker; but, what was still more surprising, no one was allowed to enter. Some attempted to peep in at the window, to see whether the writer's *incubation* was continued, and whether it was likely to end, as *incubations* generally do, in the flight of that which undergoes the process. These efforts were also unavailing, and the news spread that there was a determination, on the part of the writer, to exclude every one from the house and presence of their sick idol. Suspicion began to grow apace; whispers grew louder and louder; and a kind of hue and cry was got up and spread like wild-fire throughout the parish, producing intense fears and anxieties in the breasts of all those whose money was deposited in the said iron chest, which was thus supposed to be in such imminent danger.

Several meetings were held by the terrified creditors, and it was resolved that a deputation of them should proceed and demand an entrance to the presence of the sick man; and, upon receiving admission, cast their eyes about, and see if the chest was really in a state of safety.

The deputation accordingly proceeded toward the house; but they were met by a stranger, whom they had never seen before, who informed them that John M'Whannel had just died, and that it would be exceedingly unbecoming in them to desecrate the house of the dead by executing the purpose they had in view. The statement seemed reasonable, and the party separated, upon condition, however, that they should severally visit the house, and look at the dead body of their old friend, as well as at the iron chest where their fortunes were deposited.

This purpose was accordingly acted upon. Two or three of the creditors called, and wished to be shewn "ben the house," for the double object already mentioned; but they were again defeated. Jenny Gatherer would allow no one to enter the bedroom where the corpse and the chest both lay. She proffered every kindness to the visitors usual on such occasions—shewed them into a parlour, gave them something to eat and to drink, and dispatched them with the intelligence that, after the funeral, they would find everything to their utmost satisfaction. This conduct was as extraordinary as the rest; the people knew not what to think; no one could say he had seen John M'Whannel in his sickness, and far less could any one say that he had seen his corpse. Speculation began to foster strong suspicions; but no one could conjure up a case sufficient to satisfy all the conditions of the story; and it was at last resolved that they should suspend all their acts and inquiries till after the funeral.

The day of the funeral arrived, and invitations were sent to a great number of the inhabitants of the parish. Many attended, and not a few who had got no invitation at all. They remarked the extraordinary circumstance, that no one was invited into the house, as is usual on such occasions. The coffin was brought out glittering with its silver facings, and exhibiting a large plate on the top, which bore the words—"John M'Whannel, aged 65 years." It was laid upon the spokes, and covered with the black pall, in the usual way, and the bearers, followed by the mourners, proceeded to the churchyard, where John M'Whannel was regularly consigned to his fathers.

At the funeral there were about twenty of those whose money lay consigned in the iron chest in John M'Whannel's bedroom. Actuated by the suspicion which had already pervaded so many of the people of the parish, these individuals were determined not to be balked by further denials and excuses; and accordingly proceeded, along with Gilbert M'Whannel the writer, to the house of the deceased. Arriving at the door, they asked no permission to enter; but, without ceremony and without fear, rushed in *en masse*,

and never stopped till they arrived at the side of the iron chest, where lay enshrined all their hopes of future happiness on earth. Every eye was fixed upon it; and he who took upon him the character of spokesman—a person of the name of John Hamilton—demanded the key, that they might satisfy themselves of the safety of their property.

“As my brother’s heir and executor,” said Gilbert, “I might resist this request; but I am anxious to satisfy people in so very peculiar a position as that in which you stand; and, therefore, I will lay open the contents of this chest to you, upon the condition, however, that you refrain from laying violent hands upon what you may erroneously conceive to be your property. A division of my brother’s effects will afterwards be made, according to law, and every one will procure the most ample satisfaction.”

The proposition was reasonable, and at once agreed to. The key was produced, and applied to the lock; the lid was lifted up; and, in place of the money which they conceived to be there deposited, their eyes met nothing but empty space! Every one started back in amazement. The writer alone seemed to be unmoved. After many exclamations of wonder, some one proposed to call ben Jenny Gatherer, to ascertain if she could tell where the contents of the box had been placed. John Hamilton proceeded to the kitchen; but Jenny was not to be seen. She had left the house suddenly, some short time before, carrying in her hands a bundle, and apparently equipped for a long journey. This intelligence added to the mystery, and the wonder waxed greater and greater, as their search for the money was continued without success. Every drawer was opened, and every repository exposed. There was no money to be found; and, what was still more extraordinary, there was no document discovered to shew that it was deposited in a bank, or vested in security, or given in loan. The writer declared, upon his *honour*, that he knew nothing of his brother’s affairs, and could not tell them whether he had left any effects or not. The house, he added, was open to them, and they might satisfy themselves on every proper subject of curiosity or inquiry, if they considered the search they had already made in any way incomplete. The creditors, after continuing their search for some time longer, left the house in despair; and, in a short time, the additional facts now stated flew, on the wings of fame, throughout the whole county—producing staring eyes, open mouths, and ejaculations, wherever they struck the ears of the wondering inhabitants.

A day or two passed over without any light being thrown on the mystery. The brother had retired to the town, and Jenny Gatherer was beyond the knowledge of any one. Speculation, hitherto so unfruitful, began to shew some signs of fruit. The creditors met, and compared notes; and the most striking circumstance of the whole affair seemed to be the fact that no neighbour had seen John M’Whannel, either on his sick-bed or in his coffin. The visitors had been all refused admittance. The undertaker—a *cousin-german* of the deceased’s—was the only person who said he saw the body. He made the coffin with an inner case of lead, laid in the body, and performed the operation of nailing up. No other person could speak to these facts. The cousin’s statements were not believed; and there arose a suspicion, which was destined soon to become a conviction, that John M’Whannel was still alive, and that the ceremony of the funeral was a hoax, resorted to for some nefarious purpose. This suspicion gained ground every hour after it was elicited, and obtained so many prolytes that it was resolved to put it to the test, by opening the grave and examining the coffin. This purpose was almost immediately put into execution. A large party repaired to the burying-ground; the grave was opened; the coffin taken out and examined. There was no John

M’Whannel there! As the iron chest had been found empty so the coffin contained nothing but a leaden case!

The affair seemed now as clear as the sun at twelve o’clock. John M’Whannel had eloped, and Jenny Gatherer, the baggage, had gone after him. The funeral had been got up for the purpose of screening the perpetrators from the vengeance of a host of ruined creditors. All the facts quadrated with this opinion; and it became so general that there was scarcely one in the parish that doubted of it. Lawyers were consulted, and the general opinion seemed to be, that Gilbert M’Whannel had made himself liable to a prosecution for aiding and abetting his brother in accomplishing his scheme of deception. Even the writers were almost cheated into the belief that old John M’Whannel had run the country with a young woman, and taken with him all the poor people’s money in the parish.

It never occurred to the quick-sighted money-lenders, that there were such individuals as resurrectionists. The coffin had, in fact, been spoiled of its contents, and John M’Whannel was at that very time lying quietly, honest man, on the dissecting table of a surgeon in Edinburgh. Neither did it ever occur to them that all the circumstances of the supposed secrecy connected with John’s sickness and death, together with the flight of Jenny Gatherer, might have been accounted for, by the simple fact that the writer had resolved upon emptying the iron chest, and had actually done so. Jenny had been bribed to take herself out of the way, and the people were excluded, for fear they might lay violent hands on the precious repository. The belief, that John M’Whannel was not dead, still remained, and William Steedman, a writer, was requested to call upon Gilbert M’Whannel, for satisfaction.

“I am sorry to think, Mr M’Whannel,” said he, “that you have made yourself responsible for the debts of your brother.”

“I beg your pardon, Mr Steedman,” replied Gilbert. “I am his heir; but I never intromitted with his effects. Everything remains in his house as it was left by him.”

“The creditors conceive,” said Mr Steedman, “that the alleged death and funeral of your brother, was a mere device to cover his flight from the country.”

“Indeed!” replied Gilbert, in apparent wonder; “how do you arrive at that extraordinary conclusion?”

“The coffin has been examined,” answered Mr Steedman, “and no body has been found in it; the servant has eloped; and the only man who says he saw the body, is your cousin, the undertaker.”

Gilbert paused, and meditated.

“I’ll tell ye, what, Mr Steedman,” said he, at last, in his simplest style of speech; “*prove* ye that my brother has *fled*, and that the funeral was a hoax, and I’ll pay his debts.”

“I must frankly own that I cannot,” replied the other, “No one has seen his body, alive.”

“Weel, weel, I’ll tell ye what, Mr Steedman,” said Gilbert, again, with great simplicity; “*prove* ye that my brother is *dead*, and that I took his siller, and I’ll pay his debts.”

“Neither can I do that, I fear,” replied the other; “for no one, (save your cousin, who will not be believed,) has seen his dead body.”

“Very weel, then,” rejoined Gilbert, laughing, and twinkling his cunning grey eye, “if ye can prove neither that he’s *fled* nor that he’s *dead*, I see nae richt ye hae to wear the brass knocker o’ my door, on sae fruitless an errand as that which brocht ye here this day.”

The poor people still adhered to the opinion that old John M’Whannel would one day cast up—and thus were they cheated. The writer took advantage of the coffin being found as empty as the kist; and, out of the two negatives, made a very good positive.

THE MISER'S WILL

THE following tale is in substance absolutely true. The individual who performed the feat is still living; and, while we cannot wish him much joy of his ill-won gear, we cannot but admire the dexterity with which it was acquired. In the little town of Maybole there lived, some fifty years ago or more, an old man of the name of George Rorieson, more commonly called Laird Rorieson. He had been a kind of general merchant, or trafficker in any kind of commodities which he thought would yield him a profit; and, by dint of great sagacity, had made some very fortunate hits, and realized a large sum of money. Having begun the world with a penny, he was emphatically the maker of his own fortunes—a circumstance he was very proud of, and loved to sound in the ears of certain individuals who envied him his riches. Having amassed his money by an accumulation of small sums, for a long course of years, he had gradually become narrower and narrower, as his wealth increased; and, by the time he arrived at the age of sixty, his penurious feelings had become so strong and deep-rooted that he could scarcely afford himself the means of a comfortable subsistence.

It is almost needless to say that Laird Rorieson never had courage or liberality of sentiment sufficient to give him an impulse towards matrimony; and, truly, it was alleged that he never even looked on womankind with any feelings different from those with which he contemplated his fellow-creatures generally; and these had always some connection, one way or another, with making profit of them. But, though he had no wife, he had a good store of nephews and nieces—somewhere about twenty—all poor enough, God knows! but all as hopeful as brides and bridegrooms of a great store of wealth and bliss being awaiting them on the death of Uncle Geordie.

The affection which these twenty nephews and nieces shewed to Uncle George was remarkable; but, somehow or another, the good uncle hated them mortally, and the bitterer he became, the more loving they waxed—so that it was very wonderful to see so much human love and sympathy thrown away upon an old churl who could have seen all the devoted creatures at the devil.

It was indeed alleged that this crabbed miser had no love for any one, all his affection being expended upon his money-bags; but we are bound to say that this is not quite the truth; for there was a neighbour of the name of Saunders Gibbieson, a bachelor, for whom the laird really felt some small twinges of human kindness. Saunders Gibbieson was as true a Scotchman as ever threw the pawky glamour of a twinkling grey eye over the open face of an English victim. He was, as already said, a bachelor; but, unlike his friend Geordie, he loved the fair sex, and vowed he would marry the bonniest lass o' Maybole the moment he was able to sustain her "in bed, board, and washing." He had scraped together a few pounds, maybe to the extent of a hundred or two, and looked forward to making himself happy at no very distant period. He was a famous hand at a political argument; and there was not a man in Maybole who could touch him at driving a bargain.

As already said, Geordie had a kind of feeling towards Saunders, and there can be no doubt that Saunders had as strong an affection for the "auld rich grub," as he called him in his throat, as ever had any one of the twenty nephews and nieces already alluded to. In the evenings he often went in and sat with him; and, by dint of curious jokes, "humorous lees," and political anecdotes, he contrived to wile, for a few minutes, the creature's heart from his money-bags, and unbend his puckered cheeks and lips into a species of compromise between a laugh and a grin. It was no wonder, then, that Geordie had a kind of liking

for Saunders—seeing he got value in amusement from him, without so much cost as even a piece of old dry cheese, or a waught of thin ale. On the other hand, it was difficult to see how Saunders could love the laird; and, indeed, it was a matter of gossip what could induce a man so much in request as Saunders Gibbieson to take so much pains in pouring into the "leather lugs" of an old miser the precious jokes that would have set the biggest table in Maybole in a roar.

Now the time came when Laird Rorieson began to feel the first touches of that big black angel who loves to hug so fondly the sons of men. He was ill—he was indeed very ill—and it would have done any man's heart good to see the kindness and sympathy which his twenty nephews and nieces paid him. Every hour one or other of them was calling at his house; and his ears were regaled by the sympathetic tones which their love for their dear uncle wrung from their tender hearts. Oh, it was beautiful to behold! Such things do credit to our fallen nature. But the old grub loved it not; and it was even said he cursed and swore in the very faces of the kind creatures, just as if they had had an eye on the heavy coffers of gold that lay in his house. This kindness on the part of his nephews and nieces was thus converted into a kind of poison; for every time they called, their uncle got into such a passion that his remaining strength was well-nigh worn out. But he had still enough left to sign his name; and the ungrateful creature resolved upon leaving all his gold to found an hospital. He sent for a man of the law, and had a consultation with locked doors, and all things seemed in a fair way for the poor nephews and nieces being sacrificed for ever.

This circumstance came to the ears of Saunders Gibbieson, who had not been an unattentive spectator of the extraordinary proceedings going on in the house of his neighbour. As soon as he heard the news, he retired and meditated, and communed with himself three hours on matters of deep concernment to him and the generations that might descend from him. The result of all this study was a resolution alike remarkable for its eccentricity and sagacity; but Saunders' spirit dipped generally so deep in the wells of wisdom that there was no wonder it should come forth drunk, as it were, with the golden policy of cunning.

Now, all of a sudden, Saunders grew (as he said) very ill—as ill indeed, or nearly as ill, as Laird Rorieson himself; but, so full was he of brotherly love towards his neighbour, that his sudden illness did not prevent him calling upon the latter, one night, when there seemed to be no great chance of their being disturbed by any of the sympathetic nephews and nieces. He found Geordie very weakly, and sat down by the bedside, to pour the balm of his friendship and consolation into the sick man's ear. The Laird received him kindly, and, as was his custom, Saunders got him into a pleasant humour, by telling him something of a curious nature that had occurred, or had been supposed by Saunders to have occurred, during the day. He then began the more important part of his work.

"You are ill, Laird," said he; "but I question muckle if ye're sae ill as I am myself. For a long time I've been in a dwinin' way, and, though I hae kept up a fair appearance and good spirits, I've been gradually getting thinner and weaker. I fear I'm in a fair way for another world."

"I'm sorry to hear't," replied the Laird. "It's a sad thing to dee." And he shook as he uttered the word.

"Ay, an' it's a sad thing," said Saunders, "to be tormented in your illness, wi' thae cursed corbies o' puir relations. The moment I began to complain I've been tormented wi' a host o' nephews and nieces, wha come and stare into my hollow een, as if they would count the draps o' blude that are yet left in my heart."

"Ay, ay, are you in that plight too, Saunders," groaned the Laird. "The ravens have been croaking owre me for twa lang years. They come and perch on the very bed-posts, they croak, they whet their nebs, they look into my face, and peer into my very heart. It's dreadful—and there's nae remedy. I've tried to terrify them awa; but they come aye back again. They've worn me fairly out."

"I've had many a meditation on the subject, Laird," said Saunders; "and, between you and me, if there's a goose quill in a' Scotland, I'll hae a shot at them. I haena muckle i' the world—a thousand or twa maybe, hard won Geordie, as a' gowd is in thae hard times; but the deil a plack o't they'll ever touch."

"Ye'll be to found an hospital?" said the Laird.

"Na, na," answered Saunders. "I'll found nae beggar's palace. I've studied political economy owre lang to be ignorant o' the bad effects o' public charities. They relax the sinews o' industry, and mak learned mendicants. Besides, wha thanks the founder o' an hospital for his charity? Nane!—nane! A puff or twa in the newspapers about Gibbieson's mortification would be the hail upshot o' my reward; and sensible folk would set me down as an auld curmudgeon, wha hadna heart to love and benefit a friend."

"There's some truth in that," muttered the Laird. "It's a pity a body canna tak his gear wi' him. Sair hae I toiled for it, and, oh! it's miserable! cruel! cruel! that I should be obliged to leav't to a thankless world! But what are ye to do wi't, Saunders?"

"Indeed, I'm just to leave it a' to you, Laird," said Saunders. "I have lang liked ye wi' a' the luvie o' honest, leal friendship; and, after muckle meditation, I canna fix on a mortal creature wha is mair deservin o't than you, my guid auld freend. You have a fair chance o' recovering; I have nane. Ye may enjoy my gear lang after the turf has grown thegither owre my grave; and God bless the gift!"

"Kind, guid man!" cried the Laird, in a voice evincing strong emotion, either of love or greed. "That is kindness—ay, very different frae the friendship o' my sisters' and brothers' bairns. After a', I believe yer richt, Saunders—an hospital has nae gratitude; and what have we to do wi' a cauld and heartless world?"

"There's just ae difficulty I hae," said Saunders. "The will's written and signed; but I dinna weel ken whar to lay it; for, when I'm dead, thae deevils o' corbies may smell the bit paper and put it in the fire. Maybe you would tak the charge o't for me, Laird."

"Ou ay," answered the laird. "I'll keep it. The deil o' ane o' them will get it oot o' my clutches."

"Weel, weel, my dear friend," said Saunders. "I'll put it into a tin box; the key ye'll find, after my breath's out, in the little cupboard that's at the foot o' my bed—ye ken the place. They can mak naething o' the key without the box; and, if you canna find the key, you can force the box open. Oh, I would like to see you reading the will in the midst o' the harpies."

"That's weel arranged, Saunders; ye can set about it as soon as you like."

"I intend to do it instantly, Laird," replied the man. "I'll about it this moment." And he rose and went out of the house.

In a short time, Saunders returned, holding in his hand a small tin box. He laid it down upon the table, and, taking out a small key, opened it, and took out a paper, entitled—"Last Will and Testament."

"There it is, my good friend," he said; and, replacing the paper in the box, he locked it and placed it in an escrutoire pointed out by the Laird. He then went away.

Next day, the lawyer came to carry into effect the

charitable resolution of Laird Rorieson; but he found that a great change had taken place upon the old man's sentiments. He was now adverse to a mortification, and said he was resolved upon leaving his fortune to one whom he considered to be a *real friend*: and, indeed, the only real friend he had upon earth. The lawyer was surprised when he ascertained that this friend was Saunders Gibbieson; but it was no this province to object—so he departed straight-way to carry into effect the new resolution of the testator.

Two days afterwards, the laird sent a message to Saunders to come and speak with him. Saunders obeyed; walking in to him slowly, and apparently with great effort, as if he had been labouring under a strong disease.

"I have been thinking again and again, Saunders," said the Laird, "o' your great kindness. You are the first man that ever left me a farthing. The world has rugged aff me, since ever I had a feather to pick. Nane has ever offered me either a bite or a sup. You are the only friend I've ever met upon earth."

"I hae only obeyed the dictates o' my heart," replied Saunders; "and I'm glad I have dune it, for I feel mysel very weakly, and fear the clock o' this world's time will be wound up wi' me in a very short period."

"Maybe no so sune as ye think, Saunders," replied the laird. "But my purpose is executed. Saunders, you are my heir. Hand me that box there."

Saunders took up a small mahogany box that lay on the table, and handed it to him.

"Here," continued the laird taking out a paper; "here is my will. It's a' in your favour, Saunders—lands, houses, guids, and chattels, heritable and movable. Say naething; you are my heir. Ha! ha! let the corbies croak. You've dune me a guid service; I winna be ahint ye. Tak the box into yer ain keeping. I'll keep the key. Awa wi't this instant. Ha! ha! let the corbies croak."

Saunders obeyed. He carried the box into his own house, placed it in his cupboard, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

In about a month afterwards, old Laird Rorieson departed this life. On the day of his death, his nephews and nieces were in great commotion, and there was a terrible running to and fro, and much whispering, and wondering, and gossiping—all on the great subject of the death of Uncle Geordie. On the day of his funeral, they were all collected, to see whether there was any will. They, of course, wished that there should be none, because they, being his heirs, would succeed to all, if there was no disposition of the old man's effects. The little box was broken open in their haste, and, lo! there was indeed a paper, bearing the fearful word "Will," and the faces of the heirs turned as pale as the paper itself. It was opened; but it was a fair, clean sheet of paper, and not a drop of ink had stained its purity. "All safe, all safe," muttered the heirs.

"Here is another box," said Saunders Gibbieson, holding up the mahogany one; "let us try it." And he opened it, and took out Geordie's will. The writer read it aloud. Saunders was sole heir to all the old miser's possessions, amounting to £20,000. No one could tell the reason why there were two papers marked "will," and one of them a blank sheet; and Saunders, simple man, did not trouble himself to give any explanation.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILLIE SMITH.

IF I thocht the world wad tak the least interest in the matter, I wad tell it the where an' the when o' my birth, in conformity wi' auld use an' wont in the case o' biographical sketches; but, takin it for granted that the world cares as little about me as I care about it—an', Gude kens, that's little aneuch, thanks to the industry o' my faither, that made me independent o't!—I shall merely say, wi' regard to the particulars aboon alluded to, that I was born in a certain thrivin, populous bit touny in the south, an' that I am, at this present writin, somewhat aulder than I was yesterday. I dinna choose to be mair particular on the point, because I dinna see that my age has onything mair to do wi' my story, than the ages o' witnesses hae wi' their evidence. Bein born in the usual way, in the usual way was I christened—(*Anglice*, baptised;) but hereon hangs a tale, or rather a dizzen o' them. My faither's name was Willie Smith, my paternal grandfather's name was Willie Smith, I had an uncle whase name was Willie Smith, an' twa cousins whase names were Willie Smith; an' it was determined that I should be a Willie Smith too, in order, I suppose, to mak sure o' perpetuatin that very rare an' euphonious family name. But, oh, that they had ca'ed me Nebuchadnezzar, or Fynmackowl, or Chrononhotonthologos, or ony name in the sma'est degree distinctive, an' no that confounded ane, that seems to me to belong to every third man I meet wi'! It wad hae saved me a world o' misery, an' disappointment, an' sufferin o' a' sorts. It's just incredible the mischief that simple circumstance has wrought me—I mean, the ca'in me Willie Smith. It may appear, I dare say, a harmless aneuch thing to you, guid reader, but, my feth, ca' ye yersel Willie Smith just for æ twelvemonth, an' ye'll find it's nae such joke as ye may think, especially if there be half-a-dizzen o' Willie Smiths leevin in the same street wi' ye; whilk is a' but certain to be the case, gang to where ye like. I ken I could never get oot o' their neighbourhood, an' mony a shift an' change I hae made for that express purpose. I maun confess, however, that the name's na a'thegither without its advantages. Mony a scrape I hae got skaitheless oot o', when I was a boy, in consequence o' its frequency. In the first schule I was at, there war three Willie Smiths, besides me, an' it was thus almost impossible, in many cases, to ascertain which was the real delinquent when mischief had been perpetrated; an' the result was, that the wrang Willie Smith was as often punished as the richt ane; but, as I, of course, was frequently in the former predicament, I am no sure that, if the account were fairly balanced, I wad be found to hae been a great gainer after a'. Latterly, however, I certainly was not; for the maister, findin the difficulty o' distinguishin between the Smiths, an' that the course o' justice was thus interrupted, at last adopted the sure plan o' whippin a' the Willie Smiths thegither, whenever any one o' the unfortunate name was charged wi' ony transgression. We were thus incorporated, as it were, rolled into one, and dealt wi' accordingly, in a' cases o' punishment.

My schule days owre, I began the world in the capacity

o' shopman to my faither, wha was a hosier to business, and carried on a sma', but canny tredd in that line. He wasna to ca' wealthy, but he was in easy aneuch circumstances, an' had laid by a trifle, which was intended for me, his only son an' heir. I was now in my twentieth year, the heyday of youth; an', why should I hesitate to say it, a sensible, judicious, well-meanin, an' good-lookin lad, but (I hesitate to say this, though) wi' a great deal mair sentiment in my nature than was at a' necessary for a hosier. How I had come by it, Heaven knows; but so it was. I was fu o' romance, an' fine feelin, an' a' that sort o' thing, an' wi' a heart most annoyingly susceptible o' the tender passion. It was just like tinder, as somebody has said—I think it was Burns—catched fire in an instant. For some time, however, as is the case with most youths, I dare say, my love was general, and was pretty equally divided amongst *all* the young and good-looking o' the other sex whom I happened to see or to meet wi'; but it at length concentrated, an' dwelt on one object alone—(this was a case o' love at first sight)—a beautiful an' amiable girl, wha attended the same kirk in which I sat. I hadna the slightest personal acquaintance wi' her, nor ony access to her society; but this didna hinder me adorin her in my secret heart, nor prevent me puttin doon stockings to customers, whan they asked for nichtcaps. In short, before I kent whar I was, I was plump owre head an' ears in love, distractin love, wi' my fair enslaver, an' rendered useless baith to mysel an' every ither body. Never did the tender passion so engross, so absorb the feelins an' faculties o' a human bein, as it did those o' me, Willie Smith the hosier, on this occasion. I was absolutely beside mysel, an' felt as if livin an' breathin in a world o' my ain. This continued for several months; an' yet, during all that time, I had remained content wi' worshippin the object o' my adoration at a distance, an' that only on Sundays, for I rarely saw her through the week. Whan I said, however, that I was content wi' this state o' matters, I am no sure that I hae said precisely what was true. Had I said that I lacked courage to mak ony nearer advances, I wad, perhaps, hae expressed mysel fully mair correctly. This was, in fact, the case; I couldna muster fortitude aneuch to break the ice, an' yet I didna want en' couragement either. My fair captivator soon discovered the state o' my feelins regardin her, as she couldna but do, for my een war never aff' her, an' my looks war charged wi' an expression that was easily aneuch interpreted. She, therefore—at least I thocht sae—kent perfectly weel how the laun lay; an' if I didna mak a guid use o' the impression I had made in my turn—for this, I thocht I saw too, in sundry little nameless things—the fault was my ain, as I didna want such encouragement as a modest an' virtuous girl could, under the circumstances, hand oot to a lover. She looked wi' an interest on me, which she couldna conceal whanever we met, an' I frequently detected the corner o' her bright blue eye turned towards me in the kirk. Often, also, have I seen her sittin in melancholy abstraction, when she should hae been listenin to the minister; but could I blame her, whan she was thinkin o' me? Of *that*, from all I could see an' mark, I was satisfied.

At length, unable to endure the distraction o' my feelins

anger, and encouraged by the wee symptoms o' reciprocal affection which I had marked in my enslaver, assuring me o' my being on pretty safe ground, I cam to the desperate resolution o' makin a decisive move in the business. I resolved to *write* my beloved; to confess my passion, and to beg that she would allow me to introduce myself to her. This resolution, however, I fand it much easier to adopt than to execute. There was a faint-heartedness aboot me that I couldna get the better o'; and a score o' sheets o' paper perished in the attempts I made to concoct something suitable to the occasion. At length, I succeeded; that is, I accomplished such a letter as I felt convinced I couldna surpass, although I wrought at it for a twelvemonth.

Havin faulded this letter, which I did wi' a tremblin hand and palpitatin heart, I clapt it into my pocket-book, whar it lay for three days, for want o' courage to dispatch it, and, in some sort, for want o' opportunity too; for if I sent it by the post, there was a danger o't fa'in into the hands o' Lizzy's faither—Lizzy Barton bein the name o' my enthraler; and there was naebody else that I could think o' employin in the business. At length, however, I determined to dispatch it at a' hazards. There was a wee bit ragged, smart, intelligent laddie, that used to be constantly playing at bools aboot oor shop-door, and whom we sometimes sent on bits o' sma' messages through the toun; and on him I determined to devolve the important mission of delivering my letter. Accordingly, ae day when my faither was oot, and naebody in the shop but mysel—

"Jock," cried I, wagging the boy in, "come here a minnit." Jock instantly leaped to his feet—for he was on his knees, most earnestly engaged in plunkin, at the moment—and, cramm in a handfu o' bools into his pocket, was, in a twinklin, before me; when, wipin his nose wi' the sleeve o' his jacket, and looking up in my face as he spoke—

"What's yer wull, sir?" said Jock.

"Do ye ken Mr Barton's, Jock?" said I.

"Brawly, sir," replied Jock.

"Weel, Jock, my man," continued I, but wi' a degree o' trepidation that I had great difficulty in concealin frae the boy, "tak this letter, and go to Mr Barton's wi't, and rap canny at the door, and ask if Miss Barton's in. If she's in, ask a word o' her; and, when she comes, slip this letter into her haun. If she's no in, bring back the letter to me, and let naebody see't. Mind it's for *Miss Barton*, Jock, and nae ane else. Sae ye maunna be paveein't aboot, but kep it carefully hidden under yer jacket, till ye see Miss Barton hersel; then whup it oot, and slip it into her hand, that way;—and here I fugged the proper motion to Jock. "Noo, Jock," I continued, "if ye go through this job correctly and cleverly, I'll gie ye a saxpence." Jock's eyes glistened wi' delight at the magnificence o' the promised reward, so far transcending what he had been accustomed to receive. He wad hae thocht himsel handsomely paid wi' a ha'penny, and wad hae run sax miles any day for a penny.

Having dispatched Jock, after seein the letter carefully buttoned up inside his jacket, I waited his return wi' a painfulness o' suspense, and intensity o' feelin, that I wad rather leave to the reader's imagination, than attempt to describe. It was most distressin—most agitatatin. At length, Jock appeared—I mean in the distance. My heart began to beat violently. He bounced into the shop; my trepidation became excessive; my knees trembled; my lips grew as white as paper; I could hardly speak. At last—

"Jock," said I, wi' a great effort, "did ye see her?"

"Yes," said Jock, "and I gied her the letter."

"And what did she say?"

"She asked wha it was frae."

"And ye tell't her?"

"Ay."

"And what did she say then?"

"She just leugh, pleased-like; and her face grew red, and she stappit it in her bosom, and said, 'Vera weel, my man;' and syne shut the door."

Oh, what pen could describe the feelins o' joy, o' transport, that were mine at this ecstatic moment! She had smiled wi' delight on hearin my name; she had blushed when my letter was put into her hands; and she had put that letter—oh, delicious thought!—into her bosom. The proof o' her love was conclusive. There was nae mistakin what were her feelins towards me. Jock's artless tale had put that beyond a doot. I was noo put nearly distracted wi' joy. But, if the merely gracious reception of my letter was capable o' inspirin me wi' this feelin, what degree o' happiness could be imparted by a reply to it, and that o' the most favourable kind? (It could be ascertained by the Rule o' Three.) That degree o' happiness, whatever it is, was bestowed on me. In the course of the ensuing day, I received the following sweet billet by the postman, written by Lizzy's own dear hand:—

"Miss Barton presents her compliments to Mr Smith, and will be happy of his company to tea, to-morrow evening, at six o'clock."

Oh, hoo I noo langed for the "to-morrow evenin at six o'clock!" And yet I trembled at its approach, wi' an undefined, but overwhelmin feelin o' mingled love and shame, and hope and fear. It was just what I may ca' a delightfully painfu' predicament. Regardless, however, o' my feelins, the appointed hour cam round, and, when it did, it saw me dressed in my best, and, wi' a flutterin heart, stan'in at Lizzy's faither's door, wi' the knocker in my hand. I knocked. I heard a movement o' the sneck behind. The door opened, and my angel stood before me. I smiled and blushed intensely, without sayin a word. Miss Barton stared at me wi' a look o' cauld, composed surprise. At length—

"Miss Barton," I stammered oot, "I am come, according to your invitation, to"—

"My invitation, sir!" said Miss Barton, noo a little confused, an' blushin in her turn. "What invitation? I haena the pleasure o' ony acquaintance wi' ye, sir. Ye're a perfect stranger to me."

"I houp no a'thegither, Miss Barton," replied I, makin an abortive attempt at a captivatatin smile. "I took the liberty o' addressin a letter to ye yesterday; an' here's yer invitation on the back o't," continued I, an' noo puttin bet ain card into her hands. The pair lassie looked confounded an', in great agitation, said—

"Oh, sir, it's a mistak! I'm so sorry. It's an entire mistak on my part. Yer'e no the person at a' I meant. I thocht the letter was frae anither gentleman—a different person a'thegither. It's the name has misled me. I am really so sorry." An' she curtsied politely to me, an' shut the door.

Ay, here, then, was a pretty dooncome to a' my air-built castles o' love an' happiness! It was a mistak, was it?—a mistak? I wasna the person at a'! She thocht the letter was frae anither gentleman a'thegither! An', pray, wha was this gentleman? A' that, an' a deal mair, I subsequently fand oot. The gentleman was a certain Willie Smith—a young, guid-lockin fallow, wha sat in the same kirk wi' us, an' between whom an' Lizzy there had lang existed the telegraphic correspondence o' looks, an' smiles, an' sighs, an' blushes—in fact, just such a correspondence as I had carried on mysel, wi' this important difference, however, that it wasna a' on ae side, as it noo appeared it had been in my case. The other Willie Smith's returns were real, while mine were only imaginary. I needna enlarge on the subject o' my feelins under this grievous an' heart-rendin disappointment. It will be aneuch to say that it pat me nearly beside mysel, an' that it was amaist a hale week before I tasted a morsel o' food o' ory kind. I was in a sad state; but time, that cures a' ills, at length cured mine, too.

although it didna remove my regret that a name so unhappily frequent as Willie Smith had ever been bestowed on me.

Havin already described mysel as bein o' a susceptible nature, an' bein at this time in the prime o' youth, it wiuna surprise the reader to learn that I soon after this fell in love a second time. The object o' my affections, on this occasion, was a pretty girl, whom I met wi' at the hoose o' a mutual fren. She was a stranger in oor town, an' had come frae Glasgow—o' which city she was a native—on a short visit to a relation. The acquaintance which I formed wi' this amiable creature soon ripened into the maist ardent affection, an' I had every reason, very early, to believe that my love was returned. The subsequent progress of our intimacy established the delightful fact. We eventually stood on the footin o' avowed, an' all but absolutely betrothed lovers. Soon after this, Lucy Craig, which was the name of my beloved, returned to Glasgow, but not before we had settled to maintain a close and regular correspondence.

The correspondence wi' Lucy, to which I hae alluded, subsequently took place; an', for several months—durin which I had made, besides, twa or three runs to Glasgow, to see her—mony a sweet epistle passed between us—epistles fu' o' lowin love, an' sparklin hopes, an' joy. I may as weel here remark, too, that, on the occasions o' my visits to Lucy, I was maist cordially an' kindly received by her mother—a fine, decent, motherly body, an' a widow—Lucy's faither havin died several years before. Aweel, as I said, oor correspondence went on closely an' uninterruptedly; but I maun noo add, wi' a restriction as to time, an' say for aboot five months, at the end o' which time it suddenly ceased, on the pairt o' Lucy, a'thegither. She was due me a letter at the time; for I had written three close on the back o' each other, which were yet unanswered. In the greatest impatience an' uneasiness, I first waited ae week, an' then anither, an' anither, an' anither, till they ran up to aboot six, whan, unable langer to thole the misery which her seemin negligence, or it micht be something waur, had created, I determined on puttin my fit in the coach, an' gann slap right through mysel, to ascertain the cause o' her extraordinary silence. To this procedin—that is, my gann to Glasgow—I was further induced by anither circumstance. There was a mercantile hoose there, wi' which my faither had dealt for twenty years, an' which had gotten, frae first to last, mony a thoosan pounds o' his money—a weel an' punctually paid. Noo, it happened that, twa or three days before this, my faither had dispatched an order to this hoose for a fresh supply o' guids, whan, to oor inexpressible amazement, we received, instead o' the guids, a letter plumply refusin any further credit, an' demandin, under a threat o' immediate prosecution, payment o' oor current account—amountin to aboot £150. To us this was a most extraordinary affair, an' wholly inexplicable, an' we resolved to know what it meant, by personal application to the firm. This, then, was anither purpose I had to serve in gann to Glasgow, to which I accordingly set out, wi' the folk's hunner-an'-fifty pounds in my pocket.

On arrivin in the city just named, my first ca', of course, was on Lucy. But this wasna accomplished without a great deal o' previous painfu feelin. It was twa or three minutes before I could rap. At length I raised the knocker, an' struck. Lucy opened the door. She stared wildly at me, for a second, an' then, utterin a scream, ran into the hoose, exclaimin, distractedly—"O James, James! mother, mother! here's Mr Smith's ghost!" And she screamed again more loudly than ever, an' flung herself on sofa, in a violent fit o' hysterics.

Here, then, was a pretty reception. I was confounded, but stepped leisurely into the hoose, after Lucy, whom I found extended on the sofa, an' her mother an' a strange gentleman beside her—a stranger to me at least—endea-

vourin to soothe her, and calm her violence. On the mother, my presence seemed to hae nearly as extraordinary an effect as on the dochter. When I entered the room, she, too, set up a skirl, and fled as far back frae me as the apartment wad admit, exclaiming—

"Lord be aboot us, Mr Smith! is that you? Can it be possible? Are ye in the body, or are ye but a wanderin spirit? Lord hae a care o' us, are ye really an' truly leevin, Mr Smith?"

"Guid folks," said I, as calmly as I could, in reply to this strange rhapsody, "will ye be sae kind as tell me what a' this means?" An' I first locked at the dochter, wha was still lyin on the sofa, wi' her face buried wi' fricht in the cushions, an' then at the mother, wha was sittin in a chair, starin at me, an' gaspin for breath, but noo evidently satisfied that I was at least nae ghaist.

"Means, Mr Smith!" said she, at intervals, as she could get breath to speak; "oh, man, didna we hear that ye were dead! Haena we thocht that ye were in yer grave for this month past! Dear me, but this is extraordinary! But will ye just step this way wi' me a minnit." An' she led the way into another room, whither I followed her, in the hope o' gettin an explanation o' the singular scene which had just taken place; an' this explanation I did get. On oor enterin the apartment, my conductress shut the door, an', desirin me to tak a seat, thus began—"Dear me, Mr Smith, but this is a most extraordinary, an', I maun say, a most unlucky affair. Werena we tell't, a month ago, that ye were dead an' buried, an' that by mair than ane—ay an' by the carrier frae yer ain place, too, at whom Lucy made inquiry the moment we heard it? An', mair than a' that," continued Mrs Craig, "here's yer death mentioned in ane o' the newspapers o' yer ain place." Sayin this, she took an auld newspaper frae a shelf, an', after lookin for the place to which she wanted to direct my attention, put it into my hauns, wi' her thoom on the following piece o' intelligence:—"Died, on the 16th current, at his father's hoose, —, Mr William Smith, in the 23d year o' his age."

"Noo, Mr Smith," said Mrs Craig, triumphantly, "what were we to think o' a' this, but that ye were really an' truly buried? The place, yer name, yer age, a' richt to a tittle. What else could we think?"

"Indeed, Mrs Craig," said I, smiling, "it is an odd business, an' I dinna wunnur at yer bein deceived; but it's a' easily aneuch explained. It's this confounded name o' mine that's at the bottom o' a' the mischief. The Willie Smith here mentioned, I need hardly say, I suppose, is no me; but I kent him weel aneuch, an' a decent lad he was—he just lived twa or three doors frae us; an', as to the carrier misleadin ye, I dinna wunnur at that either—for he wad naturally think ye were inquiren after the deceased. But there's nae harm dune, Mrs Craig," continued I.

"I'm no sure o' that," interrupted my hostess, wi' a look an' expression o' voice that rather took me aback, as indeed, had also the *triumphant* manner in which she had appealed to me if they could be blamed for havin believed me dead. This she was aye pressin on me, an' I was rather surprised at it; but it was to be fully accounted for.

"No!" said I, whan Mrs Craig expressed her uncertainty as to there bein any mischief dune; "isna there Lucy to the fore, lookin as weel an' as healthy as ever I saw her, an'?"

"Lucy's married!" interposed Mrs Craig, firmly and solemnly.

"Married!" exclaimed I, startin frae my seat, in horror an' amazement—"Lucy married!"

"Deed is she, Mr Smith, an' yon was her husband ye saw; an' ye canna blame her, puir thing! I'm sure mony a sair heart she had after ye. I thocht she wad hae grat-ten her een oot; but, bein sure ye were de. an' a guid offer

comin in the way, ye ken, she couldna refuse't. It wad hae been the heicht o' imprudence. Sae she juist drier her een, pur thing, an' buckled to."

"Exactly, Mrs Craig—exactly," said I, here interraptin her; "I understan ye—ye need say nae mair." An' I rushed oot o' the door like a madman, an' through the streets, withoot kennin either what I was doin or whar I was gaun. On recoverin my composure a little, I fand mysel in the Green o' Glasgow, an' close by the river side. The clear, calm, deep water, tempted me, in the desperation o' my thochts. Ae plunge, an' a' this distractin turmoil that was rackin my soul, an' tearin my bosom asunder, wad be stilled. In this frame o' mind, I gazed gloomily on the glidin stream; but, as I gazed, better thochts gradually presented themselves, an', finally, resentment took the place o' despondency, whan I reflected on the heartless haste o' Lucy, to wed anither, thereby convincin me that, in losin her, my loss was by nae means great. So, then, to mak a lang story short, in place o' jumpin into the Clyde, I hied me to a tavern, ate as hearty a supper as ever I ate in my life, drank a guid, steeve tumbler o' toddy, tumbled into bed, sleepit as sound as a caterpillar in winter, an' awoke next mornin, as fresh as a daisy an' as licht as a lark, free frae a' concern about Lucy, an' perfectly satisfied that I had acted quite richt in no droonin mysel on the previous nicht.

Havin noo got quit o' my love affairs, my first business, next day, was to ca' on the mercantile firm alluded to in another part o' the narrative; and, to their countin-hoose I accordingly directed my steps—and thae steps, when I entered their premises, were a wee haughty, for I felt at once the strength o' the money in my pouch, and a sense o' havin been ill-used by them. On enterin the countin-hoose, I fand the principal there alane, seated at a desk.

This gentleman I knew personally, and he kent me too; for I had frequently ca'ed at his office in the way o' business, and on these occasions he had aye come forrit to me wi' extended hand and a smilin countenance. On the present, however, he did naething o' the kind. He sat still, and, lookin sternly at me as I approached him—

"Well, Mr Smith," he said, "are ye come to settle that account. Short accounts make long friends, you know," he added; but wi' a sort o' ferocious smile, if there be such a thing.

"I wad like first to ken, sir," I replied, "what was the meanin o' yer writin us sic a letter as we had frae ye, the ither day?"

"Why, Mr Smith," said Mr Drysdale, which was the gentleman's name, "under the peculiar circumstances of the case, I don't see there was anything in that letter that ought to have surprised you. It was a perfectly natural and reasonable effort on our part to recover our own."

"A reasonable effort, sir, to recover your own!" said I, indignantly. "What do you mean? My faither has dealt wi' ye these twenty years, and I don't suppose ye ever fand it necessary to mak ony effort to recover your money oot o' his hands. I rather think ye were aye paid without askin."

"Oh, yes, yes," replied Mr Drysdale, doggedly; "but I repeat that recent circumstances have altered the case materially."

"What circumstances do ye allude to, sir?" said I, wi' increasin passion.

"What circumstances, sir, do I allude to?" replied Mr Drysdale, fiercely. "I don't suppose you required to come here for that information; but you shall have it, nevertheless, since you ask it." And, proceeding to a file of newspapers, he detached one, and, throwing it on the desk before me, placed his finger, as Mrs Craig had done on another occasion, on the bankrupt list, and desired me to look at *that*. I did so, and read, in this catalogue of un-

fortunates, the name of "William Smith, merchant, —. Creditors to meet," &c. &c.

"Now, sir," said Mr Drysdale, with a triumphant sneer, "are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly, sir," I replied; "but you will please to observe that that William Smith is not my father. He's a totally different person."

"What!" exclaimed Mr Drysdale, "not your father! Who is he, then? I didn't know there was any other William Smith, of any note, in trade, in your town. I did not, indeed, look particularly at the designation; but took it for granted it was your father, as, to my certain knowledge, many others have also done."

"Indeed!" replied I; "why, that is mair serious. Some steps maun be taen to remedy that mischief."

"Without a moment's delay," said Mr Drysdale, who was already a changed man. "Your father must advertise directly; saying he's not the William Smith whose name appears in the bankrupt list of such a date. Lose not a moment in doing this, or your credit'll be cracked through-out the three kingdoms. It has already suffered seriously here, I can assure you."

Havin paid Mr Drysdale his account, which he wasna noo for acceptin—sayin that, if we had the sma'est occasion for the money, to use it freely, withoot regardin them—and havin thanked him for his advice as to counteractin the evil report that had gane abroad respectin us, I hurried awa to put it in execution; and thinkin it very hard to be subjected to a' this trouble sae innocently, and to hae, at ane and the same time, a pair o' such calamities sae oddly thrust upon me, as my ain death, and the bankruptcy o' my faither. However, sae it was. But my business noo, was to remedy, as far as possible, the mischief that had been done by the unfounded rumour o' oor insolvency. Wi' this view I hastened awa to a newspaper office, to begin the cure by an advertisement; and, in doin this, I had occasion to pass the coach-office whar I had landed the day before. Observin the place, I thoct I might as weel step in and secure my ticket for the followin day, when it was my intention to return hame. Accordingly, into the office I gaed; and, whan I did sae, I fand the clerk in earnest conversation wi' twa men, ane o' whom was busily employed in lookin owre the way-book or register o' passengers' names. They didna at first observe me enter; but, whan they did, there was an instant pause in their conversation, and I observed the clerk, after he had glanced at me, tippin a significant wink to ane, and gently punchin the other wi' his elbow. Then a' three glanced at me. I couldna understand it. However, I said nothing; thinkin they were settlin some private business tgether, and, oot o' guid nature, wad rather wait a minute or twa than interrupt them. But my waitin wasna lang. Before I had been an instant in the office, ane o' the men cam roun to whar I was stan'in, and, lookin me fiercely in the face, said—

"What's your name, sir, if you please?"

"My name, sir!" replied I, as angrily—for I thoct the fellow put the question in a very impertinent sort o' way—"what business hae ye wi' my name?"

"Oh, mair than ye're aware o', p'raps," says he. "An it's a bad sign o' a man whan he'll no tell his name," says he. This touched me to the quick, an' I dare say the vagabond kent it wad, an' did it on purpose. It was a wipe at my character which I could by nae means submit to. So says I to him, says I:—

"Freen, ye'll observe that I'm no denyin my name—I'm only disputin yer right to demand it. I'm no ashamed o' my name, sir, although it certainly has cost me some trouble in my day. My name, sir, is William Smith—sae mak o't what ye like."

"I should mak a couple o guineas o't, at the very least," said the fellow wi' a smile; and at the same time catchin

me by the breast o' my coat, and sayin that I was his prisoner.

"Prisoner!" exclaimed I, in amazement, "prisoner! what do ye mean?"

"I mean just exactly what I say," said the fellow, quite coolly; and, thinkin he saw in me some show o' a spirit o' resistance, whilk there really was, he touched me wi' a bit thing like a wean's whistle, and winked to his neebor to come to his assistance, which the latter immediately did, and catched me by the ither breast o' my coat.

"Come along," said baith, now beginnin to drag me wi' them.

"No a fit," said I, resistin, "till I ken what for I'm used this way."

"Oh! ye don't know, Mr Innocence!" said the fellow wha first took haud o' me; "not you—you're amazed, an't you? You can't suppose there's such a thing as fugæ warrants out against you! And you can't believe I should have such a thing in my pocket," added the scoonril, takin a piece o' paper oot o' his pouch, and haudin't up before my een, but oot o' my reach. "There, my lad, are you satisfied now? That's the thing I walks by."

Then, havin replaced the paper in his pouch, he went on, but now, apparently, more for the information of the bystanders, (of whom there was, by this time, a considerable number gathered together,) than for mine.

"You're apprehended, Mr Smith, by virtue of a fugæ warrant, obtained at the instance of Messrs. Hodgson, Brothers, & Co., on the evidence of two credible witnesses—namely, Robert Smart and Henry Allan—who have deponed that you were going beyond seas; you being indebted to the said Hodgson, Brothers, & Co., in the sum of £74: 15: 9 sterling money. There's cause and ground o' yer apprehension, Mr Smith," continued the fellow; "so, no more about it, but come along quietly, and at once, or it may be worse for you."

"I'll see you shot first," said I. "I ken naething about your Hodgson, Brothers—never heard o' them before. I owe them nae money, nor onybody else, but what I can pay, and I haena, nor ever had, ony intention whatever o' leavin my ain country."

"A' quite natural statements these, Mr Smith," said the man wha first took haud o' me; "but ye'll observe we're no bound to believe them. All that we have to do, is to execute our duty. If you are wronged, you may have your redress by legal process. In the meantime, ye go with us." And again the two commenced draggin me oot o' the office.

"May I be hanged if I do, then!" said I, passionately; for my blood was noo gettin up. It wad hae been far better for me, in the end, if I had taen things calmly—for I could easily hae proven my identity, and, of course, the messengers' error in apprehendin me; but my prudence and patience baith gave way before the strong feelin o' resentment, which a sense o' the injustice I was sufferin had excited.

"May I be hanged if I do, then!" said I; and wi' that I hit ane o' the fellows a wap on the face that sent him staggerin to the other side o' the office. Havin done this, I turned roun, quick as thocht, and collared the ane that still held by me, a proceedin which was immediately followed by a wrestle o' the most ferocious and determined character. I was the stouter man o' the twa, however, and wad sune hze laid my antagonist on the breadth o' his back, but for his neebor, who, now rendered furious by the blow which I had gien him, sprang on me like a tiger; and, between them I was borne to the groun, the twa fa'in on the tap o' me. Here, again, however, the battle was renewed. I continued to kick and box richt and left, wi' a vigour that made me still formidable to my enemies; while they, to do them justice, lent me kicks and blows in return, that nearly ca'ed the life oot o' me. There, then, were we a' three rowin

on the floor, sometimes ane uppermost an' sometimes anither, wi' oor faces streamin o' blude, and oor coats a torn in the most ruinous manner. It was an awfu' scene, and such a ane as hadna been seen often in that office before, I dare say. As micht be expected, we had a numerous audience, too. The office was filled wi' folk, the door was choked up wi' them, and there was an immense crowd in the street, and clusters at the window, a' tryin to get a sicht or a knowledge o' what was proceedin within. Baith the commotion and the concourse, in fact, was tremendou—just appallin to look at. But this was a state o' matters that couldna last lang. My assailants havin ca'ed in the assistance o' a couple o' great, big, stout fallows o' porters, I was finally pinned to the floor, whan my hauns bein secured by a pair o' handcuffs, I was raised to my feet, again collared by the twa officers, and a cry havin been made to clear the road, I was led oot o' the office in procession; a messenger on each side o' me, the twa porters ahint, and ane before, openin a passage through the crowd, whose remarks, as I gaed along, were highly flatterin to me:—

"What an awfu'-like ruffian!" said ane. "What a murderous-lookin scoonril!" said anither.

"What's he been doin'?" inquired a third.

"Robbin the mail-coach," answered a fourth; "and they say he has murdered the guard an' twa passengers."

"Oh! the monster!" exclaimed an auld wife, whom this piece of accurate information had reached; "the savage, bloody monster! Was ever the like heard tell o'! The gallows is owre guid for him."

In short, I heard mysel, as I was led along, charged wi' every crime that human wickedness is capable o', although I perceived that the robbery o' the mail, and the murders o' the guard and passengers, was the favourite and prevailin notion; a notion which, I presumed, had arisen frae the circumstance o' the row's havin had its origin in a coach office. Some reports hae been waur founded. As to the reflections on my appearance, I couldna reasonably quarrel wi' them; for, really, it was far frae bein prepossessin; and o' this I was quite sensible. My coat was hingin in tatters aboot me; my hat was crushed oot o' a' shape; and my face was hideously disfigured wi' blude, and wi' unnatural swellins frae the blows I had gotten.

Wi' the reflections on my appearance, then, as I hae said, greatly improved as it was by the display o' my handcuffs, I couldna justly fin' faut. By-and-by, however, we reached the jail; and into ane o' its strongest and best secured apartments was I immediately conducted. Havin seen me fairly lodged here, my captors took their leave o' me; ane o' them sayin, as he quitted the cell, and shakin his head as he spoke—

"If ye don't rue this job, friend, my name's not what it is—that's all."

The door bein noo closed on me, an' a fine opportunity bein thus presented me for indulgin in a little reflection on my present circumstances an' situation, I accordingly began to do so; but I fand it by nae means a very agreeable employment. Among ither things, it struck me that I had exposed mysel sadly, an' very unnecessarily, since I could easily, as I believe I hae before remarked, hae shewn that they had put the saddle on the wrong horse; but I had allowed my passion to get the better o' me, an', instead o' takin the richt an' prudent course o' establishin this by a quiet procedure, had resisted, an' feucht like a thief taen in the fact. However, the business was noo hoo to mend the matter, an' it was some time before I could discover precisely hoo this was to be done—at least wi' a' that expedition I wad hae liked. At last it struck me that I couldna do better than intimace my situation to Mr Drysdale, an' request o' him to come an' see me. This, then, I immediately did—the jailor furnishin me wi' paper, pen, an ink, an' undertakin to have my letter delivered as directed.

which was faithfully executed; for, in less than half-an-hour, Mr Drysdale, laughin like to split his sides, entered my cell.

"What's this, Mr Smith?—what's this has happened ye, man?" said he, when the laughin wad let him speak. "Ye see what it is to hae a bad name. I tell't ye there was mair than me mistaen about this affair. It's a most unlucky name yours."

"Confound the name, sir!" said I. "It's like to be baith the ruin an' the death o' me. But what can I do? I canna get quit o't, an' maun just fecht oot wi't the best way I can."

I wasna at first a'thegither in such a laughin humour as my visiter, yet I couldna help joinin him in the lang run, whan we took twa or three guid rouns o't, an' then proceeded to business. Mr Drysdale said he wad bail me to ony amount, if that were necessary to my immediate liberation; but proposed that he should, in the first place, call on Hodgson, Brothers, whom he knew intimately, an' state the case to them. This he accordingly did; an', in about a quarter o' an hour, returned to me in the jail, wi' ane o' thae gentlemen alang wi' him. Mr Hodgson expressed the utmost concern for what had happened, an' offered me ony reasonable recompense I might name for the injury an' detention to which I had been subjected. This, however, I declined, but expressed a wish that the messengers wha had apprehended me micht be keel-hauled a bit for the rashness o' their proceedins.

"As to that, Mr Smith," said Mr Hodgson, smilin, "I think you had as well 'let a-be for let a-be' there. They have been sadly mauled by you, I understand, and it strikes me to be a drawn battle between you."

"Weel, weel," said I, laughin, "een let it be sae, then; but the soonrils ocht to be mair carefu wha they lay their hands on."

"They ought, no doubt," said Mr Hodgson; "but, in this case, there was really some excuse for them. Our debtor, whom I dare say you know very well, is a young man of the name of William Smith—a grocer in your own town, who began business there some months ago. Now, he has failed, as I dare say you know, also—has shut shop—swindled his creditors—and fled the country. This was the fellow we wanted to catch; and, you being from the same place, of the same name, and of, as I take it, about the same age, it is really no great wonder that the men were deceived."

I allowed that it was not; but said it was rather hard that the sins o' a' the Willie Smiths in the country should be visited on my shouthers. "There's no a piece o' villany done by, nor a misfortune happens to a Willie Smith," said I, "but it's fastened on me. It's really hard."

My twa visitors laughingly admitted the hardship o' the case, but advised me to be as patient under't as I could—a wishy-washy aneuch sort o' advice; but it was a', I dare say, they had to offer.

I need hardly say that the jail doors were noo instantly thrown open to me, nor that I lost nae time in availin mysel o' the liberty to which they invited. The first thing I did on gettin oot, was to provide mysel wi' a new coat and hat; for, until this was done, I wasna in a fit state to be seen, and couldna think o' walkin the streets in the torn-down and blackguard-lookin condition in which my captors had left me. Havin, however, improved my outward man a little, and brushed up my face a bit—but on which, notwithstanding a' I could do, there continued to remain some ugly traces o' my late adventure—I thoct I couldna do better, as I had noo a lang idle evenin before me, than ca' on twa or three auld and intimate acquaintances o' our family that resided in Glasgow. In pursuance o' this resolution, I began wi' some decent folks o' the name o' Robertson, distant relations o' our ain, and from whom I had, on the occasion o' former visits, o' which I had made twa or three,

met wi' the most kind and cordial welcome; and o' this I naturally expected a repetition in the present instance. What was my surprise and mortification, then, whan I fand it quite the reverse—most markedly sae!

"Oh, William, is that you!" said Mrs Robertson, drily, and wi' a degree o' stiffness and cauldness in her manner which I couldna understan. "Will ye stap in a bit?" she added, hesitatingly and evidently wi' reluctance. Noo, she used to fling her arms aboot me, and pu' me in. But it was noo, "Will ye step in?" I did, but sune saw there was something wrang; but what it was I couldna conjecture. I overheard her husband and dochters *refusin* Mrs Robertson's request to them to come ben and see me. They used to a' rush aboot me, like a torrent. In short, I perceived that I was a very unwelcome visiter, and that a speedy retreat, on my part, wad be highly approved of. Amongst other hints o' this, was Mrs Robertson's scarcely speakin three words to me a' the time I sat wi' her, and no makin ony offer o' the sma'est refreshment. Her behaviour to me was a'thegither strange and mysterious; but what struck me asmaist singular, was her aye speakin o' my faither wi' a compassionatin air. "Puir, puir man!" she wad say; "Gude help us! it's a weary warl this! Ane canna tell what their weans are to come to. Muckle grief and sorrow, I'm sure, do they bring to parents' hearts." These truths bein obvious and general, I couldna deny them, although I was greatly at a loss to see any particular occasion for advertin to them at the time. Wearied oot, at length wi' Mrs Robertson's truisms, and disgusted wi' her incivility and uncourteous manner to me, I took up my hat, and decamped, wi' as little ceremony as I had been received. I was, in truth, baith provoked and perplexed by her extraordinary treatment o' me, and couldna at a' conjecture to what it could be owin.

But let the reader fancy, if he can, what was my surprise whan I fand mysel treated in almost precisely the same way in every ither hoose at which I ca'ed subsequently to this. There was, in every instance, the same astonishment expressed at seim me, the same cauldness exhibited, and the same mysterious silence maintained durin my visit. I was perfectly confounded at it; but couldna, of course, ask ony explanation, as there was naething sae palpably oot o' joint as to admit o't. Havin made my roun o' ca's wi' the success and comfort I haementioned, I returned to my quarters, and, orderin a tumbler o' toddy, sat down amongst a heap o' newspapers, to amuse mysel the best way I could till bedtime. The first paper I took up was a Glasgow one, published that day. I skimmed it owre till I cam to a paragraph wi' the followin takin title—"Desperate Ruffian." This caught my ee at ance; for I was aye fond o' readin aboot desperate ruffians, and horrible accidents, and atrocious murders, &c. &c. "So," says I to mysel, "here's a feast." And I threw up my legs on the firm on which I was seated, drew the candle nearer me, took a mouthfu' oot o' my tumbler, and made every preparation, in short, for a quiet, deliberate, comfortable read; and this I got, to my heart's content. The paragraph, which began wi' "Desperate Ruffian," went on thus:—

"This morning, a scene, at once one of the most disgraceful and ludicrous which we have witnessed for some time, took place in one of the coach-offices of this city. A fellow of the name of William Smith, a young man of about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, from —, who is charged with various acts of swindling, and is well known as a person of infamous character, was apprehended, on a fugæ warrant, by our two active criminal officers, Messrs. Rob and Ramage, in the — coach-office, just as he was about to take out a ticket for Greenock, whither he intended to proceed for the purpose of embarking for America, with his ill-got gains. The ruffian, on being first apprehended, denied his name; but, finding this not avail

him, he violently assaulted the officers in the execution of their duty, and, being a powerful man, it was not until those very deserving men had suffered severely in their persons, and obtained the aid of the bystanders, that he was finally secured. This, however, was ultimately accomplished, when the fellow being securely handcuffed, was conducted to jail, and lodged in one of the strongest cells, where he will, of course, remain until brought to trial. There is a rumour that Smith has been concerned in some late coach robbery; but we have heard no particulars, and cannot vouch for its truth, although, from his appearance, we should suppose him to be perfectly capable of anything."

Weel, guid reader, what do ye think o' that? Wasna that a pretty morsel for me to swallow? It is true that I needna hae felt very uneasy about the description o' a character that didna belong to me; but it maun be observed that there was here that mixture o' fact and fiction which, in cases o' rumour it is sae difficult to separate. Moreover, I was certainly the person spoken o', however erroneously represented. There was nae denyin that. I was mingled up wi' the business, and the very process o' establishin my innocence was certain to gie me a most unpleasant notoriety; and was likely, besides, no to be in every case successfu. In short, I fand, tak it ony way I liked, that it couldna be reckoned otherwise than as a most unlucky affair. It was noo, too, that I began to smell a rat regardin the treatment I had met wi' frae the different acquaintances I had ca'ed upon. They had either seen the paragraph which I hae just quoted, or had heard o't. The same belief explained to me the cause o' Mrs Robertson's reflections on the risin generation o' mankind, and her extraordinary sympathy for my father. There could be nae doot o't—and thus was the mystery solved. Of this I was still further satisfied, when, on takin up anither Glasgow paper o' the same day, I fand that it also contained an account o' the mornin's affair. The twa paragraphs were, on the whole, pretty much alike in substance; but, in the second ane, there were twa or three incidental circumstances mentioned, that added to the interest o' the story considerably.

Such, then, was the readin wi' which I beguiled the time on the evenin o' which I am speakin; an' I leave it to the reader o' thae pages to judge hoo far it was calculated to soothe my previously harassed feelins, an' to afford me the relaxation an' amusement I sought, an' o' which I had sae much need. At first, I resolved on takin every possible public an' private measure that could be commanded to counteract the evil reports, o' ae kind an' anther, under which baith mysel personally an' my family were labourin. I thoct on gaun roun to a' the acquaintances on whom I had just been ca'in, an' explainin to them the real state o' the case; an' then followin up this proceedin wi' ca'in on the editors o' the twa papers in which the injurious statements had appeared, an' requestin, nay, insistin, on their puttin in a true version o' the story, at the same time carefully markin my identity, an' separatin me frae a' discreditable transactions, of every kind, degree, an' character whatsoever. A' this I thoct o' doin, I say; but, on reflection, I changed my mind, an' determined no to gie mysel ony such trouble, but just to let things tak their course, an' trust to my ain conduct, an' the weel-kent respectability o' my father, for the guid opinion o' the world. Anent the rumour o' oor bankruptey, however, I thoct there could be nae harm in puttin in an advertisement or twa, contradictory o't; an' this was accordingly done, in the following brief terms:—

"William Smith, hosier, —, begs to inform his friends and the public, that he is not the same person whose name appears in the bankrupt list published in the — newspaper of the 15th inst. All claims on the advertiser will be paid, on demand, at his shop."

This advertisement I handed into the offices o' twa Glasgow papers that same nicht, an' next mornin saw me safely perched on the tap o' the coach for oor ain place, glad that a' my misadventures were owre, an' that I was soon to be at hame again; for I was sick o' Glasgow—an' the reader will allow no without some reason. The coach on which I was mounted was just aboot to start, the driver had taen the reins in his hand, an' the guard was strugglin to get up the last trunk, whan the waiter o' the inn in which I had been stoppin, an' which was at the head o' a prodigiously lang close, just at the startin-place, cam rinnin up, an' cried, lookin at the same time at the passengers—

"Is there a Mr Smith here?"

I expected that half-a-dozen at least wad hae owned the name; but, to my surprise, there was no Mr Smith among them, but mysel.

"They ca' me Smith, my man—what is it?" said I, wi' a suspicious look; for I noo stood greatly in awe o' my ain name—no being sure what mischief it might lead me into.

"There's a gentleman up in the hoose wants to see you directly," said the lad.

"But I canna go till him, man—ye see the coach is just gaun to start," said I.

"Ay, but he says that's o' nae consequence. Ye maun come till him. He has something o' importance to say to ye."

Thinkin it wasna advisable to slight a message o' sae pressin a nature, an' curious to ken wha it was that could be wantin me, an' what he could be wantin me for, I leaped down, resolvin to mak my legs, which were gay an' lang an' souple anes, save my distance, an' havin nae doubt they wad, critical as the case was. I up the close like a shot, an' into the hoose; but, though I was in a hurry, the waiter wha had come for me was in nane. He didna appear for five minutes after; an', as he was the only person wha kent onything about a message bein sent after me, I had to wait his return, before I could find oot the person wha wanted me. This, however, he noo effected for me; but not before a good deal mair time was lost. The gentleman who wished to see me was dressin; so I was shewn into a room, while the waiter went to inform him o' my arrival. In a minute or twa after—durin which I was dancin aboot in a fever o' impatience, for fear o' losin the coach—the door o' the apartment flew open, an' a laughin, joyous-lookin fellow, with a loud "Aha, Bob!" an' extended hand, rushed in; but he didna rush far. The instant he got his ee fairly on me, he stopped short, an', lookin as grave's a rat, bowed politely, an' said he was exceedingly sorry to perceive that he had committed a gross mistake.

"The fact is, my dear sir," he said, becomin again affable, to reconcile me, I suppose, to the unfortunate blunder, an' speakin wi' great volubility, "my name is Smith, which, I suppose, is yours too, sir. I'm from London. Now, you see, my dear sir, my brother Bob, who lives in Ireland, and whom I haven't seen for some years, was to have met me here last night, agreeably to arrangement made by letter, and we were to have gone this morning, as it were, by the same coach in which you were going, to visit some friends in that part of the country to which it runs. Well, you see, I arried here only this morning early; but the first thing I did was to inquire if there was a Mr Smith in the hoose, and I was distinctly told by the rascal of a waiter that there was no person of that name. Well, what does the fellow do, but come running to my bedside, a little ago, and tell me that there had been a Mr Smith in the hoose over night, and that he was at that moment on the top of the — coach. Well, my dear sir, did not I immediately and very naturally conclude that this Mr Smith must be my brother! And thus has this unlucky mistake happened. 'Pon my honour, I am most sorry for it—exceedingly sorry, indeed."

Bein naturally o' a very placable disposition, I didna say much in reply to this harangue; but, mutterin something

about there oen nae help for't, rushed oot o' the hoose, an' down the confounded lang close, as fast as my legs could carry me, and that was pretty fast; but no fast aneuch to catch the coach. It was aff an' awa, mony a lang minute afore.

"Aweel," said I, on discoverin this, "but this does beat cock-fechtin! What, in heaven's name, am I to do wi' this unfortunate patronymic o' mine? It's crossin me wi' mischief o' ae kind or anither at every step. I suppose I'll be hanged in a mistake next. That'll be the end o't. I'll change't, if I leeve to get hame—I'll change't, let what like be the consequence, or I'll hae an' *alias* added till't, before waur comes o't; for this'll never do."

In such reflections as thae did I expend the impatient feelin that the loss o' the coach, an' the recollection o' certain ithers sma' incidents wi' which the reader is acquainted, had gien rise to. But little guid they did me; an' this I at length fand oot. Sae I just gae a bit smile to mysel, an' made up my mind to wait patiently for the next coach, which started the same nicht, though at a pretty late hour. Late as that hour was, however, it cam roun, an', whan it did, it fand me, without havin met wi' ony ithers misfortune in the interim, mounted again on the tap o' a coach. This time I was allowed to keep my seat in peace. The coach drove awa, an' me along wi't; an', in twal' hours thereafter, I fand mysel in my faither's hoose, safe an' soun', after a' that had happened me.

Shortly after the occurrences which I have just related, my puir faither departed this life, and I, as his only son and heir, succeeded to a' his possessions—stock, lock, and barrel; and I now only wanted a wife to complete my establishment, and fix my position in society. This, however, didna remain lang a desideratum wi' me. A wife I got, and as guid a nee as ever man was blessed wi'; but it was rather a curious sort o' way that I got her. Ae nicht, pretty late, in the summer o' the year 1796, a rather smart rap comes to our door. We were a' in bed—mother, servant, lass, and a'; but, on hearin't, I bangs up, on wi' my claes, lights a cannel, and opens the door. On doin this, then, I sees a porter loaded wi' trunks and bandboxes, and behint him a very pretty, genteel-lookin young woman.

"Here's a frien o' yours come to see you, frae Edinburgh," says the porter, whom I kent weel aneuch; and wi' this the young leddy comes forward, wi' a licht step, and ane o' the prettiest smiles I ever saw; and, says she, haudin oot her haun to me—

"Ye'll no ken me, Mr Smith, I dare say?"

"No, indeed, mem," says I—"I do not."

"I'm a cousin o' yours," said she—"Margaret Smith; and a dochter o' your uncle William's."

"Frae Edinburgh," said I, takin her cordially by the haun, and leadin her into the parlour.

"The same," said she, smilin again; "and I'm just come doun to spend a day or twa wi' ye, if ye hae room for me, and winna think me owre troublesome."

"Room!" said I—"plenty o' room; and, as for trouble, dinna mention that." And I assisted my fair cousin to remove her shawl and other haps. This cousin, I may mention by the way, I had never seen before; and neither had she ever seen ony o' us, although we knew perfectly weel o' each other's existence. But this within parentheses.

Havin seen my pretty cousin—for she was really a bonny-ookin and modest creature—made so far comfortable, I ran joyfully to my mother, to inform her o' oor acquisition. My mother, who had never seen her either, was delighted wi' the intelligence, and instantly rose to welcome her. The servant was roused oot o' her bed, a little supper prepared, and some delightful hours we spent together. I was charmed wi' my fair cousin; so intelligent, so lively, so sensible, so accomplished—so much o' everything, in short, that was captivatin in a young and beautifu' woman.

Nor was my mother less delighted wi' her than I was. There were, indeed, some things spoken o' in the course o' conversation between my mother, and oor guest, and I, relatin to family affairs, in which we couldna, somehow or other, come to a distinct understandin. There was something like cross-purposes between us; and I observed that my fair cousin was extraordinary ignorant o' a' matters concernin us, and o' the circumstances o' a number o' oor mutual relations. But this neither my mother nor I thought much o', either. It was just sae like a bit lively thochtless lassie, wha couldna be expected to hae either the genealogy o' her friends, or their particular callins or residences, at her finger-ends. However, as I said before, we spent a pleasant evening thegither; and this was followed by eight as pleasant days, durin which time oor fair guest continued to mak rapid progress in the affections o' baith my mother and me; although, of course, the regard she excited was somewhat different in its nature in the twa cases. In mine it was love—in my mother's esteem. But a' this was to hae a sudden and a curious termination. At the end o' the eight days above alluded to, happenin to tak up a newspaper, I was attracted by an advertisement bearing the following highly interesting title—"Young Lady Missing." I read on, and found, to my amazement, that the young lady was no other than my fair cousin. The notice stated, that she had gone doun to —, to visit some relations; had left Edinburgh, by the — coach, on the mornin of the 10th, and had been safely set doun at —; but that her relations there had seen nothing of her, and that no trace of her could since be found. The advertisement concluded by offering a handsome reward to any one who could give any such information as might lead to a discovery of the young lady, either to Mr William Smith, haberdasher, —, or to Mr William Smith, No. 19, Lavender Street, Edinburgh.

Here, then, was a queer business. But, bein now somewhat accustomed to thae things, I was at nae loss to discover the meanin o't. The young lady wasna my cousin at a'—she had come to the wrang shop. She was a niece o' Willie Smith the haberdasher's—and there was the mystery solved at ance. It turned oot precisely sae. There was an awfu kick-up, and an awfu rejoicin, and shakin o' hands, and writin o' letters, and sae forth, after I had announced to the different parties how the matter stood, and brocht them thegither. But I wasna gaun to lose my fair cousin this way. I followed her to Willie Smith's, whar I was a welcome aneuch guest, and availed mysel to the full o' the advantages which a curious chance had thrown in my way, by eventually makin her my wife; and, as I said before, a most admirable one she made, and still maks, as she is sittin by my elbow at this present writin.

Noo, guid reader, sae far hae I brocht the story o' my life, or perhaps, rather o' my unfortunate name, (no a'thegither so unfortunate, either, since it helped me to sic a wife,) and I maun stop; but it's for want o' room, and, I assure you, no for want o' matter. What I hae tell't ye is no a tite o' the sufferins I hae endured through this unhappy patronymic o' mine. In truth, it was but the beginnin o' them. The rest I may relate to ye on some future day. In the meantime, guid reader, I bid ye fareweel, wi' a sincere houp that yer name's no Willie Smith.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SCOTTISH VETERAN.

IT was upon one of those clear, chill, but not unpleasant days, that so often occur towards the latter end of November, that an aged female, and one much younger, in all the bloom of maiden beauty, overcast by a tender shade of melancholy, that gave tenfold interest to her lovely countenance, and mellowed the lustre of her dark hazel eyes, were seen sitting at the door of a cottage on the banks of one of the tributaries of the silver Tweed. The full round orb of the sun was sinking slowly behind a huge bank of clouds, tinged by his departing rays, that lingered as if regretting his short career, and loath to depart. The deep shades of twilight closed quickly upon the scene; but the females sat engaged at their work, as if it had been an eve of autumn. Margaret Blair, the more aged of the two, sat gazing in one direction, with unwearied assiduity, only occasionally looking at the progress she made with the stocking she was busy knitting; and Jeanie Aitken, the younger, bent her steadfast gaze at intervals in the same direction, towards the road that skirted the foot of the neighbouring hills. Heavy clouds began to rise in the east; the wind had changed towards that quarter, and howled mournfully along the waste.

"Jeanie, my dear," said Margaret, "Jamie has gotten a fine day to travel in. Do you see no appearance o' him yet? Your young een are far clearer than mine. These heavy clouds mak me fear for the nicht. I am sure he might have been here lang before this time, if his heart yearned as mickle to see me as mine does to see him. I trust that naething has happened to him on the road. Many a danger has he passed through in the wars. It would be an awful thing were one misfortune to happen him when he is so near home. God has preserved him in the battle-field; and, oh, I trust and pray He will still be his guide! Do you no see any signs o' him yet? The night will soon be on, and I fear it will be a stormy one."

A deep sigh escaped from Jeanie as she answered—"Oh, no; I see no one on the road. Dear mother, retire into the house—you must be very cold—I will watch yet a little. I hope he will soon be here, and then we will be so happy when we meet." The tears that filled her eyes, and the trembling accents in which she spoke, betrayed a heart ill at ease.

It was at this period I arrived at the cottage, in hopes of seeing my old schoolfellow; for a letter had been received a few days before, in which he informed his mother and Jean that he would be with them this day, as he had received his discharge.

Jeanie and James had long loved each other; they were cousins, and had been brought up together; but he had enlisted in anger, and forsaken her. With all his faults, she had never ceased to love him; and, from the day he went off to join his regiment, for six long years they had never heard of him. About three months after the battle of Victoria, the carrier to the town of Dunse brought them two letters as he passed—one for Margaret Blair, the other for Jeanie Aitken. They were from James. I was shewn both the letters, which will unfold the previous history of my friends, and the feelings of the reformed son better than I can, and introduce the Veteran

in a more favourable light than I have as yet been enabled to do.

"Victoria:

"DEAREST MOTHER,—My folly has at length fallen upon my own head, and heavy is the load I will bear until I receive an answer to this, containing your forgiveness for my wicked neglect of your counsels, and despising the instructions of my worthy father—the result of all which has been my giving myself so much to evil company, and deserting you in your old age. But, dear mother, I am now an altered man. On the dark and cheerless guard, at the dead hour of the night, my conscience often awoke, and rendered me almost desperate—when sinking under fatigue, hunger, and thirst, on the long and toilsome march, it has given a keener edge to my sufferings; still I warred against the better feelings that arose in my breast—for I was still wayward and proud; but now, lingering under my wounds, I humble myself in the dust, before that God I so long neglected, who alone speaks peace to my humbled spirit! Be not alarmed at the mention of my wounds. I am now out of danger, and will be enabled to join my regiment in a few weeks—would it were to join your peaceful fireside. But though I am unworthy to obtain yet for a time this my earnest prayer, I feel assured I shall yet be spared to comfort your declining years. And that every blessing may be yours until then, is the prayer of your now repentant and loving son,

"JAMES BLAIR."

"P.S.—Is cousin Jeanie still unmarried? Does she reside still near you? I hope she is still unchanged, unreasonable that I am. If she is, give her the letter; if not, burn it. The scenes and feelings I enjoyed before I left your roof, are dearer and stronger here in Spain, than I can express or you imagine. I do not request you to write soon—it would be unjust and unkind to doubt it for a moment. Again, I am your now altered and dutiful son until death.

"J. B."

The letter to Jeanie was received with a trembling hand, and placed in her bosom, that felt it impart a buoyancy to her feelings, she had been long a stranger to. As soon as she had finished reading the letter to Margaret, she retired to a beautiful knove that overtopped the burn, and seated herself among the long yellow broom, where the most pleasant of her days had passed with her James. There they had herded together; there they had first plighted their young loves; and there James had left her in anger, without hope of ever returning to her again. On this loved spot, every moment she could spare had been passed, musing upon her absent lover, or praying for his safety and return; and now, with a feeling of pleasure she had been long a stranger to, she drew the letter from her bosom, and broke it open, while joy and grief filled her heart by turns.

"Victoria.

"DEAREST AND BELOVED, BUT MUCH INJURED JEAN,—Dare I hope you ever think of me? I fear, if you do, it is with anger and contempt; for I feel, and my heart is like to burst with the thought, that I have used you ill. Believe me, it was in anger at I knew not what. You, with the

prudence I now esteem you for, refused to fulfil your promise of marriage, because I had given myself too much up to company—to my shame I own, to dissipation. Believe me, my love, I now feel, in all its bitterness, my folly, and your wisdom. I am no longer the “roaring boy” I used to boast myself among my associates; but the humbled lover and son. The privations and toils of war have opened my eyes to my true interests. For a time I was the most reckless in our company; for I strove, by riot, to drive from my mind the upbraidings of my heart; but I strove in vain. The early lessons I had received in rectitude, embittered all my guilty joys, and at length triumphed. Let me pour into your bosom the history of my reformation. It was on the eve of the battle of Fuentes de Honore, the first serious reflection came over my mind. The whole after part of the day I had been engaged in the work of death, with all my energies aiding in the destruction of my species, my mind excited to the utmost. Thrice we had driven the enemy through the village before us, over the dead and wounded. My comrades were falling thick around me. Evening came to stop the work of death. My bosom friend, the companion of my follies, had fallen, early in the action, at the foot of the brae by the burn-side. I remember the spot well. O Jeanie, how could I forget it? It was so like the spot where we last parted—where the most innocent and happiest of my hours had been spent—that, even in the hottest of the fire, the resemblance strung my arm, and fired my soul to double daring. I could not endure that an enemy should be in possession of it, and drive us from the sacred ground. I rejoiced that I was put on duty, to bury the dead and remove the wounded. I hurried to the spot where my friend had fallen, to assist him if alive, or to pay the last duty if dead. Alas, Jeanie! what a sight there met my eyes! He lay, adding to the pile of bleeding bodies that, only a few hours before, were all in life and health. Silent and sad, we dug a trench, and deposited the victims of war. The French parties were out on the same duty; we mixed friendly together, only enemies by a cruel necessity, and, like dogs, brought out to fight for the interest or amusement of others. Several of them could speak a little English. We drank and eat together. They had plenty; we were at this time almost famished, being in advance of our supplies. Fear, my love, you know, is no part of my nature; but the uncertainty of human life as a soldier, had never struck my mind with so much force as now. I returned an altered man. I felt as if we were never to meet again, and I never should reach my native vale, to lay my mother’s head in the grave. I own, with shame, I had until now striven to forget you, but could not; for, sleeping or waking, you were ever in my thoughts; night after night you were present in my dreams, and day found me almost distracted. Dissipation only brought greater anguish; yet my proud heart would not stoop to communicate its woes to those who alone could give relief. Every draught that joined I anxiously looked for an acquaintance from my native place; and I would have given a kingdom for the knowledge that you were still free. I knew your faithful nature; but I had basely deserted you; wounded that heart I ought to have cherished, because it would not act contrary to the dictates of a desecrating advice, that would have ruined us both. At length, the battle of Victoria was fought; in which action I was wounded in the thigh; but still I kept the ranks. We were sorely pressed by the enemy; but nature could support me no longer, and I sank to the ground as our regiment was forced to retire, overpowered by superior numbers. A charge of cavalry passed over the ground where I lay; and, O Jeanie! what horror did I feel at this moment! I commended my soul to God—my mother’s and your name escaped from my lips—the horse passed over me—and when, from a swoon, I awoke to consciousness, the surgeons were

setting the bone of my leg, and a bandage was already upon my wound in the thigh. I will not pain you more. I am now almost well, and often amuse myself with the thought that, were you to see the pale emaciated soldier upon his crutches, you would look in vain for Jamie Blair. But be cheerful, my love; for the surgeon says I will be as sound a man as ever, and join my regiment in a few weeks. How much better were it to join you and my mother! But the time will come in course, and I hope soon. If pity ever found a place in your bosom, send me your forgiveness; and, if you can send me the assurance that, in spite of all my follies, you love me dear as ever, I will now do all in my power to be worthy of it. If you refuse to pardon me, you will drive me to despair, and I shall volunteer for every forlorn hope, and rush upon danger, until death relieve me from my present state of mind. Return me, my love, good for evil, and give peace to that heart that wounded yours. Remembered or forgot, dearest Jean, I shall ever remain yours until death;

“JAMES BLAIR.”

On the evening of the day after the receipt of these letters, when I made my usual call, I was astonished at the change that had taken place in the widow’s cottage. The sadness had passed from the brow of Jean, and hope had given a new lustre to her eye. Margaret was all garrulity, and loud in the praises of James; but Jean was silent, and seemed to luxuriate in the pleasant feelings with which her soul was filled. I departed myself, with a feeling of happiness, at the welcome news from my old school-fellow, and walked home more stately and erect, as if my consequence had been enhanced by my friendship and intimacy with one of Wellington’s heroes; and crooned, with peculiar spirit and satisfaction, as I walked along, “Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled.”

It would be superfluous to say that Jeanie returned such an answer as James might wish. Joy once more became an inmate of Widow Blair’s cottage, and thanksgivings were now mingled in their prayers for the absent soldier. The correspondence was as regular as the vicissitudes of war would permit; and often, when I had occasion to go to town, I was intrusted with the letter and penny to lodge in the post-office for the soldier. Month after month rolled on; peace was at length concluded; the troops were returning to Britain; and James, being a seven-years’ man, and his period of service nearly expired, we could calculate to a day the time we expected to have him once more among us. But for a time we were disappointed. In no home in Britain did the return of Bonaparte from Elba cause greater sorrow than in the widow’s cottage. James was once more embarked for the continent with his regiment—was present at the battle of Waterloo—escaped the dreadful carnage unhurt—and marched with the army for Paris, where he got his discharge, and was on his return at the commencement of this narrative.

The shades of evening had forced the females to retire, benumbed with cold, long before my accustomed visit. I was grieved and disappointed at not finding James, and sorry to see the anxiety and grief of the mother and sweetheart. The clouds had now covered the whole sky—the darkness was intense—the wind blew with a piercing keenness—and snow had begun to fall fast, and drift along the waste. I gave them all the comfort I could, and retired, promising to call again in the morning—having in vain urged them to retire to rest; and, upon my return next day, I learned that, after my departure, they continued to watch—going repeatedly out to examine the state of the weather, or beguiled by the shaking of the door struck by the blast, and thinking some one tried the latch. Still no one came—hour after hour passed on—their humble supper stood untouched—the fears of the mother

were expressed in wailings and ejaculatory prayers for his safety; and Jeanie's expressive countenance betrayed the anxiety under which she laboured. Their evening devotions were made with pious hope—their usual hour of retiring to rest had long gone by; yet neither thought of sleep—for all that was most dear on earth to them was, they feared, exposed to the pitiless storm, and they still sat by the fire, shrinking at every gust of wind, as if it had struck themselves, while the candle burned on the window sill, a beacon to guide the wanderer. At length the door opened, and a thin, weather-beaten figure staggered in, and sank upon the floor, exhausted and senseless. The anticipated joyful meeting, was one of anguish and alarm. Care and assiduity restored the soldier to warmth and animation; and hope and joy succeeded to fear and grief. James had come from London to Leith in one of the smacks; and, after leaving Haddington, anxious to reach his mother's as soon as possible, had left the highway, and struck into the country, over the Lammermuir hills, by a route dear and familiar to him; and, being some miles shorter, chosen as much for the sake of former recollections, which were crowding upon him at every step, as for its shortness. The day was clear and bracing when he left Haddington, and all induced him to follow this route; but he had miscalculated his strength, and the shades of evening overtook him in the middle of the mountains. The sky began to lower, and threatened a storm. Ere he had reached the heights, the snow fell fast, the wind and drift threatened to overwhelm him, and all around became one undistinguishable chaos. He could recognise no mark by which to know whether he was in the right tract or not. Confused and bewildered, but not dismayed, he stood still for a few minutes, to collect his energies; and having recalled to his recollection that the wind blew from the direction in which he wished to proceed, he started afresh, and battled with the storm, till at length he recognised a well-remembered cairn on the heights, against which he stumbled, and of which he gained his knowledge only by groping; for it was so dark that he could not see his own hand a few inches from his face. Having felt it round and round, he came to the broad, flat stone on the southern side, the shepherd's dial, which gave a thrill of hope to his breast, like a glimpse of the polar star to the tempest-tossed mariner. Starting anew, and still keeping his face to the biting blast, again he stumbled upon a cairn, and felt it round and round; and, to his surprise and regret, found it to be the same. Disappointed and confused, he started afresh—twice he struggled round the same circle upon the heights, each time adding to the despondency that began to steal upon him, till, exhausted and almost hopeless, he threw himself on the lee-side of the cairn, to recover his strength. He thought some strange fatality attended him; yet was loath to yield to despair, and struggled manfully against it; but a languor came over him, attended by an almost irresistible drowsiness; and all he had suffered in the retreat to Corunna could not be compared to his present situation. There, companionship had lightened the most intense sufferings; severe as they often were, they were not, as now, without that aid which sustains men in the most trying cases—the countenance of their fellow-men. Here he was alone, in a sea of snow, within a few miles of his mother's door!—the thought was bitterness unutterable, such as he had never felt before. Death he had often braved in all his forms—in the battle-field he had gazed upon him in the pomp and tumult of war, when the excited mind unheeded his presence; but here he seemed to hold his victim in suspense, until his very presence might produce the parting of soul and body from very fear of him. He struggled to rise, and combat the feelings that he knew must prove fatal to him; but his limbs were stiff, and would not obey his will, and he commended his soul

to his Creator, and resigned himself to his fate. His mind became more calm, his thoughts less confused; and, as he lay musing, it occurred to him that he had erred in taking the wind for his compass; for, perhaps, it blew round the top of the hill, (as it did,) and was the cause of his always returning to the same spot. The idea occurred to him that, if he had held straight on until he came to a running water, and followed its course, it would have guided him to some mill or cottage. This acted upon his mind like an electric spark, his heart warmed, and his limbs resumed, under the inspiration of hope, that once more came to his aid, their former energy. Onwards he urged his way, stumbling at every few paces over the unequal ground; and, with severe labour, he cleared the hills, and anxiously listened for the sound of running water; but the howling of the blast deadened every sound; and he still urged his way, dragging his weary limbs after him, till a faint rushing was heard, and a black chasm appeared at his feet, over which he must have fallen on the next step. He returned thanks to God for his preservation. The chasm was the well-remembered linn, only a few hundred yards from his mother's cottage; and he had thought, more than once, he had distinguished a faint light in the gloom, at times distinct, then vanishing again, but now easily made out. His heart leaped for joy, for he knew it proceeded from his mother's cottage window. He kept the burn side, and proceeded straight to the house; but his energies were entirely spent; he reached it, lifted the latch, and remembered no more until he found his mother and Jeanie hanging over him and chafing his benumbed limbs. After a night's repose, the hardy veteran had risen, full of vigour, as if the last night's escape from death had been only a dream. I could perceive melancholy reflections, mixed with the joy he felt at finding all well at his return; but he said to me, with much bitterness—

“Eight years I have spent, of the prime of my life, in the service of my country; a few shillings, the remainder of my marching money, is all I possess in the world; and I have returned to my mother's house, a poorer man, in every respect, than I left it.”

A cloud passed over his brow—a sigh escaped—his altered look Jeanie watched with pain. She spoke not, but the sigh fell on his mother's ear. She grasped his hand; and, pressing it to her bosom—

“Jamie,” said she, “my bairn, why do ye sigh on this blessed day? Are ye vexed that ye hae come back to yer auld mither and Jeanie?”

“I am not, mother,” replied he—“indeed, I am not; but a few painful recollections steal over my mind; and the consciousness that I am alone the cause, adds to their bitterness. Jeanie, I am at home, and find you all I could wish; but complete happiness is yet at a distance. We cannot be united until I have recovered, by care and industry, what I have lost by my unprofitable absence.”

Jeanie blushed and hung down her head; her breast seemed too narrow to contain the feelings that rose in it; but his mother hastily interfered:—

“Jamie,” said she, “ye maunna tak that view o' yer situation—this cottage an' a' that is in it is yer ain. Ye'll no begrudge me my room in it for a' my time; and yer cousin has saved some pounds for this happy meeting, and winna put ye aff as she ance did before; for noo she's satisfied ye're an altered man. What say ye, lassie? Am I richt?”

Jeanie spoke not; but her looks shewed her approval, and the happy pair sat gazing at him as if they feared he was soon about to leave them, and they could not look enough. I began to speak of the scenes he had witnessed in Spain, when his mother inquired what he considered his most unlooked for escape.

Indeed, mother,” he replied, “it is hard to say; but I think it was at the storming of Badajos, before my better

feelings had returned to me. I was then reckless of everything; and, being in the grenadier company, I volunteered for the forlorn hope. I had been before on the same duty, and knew it was as well to volunteer as to be commanded, for the duty must be done, and volunteering has a more soldier-like sound; so we who were to form the party, immediately sold everything we possessed, and drank it with our comrades. This was the practice of many, for we knew what we had to do as soon as it was dark; and, if we escaped death, we might look upon it as a miracle; and thus were determined to enjoy life while we had it. This is a soldier's philosophy: enjoy all you have in your power; for what you leave after you fall, you know not who will enjoy. I have eaten the last morsel of bread in my haversack going into action, and my comrades did the same, lest we might fall and another eat it. As soon as the hour arrived, we were at our post and formed, then marched on in dead silence towards the breach, headed by a captain and a lieutenant. I was on the right, and heard the lieutenant sob once or twice. The captain turned to him and said, in an under voice—

“‘Return, if you are afraid.’”

“‘No,’ replied the lieutenant, in a firm voice, though not much louder than a whisper, ‘I am not afraid—I fear not danger, but will face it with any man in the British army; but, good God! my mother and sister’—

“A dreadful crash stunned me—a mine had been sprung, and we were all scattered in different directions, the greater part mangled and dead. When I recovered my recollection, I was sweltering in the ditch of the place, almost suffocated, and sinking. I was sorely bruised and bewildered; and, led more by instinct than reason, for I was incapable of thinking, I struggled to get at some support; and fortunately got hold of some willow twigs that were growing in the side of the ditch, and clung to them, while my faculties gradually came to me, and I felt in all its force the horrors of my situation. The noise was louder than thunder; the shot was entering the banks, and plunging into the water around me like a hail-storm, while splinters of shells were flying past in every direction. I was at one moment covered with water, and the next with mud and earth, torn by the shot from the side of the ditch. The whistling of the balls, the shouts of the men, the volleys of musketry, and deafening roar of the guns, and constant flashes of light that shot fearfully across the darkness of the scene, rendered my mind a chaos of confusion. I felt not what could be called fear; I had, in vain, more than once tried to extricate myself from my horrible situation. A callous, regardless feeling was upon me; and I passed the tedious hours in a kind of stupor, much resembling a fearful nightmare. I felt fully the desperate situation I was in, and my utter inability to relieve myself; but there was no use of making it worse than it was by fretting—and morning at length came. The firing had for a long time ceased; and I was dragged out more dead than alive, benumbed and bruised. Most of the volunteers had perished, and, along with them, the lieutenant, for whom I felt more regret than for any officer I had ever known to fall in the field of war. I often thought how much more commendable his feelings were than my own; for I had never even thought of you until I returned once more safe to the camp, and coolly turned over in my mind the whole occurrences of this fearful night. My conscience, I own, did upbraid me; but I soon shook off the uneasy feeling.”

Jemie heard the recital with a thrill of horror; and, while the tears were falling fast—

“O Jamie!” said she, “little did we imagine the half of the dangers you were exposed to, or the misery you must have endured.”

“We had sufferings,” replied he, “enough and to spare; but we had also our enjoyments, with a relish no one at

home, in the calm of domestic life, can have the most distant conception of. The soldier's life, in an enemy's country, is made up of extremes, either of hardship or enjoyment. When the toilsome march is over, how sound and sweetly he sleeps, even on the hard, bare ground, under the canopy of heaven! But, if his billet be good, he is the happiest of mortals—words cannot express his pleasures. After a rapid pursuit of the enemy, such as we had after the French to Victoria, when we were far in advance of our commissariat, and our stomachs were keen, sweet, sweet was our dry hard beef, so hard and black from over-driving, we were forced to bruise it between two stones, before our eager teeth could masticate it. Victuals and drink were all we coveted, and we were not over scrupulous how we came by them. We were quartered in Alcantara for a winter, after a summer of privations, and we lived like kings. Four of us were quartered upon one house; our rations were regularly served; and we had abundance and to spare. In Spain, almost every family has a barrel of olive oil for a supply during the winter; for they cook a great many of their victuals with it. We had become as fond of it as the natives. I recollect that our host had two large barrels filled behind the door; and complaints having been made by the inhabitants, every day, of the depredations committed upon their oil by the soldiers, our host was as jealous as the rest, examined his store night and morning, and gave us the greatest character for honesty. But little did he know whom he praised; for we were no better than the rest—only more cunning; and it was fortunate for us when the route came, for I am sure there was not the depth of a finger of oil in one of the barrels, we having had the precaution to put in as much water as we drew oil, to save appearances.

“Jamie, Jamie,” said Margaret, “ye were sair left. Oh, man, did ye steal frae the poor folk in that gate?”

“Indeed, mother,” replied he, “we did not think we stole when provisions were in the case. The Spaniards, no doubt, said we were only better than the French in this respect; for the French took openly whatever they chose, and abused them to boot; we only stole provisions, when unobserved, and always gave them fair words for what we took, whether detected or not. Perhaps they were indebted to Wellington and the provost-marshal for this; for I assure you there was no mercy for us when detected. There were two brothers hanged upon the same tree, just before the battle of Victoria, for being detected in taking a little flour, when we were in great want. I recollect we marched past them.”

“Oh, Jamie,” said the mother, “ye've seen strange sights.”

“Ay, and heard strange things, too,” replied he. “I will tell you what I heard from a German, one of the legion, who had been severely wounded, and lay next my berth in the hospital:—He had served in a regiment of Swiss in the pay of Great Britain, which had been raised to stop the progress of the French, in the early part of the revolutionary war, and had been with it in Italy and Corsica. They had been hurried, by forced marches, from Constance to Rome, in the depth of a severe winter, and suffered much. The French were in such superior numbers, that they were forced to fly before them until they were joined by the British under General Stewart, when they made a successful stand for some time, and had a great deal of hard fighting. It was during one of these checks, after a severe action, that they lay for some weeks in an old castle, which they had fortified in the best manner they could. The French lay in front, in great force, their foraging parties scouring the country, and cutting off their supplies; so that they were reduced to the most extreme want of provisions, and suffered sadly from the severity of the weather. The cold was most intense; snow or sleet fell almost every day; while firing was not to

nehad. Their clothing almost wore out, great numbers were barefooted. Under such circumstances, it was with difficulty that human nature could bear up under its sufferings. The men became desperate, and numbers were falling sick, and dying every day. In the midst of these horrors, urged by extreme misery, three Germans conceived an idea the most repugnant to human nature that can be conceived by man, and put it in execution. One evening they were seen in deep consultation by their comrades, and, towards the middle of the night, they stole down to one of the vaults, of which there were many under the castle, and earnestly and fearlessly invoked the Devil to come to them, and enter into an agreement upon any terms he chose. All they would stipulate for was to be delivered from their present misery; but they called in vain—no Devil or other appearance could they perceive, although they remained calling upon him for a long time. At length they left the vault, much disappointed at their failure. It was remarked by all the regiment—for they told what they had been about—that none of the three survived any length of time after this, and all died by uncommon modes. The first that fell was Gualter Stulzer. That very night he awoke in his sleep, and, starting to his feet, shouted out, at the loudest pitch of his voice, in a manner that awoke all in the hall, and made us tremble—“Ho! ho! you are come at length—I am your man; take me anywhere, only take me hence; and fell upon his face. When the day broke, we found him quite dead. We thought he had been in a dream. Not one of us could have risen to assist him, had we thought he was not, for all was dark, and we thought the Evil One was present in the room. The two others, who were not in the same part of the building, we had no doubt were in the same state, until we saw them alive and well in the morning. A few days after this melancholy event, another of them was found dead at his post, with horror most strongly expressed on his countenance. The third survived only until we reached Corsica, where he was hanged for a cruel murder, a short time after our landing. And thus perished these three desperate men—the only instance really authentic of the kind I ever heard of in all my life.”

“His presence,” said Margaret, “be about us a’, to keep us frae evil! Ye hae made my flesh creep on my banes. Surely, my bairn, they must hae been Pagans. We read, in the blessed Word, that Esau sold his birthright for a mess of potage. But men to gang an’ offer to sell their sauls to the Evil One! Ohon! ohon!”

“No one can say,” replied James, “what he will or will not do, until the hour of trial is past. These Germans gave implicit belief to stories of diablerie and witchcraft, and hoped to be relieved from their sufferings by becoming warlocks. You yourself are not free from the belief that such things have been.”

“I maun first doubt my Bible, Jamie,” said she, “ere I doubt ony sic thing. Hae we no a commandment against witchcraft, an’ a pattern o’ what they were in the Witch o’ Endor? Hae I no kent folk that werena canny, mysel? I only wonder he camna at their ca’, to seal the bargain wi’ them. I may say I ken o’ nane at present that has a very ill name; but, when I was a young lass, Ellen Græme was feared owre a’ the kinty side for her unholy power, after she witched Bauldy Scott, the minister’s man, for something he had either said or done to her. She had a bauld an’ bitter tongue in her head; an’, after gieing him ill names until she was tired, she spat at him, an’ ended wi’ saying—‘Bauldy Scott, mind my words!—ye’ll rue, ere lang, meddling wi’ me.’ Bauldy only leuch at her; but didna feel owre easy, for a’ that weel, a day or twa after the collyshangie wi’ Ellen, he had to gang to Hawick, on some business about a web he had been weaving for the bailie’s wife. A’ went weel aneuch until he was comin hame in the evenin, whan, just as he was in the middle o’

the hills—for he took the shortest cut hame—he met wi’ a muckle black tyke o’ a dog, that looked hard an’ sair at him, an’ followed whether he wad or no. He feared to clod it; for it was an unsousy like beast, an’ he had a druther that it wasna a canny creature. Bauldy took fervently to prayer an’ psalm-singin, an’ the dog soon left him; but he was nae sooner oot o’ sicht, than there cam on sic a mist that he fairly tint his gaet, an’ wandered he knew not where, until, wi’ perfect fatigue, he sat doon on a stane. The nicht was closing in fast upon him, an’ he kendna whither he had dandered nearer or farther frae hame. There he sat, whiles praying, whiles thinkin on his wife an’ weans, but oftener o’ Ellen Græme an’ her threat, an’ the awesome black dog he had met. He was like to gang demented. The time hung sae dreich on his hand, he thocht the world was standin still. He dared na open his een, for fear he might be scaured by some awesome sicht. So still was all around him, that the very beatin o’ his ain heart sounded in his lugs like a death watch. This grave-like calm an’ stillness, became to him waur than ony noise could hae been; an’, to mak a lang tale short, there he sat on the stane until the gray o’ the mornin. An’ whar was’t, do ye think, he had been sittin the lee-lang nicht? No a hunder yards frae his ain door, on the big stane that stan’s by the kirk-stile at the self an’ same spot where Ellen Græme had threatened him! That he had been bewitched, few in the parish doubted; an’ he himself believed, until the day o’ his death, that he had seen the Evil One in the form o’ the black dog, wha, being forced to flee by the force o’ his prayers, had raised the mist, to bewilder an’ prevent his gettin hame. He made a lang complaint to the minister against Ellen; but he wadna tak it up, an’ only laughed at Bauldy, an’ said—‘Are ye sure ye didna pree owre deep o’ the yill in Hawick, Bauldy?’ Now, this was warst o’ a’; for, puir man, he had baith the skaith an’ the scorn; but few thocht waur o’ the minister for no takin up Bauldy’s case.”

“It may be as you say, mother,” said James—“I never thought seriously on the subject; but this I know—I never felt so comfortable, when sentinel upon a lonely outpost, as I did in garrison or in camp. I remember once, while we lay in the valley of Roncesvalles, a short time before we entered France, I was on duty upon an outpost, with the enemy in front. I had almost made a fool of myself by giving a false alarm. I never was so much out of sorts in my life with real terror; I shook like a dog in a wet sack. My station was an old building, a complete ruin, without roof, and not more than six feet of wall standing in any part of it; so that, with a glance of my eye, I could examine recesses of the interior. My turn came at twelve o’clock. The orders were to allow no one to advance without the word and countersign; and if any movement was perceived in the enemy’s lines, to fire off my piece, and fall back upon the mainguard. I had been upon my station for about half-an-hour, or better, musing upon various things—but Jeanie and you were ever uppermost in my thoughts. Suddenly, a strange sound fell upon my ear. I could not distinguish whether it was a sigh or a low moan. I became all attention for a recurrence of the sound, and cocked my musket. Never did the click fall so loud upon my ear. Thus I stood at post, gazing, with eyes almost starting from their sockets, around me. It did not recur again. While I stood thus, I began to recover, and thought I had been deceived, uncocked my musket, and resumed my measured pace, peering on every side, and searching with my eyes, as far as the gloom of a starry night, without moonlight, would admit. I had not made above a dozen of turns upon my allotted bounds, when the same sounds fell upon my ears, but much more distinct. It was a heavy groan, and appeared to come from my right—not in the direction of the enemy’s lines. Again I cocked

my musket. All was still as death after the groan. I stooped towards the ground, to listen; but could discern no foot-tread upon it, or the smallest movement. I walked round the ruin, and examined it with care; but all was still and void. I looked in the direction I thought the sound had come from; when, all at once, there appeared to rise out of the ground, at a short distance from me, a most uncouth figure. It had the appearance of a monk in his cloak, with the hood up, and a pair of horns upon his head. From the outline between me and the sky, so appalling was the vision, that I clapped my musket to my shoulder, and called, 'Who goes there?' A heavy groan was the only reply; and the whole disappeared into the ground as suddenly as it had risen out of it. A cold sweat covered my whole body—my knees knocked against each other, as I stood rooted to the spot. I would have fired, but had not the power at first; and, as I recovered, I was ashamed, as I knew my comrades would laugh at me, and the officers give no credit to my story. I had not the power to withdraw my eyes from the spot. Again I saw the same appearance rise out of the ground, but with more fearful distinctness, and gaze upon me, utter a groan, and again vanish. This was too much. I was almost overcome, when I heard the tread of the relief, advancing to change guard. My nerves were in a moment strung to energy again, by the sound of the human voice. Although, in a whisper, I related what I had witnessed to them, all were inclined to laugh, save he who was to take my place. However, it was agreed to go to the spot I pointed out, and examine it. When we reached the place, we found, behind some low bushes, scarcely, in the dark, to be discerned from the ground, a wounded mule, so weak that it could not rise from the ground upon its feet. At our approach, it attempted to rise; but could only elevate its fore-quarters, as it had been shot through the loins, and fell down again with a groan. None of us laughed more heartily than I did, at this elucidation of the fearful vision. These outpost duties often occurred, and we liked them worse than an action. So little did we dread fight, that I have heard the men say seriously, when they had lost even so trifling a necessary as a Rosatt, 'I wish we may have an action soon, that I may pick up one.' In action, so cool and steady had we become, that jests and remarks were made as freely, and with even more spirit than on a parade or in the barrack-room. In an affair of outposts, the sharpest I was ever in, and when the balls were whistling around us like grasshoppers on a sunny bank, James Graham, my left-hand man, said—

"'Blair, they have hit me at last, confound them! and broke some of my ribs. I both heard and felt them crack like pipe-staples; but I will have a shot or two while I can stand to them.' After a few minutes, he said—'They have hit, but not cut me. There is no blood on my trowsers; yet my breast is confounded sore.' He put his hand into a pocket he had in the breast of his coat, and pulled out a favourite knife, stamped on the ground in anger, and cried—'Oh, the French blackguards! they have broken my knife, and I bought it in the High Street of Edinburgh!' And he resumed his fire, if possible, with redoubled energy, taking as cool and deliberate an aim as if he had been firing at a target, for a prize, in his native village.

"In the same skirmish, James Paterson's bonnet fell over the wall which we were lining, as he was taking out some cartridges, to place them in his breast. The enemy were in triple force not one hundred yards from the other side.

"'I shan't go bare-headed for all that,' said he, and leant his musket against the wall, climbed over it, gathered up his ammunition as calmly as if he had been in the barrack-yard, placed his bonnet on his head and leaped

back unhurt. An aid-de-camp, who rode past at the time, cried out to us—

"'Well done, my brave men!—they may march over your bodies, but they cannot drive you back.'

"We gave him three cheers, and the enemy soon after fell back. But, Jeanie, lassie, I fear you think I am boasting far too much of myself and comrades. I would not speak to you of a soldier's life, were it not that you, my friend, invite me to it; but I assure you that those parts of it which are most dreaded by the people at home, have in them great interest, and serve to enliven the otherwise monotonous duties of a campaign in an enemy's country, where our fatigues, in marching and counter-marching, are scarce bearable. If we found any fault with the general, in our private conversation, it was, that we had not fighting enough. Our opinion was—the hotter war, the sooner peace; and we always felt a consciousness of being able to beat the enemy, if we were only led on."

"'O Jamie, my bairn," said Margaret, "evil communications corrupt good manners. I wadna hae believed, had onybody but yersel tauld me, yer nature could hae changed sae mickle as to tak delight in sic a life. My heart is sair to hear ye speak wi' sae mickle relish o' sic bloody wark."

"Mother, you wrong me," replied the veteran. "I rejoice that there is now no call for such doings: While I was in Spain, my heart was ever here, with you and Jeanie. I cannot help feeling my blood move quicker in my veins when I recall these moments of intense excitement. It is all the reward I shall ever have for my fatigues and wounds. We felt that we fought in Spain to keep the battle from our own beloved homes; and the scenes of rapine and desolation we witnessed there gave us double energy—for the foe that ravaged the fields of Spain had long threatened the land of our fathers, where all we held dear remained. A short time before the siege of Burgos, a party of our regiment were sent as a convoy to some stores. We halted at a village, where a foraging party of the French had been only a few hours before. Every house was a scene of ruin and blood. In one cottage that we entered, we found a beautiful young female sitting upon the ground weeping over the bodies of her murdered father and brother, who had fallen defending her from the violence of the French soldiers. As the evening was soon to be upon us, we were halted until day-break in the morning. Donald Ross, one of the men in our company, was particularly struck with the charms of the female; and, somehow or other, became so intimate with her, that she agreed to go with him, as soon as she had buried her father and brother—and she was as good as her word. Donald being a Roman Catholic, they were married by a Spanish priest, and lived happy enough for some time. While we lay at Abrantes, a party of Spanish guerillas came into the town. All at once, Martornes became very dull and uneasy. Donald, at his coming home, often found her in tears; but she would not impart to him the cause of her distress. Ross, who loved her with all his heart, became himself uneasy upon her account. All at once she was amissing, and no accounts of her could be had, although diligent search was made for her. The guerillas were still in the neighbourhood of the town, and Donald suspected that she had gone to some of them, and resolved to go and make the necessary inquiries. On the morning of the day he was to have gone, having got leave from his officer, her body was found stabbed to the heart, concealed in a thicket near the town. Poor Donald wept over her body like an infant, and, after becoming a little more calm, swore a fearful vengeance on her murderer, should he ever meet him, and to do all in his power to discover the cruel perpetrator. The day following her interment, as he was indulging his grief for her loss, and thinking of means to trace her destroyer near the spot where her body had been found, one of the guerillas started

from behind a tree, and thrust a knife at his bosom. Fortunately it struck his breast plate, and glanced off. In a twinkling his bayonet was plunged to the socket in the body of the assassin, and he fell, grinding his teeth in rage and pain. Donald shouted for assistance, not to aid him in the strife, for his enemy was now helpless, and to all appearance dead at his feet; but to assist in bearing him into the town, as he had an impression on his mind that this was the murderer of his beloved. Two of his comrades, who were in the neighbourhood, came to his aid, bore the wounded man into the town, and carried him to the hospital, where his wound, which proved to be mortal, was dressed. Before his death, he confessed the murder of Maritornes, and gave the following account of himself:—His father had been a vine dresser, whose vineyard joined that of the parents of Maritornes, so that they had been brought up together from their earliest childhood. After he came to man's estate, the beauty of Maritornes had made a violent impression upon him; but, being of a wild and unsettled turn of mind, her parents had disapproved of his attentions to her; and she herself had never encouraged his addresses, but had always appeared uneasy and fearful in his presence. He had tried every method to win her affections in vain, and had been involved in several quarrels, upon her account, with the other youths, one of whom he had slain, and was forced to fly. The war breaking out soon after, he had joined one of the guerilla parties, and had never seen or heard of her since he left the village, until he found her the wife of a vile heretic, as he thought. The sight was too much for him, and he resolved to murder her; for, he said, the hope of at one time or other winning her affections, had never forsaken his mind until then; and he vowed the death of her, and her seducer, as he supposed Donald to be. She had seen and recognised her tormentor, which had been the cause of her distress. For several days he had tracked and watched her steps like a bloodhound, until he accomplished his horrid purpose; and he shewed not the least contrition for the deed, but appeared to regret that he had not slain Donald also. It was long before Donald ceased to regret the death of Maritornes, or to think of her; but it was perhaps wisely ordered for himself, for, after the battle of Bayonne was fought, and the peace made, the troops left for England. None of the men were allowed to take their Portuguese or Spanish wives out of the country along with them; and there were several hundreds who had followed the army and clung to their husbands in all our privations, wherever we went. Poor things! my heart bled for them. When the order came, it was one of the most heart-rending scenes to witness the distress of both parties—the despair and wailings of the females, and the anguish of many of the men—severals deserted, and all promised to return for these poor creatures, as soon as it was in their power. Many are the disconsolate females who still languish in their lonely homes, hoping in vain for the return of husbands they shall never see again, and who, if alive, only think of them now with indifference, or perhaps have heartlessly formed new ties.

“O Jamie, Jamie,” said Jeanie, “it is not possible, I learn frae yourself, to tell a pleasing tale o’ war. They are all o’ blood, injustice, and violence. It gradually steals the heart to the best feelings o’ the human race, and does away wi’ the sense o’ right and wrong by a false plea o’ necessity. Surely man is never placed, but by his ain evil passions, in a situation where it is necessary either to be unjust or cruel.”

“Let us forget, my love,” said James, “that such things ever were, and look forward in hope. I have, no doubt, the world once more to begin. I am not yet an old man; and, if I am not rich in cash, I am richer in experience than many others who have been at home, and shall, by the blessing of God, do my endeavour to put to use

my dear purchased wisdom. I shall then be more fortunate than poor Walter B—— and several others I have known.”

“Dear Jamie, tell us about Walter—what o’ him?” said Margaret.

“There were severals in the army,” continued James, “whom I knew as common soldiers, that had been born to rank and riches—one in particular, Walter B——. I will give you his lamentable story, as I had it from his own mouth in one of his fits of melancholy and repentance. We were on the heights above Roncesvalles, and the weather was more boisterous than I had ever seen it in my life anywhere: the gusts of wind blew down our tents, and the hail storms were so severe that we were forced to shelter ourselves from them by any means we could, and even the very mules were scarce able to endure their severity. He had been in one of his desponding fits for several days, and I had done all in my power to amuse him in vain. Towards the shades of evening, we sat shivering and cowering from the extreme cold, and, having given him an outline of my own history, he in return gave me his, nearly as follows:—He was a native of England, and a relative of some of the oldest families in it. His father had been one of the established clergy, and held a rich living, beloved and respected for his benevolence and piety. Walter, who was an only son, had received as good an education as England could afford; but, unfortunately for himself, he was of an unsettled and extravagant disposition, and was always getting himself into disagreeable situations, from which he was always relieved, after a show of contrition, by his indulgent parent. Thus matters waxed worse and worse with him, until he could not from very shame apply to his forgiving father. He had lost a large sum of money at play in London, and had no means of liquidating the debt. In an agony of shame and remorse, he fled, and, having no means of maintaining himself, changed his name, and enlisted as a private soldier. His distressed parent, for several years, knew not whether he was dead or alive. Matters remained thus with him until the arrival of a new chaplain to the regiment in which he was serving. Shortly after the chaplain joined, he recognised Walter, spoke to, and reasoned with him in a truly Christian spirit, and chid him for his cruelty to his parent, who continued to mourn his loss, and would, he had no doubt, once more receive him to his bosom, would he only promise to behave more circum-spectly in future, and express his sorrow for what he had done. Poor Walter was now heartily sick of his present situation, and requested the chaplain to write for him what he chose, and, upon the receipt of an answer from his father, he would do all in his power to regain his pardon and confidence. In a few weeks after, Walter got his discharge, and returned to his father's mansion, where he was received with joy and forgiveness. His parent only appeared to have lived to be blessed in the return of his prodigal son; for he died in about three months after his return. Walter was his sole heir, and was now rich, as he had been lately poor while a private soldier. For a few months, he was all that his relations could have wished him—reserved and penitent for his former follies, and most punctual in his religious duties. In this frame of mind he became attached to a young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring squire, rather his superior in rank and fortune. To her he was wed, and lived in happiness and peace for some months, when, unfortunately, he paid a visit to London with his young wife; and, as bad fortune would have it, he once again launched out into all his former extravagance, and soon became embarrassed in his circumstances. An unsuccessful bet at a horse-race once more placed him in the same position he had been in at his first enlistment; but his distress was tenfold greater, for his young and innocent wife was now a partaker in his misery. He solemnly declared to me he

more than once resolved to put a period to his existence, but was always prevented by some trivial interruption or other. At this critical period, an uncle of his wife's died, and she was his sole heir. Thus, once again, he was unexpectedly snatched from beggary, and was much richer than he was at his father's death; but, alas for him! not wiser; for, with accelerated pace, he held on his former career, and the consequence was, that he was forced to leave his young and beautiful wife to the charity of her relations. Under his assumed name, he became my companion in the ranks—a strange, interesting, even fearful companion, too, he was at times; for he would occasionally be the most light-hearted and amusing person in the group; at others, he was sullen and morose, scarce a monosyllable would escape his lips; and, when irritated, the expressions he made use of were sublimely fearful, such as a devil might have used, making even the most depraved of the men quail. Yet, when in his quiet and gentle moods, I have listened to his discourse with rapture. One hour of his conversation conveyed more information to my mind than a month of reading could have done. I have seen him, when we were alone, weep like a child over his fallen foetunes; then, the next moment, knit his brows, compress his lips, clench his fists, and stamp upon the ground, and call upon death to deliver him from his own thoughts. Times out of number I have heard him express a wish that he might fall in the next action. He had escaped without a scratch until the battle of Bayonne. Well do I remember the conversation we had the evening before. It were tedious to repeat it; but he expressed his fears that the enemy would miss him, and declared to me his firm determination to desert and remain in Spain (he spoke the language like a native) rather than return to England; for there was a rumour in the camp at the time of the reverses of Bonaparte, and the anticipations of a speedy peace. Towards the close of the action, we had driven in the opposing column, and the fire had slackened; hundreds of dead and wounded lay around us, for the affair had been very sharp.

“‘Blair,’ said he, ‘I knew they could not hit me; I must live on in misery.’

“Scarce were the words spoken when he fell upon his face. I stopped and turned him on his back; his eyes were fixed in death; his countenance more placid and resigned than I ever remember to have seen it; he grasped my hand, his lips moved, but the noise of the firing deadened his voice. I placed my ear to his lips, and could just make out—

“‘James, I am now happy. Gracious God, pardon your erring creature!’

“A slight shiver passed over his frame and all was over. What his real name was I never knew, or I would have written to his wife. Such were his talents that, had his mind been well regulated, there was no effort that man can accomplish he was not capable of; but, alas! he perished, the victim of his uncontrolled passions.”

Here ended the soldier's narratives. James Blair had returned, and in health, but he had not found happiness, neither had his mother or cousin; yet his hopes were most reasonable. He had only attained one object to find another more difficult to attain, humble as that object is—a way to earn his daily bread. Matters were in this state, when a rumour spread through the parish that a captain had purchased an estate which had been for some time in the market, and meant to build a new house, and live constantly at it. This was a matter of great joy to us; for it brought hope of employment, for a time at least, and James brightened up. The weather was no sooner favourable, than the new proprietor came to survey his purchase, and plan his improvements. A number of labourers were employed, and James among the

rest; for he was first in his application. The captain, struck by his cleanly and military appearance, was much taken with him, and inquired as to his services. James gave a modest account of them, and retired, the captain making no observations at the time; but it was observed that he oftener stopped, and spoke to him, than to any other of his work people, and observed him more closely. Still nothing uncommon had occurred to James, more than the rest. He received his wages the same as the others, and was most assiduous to please, and give satisfaction to his employer. Since his return he had been most punctual in his attendance at church, and zealous in his religious duties—for he felt all the heart-consoling comforts they are calculated to bestow; and thus had won back to himself the approbation of his own mind, and the esteem of others, who had formerly thought very lightly of his principles and conduct. His employer was not less observant of him than those who had known him from his youth, and was most particular in his inquiries. Our worthy minister, who had, with a shepherd's care, watched over his flock, and knew them all—their virtues and their frailties—checking one, and encouraging the other, was much pleased with the returned veteran, and spoke to the captain of him as he felt.

The consequence was, that James (who, before he went from among us, was well skilled in all the branches of agricultural labour) was appointed grieve, by the new proprietor, over his estate, towards the end of the harvest, and put into possession of a neat house before the winter commenced. All obstructions to his wedding with Jeanie Aitken were now removed; they were married, and after the wedding, she left the widow's cottage for her own house, a happy bride; but the Widow Blair would not leave her cottage to live with them. Years thus rolled on; James's family had increased to three, two boys and a girl, when Widow Blair paid the debt of nature, and was buried beside her husband. James had accumulated a small sum of money by his industry and strict economy, when his excellent and worthy master died suddenly, and he was again without a way to live, though in much better circumstances than when he had first returned. He was now under a greater necessity to exert himself, but he could not at once make up his mind as to the manner. He, at last, resolved to emigrate. His only difficulty was where to choose—the Canadas or Australia. While he remained in this doubt, making the most anxious inquiries, a gentleman came to our minister, to make inquiries for steady and skilful shepherds, to look after some flocks he was proprietor of near Sidney. James Blair was the first man the minister spoke of, as he knew what were James's intentions at the time. He was at once engaged, and set sail towards the fall of the leaf. I have parted with relations and dearest friends, but never did I feel a sharper throe than when I last bade farewell to James Blair and Jeanie Aitken.

But I have often a letter from them. In my last, James says he is prosperous far above his deserts. He is sole proprietor of thousands of sheep of the best breed; has the range of more land than he can ride round in a long day, and hints that I might do worse than join him; but my time of removal has gone by.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GEORDIE BINKS, THE KING'S JESTER.

"Is yer Highness gaun oot a-huntin the day?" said a squat, odd-looking personage, in a strange, party-coloured coat, and otherwise fantastically dressed—"Is yer Highness gaun oot a-huntin the day?" he said, looking upwards, and addressing, from the courtyard of Falkland Palace, a person who was listlessly leaning over a window that overlooked the said yard, and which was also right over the spot where the querist stood—the period of our story, we may as well here add, being the year 1512.

"Why, I think I shall, Geordie," was the reply of the person spoken to.

"I wadna care to gang wi' ye, if I thocht the day wad haud up," rejoined he of the party-coloured coat, at the same time cursorily scanning the sky, to ascertain what promise was there held out of the approaching weather.

"You're mighty obliging—mighty condescending indeed, Geordie," replied the person at the window, with a good-natured smile; and that Geordie was so, the reader, we doubt not, will also be of opinion, when he is told that he who made the remark was no less a personage than James IV. of Scotland, and he to whom it was made no other than Geordie Binks, his Majesty's familiar or fool, as he was called, although there was just barely as much of that about him as to entitle him to this flattering distinction. Geordie certainly did often say and do sufficiently absurd things. He had "a want," as we say in Scotland here; but this want was compensated, in part, by a singular kind of shrewdness, some blunt, ready, natural wit, and a great deal of dry sarcastic humour. But of all Geordie's qualities, there was none that his royal master was so delighted with, as a certain free and easy way he had, which no presence, however elevated, could in the least abash or discompose. Geordie, in truth, seemed to be totally destitute of the organ of veneration. He cared for nobody, and never was restrained, by any circumstances, from speaking out what came uppermost. All his bearing, in short, indicated a feeling, on his own part, of perfect equality with all those around him, or, at least, of a total indifference to rank or pretension, whatever these might be, or by whomsoever held or put forth. It is true that Geordie often carried this independent spirit of his a great deal too far, and, by its imprudent exercise, frequently brought a frown on the royal brow; but this frown, which could awe all others, had no effect on Geordie. He was totally impervious to reproof, and never failed to remove the royal displeasure, almost as soon as excited, by some blunt, whimsical remark or other, for which he was never at a loss.

To return to the colloquy which this digression has interrupted. Geordie, in reply to the King's acknowledgement of his condescension, said gravely, and with an air of apparent utter unconsciousness of the irony—

"That it was nae obligation at a', and, as to the condescension, that he was nane o' yer proud folk, wha war ay seekin the company o' their betters; and that, for his part, he wadna ashamed to be seen wi' his Highness onywhere."

"Excellent, Geordie, excellent," said James, laughing heartily at the amusing nonchalance of his privileged official.

"Humility is a beautiful thing, Geordie, and sits on you with peculiar grace."

"I hae aye been remarkable for't," replied Geordie. "We should never forget what's due to oor fellow-cratur, whatever station o' life they may be in."

"On my word, a most just remark, Geordie," said James; "but, an' ye intend joining us to-day, you had best go and get yer hunting gear in order."

"Guid advice," replied Geordie; "but is't to be hound or hawk?"

"Hound, Geordie—hound. We'll try the deer to-day."

"That's no just sae suitable, as yer Highness kens I'm nae great miracle o' a horseman. Could ye no mak it hawks the day, as I'm gaun wi' ye?"

"No, really, Geordie," replied the King, smiling. "I'm sorry I cannot oblige you, as I have promised the French ambassador a day's sport with the dogs."

"I think ye micht hae consulted me first. What's he, that peelgarlic o' a body, wi' legs nae thicker than drum sticks, and a wame as lank as an empty blether, that *his* pleasure should be consulted before his better's!"

"Come, come, Geordie, thy tongue's getting loose, man," said James, with a slight degree of impatience. "Get ye to our equerry, and tell him from us to have a horse ready for thee. Let him choose one of the gentlest. Let me see." And the good-natured monarch paused for a moment. "Ay, tell him to give thee Yarrow. She is docile as a lamb, and will suit thee admirably. And, harkee, Geordie," called James after the jester, who was already retiring to execute his master's command, "desire our equerry to come to us after ye have spoken with him."

"I'll do that," replied Geordie; and he proceeded on his errand.

In a few minutes after Geordie's departure, the officer whom the King had through the former ordered to attend him, entered the apartment, and, bowing respectfully, awaited in silence James' commands.

"I say, Napier," said the monarch, smiling, "Geordie Binks proposes doing us the honour of joining in our sport to-day."

"He has told me so, your Highness," replied the officer; "and has bespoke Yarrow, by your Highness' commands, I understand."

"Yes, yes," said James; "but don't you think we could manage to give him an animal with a trifle more mettle than Yarrow, so as to get a little amusement with Geordie, who is no great horseman, you know."

"Why, easily, your Highness," replied the equerry. "There's Stirling, there's Lady Jane, there's Mosstrooper, and three or four more, any one of which will give such an equestrian as Geordie ample employment. They'll make him dance in the saddle, I warrant, your Highness."

"Well, then, Napier, just choose such an animal for Geordie as you know is wanted. Not one, either, that is too fiery or unmanageable; for I would not have the simpleton injured; but something with a little life in it. You understand me?"

"Perfectly, your Highness," replied the equerry, briefly, and withdrew.

In less than an hour after this conversation took place

between the King and his officer, the open space in front of Falkland Palace was thronged with the royal cavalcade of sportsmen; horses, dogs, and men all intermingled in joyous and noisy confusion. This disorder, however, was shortly abated, by an announcement that the King was about to issue from the Palace. The clamour instantly ceased; every man threw himself on his horse; the dogs were held in by their keepers; and all waited in respectful silence the appearance of the Sovereign. He came forth, dressed in a short surtout of green cloth, trowsers of the same, with russet boots, and on his head a bonnet with a single feather, and encircled by a gold band. A sword depended from his side, and behind him was slung a small hunting horn of silver, lackered inside with gold. On stepping out of the Palace, James bowed gracefully to the assembled sportsmen, amongst whom were several persons of rank, and a host of retainers; and vaulted into his saddle, with an ease and agility that shewed how well practised he was in equestrian exercises. The royal person, however, must not engross all our attention; we must not forget to say, that he came not forth alone from the palace on this occasion. He was accompanied by one whose grave looks, dignified demeanour, and measured step, presented a most laughable living caricature of the royal bearing. This person was no other than our friend, Geordie Binks, who, walking close by the King, and copying his manner as nearly as he could, evidently desired to engross a share of the attention and respect paid to the Sovereign; and, of the former, he certainly did secure a very fair proportion. For this, Geordie was indebted to the very extraordinary and peculiar style of his outfit, which consisted of a hunting dress, most singularly exaggerated in all its details; spurs half a yard long, a hunting horn like the worm of a 500 gallon still, and a sword that might have done execution across the Queensferry. A flaming yellow jerkin, with scarlet cuffs and facings, crossed by an enormously broad baldric, a pair of huge old boots like water stoups, and a hat or bonnet so loaded with feathers as to have lost all semblance to a covering for the head, completed Geordie's equipment.

One simultaneous shout of laughter from the assembled sportsmen, hailed the appearance of this extraordinary figure; a reception this, however, which did not for a moment disturb the gravity and serene composure of its object. Having seen the King mounted, Geordie proceeded, with stately step and unmoved countenance, towards the horse which was destined for him, and which a groom held waiting for him at a little distance. On approaching the animal, Geordie stood for a moment, and eyed him with the look of a connoisseur, at the same time drawing on his gloves with an air of dashing gallantry. After examining the horse for a few seconds, a suspicion, excited by certain indications of wholly undesired spirit in the animal, crossed Geordie's mind.

"That's no Yarrow, Jock," he at length said to the groom who held him.

"No, Geordie," replied the lad, who had got his one; "Yarrow's dead lame. This is Jumper, as quiet a beast as ever chewed corn."

"It may be sae, lad," said Geordie, "but I dinna like his name; as little do I like the manoeuvres he's gaun on wi'. It bodes nae guid for me, I doot; but I suppose I maun just try him."

Saying this, Geordie put his foot into the stirrup, and, by the assistance of the groom, was rolled into his saddle, amidst the shouts of the surrounding serving-men, and the ill-suppressed laughter of the King and his attendant nobles. Having been fairly fixed in his seat, and the reins being put into his hands, Geordie joined the cavalcade, which was now in motion, and, forcing his way through the surrounding persons, took his place beside the

Sovereign. During this time, however, short as it was, Geordie's horse had executed a great many more capers than his rider approved of; several of which were of so violent a nature as to compel him to cling, with a death grip, sometimes to the mane, and sometimes to the pommet of the saddle, to the no small entertainment of those who witnessed these desperate efforts of the horseman to maintain his precarious position. It was after one of these performances of Jumper, that Geordie, going as close to his master as he could, whispered, in a confidential manner, into his ear—

"Faith, your Highness, I'm feard *we'll* be a' affronted thegither wi' this infernal brute I hac gotten. He'll hao me doon as sure as dockens, an' that'll be seen. As it is, your court's getting into disgrace. Thae lantern-jawed foreigners will report to their king this exposure of a courtier. It's discreditible to *us* a'."

At this moment, Geordie's attention was again suddenly called to his safety, by a new series of evolutions on the part of Jumper. These were, on this occasion, of a still more lively character than any that had preceded them; and, of course, demanded an increased exertion on the part of the rider to counteract their object, which, he had no doubt, was to floor him. Fully impressed with this belief, he now dropped the bridle altogether, and, seizing the saddle with both hands, in that position submitted to be knocked to and fro by the various rearings of Jumper, who, at one time, flinging up his hind legs, threw him forward over his ears, and at another pitched him nearly over his tail, by raising his fore-legs up into the air. During these operations, Geordie was calling on the by-standers loudly but vainly for assistance, who had now formed a ring around him, at once to admire at leisure, and to give free scope to his equestrian performances.

"Haud the brute, haud the curst brute, some o' ye!" exclaimed Geordie, with desperate energy; "yer Highness, ye nicht do't yersel. I'm sure I wad do as muckle for you. Lord, there he goes again!" (After a momentary cessation of Jumper's movements.) "He'll hao the harns oot o' me before he halts. Grip, curse ye! grip, some o' ye culroons!"

And now really beginning to fear some unhappy result, the King made a signal to an attendant to ride up to Geordie's assistance. This person seizing the bridle, led on the horse a little, when both he and his rider regained a little composure; and something like a promise appeared, on the part of the former, that he would keep quiet for a while, and allow Geordie to sit him in peace. Matters thus adjusted, Geordie resumed his place near his master, and the cavalcade again moved on.

"Faith, yer Highness, yon was a collyshangy!" said the jester, who had now regained some ease of mind, as Jumper was continuing to move very quietly under him. "As sair a trussle as I've had for a while."

"You stuck to him admirably, Geordie," said James, laughing.

"Like a burr on a bannet," replied Geordie. "I was determined to keep the grip, come o't what-like't. But, I say, your Highness, is there ony provender wi' us? Did yer Highness gie ony orders to that effect?"

"I did, Geordie," replied James. "There's store of good things coming after us, on sumpters; but, methought, your first inquiry in that way would have been after liquor, man."

"Policy, yer Highness—policy. It doesna look weel to be craikin after drink. Noo, in such cases as this, I ken whar there's corn, the water 'll no be far aff. I aye inquire for the former. It saves appearances."

"Very ingenious, Geordie—very ingenious, on my word; but surely, man, you cannot be either hungry or thirsty, already."

"Baith, as I'm a sinner, yer Highness—baith. Yon knockin I got 's made me as dry 's a whistle, and the caller air and exercise thegither as hungry 's a hawk. Did yer Highness say the vivers war comin after us?"

"I did, I did," replied the King, a little shortly; for he was now engaged in conversation with the French ambassador, D'Oisseul, who rode on the opposite side of him.

Having obtained this brief answer, Geordie might now have been seen allowing himself to drop gradually behind the cavalcade; but he was not permitted to do this without remark. The proceeding excited some surprise, and called forth various bantering salutations from the attendants of the hunting party, as they passed him, one after another. This running fire, however, Geordie stood manfully; and rarely failed to give fully more than he got. He also stood fast to his purpose, whatever that was, and held on until the last man had passed him. When this man had done so, Geordie slowly retraced his steps towards Falkland, until he had proceeded somewhere about half-a-mile, when the appearance of a party, consisting of three men and two horses, with panniers, approaching, arrested his progress. On seeing these, Geordie stopped short until they came up. They were the persons who had charge of the "provender."

"Come awa, lads—come awa," said Geordie, addressing the sutlers. "I hae been waitin for ye this hour. There's the King, puir man! wi' his tongue hingin oot wi' drouth like a dog in July, and no a drap o' drink o' any kind to gie him. It's just heart-breakin to see him. Turn me oot a bottle o' yer muscadel there instanter, and let me tak it till him. He bade me wait on ye for't."

At once obeying the royal order, which was not for a moment doubted, one of the purveyors instantly removed the cover from one of the panniers, and, plunging down his hand, drew out a bottle of the liquor demanded.

"Ye may as weel gie me ane o' thae chuckies, too," said Geordie, to whose watchful eye the opening of the basket had exposed some roasted fowls. "He'll maybe tak a mouthfu wi' his drap drink."

The fowl and some bread were also added to Geordie's stock of creature comforts, and with these he made off, apparently to rejoin the royal hunting party—but it was only apparently; for he had no sooner got out of sight of the purveyors, than he struck off the road, and continued his divergent course until he came to a small, quiet, sequestered dell, which seemed suitable for the purpose he meditated. This purpose, as the reader may guess, was no other than to enjoy a little peaceable refecton on the wine and victuals which he had so dexterously secured. Having fixed on the scene of his intended performances, Geordie dismounted, and, having secured his horse to a tree, sat him down on the grass, and proceeded with great deliberation to arrange the small preliminary matters of his proposed banquet. He first turned out the "chuckie," which he eyed for an instant with great satisfaction, turning it round and round the while; then placed it before him, with an audibly expressed opinion that "it was a noble fat ane." He next produced the bottle or flask of muscadel wine; but on this article he proceeded to immediate operations. Having extracted the cork, he raised the richly-laden vessel to his lips, and held it there till his eyes began to stand in his head, and his upturned face to grow black "as he was drinking," for the want of that breath of which his intense efforts at suction deprived him. At length, however, being able to hold out no longer, he withdrew the delicious fountain; and, having recovered respiration after two or three convulsive gasps, placed it down beside him with a—

"Heeh, by St Margaret, but that was a wully waught! That's something like a drink. Glorious stuff! My faith, Geordie, lad, it's no every day ye fa' in wi' a soup like that. Oh, gin Lochleven war made o' such gear, an' me a troutin't!" Having thus expressed his satisfaction with his liquor,

Geordie commenced operations on the fowl, continuing, at intervals, his application to the flask, until he had extracted the last drop of its contents—a feat which he had just accomplished, when he was startled by the sound of a horn at no great distance; then by that of another, and another, in different quarters, all around him. "Faith, they're at it!" said Geordie, starting to his feet, or rather attempting to start to his feet; for the muscadel was now bothering his upper works pretty considerably, and exciting a tendency to prostration, that Geordie found it extremely difficult to counteract. In this, however, he, after some strenuous efforts, succeeded in the present instance, and got upon his legs. This clever trick performed—

"Faith, they're at it," again said Geordie, hiccupping at intervals, as he spoke; "they're at it, helter skelter."

And Geordie was right; seeing that he meant the chase had begun. A deer had been started, and dogs and horsemen were now sweeping over the face of the country, like a whirlwind, in pursuit of the flying prey. The chase was coming in the very direction of Geordie's retreat; and, being aware of this, he mounted as quickly as he could, and rode gently to the summit of the rising ground, which enclosed the little dell or hollow that had been the scene of his refecton. All that Geordie intended by this movement, was merely to ascertain precisely what was going on; he having no intention whatever of joining in the chase; but this was a point wherein he was not to be permitted to choose. Geordie had scarcely gained the summit of the ravine, when the hunted deer, a huge animal, with antlers like the branch of an oak, rushed past him with the speed of lightning, and plunged down into the strath which lay below. Confounded, and not a little alarmed by the suddenness of the visitation, Geordie hastened to turn his horse in an opposite direction, and began kicking, and urging him to get out of the line of the chase, which he knew would be followed up in the precise track of the deer. But his efforts in this way were made in vain. Jumper, who was an old hand at the sports of the field, apparently understanding what was going on, and shewing strong symptoms of a desire to take a share in the sport, got restive on his rider's hands, and not only peremptorily refused to go either to the right or to the left, but displayed a violent inclination to start off at full gallop, in the direction which the deer had taken. All this, Geordie, with great alarm, perceived, and he would have instantly dismounted; but Jumper's motions were now far too lively to permit of this; and, finding it so, his rider had nothing for it but to combat his inclinations as well as he could. The question now was, then, whether Geordie or Jumper should prevail; and it was being eagerly disputed by both parties, when a circumstance occurred that settled it at once, and in favour of the latter. This was the approach of the dogs and horses of the sportsmen. They came sweeping on like a hurricane, and in an instant Geordie was in the midst of them. In the next, notwithstanding some desperate efforts to prevent it, he was seen flying along with the body of the chase. Geordie was now fairly in for it; and, to his great horror, he felt that he was so. Clinging by saddle and mane, and expressing his feelings, from time to time, in a series of the most unearthly shouts, he was borne along, over hedge and ditch, with a velocity that a witch on a broomstick might have envied. But Geordie, however involuntarily, was gaining honour by his performances. Thanks to Jumper, he was the foremost man in the chase, and led on in a style which excited the unqualified approbation of his fellow sportsmen, who cheered him on with many a hilarious cry, and many a roar of laughter. Still holding fast, and still keeping the van, Geordie held gallantly on his way, although we cannot say that he either sufficiently appreciated the exaviableness of his position, or felt greatly

elated by the honours it procured him. Be this as it may, Geordie kept the lead for a run of nearly fifteen miles; and he would, undoubtedly, have kept it longer, had there been occasion—but there was none. At the end of a course of this extent, the deer was run down by the dogs, and Geordie was the first and only man in at the death. In half a minute after, however, he was joined by the King, who was decidedly the best horseman in Scotland; and in less than another half minute, a dozen of the most daring of the sportsmen were on the spot.

“Hurra! ye Diel’s buckies!” exclaimed Geordie, triumphantly, and in great excitation, so soon as he found he had an auditory; “I kent I could do the thing, if I only ance entered into the spirit o’t. It was a’ that was wantin. Ye aye thocht little o’ Jumper; but, my faith, ye saw how I made him spin. Just gie him plenty o’ heel as I did, an’ there’s no a better horse in a’ your aucht,” (this was addressed to the King,) “although he *does* tak some pushin on. But there’s just a way o’ thae things.”

From all this the reader will observe that Geordie had ingeniously, and with no small degree of presence of mind, assumed a decided intention of making a merit of his accident, and of passing off his involuntary feat as a spontaneous act. This certainly was the case; and it was at once perceived and appreciated by his audience, who, delighted with his ready effrontery, tumultuously surrounded him, and congratulated him, with noisy glee, on the singular boldness and skill which he had displayed.

“Heel, heel, heel, and a grip,” replied Geordie, with brief didactic gravity; “thae’s the twa grand things in a rin like yon. Jumper wasna for takin the road at first; but faith, frien, says I, gang ye maun, an’ at your best too. It’s my pleasure an’ no yours that’s to be consulted in the matter. We’re no gaun to let oorsels be affronted afore thae lawn-loupers o’ foreigners. Wi’ that I gied him twa dings wi’ the spurs; sendin the rowels into the head every time, an’ awa we gaed like a fire-flaught, an’ here we are a’ ticht an’ richt, thack an’ rape. But,” added Geordie—his real ideas an’ natural feelings on the subject, obtaining utterance, whether he would or not—“this huntin’s a thing I dinna, after a’, a’ thegither approve o’. It’s just a temptin o’ Providence, an’ should be warily practeesed.”

Whatever objection, however, Geordie might have to hunting, he had none at all, as we have already seen, to good eating and drinking. It was, therefore, with no displeasure whatever, that he now heard orders given to some attendants to go out in quest of the sumpter horses, who had been following the chase, with what speed they might, and to hasten them forward to the ground then occupied by the hunting party; and with still less displeasure was it, that Geordie, in about an hour after, saw the said sumpter horses arrive, and the good things they carried, spread out on the grass, for the edification of the now hungry sportsmen.

“Well, Geordie,” said the monarch, eyeing the various edibles which were dispersed over a large snow-white cloth, that had been spread over a carefully-selected spot; “well, Geordie,” he said, “what will’t have to eat? That ride of thine must have given thee an appetite.”

“No muckle o’ that, your Highness; but wow, man, it has gien me an awfu thirst. I’m juist most shockin dry. My tongue’s rattlin in my mouth like a mill-happer.”

“Well, what will’t drink then, Geordie?”

“Ye’ll no hae a drap muscadel about ye?” was the response, in a quiet, suppressed tone.

“Oh, doubtless, doubtless,” replied James; “I say, Merchiestoun”——

“Never mind him, your Highness, never mind him; gie yoursel nae trouble; I’ll tak onything that’s at hand, onything, onything”—here eagerly interposed Geordie, who had reasons of his own for wishing no communica-

tion of any kind to take place on the subject of muscadel, of all others, between his master and Merchiestoun, who was the very man who had supplied him with the stores demanded for the King’s use, but appropriated to his own, as already set forth.

“No trouble at all, man. Hold that fool tongue of thine,” replied the King, hastily; “I say, Merchiestoun, come hither. Hast brought any muscadel with thee?”

“Here’s a whaup in the rape,” muttered Geordie, by way of an aside.

“What dost stare at, sirrah?” continued James, still addressing his serving-man, who, instead of answering his query, was looking rather surprised at it, and simpering his perplexity.

“Begging yer Highness’ pardon,” at length replied the man, who now began to smell a rat; and this the more readily, that he thought, what was indeed true, that he perceived a considerable degree of obfuscation about Geordie—“Begging yer Highness’ pardon, but I thought your Highness had *known* that we had muscadel; seeing”——

“I say, man, dinna staun bletherin nonsense there,” here again interposed Geordie, “but obey his Highness’ order at ance, an’ bring the wine he wants, *if ye hae’t*. This is neither time nor place for lang speeches.”

“Faith, and Geordie speaks wisely,” said the monarch, smiling; “come, Merchiestoun, bring the wine hither without more ado, man, and give Geordie a deep cup of it, for he’s *gaisening*.”

Merchiestoun, whose mouth had been thus dexterously shut just in the nick of time, before going off on his mission, shook his head angrily at Geordie—which shake said as plainly as such sign could do, “I know the trick you have played, friend, and I’ll be up sides with you yet for it. Take my word for that.” To this threat by implication, Geordie replied merely by touching the side of his nose impressively with his forefinger, and hanging out a gentle smile of derision.

“He’s a haverin guse that Sandy Merchiestoun,” said Geordie, turning round to give his master the benefit of the remark; but his master had left him. He had gone to take his place at the dejuné. On discovering this, Geordie’s reflections took another direction. “Faith, yon was touch an’ go. Just as close sailin on the win’ as there’s ony occasion for. Naething like a wee hair o’ presence o’ mind, for gettin a man oot o’ a scrape. It’ll bring ye as clean oot as a darnin needle through a worsit stockin. Is that the wine, Sandy?” continued Geordie, but now addressing Merchiestoun, who was at this moment approaching with a flask in one hand, and a cup or goblet in the other; “ye hae the King’s order to gie me a waucht o’t.”

“Hae ye had the King’s order for a’ the King’s wine ye hae drank, Geordie?” inquired Merchiestoun, sarcastically.

“Hae ye, Sandy?” said Geordie slyly. “I doot it.”

“That’s no my question.”

“But it’s mine.”

“Ay, ay, but that’ll no do, frien,” quoth the defrauded serving man; “ye got a flask o’ wine frae me this day—ane o’ the best that ever cam oot o’ Falkland too—under fause pretences; and I’m determined to expose your roguery.”

“Wow, man, out ye hae an ill tongue,” replied Geordie, with perfect composure. “It’s just scandalous to hear ye. Dear me, man, Sandy, what would folk think o’ ye if they heard ye gaun on wi’ that indecent nonsense? Come, lad, fill us oot that tass o’ liquor, and I’ll forgie ye for this time, although ye maunna repeat it.”

“Weel, confound your impudence,” slowly and emphatically exclaimed the amazed servitor—amazed at the con-

summate effrontery that would place him in the situation of the offending party. "Ye'll forgie me! By my troth, that's a guid ane. Do ye mean to mak oot that it was *me* that swindled the flask o' wine?"

"It'll be lang or I accuse ye o' onything o' the kind, Sandy," replied Geordie, with a still unmoved countenance, "an' ye dinna accuse yoursel. No, no, I'm no the man to hurt onybody's character, and still mair laith wad I be to hurt yours. Ye're safe aneuch for me, Sandy. But come, man, I say again, fill us oot a cup o' that stomach warmer; for I'm spittin boddles."

Finding it of no use to carry on the altercation, Merchiestoun, without saying another word, filled up a goblet, and, handing it to Geordie, expressed a benevolent wish, that it "might choke him."

Having taken out his *horn*, and having subsequently picked up various other driblets out of ill-drained flasks, &c. for which he kept on the look-out, by going round and round the party who were regaling themselves, much as a shark keeps making the circuit of a ship, in the expectation of prey—Geordie soon found himself in a very comfortable condition, and ready for anything but another hunt, to which no degree of excitation could reconcile him.

This last, however, was a feeling by no means shared by the royal party, who, so soon as they had finished their repast, again took to horse, for the purpose of enjoying one other run, ere the day, which was now pretty far advanced, should draw to a close. In this proposed course, Master George determined not only to take no voluntary part, but no involuntary one either, and, in order to prevent this, he kept his horse secured to a tree till the whole cavalcade had got on horseback, and departed. Having given them a start of, as he calculated, about a mile, he mounted also, and began jogging on at his leisure, in the direction which the huntsmen had taken—a course which he meant to pursue throughout the whole afternoon; but accompanied by a determination always to maintain a respectful intervening distance between himself and his friends. Thus Geordie proceeded, and thus proceeded also, the party in advance of him; the former obtaining, every now and then, assurance of his keeping the right direction by catching occasional glimpses of the latter in the distance. Thus, we say, they proceeded for about two hours, at the end of which time the faint sound of a horn intimated to Geordie that another deer had been started, and that the scene of the morning was about to be acted over again. Geordie prayed fervently that the "brute," as he called the unfortunate animal, might not come his way again—and in this wish he was gratified; for the chase took an entirely opposite direction, as was made manifest to him, by the increasing faintness of the sounds of the horns. These sounds, however, were not altogether so faint as not to reach the ear of Jumper, and thus causing his rider a good deal both of trouble and alarm. On observing his steed cock his ears at the first blast, Geordie began shouting over his neck in order to prevent any repetition of the exciting sounds reaching him, and, by dint of this expedient, and some hard pulling, succeeded in restraining him until all danger from that cause had ceased, in consequence of the rapidly increasing distance of the sportsmen.

Of these, Geordie soon lost all trace; but he continued jogging leisurely on, in the direction which he believed they had taken. While thus proceeding, and it might be about an hour after he had heard the last of the hunting party, Geordie, in threading his way cautiously through an extensive morass that lay directly in his route, was suddenly startled by some one calling in a loud voice—"Hoa! fool George—fool, I say, hoa!" Geordie instantly drew bridle, and, looking in the direction whence the sounds proceeded, saw a man up nearly to his neck in

the bog, and at the distance of about fifty yards from him.

"Weel, freen, but ye *hae* gotten a pair o' breeks, at ony rate, be ye wha ye like." And, saying this, Geordie advanced towards the bust in the bog. On coming close up to it—"Gude preserve me! Maister Whustle, is that you?" he said—recognising in the unlucky wight before, or rather beneath him, no other than Monsieur d'Oisseul, the French ambassador. "Hoo the deevil got ye there, man?"

"Ah! one dam countree this, my friend. All as soft as one custard, or one jelly. All de same as one dam mess of dirty pottage."

"Dinna ye begin abusin parritch, or the country that produces it, Maister Whustle, or I'll maybe clink ye doon anither fit in the bog, an' that wad settle yer business, I'm thinkin."

Between resentment at the freedom, or rather insolence, as he deemed it, of Geordie's language, and a most earnest desire to avail himself of his assistance in getting out of his present awkward situation, the little Frenchman felt a good deal at a loss how to conduct himself. The latter feeling, however, getting at length the better of the former, Monsieur d'Oisseul resolved to sacrifice his resentment to his safety; and it was a prudent determination, as he could not possibly extricate himself without the assistance of some one. Being perfectly aware of this—

"Come, my good friend," he now said, assuming as gracious a look as his present circumstances would permit, "let me have your hand, and give me one strong pull out."

"No ae inch, freen, till ye retract every word ye *hae* said against Scotland, an' against Scotland's best food, parritch," replied Geordie, with cool, composed determination.

"Vell, vat I shall say?" rejoined Monsieur d'Oisseul, with a humility inspired by the advantage which he but too sensibly felt Geordie had over him. "You shall dictate, and I shall repeat."

"What do ye mean by that?" inquired Geordie, bluntly, not precisely understanding the terms employed by the ambassador.

"Vy, you shall speak de vord, de apologie, an' I shall speak it after you."

"Ou ay; let me see, then." And Geordie began scratching his head, in considerable difficulty as to how he should proceed in this work of dictation. At length, finding he could make no better of it—"Aweel, ye see, Maister Whustle," he said, "just say this, an' I'll be satisfied, an' pu' ye oot like a carrot; for, atweel, ye're no muckle langer than a guid-sized ane. Just say this, Maister Whustle:—Scotland's a guid, healthy, an' respectable country; an' parritch is a guid, wholesome, an' respectable dish; an' I'm sorry for havin misca'ed either the tane or the tither."

Monsieur d'Oisseul having repeated Geordie's patriotic formula as closely to the original as he could, the latter instantly dismounted, and strenuously exerted himself in extricating the ambassador from his unpleasant situation—a service which, after a good deal of pulling and hauling, he efficiently performed, by fairly landing him on a dry section of the morass. Having done this, he assisted Monsieur d'Oisseul in recapturing his horse, which was floundering in the swamp, at a little distance. In a short time after, the little Frenchman was again mounted, and Geordie, who was perfectly familiar with the localities of the place, having pointed out to him a safe track, he started off at a gallop, to overtake the chase; but not before he had given Geordie a very handsome *douceur*, in the shape of a silk purse pretty well filled with both gold and silver coin.

"Aweel," said Geordie, holding up the purse, on the

departure of the donor and making its contents dance to their own music, "wha wad hae ever thocht o' findin this in a moss? Shut your mouths, ye tuneless brutes," he continued, and now apostrophizing some larks, and other little feathered minstrels that were warbling around him; "there's no in a' yer nebs put thegither half the music that's here." And he made the contents of the purse jingle again with noisy glee.

Having thus expressed the satisfaction he felt, Geordie secured his treasure beneath his jerkin, and, remounting Jumper, pursued his way through the morass.

It was now getting late in the evening, and Geordie became aware that darkness would soon overtake him. For this, however, as he knew the way well, he did not feel much alarmed; but it decided him on giving up all attempts at rejoining the hunting party, of which he had, long since, lost all trace, and making the best of his way to Falkland alone. Having come to this determination, he diverged from the route he had been hitherto pursuing, and struck down through a narrow glen, which abridged his journey by full two miles. By taking this convenient course, he had to pass a certain solitary cottage that stood a little way above the lowest level of the valley, and which was in bad odour in the neighbourhood, as the *houff* of some loose, idle fellows, who were more than suspected of laying travellers under contribution, and practising various other kindred means of supplying the place of lawful industry. Though he did not like the idea of passing this cottage, the more especially that he had at the moment, what he had rarely ever had before, some superfluous cash about him; yet he resolved on trying the adventure rather than take the longer route at such a late hour of the night.

Having come to this resolution, then, he took the glen at a smart trot, in order to clear it as quickly as possible, and had arrived within a hundred paces or so of the dreaded cottage, when his curiosity was excited by his horse's hoof striking against a piece of metal. Upon looking down he beheld a glittering object on the sward. It was of such a shape and size as to excite so much further the curiosity which its sound had first created, as to induce him to dismount for the purpose of examining it. He did so, and great was his amazement to find that it was the well-known hunting horn of the King. After looking for an instant in great surprise and no small perplexity, Geordie perceived that the chain by which it had been slung on the royal person bore evident marks of having been forcibly torn asunder; and there were, besides, other indications of the separation of the horn from its owner having been a violent one. Another startling circumstance fell under his acute observation. The turf around where the horn had lain was much trampled and disturbed, as if there had been persons wrestling or struggling on the spot. What could all this mean?

"Something wrang here," said Geordie, again contemplating the horn, and anon throwing an involuntary and almost unconscious glance at the little thatched house on the brae. "Something wrang here, be't what it likes," muttered he. "I wish a' may be richt wi' his Highness. I hae my ain doots o't. But I'll no leave him in the lurch if he be in ane, if a blast or twa o' his ain horn'll do him ony guid. Surely some o' the folk'll no be far aff."

But Geordie's suspicions and intentions require to be fully more explicitly stated than through the medium of his brief, disjointed soliloquies—and this we proceed to do. Geordie, then, began to suspect that some mischief had befallen his royal master, and he believed that an explanation of it, and a discovery of its nature, would be found in the house of evil repute on the face of the glen. Impressed with this notion, he determined on sounding the King's horn, and of sounding, too, James' favourite, and,

on this account, well-known reveillé, which it happened he could imitate to great perfection, in the hope of bringing some of his escort to the spot. But Geordie wisely judged that it would be as well that he got out of harm's way himself before he sounded, since he was so near to the cottage that the blast could not fail to be heard by its inmates, and might thus bring enemies in place of friends around him. Acting on this precautionary idea, he first rode his horse into a retired spot at some distance from the cottage; and, having there secured him to a bush, he next ascended on foot the hill that rose above, until he had got to a sufficient height to render his escape practicable if he should chance to be pursued, while his situation commanded such a view of the suspected cottage—the only quarter whence he expected enemies to come—that none could either come to or leave it without being seen by him. This, however, could not be long the case, as it was now fast getting dark. There was, therefore, no time to lose. Aware of this, Geordie hastened to select a spot favourable for his purpose—that is, one that should command as wide a range of sight and sound as possible; and, having found such a place, he raised the horn to his lips, and blew a blast whose shrill tones made both mountain and valley ring for many a mile.

"That'll gar some o' them jump, I'm thinkin, if they're ony o' them within soond o't," said Geordie, on withdrawing the horn from his lips. "That was a roarer, and I defy ony o' them to ken but it was the King blew't. It's every whilly-wha copied to a turn."

Having thus expressed himself, he awaited the result of his alarm; but nearly half-an-hour elapsed, and yet there was no result. No one appeared, nor did any replying horn, or other sight or sound, intimate that the blast had been heard.

"This is queer," said Geordie, whose patience was beginning to be exhausted. "I wad thocht naething o't if I had sounded my ain horn. That they wadna hae minded mair than the routin o' an auld cow, but I'm sure there's no a man o' them that doesna ken the tone o' the King's bugle as well as they ken the clink o' their ain wives' tongues." Saying this, he once more raised the instrument to his mouth, and drew another blast longer and yet shriller than the first; and this time he did not sound in vain. The distant response of a horn fell faintly on his ear. Geordie, in a state of great excitement, sounded again, and again a reply, but louder and more distinct, was wafted towards him on the breeze. They were approaching. There was no doubt of that; and, not doubting it, Geordie now continued sounding at short intervals, and with equal frequency was he replied to till at length he saw—

"Four-and-twenty belted knights come skipping owre the hill."

It being now nearly pitch-dark, however, there was still a little difficulty in the parties coming together.

"Hilloa, hilloa!—where is your Highness?" shouted several of the cavaliers and retainers who had come up at full gallop to the spot, and were now flying about in all directions in search of the King.

"Here, here, ye knaves," roared Geordie. "This way, this way!" And, in the next instant, half-a-dozen horsemen were within a yard of him, and the remainder hastening towards the same spot; but what was the surprise and disappointment of the party when they found, not the King, but Geordie Binks!

"It's Geordie Binks!—it's Geordie Binks! and not the King!" flew from one to another, with shouts of laughter, and loud expressions of wrath, amazement, and derision, all intermingled. Taking the first word of *flying*, and not altogether pleased with this greeting—

"Ay, ye think ye're a' aff yer eggs, do ye? Ye think ye've been on the wrang scent?" said Geordie, with great

coolness; "but ye'll maybe fin that I ken what I hae been doin."

"What is the meaning of this, sirrah?" here interposed the captain of the King's guard, who was one of the party, and whose momentary mirth on first recognising Geordie had changed, as in the case of all the others present, into intense anxiety for the safety of the King. "Where, or how got ye the King's horn, and where is his Highness?"

"That's a bonny string o' questions to put a' at ance and no owre ceevily puttin. Nevertheless, I'll answer ye the twa first. The third maun staun a wee."

And Geordie proceeded to detail all the circumstances connected with his finding the King's horn, as already related, and to explain the motives of his subsequent proceedings. When he had concluded, he received as much commendation from those around him as he had had before of contumely. All praised his presence of mind and forethought, and gave him, in advance, the credit of having done his Sovereign an essential service.

It was now determined that the suspected cottage should be silently surrounded without loss of time, and a forcible entrance made, if it was not willingly given, into the interior, to see if anything there could be discovered in connection with the King's mysterious disappearance. This measure being resolved upon, the assembled gentlemen and men-at-arms dismounted, and, leaving their horses in charge of two or three of the latter, descended the hill, quickly but noiselessly. On reaching the bottom, the party, which consisted of seventeen persons in all, including Geordie, who insisted on taking a leading part, advanced in a close body, swords drawn, and in profound silence, on the cottage. In the same silence it was surrounded, when the captain of the guard, with one or two others, approaching the door, rapped loudly, and demanded instant admittance. Geordie, who was one of those at the door, also chimed in; but it was in a characteristic way. Clapping his mouth to the key-hole—"If ye be in there, yer Highness, keep up yer heart, and we'll be in at ye immediately. Here's plenty o' friens to tak ye oot o' yer trouble—that is, if ye be there, and in ony."

Having administered this encouragement and consolation, Geordie made way for the others to follow up whatever proceedings they intended. These now were, in the first place, to force the door, as no answer from within could be obtained.

In a wretched apartment, dimly lighted by an almost exhausted fire, was found the King, extended at full length on the floor, his hands and feet strongly secured with cords, and a handkerchief so tightly tied over his mouth as not only to prevent him uttering any sound, but nearly to suppress respiration. His eyes, also, were tightly bandaged. There were no other persons visible in the apartment. At first no doubt was entertained that the King was murdered, but a closer examination discovered that he was still alive.

On this being ascertained, no time was lost in undoing the bands by which he was tied, when, to the infinite joy of those who had thus come so opportunely to his aid, he immediately rose to his feet apparently uninjured, although greatly exhausted. It was some time, however, before he could make any reply to the numerous and eager inquiries which were put to him by his attendants. When enabled to do this, he informed them that he had been attacked by four men at a short distance from where they then were; that they had come suddenly upon him when riding alone, before he had had time to draw his sword; that one had seized the bridle of his horse, and that the other three had dragged him, after a severe struggle, to the ground; that, having done this, they had stripped him of all the valuables about his person, then secured him in the manner in which he had been found. James added an expression of belief that they had intended ultimately to murder him,

although he could not account for their delaying the commission of this additional crime. Such, in substance, was the narrative of the King regarding this very singular affair. When he had concluded, the attention of all became directed to the inquiry, Where were the perpetrators of this atrocity? There was no one to be seen. Meanwhile, Geordie was busy.

"I say, lads, here's something queer," he said; and, as he spoke, shewed, by a pressure of his foot on a corner of the large flagstone of the hearth, that it did not lie solidly in its place. "I've heard o' sic things as this before," added Geordie; and now stooping down to apply his hands to the stone, in which he was joined by others, it was canted over, and discovered a large hole—it could not be called a chamber—in which, closely huddled together, were the four ruffians of whom they had been in search. "Ha, ha, my linties, are ye there?" exclaimed Geordie, peering down into the pit; "that's a nice bit cage for ye now. But come oot, my bonny birdies, an' tak a mouthfu o' the caller air. We've been a' wearyin sair to see ye."

Geordie's banter, however, was quickly interrupted by the stern interference of some of the other members of the party; who, threatening to cut the unfortunate wretches to pieces where they stood, compelled them instantly to ascend from their noisome retreat, which they did, one after the other, by means of a small side ladder, of six or eight steps, kept apparently for the purpose. On coming to the surface, the unhappy men were seized, each as they ascended, and their arms pinioned. This process completed on them all, they were bound two and two together, and thus dispatched, with a guard of eight men, to Falkland, to be afterwards dealt with as the law should direct.

"Now, gentlemen," said the King, on this part of the strange business of the evening having been performed; "now that we have time to advert to it, pray inform me to whom, or to what accident am I indebted for my rescue?"

The King soon found a respondent.

"Wha does yer Highness think ye could be indebted to for such a thing, but me? I wonder to hear ye. Ye owe yer escape to the four quarters o' Geordie Binks, an' to nae ither leevin mortal man, saunt or sinner." And Geordie, amidst frequent expressions of corroborative testimony from those around him, proceeded to relate, although with considerable prolixity, to the astonished, and, we may add, much amused monarch, the particulars connected with the latter's rescue, which are already before the reader. "An' now, sir," said Geordie, when he had finished, "there ye are, guid be thankit! as soun's a bell—no a hair the waur, only lookin' a wee whiter than usual about the gills; an' a' through the marvellous courage, constancy, loyalty, forethocht, prudence, an' discretion o' Geordie Binks."

"We own it, Geordie, we own it most cheerfully," replied the King, laughing; "and, depend upon it, it shall not be forgotten."

"Weel, weel, your Highness, see that it bena. It's weel worth mindin, although I say't that shouldna say't, maybe. But now, sirs, I'm awfu dry. Has nane o' ye sic a thing about ye, as a bit flask wi' onything in't?"

All, with expressions of regret, declared to Geordie that they had not such a thing about them; but it was hinted to him that he would get as much liquor as he could swallow when he reached Falkland—and with this consolation he was obliged to be satisfied. In a few minutes after, the whole party mounted, the King having got the horse of a retainer—for his own had never been seen after he was attacked; and, in due time, they arrived safely at Falkland, after a day of unusual bustle and adventure. Such a day, however, it had been, as Geordie swore he would never expose himself to again—"although," he always added, "he had seen waur."

THE DEAD DEAL.

THE best feature of a story is, after all, its truth; and, however much the fancy of man may travail in the production of plots and characters, we must always come back to the working of our old mother Nature. Yet, of a verity, she herself is a strange coiner of inventions; and, if it were not that she is so sober-looking a matron, especially at this time of the year, we would sometimes have very good grounds to doubt if she herself did not sometimes deal as much in fiction as ever did the famous Don Pinto of mendacious memory. In one instance which we are about to detail, she played off one of her tricks of invention with an art that no fictioneer out of China, where they are all liars together, could have done so well by a full half. In the old town of Dumfries lived an individual called Simon M'William, a very good man, and as good a Christian to boot as one might see in a whole chancel of godly men on a Sunday. His religion was as sincere as a good heart could feel, and the actions of his life acknowledged in their uprightness the power of his good spirit; yet was it a matter of verity, however much it may savour of strangeness, that his holiness, no more than Dr Johnson's, ever took away from him the fear of death.

This peculiarity in his character, and this alone, was the cause of some disputes between him and his wife Margaret, who was as good a Christian as Simon, but who, with the fortitude of her sex, when they get old, seemed to care no more for the big black angel than she did for the arch-enemy himself. Had it not been for this difference, these two godly persons might have been as happy as ever were man and wife in this lower world, or any other world of which Fontenelle has given an account. But this was an eternal source of disagreement. Somehow or another, Margaret was almost continually talking about the vanity of all things here, after the manner of the son of Sirach, or any other prophet. And from this she fell naturally into the subject of death, of whom she spoke as a good friend, that would, by and by, remove her and Simon from this sphere of suffering. Of a truth, it was as strange a sight as one could wish to see, in this province of wonders, this worthy pair engaged in this subject of conjugal polemics; for, while the eye of the one brightened with the prospect of an immortality as pure as everlasting, which made her despise the pains of dissolution, the other gloomed like a cloud in November, shuddered with horror at the prospect of death and judgment, and taxed his better half, in his bitterness of spite, with a wish that he were gathered to his fathers.

Now, it happened that Simon took ill, and was, indeed, just as ill as any man ought to be, when he calls for a physician; but the never a physician he would send for, notwithstanding of all that Margaret could advance in favour of its expediency. He trembled at the very idea of being in danger; and the face of a doctor was, he thought, no better than that of death himself. The opportunity, however, thus presented, by the hand of God's affection, was too good a one to be let slip by Margaret, without turning it to account in behalf of Simon's soul. So she set to work with all the pith of her tongue, to array before him the consequences of death; nor did she stop, although she saw him twisting himself like a snake beneath the clothes, and heard strong words of objurgation and spite come from his white lips, as he struggled with his anger and his fear.

On a subsequent day, Simon had been dozing a little, and enjoying a respite from his terrors. Startled by some noise, he looked up, and whom should he see standing before him, and actually holding his pulse, but the doctor himself. He had come by the request of Margaret, who could not stand by, as she said, and see her husband die,

without something being done for the safety of his body. Simon shuddered with terror, and bade the doctor begone—but the doctor was a man of sense, and knew the infirmity of his patient. Simon grew worse and worse. Margaret continued her devotional exercises, and spoke of death more and more. Visitors called daily, to ascertain how he was, and, as none durst approach him, to inquire about his health, they were generally answered at the door, in such a manner as that he might not hear their inquiries. One day Margaret thought he had got worse than ever—for he was lying apparently in a state of great weakness, with his eyes shut, and his mouth open, and other signs of dissolution about him; but the truth was, that he was undergoing an improvement, by a process of nature's own, and the *vis medicatrix* was busy working in him a change for the better. At this moment it happened, in that curious way by which the imp Chance chooses to bring about coincidences, that Jenny Perkins—a very officious body—put in her head at Margaret's door, and asked how Simon was. Margaret shook her head, as any good wife would do, and looked as melancholy as if her face had been lengthened by the stretching process about to be applied to her husband. She had, however, a message for Jenny to perform, and thought proper to get her own request out before she answered by words that which had been put to her.

"Run up, Jenny," she said, "to George Webster, and tell him he's wanted here immediately."

Now, this George Webster was no other than an undertaker; and Jenny, judging from the look, and the shake of the head of Margaret, that all was over with Simon, flew as fast as intelligence itself, and told George Webster to take down the "streeking board" to Simon M'William's upon the instant. This was an addition of Jenny's own; for Margaret wanted the wright for another purpose entirely. The command was complied with by two of George's men, who stalked away with the grim "deal," in the expectation of getting a "good dram," as is customary on stretching out the dead. As they went along, all the neighbours looked and gossiped, and set down Simon for dead; and by the time they got to the door, Margaret had gone forth to the doctor's for some medicine which he was preparing for Simon. But the men cared nothing for the absence of the living—it was the presence of the dead they wanted; so in they stalked, and they never stopped till they were by the bedside of Simon. There they placed themselves, like sentinels, with the dead deal standing between them, on its broad end, and the round head of it presented to the face of the patient. The noise awoke Simon. He opened his eyes; saw the men standing before him with the dead deal in their hands, just as if he had been on the very eve of being stretched out. He seemed to doubt whether he was dead or alive; for he stared a goodly time, without saying a single word; but the men, seeing his eyelids move, and the eyes fixed upon them, took fright, and hurried away out of the room. We never heard described the feelings of Simon on this occasion. One thing is certain—that he was still more satisfied that Margaret wished to bring death upon him, by presenting the object to both his senses of hearing and seeing; but, in spite of her efforts, he got better, and lived afterwards for many years after he had thus seen his own "Dead Deal."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. VIII.—THE CURED INGRATE.

EVERY person who has studied, even in the most cursory manner, the checkered page of human life, must have observed that there are in continual operation through mankind some great secret, moral agents, whose powers are exerted within the heart, and beyond the reach of the consciousness or observation of the individual himself who is subject to their influence. There is a steadfastness of virtue in some high-minded men, which enables them to resist the insidious temptations of the bad demon; and there is also a stern stability of vice often found in the unfortunate outlaw, which disregards, for a time, the voice of conscience, and spurns the whispered wooing of the good principle, "charm it never so wisely;" yet the real confessions of the hearts of those individuals, would shew traces enough of the agency of the unseen power to prove their want of title to an exception from the general rule which includes all the sons of Adam. We find also that extraordinary moral effects are often produced, in a dark and mysterious manner, from physical causes; and every medical man has the power of recording, if he has had the faculty of observing, changes in the minds, principles, and feelings of patients who have come through the fiery ordeal of a terrible disease, altogether unaccountable on any rules of philosophy yet discovered.

Not many years ago, a well-dressed young woman called one evening upon me, and stated that her lady, whose name, she said, would be communicated by herself, had been ill for some days, and wished me to visit her privately. I asked her when she required my attendance; and got for answer, that she, the messenger, would conduct me to the residence of the patient, if it was convenient for me to go at that time. I was disengaged, and agreed to accompany the young woman as soon as I had given directions to my assistant regarding the preparation of some medicines, which required the application of chemical rules. To be ingenuous, I was a little curious to know the secret of this private call; for, that there was a secret about it, was plain, from the words, and especially the manner of the young woman, who spoke mysteriously, and did not seem to wish any questions put to her on the subject of her mission. The night was dark, but the considerate messenger had provided a lantern; and, to anticipate my scruples, she said that the distance we had to go would not render it necessary for me to take my carriage—a five minutes' walk being sufficient to take us to our destination.

Resigning myself to the guidance of my conductress, I requested her to lead the way, and we proceeded along two neighbouring streets of considerable length, and then turned up to ——— Square—a place where the rich and fashionable part of the inhabitants of the town have their residences. At the mouth of a coach entry, which ran along the gable of a large house, and apparently led to the back offices connected with the residence, the young woman stopped, and whispered to me to take care of my feet, as she was to take the liberty of leading me along a meuse lane,

to a back entrance, through which I was to be conducted into the chamber of the sick lady. I obeyed her directions; and, keeping close behind her, was led along the lane, and through several turns and windings which I feared I might not again be able to trace without a guide, until we came to a back door, when the young woman—begging my pardon for her forwardness—took hold of my hand, and led me along a dark passage, then up a stair, then along another passage, which was lighted by some wax tapers placed in recesses in the wall; at the end of which, she softly opened a door, and ushered me into a very large bedroom, the magnificence of which was only partly revealed to me by a small lamp filled with aromatic oil, whose fragrance filled the apartment. The young woman walked quickly forward to a bed, hung with light green silk, damask curtains fringed with yellow silk, and luxuriously ornamented with a superfluity of gilding; and, drawing aside the curtains, she whispered a few words into the ear of some one lying there, apparently in distress; and then hurried out of the room, leaving me standing on the floor, without introduction or explanation.

The novelty of my position deprived me for a moment of my self-possession, and I stood stationary in the middle of the room, deliberating upon whether I should call back my conductress, and ask from her some explanation, or proceed forward to the couch, where, no doubt, my services were required; but my hesitation was soon resolved, by the extraordinary appearance of an Indian-coloured female countenance, much emaciated, and lighted up with two bright orbs, occupying the interstice between the curtains, and beckoning me, apparently with a painful effort, forward. I obeyed, and, throwing open the large folds of damask, had as full a view of my extraordinary patient as the light that emanated from the perfumed lamp, and shone feebly on her dark countenance, would permit. She beckoned to me to take a chair, which stood by the side of the bed; and, having complied with her mute request, I begged to know what was the complaint under which she laboured, that I might endeavour to yield her such relief as was in the power of our professional art. I thus limited my question to the nature of her disease, in the expectation that she herself would clear up the mystery which hung around the manner in which I was called, and introduced to so extraordinary a scene as that which was now before me. Her great weakness seemed to require some composure, and a collecting of her scattered and reduced energies, before she could answer my simple question. I now observed more perfectly than I had yet done the character and style of the room into which I had been introduced—its furniture, ornaments, and luxuries; and, above all, the extraordinary, foreign-looking invalid who seemed to be the mistress of so much grandeur. Though a bedroom, the apartment seemed to have had lavished upon its fitting-up as much money as is often expended on a lord's drawing-room—the bed itself, the wardrobes, pier-glasses, toilets, and dressing-cases, being of the most elaborate workmanship and costly character—the pictures numerous, and magnificently framed; while on all sides were to be seen foreign ornaments, chiefly Chinese and Indian, of brilliant appearance, and devoted to purposes and uses of refined

luxury, of which I could form no adequate conception. On a small table, near the bed, there was a multiplicity of boxes, vials, trinkets, and bijouterie of all kinds; and fragrant mixtures, intended to perfume the apartment, were exposed in various quarters, and even scattered exuberantly on spread covers of satin, with a view to their yielding their sweets more freely, and filling all the corners of the room. In full contrast with all this array of grandeur and luxury, lay the strange-looking individual already mentioned, on the gorgeous bed. She was apparently an East Indian; and, though possessed of comely features, she was even darker than the fair Hindoos we often see in this country. The sickness under which she laboured, and which appeared to be very severe, had rendered her thin and cadaverous-looking—making the balls of her brilliant eyes assume the appearance of being protruded, and imparting to all her features a sharp, prominent aspect, the very reverse of the natural Indian type; yet, true to her sex and the manners of her country, she was splendidly decorated, even in this state of *dishabille* and distress—the coverlet being of rich Indian manufacture, and resplendent with the dyes of the East—her gown and cap decorated with costly needlework—her fingers covered with a profusion of rings—while a cambric handkerchief, richly embroidered, in her right hand, had partly enveloped in its folds a large golden vinegarette, set profusely with glittering gems.

The rapid survey which enabled me to gather this general estimate of what was presented to me, was nearly completed before the invalid had collected strength enough to answer my question; and she was just beginning to speak—having as yet pronounced only a few inarticulate syllables—when she was interrupted by the entrance of the same young woman who had acted as my conductress, and who now exhibited a manner the very opposite of the soft, quiet, slipping nature of her former carriage. The suddenness, and even impetuosity of her entry, was inconsistent with the character of nurse of a lady in so distressed a condition as that of her apparent mistress; but her subsequent conduct was much more incomprehensible and extraordinary; for, without speaking and without stopping, she rushed forward, and, taking me by the arm, hurried me away through the door by which I had entered, along the lighted passage, down the stair, and never stopped until she landed me on the threshold of the back-door by which I had entered the house. At this time I heard the bell of (as I thought) the fore or street door of the house ringing violently; and my conductress, without saying a word, ran away as fast as the darkness would permit, leaving me, perplexed and confounded at what I had seen and heard, to find my way home in the best way I could.

In my professional capacity I had not been accustomed to any mysterious or secret practice of our art, which, being exercised ostensibly and in reality for the benefit of mankind, requires no cloak to cover its operations; and, though I was curious to know the secret of such incomprehensible proceedings, I felt no admiration of, or relish for adventures so unsuited to the life and manners of a sober, practical man. One thing, however, was clear, and seemed sufficient to reconcile my practical, every-day notions of life with this mysterious negotiation, and even to solve the doubt I entertained, whether I should again trust myself as a party to the devices of secrecy—and that was, that the individual I had been thus called to see professionally was in such a condition of body as required urgently the administrations of a medical practitioner. On the following day, I resolved upon making some inquiries, with a view to ascertain who and what the individual was that occupied the house to which I had been introduced, and which, upon a survey in daylight, I could

have no difficulty in tracing; but I happened to be too much occupied to be able to put my purpose into execution; and was thus obliged to remain, during the day, in a state of suspense and ignorance of the secret involved in my previous night's professional adventure. In the evening, however, and about the same hour at which the messenger called for me on the previous occasion, the same individual waited on me, with an apology for the apparently unceremonious treatment I had received, and which, she said, would be explained to my satisfaction; and a renewed request that I would again accompany her to the same house, and on the same errand. I told the messenger that I bore no great love to these secret adventures, but that I would consent, on this occasion, to make a sacrifice of my principles and feelings, to the hope of being able to be of some use, in a professional way, to the distressed lady I had seen on the previous occasion, whose situation, so far as I could judge from appearances, was not far removed from the extremity of danger. I again, accordingly, committed myself to the guidance of the young woman; and, after a repetition of the windings and evolutions of the previous visit, soon found myself again seated in the chair that stood by the gorgeous bed of the strange invalid. Everything seemed to be in the same situation as before: the lamp gave out its weak light, the perfumes exhaled their sweets, and the distressed lady exhibited the same strange contrast between her reduced sickly condition and the superb finery of her *dishabille*.

I had not been long seated, when she struggled to inform me, in a very weak voice, that she was much beholden to me for my attention, and grieved for the unceremonious treatment I had received in my last visit. I replied, that I laid my account with much greater personal inconvenience, in the pursuit of my profession, than any to which she had subjected or could subject me—all such considerations being, in my apprehension, of small importance, in comparison with the good we had often the power of administering to individuals in distress; and begged to know the nature of the complaint under which she too evidently laboured, that I might endeavour to ameliorate her sufferings, and restore her to that health without which the riches she apparently was mistress of, could be of small avail in rendering her happy. She appeared grateful for the sentiments I expressed; and proceeded to tell me, still with the same struggling difficulty of utterance, arising from her extreme weakness, that she was the wife of Colonel P—, the proprietor of the mansion into which I had been thus secretly introduced, for reasons she would explain in the course of her narrative. She had been married to her husband, she proceeded, in the East Indies, of which country she was a native; and, having succeeded to a large fortune on the death of her father, had given it all freely, without bond, contract, or settlement, to her husband, whom she loved, honoured, and worshipped, beyond all earthly beings, and with an ardour which had never abated from the first moment she had become his wife. Nor was the affection limited to one side of the house; for she was more than satisfied that her lord and master—grateful, no doubt, for the rank, honour, riches, and independence to which she had raised him—loved her with an affection at least equal to her own. But all these advantages (and she sighed deeply as she proceeded) were of little consequence to the production of happiness, if the greatest of all blessings, health, were denied to the possessor; and that too she had enjoyed, uninterruptedly, until about a month previously, when she was seized with an illness, the nature of which she could not comprehend; and which, notwithstanding all the anxious efforts of her husband, had continued unabated to that hour.

She paused, and seemed much exhausted by the struggle she made to let me thus far into her history. The con-

cluding part of her statement, combined with the still unexplained secrecy of my call, surprised me, and defied my powers of penetration. This lady had been dangerously ill for a month, during all which time no medical man had been called to her aid; and even now, when her body was attenuated, and her strength exhausted to the uttermost, professional assistance had been introduced into the house by stealth, as if it were against the laws to ameliorate human sufferings by curing diseases. This apparent anomaly in human conduct struck me so forcibly that I could not refrain from asking the patient, even before she recovered strength enough to answer me, what was her or her husband's reason for not calling assistance; and why that assistance was at last requested under the cloud of secrecy and apprehension.

"That I intended to explain to you," she said, after a pause. "When I felt myself ill, (and my complaint commenced by excruciating pains in my stomach, accompanied with vomiting,) I told my husband that I feared it would be necessary to call a doctor; but, ah, sir! the very thought of the necessity of medical aid to the object of so much love and tenderness, put him almost frantic. He confessed that it was a weakness; but declared his inability to conquer it. Yet, alas! his unremitting kindness has not diminished my disease. Though I have taken everything his solicitude has suggested and offered to me, my pains still continue, my appetite is entirely gone, and the weakness of my body has approached that of the helpless infant. Three days ago, I thought I would have breathed my last; and parting thoughts of my native country, and the dear friends I left there, to follow the fortunes of a dearer stranger, passed through my mind with the feeling of a long and everlasting farewell. My husband wept over me, and prayed for my recovery; but he could not think me so ill as to make the call of the doctor imperative; and I did not press a subject which I saw was painful to him. No, sir, I would rather have died than have produced to him the slightest uneasiness; and my object in calling you, in the secret manner you have witnessed, was simply to avoid causing to him the pain of thinking that my illness was so great as to render your services absolutely necessary."

The communication I now heard, which was spoken in broken sentences, and after considerable pauses, in place of clearing up my difficulty, increased it, and added to my surprise. Some light was, no doubt, thrown on the cause which produced the secret manner of my visitation; but every other circumstance attending the unfortunate lady's case, was merged in deeper gloom and mystery. The circumstance of a husband, who loved his wife, refusing to call professional assistance, appeared to be not less extraordinary than the reason assigned for it—even with all the allowances, justified by a very prevailing prejudice, in some weak minds, against the extremity of calling a doctor. I had heard something of Colonel P——; that he was considered to be immensely rich, and known to be a deep gambler; but I never understood that he was a victim of weak or imaginary fears, and I was, therefore, inclined to doubt the truth of the reason assigned by the unsuspecting invalid, for the scrupulous delicacy of her husband's affection and solicitude. I pondered for a moment, and soon perceived that the nature of her complaint, and the kind of restoratives or medicines she might have been receiving, would, in all likelihood, yield me more information on the subject of my difficulty, than I could procure from her broken sentences, which, at the best, only expressed the sentiments of a mind clouded with the prejudice of a devoted love, and unbounded credulity. I proceeded, therefore, to ascertain the nature of her complaint; and soon discovered that the seat of it was, as she had said, in the region of the stomach, which not only produced to her great pain

internally, but felt sore on the application of external pressure on the *præcordia*. Other symptoms of a disease in this principal organ, were present; such as fits of painful vomiting after attempting to eat, her great emaciation, anxiety of countenance, thirst, restlessness, and debility; and, in ordinary circumstances, I would have been inclined to conclude that she laboured under some species of what we denominate *gastritis*, or inflammation of the stomach, though I could not account for such a disease not having been resolved and ended in much shorter time than the period which embraced her sufferings.

I next proceeded to ascertain what she had been taking in the form of medicaments; and discovered that her husband, proceeding on the idea that her stomach laboured under weakness, and required some tonic medicine, had administered to her, on several occasions, what we term *limatura ferri*, iron filings—a remedy for cases of dyspepsia and bad stomachs; but not suited to the inflammatory disorders of the kind under which she was suffering. I asked her if she had any of the medicine lying by her, and she replied, with simplicity, that her husband generally took charge of it himself; but that he had that evening laid a small paper, containing a portion of it, on the top of a side-table, until he administered to her the dose she was in the habit of receiving, and had gone away without laying it past, according to his custom. I took up the paper, examined it, and found, according to the rapid investigation I bestowed on it, without the aid of any tests, that it possessed all the appearances of the genuine medicine. I, however, took the precaution of emptying a small portion of it into another paper, and slipping it into my pocket, unobserved by the patient. I then told her that I thought she should discontinue the use of the powder, which was entirely unsuited to her ailment.

"That is a cruel advice, sir," she cried, in a tone of great excitement. "How can I discontinue a medicine offered to me by the hands of a husband, without being able to give any reason for rejecting his kindness? I tremble to think of repaying all the attentions of that dear man with ingratitude, and wounding his sensibility, by rejecting this testimony of his solicitude and affection. I cannot—I feel I cannot. The pain I would thereby produce to him would be reflected, by sympathy, on this weak frame, which is unable to struggle much longer with the pains of flesh alone, far less with the additional anguish of a wounded mind, grieved to death at causing sorrow to the man I so dearly love. Do not, oh! do not, sir, make me an ingrate."

I was struck with the devotion of this gentle being, who actually trembled at the idea of producing uneasiness to the man whom she had raised to affluence, and who yet would not allow her the benefit of a doctor in her distress; but, while I was pleased with this exhibition of a feature in the female character I had never before seen so strongly developed—though I had read and heard much of the fidelity and affection of the women of the East—I was much chagrined at the idea that so fair and beautiful a virtue would probably prevent me from doing anything effectual for a creature who, independently of her distance from her country, had so many other claims on my sympathy. I told her that I feared I could be of little service to her if she could not resolve upon discontinuing her husband's medicine; and tried to impress upon her the necessity of conforming to my advice, if she wished to make herself well—the best mode, assuredly, of making her husband happy. But she replied, that she expected I would have been able to give her something to restore her to health, independently of what she got from her husband—a result she wished above all things, as she sighed for the opportunity of delighting him, by attributing to his medicines and care, her restoration and happiness. I replied, that

that was impossible—a statement that stung her with disappointment and pain.

“Then I will take my beloved’s medicines, and die!” she cried, with a low, struggling voice—resigning herself to the power of her weakness.

This extraordinary resolution of a female devotee put me in mind of the immolating custom of her countrywomen, called the *Suttee*. It was a complete *ultima ratio*, and put all my remedial plans at fault in an instant. Her extreme weakness, or her devoted resolution, prevented her from speaking, and I sat by her bedside, totally at a loss what to do—whether to persevere in my attempt to get her to renounce her husband’s medicine, and conform to my prescriptions, or to leave her to the fate she seemed to court. I put several more questions to her, but received no other answer than a wave of the hand—a plain token of her wish that I should leave her to the tender mercies of her husband. I had now no alternative; and, rising, I bowed to her, and took my leave. I had some difficulty in finding my way out of the house; but, after several ineffectual turns through wrong passages, I reached the door through which I had entered, and returned home.

The extraordinary scene I had witnessed, engaged my attention during the evening; but all my efforts at clearing up the mystery that enveloped the proceedings of these individuals, were met by difficulties which, for a time, seemed insuperable. I sat cogitating and recogitating various theories and probabilities, and had several times examined the *iron powder*, which, for better observation, I had scattered on a sheet of white paper that lay on my table. My intention was to test it; and I waited the incoming of my assistant, to aid me in my experiment. As I looked at it at intervals between my trains of thought, I was struck with a kind of glittering appearance it exhibited, and which was more observable when it caught my eye obliquely and collaterally, during the partial suspension of my perception, by my cogitations. Roused by this circumstance, I proceeded instantly to a more minute investigation; and having, by means of a magnet, removed all the particles of iron, what was my surprise to find a *residuum* of triturated glass—one of the most searching and insidious poisons known in toxicology! Good God! what were my thoughts and feelings when the first flash of this discovery flared upon my mind—solving, in an instant, by the intensity of its painful light, all my doubts, and realizing all my suspicions! Every circumstance of this mysterious affair stood now revealed in clear relief: a dark scheme of murder, more revolting in its features than any recorded in the malefactor’s journal, was illumined and exposed by a light which exhibited, not only the workings of the design itself, but the reason which led to its perpetration. This man had married the confiding and devoted foreigner for the sake of her immense wealth, which raised him, in an instant, from mediocrity to magnificence; and, having attained the object of his ambition, he had resolved—with a view to the concealment of the means whereby he effected his purpose, and regardless of the sacred obligation of gratitude he owed to her who had left her country, her relations, and friends, to trust herself to his protection and love—to immolate the faithful, kind-hearted, and affectionate creature, by a cruel and protracted murder. In her own country, the cowardly wretch could not have braved the vengeance of her countrymen; but, in a distant land, where few might be expected to stand up for the rights of the injured foreigner, he had thought he might execute his scheme with secrecy and success. But now it was discovered! By one of those extraordinary detached traces of the finger of the Almighty, exposed to the convicting power of divine intellect, it was discovered!

The great excitement produced in my mind by this

miraculous discovery, prevented me, for some time, from calmly deliberating on the steps I ought to pursue, with the view of saving the poor foreigner from the designs of her murderer. The picture of the devoted being, lying, like a queen, in the midst of the wealth she had brought to her husband, and trembling at the very thought of rejecting his poison, for fear of giving him the slightest pain—yet on the very point of being sacrificed; her wealth, love, confidence, and gentleness, repaid by death, and her body consigned—unlamented by friends, who might never hear of her fate—to foreign dust, rose continually on my imagination, and interested my feelings, to a degree incompatible with the exercise of a calm judgment. In proportion as my emotion subsided, the difficulty of my situation appeared to increase. I was, apparently, the only person who knew anything of this extraordinary purpose; and I saw the imprudence of taking upon myself the total responsibility of a report to the public authorities, in a case where the chances of conviction would be diminished to nothing, by the determination of the victim to save her destroyer, whom she never would believe guilty; and by the want of evidence of a direct nature, that the powder I had tested was truly destined for her reception; while, in the event of an impeachment and acquittal of the culprit, I would be exposed to his vengeance, and his poor wife would be for ever subjected to his tyranny and oppression. On the other hand, I was at a loss to know how I could again get access to the sick victim, whom I had left without being requested to repeat my visit; and even if that could be accomplished, I had many doubts whether she would pay the slightest attention or regard to my statement, that her husband, whom she seemed to prefer to her own divine Brama, designed to poison her. Yet it was clear that the poor victim behoved to be saved, in some way, from the dreadful fate which impended over her; and the necessity of some step being taken with rapidity and efficacy, behoved to resolve scruples and doubts, which otherwise might have been considered worthy of longer time and consideration.

Next day, I found I had made little progress in coming to a resolution what step to pursue; yet, every hour and minute that passed, reproached me with cruelty; and my imagination brought continually before my eyes the poor victim, swallowing the stated periodical quota of her death-drug. I could have no rest or peace of mind, till something was done, at least to the extent of putting her on her guard against the schemes of her cruel destroyer; and, after all my cogitations, resolutions, and schemes, I found myself compelled to rest satisfied with seeing her, laying before her the true nature of her danger, and leaving to the operation of the instinctive principle of self-preservation the working out of her ultimate safety. At the same hour of the evening at which my former visit was made, I repaired to the back entrance of the large mansion, and, upon rapping at the door, was fortunate enough to be answered by the young woman who acted formerly as my guide. She led me, at my request, instantly to the sick-room of her lady, who, having immediately before been seized with an attack of vomiting, was lying in a state of exhaustion approaching to the inanity of death. I spoke to her, and she languidly opened her eyes. I saw no prospect of being able to impress upon her comatose mind the awful truth I had come to communicate; yet, I had no alternative but to make the attempt; and I accordingly proceeded, with as few words as possible, and in a tone of voice suited to the lethargic state of her mind and senses, to inform her, that the medicines she was getting from the hands of her husband, were fraught with deadly poison, which was alone the cause of all her sufferings and agonies, and would soon be the means of a painful death. These words I spoke slowly and impressively, and watched the

effect of them with anxiety and solicitude. A convulsive shudder passed over her, and shook her violently. She opened her eyes, which I saw fill with tears and fixed a steady look on my countenance.

"*It is impossible,*" she said, with a low, guttural tone, but with much emphasis; "and if it *were* possible, I would still take his medicine, and die, rather than outlive the consciousness of love and fidelity."

These words she accompanied with a wave of her hand, as if she wished me to depart. I could not get her to utter another syllable. I had discharged a painful duty; and, casting a look upon her, which I verily believed would be the last I would have it in my power to bestow on this personification of fidelity and gentleness, I took my departure.

I felt myself placed in a very painful position for two or three days after this interview, arising from a conviction that I had not done enough for the salvation of this poor victim, and yet without being able to fix upon any other means of rendering her any assistance, unless I put into execution a resolution that floated in my mind, to admonish her husband, by an anonymous communication, and threaten to divulge the secret of his guilt, unless he instantly desisted from his nefarious purpose—a plan that did not receive the entire sanction of my honour, however much it enlisted the approbation of my feelings. Some further time passed, and added, with its passing minutes, to my mental disquietude. One evening, when I was sitting meditating painfully on this sombre subject, a lackey, superbly dressed, was introduced to me by my servant, and stated that he had been commanded by his master, Colonel P——, to request my attendance at his house without delay. I started at the mention of the name, and the nature of the message; and the man stared at me, as I exhibited the irresolution of doubt and the perturbation of surprise, in place of returning him a direct answer. Recovering myself, I replied, that I would attend upon the instant; and, indeed, I felt a greater anxiety to fly to that house on which my thoughts were painfully fixed, than I ever did to visit the most valued friend I ever attended in distress. As I hurried along, I took little time to think of the object of my call; but I suspected, either that Colonel P—— had got some notice of my having secretly visited, in my professional capacity, his wife, and being therefore privy to his design—a state of opposing circumstances, which he was now to endeavour in some way to counteract—or that, finding, from the extremity to which his wife was reduced, that he was necessitated to call a doctor, as a kind of cloak or cover to his cruel act, he had thus made a virtue of necessity, when, alas! it would be too late for my rendering the unfortunate creature any service. "He shall not, however, escape," muttered I, vehemently, through my teeth, as I proceeded. "He little knows that he is now calling to his assistance the man that shall hang him."

I soon arrived at the house, and rung the front door bell. The same powdered lackey who had preceded me, opened the door. I was led up two pair of stairs, and found myself in the same lobby with which I had already become somewhat familiar. I proceeded forward, thinking I was destined for the sick chamber of the lady; but the servant opened a door immediately next to that of her room, and ushered me into an apartment furnished in an elegant style, but much inferior to that occupied by his wife. In a bed lay a man of a genteel, yet sinister cast of countenance, with a large aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes. He appeared very pale and feverish, and threw upon me that anxious eye which we often find in patients who are under the first access of a serious disease; as if Nature, while she kept her secret from the understanding, communicated it to the feelings, whose eloquence, expressed through the senses, we can often read with great facility. I knew, in an instant, that he was committed, by

a relentless hand, to suffering, in all likelihood, in the form of a fever. He told me he was Colonel P——, and that, having been very suddenly taken ill, he had become alarmed for himself, and sent for me to administer to him my professional services. I looked at him intently; but he construed my stare into the eagerness of professional investigation. At that instant, a piercing scream rang through the house, and made my ears tingle. I asked him who had uttered that scream, which must have come from some creature in the very extremity of agony, and made an indication as if I would hasten to administer relief to the victim. In an instant, I was close and firm in the trembling clutch of the sick man, who, with a wild and confused look, begged me not to sacrifice him to any attention to the cause of this disturbance, which was produced by a servant in the house, habitually given, through fits of hysterics, to the utterance of these screams. I put on an appearance of being satisfied with his statement; but I fixed my eye relentlessly on him, as he still shook, from the combined effects of his incipient disease, and his fear of my investigating the cause of the scream. I proceeded to examine into the nature of his complaint. The symptoms described by him, and detected by my observation, satisfied me, that he had been seized with an attack of virulent typhus; and, from the intensity of some of the indications—particularly his languor and small pulse, his loss of muscular strength, violent pains in the head, the inflammation of his eyes, the strong throbbing of his temporal arteries, his laborious respiration, parched tongue, and hot breath—I was convinced he had before him the long sands of a rough and rapid race with death. At the close of my investigation, he looked anxiously and wistfully in my face, and asked me what I conceived to be the nature of his complaint. I told him at once, and with greater openness and readiness than I usually practise, that I was very much afraid he was committed for a severe course of virulent typhus. He felt the full force of an announcement which, to those who have had any experience of this kind of fevers, cannot fail to carry terror in every syllable; and, falling back on his pillow, turned up his eyes to heaven. At this moment, a succession of screams, or rather yells, sounded through the house; but, as I now saw that I had a chance of saving the innocent sufferer, I pretended not to regard the dreadful sounds, and purposely averted my eyes, to escape the inquiring, nervous look of the sick man. I gave him some directions, promised to send some medicines, and took my leave.

As I shut the door, the waiting-maid, whom I had seen before, was standing in the door of her mistress's apartment, and beckoned me in, with a look of terror and secrecy. I was as anxious to visit her gentle mistress as she was to call me. On entering, which I did slowly and silently, to escape the ear of the husband, I found the unfortunate creature in the most intense state of agony. The ground glass she had swallowed, and a great part of which, doubtless, adhered to the stomach, was too clearly the cause of her screams; but, to my surprise, I discovered, from her broken ejaculations, that the grief of her husband's illness had been able, in its strength, to fight its way to her heart, through all her bodily agonies produced by his poison. My questions regarding her own condition were answered by hysterical sobs, mixed with ejaculations of pity, and requests to know how he was, and what was the nature of the complaint by which he had been attacked—hinting, in dubious terms, that she had been the cause of his illness, by entailing upon him the necessity of attending her, and wounding his sensitive heart by her distress. My former communications to her concerning the poison, and my caution against her acceptance of it from the hands of her intended murderer, had produced no effect upon a mind predetermined to believe nothing against the man she

loved and trusted beyond all mortals. She had received it again from him after my communication; the effects of it were now exhibited in her tortured, burning viscera; and yet, in the very midst of her agonies, her faith, confidence, and love stood unshaken; a noble, yet melancholy emblem of the most elevated, yet often least valued, and most abused virtues of her sex. I endeavoured to answer her fevered inquiries about her husband, by telling her that he stood in great need of her attendance; and that, if she would agree to follow my precepts, and put herself entirely under my advice and direction, she might, in a very short time, be enabled to perform her duty, of a faithful wife and a kind nurse, to her distressed partner. The first perception she caught of the meaning of my communication, lighted up her eye, even in the midst of her wringing pains; and, starting up, she cried, that she would be the most abject slave to my will, and obey me in all things, if I could assure her of the blessing of being able to act as nurse and comforter to her husband. Now I saw my opportunity. On the instant, I called up and dispatched the waiting-maid to my home, with directions to my assistant, to send me instantly an oleaginous mixture, and some powerful emetics, which I described in a *recipe*. I waited the return of the messenger, administered the medicines, and watched for a time their operation and effects. Notwithstanding the continued attacks that had been made on her system, by the doses of an active poison, I was satisfied that, if my energies were not, in some unforeseen way, thwarted and opposed, I would be able to bring this deserving wife and pattern of her sex, from the brink of the grave that had been dug for her by the hand of a husband. After leaving with the waiting-maid some directions, I proceeded home, for the purpose of preparing the necessary medicines for my other patient.

I now commenced a series of regular visits to my two patients—the illness of the husband affording me the most ample scope for saving his wife. As he gradually descended into the unavoidable depths of his inexorable disease, she, by the elastic force of youth, and a good constitution, operating in unison with my medicines, which were administered with the greatest regularity, gradually threw off the lurking poison, and advanced to a state of comparative safety and strength. I was much pleased to observe the salutary effects of my professional interference in behalf of my interesting patient; but could scarcely credit my own perceptions, as I had exhibited to me the most undoubted proofs, that the desire to minister to the wants and comforts of her sick husband, engrossed so completely every other feeling that might have been supposed consequent upon a restoration to health, that she seemed to disregard all other considerations. Her questions about the period when she might be able to attend him, were unremitting; and every hour she was essaying to walk, though her efforts often ended in weak falls, or sinkings on the ground, when some one was required to assist her in getting up, and returning to bed. She entreated me to allow her to be carried to his bedside; where, she said, they might mix their tears, and console each other; and all my arguments against the impropriety of such an obvious mode of increasing her husband's illness, and augmenting those sufferings she was so solicitous to ameliorate, were scarcely sufficient to prevent her from putting her design into execution.

The husband's disease, which often runs a course of two months, though the crisis occurs generally between the third and fourth week, progressed steadily and relentlessly, mocking, as the fevers of that type generally do, all the boasted art of our profession. His pulse rose to the alarming height of 120; he exhibited the oppression at the chest, increased thirst, black-furred tongue, and inarticulate, muttering speech, which are considered to be unfavour-

able indications; and there was, besides, a clear tendency to delirium—a common, yet critical symptom—leaving, even after the patient has recovered, and often for years, its marks in the weakened intellect. One evening I was standing by his bedside, studying his symptoms; witnessing the excess of his sufferings, and listening to the bursts of incoherent speech, which, from time to time, came from him, as if expelled from his sick spirit by some internal power. He spoke often of his wife, whom he called by the name of *Espras*; and, in the midst of his broken ejaculations, gushes of intense feeling came on him, filling his yellow sunken eyes with rheumy tears, and producing heavy sobs, which, repressed by his loaded chest, assumed sounds unlike anything I ever heard, and beyond my power of description. I could not well understand these indications of the working of his spirit; but I fancied that, when he felt his own agonies, became conscious of what it is to suffer a certain extremity of pain, and learned, for the first time of his life, the sad experience of an inexorable disease, which presented to him the prospect of a lingering death, his mind recurred to the situation of his wife, who, as he thought, was, or might be, enduring tortures, produced by his hand, transcending even his sufferings. There seemed to be less of conscience in his mental operations, than a new-born sorrow or sympathy, wrung out of a heart naturally obdurate, by the anguish of a personal experience of the pain he himself had produced in another, who had the strongest claims on his protection and love. His mind, though volatile and wandering, and not far from verging on delirium, was not yet deranged; and I was about to put a question to him concerning his wife, whom he had not directly mentioned to me, when the door opened, and the still pale and emaciated figure of Mrs P——, dressed in a white morning gown, entered the apartment, struggling with her weakness to get forward, and clutching, in her breathless efforts, at whatever presented itself to her nerveless arms, to support her, and aid her in her progress to the sick-bed of her husband. The bed being in the middle of a large room, she was necessitated to trust partly to the weak powers of her limbs, which having failed her, she, in an attempt to spring forward, and reach the bed before sinking, came short of her aim, and fell with a crash on the floor, uttering, as she stumbled, a scream of sorrow, wrung from her by the sight of her husband lying extended on a bed of sickness. The noise started the invalid, who turned his eyes wildly in the direction of the disturbance; and I rushed forwards, to raise in my arms the exhausted victim. I had scarcely got her placed on her feet, when she again struggled to reach the bed; and having, by my assistance, got far enough forward, she threw herself on the body of the fever-ridden patient, ejaculating, as she seized him in her arms, and bedewed his pale face with tears—

“Frederick! my honoured husband, whom I am bound to cherish and nurse as becomes the fondest of wives, why is it that I have been deprived of this luxury of the grief-stricken heart—to watch your looks, and anticipate your wants? Thanks to the blessed powers of your faith and of mine, I have you now in my arms, and no mortal shall come between me and my love! Night and day I will watch and tend you, till the assiduities of my affection weary out the effects of your cruel disease, brought on you—O God!—by your grief for me, your worthless *Espras*.”

And she buried her head in the bosom of the sick man and sobbed intensely. This scene, from the antithesis of its circumstances, appeared to me the most striking I had ever beheld; and, though it was my duty to prevent so powerful a cause of disturbance to the patient, I felt I had no power to stop this burst of true affection. I watched narrowly the eye of the patient; but it was too much clouded by the effects of the fever, and too nervous and

fugacious, to enable me to distinguish between the powers of disease, and the working of the natural affections. But that his mind and feelings were working, and were responding to this powerful moral impulse, was proved fearfully, by his rapid, indistinct muttering and jabbering, mixed with deep sighs, and the peculiar sound of the repressed sobs which I have already mentioned, but cannot assimilate to any sound I ever heard. All my efforts to remove the devoted wife, by entreaty, were vain: she still clung to him, as if he had been on the eve of being taken from her by death. Her sobbing continued unabated, and her tears fell on his cheek. These intense expressions of love and sorrow awoke the sympathy which I thought had previously been partially excited; for I now observed that he turned away his head, while a stream of tears flowed down his face. It was now, I found, necessary, for the sake of the patient, to remove the excited lady; and I was obliged to apply a gentle force, before I could accomplish my purpose. She insisted, however, upon remaining in the room, and beseeched me so piteously for this privilege, that I consented to a couch being made up for her at a little distance from the bed of her husband, whom it was her determination to tend and nurse, to the exclusion of all others. I was not, indeed, ill-pleased at this resolution; for I anticipated, from her unexampled love and devotedness, an effect on the heart of her husband, which might cure its vices, and regenerate its affections.

On the next occasion of my stated visit, I found my patient had at last fallen into a state of absolute delirium. On a soft arm-chair, situated by his bedside, sat his wife, the picture of despair, wringing her hands, and indulging in the most extravagant demonstrations of grief and affection. The wretched man exhibited the ordinary symptoms of that unnatural excitement of the brain under which he laboured—relapsing at times into silence, then uttering a multiplicity of confused words—jabbering wildly—looking about him with that extraordinary expression of the eye, as if every individual present was viewed as a murderer—then starting up, and, with an overstrained and choking voice, vociferating his frenzied thoughts, and then again relapsing into silence. It is but little we can do for patients in this extreme condition; but the faith his wife reposed in professional powers that had already saved her, suggested supplications and entreaties, which I told her she had better direct to a higher Dispensator of hope and relief. The tumultuous thoughts of the raving victim were still, at intervals, rolling forth; and, all of a sudden, I was startled by a great increase of the intensity and connectedness of his speech. He had struck the chord that sounded most fearfully in his own ears. His attempt to murder the creature who now sat and heard his wild confession, was described by himself in intelligible, though broken, sentences:—

“The fortune brought me by Espras,” he vociferated, “is loaded by the burden of herself—that glass is not well ground—you are not so ill, my dear Espras, as to require a doctor—I cannot bear the thought of you labouring under that necessity—who can cure you so well as your devoted husband? Take this—fear not—why should love have suspicions? When she is gone, I shall have a wife of whom I may not be ashamed—yet, is she not a stranger in a foreign land? Has she not left her country, her relations, her friends, her gods, for me, whom she has raised to opulence? Cease, cease—I cannot stand these thoughts—there is a strife in this heart, between the powers of hell and heaven—when will it terminate, and who shall rule my destiny?”

These words, which he accompanied with wild gestures, were followed by his usual indistinct muttering and jabbering. I directed my gaze upon his wife. She sat in the chair, motionless, with her eyes fixed on the

ground, as if she had been struck with death in that position, and been stiffened into a rigidity which retained her in her place. The issues of her tenderness and affection seemed to have been sent back upon the heart, whose pulses they stopped. The killing pain of an ingratitude, ingeniously heightened to the highest grade of that hell-killing of all human crimes, operating upon a mind rendered so sensitively susceptible of its influences, paralysed the whole moral constitution of the devoted creature, and realized the poetical creation of despair. I felt inclined to soften the sternness of her grief, by quickening her disbelief of the raving thoughts of a fever-maniac; but I paused as I thought of the probable necessity of her suspicion for her future safety from the schemes of a murderer, whose evil desires might be resuscitated by the return of health. I could do nothing more at that time for the dreadful condition of the wretched husband, and less for the more dreadful state of the miserable wife; and the personal pain I experienced in witnessing this high-wrought scene of terror, forced me to depart, leaving the one still raving in his madness, and the other bound in the stern grasp of the most awful of all moral visitations.

I expected that, on my next visit, I would find such a change on my patient as would enable me to decide whether he would live or die; but he was still delirious, with the crowded thoughts of the events of his past life careering through his fevered brain, as if their restlessness and agitation were produced by the burning fires that chased them from their legitimate territory of the mind. There was, however, a change in one quarter. His wife's confidence and affection had withstood and triumphed over the attack of the previous day, and she was again occupied in hanging over her raving husband, shedding on his unconscious face the tear of pity, and supplying, by anticipation, every want that could be supposed incident to his miserable condition. This new and additional proof of the strength of this woman's steadfastness, in her unparalleled fidelity and love, struck me even more forcibly than the previous indications she had given of this extraordinary feature in her character; but I was uncertain yet whether to construe her conduct as salutary or dangerous to her own personal interests—a circumstance depending on the further development of the sentiments of her husband. On that same evening, the change suspected took place: the delirium abated, and consciousness, that had been driven forcibly from her throne, hastened to assume the sceptre of her authority. The crisis was past, and the patient began to be sensible of those attentions, on the part of his devoted wife, which had not only the merit of being unremitting, but that of being sweetened by the tears of solicitude, and the blandness of love. I marked attentively the first impressions made by her devotedness on the returning sense. I saw his look following her eye, which was continually inflamed, and bedewed by the effects of her grief; and, after he had, for a period of time, fixed his half-conscious, half-wondering gaze on her, he turned it suddenly away, but not before he gave sufficient indications of sympathy and sorrow, in a gush of tears. These manifestations were afterwards often repeated; but I thought I sometimes could perceive an abruptness in his manner, and a painful impatience of the minute, refined, and ingenious attentions of a highly-impassioned affection, which left me in doubt whether, after his disease was removed, sufficient reliance could be placed on the stability of his regeneration.

In my subsequent visits I kept up my study of the operations of his mind, as well as the changes of his disease. His wife's attentions seemed rather to increase with the improvement of his health, and her increased ability to discharge the duties of affection. He had improved so far as to be in a condition to receive tonics for the recovery of the tone of his stomach. I seized the opportunity of his wife leaving,

for a short time, his sick-room, and, as I seated myself on her chair by the bedside, I took from my pocket the powder of iron filings and triturated glass he had prepared for the poisoning of her who had latterly been contributing all the energies of love to the saving of his life.

"A chalybeate mixture," said I, while I fixed my eyes on his countenance, "has been recommended for patients in your condition, for improving the power of the stomach, weakened by the continued nausea of a protracted fever. Here is a powder composed of iron filings, a good chalybeate, which I found lying in your wife's apartment. I have none better in my laboratory, and would recommend to you a full dose of it before I depart."

The electric effect of this statement was instantaneous and remarkable. He seemed like one who had felt the sharp sting of a musket bullet sent into his body by a hand unseen—uncertain of the nature of the wound, or of the aim by which it is produced. A sudden suspicion relieved his still fevered eye, which threw upon me the full blaze of staring wonder and terror; while an accompanying uncertainty of my intention sealed his mouth, and added curiosity to his look. But I followed up my aim resolutely and determinedly.

"Here is, on the table," continued I, "a mucilaginous vehicle for its conveyance into the stomach. I shall prepare it instantly. To seize quickly the handle of an auspicious occasion, is the soul of our art."—(Approaching the bed with the medicine in my hand.)

"I cannot, I cannot take that medicine," he cried, wildly. "What means this? Help me, Heaven, in this emergency! I cannot, I dare not take that medicine."

"Why?" said I, still eyeing him intently. "*Is it because there is ground glass in it?* That cannot be; because I understand it was intended for Espras, your loving, faithful wife; and who would administer so dreadful a poison to a creature so gentle and interesting? She is, besides, a foreigner in our land; and who would treat the poor, unprotected stranger with the dainty that has concealed in it a lurking death? Is this the hospitality of Britain?"

Every word was a thunderstroke to his heart. All uncertainty fled before these flaming sarcasms, which carried, on the bolt of truth, the keenness of his own poison. His pain became intense, and exhibited the peculiarity of a mixture of extreme terror, directed towards me as one that had the power of hanging him, and of intense sorrow for the injury he had produced to the wife of his bosom; whose emaciated figure, hanging over him in his distress, must have been deeply imprinted on his soul. Yet it was plain that his sorrow overcame his fear; for I saw his bosom heaving with an accumulation of hysterical emotions, which convulsed his frame in the intense manner of the aerial ball that chokes the female victim of excited nerves. The struggle lasted for several minutes, and at last a burst of dissolving tenderness, removing all the obstructions of prudence or terror, and stunning my ear with its loud sound, afforded him a temporary relief. Tears gushed down his cheeks, and groans of sorrow filled the room, and might have been heard in the apartment of his wife, whose entry, I feared, might have interrupted the extraordinary scene. Looking at me wistfully, he held out his hands, and sobbed out, in a tone of despair—

"Are you my friend, or are you my enemy?"

I answered him that I was the friend of his wife—one of the brightest patterns of female fidelity I had ever seen; and if, by declaring myself his friend, I would save her from the designs of the poisoner, and him from the pains of the law and the fire of hell, I would instantly sign the bond of amity.

"You have knocked from my soul the bonds of terror," he cried out, still sobbing; "and if I knew and were satis-

fied of one thing more, I would resign myself to God and my own breaking heart. Did Espras—yet why should I suspect one who rejects suspicion as others do the poison she would swallow from my hand, though labelled by the apothecary?—did Espras tell you what you have so darkly and fearfully hinted to me?"

I replied to him that, in place of telling me, the faithful, unsuspecting creature had, to that hour, rejected and spurned the suspicion, as unworthy of her pure, confiding spirit.

"It is over!—it is over!" cried the changed man. "O God! How powerful is virtue! How strong is the force of those qualities of the heart which we men often treat as weak baubles, to toy with, and throw away in our fits of proud spleen—the softness, the gentleness, the fidelity and devotedness of woman! How strangely, how wonderfully formed is the heart of man, which, disdainful the terrors of the rope of the executioner, breaks and succumbs at the touch of the thistle-down of a woman's love! This creature, sir, gave me my fortune, made me what I am, left for me her country and her friends, adhered to me through good and evil report—and I prepared for her a cruel death! Dreadful contrast! Who shall describe the shame, the sorrow, the humiliation of the ingrate whose crime has risen to the fearful altitude of this enormity; and who, by the tenderness and love of his devoted victim, is forced to turn his eye on the grim reward of death for love, riches, and life? Gentle, beloved, injured Espras! that emaciated form, these trembling limbs, these sunken eyes, and these weak and whispering sounds of pity and affection have touched my heart with a power that never was vouchsafed to the tongue of eloquence. Transcending the rod of Moses, they have brought from the rock streams of blood; and every pulse is filled with tenderness and pity. Wretched fool! I was ashamed of your nativity, and of the colour you inherited from nature, and never estimated the qualities of your heart; but when shall the red-and-white beauty of England transcend my Espras in her fidelity and love, as she does in the skin-deep tints of a beguiling, treacherous face? God! what a change has come over this heart! Thanks, and prayers, and tears of blood, never will express the gratitude it owes to the great Author of our being for this miraculous return to virtue, effected by the simple means of a woman's confidence and love."

As he finished this impassioned speech, which I have repeated as correctly as my memory enabled me to commit to my note-book, he turned his eyes upwards, and remained for at least five minutes in silent prayer. As he was about finishing, his wife entered. Her appearance called forth from his excited mind a burst of affection, and, seizing her in his arms, he wept over her like a child. He was met as fervently by the gentle and affectionate creature, who, grateful to heaven for this renewed expression of her husband's love, turned up her eyes to heaven, and wept aloud. I never witnessed a scene like this. I left them to their enjoyment, and returned home.

I was subsequently a constant visiter at the house of Colonel P——; and, about eighteen months after his recovery, I officiated as accoucheur to his wife on the occasion of the birth of a son. Other children followed afterwards, and bound closer the bonds of that conjugal love which I had some hands in producing, and which I saw increase daily through a long course of years.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE YOUNG ARTIST.

SOME years ago, a large packet of letters was placed in my hands, by a young artist, who was about to visit Italy, in order that he might further himself in his profession. I was his nearest and dearest friend; the packet contained many valuable, and, to him, interesting memorials of affection, which he was not willing to destroy, yet could not conveniently carry along with him; and I received them, under the promise to peruse them only should I hear of his death. He was young and enthusiastic in his profession, and he left Scotland under the most favourable auspices—a wealthy merchant, eminent for his liberality and patronage towards art, having most generously taken the poor student under his protection. My young friend was the son of an industrious mechanic, who had given him a good education, and had, with all a parent's fondness, encouraged him, from his boyhood, to direct his talents, which early developed themselves, to become a painter. He was indulged in his favourite pursuits to the utmost of his father's means, and had made considerable progress as a landscape painter, before proceeding to roam beneath an Italian sky.

I have said that I was the artist's dearest friend. There was one individual still dearer to him than me—a young lady, with whom he had been in love for about three years previous to his departure. From my own knowledge, I was aware that his passion was sincerely returned; for never was a being more devoted to another, than Mary Williamson to her ardent lover. Her parents, however, although they admired my friend's talents, and, in common with all who knew him, respected his amiable and upright character, were understood to be averse to their daughter's marriage with a poor man. They were themselves in highly comfortable circumstances, and it was but natural that they should wish their child to be equally so, in the important matter of settling down in life. His visits to the family, therefore, were rather tolerated than openly encouraged; still, his fascinating manners and conversation were such, and so conscious were they of the state of their child's affections, that they, to themselves, acknowledged that poverty in him was the only barrier to what they would otherwise have looked on as a happy union. It was under this understood impression that the young artist set out upon his journey; animated with double hopes—the hope of rising to fame and eminence in his profession, and that of securing an income that would enable him to support his beloved one in a station equal to that in which she had been educated.

I wish I could paint the beauties of mind and manner half so well as my friend could delineate the beauties of landscape; for then would I attempt to shew a specimen of a lovely woman in Mary Williamson, which would interest every reader in her fortunes. In the ordinary affairs of life, she was an unostentatious but careful manager; and her “soft, low voice—an excellent thing in woman”—was that sort of music which it is so delightful to hear reigning over the household details of a rich, as well as a poor man's dwelling. I cannot believe that my friend knew

half her excellences; for, in his presence, she was subdued as it were, “to the very quality of her lord.” He was a man of strong mind, great penetration, and decisive judgment. He was apt to form a decision on the instant; and Mary would sit and listen to the outpourings of his masculine character, as if it would have been like falsehood to hint a contradiction—or something like a sin to utter her poor opinion on anything that he had, as she deemed, thoroughly discussed. In a moment of confiding affection, she has acknowledged that she could speak with perfect freedom before anybody but her father and her lover. And such was the fact; for her assents were all smiles to them, while, with others, she could give her “yea” and “nay” with becoming latitude. But it was the perfect simplicity, the winning kindness of her manner—the sincere, unobtrusive charity—and the love of virtue and goodness, for their own sake, which she possessed—that acted like fascination on others, and made her be looked on almost as a little saint by her relations. I have seen her, in a group of laughing children, the happiest of the happy of the little band. I have seen her, at a lively evening party, the liveliest there. In the merry dance on the green, or in the lighted hall, her spirits were ever the most buoyant, “stealing and giving odour.” But my friend saw none of this; for, although he was the one object in the world dearer to her than life, his presence would at once have converted her from mirth to seriousness—seriousness no less becoming than her mirth, and, I should think, infinitely more flattering to her lover, although, on her part, unwitting. Often has she, in her innocent love—thinking that what gave her pleasure, must have been gratifying for him to know—wrung his heart with anguish, by descriptions of some pleasant little party, where she was *so happy*. He was not there—*he was poor!*

The lovers parted, as thousands have done before, with tremblings, and tears, and lingering embraces—and faint hopes, and strong and sudden fears, and confiding acknowledgments of unalterable love. The delicate charge of transmitting letters through the post, from the one to the other, was left to me. It was a task which I would rather have avoided; but it was forced on me, and I was strong in my friend's integrity. Several letters arrived, sent by him during his first month's absence. They were addressed to her, for my care; and I, of course, delivered them safely. It was no secret to her parents that Mary was keeping up a correspondence with the artist; for, indeed, she was incapable of holding such a thing a secret for a single hour. Nor were they displeased at it, no visiter being so welcome as myself; for that which gave their only daughter pleasure, could not be indifferent to them. But how can Mary's reception of me on such occasions be described? She knew my step in the lobby, and would run to meet me the moment she heard it. Then, what a mantling of smiles was on her glowing face, and how her eyes beamed so lustreously, as she watched my slightest motion, till I pulled forth the expected letter! And how she would dart away from me, like a young fawn, to her own little room, leaving me to stumble into any other room I pleased! But seldom had I to wait long until she was again with me. What! not an apology for leaving me so abruptly? No. I knew

how she loved *him*—and how could she think of idle ceremony at such a moment? Had I taxed her with abruptness, she might have blushed, and I should have been ashamed.

The last letter which I thus delivered reached me about three months after my friend's departure. I had occasionally received a letter from him for myself; and I was sorry to see, from the general tone of his correspondence, that he was not only in bad health, but that he was oppressed with fears as to his future success. As, from all I could gather from Mary's conversation, he seemed to breathe nothing of this in her letters, I did not feel myself called on to allude to his supposed situation or condition in her presence; but I called upon his father, and informed him, regularly and faithfully, of the contents of my letters. The old man's concern for his son was not lessened by my statement of my fears; and it was with tears in his eyes, he told me, that a warm climate had already been fatal to one of his family, his oldest son, who had died, in the East Indies, of the fever peculiar to the country.

On visiting Mary's abode, with the last communication, to which I have just alluded, she was alone in the house. It was on the occasion of some public rejoicing, and the rest of the family had gone forth to enjoy the sight of a military review. I presume she had been looking over some old letters from her lover; for she hurried several, on my appearance in the room, into a little cabinet that stood beside her. I never saw her look so pleased or so happy. She had dressed herself for the review; but, on some sudden recollection, she had stayed at home. She confidently told me, that she knew I would call that very day with a letter, and that she could enjoy nothing out of doors, when a packet of good news might be lying for her at home.

"Well," said I, "I hope this does bring you good news," handing her the letter.

"I am sure it does," she replied; "and so I shall not be in such a violent hurry to read it, as to forget my good manners. Pray, be seated, and pardon my absence for a few moments. You are a very great favourite of mine, and I'll allow you to take a peep into *his* sketch-book; only you must not read anything you may see there." So saying, she left me.

I will not disguise the fact—I was afraid of her return. I suspected that my friend had buoyed her up with pictures of what he deemed he could once be, rather than of what he was; and that he had studiously avoided hinting at his delicate state of health. Now, I feared the worse. I trembled lest he should have lost all hope, and, in the language which was natural to him under disappointment, expressed himself with a sincerity which might be fatal to the peace of his mistress. She had not been absent many minutes, when she returned, and, with an agitated air, handed me back the letter, requesting me to read it aloud, adding, that it contained no secrets—at least, none that I should not be acquainted with. I complied with her request, to the best of my ability; but I could scarcely get through without tears. She threw herself on a sofa, and turned her face from me while I read. It was a letter to make a stranger weep. It talked of sickness, and suffering, and broken hopes. How fondly had the young artist set out to visit the land of his dreams—to drink deep at the fountains of art! There he had confidently anticipated that his spirit would be inflamed to rivalry, by gazing at the glories of the antique world. Alas! he had wept himself almost blind, in looking at the splendid triumphs of genius that were strewed like flowers in his way—that man could never imitate. He saw, he trembled, he shrunk abashed—he could paint no more. The pencil dropped from his hand—he dared not think himself an artist; and he had come thus far, to be so taught the sense of his own insignificance! Was it the ever-sunny clime that made him sicken, and

haunt the temples of Fame with fever at his heart?—or was it not rather the despair of intolerable disappointment that filled his bosom, and dispelled for ever his brightest dreams? He stated that he was now lying on a sick-bed—he hoped his death-bed—and that he would never work more. He implored his mistress to forget him—at least, to forgive him for having, in the heat of youth, engaged her affections—engaged them to worse than a beggar.

"He will die, he will die!—and must I not be near him! Oh, can I not go to him? Yes, yes. He must not die; and I will cheer him. He will not die when I am beside him!"

Such were the exclamations of poor Mary, as she arose and threw on her bonnet, and was making for the door.

"Where will you go, Mary?" said I. "Do not leave the house in this state."

"Where should I go," she replied, through her tears, "but to him? He is my William; and he is ill, and I here! Oh, come with me; let us go to him!"

And most cheerfully would that devoted being have set forth on a pilgrimage to the bedside of her dying lover. Her heart was bound up in him; and I can conceive of no greater state of suffering than for such a woman to survive the object of her affections. The gentleman who had supplied my friend with the means of prosecuting his studies in Italy, was applied to; and he immediately wrote off a letter, full of kind assurances and encouragement, to his protégé, recommending him to take care of his health; promising that, if he would come home, he should provide for him in some other way. He also despatched a letter to a commercial correspondent, recommending the most assiduous attention to the welfare and comfort of his young friend. In the course of a few months, I had again the pleasure of folding my old companion to my heart. He was sadly altered—in appearance a perfect wreck.

Poor Mary was little better than her lover. She had suffered much since the receipt of his last letter. Her blooming complexion was gone, and a few months of illness had given her the appearance of as many years. When she heard of his arrival, she hurried to his father's to see him; and never did that amiable girl look so like her real character, as when speaking kind words to the Hopeless, and the humble roof of the old mechanic.

The artist got better; but he was an artist no more. "I shall begin the world again," he said, "and try some more humble calling. I will be assiduous and industrious; and, should fortune prove propitious, I may, perhaps, win Mary, to leave her father's lofty mansion for an abode in a more humble dwelling." He did set to work in earnest. His former patron did not desert him, but put him in a situation under himself, where he speedily established himself, by his attention to business, punctuality, and other good behaviour.

One day, I was so impertinent as break open the seal of the package of letters that had been left in my keeping by the quondam artist. The loose ones were all of my own writing; but there were some tied up and sealed apart. On the wrapper was written—"To be delivered to Miss Williamson only on receipt of my death." This little parcel I had the pleasure of giving to Mary on her wedding-day; and, when she read the superscription, she pinched the bridegroom's ear, and said he deserved to die for fearing *that he could die before marriage.*

THE SACRIFICE.

MANY are the sacrifices that are daily made in the world, by the opposite sex, in the important affair of marriage—sacrifices involving considerations of the most interesting kind, as regards the peculiar position of womankind. It

is impossible to allude to these without a feeling of regret that circumstances should occur in the history of many families to render such sacrifices almost inevitable; for their results are generally untoward.

There are certain considerations by which the various classes of society are affected, in the raising up of families, which, when they come in collision with affections pre-engaged or misplaced, cannot fail to operate painfully on individuals. Rank and fortune have their victims as well as poverty and dependence. Much of the romance of life is to be found in the stern world of reality.

In the present paper we will endeavour to record the history, so far, of two human beings, in which a sacrifice of the most generous character appears, with its results—a sacrifice which is not uncommon; but which, we trust, is seldom called for to the extent which it assumes in the case before us.

Mr Wilson was, at one time, a thriving merchant in an extensive manufacturing town in England. He was a man of middle age, of a cheerful disposition; and he was the pride of a little circle of friends, of cultivated tastes and liberal acquirements. Among the pleasures which he enjoyed, and had a passion in the pursuit of, was the truly innocent and fascinating one of a love for the fine arts. He drew beautifully, and painted well; and his patronage of those who followed painting as a profession, was liberal as it was well-judged. Of many who felt the effects of his generosity, was a poor, widowed lady, who taught drawing in his neighbourhood. This lady had one child—a little girl of about twelve years of age, whose father had died while she was but an infant. Accustomed to mingle in scenes of fashionable life, the mother, on a reverse of fortune, which overtook her at the death of her husband, retired, with her child, to the busy town of which Mr Wilson was a denizen, and there devoted her talents as a teacher of drawing—in which art she was no mean proficient—to the honourable purpose of supporting herself and little girl. Mr Wilson, to whom she had been introduced, was of much service to this amiable woman, in recommending pupils to her care, and in furnishing her with many comforts and conveniences at her outset in her new line of life. He also became a father to her child; and, in her twelfth year, he resolved to educate and adopt her as his heir. Jane Fitzwilliam—for that was the favoured girl's name—was a most affectionate creature, and dearly did she repay the kindness, in her latter years, which was lavished on her youth. Since ever she could distinguish betwixt one individual and another, she had been accustomed to recognise Mr Wilson as her father; and when she lost the society of her mother, who was carried away from her by death, about two years after the period of her adoption, she was received into his family, and placed at the head of his establishment.

Jane had a lover, unknown to her protector, in a young man, an assistant in one of the schools where she had received part of her education. He was poor, and she was the presumed heir to considerable wealth; but this did not hinder her from giving up her affections into the scholar's keeping. The two, it might be said, were formed for each other. He was of a bold, resolute character, and a person of considerable natural ability. Not decidedly handsome, he could, when he chose to exert himself, be perfectly fascinating in the presence of the fair sex—a power which is often bestowed on those who have been denied mere beauty of face or form, as if in indemnity for nature's niggardliness otherwise. Jane, on the other hand, was a retiring little creature, simple, modest, unpretending, and secretly proud of the talents of her lover. Hers was not a mind of that strong and decided cast out of which one could make a heroine for a novel. She was rather a being formed for dependence on one her superior in bodily and

mental capacity. From this it is not meant to be inferred that she was incapable of entertaining a sincere and lasting affection; on the contrary, such a character is in general the opposite, when put to the test.

Things ran on in an even current of happiness and prosperity with Mr Wilson and his adopted daughter. She was now a woman of nineteen, and had received several offers of marriage, which she invariably refused; affirming that she would never leave the house of her benefactor until he was tired of her company—a thing not very likely ever to take place. He set down her refusals to enter the married state, to a very different reason from the right one; which was her love for the poor tutor, who was still unable to support a wife, but who ardently looked forward to the time, when fortune would prove more propitious, and enable him to open an academy on his own account. Mr Wilson, knowing nothing of this, began to suspect that his ward's affections were fixed upon himself; and, although the disparity in their ages might have opened his eyes to a different conviction, still, as nothing transpired to whisper to him the true state of the matter, he indulged in the delightful dream, until it became to him an all-engrossing attachment.

There is nothing so fluctuating as prospects of human happiness. A single day will often bring about the most distressing results to families, in the commercial world. So did it with the amiable gentleman whom we have introduced under the name of Mr Wilson. One day made him a poor man—poorer even than when he first began business as a merchant. How this came about, is of little consequence to the facts of the story. Losses at sea, and failures at home—unsuccessful speculation—a turn of the card; these have ruined hundreds before, and some of them combined, did so in his case. With that spirit of honesty, which had hitherto been his pride, he disposed of his handsome house, furniture, pictures, everything that could remind him of his former position in society, and prepared to travel to Scotland, where he intended following some calling, in an humble way, among strangers who could not know his past history. It was now that he was tempted to offer marriage to Jane Fitzwilliam; for he now felt, and said so, that her cherishing care and kindness were necessary to his existence. What an unenviable position for a young woman so circumstanced as she was! Had he asked her hand during his prosperity, she might, perhaps, at once have decided on a refusal; but now, when he was bowed down by sorrow—deserted by the world—almost helpless but for her—how could she act? She had never told him of her young love—and could she tell him now? Could she otherwise than shew him in this that he had been nursing a viper in his bosom, only to sting him incurably at the last? But who can tell her thoughts, her feelings, or paint the agony of her mind? She was bound to her benefactor for a thousand kindnesses, which all claimed her gratitude. Yet, again, her poor scholar—had he no right to be consulted? She scarcely dared to think of him—gratitude triumphed over love—she did not dare to see him! Perhaps the fact that she was about to leave the scenes of her youth, and could be no more haunted by the upbraiding presence of her lover—that she had now, at least, an opportunity of returning a portion of that almost paternal love which had been lavished on her since infancy, as the wife of his bosom—might have swayed her in the reply she made to the wishes of Mr Wilson. They were married, and reached Scotland together.

Whatever may be said of the step taken by this young woman—whether it may be said that she acted unjustly towards her lover, or disingenuously towards both lover and husband—there is this much certain, that she looked herself, on her conduct, in the light of a merited and meritorious sacrifice; and she was now to shew that she felt it

to be no such thing. This was, perhaps, the most trying difficulty of all; yet most nobly did she fulfil all the duties of a kind and affectionate wife. In consequence of a farewell letter which she received from the poor tutor, after reaching Scotland her husband, to whom she shewed it, was made aware, for the first time, of all that she had done, and must have suffered for his sake, and the knowledge, although painful, was not without a favourable effect. It made him renew every effort to gain the station in society which misfortune had deprived him of, and do everything in his power to make life pleasant to his wife.

Some years ago, I had the good fortune to become acquainted with this amiable family. Mr Wilson was then not an old man; but, placed beside his wife, he looked like one who might be her father rather than her husband. He was at that time in easy, if not comfortable circumstances, and his wife had made him the happy father of three fine children. Wilson was an agreeable conversationalist, had seen much, and read a good deal, and his society was always inviting. Many a pleasant chat we have had together in his little parlour, which was tastefully ornamented with many of his own productions with the pencil. It was quite a treat to spend an evening in his house. His wife, if not buoyant in spirits, looked always pleased and happy; and so fond of her old man, as she playfully called him, that one who did not know the early history of the pair, could not but say, judging from every appearance, that theirs had been quite a love match. What I liked best about her, was her unaffected sincerity of welcome to all her husband's friends. Nor did this extend to mere words of course, and the ordinary hospitalities of friendly intercourse; she was constantly devising some simple enjoyment with which to take her husband and his friends by surprise. Thus, on a Christmas eve, has she led a little party, headed by the "old man," who had been perhaps engaged in business all day, and knew nothing of her arrangements, into her parlour, which was pleasantly surrounded with evergreens, the tables well filled with dishes of her own preparing—pure English dishes! How she did enjoy the look and the smile of her husband on such occasions!—and how her heart beat in unison with his, as he would exclaim—"Ay, this does bring me in mind of England!"—And then he would kiss his youngest boy, and tell him to kiss mamma, for being so very kind! I have just now a card of invitation to one of these happy parties lying before me—the turning up of which the other day, among some old letters, set me to write thus far. On reperusing it, I am reminded of the joyous night I spent with Wilson and his friends on the occasion. There was music, and dancing, and conversation, and fruits, and flowers, and faces beaming with happiness. Four years have not elapsed since then. That night seems but a dream; and these faces are all gone, or scattered over the world—some of them in distant lands.

Poor Wilson was seized with a lingering illness, which confined him to bed. The devotedness and attention to his every wish and want, which his kind wife then displayed, were beyond anything that could be fabled. In that last, painful hour of his pilgrimage on earth, it was permitted him to receive a full reward for all his kindness to the widow and the orphan.

Why do I dwell on this part of the history of my friend! I laid his head in the grave, and then returned, with a sad heart indeed, to the house of mourning, and lamentation, and wo—to the mother and her destitute children. Among those who attended the funeral, was a near relation of the deceased—a cold, heartless wretch, who left the procession ere it had reached twenty yards from the house. He had learned enough, while in the house, waiting till the corpse should be lifted, to convince him that his relative had died in straitened circumstances—and it could not well

be otherwise, considering that Wilson could not for a twelvemonth before attend to business. This man, this relative, this summer fly, whom I had seen partake, again and again, of the kindness and hospitality of the deceased and his wife, was the first to turn his back upon the bereaved family. It was little, indeed, that would have been asked, or that could have been expected at his hands, but advice and consolation; for, as it was, one or two acquaintances stepped forward, and relieved the family of their pecuniary troubles.

Here, now, was she who was once the lovely young Jane Fitzwilliam, alone in the world, surrounded by strangers, who knew nothing, or cared little about her. Here was she, with three children to provide for—and she was for the first time in her life called to exert herself for her own and their support. Such situations are, alas! too common—so much so, that they make but a sorry figure in a tale, and even in real life seldom arrest the attention of mankind. Did a thought of her first lover now intrude upon her mind? In all that interval, since the farewell letter, she had never heard of him; and I am not sure but she entertained for him a yearning and lingering affection.

The poor scholar had made his sacrifices too. On the occasion of his severe disappointment, he had departed from his native town, and, under feelings of excitation, he entered the service of the army. There was nothing congenial to his tastes in this situation. He deserted, and wandered about the country, a beggar, reckless and desperate. On one occasion he had the good fortune to introduce himself favourably to a gentleman who had made some improvements in a machine connected in some way with reed-splitting. Our student had a taste for mechanics, and, from being employed first as a common labourer, he raised himself to the rank of engineer and overseer in the extensive establishment carried on by the gentleman alluded to. Such was his situation at the period of Wilson's death. That event came to his ears, and he, with a generosity worthy of a noble nature, wrote a letter to the widow, in which he offered to protect and support herself and children. I know not how she felt on the receipt of this letter; but this I know—and it is one of the few romances of real life that have come under my observation—that she is now the wife of her first lover. Such is a brief history of a sacrifice, which produced much misery to more than one party; and in which we have seen that same misery amply compensated for, by a sort of retributive mercy, and by the bringings about of a kind Providence.

THE PIRATE'S DOOM.

THE island of Cuba, in the West Indies, was, for a long period, the noted haunt of pirates or buccaneers, whose desperate courage was only equalled by their atrocity—men who, having outlawed themselves by their crimes, had banded together for the sake of mutual defence; and who, finding themselves opposed by all nations, had taken up arms against the whole world. As they were sensible that, if taken, they could expect no mercy; so these miscreants, in the spirit of retaliation, determined to shew none to those unfortunate victims who fell into their hands. Emboldened by long success, they had at last rendered themselves so formidable, as to make traffic in that part of the world extremely dangerous. The attention of the British government was, at last, turned to the subject, and the Oscar frigate was despatched, to root out the ruffians. The Oscar was a frigate of the largest class, and, altogether, one of the finest in the service.

The crew of the Oscar had been, most of them, impressed into the service against their wills; and, although sailors,

in general, dislike a man-of-war, the desperate nature of the service on which they were about to be engaged, tended to increase this dislike. Some symptoms of insubordination even broke forth before the Oscar left England; but these being visited with speedy punishment on the offenders, all murmurings for the present were checked.

The naval service of Great Britain at this time, perhaps, presented as complicated a scene of tyranny and oppression as is to be found in any period of our history. We have already mentioned that many were impressed into the service, torn from their families and friends, whose faces, perhaps, they were destined never again to behold. This, in any state, would be reckoned cruel and unjust; but in a state such as Britain, professing to be the freest in the world, it was a perfect anomaly, and quite opposed to the very nature and essence of our constitution. Sure is the saying of a modern philosopher—that slavery has often reposed under the shade of liberty.

The treatment of the men on board was exactly in keeping with their impressment. For the least offence, they were bound up to the gratings at the gangway, and received a round dozen on their naked shoulders. Frequently, also, were the men punished for the mistake of their officers. The veteran sailors who, for their country's cause, had ventured their lives and shed their blood, were snubbed by a parcel of boys, just let loose from school, to be set over men. Daring not to retaliate, they were obliged to brook, in sullen silence, the insults and indignities heaped upon them by these jackanapes, whose commands, although entirely ignorant of the service, the seamen were obliged to obey. Nor was this all—the sailors were also ill supplied with food. For their breakfast, they had what was termed skilagilee, or oatmeal and water, not thicker than water-gruel; so thin was it that it was run from the coppers in which it was made, by a cock. For their dinner, they had one pound of meat and one of bread, the pound only 14 oz.; and the pound of meat included bones, on which, being removed, there did not remain much more than one good bite; and this, along with a small quantity of hard peas and water, was the whole of their daily allowance. Two days in the week were, what the sailors called, banyan days, on which no meat was served out; but, instead of this, a small quantity of butter or cheese—sometimes, but rarely, cocoa. One day, and one day alone, a quantity of flour was allowed, sufficient to make each man a small pudding. This allowance of food was quite insufficient for the support of the seamen, and they could not have subsisted upon it, but for their grog. I have frequently heard an old sailor affirm, that hunger has often compelled him to take a mouthful of salt to create thirst, in order that, by drinking water, he might, in some degree, satisfy the cravings of his appetite. And these, too, were the men who shed their blood and spent their lives in the service of their country. It is certainly one of the most redeeming points in our national character, that those very men, suffering all the evils enumerated, should, in the hour of battle, forgetting all the injuries which they had endured, be mindful only of their country's glory. Ill, indeed, was such magnanimity rewarded! It is a well-known fact, that the evils already specified were the chief causes of the mutiny of the Nore, to which may, in a great measure, be attributed the improvements which have taken place in the navy. But to our story:—

The evils which we have mentioned as characterising the naval service in general, were fully illustrated in the particular case of the Oscar. The cruelty of the officers was great; and the sailors, most of whom had never before been in the service, at first only expressed the sense which they entertained of their treatment, in oaths and imprecations against the authors of it, and in suppressed mutterings amongst each other. At last, seeing no redress for

their grievances, and stung almost to madness by the wrongs which they suffered, they could bear it no longer. A regular organized conspiracy was the result, in which it was determined to cut off every commissioned officer on board.

The Oscar reached the Bahamas without meeting any accident, and was becalmed for four days under the east side of Long Island. Here the mutiny broke out. It was on the evening of the fourth day after their arrival at Long Island. The frigate was lying at anchor—not a breath of wind was stirring—the watch for the night had been set, and the first lieutenant, who had the command of it, was walking up and down the quarter-deck. A shrill whistle was heard from below, when two men came behind the lieutenant, and threw him overboard. This was the signal for the slaughter—all was noise and uproar—and, in a few minutes, there was scarcely a commissioned officer alive on board. When the mutiny commenced, the captain was asleep in his cabin. Alarmed by the noise, he hastily rose, and was rushing out to see what was the matter; but was met at the door by the coxswain of his barge, who aimed a blow with his cutlass at his head. The captain was a strong, powerful man, and he would have overpowered the coxswain, but for four other fellows, who entered and overpowered him. He was thrown upon his back, and the cabin window was opened.

“Overboard with him!” exclaimed the coxswain. The captain begged for mercy. “Mercy!” exclaimed the coxswain; “what mercy did you shew to me, the other day, when you flogged me till the blood came, because I missed my foot, and tumbled off the main-yard? Mercy!—ay, ask mercy of the sharks!”

Dreadful were the captain's shrieks. “Oh! do not murder me!” he screamed out.

“Overboard with him!” shouted the coxswain; and, in spite of his cries and struggles, the captain was lifted up to the window and pushed over.

As a last effort, he grasped the panel of the window, and clung to it with a death's grasp. The coxswain lifted his cutlass, and severed the fingers from the hand. The captain fell, and disappeared for a moment—he rose again to the surface—it was his last struggle—one agonizing shriek rose above the billows, and he sank to rise no more. The sailors looked a moment in breathless silence, to see if he would rise again; but nothing was seen, save the ripple which his disappearing form had left, for a moment, upon the surface of the ocean.

The only officer left alive on board the Oscar, was a little midshipman, named Dickey. Dick had, by his intercession with the captain, (whose nephew he was,) been the means of saving an Irish sailor from being flogged a few days before; and the grateful fellow, at the imminent risk of his own life, preserved him from the hands of his infuriated shipmates.

After the massacre of their officers, a consultation was held by the sailors as to their future course; some were for joining the pirates of Cuba, whilst others were for selling the vessel to the Spanish government, at that time at war with Great Britain, and then the crew might dispose of themselves as they pleased, afterwards. The last plan was agreed to; the Oscar was sold to the Spanish government, and the sailors dispersed, some to join the pirates, others to make their way home again.

Dreadful was the consternation in England, when the news of the mutiny arrived. An immense reward was immediately offered for the apprehension of the perpetrators of the impious deed; and a free pardon, together with a large sum of money, was offered to any of the accomplices who would turn king's evidence, and betray their countrymen.

There are black sheep in every flock. Amongst the

crew of the Oscar, there were two fellows—who, as it usually happens, were the chief ringleaders in the mutiny—who, for the sake of pardon to themselves, and of securing the promised reward, or blood money, as it was called, were base enough to betray their accomplices. Indefatigable were the exertions of these villains to capture their unfortunate shipmates, many of whom they themselves had inveigled into the mutiny; and, rather than fail of success, they, unhesitatingly, accused many innocent men; who, not being able to prove their innocence, were condemned for crimes which they never committed. Leaving the informers busily engaged in their nefarious employment, we will, with the reader's leave, shift the scene of our story, for a little while, to Scotland.

It was in a cold, bleak, November night, that two boats landed, from a frigate lying in Leith Roads. About a dozen men, closely muffled up in pea-jackets, stepped out of the boats. Without interchanging a single word, they proceeded to Leith, and then separated into parties of twos and threes. After skulking along different streets, in about a quarter of an hour they again met opposite a large house, from which proceeded the sound of music and dancing. Two of the windows were thrown open, to admit the fresh air; and, when the men arrived, the music struck up a lively air, which was a signal for a renewal of the dance. In the excitement of the moment, the men, for an instant, forgot their purpose; but the voice of one who, from his manner, seemed an officer, quietly recalled them to their duty.

"I say, my lads," whispered he, "stand you fast here, and the boatswain and I will go and give a peep through the keyhole; and, when I give a stroke with the but-end of my pistol, up you come."

The men accordingly kept concealed under the projecting arch of the house, at which they were standing; while the two others went up to the door, to reconnoitre.

On approaching the door, the officer put his eye to the key-hole, and whispered to the boatswain—

"There are six or seven strapping fellows within. They will form a jolly addition to the crew of the Saucy Jack."

"Let me see for a moment," said the boatswain. "Ay, sure, they are that," exclaimed he, putting his eye to the key-hole. "Arrah," continued he, "by the sowl of my ould granny—long ago under the turf, God rest her sowl!—if there isn't my ould messmate, Tom Liddle. Now, your Honour, if we can secure him, sure he would be worth any two men on board the frigate."

"So much the better," exclaimed the officer; "and now for it," said he, striking the but-end of his pistol against the lintel of the door. Up came the sailors, and in an instant the door was burst open, and then ensued a scene which would baffle all description. The cry of "The press-gang!" flew through the room; resistance was useless; some attempted to escape by the door, but that was secured; whilst some took refuge in an adjoining lumber-room. This very room had been the subject of conversation a little before; and some were for examining it, to see if there was any way of escape, if the press-gang should come; but, with the recklessness and improvidence of seamen, it was put off till too late. Seven able seamen were secured by the press-gang, and carried off to the frigate; amongst whom was Tom Liddle, the person whom the Irish boatswain, Mat Morgan, had styled as worth any two on board the ship. Tom, a smart, strapping fellow, of rather prepossessing appearance, was marched off with the rest, and in less than an hour they were all safely on board the ship. On the road, not a word had been spoken by either party; but, when they had ascended the gangway, the Irish boatswain, Mat Morgan, came up to Tom Liddle, and shook him heartily by the hand, and welcomed him on board the Saucy Jack.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Tom, looking at him as well as the darkness would permit, "is this you, Mat?"

"Ay, sure is it, and no mistake," replied Mat.

"And so, Mat, you were one of the press-gang who have seized us! I never thought that you would have been such a swab as to hunt after a shipmate as if he had been a wild beast."

"There, now, honey—the same man yet I see. Now, how was I to be after knowing that you were there?—and, if I had, what would it have signified? Don't you know that, in the King's sarvice, (all the saints in heaven bless him!) we must do what we are bid? But, come, my boy, as my ould tacher, Teddy O'Reilly, used to say, 'what's ended can't be mended.' So, cheer up, my boy, and come down to my leetle cabin. You'll not like the Saucy Jack anything the worse for finding yourself alongside of your ould messmate, Mat Morgan."

Tom, seeing that he could not mend the matter followed the kind-hearted Irishman down to his cabin, where, having seated themselves, Mat pulled out a flask of good whisky, which he handed to him, saying—

"Now, darlint, take a drap o' the crathur. I've a good store on board, thanks to my namesake, St Mathew, now in heaven, God bless him! So, jewel, don't spare it."

Tom, encouraged by the kindness of his old friend, soon began to make himself comfortable; and, as they talked together over some of their former voyages, he soon forgot all his former vexation.

"The curse o' Cromwell seize me," exclaimed Mat, "if I can tell how I feel! I'm almost bothered out o' my seven senses wid joy to see you near me again; but I hope, Tom, that now, as you are on board of us, you won't try to get away again. If you do stop, as sure as I was born in Cork, you will be an officer in six months; and, besides, isn't it a fine thing to retire, in our ould days, on a pension, and live jist like gentlemen, quite independint o' all the world?—and isn't that better than to spend all our lives on board a merchantman, and, when we turn ould, to be kicked about like ould junk?"

"There is certainly some reason in what you say," replied Tom.

"Raison!" responded Mat; "I could give you as many raisons on the subject as there are raisins in the plum-puddins which we tuck under our belts at Christmas, Tom," continued he. "Do you remember when we sailed together in the Pelican, when that cursed pirate attacked us off Madeira?"

"Ay," replied Tom; "I have some cause to remember that, when they murdered our skipper and four hands, besides the gentleman and his two daughters, who were passengers, because they would not give them any more money."

"Bad luck to the villains!" exclaimed Mat. "I can never forget, Tom, that cursed ugly son of a gun who killed our poor captain: I can never forget that chap. I hope that I shall one day see him swing at the yard-arm. However, Tom, it's one consolation to think that, though the villains may escape the quicksands of this life, yet the brimstone shoals o' the next world will bring them up all standing. But it grows late," added Mat, "and you must need rest; so turn in, along with me to-night, till you get your own hammock on board."

Tom felt much encouraged by the conversation of his friend Mat; and his own sanguine temperament, which always inclined him to look on the bright side of the picture, aided in reconciling him to the frigate. Unfortunately, however, a few days after, when Tom had resolved on staying on board, the first lieutenant had used some harsh language to him, which Tom's proud spirit could not brook; and he resolved to make his escape as soon as possible. This design he communicated to his friend Mat, who, seeing him bent on going, saw that it was no use to oppose

him. Tom waited till the evening, when he intended to put his project in execution. Previous to this, however, he went down to Mat's cabin, to take leave of him.

"Good-by!" exclaimed Tom, stretching out his hand to Mat. "God bless you, my old messmate!"

"May the blessed Virgin have you in her gracious keeping!" exclaimed Mat, grasping Tom's hand, and scarcely able to suppress his emotion. "Good-by, Tom; and, if ever you want a friend, remember Mat Morgan."

The frigate was still lying in Leith Roads; and Tom, being an expert swimmer, had not the least doubt but he could reach the shore, if he could get over without being observed by the sentinel, who was walking backwards and forwards on the deck. Accordingly, he crept forward on his hands and knees, on the side of the deck opposite to that on which the sentry was walking; and, by remaining still when his face was towards him, and creeping forward when his back was turned, he at last reached the bow of the frigate, where he silently stripped off his upper garments, which he rolled up in a bundle, and fastened to his head, and then lowered himself down by the chains into the water. He reached the shore in safety, and immediately betook himself to Edinburgh, to a Jew's house in the Canongate, who dealt in marine stores. There he exchanged his sailor's suit for the dress of a countryman, which consisted of a corduroy pair of trowsers, and vest, together with a jacket of the colour called pepper-and-salt, for want of a better name—finely bespangled with rows of clear buttons down the sides, and along the pockets, which were on the outside.

Disguised in this dress, he at last reached Portsmouth, where he engaged himself on board of a merchantman, bound for the West Indies. It was on the evening before the sailing of his vessel, that Tom, accompanied by another seaman, was walking on the streets of Portsmouth, when one of the informers already mentioned, came up to him, and looked attentively in his face.

Tom, wondering what the fellow meant, passed on, and said nothing; but he had not proceeded far, when he was tapped on the shoulder by a naval officer, accompanied by two sailors, who told him that he was his prisoner. Tom asked him what crime he had committed; but the officer bid him ask no questions, but follow him. Immediately, it flashed across Tom's mind, that he had been seized on account of his desertion from the Saucy Jack, in Leith Roads; as for being accused as one of the mutineers of the Oscar, he could have had no suspicion, for he had never even heard of the fate of that ship. He was conducted to the town prison, where he passed a sleepless night. In the morning, he was taken, by the same officer who had apprehended him on the previous evening, on board of the guard-ship, which was lying in the harbour. Tom was put into the gun-room, and a sentry placed over him. Whilst here, he again ventured to address the officer as to the cause of his confinement. The officer briefly replied, that he was taken up on suspicion of having been engaged in the mutiny of the Oscar frigate.

"The mutiny of the Oscar frigate!" replied Tom, in amazement, but at the same time much relieved; "by all that's sacred, I never heard the name before, much less of the mutiny!"

"Well, you know that best yourself," replied the officer; "but you will soon have an opportunity of defending yourself, as the officers who are to compose the court-martial are assembling in the state-cabin."

A sailor entered at this moment, and informed the prisoner that he must follow him.

Tom rose and followed the seaman, who ushered him into the state-cabin, where the court-martial was assembled. As he entered, all eyes were turned towards him; he was motioned by one of the officers to sit down on a form at

the side of the room. The officers who composed the court-martial were seated on forms placed on each side of a long table. At the head of the table, sat an old admiral, who presided on the occasion; and on whose breast were displayed several medals, which were fastened to his coat by scarlet ribbons. On each side of the table, sat four other officers; whilst at the bottom was seated another person, apparently a clerk, before whom writing materials were standing.

On one side of the room were seated two persons, who seemed from their dress to be sailors. After the door was again shut, and the sentry had resumed his place on the outside, to prevent intrusion, the old admiral ordered the clerk to read the indictment. After this was done, the clerk called the name of David Arnot, as witness for the King. One of the sailors who were sitting in the room came forward.

"Do you recognise the prisoner," said the clerk, "as one of the crew of the Oscar?"

The sailor looked attentively at Tom for a while, and then replied, that he thought he was, but he was not altogether sure.

"Can you take your oath that he was one?" asked the clerk.

"No," replied the sailor; and he was dismissed.

The clerk then called the name of Robert Windmarsh, as witness for the King.

The sailor came forward. He was a strong, powerful man, and in height rather exceeding the common size. His hair was of a woolly black, and knotted like a mop. His eyes, small and piercing, were sunk in his forehead: they even appeared more sunk than they really were, from their proximity to a pair of prominent cheek bones, which stood out in bold relief from his face. In his left eye, there was a constant motion, which resembled the twinkling of a fixed star on a winter evening; whilst the other, by its strong, steady light, reminded one of the planets. Altogether he was one of those persons whose features, if once seen, are too remarkable ever to be forgotten.

As this fellow approached the table, Tom fixed his eyes upon him; the more he looked at him, the more was he persuaded that he had seen him somewhere before; but where, he could not remember.

The same question was put to this sailor as to the other—whether he recognised the prisoner as one of the crew of the Oscar.

The hardened villain seemed to have his answer ready prepared for the occasion; and he replied, without hesitation—"Yes."

"Can you take your oath upon it?"

"Yes," replied the fellow; "I remember his features well, although I know not his name; he was the man who pulled the bow oar in the captain's barge, and was one of the ringleaders in the mutiny."

"Liar!" exclaimed Tom, unable to suppress his emotion. The sudden tone in which this exclamation was uttered, startled the whole court; but the admiral told Tom that, having heard his accusation, he was at liberty to speak in his own defence.

Tom briefly replied that, so far from being engaged in the mutiny, he had never till that morning heard the name of the ship.

"Did you ever see that man before?" asked the admiral, pointing to Windmarsh.

"I am certain," replied Tom, "that I have seen him somewhere before, although I cannot remember where."

"Well," said the admiral, going on with the examination, "before you can clear yourself, you must prove where you were on January 19, 17—"

Tom reflected a little, and then replied—"As nearly as

I can recollect, I was, at the period which you have mentioned, in the Dorset of Leith, on our passage from Quebec to London."

"How are you prepared to prove this?" asked the admiral.

"Easily," replied Tom; "it so happens that the Dorset is at this very moment in Portsmouth, and one of my shipmates, Bill Jarvis, who was with me on that voyage, is now mate of her. I saw him but yesterday; if you send for him, you may examine him for yourselves."

Bill Jarvis was accordingly sent for; who, being asked if he knew the prisoner, exclaimed—"What! not know my old messmate, Tom Liddle, as smart a sailor as ever reefed topsails in a gale of wind! Tom's no skulker below when danger is in the way, and"—But Bill's farther panegyric was cut short by the admiral, who asked him where he was on January 19, 17—. Bill hesitated a little at first; however, after a little consideration, he replied, that he was then in the Dorset of Leith, on the passage between Quebec and London.

"Was Tom Liddle along with you on that voyage?" asked the admiral.

"To be sure he was, your Honour," answered Bill; "and doesn't your Honour know that he saved all our lives? We had just reached the mouth of the Gulf, when a fog came on, as thick as butter-milk. The master was at the helm, and we had a fine spanking breeze right abeam, when Tom, happening to walk forward, and just give a bit of a squint over the bows, seed something whitish just under our lee-bow. 'Breakers a-head!' sings out Tom. 'Hard a-port your helm!' Down went the helm; and when the ship's head came up to the wind, sure enough there were the breakers, quite plain, as white as your Honour's shirt; and so you see," continued Bill, "had it not been for Tom Liddle, we should have been bump ashore."

"Well," said the admiral, turning to the officers, "you see that there could be no previous collusion between the parties. Windmarsh must have been mistaken."

"What this fellow says is impossible," said the informer.

"What's impossible?" exclaimed Bill Jarvis.

"It is a trick," responded the informer, "between these fellows; they have it all made up before now."

"What's a trick?" sung out Bill, clenching his fist. "Were it not for his Honour and the other gentlemen here, I would give your ill-faured face a beauty-spot that would not be rubbed out for a while."

"Silence, my fine fellows!" said the admiral, at the same time admiring Bill's manly spirit; then turning to the officers—"Gentlemen," said he, "this case appears to me quite plain—the prisoner is innocent."

The officers bowed assent.

"You, Windmarsh, may retire," said the admiral, "and be more careful in future whom you accuse."

The hardened villain cast a deadly glance on Tom and Bill, and had his hand already on the door, to open it, when Tom Liddle, who had stood musing for some time, bawled out, in a voice which startled every one in the room—"Stop that villain!—stop him, stop him! I was sure I had seen him somewhere before."

The officers looked at each other in amazement; but Bill Jarvis sprung forward, and seized the informer by the collar as he was retiring, and exclaimed—

"Back water, my fine fellow!—back water, or else I'll give you starn way with my foot!"

The officers looked to Tom for an explanation. Tom stepped forward to Windmarsh, and, putting his hand upon his shoulder, he said—

"I accuse you as one of the pirates of the Guadaoupe, who, five years ago, attacked the Pelican, and barbarously murdered the most of her crew."

The informer turned as pale as death; his eyes became

riveted upon Tom as if they would pierce his inmost soul; his teeth were clenched together; and he would have fallen to the ground, had not Bill supported him.

"I was at that time," continued Tom, "on board the Pelican, and was one of those who escaped the fury of the pirates—a large vessel having hove in sight before they could murder us all. That man is the person who killed the captain with his own hand."

"Do you know where any of the crew of the Pelican are," asked the admiral, "who could give evidence in this case?"

"There is one," replied Tom, "who could at once recognise the prisoner—Mat Morgan, boatswain on board his Majesty's ship, the Saucy Jack; but she has just sailed for the West Indies."

The informer was immediately put under arrest, and, next day, struck with conscious guilt, he confessed his crime. Tom was immediately released from confinement. All the officers expressed their regret at his unjust detention, and the old admiral came up to him, shook him heartily by the hand, and told him that he would see him again in a few days. The news of Tom's release had spread like wildfire along the various ships lying off; and, as Tom and Bill rowed ashore, each of the crews assembled on the decks of their respective vessels, and gave them three hearty hurras. On the quay where they landed, the same enthusiastic reception awaited them; but, when the news spread that Windmarsh the informer had been discovered to be a pirate, their joy knew no bounds. Each sailor shook his shipmates by the hand, as if they had gained a victory over a common enemy. Windmarsh, the informer, being convicted on his own confession, the Thursday following was appointed for his execution, which was to take place on board the guard-ship. Crowds of people lined the shores and the rigging of the merchant vessels lying in the harbour, all of which had their flags half-mast high, as a token of mourning. The funeral bell had been tolling till twelve o'clock. The drum beat on board the guard-ship, and a gun was fired, when all hands were mustered, and the prisoner was brought upon deck, and mounted upon the cat-head. He remained for some time engaged in prayer with the clergyman who attended him, when, on a given signal, another gun was fired, amidst the smoke of which he was run up to the yard-arm, where he suffered that death which his crimes so justly merited, and which his false accusations had caused to be the lot of many an innocent man.

During the execution, Tom Liddle and Bill Jarvis were standing together, and not a word had been uttered by either of them till the informer was seen extended on the yard-arm, when Tom exclaimed, "Behold the Pirate's Doom! Mat Morgan's wish is satisfied." The day following, the old admiral sent for Tom, and asked him if he was willing to enter his Majesty's service; at the same time assuring him of his favour and countenance. Tom, mindful of his treatment on board the Saucy Jack, hesitated at first; but was at length prevailed upon, by the admiral's importunity, to enter himself on board a seventy-four, commanded by one of the admiral's relatives. There he continued for some years, and so distinguished himself by his bravery and good conduct, that he rose to be a lieutenant.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE HUNTSMAN OF ETRICK FOREST.

THE legend of William de Hamyll, the falconer to Alexander III., has, like many others derived from a barbarous age, ceased to exert that influence over the minds of the country people which it once so signally possessed. It has been asserted, by those who knew no better, that the story of "the wild huntsman" is of German origin; and there can be no doubt that that hunting people have a legend—beautifully embodied by Bürger in his small, but terrific poem—on this subject, derived from very ancient authority; yet there can be little doubt that the fate of De Hamyll, called the huntsman of Etrick, has a higher claim to be considered the foundation of this extraordinary legend, than any incident which can be produced by that nation. The Germans, however, have certainly had the merit of investing this and other themes with that peculiar drapery which can be manufactured in that land of dreams alone. The sensible inhabitants of Great Britain have not shewn any great relish for the more elaborate metaphysical nightmares of our German neighbours; but they have ever evinced a praiseworthy, because national fondness for our ancient legends, which, however tinged with that original spirit which has come to all the northern nations from the hall of Odin, give us some insight into the manners of our ancestors. It is, indeed, a sufficient recommendation of a legend, that it is of such a nature as to have insured for it the belief of those from whom we are descended—men unquestionably of strong intellects, though deprived of the more general and bright light which the elaborating mental processes of later times have cast over the world.

The family of De Hamyll is said to have come from Normandy; and there are some antiquarians who insist upon the name being the original of the Hamiltons, though others say that the latter may be found in our annals before that of De Hamyll appears. The members of the family to whom our legend refers, were Peter De Hamyll and William De Hamyll. Whether they were born in Scotland, or were the first part of the family that came from Normandy, has not been ascertained. At an early age, however, they seem to have arrived at offices of some importance in the household of Alexander III.; Peter being conservator of the Forest of Etrick, and William having been chief falconer to the king. There are still extant, in the Exchequer accounts, various entries of sums to William, to defray the expense of the King's falcons, many of which were brought from France by the falconer, and trained according to the perfection of the art in those feudal times.

Peter De Hamyll, as keeper of Etrick Forest, had a large castle on its confines. He is represented as having been deformed, with a large hump on his back, and protuberances on his shin bones. He was, however, a man of excellent disposition, equable temper, and generous feelings; and, in those fierce times, not very well suited to preserve the Forest, which it was his duty to protect from the inroads of the inhabitants of the neighbouring hamlets, who did not hesitate, when they required a buck, to shoot one for themselves, without any fear of being

molested by the good-natured keeper. Though invested with this authority—which, at one time, was reckoned a great honour, and of no small importance to the state and the nobility of the kingdom, who, in the dearth of black cattle, resorted to the Forest for provisions—the keeper was himself no great huntsman, probably in consequence of the weakness of his body, which was incapable of sustaining much fatigue.

Peter was married to Helen Bisset, one of that family who were, in the reign of Alexander, disgraced by the murder of the Earl of Athol. The banishment and excommunication, however, only extended to the male branches of the family; and Helen, the wife of Peter de Hamyll, a woman of some beauty and great ambition, was allowed to retain, as in her own right, a part of the property which she had got from one of her brothers, previous to the affair of the murder. It formed a subject for gossip—even in those days, when scandal had not yet been completely fledged—that Helen Bisset should have allied herself to a hunchback; but the wonder would have ceased, if it had been adverted to, that her husband, while he was not very likely to be a long liver, was reputed to be very rich. Yet there can be little doubt that Helen Bisset might have been happy with such a husband as De Hamyll, who doated upon her with extreme affection, and poured upon her all the tenderness and kindness of a heart formed to throb with the pulses of other people's woes and pleasures. But kindness is only the food of affection. It has seldom or never generated it; and De Hamyll's wife, while she received his affection, only gave him credit for an amelioration of an unhappy condition, as a hard and uncompromising creditor writes off a part of a debt by a partial payment.

Notwithstanding these untoward circumstances, a son was born of this marriage—a very fine boy, who was named after his father. The father loved the boy with more than parental affection, and the mother seemed to be no less fond of him; yet this endearing link, though bound to both, did not produce a moral sythesis; for she claimed the boy, and repudiated the reason, as well as the sentiment which ought to have inclined her to treat with respect the feelings of a husband, and the paternal sympathy of a father. The son was, in body, the very opposite, in every respect, of old De Hamyll; having borrowed the features of the mother, and her straight, erect, and bold bearing; but, in mind, he inherited the kindness and generosity of the father, shewing a placidity of temper, and a thinking, sentimental turn, which, in a youth not yet ten years of age, and the son of the keeper of Etrick, the very chosen theatre of sport, was as remarkable as it was congenial to the hopes and wishes of his parent.

These three formed the family which inhabited the old Castle of Etrick, the appointed residence of the keeper of the Forest. Their servants and dependents were numerous, and suited to the defence of the Castle; which, situated on the Borders, was exposed to continual attacks from the English, as well as from the retainers of the proud barons, who did not hesitate to commit depredations, under the colour of some fancied grievance, on even the strongholds of government officials. But the good

character of the Lord Keeper was a better safeguard of his castle, than all his retainers; for—though in those days, when acts of depredation required the countenance of a lax morality, a character for goodness of heart, justice, and generosity, often passed for simplicity, or even cowardice—an exception seems to have been extended to the case of the Lord Keeper; who, perhaps, enjoyed it, in consequence of the leniency with which he treated all encroachments on the royal demesne, and the necessity there existed for being on good terms with one who could, by a representation to the King, have often been the cause of great mischief to the surrounding knights and nobles.

The attacks to which the Castle of Etrick was subjected, were, therefore, more often directed against the hospitable board which the Lord Keeper at all times kept for the convenience of those parties who had procured liberty to hunt in the domains over which his authority extended. The Forest of Etrick presented no other place where the fasting and weary huntsman could find rest and refreshment, and no one ever presented himself at the gate, without being at once admitted and treated as his grade in society demanded. Though crooked and infirm, De Hamyll loved to officiate as the hospitable landlord. It was in communicating enjoyment to others, and particularly at his own table, that his generous feelings exhibited themselves in a continued flow of kind and entertaining conversation, spreading delight all around, as a grateful accompaniment to the excellent cheer which he delighted to deal out to his guests with exuberant hospitality. As there is no more effectual way of spreading a good name, than by keeping a full and open table, the fame of the good De Hamyll was widely diffused through Scotland; and did not stop short of the court itself, where Alexander, who was himself a great paron of generosity, did not fail to extol the virtues of his Lord Keeper, with kindred feeling.

The brother, William de Hamyll, was, as we have already said, the falconer to the King. He generally resided at the court at Scone, to be ready to join the King, who was a great sportsman, in his favourite pastime of hawking. Occasionally, however, he had gone to the Castle of Etrick, to visit his brother and his wife; and with the view of enjoying the pleasure of hunting in the old Forest. Though a professed falconer, William de Hamyll was more attached to the pastime of the chase. It was more suitable to his bold disposition, which courted the excitement of danger for its own sake; and, as, to all rude and cruel spirits, there is, in the running down of a defenceless animal, and finally slaying it, always something congenial—perhaps instilled by nature, which makes such provisions for the safety of man—William de Hamyll felt the excitement of hunting in its strongest and most passionate degree. When fairly engaged in the chase, nothing restrained him. He became filled with a wild enthusiasm; disregarding the obstructions offered by nature, as well as moral obligations: streams were passed which other men shuddered at; clefts of rocks overleaped which made the head swim to contemplate their ruggedness and depth; corn-fields were passed over without remorse; and instances occurred, according to report, where old men and children, who were unable to escape, were trampled under foot by his excited steed, spurred and lashed by a ruthless and reckless rider.

This love of hunting, which was gratified in such an extravagant manner, was the index to the disposition of William de Hamyll. Possessed of a mind which, when left to itself, was incapable of the pleasures of reflection—an enemy to all humane studies, with no wife or children to excite—if in his bosom there was any such sympathetic power—any of the domestic affections, and naturally averse to companions whom he was too cold to warm into

friends, this man sought, in any exercise which called forth his muscular powers, that relief from torpid inanity which is ever required by those in whose nature the animal predominates over the rational creature. All his feelings required to assume the intensity of passions ere they could become in him principles of action, or afford him any satisfaction. His sympathies and antipathies were either maddening loves, or deadly hatreds. He presented the appearance of one under either the inebriating effects of wine, or the depressing influence of its lees, as they died on his jaded nerves. The common interests and feelings of humanity were, to him, tame and insipid; and crime of the deepest die was more acceptable, though less profitable, than were the virtues which, destitute of exterior glare or internal excitement, have immortalized men and raised the character of human nature.

Did not such men occasionally cross the path of almost every observer, we would hesitate to portray the strongest lines of the character of this man, because, when judged by ordinary experience, they might be deemed unnatural and revolting. That there are men who delight in the miseries of their neighbours, against whom they entertain some particular grudge, is matter of daily observation; but that there are men such as William de Hamyll, who are pleased with indications of pain and suffering in mortals who have never injured them, is also verified by the experience of mankind. There are animals that lacerate and kill when their stomachs are distended with food, and thus gratify an innate principle of cruelty gratuitously, and unaffected by the call of animal appetite; there are, also, among men, misanthropes who delight in pain, because it is natural to them to hate their fellow-creatures. These are extraordinary instances of the presence of the evil principle; and we will be the more easily believed, from the contemplation of these, when we assert that there are men who, not enrolled among the dark, moping, melancholy idiots called men-haters, have yet such a morbid relish for excitement, that they will gladly seek for it in the pains and death-struggles of man, with no other view than, as the gorged tiger mangles for sport, they may drive off a moral sleep, occupied with nightmares more dreadful than the feelings which put them to flight.

Of such men William de Hamyll was a noted example; and, perhaps, a trace of the same character may be found in many of the public men who figured in the age in which he lived. In the want of the engrossing occupations of private life, the weary and listless minds of the inhabitants of Scotland sought excitement and relief in forays, where nothing was expected, and little wished for, in addition to the exquisite stir and confusion of the *melée*. Yet these occasions were warlike, and little will suffice to take away from crime the gratuitous form in which it was presented in the person of William de Hamyll, who seemed to love it for its own sake with the same devotion with which virtue is followed and exercised by good men. While his extraordinary disposition thus compelled him to crime, there was in him no antagonist or restraining principle—no better genius that strove to soften the obduracy or change the purposes of his evil heart. The only person he stood in awe of was his sovereign, whose ear was filled with stories of his cruelty and villany, and who had long threatened to remove him from his office, and deliver him up to the revenge of his enemies, who thirsted for his blood.

It may well be believed that the occupation of falconer was not suited to occupy the mind or gratify the purposes or passions of a man of such gigantic wickedness; yet it must be recollected that hawking might supply, on a small scale, food for his craving desire of inflicting pain. This pastime was one of the cruellest that ever received the glossing apologies of indulgent fashion. The innocent feathered creation, formed to feast the eye and the ear of

man, and to lend a charm to the scenes of nature which nothing can supply, were subjected to the cruel tearing talons of their fierce natural enemies; the lark, after having charmed the ear of the lover of nature with her sweet song, making the groves ring with the delightful notes, and while descending to enjoy the grateful flutterings of her tender young, was pointed out by the finger of man as a victim of a cruel sport, and brought to the earth, panting, dying, and covered with its life-stream. Hawking boasted of such triumphs; and the love of blood may be as amply gratified by a cruel privation of the life of an innocent bird, as by the death of the stately buck or the mother-yearning doe: in the one case, there is in the wish for food some reason for the death; in the other, the cruelty is gratuitous.

Such being the attributes of the heart and mind of William de Hamyll, nature exhibited in him not only an extraordinary instance of moral depravity, but the strange inconsistency—of which she is often guilty—of uniting these bad qualities to physical properties of the most elevated kind. The opposite of his brother in mind, he was still farther from him in body. With prodigious muscular strength, he united great beauty of form and features. His dark eye, which told in expressive beams the fire which raged within, gave him a wild and unsettled air; while a peculiar fashion of wearing his hair in long black locks down his back, some of which he could artfully throw forward, to cover a part of his face, aided the effect, and produced in the beholder admiration of his beauty, and fear of the spirit which gave it its wild and fascinating character. A foreigner among the people of Scotland, he knew his superiority of personal appearance, and did not fail to take advantage of art and opportunity to invest his natural endowments with the factitious advantages best calculated to shew them off, and give them effect; and thus his brigand-like appearance was mixed with an elevated tone of commanding superiority, which overawed the weak, and produced no small influence on those of firmer nerves and greater decision of character. These external attributes—abating the beauty—agreed so well with the character of his mind, that no person acquainted with both could contemplate him without a wish for a sudden interposition of space, to throw him beyond the risk of falling under his anger, or rather to free him from an uncertain danger, the limits or quality of which he could not specify, though he had no doubt of its existence.

Being a younger son, William de Hamyll had little or no patrimony. The emoluments he received as falconer to the King were sufficient to have kept him in a style of elegance suited to that high station; but the draining effect of a wild, dissolute life, drove him to the necessity of borrowing money from his acquaintances about court—a resource in which, from the fear he spread around him, he was for a time successful; but, latterly, his demands becoming exorbitant, and exceeding the ability of those from whom he, with the greatest effrontery, continued to ask assistance, he was necessitated to leave court, and take up his abode at his brother's castle, where he found encouragement for the display of vicious propensities in a quarter in which, there is reason to suppose, he knew previously where to find it. The sympathy of bad hearts is clear-sighted to the discovery of their cognate impulses: a good man may be cheated by the false colours of virtue; but few ever simulate vice, and, sure of every indication, the wicked, impelled as well by the necessity of mutual countenance and union, as by the congeniality of their sentiments, embrace each other with the avidity of lovers.

The necessities which had driven William from court, were not supplied by the mere liberty of being supported in the castle of his brother. He had demands for money, which were no sooner satisfied by fraternal kindness, than

others, to a greater extent, started up, requiring a similar extension of generosity. A refusal, wrung from his brother, by the necessity of offering, at some time, a resistance to extravagance, produced anger and threats, which, overheard by the lady of the castle, received from her a sympathy that at once opened a communication of sentiments as dark and treasonable as they were ominous and fatal.

The language which is often so eloquently expressed by looks and the muscular play of the face had, for a long time, been carried on between William de Hamyll and the wife of his brother. Her disregard of her husband could not be concealed from an observer of manners. As age continued to render the deformity of Peter more observable and more unpleasant, her regret at having sacrificed herself for the sake of wealth increased; and this feeling was perpetuated and rendered more irksome, by the continued flow of young and handsome visitors, whom the proximity of the Castle to the Forest brought as guests to her board. When no person was present, she wore the chain with more resignation; for time had, in some degree, accustomed her to it; but, when her condition of irremediable bondage and colligation with a creature whom nature had marked, set apart from mankind, and placed, in so far as regarded form, in another class of living creatures, was made apparent by contrast, she lost temper, and replied to the remarks of her good-natured husband with an asperity which at once disclosed the true state of her feelings.

It was when she retired to rest, after a day of conviviality passed with handsome guests, that she felt, in the keenest degree, the utmost extent of this voluntary misery. Her active imagination, unsanctified by the glow of any generous feeling, and unrestrained by any of the ties of moral obligation, rioted in the fancied liberation from her holy tie. The contrast between these feelings of a heated fancy, which pictured gay knights acting at her feet the envied play of courtly love, and competing for her affections, and those produced by the actual contact with what she conceived disgusting and revolting—the eternal monitor of her fate and the obstructive impediment that lay between her and the gratification of her unrestrained passions—created such a confusion of thoughts, so much depression and misery, with convulsive starts, groans, and sighs, and repeated floods of tears, that it would have been impossible to have concealed her feelings from any one but the single-minded, unsuspecting De Hamyll. But, if she was inclined to attribute her misery to the fate of her brothers, the Bissets, and the ruin of her family, he was willing to receive the excuse. He could not suppose that, after so long a period of cohabitation, she regretted her fate in being allied to him who had uniformly treated her with affection and kindness; and the native goodness of his heart excluded suspicions which never found a harbour there, but when the open and proved bad conduct of man justified their reluctant entertainment.

While De Hamyll's wife thus nourished disloyal and inimical sentiments against the husband of her bosom, his unhappy fate, shewn so early in his malformation, and afterwards in his unsuitable union, required that there should be added the secret repinings of a discontented brother, who cursed his fate in being subjected to the effects of the poverty of a second son; and, smarting under the chafing restraint which his brother, for his own good, had imposed upon him, ungenerously imputed to his benefactor what was alone attributable to his own unruly passions and unhalloved life. His wishes being at all times his only rule of action—the gods at whose shrine all moral duties were sacrificed—it never once occurred to him, that any feelings due to a brother could be invested with any sanction, human or divine, that ought to give them

an exception from those all-devouring Molochs which he had set up over all other deities.

He had never, from his earliest years, loved his brother; or, indeed, any other relation or individual he ever knew. The only person with whom he was ever on apparently friendly terms—John Durward, a cousin of Allan Durward, the famous knight—he slew at Bothwell, to free himself from the payment of a bet he had taken on the success of a favourite falcon. Of such importance did he hold the gratification of his own passions, that even the life of a fellow creature weighed but as a feather in the balance; and it was not as a feature of the barbarous times in which he lived, that he possessed this disposition along with many lawless men. In better times, he would have been the same William de Hamyll; for he owed his peculiar spirit to no circumstance of time, locality, or imitation. It was a dire inheritance from the author of evil, intended by the author of good for the purpose of affording such a spectacle of moral depravity—punished in a manner as peculiar and striking as the character was uncommon and odious—as might prove a salutary beacon to men, and shew them that vice, though in some of its features invested with colours not unqualifiedly repulsive, is capable of attaining to proportions and attributes so gigantic and hideous as to form an object of disgust and terror. The affections of natural relations were then as strong as they are now; and a brother renouncing one of the first and strongest of his instincts—cutting the ties which the Almighty had wound round the hearts of him and the son of the same mother—renouncing his allegiance to nature, as well as severing his obligations to morality—presents a picture which cannot fail to impress its character in the hearts of all who contemplate it. William de Hamyll wished for nothing more anxiously than the death of the keeper.

The feelings and reasonings of this unnatural brother, and not less unnatural wife, though in themselves different, were thus pointed to the same consummation—the death of a brother, husband, and benefactor. His generous and amiable qualities pleaded but feebly to those who hated goodness because it was incompatible with their evil; and who, though they had not yet communicated their sentiments to each other, saw, in the removal of the unfortunate victim, the opening of a door to wealth and freedom. Possessed of these thoughts, they found, in their mutual language of sympathy, a copious expression of their mutual wishes.

The first open indication of these secret thoughts, was brought out by the refusal, on the part of the Lord Keeper, to supply William with the quantity of money which his wants, produced by extravagant habits, demanded. This refusal was delivered by the keeper with kindness; accompanied by a recommendation to his brother, to reform his mode of life, rein up his desires, take a wife, and settle down into a respectable member of society, for the support of his character; in which new vocation he promised to settle upon him a sum yearly, which, in addition to his income as falconer, and the dowry he would get with his wife, would enable him to live in a style of elegance, equal to that of any of the lesser barons in the kingdom. He represented to him, at the same time, that his residence at the Castle had been productive of many evil effects. The people of the neighbouring hamlets complained of conduct in which, if he was stopped by the protecting hand of a husband or a father, he did not hesitate to strike these natural guardians to the earth. His hunting exploits were another grievance of general complaint. He had killed the child of a neighbouring hind, which had, in its playfulness, tottered from its devious path in the way of the sportsman; and, in place of assuaging the grief of the parent by a gift of money, or the cheap boon of timely expressed pity, he had cursed

the sorrowful father, for allowing his child to stray in the way of danger. He had slain the forester of Jedburgh Forest, in a quarrel about disposing of the nombles of a deer; and, on the day previous, three of the retainers of a neighbouring baron had called at the Castle, seeking revenge for their murdered companion, who had fallen by the hand of the ruthless huntsman, as he attempted to anticipate him in sending an arrow after a buck. These, and other lawless and bloody acts, were lamented by the keeper as casting a stain upon his character as conservator of the Forest; they were derogatory to the fame of a man who claimed the rights of a citizen of the world; and, with paternal affection, he implored his brother to reform his conduct, and give no ground, in future, for similar complaints.

This good-natured reproof, for which there was so good ground, would have produced no great effect in exciting the anger of the falconer, if it had not been accompanied with the refusal to comply with his request for money. This affected him in one of the few tender points he possessed. He recurred, in his mind, to the old and favourite subject of complaint—of having been, as a second son, excluded from an adequate share of the patrimonial property. His irritable temper was in a moment fired; the spark was applied to the long train of meditated purposes of removing from his path one who, besides standing in the way of his aggrandisement, had now taken upon himself the office of instructor and reclamer. The revenge with which his heart was filled, and which he endeavoured to repress when along with his brother, broke forth, as he passed to his own apartment, in murmurings and deep curses; and these were overheard by Lady de Hamyll with feelings of satisfaction, and hopes of getting her secret wishes gratified by an unnatural hand.

The opportunity thus offered was not allowed to escape. Hastening to his apartment, she inquired the cause of his anger, and received such an answer as to call forth from her a simultaneous expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of her husband, whom she represented as being avaricious and unkind to her. Her policy suggested, at the same time, the propriety of pretending to be sorry to be thus compelled to expose her lord's infirmities; but to whom, she ejaculated with tears, could she communicate griefs produced by her husband, but to that husband's brother?—and from whom could she more readily receive sympathy, than from one who had himself experienced the effects of these evils of which she was the unhappy victim? She cunningly hinted that, seeing she had brought herself to the resolution of marrying him, to the exclusion of proper men, she had a claim to so much more attention, kindness, and generosity from him, than other wives could expect, as would solace her for the loss of the attributes of a pleasing person, which many women valued in a husband beyond even the virtues and beauties of the mind; yet—and she sobbed as she proceeded—these suppliances of such important wants and deficiencies, she was also deprived of; for, in addition to his crooked person, she had to encounter the disadvantages of a stunted, crooked, and ungenerous mind. Her life was, in short, miserable; and she entertained serious resolutions of separating from him, before death could effectuate that consummation.

These sentiments produced little surprise in the mind of her brother-in-law, who, by the previous study he had devoted to her position, looks, manners, and expressions, had arrived at his first conclusion, that she did not love her husband. The next step in the ratiocination, in which he was assisted by the confession now made was, that she hated him—a state of the female mind between which, and the simple negative of not loving, there seldom intervenes either time or impediment; and he knew the character he was studying too well to hesitate a moment in

arriving at the grand result, that she would not be displeased that the object of her hatred were removed by any hand which did not communicate to hers a sprinkling of the blood. He was aware, however, that there exists a disposition in many wicked minds which induces them to affect horror at the sudden broaching of a purpose, the execution of which lies nearest to their own heart—a kind of dying effort in expiring virtue which, though destined to be overcome by the slow progress of the evil power, throws an expiring gleam back on the dark mind it is about to leave for ever, whereby the proposed design is for a time checked. By slow degrees, De Hamyll contrived, after many meetings, and many conversations and efforts, to get the evil-disposed mind of the unnatural wife to discover such traces of her design, that he could lay hold of, and use them as arguments suggested by herself in aid of the purpose he had already decided upon.

A purpose which results from a long series of exciting causes, operating through a course of many years—and which may well be compared to the pressure produced by a mass of waters on the bosom of the earth, collected from the filtering drops of innumerable showers—is generally rapidly fulfilled, in proportion to the time occupied in the production of these causes. Every effort made in the course of that period to restrain the mind or avert it from its design, is, only in the event of its failure, an accumulation of the power which is in operation. There is a saliency in the energies of vice which acquires force and activity from the resistance of a better principle; and those who have changed from good to evil, and have had an experience of the heavenly gift—fearing the excellence they cannot enjoy—execute their designs with the precipitancy of a mixture of wish and fear, which regularly organized depravity seldom acknowledges. The wishes of Lady de Hamyll, when partly elicited by her brother-in-law, assumed, with great rapidity, the form of resolutions. Every time they met, they became better acquainted with each other's thoughts. The sympathy of evil directed to a common object, laid open, as by a spring touched by the hand of enchantment, the black recesses of wicked purposes to their mutual gaze; and, communicating and receiving support and strength, they soon brought their measures to the form of a regularly-organized plan for taking away the life of the unfortunate Lord Keeper.

The affectation and art of bad women are exhibited even in affairs of blood. When it was resolved upon that the life of her husband should be taken away, she implored, even with tears, that she might be spared the sight and participation of an act which she had suggested and precipitated. The open, uncompromising ruffian contemplated this sacrifice offered by vice to virtue with a smile; and, such is the meanness of hypocrisy, even where virtue is feigned, that he did not consider himself invested with the superiority of being at least consistent in his crime—a circumstance indicating, in a signal manner, the universal contempt with which this meanest of all vices is visited by man. Whether in irony or pity, the nobler criminal wiped away her tears, and told her he would murder her husband himself.

The plan adopted was, that William should watch the Lord Keeper as he rode in the Forest, and, from behind a fence, send forth one of his fatal arrows, to do the work of death, at a distance from the unnatural hand thus lifted against the life of a brother. The murderer was then to return to the Castle, and leave the body to be found in the Forest by a chance huntsman or other passenger, who, upon reporting the intelligence to the lady, should see enacted before him a well-sustained scene of grief, in which the brother and wife should perform the principal parts. Some inquiry was then to be made after the murderer, a reward offered for his apprehension, and the matter allowed to die

after the manner of an ordinary wonder. The division of the riches, and the occupation of the castle, were left to future consideration, while the protection of the boy was claimed by the tender mother.

The execution of this scheme was not so easy as the concoction of it; for life, the most precious of the gifts of heaven, is guarded by peculiar laws, which are often concealed from the most acute observer. On apparently a propitious day the victim did not ride out; and, when he did, he was accompanied by the young De Hamyll. At other times, he diverged from his accustomed path, and often there were stragglers in the Forest, unconcious instruments of preservation. The hand which had never shaken in the execution of the purposes of death, shewed symptoms of allegiance to nature, and rebelled against the authority of dominant passions, when lifted against the life of a brother; but nature and reason, instinct and sympathy, feeble as were their united voice, were altogether silenced by the rancour of disappointment and increased impatience of obstructions to the gratification of unhallowed wishes. A new excitement was produced by the difficulties he had to encounter; and the evil principle derived, as it so often does, strength from the obstructions offered by the conservative principle of good. The presence of the boy, who almost always accompanied his father, was now disregarded. The Lord Keeper was destined to die in the arms of his son. As he rode in a part of the Forest to which he was attached from its secluded character, and the presence of many sweet-smelling wild plants which bloomed there, he was told by the boy that he had that moment seen his uncle pass quickly between two trees, and go behind a thick bush of brambles, mixed with thorn, that grew on the right of their course. The words had been no sooner uttered, than they were followed by the twang of the long English bow; the cloth-yard shaft in an instant quivered in the body of the victim, and the lord of the Forest fell to the ground like a stricken deer. The moment the boy saw his father fall, he cried out instinctively for his uncle, whom he had observed, and made the Forest ring with his cries and lamentations.

The murderer flew when he observed the effect of the shot. The cries of the boy, directed to him, and making the woods resound with his name, rung in his ears, and filled him with well-founded apprehensions that he had been discovered. Meanwhile, having been able to find no assistance for his dying parent, who lay on the ground weltering in his blood, and with the death shaft still sticking in his bosom, young De Hamyll made his way to the Castle, to communicate the intelligence and procure the necessary aid. He had no sooner arrived there, than he was seized by his uncle and confined in one of the remote rooms; and, not having time to tell any one except his mother of the fate of his father, the body of the murdered man lay for some days in the Forest, until it was discovered by the forester, a person of the name of John Hunter, who got it conveyed to the castle. The greatest surprise and grief was well affected by the lady; and the fratricide pretended to set on foot some inquiries for the discovery of the perpetrator of the deed. The Lord Keeper was buried with as little display as possible; the reward that was offered for the apprehension of the murderer remained unclaimed; and the murder was invested with the usual character of a circumstance which time alone could satisfactorily explain.

William de Hamyll was now the Lord Keeper of Etrick Forest; the King having, on hearing of his brother's death, granted him that honour and privilege. A new forester was appointed in place of Hunter; who was discharged, without any cause having been assigned for the change. Richard Wright, the person who succeeded him, was one of the few individuals with whom De

Hamyll associated, and was supposed to be the custodian of some of his secrets. About the same time, young Peter, the son of the murdered Keeper, disappeared, and not even his mother could tell what became of him. The author of this secret proceeding was, no doubt, his uncle, who had good grounds to fear that the boy would be able to tell enough to excite suspicions, which might lead to an exposure of his crime. The mother partly consented to his removal, but only on the condition that she should know the place of his confinement; a condition which was not granted, though it might well have been supposed, that she who had so great an interest to conceal the crime itself, might well be trusted with the concealment of one who might divulge it. Yet, De Hamyll knew that maternal affection is sometimes as strong as self-preservation; he did not choose to put his safety in the keeping of an instinct yearning for gratification; and all the entreaties of the mother to be told the place of confinement of her son, were unable to draw from the bosom of her partner in crime, any satisfaction.

The Castle of Ettrick had now for its occupants two individuals, whose presence suggested to each other a train of thoughts and feelings, to the one fearful and alarming, and to the other, in spite of his extraordinary character, unpleasing and irritating. The Lady de Hamyll had now discovered that great secret which is concealed from criminals till it is too late—that, while no anticipation can ever teach the human heart the true feeling of remorse, no power within the reach of its victim can avert or counteract it. The blindness, produced by the passion that urges to crime, prevented her, as it has done millions, from adverting to the simple fact, that new circumstances produce new feelings, and new feelings are modes of a new existence. She had now entered upon this new state; and woful experience, that dreadful task-master of the human heart, came armed with the lash of scorpions, to teach the evils of substituting hopes and wishes, for the workings of avenging nature. The genius of remorse, with melancholy, terror, dreams, and haggard nightmares, in her train, claimed as her suitable victim one who had not the power to pray to heaven for relief. She had no refuge—except in one equally guilty as herself; and who, therefore, had not the power, if he had had the will, which he had not, to yield her any comfort. Her agony was not understood, by one who was dead to the feeling himself; but her wild and maniac appeals for the healing influence of sympathy, irritated and annoyed him, and he repelled, with rudeness, what he could not suffer with calmness. She became to him, as she broke down under the pangs of an awakened conscience, a source of disquiet, and latterly of disgust; he sought, in the pastime of the chase, a relief from her morbid importunities, and, in that, he also found a refuge from thoughts which, from slow beginnings, had now assumed an aspect that threatened to affect the iron nerves of this extraordinary man.

When he returned from the chase to the Castle, he still encountered the same living ghost which the dreadful execution of their mutual purpose had produced out of the agonised body of the wretched woman. Her terrors, now, were not confined to the period of darkness: the broad day brought, in the beams of the glad sun, images which her morbid fancy could not contemplate without screams, and hysterical ebullitions of incurable despair. Her remorse had changed the feelings she formerly entertained against her husband, into those of affection. His deformity was now an element in her pity; and his kindness, contrasted with the ruffian insensibility of his brother, set off the cruelty of his death in a contrast which overwhelmed her, and threw her into convulsions. In her ravings she called for her husband and her boy, and accused her companion of the murder of the one, and the disap-

pearance, if not death of the other, without authority from her. Her frenzy forced her mind into an attempted vindication of her conduct: she denied all that she had ever said against her husband; called upon his spirit to witness the truth of her assertion; loaded De Hamyll with reproaches; and invoked the vengeance of heaven on the head of the fratricide. In a moment after, the demon of self-reproach got the ascendancy, and, falling on the floor, she uttered yells, which awakened the deep echoes of the castle; in the agony of the burning pains and convulsive spasms of a conscience roused by the spell of that word which stands alone in the vocabulary of the breathing spirit—murder—she tore her hair, and beat her bosom with the fury of the paroxysm of madness; and, if she found, for a moment, relief in the insensibility of exhaustion, it was only to awaken to a repetition of the same horrors.

These exhibitions produced in De Hamyll only the effect of exasperation. In his fury he struck the partner of his guilt, and the blood of a woman defiled the hands of the murderer of her husband. From this brutal usage, he received that satisfaction which woman invariably yields to the man who belies his nature by abusing her sex: her bosom was presented for the reception of a blow—which should complete what the former outrage had left undone. Such an appeal brings shame, but no repentance. The exasperation increased; and, while she continued to break down under the effects of her mental agony, getting every day weaker and weaker, he, by the aid of a stronger nature, which contemned the imbecility of a submission to the remorse she exhibited, and rioted in a stronger rebellion against the better powers as they seemed to exert greater authority, plunged deeper into vice, and laughed to scorn the avenging powers of God and man. In the Castle of Ettrick were now heard the screams of despair and the hoarse growl of unsubdued rebellion against heaven. The servants, ignorant of the cause, sought explanation from omens; and, in the croak of the night-birds, which left the forest to perch on the old turrets, or in the hollow blasts of wind which courted an indistinct articulation from the impeding oaks, found an oracle that foreboded the ruin of the family to which they were attached.

The wickedness of De Hamyll was not now, as formerly, regulated by calculated design to effect a purpose. The powers of cool determination, or, indeed, of connected thought, had left him. His spirit, though unsubdued, was disturbed; and conscience, unequal to the task of producing compunction, was only able, by preventing his mind from contemplating his greatest crime, to drive his destroying energies more recklessly and more riotously over the quailing genius of goodness. The only ease he could hope for, lay in the fever of excitement. His prior crimes could only be hid from his view by the turmoil of a new outrage against life or property. He joined unjust forays, for no other purpose than to find food for the craving appetite his nature and necessities created for the stimulating powers of blood. With no refuge afforded by a repentance which the enormity of his crimes rendered vain, and his disposition, habits, and desires, led him to consider as imbecile, he could not look back on any part of his former life; while the circumstances of the present, in the misery of his home, were equally terrible; and no prospect having calmness, and far less virtue and order, in its lights and shades, could be contemplated without the bitter sting of a dreadful contrast. He looked to the future with the eye of the despairing pirate, who directs his vision to the breaking up of the decks which protect him from death, with the hope of getting awarded to him the liberty of inebriation amidst the turmoil of death. He courted dangers for the sake of their excitement; and, in the outlawed spirit of one who, in falling a victim to the

rashness of despair, could still boast a gain in an escape from misery.

The unhappy state of matters at the Castle continued to increase. The blow which De Hamyll had given to the partner of his guilt, rendered her regardless of his safety, and her own despair had cast behind her the paltry concerns of the temporal state of her own insignificant person. In her agony her heart yearned for her boy, whom her imagination pictured lying in some remote part of the Forest, dead and mutilated—his life taken by his remorseless uncle, and his body in the act of being devoured by the not more remorseless vultures. Her pity for her husband was increased by the same state of feeling which these thoughts produced in regard to her son; and, in proportion to the strength of the emotion, was the rage against the cruel, though, alas! not sole author of all her woes. Yet all might have been borne, even to the breaking of her heart-strings, if she had received sympathy from the man who was bound to treat her, at least as he treated himself, by aiding her in an effort to quench the fire which remorse had lighted up in her bosom. But the blow—the effusion of her blood—as a consummation of all the cruelty she had experienced—it was impossible to bear; and, regardless of her own safety in her wish to punish the partner of her crime, she, with the wildness of frenzy, demanded from him her boy, with threatenings to denounce him to the King as the murderer of his brother and of his nephew.

“Give me,” she ejaculated, “my boy, that, in preserving his life, I may make all the atonement now in my power to offended heaven for the hand I had in the death of the best of men, the kindest of husbands, the most indulgent of fathers, and, let me add, to thee, the most affectionate of brothers. If this last tie is cut by thy act, I am severed from the concerns of earth; my safety is to me nothing; the hand of the executioner will be that of the leech who spreads a soothing balm on irremediable sores; I shall forget the blow that was dealt by thine in the assuasive softness of that which shall bare this neck for the decapitating stroke. Refuse me my boy, and thou shalt participate in the doom which my despair excites me to court, and thy still retained love of inflicting pain on thy fellow-men, and of avoiding it thyself, impels thee to fly. I shall abide no parole—my fiends grant me none—remorse rugs at my heart, and my ears are deaf to the voice of man—my boy, or death!”

As she uttered these words, she fell in a paroxysm of her hysterical emotion. De Hamyll saw the danger with which he was threatened, and took his measures accordingly. His life was in the hands of a woman regardless of her own, and it was necessary to prevent the divulging of a secret which would bring upon him ruin and death. He conveyed the senseless lady to her apartment; and, throwing her on a couch, hurried away to the house of the forester, Richard Wright, whose wife, as the custodian of her husband's secrets, was in his confidence; and, after a long conversation with her and her husband, returned, followed by this female, who undertook to attend the lady and do what was necessary to keep her from communication with the servants at the Castle. From this period, the unfortunate Lady De Hamyll was confined to her apartment. No one of the servants was permitted to visit her, and all inquiries were answered by Mrs Wright, who said that her Ladyship was indisposed, and had expressed a wish to be attended by her alone. Loud cries of one in distress were often heard in the silence of night; and these continued for a considerable time, waxing, night after night, weaker and weaker. The occurrence of circumstances so unusual as had, for a time, been experienced by the servants, created private conversations among them, and mutual efforts at explanation. The cook

observed, that the food that was taken by Mrs Wright to be given to her lady, had generally been disposed of otherwise, parts of it having been discovered to be conveyed by Mrs Wright's daughter to her father's house, and parts of it sometimes found thrown away at some distance from the Castle. This circumstance, joined to the gradual decay of the lady's groans, excited a suspicion that some unfair proceedings were in the act of being carried on against their mistress; but the character of De Hamyll was too well known to admit of any attempt to control acts which had apparently his sanction. Every one remained silent, and there was nothing to indicate that scenes of a secret and unusual nature were in daily and nightly acting in the Castle, except the subdued whispers of coteries of servants, who, with side-directed eyes, watched the slightest intrusion on their private conversations. In a short time, Lady De Hamyll was reported to have died. The servants were allowed to see the corpse of their mistress. Extreme maceration indicated starvation; but no violence was seen on the body, and the whispers of suspicion died away for want of a proof which had been so industriously concealed.

As faithful to historic lore, we have narrated these extraordinary occurrences with undeviating truth, and in the humble confidence that, as they are strictly accordant with human nature in some of its most frightful shapes, they will obtain the credit that is due to the chroniclers of the country; but we now approach the mysterious part of our legend. Imbued with the spirit of true antiquaries, and filled with reverence for what is admittedly old, we cannot treat, with any feeling short of respect, what has been so long credited by our ancestors, and what, though wonderful, and apparently miraculous, is not adverse to the ways of Him who hath veiled even our apparently palpable physical causes with the mantle of mystery. We hold ourselves bound, when we approach legends of antiquity verifying divine modes of particular visitations on sinners of extraordinary magnitude, to cast off the philosophic glasses ground in this age with such conceited partiality to the focus of cold reason, and open our souls to the influence of those feelings which seem to owe allegiance to a higher power than that small sovereign we have, in our weak pride, erected in our brains, with a dominion over which his control is but as a breath of our atmosphere to our planet's centrifugal force. Our feelings speak not the less true that they are not the representatives of mathematical affections. If they have no forms, they have substance; and it is only modern philosophy that has despised their claims as indicators of the existence of those things to which they point.

Every additional crime, though in itself one act, is calculated, by nature, to disintegrate itself into a thousand elements of pain; and De Hamyll felt the effect of this last enormity, multiplied upon him, to an extent sufficient to dissipate every trace of peace upon earth. He was now seldom seen in the Castle, the scene of his crimes. The Forest alone had any charms for him, and he became almost an inhabitant of it. He headed all the hunting parties with which it abounded. When overtaken by night—which he seemed often to court—he slept in the open air, and felt a freedom under the canopy of heaven, which was denied to him in the abodes of man. The very inconvenience and hardships of a hunter's life, were to him recreations and reliefs from the burning thoughts which now began to vindicate their long-disputed authority; yet there was no repentance in him—no true remorse working out a cure in his soul—nothing but corroding thoughts and efforts to escape from them, in excesses of bodily toil or mental inebriation. But, amidst all this excitement and confusion, which prevented a single thought from resting for a moment, as a subject of mental con-

temptation, there was a steady finger pointed at his bosom, to tell the messengers of fate that this could no longer be endured by the powers above. The Sabbath was a day which produced in him a paroxysm of exasperation; because its privilege of sanctification opposed the course of his struggles to get quit of himself by the chase. He heeded it no longer; and, calling together his retainers for a Sunday hunt, sounded his horn, amidst the toll of the bells of the neighbouring cathedrals.

A crew of Sabbath-breakers rushed forth to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. De Hamyll led them on with cries of exultation, over the trampled ordinances of God and man. The horse on which he was mounted was the fleetest in his stable; and his hunting dress was adorned with gay superfluities, in mock honour of the occasion and the day. His enthusiasm was greater than he had ever exhibited. As the people of the hamlets started, and expressed their horror of the unwonted desecration, he laughed in triumph and contempt; and, as he passed, lashed them with his long whip, which he made crack in the air, in aid of his other indications of determined jollity and violation of sacred things. His steed participated in his enthusiasm, and stretched forward with the velocity of light. His horn winded its sounds among the woods, till the echoes startled the drowsy ear of the deer, whose instinct trusted to the protection of the sacred day. The "tallyho," "hark forward," and the "chevy" were shouted aloud; and the neighing of the fiery steeds with the clattering of their hoofs on the reverberating turf, mixed with the sacrilegious shouts of man, till all the forest rung with the reveillé. A frenzy had seized the brain of the leader. Giving his steed the rein, he flew over hill and dale, crying to his companions to keep pace with him; a task which was beyond their power. Still he pushed on, and, in a short time, found himself in the midst of the Forest, far removed from his companions.

Still in the track of the object of chase, his speed continued unabated; and he went deeper and deeper among the trees, following a narrow path formed by the hunters. On looking around, he saw two riders approach, one from either side of him. He had never seen them before, and gazed on them with deep curiosity. They rode black steeds, were dressed in the same manner, and appeared so like each other that no difference could be pointed out between them. De Hamyll was unable to rein up his horse, and continued his flight; the two strangers joined the chase without speaking a word, and the three stretched onwards with unabated speed, while De Hamyll made the woods echo with the sound of his horn.

"Return, return!" cried the rider on his right; "this day is hallowed—devoted to God—and man shall not desecrate it with impunity. Thou hast need of repentance; thy crimes are as the leaves of the forest, numerous—as the crimson blood of thy victims, deep—as the cut off sinner's, unrepented of. I warn thee not to proceed. If thou dost, it is to death."

"Stretch on, stretch on, with a 'ho, chevy!'" cried the rider on the left; "I long to see the famous De Hamyll 'dight the erber'—break up the stag—give the forester his rights—the nombles to the church-goers—the quarre to the hounds, and the corbin-bone to the raven that croaks over the dungeon of the young De Hamyll. Ho! ho! Hark, on! hark, on!"

"Right!" cried De Hamyll; "thou art my man. Hark on!—hark on! If death awaits us, as the craven says, we can but die once, and the soul shall but continue this flight which is to me so dear. Away! away!"

And the speed of the three huntsmen was increased by these inspiriting sounds. Miles past them like ordinary paces, uncounted, unheeded. They wound round hills and through valleys. Their speed continued unabated,

and the echoes of the sounding hoofs rung among the surrounding rocks. The hark on! was still shouted by the frenzied huntsman, though the stag was no longer visible. Night came on, and the three huntsmen, though enveloped in the sable mantle of darkness, pushed on their panting steeds.

"Return, return!" again cried the rider on the right; "the last hour of man's pilgrimage is not too late for repentance. The race of the sinner, though pursued by yelling demons, may be stopped on the jutting crag that o'erhangs the hell of his woes. The prayer from the mouth of the yawning pit, may be heard in the region of mercy, as well as that from the smiling valley of peace. Once more, the angel of good sounds in thy ear the notes of mercy; and waits for the echo of the crying conscience as the remembrance of thy crimes wrings out the burning issues of repentance. Thy way in the world is lost—the confusion of madness is in thy whirling brain—the night birds scream around thee—the winds howl, and the snorting of the horses sounds their terror of the angel of death, who rideth before. No more—the trumpet has pealed! Return, return!"

"Oh, heed him not, De Hamyll," cried the rider on the left; "his voice is the false sound of craven fear. I am thy better angel, that will lead thee to the triumph of the enjoyments of this world. The feast of unbridled passion awaiteth us in the lighted hall of pleasure, where conscience will be drowned in the flowing bowl. Stretch on, stretch on, with a ho, chevy!"

"I love thy voice, my friend on my left," shouted De Hamyll; "we will cast behind us the remembrance of our crimes, as the foam that parteth from our steeds' mouths, is scattered in the wind of our speed. On, on, to the pleasure that awaiteth us!"

"It is finished, it is finished," cried the rider on the right, and disappeared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the left horseman, as he saw the other disappear, and De Hamyll's loud laugh mixed with the swelling sounds.

Away flew the remaining pair.

Four days afterwards, the unfortunate De Hamyll was found dead in a part of the Forest not far distant from the house of his forester Wright. As soon as this intelligence reached the Castle, the servants went out and saw the body of their deceased master; and a crowd of people collected, who disanted largely on the crimes of the deceased. At the same time, a messenger arrived from the King, bearing a sentence of outlawry against the murderer of his brother; and it was resolved that he should be buried where he lay. On digging the grave, the people were startled by the sound of groans coming as if from the earth. Some ran away, but others, more courageous, remained. On digging deeper, the same sounds were more articulate; and, by persevering, the diggers came on a hollow part of the ground, excavated in the form of a cave. In this place, whose opening was through the house of the forester, was confined the lost heir of the house of De Hamyll. He was yet alive, though greatly emaciated; and, upon being released, stated that he had been confined there by his uncle; and that Wright was his keeper, and occasionally furnished him with food.

Such is the old legend of the Huntsman of Ettrick.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DISSOLVED PLEDGE.

"HOLD hard!" said the coachman, as he gathered up his reins, and flourished his whip—and away lumbered the heavy afternoon coach, for the South, from the door of the coach office. It was full inside, with only one outside passenger. After it was fairly out of the town, and the road had become comparatively clear of carts and carriages, the coachman, after two or three quiet, reconnoitring glances at the gentleman who occupied the box-seat, tucked the apron comfortably over his knees, and, having settled himself to his own satisfaction, began to weary of so long a silence, and endeavoured to break the spell by the novel and interesting remark—"It's a fine afternoon, sir."

"Yes."

A long pause.

"Fine horses these, sir."

"Yes."

Another long pause.

"Queer fish this," muttered the coachman to himself.

"I wonder if he can say No. I'll try him once more. Take snuff, sir?" said he, thrusting the mull under the nose of his victim.

"No, I thank you," followed by an impatient rustling of his cloak, and a restless movement on the seat.

The coachman gave up the matter in despair, and was obliged to content himself with holding agreeable converse with his cattle, in which he certainly had the best of it, as they bore all he chose to inflict, in silence.

The man of few words was a youth of one or two-and-twenty, of pleasing and gentlemanly exterior; and, although the *coachman* looked with great contempt upon one who would not take snuff, and who did not admire his favourite horses, we hope he will prove an object of greater interest to our readers, as he is to be the hero of our story. Poor fellow! no wonder that he wore such an air of sadness and abstraction, and that he shrank from the well-meant, though obtrusive advances of the knight of the whip. Most of us have experienced—and who that has experienced can ever forget?—the feelings of mingled sorrow and hope with which we have, for the first time in our lives, turned our backs upon the home of our childhood, and were fairly launched, on our own responsibility, into the untried ocean of life. How fondly did our thoughts rest upon the much-loved scenes we were leaving behind us! how vividly did we recall each look and action of those nearest and dearest to our hearts! and how perseveringly did we cling to our sorrowful yet pleasing recollections, shutting our eyes and ears to the vulgar sights and sounds of every-day life around us, and shrinking from communication with our fellow-men, as if our sorrow were "a thing apart," too sacred to be unveiled to the eyes of others. Such were the feelings of young Edward Malcolmson, our silent friend. He was leaving, for the first time, a mother he tenderly loved, sisters who doted on him, and, last, though not least, he was leaving one who was dearer to him than them all—one whom he *then* thought, as most of us have thought once in our lives, he would never, never forget—the joy of his heart, the light of his eyes, (as the poets word it,) his

first, his only love. No wonder, then, that he flapped his travelling cap down over his ears, folded his arms on his breast, and, fixing his eyes upon the footboard, sat the very image of determination—to be miserable. Night was closing around; but the darkness was congenial to his feelings; he could now indulge them unobserved, and he abandoned himself to them without control. He felt the same kind of listlessness and prostration of mental energy which those experience who suffer from sea-sickness; so much so, that, when a sudden gust of wind whisked his cap off his head, he was too completely victimized even to mention his loss to the coachman.—"Let it go! What do I care? O Jessy!"

The latter part of this effusion he unconsciously uttered aloud.

"That's the name of my near wheeler, sir," said the coachman, glad to hear dummy speak at last, and still more delighted to have an opportunity of hearing *himself*. What a strange mixture of inconsistencies is the creature man! This ludicrous and unexpected appropriation of his beloved one's name, tickled Edward Malcolmson's fancy; and he who the moment before had thought himself the most miserable dog in existence, burst into an extravagant fit of laughter. The coachman was delighted with the success of his random remark; and it was with a chuckle of unaffected, kind-hearted pleasure, that he exclaimed—

"It does my heart guid to hear ye laugh. Nae-thing like it, sir, for keeping a body gaurie an' comfortable."

The ice was broken; the conversation was kept up for some time—at first only in monosyllables, on Edward's part; but he could not long resist the contagion of the man's persevering merriment, and he gradually shook off the weight which had before almost overpowered his spirit. Sorrow gave way to hope for the future, and, with all the sanguine buoyancy of youth, he already, in fancy, began business for himself, in an extensive way, as a builder—of castles in the air. Those castles in the air, those bubbles of fancy, how soon do they crumble away, and burst amid the jostling realities of life! How soon are our eyes opened to their hollowness and vanity! The visions of early hope are like the rainbow—bright and beautiful it appears before us, spanning half the heavens with its brilliant arch, and fading even while we gaze upon it. Fleeting, yet delightful dreamings of fancy! whither have ye fled? Gone, with the buoyant spirits and unchilled affections of youth; and we, the seared and world-hardened, sigh when we look back to you, to think that ye have proved to be but delusions. But a truce to sentiment; it is time that we should introduce our hero to our readers, to do which satisfactorily, we must glance backwards to a period some thirty years anterior to the date of our story, and give some account of his parents.—Mrs Malcolmson was the widow of a substantial tradesman in Edinburgh, who had been dead for some years, having left her in tolerably comfortable circumstances, with two daughters and one son, the Edward of our story. She was a woman of manners and education far superior to her husband's station in life—the only daughter of an Irish family of distinction, in the neighbour-

hood of Cork, and moving in the first circles there. She had been attracted by the personal appearance and agreeable manners of a young subaltern in a regiment quartered in that city. Philip Denby was a man well calculated to catch the fancy of a young and romantic girl. To great personal attractions, he united the most polished, yet unaffected manners; he was highly accomplished, and was blessed, moreover, with an excellent disposition. But, with all these advantages, young Denby had one drawback—a drawback of no slight importance in the eyes of worldly minded mammas, and of their prudent daughters—he was poor. They were all loud in his praise—so elegant, so delightful, so interesting! They all agreed in thinking that no man dressed better, made a more *distingué* figure in a ball-room, or a more agreeable one in general society; but then, poor fellow, what would all that do for him?—he had nothing but his pay to depend upon. The consequence was, that, though the “admired of all admirers,” the young subaltern was looked upon as a “detrimental;” and the mammas, while they were eager to have so handsome an *officer* to grace their parties, were unwearied in their warnings and admonitions to their daughters, to beware of any serious entanglement with so poor a *man*. In general, these hints were not thrown away; but there was one, and she was the best and loveliest of the circle, who turned a deaf ear to them all. She listened only to the whisperings of her own heart, which told her that Philip Denby, poor in purse, was rich in all the qualities which adorn a man. Philip had long admired Ellen O'Connor, but as he would have admired a star in the distant sky—so great was the disparity which, to his sensitive mind, there appeared to be between their respective stations in life. She was the beautiful and only child of rich and purse-proud parents, and entitled to look forward to an alliance with the rich and high-born; while he, though a gentleman by birth, and so far her equal, had nothing but his profession to depend upon. Hitherto he had escaped, “fancy-free,” from all the dangers which surrounded him, in the shape of bright eyes and beautiful forms; he felt flattered by the attentions which were everywhere paid him by the young and fair; but the very general popularity he enjoyed, was the best safeguard of his heart; all smiled upon him, and he in return smiled upon all, without feeling particular regard for any. He had come to the magnanimous resolution, that he was too poor to marry a poor woman, and too proud to marry a rich one—and he was in the fair way to become a regular male flirt, when he first met Ellen O'Connor. We will not attempt to enter into a description of Miss O'Connor's beauty, particularly as it lay more in expression than in feature; such as it was, however, all Philip's philosophy sank before it, like snow before a sunbeam. We shall merely remark, that she had eyes dark as her raven hair, with the light of a bright, and joyous, and confiding spirit flashing through them; the rest we leave to the imagination of our readers—for

“Who has not felt how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray?”

Our limits will not allow us to enter into particulars. If this were a novel, instead of a tale of real life, we might follow the course of their love, step by step, and expatiate upon the stolen glances, the tender tête-à-têtes, and all the sentimental eceteras which usually form the burden of a tale of love—fortunately for our readers, we must, per force, spare them the infliction. Suffice it, that their mutual attachment soon became the subject of common remark and conversation; and, at last, those who were most interested; and, as usual, most blind, were enlightened by the hints and charitable warnings of sundry busy, good-natured friends. Dire was the wrath of old O'Connor, when his eyes were opened to the truth: he cursed his own blind

folly, for having allowed matters to go so far; cursed (but not aloud, he was too prudent for that) the wife of his bosom, for having been as blind as himself; and cursed every red coat that ever was made, and every unfortunate wight who had ever worn one. At length, he remembered the legitimate object of his wrath, and hastened out of the house in search of Denby. Fortunately for them both—for Philip was not a man to bear unmerited abuse with patience—he failed in his object; Philip was not to be found at his lodgings, at the reading-rooms, or at the billiard-table, for the best of all reasons—that he was seated beside Ellen O'Connor, not five minutes after her father had left her. While the one was leaving the house in one direction, the other was arriving at it by another. Philip found her in tears; and, in answer to his impassioned and alarmed inquiries, she gave him an account of the scene she had just witnessed, and implored him, if he had any affection for her, to bear patiently the intemperance which, she feared, her father would indulge in if they should meet. He calmed her fears on that score, and they had a long and interesting conversation, the result of which was, the conviction that it was impossible for them to live without each other. What arguments the philosopher, Denby, made use of, we know not; but the result was, that, in three days, Ellen O'Connor eloped from her father's house in his company. Some weeks passed gaily and happily over the heads of the young couple; but they were soon awakened from their dream of love and bliss, by the sterner realities of life. The story of old O'Connor's aversion to the match, and his loud and angry invectives against his daughter, had gone abroad, and Philip's creditors became pressing in their demands for payment. Ruin stared them in the face; and Ellen, whose fear of meeting her justly incensed father had hitherto prevented her from seeking his forgiveness, was determined to brave the interview she dreaded. With a faltering step she sought her father's dwelling; and her heart smote her, when she thought how happy that home had been, till she introduced sorrow and disappointment there. The house was shut up—the family had left it in charge of a single servant, who delivered to Ellen a letter that had been left for her by her father, in case of her return. It contained merely the following words:—“Ungrateful girl! As you have sown so must you reap: you are an outcast from my home and heart, for ever! Never presume to approach this house again.” With eyes blinded with tears, and a heart swelling with anguish, she returned to her husband, who was anxiously awaiting the result of her visit.

“Well, dearest?” said he.

“He has rejected me for ever, Philip!” sobbed she, as she threw herself into his arms.

“Grieve not, my love!” said Denby, while his anxious look and heavy sigh betrayed how much he himself needed consolation—“are we not all in all to each other?” And, as he embraced his young and lovely wife, he forgot, for a moment, the world and all its cares. By the sale of his commission, he contrived to raise money enough to pay his trifling debts, and to support himself and his wife for some months in strict economy; but that temporary supply diminishing rapidly, he was obliged to apply to some of his numerous friends to exert their interest, or open their purses in his favour. Disappointment followed all his applications; and, harassed in mind and wearied in body, he lay down on the bed of sickness and sorrow, from which he never rose again. He just lived long enough to see and bless his newly-born infant, leaving his wife to struggle with poverty and grief. Mrs Denby's sorrow was at first excessive; and serious fears were, for some time, entertained by her medical man, for her life; but youth and a good constitution carried her through. She was a woman of warm and passionate feelings, and her grief soon ex-

hausted itself by its violence. Besides, it is one of the blessings of poverty, that it allows no time for brooding over sorrow, but calls for active and constant exertion, to ward off the evils it entails. In her distress—for she was left almost destitute—she again applied to her father; but he continued inexorable, and sternly refused to see her. His example was followed by the rest of her family connections, all of whom were, or affected to be, indignant at her conduct. A maternal uncle, however, pitying her destitution, promised to settle a small annuity upon her, and to bring up and provide for her infant son, on condition that she would never interfere with his education, and would leave the country within six months.

Severe as these conditions were, she at last agreed to them, though to do so cost her many a bitter tear; but, when she thought of her own destitute condition, and of the brighter prospects which the proposed arrangement would open to her son, she struggled to suppress the fond yearnings of a mother's affection, and to close with an offer which she hoped would be for her boy's future benefit. It was with an agonized heart she tore herself from her little Philip, whose uncle received him with the greatest delight, and solemnly promised to be to him as a father. She then bade adieu for ever to her native land, after having again ineffectually endeavoured to obtain her father's forgiveness. In two years' time, she was again a wife and a mother. Mr Malcolmson, a respectable Scottish tradesman, when on a visit to some friends in Cork, had accidentally seen the young widow, at the time when her late bereavement, and her family's cruel rejection of her, excited universal sympathy and commiseration; and when he afterwards met her in Edinburgh, where she was living in humble seclusion, he contrived to form her acquaintance; and, in a few months, made her a formal offer of his hand and fortune. Mrs Denby received his addresses with graceful and grateful acknowledgments; but told him that she had no heart to bestow, that her affections were buried in the grave with her husband, and that she could never love another. "If you cannot love me as your husband," replied he, "you may respect and esteem me—you may look upon me as your friend, your guardian, your protector—as one whose pride and pleasure it will be to anticipate all your desires, and to shield you from all annoyances." In her union with the worthy and amiable Malcolmson, Ellen Denby was blessed with a recompense for all her past distresses: for ten years he was to her the kindest of husbands, the most affectionate of friends; and the only unhappy moment she experienced during her union, was that on which it was about to be dissolved for ever. He left her comfortably provided for, with three children—two girls, and a boy, the hero of our tale. Edward Malcolmson, at the time of his father's death, was a boy of excellent dispositions; and, as he grew up, he amply fulfilled the promise of his childhood. He was a young man of solid rather than brilliant talents; mild and gentlemanly in his manners; slow to form plans, but persevering and determined in following them out. He had received a medical education, and had distinguished himself by his close application to his studies, and by his rapid progress in professional acquirements. Through the interest of some of his late father's friends, he had obtained an appointment on the Bengal establishment; and was, at the time of the commencement of our story, on his way to London, there to join the ship that was to convey him abroad. Mrs Malcolmson's nearest neighbour in Edinburgh, was a widow lady, named Martin, who, like herself, was living in comfortable, though not affluent circumstances. Her only daughter, Jessie, was her mother's darling, and well deserved the affection which was lavished upon her. She was about the same age as Edward Malcolmson, and, without being absolutely lovely, there was a charm in her

simple, unaffected manners, and in the ingenuous expression of her countenance, which, added to an uncommonly fine figure and sweet voice, gave her the advantage over others who far excelled her in mere beauty of feature. Between her mother and Mrs Malcolmson, the closest intimacy had existed for several years; indeed, they had lived so secludedly, that they had hardly any acquaintances beyond the circle of their own families. The consequence was, that the young people were almost constantly in each other's society; and their parents remarked, with pleasure, the mutual attachment which seemed to be springing up between them. They did, indeed, feel a warmer regard for each other than is often the result of such constant and close intimacy; for it is but too often the case with human character as it is with the face of nature—"Tis distance lends enchantment to the view." But it was not till the time of Edward's departure approached, that they became mutually aware how dear they were to each other. The morning before leaving Edinburgh, young Malcolmson called to bid adieu to his friends. Mrs Martin happened to be out walking, and Jessie was sitting alone in the parlour, when Edward was ushered in. She turned pale when she saw him; for her heart sunk at the prospect of their approaching separation.

"Jessie," said he, after they had sat in silence some minutes, "I have come to bid you farewell."

"I feared so," said she, striving in vain to repress her tears.

"Do not—do not cry, dear Jessie," exclaimed he, starting up, and seizing her hand, while his own eyes were dimmed with tears—"I cannot bear to witness your distress."

"Would you have me look happy and cheerful, when my old friend and companion is going to leave me, perhaps never to return?"

"Companion, Jessie! friend!—these are cold words to me, whose whole heart is yours; who live but in the light of your smile; who love you as I have never before loved human being, and never shall love again. Jessie! dear Jessie! tell me that I do not love in vain; give me one word of hope to cheer me during my painful absence. Will you not answer, dearest?"

She turned her tearful eye up to his face, and then, hiding her blushing cheek upon his arm, she murmured—

"What would you have me say, Edward? We have been dearer to each other than brother and sister; we have been dreaming a pleasant dream, and now we are awakening from it; we are about to part, perhaps never to meet again."

"Oh, yes, dearest! we shall meet again. The world is all before me, and I have youth and energy to carry me through it. Only tell me that, if fortune favours my exertions, you will smile upon me; and the hope of one day calling you mine, will cheer me under misfortune, and encourage me to renewed efforts. Only tell me that you will not forget me, and I here vow, as soon as I have gained a competency, to return and claim you for my bride."

"Make no rash promises, Edward! We are both young, and have neither of us seen much of the world, or of others. You know what your favourite song says—

'Change o' fowk and change o' scene
May gar thy fancy jee.'

"Never, Jessie, never!"

But we will not weary our readers with any more of this easily imagined effusion. They parted under a mutual agreement of fidelity to each other: how well they adhered to it, remains to be shewn.

We will not follow Edward Malcolmson on shipboard, nor attempt to describe that most uninteresting of all uninteresting things, a *pleasant* passage; but will merely state

that he arrived in safety at Calcutta, where he soon rendered himself conspicuous by his active discharge of the duties imposed upon him. His zeal and talent attracted the notice of the ruling powers, and he obtained a lucrative appointment at the Presidency, the salary of which, added to the liberal fees he received in private practice, soon enabled him to clear off the debts he had unavoidably contracted at his outset, and to lay the foundation of a rapidly increasing fortune. The habits of his previous life rendered it an easy task for him to unite the most careful economy with a liberal and gentlemanly expenditure. He had been early taught that true economy consists in restraining our desire for the *superfluities*, not in debarring ourselves from the enjoyment of the *comforts* of life. His careful regulation of his expenses, and his indifference to show and parade, enabled him, on proper occasions, to give greater scope to the natural generosity of his disposition than he otherwise could have done. Esteemed for the steadiness and consistency of his character, and beloved for his kind and amiable qualities, he soon became one of the most popular men of his class in Calcutta, besides having deservedly acquired the reputation of being one of the most skilful. Fortune had thus far favoured him beyond his most sanguine expectations; and, in so expressing ourselves, we do no injustice to his merits; for how often are the most splendid talents lost to the world, even when seconded by persevering energy, for want of opportunity for their display? At a comparatively early age, he had nearly attained the summit of his profession; he had far outstripped those who had started with him in the race for wealth and distinction; he was generally and deservedly beloved and respected—and yet he was not happy. “Change o’ fowk and change o’ scene,” had made a great alteration in those feelings which, with the fond enthusiasm of youth, he had thought would remain unshaken for ever; and the recollection of his engagement to Jessie Martin, which was once his greatest solace, now hung like a cloud over his spirits. For two or three years, her image had been ever present to his thoughts, and had formed his principal incentive to exertion; but Time had been gradually dimming his memory of the past. He began almost unconsciously to regret having so inconsiderately shackled the freedom of his inclinations, and, when he gazed on the many lovely forms around him, he wished he had followed Jessie’s advice, not to bind himself by a formal promise, until he had seen more of the world, and of the people in it. The engagement had been made, however, and, true to his principles, he was determined to adhere to it, although, to do so, he was obliged resolutely and firmly to avoid the society of one who had begun to usurp Jessie’s place in his affections. He had written home from time to time, giving a full account at first of his flattering prospects, and of the hope that cheered him on in his path; and now, after a lapse of eight years since his arrival in India, he wrote to say that fortune had so far favoured him, that he considered himself justified in thinking of making a change in his condition. He told not of his cool and altered feelings—he considered it his duty to conceal them, and to adhere to his engagement, even at the sacrifice of his happiness; and he wrote to claim the fulfilment of Jessie’s promise, and to beg her, if her feelings remained the same towards him, to come out to him by the first opportunity. Time had been busy also with Jessie. Long separation had gradually weakened her affection for Edward; and a freer intercourse with the world and with society, had produced its natural effect—a love of change and variety. She had been much and generally admired, and, although very guarded in her behaviour, and cool and distant in her manners to the young men who flocked around her, had received several very advantageous offers, which she had instantly and decidedly rejected, as she considered herself in honour bound to

adhere to her early engagement. Her feelings towards Edward had, however, lost their freshness and warmth, and had gradually acquired a tone of indifference; and, although she had formed no other particular attachment, she grieved to think that she could not participate in the constancy of affection which *seemed* to pervade his letters to her. Thus were they mutually deceived, and each looked forward with anxiety and alarm to the period of their meeting, which was now not far distant, as Jessie had received Edward’s invitation, and had announced her intention of taking her passage in the *Lady Flora*, which was shortly to sail for Calcutta. It was with but little of the joy of a bride expectant, that she began her preparations for her voyage; for she was conscious that she had none of that feeling of devoted attachment to her betrothed which a woman ought to have towards the man whom she is to vow at the altar, to “love, honour, and obey.”

We must leave her to complete her arrangements, and recall the reader’s attention to one who must, by this time, we fear, almost have escaped from their recollection—young Philip Denby, whom we left in Ireland, under the guardianship of his uncle. The lovely child had grown up a handsome and promising youth, and had endeared himself to his uncle by his grateful and affectionate disposition. He had received all the advantages which wealth and liberality could bestow, and, though avowedly the intended heir to his uncle’s handsome fortune, had been brought up in the strictest habits of business and regularity. His gay, light-hearted, joyousness of spirit, his frank and engaging manners—had made him a general favourite; but, fortunately for him, he had been taught to regulate his conduct by strict principle, and he always kept in mind that the best mode of retaining the good opinion of others, is by continuing to deserve it. He was not, as is too often the case, spoiled by the attention he met with; but it had, on the contrary, the good effect of stimulating him to persevere in the path of duty. He knew nothing of his mother, but by the letters which she periodically wrote to inquire after his welfare, and often and deeply did he lament the family feud which separated them; but he had, from his earliest years, looked upon his uncle as a father, and was obliged, in duty, to conform to his prejudices. Old O’Connor never forgot nor forgave his daughter’s indiscretion. He had been proud of her—proud of her beauty and of her accomplishments—and had looked forward with delight to the prospect of one so favoured by nature and fortune forming a brilliant alliance; for, like most men with little minds and long purses, he sighed for what wealth alone could not bestow—good family connection. In this dearest hope of his heart, she had disappointed him, and his wounded pride had converted what little affection he once had had for her, into the bitterest enmity. This feeling extended even to his innocent grandson, whom he refused on all occasions to notice, remarking that an “ill bird must have an ill brood.” But we will say no more of him or his prejudices: such feelings are as monstrous and unnatural, as, fortunately, they are rare. Mr Morton, Philip’s uncle, had made his fortune in the East Indies, and had still an interest in a large mercantile house in Calcutta, which place he had twice visited during his protégé’s school days, and while he was pursuing his studies at college, under the surveillance of an old and esteemed friend. It was Mr Morton’s intention once more to visit the East; but a severe attack of illness had shattered his constitution, and obliged him to give up all hopes of prosecuting his intention. Philip had attained the age of two-and-thirty, when alarming accounts were received of the instability of several of the great commercial houses in India. This news excited old Morton’s fears; and his anxiety on the subject had a fatal effect upon his nerves, shaken and debilitated by previous illness. He felt that

he had not long to live, and, in expectation of approaching dissolution, he made his will, by which he left all he was possessed of to Philip, on condition that he took the name of Morton. He earnestly enjoined Philip to hasten to Calcutta, and, as his representative, to assist, to the utmost of his ability, the house with which he was connected, in the distress which he foresaw was impending over it. Before Philip could prepare to comply with his wishes, however, the old man became so alarmingly ill that his life was despaired of, and, though he rallied wonderfully for a time, a relapse, brought on by incautious exposure to the air, proved fatal, and Philip was left a second time fatherless. Sadly and sincerely did he mourn the loss of his affectionate and liberal protector—his earliest, his kindest, his constant friend. As soon as circumstances would allow, he hastened to fulfil his deceased uncle's wishes, and, crossing the Channel, after a rapid equipment for his voyage, he hurried down to Portsmouth to join a ship on the point of sailing for Calcutta. The passengers were all on board, and the vessel was only waiting for a fair wind to proceed to sea. Two days afterwards, they were dashing along down Channel, with a favourable wind, with a bright sky over their heads, and with the cheering hope of a good passage. The animated and novel scene excited Philip's admiration, and cheered his spirits. The bright and beautiful face of Nature, under an aspect so new to him; the sunbeams glancing from the crested waves; the white foam breaking under the vessel's bow; the exhilarating sense of rapid motion, as the water hissed and rustled alongside; the rapidly-receding landmarks on the shore; and the joyous faces of the crew—all conspired to distract his thoughts for a while from the grief which had weighed down his spirits. Several of the gentlemen passengers were on deck, enjoying the beauty of the scene; but none of the ladies, of whom he heard there were three or four on board, had yet made their appearance. At eight o'clock, the steward announced, "Spirits on the table, sir;" but Philip heeded him not. Now that the first excitement of novelty was over, his thoughts reverted to the home he had so lately left, and to the dear and valued benefactor he should never see again; and he leaned sorrowfully over the gangway, to indulge his mournful retrospections. From these reveries he was soon roused, by the sound of suppressed voices close to him; and, on turning round to see whence it proceeded, he perceived, through the dim light, the figures of two of the crew stretched at full length on the deck, close to the foremost quarter-deck carronade, and under the lee of the bulwark. Now that his attention was awakened, he could distinctly hear every word of their conversation, which amused and interested him greatly, and which he considered himself perfectly justified in benefiting by, as he had given them fair warning of his proximity, by observing to them, "It's a fine night, lads"—and receiving the answer, "Yes, sir, it is."

"My eyes, Bill!" said one of the recumbents, "aint this here a fine breeze?"

"Wait till ye sees the end on't, Jem," replied the other; "it's my notion ye'll change your tune before long."

"Mayhap I may, Bill; but I hate to be dissipating evil. What makes you so down in the mouth?"

"I'll tell ye what, Jem—I don't like this here move at all. I never seed no good come of sailing on a Friday. Why couldn't the skipper have kept her fast by the nose for another day, 'stead of running in the very teeth of mischief in this way? I wonders as how the Admiralty doesn't give an order agin sailing on sich an unlucky day."

"Why, sure, Bill, you don't call sich a breeze as this unlucky? If this is what you call Friday's luck, I hope I may always sail on a Friday."

"Well, we'll see, Jem; but, if so be as you doesn't think

that there's bad luck in a Friday, you're out of your latitude, that's all.

"Watch, man the royal clues!" interrupted the men in their confab, and startled all the watch to their feet. The breeze was gradually freshening, and the small masts were beginning to complain; but the night was clear, and cold, and beautiful—and Philip retired to his cot, laughing at the superstitious fears of the sailor, but, at the same time, unconsciously almost to himself, affected by them. The breeze continued steady till they had cleared the Channel, and were standing to the south, when it began gradually to die away and draw a-head; and, on the night of the third day from their departure, the scene was completely changed. Thick, heavy masses of cloud had been gathering to the southward all the afternoon; cloud after cloud rearing its dark head, and then remaining stationary, like an army assembling all its forces before being put in motion. Towards night, the breeze began to freshen from the southward, and the clouds to rise slowly and sullenly, as if compelled unwillingly to tear themselves from their resting-place on the horizon, while the light "scud" drove rapidly across, high up in the heavens. A large, dull halo surrounded the moon, and her light struggled dimly and ominously through the watery and angry-looking vapours that flitted across it. Everything portended a coming storm; the ship herself seemed to be aware of the approaching conflict, plunging and rolling as if in ineffectual efforts to make her escape; while her timbers groaned and creaked, as she tossed about in the confused sea, and seemed to utter mournful cries, as the wind moaned in hollow gusts through her rigging. All the small sails were taken in, and soon the loud order to "reef topsails" was heard, followed by the rattling of blocks, the flapping of sails, and the loud cheers of the sailors, as they plied their dangerous trade aloft. The double-reefed topsails were soon set, the yards braced sharp up, and the ship stood away to the westward, throwing thick sprays over her bow, and trembling from stem to stern, as she plunged heavily into the sea, and, rising again, poured whole torrents of water from her head. Philip felt an excitement he had never before experienced, as he gazed on the scene around him. The wild, threatening sky; the angry waves, like wild beasts lashing themselves into fury; the gradually-freshening gale, howling as if in search of its prey; and the moon herself—the mild, placid moon—scowling down upon the turmoil below, with a frown upon her brow—all united to form a picture of gloom and desolation, which accorded well with his own feelings. He staid on deck till near the end of the first watch, and was just going down to his cabin, when the second mate, whose watch it was, said to him—

"You must be cold and wet, Mr Morton. If you will wait a few minutes, till I am relieved, I shall be glad of your company in my cabin, to smoke a cigar over a glass of grog, for it is of little use turning in. This night's work is not over yet, or I'm much mistaken."

"Thank you," replied Morton; "I shall be happy to join you."

As soon as the deck was relieved, they dived below, to the snugly fitted up cabin of the second mate, where they soon forgot the clouds above, while enveloped in clouds of their own raising below.

"It is the fashion, Mr Morton," said Hardy, the officer, "among many of the sticklers for propriety, to rail at the use of what they have no relish for themselves, and to denounce smoking as a low and ungentlemanly practice; but, in spite of all their squeamish objections, I know nothing more soothing and refreshing, after a night of toil and excitement like this, than a mild and genuine Havannah. Surely Nature would not be so lavish of her blessings, if it had not been intended that we were to enjoy them in moderation.

"Ah! I thought so—no rest for the wicked," continued he, starting up, as the shrill pipe of the boatswain rose far above the noise of the storm; "there it is! 'All hands down top-gallant masts and yards!' Finish your cigar, Mr Morton, and douse the glim when you have done. I must be off."

"I will go, too," said Morton; "I am too much excited to sleep."

The night was now pitch dark, the wind had increased to a strong gale, and the ship was rolling "gunnels to," in the long heavy sea; bright flashes of lightning, every now and then, threw a momentary glare over the gloomy heavens, and the thunder rolled in loud and long-continued peals.

"Didn't I tell you, Jem, what 'ud come of sailing on a Friday? and we haven't seen the end on't yet," said Bill Halliday, one of the men we before mentioned, as he was running up the main rigging, and a flash of lightning shewed him his messmate beside him.

"Oh, never say 'die,' while there's a shot in the locker, Bill; we'll weather many a Friday's sailing yet."

Just then the ship gave a heavy lurch to windward; Jem heard a loud and startling cry close beside him, and, looking downwards through the darkness, a sudden flash shewed him his messmate struggling for life on the surface of the water; he had slipped his foot, poor fellow, and, amid the roar of waters and the howling of the gale, the noise of his plunge was unheard by those on deck. His messmate, trembling with horror, raised the cry of "A man overboard!" but, alas! in vain; in such a night and such a sea, it would have been madness to risk the lives of the many for the one. The next flash lighted the sea far and near, and all eyes were anxiously bent upon the water; but nothing was visible but the dark heaving mass, with the white foam driving over its surface; the ravenous waves had done their work quickly and mercifully.

Soon after this, as if satisfied with this sacrifice to its fury, the gale began gradually to moderate; and, before next night, the ship was again "all-a-taunto," and standing to the southward, with a leading wind, under single-reefed topsails, and topgallantsails. The following day, the weather was so fine, and the water so smooth, that the ladies, who had not hitherto ventured out of their cabins, made their appearance at the cuddy table. At dinner, Morton was seated nearly opposite to a remarkably fine *turkey*, and his eyes were constantly wandering in that direction, but whether for the purpose of admiring *its* beauties, or those of a young lady seated behind it, it was difficult to distinguish. His contemplation, however, either of the dead or the living beauty, seemed to have diverted his thoughts from the indulgence of his appetite.

"Mr Morton, a glass of wine?" said the captain; "you seem to be contented with *looking* at that fine turkey."

"Beautiful creature!" replied he.

"Won't you send your plate over for some of it?"

"With all my heart," sighed he, looking most languishingly in the direction of the turkey.

"Why, Mr Morton," said Hardy, "you said before dinner that you had an excellent appetite; you are not giving proof of it now—I am afraid you are not well."

Morton coloured to the eyes, and gave a faint laugh. The fact was, that he was *not* well; he had just been seized with a violent attack of a rather uncommon complaint, called "love at first sight." He felt confused, he scarcely knew why, and he fancied everybody was noticing his confusion, which made him ten times worse. He laughed when he ought to have looked grave, and looked grave when he ought to have laughed, and was guilty of a thousand awkwardnesses, which attracted towards him the observation he wished to avoid. He strove manfully to look up the table, and down the table, and in every direc-

tion but that in which he wished to look; but his eyes would, somehow or another, have their own way in spite of him, and always contrived, at last, as naturally as possible, to direct their glances towards the neighbourhood of the turkey. It was with a feeling of positive relief he saw the ladies retire from the table; and no sooner were they gone than he became a rational man again, though rather more abstracted and silent than he had been before dinner.

"That was rather a nice-looking girl sitting opposite to me at dinner," remarked he, hesitatingly and inquiringly, to his friend Hardy, after they rose from table. "Do you know who she is?"

"I have heard her name, but I forget it just now," said the sailor; "but she is a devilish fine woman; I wonder the captain did not introduce you to her."

"Why, so he did; but he spoke so indistinctly that I could not catch the name."

At one bell in the second dog-watch, (half-past six,) the band made their appearance on deck; and no sooner were the lively strains of the music heard, than the ship's company, always ready for "a lark," came swarming up the hatchways, and the decks soon resounded with the sounds of the "fantastic," but anything but "light" toe.

"Come, gentlemen," said Captain Dickens to his passengers, "won't you follow the good example the men are setting you? Can't you persuade the ladies to dance? Mr Morton, here is a fair lady for you to try your powers of persuasion upon," looking at one who was walking beside him, and who made a movement of assent in reply to Morton's bow.

It was the fair one who had attracted so much of his attention at dinner. As the captain resigned her to his charge, Morton blushed, and stammered, and wished himself a hundred miles off, although he was in the very situation which, a few minutes before, he thought he could give worlds to occupy. What fools does love make of wise men! At last, the preliminaries were satisfactorily arranged, and the dance commenced; and, before its conclusion, the partners were mutually pleased with each other.

"Well, Mr Morton," said the captain, "I hope you enjoyed your dance?"

"Very much indeed, replied he; "I hope you do not feel fatigued, Miss Martyr."

"Miss who?" said the captain, laughing; "you are surely not going to make a *martyr* of your partner."

"If I have made a mistake, Captain Dickens, you ought to make the *amende honorable* for me, for you spoke so indistinctly that I misunderstood you."

"I shall be happy to make the only reparation in my power, by re-introducing you clearly and distinctly to Miss Martin."

Yes, Miss Martin—our old, and we hope not uninteresting friend, Jessie Martin; and the scene of the introduction was the quarter-deck of the Lady Flora. At eight o'clock, the band struck up "God save the King," and the party separated for the night—the ladies retiring to their cabins, and the gentlemen adjourning to the cuddy, to discuss their grog. For several successive nights, however, by some strange coincidence, Morton always happened to be just making his appearance at the top of the companion ladder, as Miss Martin was emerging from the cuddy-door, to take her evening promenade. Of course, common politeness required that he should offer his arm to support her, because the ship had a good deal of motion, or because, if there were none just then, there might be by and by. Jessie was much pleased with her new acquaintance, when the first embarrassment of his manner wore off. This she attributed to that kind of *mauvaise honte* which a man acquires from a life of seclusion, or from a limited intercourse with society. Perfectly free from personal vanity, she had not the most remote idea that it had any connec-

tion with her own attractions; but she soon had cause to alter her opinion. She was surprised at his varied and extensive store of knowledge, and delighted with his lively and animated manner of imparting it. He had evidently mixed a great deal in society, and his conversation abounded in amusing and interesting anecdotes of celebrated characters whom it had been his good fortune to have associated with. There was something particularly gratifying to a mind like Jessie's, in being selected as the friend of one who appeared in every way so estimable; and his silent, yet constant and brother-like attention to her comfort and wishes, excited her feelings of grateful regard. Thus they went on for some time together, he becoming day after day more and more deeply enamoured, and she unconsciously increasing his love for her, by the frank and natural confidence of her manner towards him. At last, a hint from Mrs Jameson, the lady under whose charge she had been placed, opened her eyes to the danger and impropriety of so close an intimacy with one who, she felt, was daily making rapid advances in her good opinion, and whose increasing admiration of her was beginning to be but too evident. She called to mind, what she blamed herself for having so long kept out of view—her delicate position as the affianced bride of another, and saw, in its true colours, the double treachery she would be guilty of, in further encouraging, or rather in not repelling, the attentions of a new admirer. It was doing great violence to her feelings gradually to withdraw from her companionship with Morton, particularly as she must have been blind indeed not to remark the pain which her apparent coldness inflicted upon him; but, when she had once made up her mind as to the propriety of the course she had adopted, she steadily and firmly persevered in it. Philip, surprised at the change in her manner, wearied himself with conjectures as to its cause, and feared that some inadvertent act or expression of his might have given her offence; but it was in vain he taxed his memory; he could not recall any instance in which his conscience could reproach him for having overstepped the bounds of respectful and polite attention.

At last, no longer able to bear the pain of uncertainty, he resolved at once boldly to venture on a step, upon the result of which he felt that his future happiness depended. Mrs Jameson had long noticed Morton's growing love for Jessie, and, knowing the peculiar situation in which her young protégée was placed, had, as we before remarked, advised her to adopt a more distant carriage towards him; but, at the same time, charmed with Morton's amiable and estimable character, and feeling for the disappointment which awaited him, she herself redoubled her attentions towards him. Emboldened by the kind interest of her manner, Morton resolved on making her his confidante, and accordingly revealed to her, that which she had, with woman's quickness, long since discovered—the secret of his love.

"I have long feared this, Mr Morton," replied she; "feared it, because I feel the greatest interest in you, and because I know that there exists an insuperable obstacle to the fulfilment of your hopes."

"Insuperable! do not say insuperable, Mrs Jameson! I know that the shortness of my acquaintance with Miss Martin hardly warrants my presuming to address her; but will not time and the most devoted attachment, work a change in my favour? Oh, let me see her! let me plead my own cause before her, and, if unsuccessfully, let me at least have the melancholy satisfaction of hearing my sentence from her own lips?"

"An interview would only be distressing to you both, Mr Morton. I am not at liberty to say more; but I know that the result will be unfavourable to your wishes."

Morton's importunity, however, prevailed; the kind-

hearted friend, melted by the sight of his distress, promised to procure him a private interview with Miss Martin. Great was Jessie's agitation when she received Mrs Jameson's communication. She had resolutely and firmly avoided meeting Morton, ever since her eyes had been opened to the nature of her feelings towards him, which she considered it her bounden duty to repress, and to sacrifice feeling to principle; but the struggle was a severe one—the arrow rankled deeper than she suspected. She was sitting alone, when Morton, by Mrs Jameson's invitation, entered the cabin. A crimson flush overspread her cheek, which as quickly left it again. She was looking very pale, and received him with visible agitation. It was in a tremulous and low tone of voice, that Morton first began to address her; but, as he proceeded, his countenance glowed, and his words followed each other in such a rapid and fervent torrent, that she in vain attempted to interrupt him. He described the impression her first appearance had made upon his heart, the charm he had experienced in her society, and the gradual, yet rapid growth of his admiration and esteem upon a closer acquaintance with her character. He dwelt long and deeply upon the grief her apparent estrangement had occasioned him, begged her to forgive him if he had in any way given her cause of offence, explained to her his circumstances and views in life, and ended by laying his heart and fortune at her feet.

"Mr Morton," replied she, "I would fain have spared myself and you the pain of this meeting; but I owed it to you, to make some reparation for the error into which I have unfortunately led you; otherwise, I would have deputed my friend to take upon her a duty so distressing to my own feelings. Severely do I now blame myself for having so inconsiderately indulged in the pleasure which your society afforded me. I mistook your feelings. I looked upon you as a friend, and I forgot how near akin friendship is to love. Forgive me, Mr Morton!—I never can be yours—I am the affianced bride of another."

"Affianced!" exclaimed Morton, pressing his hand upon his brow, and absolutely gasping with oppression of feelings. "O heaven! I did not expect this, Miss Martin! But is your heart in the engagement?"

Jessie burst into tears. "Urge me no farther, Mr Morton—my fate is in the hands of another. Henceforth, we must be as strangers to each other—Adieu!" And she glided into an inner apartment. Morton gazed after her for a moment, and then with a heavy heart left the cabin. His friend Hardy found him sitting, with his face buried in his hands upon the table, and eagerly and affectionately inquired the cause of his distress. Morton related to him all that had passed, and ended with saying—"And now, there is no more happiness for me in this world."

"My dear fellow," said his friend, "I give you joy."

"Give me joy, Hardy! I did not expect this from you! Instead of sympathizing with me, you rejoice in my disappointment!"

"I rejoice, but not in your disappointment. Mark my words, Morton! The girl loves you, and, though at present, appearances are against you, do not be downcast—many a more broken boat has reached the land. If my suspicions are correct, depend upon it, a girl of Miss Martin's principles will not be guilty of the treachery of deceiving the man who claims her hand, into the belief that he possesses her heart."

During the remainder of the voyage, Jessie strictly adhered to her resolution, and Philip had too much respect for the woman he loved, to endeavour to shake it. It was soon evident to Mrs Jameson, who sincerely sympathized with him, that he was not the only sufferer; but that it was a grievous trial to them both; and, while she truly pitied them both, she could not but admire and respect the high sense of principle by which they were mutually actu-

ated. The thought of the approaching termination of the voyage, which was by all else on board looked forward to with delight, was to them like the haunting recollection of a frightful dream, which they strove to drive from their minds; for, unhappy as they now were, it was bliss compared to the thought of being separated for ever. At length, the high land about Ganjam was seen from the masthead, and, two days afterwards, a strange sail hove in sight, which, on a nearer approach, proved to be a brig, with the pilot flag fluttering aloft. "All hands shorten sail!" was soon the cry, and "Up there, topmen!" In a few minutes, the lofty canvass was taken in, and the active topmen were busily employed in rolling it up; while the *Lady Flora*, with her maintopsail to the mast, scarcely moved through the water, as she gracefully rose and fell, or, as a popular authoress expresses it, "curtseyed," as if saluting the approaching stranger, which shortened sail as she came near, and rounded to on the opposite tack. A double-banked boat, manned with *Lascars*, shoved off from the brig, and the pilot soon made his appearance on board. The purser of the *Flora*, with letters and despatches for Calcutta, returned in the boat to the brig, which immediately made all sail for Kedgeroe; and the *Lady Flora*, under easy canvass, followed at a distance in her wake. In the evening, the ship was brought to an anchor, at which time the brig was, lower masts down, a-head. Next morning, the *Flora* got under way, and was soon snug at anchor off Kedgeroe, where she was to discharge some of her cargo, before proceeding up the river. In the meantime, her letters had been forwarded by "dawk" to Calcutta. In three days' time, a schooner-rigged budgerow, was seen coming down the river, which anchored inshore of the *Flora*, and hailed her for a boat. A cutter was immediately dispatched to her, which soon returned with a stranger sitting in the stern-sheets. Jessie Martin had been sadly and listlessly employed, all the morning, in making preparations for landing, arranging and directing her trunks; but her work proceeded slowly; for, in spite of her better reason, her thoughts dwelt mournfully on her approaching separation from Morton, when a knock was heard at the cabin door, and, as if to reproach her with her inconstancy, the lover of her youth stood before her. Jessie had, for months, been anticipating, with dread, her meeting with Edward Malcolmson, and had, as she thought, nerved herself to go through the trial with firmness; but, now it had come upon her, she was taken unawares. The surprise was too great for her; she felt a mortal sickness creeping over her, and, turning deadly pale, fell fainting into her chair. Malcolmson ran to her assistance, and, sprinkling some water on her forehead, restored her to consciousness, when she hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

"Jessie," said Malcolmson, surprised at her agitation, "this is an unexpected reception. Am I an object of dread to you? I came here, ready and willing to fulfil my promise, and to claim you as my bride, and you seem to shrink from me, as if I were hateful in your sight."

"Oh, no!—not hateful, Edward. My heart owns you as an old and dear friend. There," said she, putting her hand into his, "there is the hand I promised you! But, as it is to be so, would that we had never parted!"

"What do I hear?" said he, in a tone which surprised her; "you say, here is my hand! Is your heart not with it, Jessie?"

"Edward," answered she, "this is no time for dissimulation. We are about to take a step on which our happiness or misery for life depends. You will despise me, Edward, but I dare not deceive you. My hand is yours, if you desire it; but my heart is another's." And, thus saying, she looked fearfully in his face, to see what effect her confession would have upon him. To her great sur-

prise, a flush of gratification spread over his countenance, and he exclaimed—

"Heaven be praised! O Jessie, what a load of unhappiness you have removed from my heart! But why did you not write to me? Why did you not tell me of the change in your sentiments? And you have been dreading to meet me! and I have been equally alarmed at the thoughts of meeting you! How ridiculous! Two old lovers acting bugbear to each other! There is one comfort, however, Jessie; the one cannot rail at the other for inconstancy; for I have been playing truant as well as yourself. But who is the happy man who has supplanted me in your affections? I sincerely trust that he is worthy of you."

"You may have an opportunity of judging for yourself, ere long," replied she, smiling; "but I will call my friend, Mrs Jameson, to you—she will explain all."

She then sent for Mrs Jameson, and, having introduced her to Malcolmson, and briefly stated how matters stood between them, left them alone together.

Mrs Jameson gave Malcolmson a full account of all that had taken place on board, spoke with enthusiastic admiration of the struggle, in both the lovers, between "passion and principle," and ended with saying that she considered Jessie a fortunate woman to have gained the affection of so amiable and estimable a man.

"But where is he? You must introduce me to him. I will go and bring him to you. I daresay I shall find him somewhere on deck." And away he went in search of him. The deck was strewed with passengers' luggage, and a young and handsome man was moving about among it, apparently selecting his own.

"I think this be one of your trunks, Mr Morton," said one of the men, to him.

"Ah, there's my man!" said Malcolmson. "Pray, sir, is your name Morton?"

"Yes, sir, it is. May I beg, in return, to know whom I have the pleasure of addressing?"

"My name, sir, is Malcolmson; yours is familiar to my ear, as that of the guardian of a near relative whom I have never had the pleasure of meeting. Pray, Mr Morton, are you Irish?"

"Yes; but Morton is an adopted name—that of a kind relative and benefactor. My own name is Denby, Philip Denby."

"Gracious Powers! my brother! I am Edward Malcolmson, the son of your mother. But come with me into Miss Martin's cabin."

And Philip followed him, dreading that in his brother he had met his happy rival.

"Philip," said his brother, "how shall we commemorate this happy meeting? I must give you some memento to recall it to your recollection. Here," said he, taking Jessie's hand in his own, "this little hand is mine. I know you will prize it; so, I make over my claim to you, if you can prevail upon Jessie to consent to the change of owners."

Need we say that that consent was granted? The lovers were united; and their example was soon followed by Edward Malcolmson and the fair object of his affections, who afterwards accompanied Morton and his bride home, to cheer their mother with the sight of the happy re-union of her family.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE COUNTESS OF WISTONBURY.

IN the summer of 1836, I had occasion to make a journey into Wiltshire, in England. As the business that called me there, although of sufficient importance to me, would have no interest whatever for the reader, I will readily be excused, I dare say, from saying of what nature that business was. It will more concern him, from its connection with the sequel, to know that my residence, while in England, was in a certain beautiful little village at the southern extremity of the shire above named, and that mine host, during my stay there, was the worthy landlord of the White Hart Inn, as intelligent and well-informed a man as it has often been my good fortune to meet with. The nature of the business which made me a guest of Michael Jones, left me a great deal more spare time than I knew well what to do with. It hung heavy upon my hands; and my good host, perceiving this, suggested a little excursion, which, he said, he thought would dispose of one day, at any rate, agreeably enough.

"I would recommend you, sir," he said, "to pay a visit to Oxton Hall, the seat of the Earl of Wistonbury.* It is one of the finest residences in England; and, as the family are not there just now, you may see the whole house, both inside and outside. If you think of it, I will give you a line to the butler, a very old friend of mine, and he will be glad to shew you all that's worth seeing about the place."

"How far distant is it?" I inquired.

"Oh, not more than three miles and a half—little more than an hour's easy walk," replied mine host.

"Excellent!" said I; "thank you for the hint, landlord. Let me have the introduction to the butler you spoke about, and I'll set off directly."

In less than five minutes, a card, addressed to Mr John Grafton, butler, Oxton Hall, was put into my hands, and in two minutes more I was on my way to the ancient seat of the Earls of Wistonbury. The directions given me as to my route, carefully noted on my part, brought me, in little more than an hour, to a spacious and noble gateway, secured by a magnificent gate of cast-iron. This I at once recognised, from the description given me by Mr Jones, to be the principal entrance to Oxton Hall. Satisfied that it was so, I unhesitatingly entered—and the house of one of the proudest of England's aristocracy stood before me, in all its lordly magnificence. A spacious lawn, of the brightest and most beautiful verdure, dotted over with noble oaks, and tenanted by some scores of fallow-deer, stretched far and wide on every side. In the centre of this splendid park—such a park as England alone can exhibit—arose the mansion-house, an ancient and a stately pile, of great extent and lofty structure.

Having found the person to whose civilities I was recommended by mine host of the White Hart—a mild and pleasant-looking old man, of about seventy years of age—I put my credentials into his hands. On reading it, the old man looked at me smilingly, and said that he would

have much pleasure in obliging his good friend Mr Jones, by shewing me all that was worth seeing both in and about the house; and many things both curious and rare, and, I may add, both costly and splendid; did I see ere another hour had passed away; but, fearing the reader's patience would scarcely stand the trial of a description of them, I refrain from the experiment, and proceed to say, that, just as our survey of the house was concluded, my cicerone, as if suddenly recollecting himself, said—

"By the by, sir, perhaps you would like to see the picture-gallery, although it is hardly worth seeing just now—most of the pictures having been removed to our house in Grosvenor Square, last winter; and, being in this denuded state, I never think of shewing it to visitors. There are, however, a few portraits of different members of the family still left, and these you may see, if you have any curiosity regarding them."

Such curiosity I avowed I felt, and was immediately conducted into the presence of a number of the pictorial ancestry of the illustrious house of Wistonbury. The greater part of the pictures had been removed, as my conductor had informed me; but a few still remained scattered along the lofty walls of the gallery.

"That," said my cicerone, pointing to a grim warrior, clad from head to heel in a panoply of steel, "that is Henry, first Earl of Wistonbury, who fell in Palestine, during the holy wars; and this," directing my attention to another picture, "is the grandfather of the present Earl."

"A very handsome and pleasant-looking young man," said I, struck with the forcible representation of these qualities which the painting exhibited.

"Ay," replied the old man, "and as good as he was handsome. He is the pride of the house; and the country around yet rings with his name, associated with all that is kind and charitable."

"And who is this lovely creature?" said I, now pointing in my turn to the portrait of a young female, of the most exquisite beauty—the face strikingly resembling some of the best executed likenesses of the unfortunate Queen Mary—which hung beside that of the Good Earl of Wistonbury, as the nobleman of whom my cicerone had just spoken was called throughout the country.

"That lady, sir," replied the latter, "was his wife—the Countess of Wistonbury. She was one of the most beautiful women of her time; and, like her husband, was beloved by all around her, for the gentleness of her manners and benevolence of her disposition."

"But what's this?" said I, advancing a little nearer the picture, to examine something in her attire that puzzled me. "A Scotch plaid!" I exclaimed, in considerable surprise, on ascertaining that this was the article of dress which had perplexed me. "Pray, what has the Scotch plaid to do here? How happens it that we find a Countess of Wistonbury arrayed in the costume of Caledonia?"

"Why, sir, the reason is good—perfectly satisfactory," replied Mr Grafton, smilingly. "She was a native of that country."

"Indeed!" said I. "A countrywoman of mine! Of what family?" added I.

* Under this name we choose, for obvious reasons, to conceal the real one.—Ed.

My conductor smiled.

"Truly," said he, after a pause, "that is a question easier put than answered."

"What!" said I, "was she not of some distinguished house?"

"By no means, sir," replied Mr Grafton. "She was a person of the humblest birth and station; but this did not hinder her from becoming Countess of Wistonbury, nor from being one of the best as well as most beautiful that ever bore the title."

"Ah, ha!" said I to myself, "here's a story for the 'Tales of the Borders.'" I did not say this to Mr Grafton, however; but to him I did say—"There must be some interesting story connected with this lady. The history of her singular good fortune must be curious, and well worth hearing."

"Why, it certainly is," replied my conductor, with the air of one who, while he cannot but acknowledge that there is interest in a certain piece of information which he possesses, is yet so familiar with it himself, has owned it so long, and communicated it so often, that his feelings seem to belie his words—the former remaining unmoved by the tale which the latter unfolds. "There is certainly something curious in the Countess's story," said Mr Grafton; "and, now that we have seen everything that is worth seeing, if you will come with me to my little refectory, I will tell you all about it, over a tankard of fine old ale and a slice of cold round."

Need I say, good reader, that I at once and gladly accepted an invitation that so happily combined the intellectual and the sensual? You will give me credit for more sense; and the following story will prove at once that your good opinion is not misplaced, that I must have been an attentive listener, and, lastly, that I must have been blessed with a pretty retentive memory. I relate the story in my own way, but without taking the slightest liberty with any single one of the details given me by my informant, who, from having been upwards of forty-five years in the service of the Earls of Wistonbury, and, during the greater part of that time, their principal and most confidential domestic, was minutely and accurately informed regarding every remarkable event that had occurred in the family for several generations back.

"But, before we leave this part of the house," resumed Mr Grafton, "be so good as step with me a moment into this small room here, till I shew you a certain little article that cuts some figure in the story which I shall shortly tell you."

Saying this, he led the way into the small apartment he alluded to, and, conducting me towards a handsome ebony or blackwood cabinet that occupied one end of the room, he threw open its little folding doors, and exhibited to me, not some rich or rare curiosity, as I had expected, but a small, plain, very plain—or I should, perhaps, rather say very coarse—country-looking, blue-painted chest.

"Do you see that little chest, sir?" said Mr Grafton, smilingly.

"I do," said I; "and it seems a very homely article, to be so splendidly entombed, and so carefully kept."

"Yet," replied Mr Grafton, "homely as it is, and small as is its intrinsic value, that is one of the heir-looms of the family, and one of the most fondly-cherished of them all."

"Indeed!" said I, in some surprise. "Then I am very sure it cannot be for its marketable worth. It wouldn't bring sixpence."

"I verily believe it would not," replied Mr Grafton. "Yet the Earl of Wistonbury would not part with that little chest for a good round sum, I warrant ye."

"Pray, explain, my good sir?"

"I will. That little, blue-painted chest contained all the worldly wealth—a few articles of female dress—of the

lady whose portrait you were just now so much admiring, when she became Countess of Wistonbury."

"Why, then," said I, "that is proof that riches, at any rate, had nothing to do with her promotion to that high rank."

"They certainly had not," replied my aged friend. "But all this you will learn more particularly in the story which I shall tell you presently. You will then learn, also, how the little, blue-painted chest comes to figure in the history of a Countess."

Saying this, Mr Grafton shut the doors of the cabinet, when we left the apartment, and, in a few minutes after, I found myself in what my worthy old host called his refectory. This was a snug little room, most comfortably furnished, and in which I observed a very large quantity of silver plate—being, I presumed, the depository of that portion of the family's wealth. My good old friend now rung his bell, when a female servant appeared.

"Let's have summut to eat, Betsy," said the old man, and never was order more promptly or more effectively obeyed.

In an instant the table, which occupied the centre of the floor, absolutely creaked under the load of good things with which it was encumbered. The "slice of cold round," I found, was but a *nomme de guerre* with the old man, and meant everything in the edible way that was choice and savoury. To this conclusion I came from seeing the table before me covered with a great variety of good things, amongst which rose, conspicuous in the centre, a huge venison pasty. When the *loading* of the table was completed, and the servant had retired—

"Now," said the old man, looking at me with a significant smile, and at the same time drawing a bunch of small keys from his pocket, from which he carefully singled out one, "since Betsy has done her part so well, let me see if I can't do mine as creditably."

Saying this, he opened what I thought a sly-looking little cupboard, and brought forth from its mysterious recess an aristocratic-looking bottle, sealed with black wax, and whose shoulders were still thickly coated with sawdust. Handling this venerable bottle with a lightness and delicacy of touch which a long practice only could have given, and with a degree of reverence which an *a priori* knowledge of its contents only could have inspired, my worthy host tenderly brushed off its coating of sawdust, gently inserted the screw, drew the cork, with a calm, cautious, steady pull, and, in the next moment, had filled up two brimmers of the finest old port that the cellars of Oxtou Hall could produce. Having done ample justice to the good things before us—

"Now, my good sir, the story, the story, if you please," said I.

"Oh, to be sure," replied my kind host, smiling. "The story you shall have. But first let us take another glass of wine, to inspire me with fortitude to begin so long a story, and you with patience to listen to it."

The procedure thus recommended having been complied with, the good old man immediately began:—

"About a hundred and thirteen years since," he said, "there lived, in the neighbourhood of one of the principal cities in Scotland, a farmer of the name of Flowerdew. He was a man of respectable character, and of sober and industrious habits. His family consisted only of himself, his wife, and an only child—a daughter, named Jessy. Gentle and affectionate, of the most winning manners, and surpassingly beautiful in form and feature, Jessy was not only the darling of her father, but the favourite character of the neighbourhood in which she lived. All yielded the homage of admiration to her supreme loveliness, and of the tenderest esteem to her worth.

For many years Jessy's father contrived, notwithstand-

ing of an enormous rent, to keep pace with the world, and eventually to raise himself a little above it; but, in despite of all his industry and all his prudence, reverses came. A succession of bad crops was followed by a series of losses of various kinds, and James Flowerdew found himself a ruined man.

'It's not for myself I care,' said the honest man, when speaking one day, with his wife, of the misfortunes which had overwhelmed them. 'It's for our puir bit lassie, guidwife. God help her! I thought to have left her independent; but it's been ordained otherwise, and we must submit. But what's to become of her I know not. Being brocht up a little abune the common, she cannot be asked to enter into the service of ony o' our neebors; yet, I see nae other way o't. It must come to that in the lang run.'

'I suppose it must, guidman—I suppose it must,' replied his wife, raising the corner of her apron to her eye, and then bursting into tears. 'My puir, dear, gentle lassie,' she exclaimed, 'it's a sad change to her; but I ken she'll meet it cheerfully, and without repining. But, guidman, if to service she must go, and I fancy there's little doot o' that, wouldna it be better if we could get her into the service of some respectable family in the toon, than to put her wi' ony o' our neebors, where she might be reminded o' her fall, as they will call it?'

'It's a good thought, Lizzy,' replied her husband, musingly, as he gazed in sadness on the fire that burned before him. 'It's a good thought,' he said. 'She will be there unknown, and her feelings saved from the taunts of callous impertinence. I will think of it,' added Flowerdew. 'In the meantime, guidwife, prepare Jessy, the best way you can, for the change of situation in life which she is about to meet with. I canna do it. It would break my heart a'thegither.'

This painful task Mrs Flowerdew undertook; and, as she expected, found her daughter not only reconciled to the step which was proposed for her, but eager and anxious to be put in a way of doing for herself, and, as she fondly hoped and affectionately said, of aiding her parents.

Shortly after this, the ruin which had overtaken James Flowerdew began to present itself in its most instant and most distressing shapes. Arrestments were laid on his funds, in all quarters. Visits of messengers were frequent, almost daily; and his whole stock and crop were sequestered by the landlord, and a day for the sale fixed. This last was a sight which Flowerdew anxiously wished to save his daughter, and he meant to do so, if he could, by finding her 'a place,' previous to the day of sale.

The duty of looking out for a situation for Jessy in town, Flowerdew took upon himself, from the circumstance of his having been in the habit, for many years, of supplying a number of respectable families with the produce of his farm, which he generally delivered himself; his simple character and industrious habits not permitting him to see any degradation in driving his own cart on these occasions. Flowerdew had thus formed a personal acquaintance with many families of the better class, which he thought might be useful to him in his present views.

Amongst the oldest and most respected of his customers, was a learned professor; whom, to avoid what might be an inconvenient identification of circumstances, we shall call Lockerby. With this gentleman, Flowerdew resolved to begin his inquiries respecting a situation for his daughter. He did so, and, on being introduced to him, explained the purpose of his visit.

'Dear me, Mr Flowerdew!' said the worthy Professor, in surprise at the application. 'I thought—I all along thought, that your circumstances would entitle your daughter, whose modesty of demeanour and great beauty of person I have had frequent opportunities of admiring—she having called

here frequently, as you know, on various occasions, connected with our little traffic—I say, I thought your circumstances would entitle your daughter to look for something higher than the situation of a domestic servant.'

'I once thought so myself, Professor,' replied Mr Flowerdew, with a tear standing in his eye; 'but it has turned out otherwise. The truth is, that I have lately met with such reverses as have entirely ruined me. I am about to be ejected from my farm, and must betake myself to daily labour, for a subsistence. In this explanation, you will see the reason why I apply to you for a situation in your family for my daughter.'

'Too clearly—too clearly,' replied the worthy Professor, sincerely grieving for the misfortunes of a man whom he had long known, and whose uprightness of conduct and character he had long appreciated. 'I am seriously distressed, Mr Flowerdew,' he added, 'to learn all this—seriously distressed, indeed; but, in the meantime, let us consult Mrs Lockerby on the subject of your present visit.' And he rung the bell, and desired the servant who answered it, to request his wife to come to him. She came, and, on being informed of Mr Flowerdew's application in behalf of his daughter, at once agreed to receive her into her service, adding that she might, if she chose, enter on her duties immediately. It was finally arranged that Jessy should take possession of her situation on the following day.

Highly gratified at having got admission for his daughter into so worthy and respectable a family, Flowerdew returned home with a lighter heart than he had possessed for some time before. He felt that his Jessy was now, in a manner, provided for; and that, although the situation was an humble one, and far short of what he had once expected for her, it was yet a creditable one, and one presenting no mean field for the exercise of some of the best qualities which a woman can possess.

Equally pleased with her father at the opening that had been found for her, the gentle girl lost no time in making such preparations as the impending change in her position in life rendered necessary. Part of these preparations, all cheerfully performed, consisted in packing a small trunk with her clothes, and in other procedures of a similar kind. In this employment, her mother endeavoured to assist her, but was too much affected by the sadness of the task to afford any very efficient aid, although her daughter did all she could, by assuming a light-heartedness which she could not altogether feel, to assuage the grief to which her mother was every moment giving way.

'Why grieve yourself in that way, mother?' she would say, pausing in her operations, and flinging her arms around her parent's neck. 'I assure you I am happy at the prospect of being put in a way of doing for myself; I consider it no hardship—not in the least. I will take a pride in discharging my new duties faithfully and diligently; and I hope that, even in the humble sphere in which I am about to move, I shall contrive to make myself both esteemed and respected.'

'That I dinna doubt—that I dinna doubt, my dear lassie,' replied her mother; 'but, oh, it goes to my heart, to see you gaun into the service o' ithers. I never expected to see the day. Oh, this is a sad change that's come over us a'!' And again the poor woman burst into a paroxysm of grief.

'Mother,' said the girl, 'you will dishearten me, if you go on in this way.' Then smiling through the tears of affection that glistened on her eye, and assuming a tone of affected cheerfulness—'Come, now, dear mother, do drop this desponding tone. There's better days in store for us yet. We'll get above all this, by and by. In the meantime, it is our duty, as Christians, to submit to the destiny that has been decreed us, with patience and resignation. Come, mother, I'll sing you the song you used

always to like so well to hear me sing.' And, without waiting for any remark in reply, or pausing in her employment, the girl immediately began, in a voice whose richness of tone and deep pathos possessed the most thrilling power—

'A cheerfu heart's been always mine,
Whatever might betide me, O!
In foul or fair, in shade or shine,
I've aye had that to guide me, O!

'When luck cam chappin at my door,
Wi' right good will I cheered him, O!
And whan misfortune cam, I swore
The ne'er a bit I feared him, O!

'O lassie, lassie!' exclaimed Jessie's mother, here interrupting her, and now smiling as she spoke—'how can ye think o' singing at such a time? But God lang yousafe ye sae light and cheerfu a heart! It's a great blessing, Jessie, and canna be prized too highly.'

'I am aware of it, mother,' replied her daughter, 'and am, I trust, thankful for it. I dinna see, after a', that anything should seriously distress us, but guilt. If we keep free o' that, what hae we to fear? A'ither mischances will mend, or, if they dinna, they'll at least smooth doon wi' time.'

'But why are ye no puttin up your silk gown, Jessie?' here interposed her mother, abruptly; seeing her daughter laying aside the article of dress she referred to, as if she did not intend it should have a place in the little chest she was packing.

'The silk gown, mother, I'll no tak wi' me,' replied Jessie, smiling; 'I'll leave't at hame, till better times come roun. It would hardly become my station, now, mother, to be gaun flaunting about in silks.'

'Too true, Jessie,' said her mother, with a sigh. 'It may be as weel, as ye say, to leave't at hame for a wee, till times mend wi' us at any rate, although God only knows when that may be, if ever.'

'I'll keep it for my wedding gown, mother,' said Jessie, laughingly, and with an intention of counteracting the depressing tendency of her inadvertent remarks on the propriety of her leaving her silk gown behind. 'I'll keep it for my wedding dress, mother,' she said, 'although it's mair than likely that a plainer attire will be mair suitable for that occasion, too.'

'Nae sayin, Jessie,' replied her mother. 'Ye'll maybe get a canny laird, yet, that can ride to market wi' siller spurs on his boots and gowd lace on his hat.'

'Far less will please me, mither,' replied Jessie, blushing and laughing at the same time. 'I never, even in our best days, looked so high, and it would ill become me to do so now.'

With such conversation as this, did mother and daughter endeavour to divert their minds from dwelling on the painful reflection which the latter's occupation was so well calculated to excite.

An early hour of the following morning saw Jessie Flowerdew seated in a little cart, well lined with straw, by her doting father, who proposed driving her himself into the city. A *small, blue-painted chest*, a bandbox, and one or two small bundles, formed the whole of her travelling accompaniments. She, herself, was wrapped in a scarlet mantle, and wore on her head a light straw bonnet, of tasteful shape, and admirably adapted to the complexion and contour of the fine countenance which it gracefully enclosed.

After a delay of a few minutes—for the cart in which Jessie was seated was still standing at the door—her father, dressed in his Sunday's suit, came out of the house, stepped up to the horse's head, took the reins in his hand, and gently put in motion the little humble conveyance which was to bear his daughter away from the home of her childhood, and to place her in the house of the stranger. Unable to

sustain the agony of a last parting, Jessie's mother had not come out of the house, to see her daughter start on her journey; but she was seen, when the cart had proceeded a little way, standing at the door, with her apron at her eyes, looking after it with an expression of the most heartfelt sorrow.

'There's my mother, father,' said Jessie, in a choking voice, on getting a sight of the former in the affecting attitude above described; but she could add no more. In the next instant, her face was buried in her handkerchief. Her father turned round on her calling his attention to her mother, but instantly, and without saying a word, resumed the silent, plodding pace which the circumstance had for a moment interrupted.

In little more than an hour, the humble equipage whose progress we have been tracing entered the city. Humble, however, as that equipage was, it did not prevent the passers-by from marking the singular beauty of her by whom it was occupied. Many were they who looked round, and stood and gazed in admiration after the little cart and its occupant, as they rattled along the 'stony street.' Their further progress, however, was now a short one. In a few minutes, Flowerdew and his daughter found themselves at the Professor's door. The former now tenderly lifted out Jessie from the cart—for her sylph-like form, so light and slender, was nothing in the arms of the robust farmer—and placed her in safety on the flag-stones. Her little trunk and bandbox were next taken out by the same friendly hand, and deposited beside her. This done, Flowerdew rapped at the Professor's door. It was opened. The father and daughter entered; and, in an hour after—long before which her father had left her—the latter was engaged in the duties of her new situation.

Days, weeks, and months, as they will always do, now passed away; but they still found Jessie in the service of her first employers, whose esteem she had gained by the gentleness of her nature, the modesty of her demeanour and the extreme propriety of her conduct.

At the time of her first entering into the service of Professor Lockerby, Jessie Flowerdew had just completed her sixteenth year. The charms of her person had not then attained their full perfection. But now that two years more had passed over her head—for this interval must be understood to have elapsed before we resume our tale—her face and figure had attained the zenith of their beauty, a beauty that struck every beholder, and in every beholder excited feelings of unqualified admiration.

It was about the end of two years after Jessie's advent into the family of the Professor, that the latter, one morning raising his head from a letter which he had just been reading, and turning to the former, who was in the act of removing the breakfast equipage, said—

'Jessy, my girl, will you be so good as to put the little parlour and bedroom up stairs in the best order you can, as I expect a young gentleman to-morrow who is to become a boarder with us.'

Jessy curtsied her acquiescence in the order just given her, and retired from the apartment to fulfil it.

On the following day, a travelling carriage, whose panels were adorned with a coronet, drove up to the door of Professor Lockerby. From this carriage descended a young man, apparently between nineteen and twenty years of age, of the most prepossessing appearance. His countenance was pale, but bore an expression of extreme mildness and benevolence. His figure was tall and slender, but handsomely formed; while his whole manner and bearing bespoke the man of high birth and breeding.

On descending from his carriage, the young man was received by the Professor with the most respectful deference—too respectful it seemed to be for the taste of him to whom it was addressed—for he instantly broke through the cold

formality of the meeting, by grasping the Professor's hand, and shaking it with the heartiest and most cordial good will, saying while he did so—

'I hope I see you well, Professor.'

'In perfect health, I thank you, my Lord,' replied the Professor.

'I hope you left your good lady mother, the Countess, well.'

'Quite well—I'm obliged to you, Professor—as lively, and stirring, and active as ever. Hot and hasty, and a little queenly in her style now and then, as you know, but still the open heart and the open hand of the Wistonburys.'

'I have the honour of knowing the Countess well, my Lord,' replied the Professor, 'and can bear testimony to the nobleness of her nature and disposition. I have known many, many instances of it.'

With such conversation as this, the Professor and his noble boarder—for such was the young man whom we have just introduced to the reader—entered the house. Who this young man was, and what was his object in taking up his abode with Professor Lockerby, we will explain in a few words, although such explanation is rendered in part nearly unnecessary by the conversation just recorded between him and the Professor. It may not be amiss, however, to say, in more distinct terms, that he was the Earl of Wistonbury, a rank which he had attained just a year before, by the sudden and premature death of his father, who died in the forty-fifth year of his age. Since his accession to the title of his ancestors, the young Earl had continued to live in retirement with his mother, a woman of a noble, elevated, and generous soul, well becoming her high lineage—for she, too, was descended of one of the noblest families in England,—but in whose temper there was occasionally made visible a dash of the leaven of aristocracy.

On her son, the young Earl, her only surviving child, she doted with all the affection of the fondest and tenderest of mothers; and well worthy was that son of all the love she could bestow. His was one of those natures which no earthly elevation can corrupt, no factitious system deprive of its innate simplicity.

The promotion of the young Earl to the head of his illustrious house, was, however, a premature one in more respects than one. One of these was to be found in the circumstance of the young man's being found unprepared—at least so judged he himself—in the matter of education, to fill with credit the high station to which he was so unexpectedly called. His education, in truth, had been rather neglected; and it was to make up for this neglect, to recover his lost ground with all the speed possible, that he was now come to reside for a few months with Professor Lockerby, who had once acted as tutor in his father's family to a brother who had died young.

Such, then, was the Professor's boarder, and such was the purpose for which he became so.

The favourable impression which the youthful Earl's first appearance had made, suffered no diminution by length of acquaintance. Mild and unassuming, he won the love of all who came in contact with him. The little personal services he required, he always solicited, never commanded; and what he could with any propriety do himself, he always did, without seeking other assistance.

A quiet and unostentatious inmate of the Professor's, time rolled rapidly, but gently and imperceptibly, over the head of the young Earl, until a single week only intervened between the moment referred to, and the period fixed on for his return to Oxton Hall.

Thus, nearly six months had elapsed—not a very long period, but one in which much may be accomplished, and in which many a change may take place. And by such features were the six months marked, which the young Earl of Wistonbury had spent in the house of Professor Lock-

erby. In that time, by dint of unrelaxing assiduity and intense application, he had acquired a respectable knowledge of both Latin and Greek, and in that time, too, he had taken a step which was to affect the whole tenor of his after life, and to make him either happy or miserable, as it had been fortunately or unfortunately made. What that step was we shall divulge, through precisely the same singular process by which it actually came to the knowledge of the other parties interested.

One evening, at the period to which we a short while since alluded—namely, about a week previous to the expiry of the proposed term of the Earl's residence with Professor Lockerby—as Jessy Flowerdew was about to remove the tea equipage from the table of the little parlour in which the Professor and his noble pupil usually conducted their studies, the latter suddenly rose from his seat, and, looking at their fair handmaiden with a serious countenance, said—

'Jessy, my love, you must not perform this service again, nor any other of a similar kind. You are now my wife—you are now Countess of Wistonbury.'

We leave it to the reader to imagine, after his own surprise has a little subsided, what was that of the worthy Professor, on hearing his noble pupil make so extraordinary, so astounding a declaration—a declaration not less remarkable for its import, than for the occasion on which and the manner in which it was made.

On recovering from his astonishment, 'My Lord,' said the good Professor, with a grave and stern countenance, 'be good enough to inform me what this extraordinary conduct means? What can have been your motive, my Lord, for using the highly improper and most unguarded language which I have just now heard you utter?'

The young Earl, with the greatest calmness and deference of manner, approached the Professor, laid his hand upon his heart, and, with a graceful inclination, said, slowly and emphatically—

'Upon my honour, sir, she is my wife!'

'What, my Lord!' exclaimed the still more and more amazed Professor—and now starting from his chair, in his excitement—'do you repeat your most unbecoming and incredible assertion?'

'I do, sir,' replied the Earl, in the same calm and respectful manner. 'I do repeat it, and say, before God, that Jessy Flowerdew is the lawfully-married wife of the Earl of Wistonbury!'

'Well, my Lord, well,' said the Professor, in angry agitation, 'I know what is my duty in this most extraordinary case. It is to give instant notice to the Countess, your mother, of what I must call, my Lord, the extremely rash and unadvised step you have taken.'

To this threat and rebuke, the Earl replied, with the utmost composure and politeness of manner—'I was not unprepared, sir, for your resentment on this occasion. Neither do I take it in the least amiss. You merely do your duty when you tell me I have forgotten mine. But the step I have taken, sir, allow me to say, although it may appear unadvised, has not been so in reality. I have weighed well the consequences, and am quite prepared to abide them.'

'Be it so, my Lord, be it so,' replied the Professor. 'I have only now to remark that, as you say you were prepared for my resentment, I hope you are also prepared for your mother's, my Lord—a matter of much more serious moment.'

'My mother, sir, I will take in my own hands,' replied the Earl; 'she can resent, but she can also forgive.'

'I have no more to say, my Lord, no more,' rejoined Mr Lockerby; 'the matter must now be put into the hands of those who have a better right to judge of its propriety than I have. I shall presume on no further remark on the subject.'

'Come, sir, said the Earl, smiling and extending his hand to the Professor, 'let this, if you please, be no cause for difference between us. I propose that we allow the matter to lie in abeyance until my mother has been appealed to; she being the only person, you know, who has a right to be displeased with my proceeding, or whose wishes I was called upon to consult in this matter.'

'Excuse me, my Lord,' replied the worthy Professor; 'but I must positively decline all interchange of courtesies which may, by any possibility, be construed into an overlooking of this very extraordinary affair.'

'Well, well, my good sir,' said the Earl, smiling, and still maintaining the equanimity of his temper, 'judge of me as charitably as you can. In the morning, we shall meet, I trust, better friends.' Saying this, he took up one of the candles which were on the table before him, bade the Professor a polite and respectful good night, and retired to his own apartment.

The Earl had no sooner withdrawn than Mr Lockerby, after collecting himself a little, commenced inditing a letter to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury, apprising her of what had just occurred. In speaking, however, of the 'degrading' connection which her son had made, the honest man's sense of justice compelled him to add a qualifying explanation of the term which he had employed—'degrading, I mean,' he said, '*in point of wealth, rank, and accomplishments*; for, in all other respects, in conduct and character, in temper and disposition, and, above all, in personal appearance—for she is certainly eminently beautiful—I must admit that her superior may not easily be found.'

The letter that contained these remarks, with the other information connected with it, the Professor despatched on the same night on which it was written; and, having done this, awaited with what composure and fortitude he could command, the dreadful explosion of aristocratic wrath and indignation which, he had no doubt, would speedily follow.

Leaving matters in this extraordinary position in the house of Professor Lockerby, we shall shift the scene, for a moment, to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury's sitting apartment at Oxtou Hall; and we shall choose the moment when her favourite footman, Jacob Asterley, has entered her presence, after his return from a call at the post-office in the neighbouring village; the time being the second day after the occurrence just previously related—namely, the despatch to Oxtou Hall of Professor Lockerby's letter.

'Well, Jacob, any letters for me to-day?' said the Countess, on the entrance of that worthy official.

'One, my lady, from Scotland,' replied the servant, deferentially, and, at the same time, opening the bag in which the letters were usually carried to and from the post-house.

'Ah! from the Earl,' said the Countess.

'No, my Lady, I rather think not. The address is not in his Lordship's handwriting.'

'Oh! the good Professor Lockerby,' said the Countess, contemplating for a moment the address of the letter in question, which was now in her Ladyship's hands. 'I hope nothing unpleasant has occurred to my son.' And while she spoke, she hurriedly broke the seal, and, in the next instant, was intently engaged in perusing the intelligence which it had secured from the prying curiosity of parties whom it did not concern.

It would take a much abler pen than that now employed in tracing these lines, to convey anything like an adequate idea of the mingled expression of amazement, indignation, and grief exhibited on the countenance, and in every act and attitude of the proud Countess of Wistonbury, on reading the story of her son's degradation. The flush of

haughty resentment was succeeded by the sudden pæness of despair; and in frequent alternation did these strong expressions of varied feeling flit across the fine countenance—still fine, although it had looked on fifty summers—of the heart-stricken mother, as she proceeded in her perusal of the fatal document. On completing the perusal, the Countess threw herself in silent distraction on a sofa, and, still holding the open letter in her hand, sank into a maze of wild and wandering thoughts. These, however, seemed at length to concentrate in one decisive and sudden resolution. Starting from the reclining posture into which she had thrown herself, she advanced towards the bell pull, rung furiously, and, when the servant entered to know what were her commands—

'Order the travelling carriage instantly, Jacob,' she said—'instantly, instantly; and let four of my best horses be put in the harness. What do you stare at, fool?' she added, irritated at the look of astonishment which the inexplicable violence of her manner had called into the countenance of her trusty domestic. 'Do as you are ordered, directly.' The man bowed and withdrew; and, in pursuance of the commands he had received, proceeded to the stables.

'Here's a start, Thomas!' he said, addressing a jolly-looking fellow, who was busily employed in brushing up some harness; 'the travelling carriage directly, and four of your best horses, for my Lady.'

'Why, what the devil's the matter now?' replied Thomas, pausing in his operations; 'where's the old girl a-going to?'

'Not knowing, can't say,' replied Jacob; 'but she's in a wondrous fuss, I warrant you. Never seed her in such a quandary in my life. Something's wrong somewhere, I guess.'

'Well, well, all's one to me,' said Thomas, with philosophical indifference; 'but it looks like a long start, wherever it may be to; so I'll get my traps in order.' And this duty was so expeditiously performed, that, in less than fifteen minutes, the very handsome travelling carriage of the Earl of Wistonbury, drawn by four spanking bays, flashed up to the door of Oxtou Hall. In an instant after, it was occupied by the Dowager Countess, and in another, was rattling away for Scotland, at the utmost speed of the noble animals by which it was drawn.

Changing here, once more, the scene of our story, we return to the house of Professor Lockerby. There matters continued in that ominous state of quiescence, that significant and portentous calm, that precedes the bursting of the storm. Between the Professor and the young Earl, not a word more had passed on the subject of the latter's extraordinary declaration. Neither had made the slightest subsequent allusion to it, but continued their studies precisely as they had done before; although, perhaps, a degree of restraint—a consciousness of some point of difference between them—might now be discerned in their correspondence. Both, in short, seemed to have tacitly agreed to abide the result of the Professor's letter to the Countess, before taking any other step, or expressing any other feeling, on the subject to which that letter related. The anticipated crisis which the Professor and his noble pupil were thus comportedly awaiting, soon arrived. On the third day after that remarkable one on which the young Earl of Wistonbury had avowed the humble daughter of an humble Scotch farmer to be his wife, a carriage and four, which, we need scarcely say, was the same we saw start from Oxtou Hall, drove furiously up to the door of Professor Lockerby. The horses' flanks sent forth clouds of smoke; their mouths and fore-shoulders were covered with foam; and the carriage itself was almost encased in mud. Everything, in short, told of a long and rapid journey. And it was so. Night and day, without one hour's intermission had that carriage prosecuted its jour-

ney. In an instant after, the carriage stopped; its steps were down, and, bridling with high and lofty indignation, the Dowager Countess of Wistonbury descended, and, ere any one of the Professor's family were aware of her arrival, she had entered the house, the door being accidentally open, and was calling loudly for 'her boy.'

'Where is my son?' she exclaimed, as she made her way into the interior of the house; 'where is the Earl of Wistonbury?'

In a moment after, the Earl of Wistonbury, who had heard and instantly recognised his mother's voice, was before her, and was about to rush into her arms, when she haughtily thrust him back, saying—

'Degraded, spiritless boy, dare not to approach me! You have blotted the noblest, the proudest scutcheon of England. Where is Professor Lockerby?'

The Professor was by her side before she had completed the sentence, when, seeing her agitation—

'My good lady,' he said, in his most persuasive tone, 'do allow me to entreat of you to be composed, and to have the honour of conducting you up stairs.'

'Anywhere, anywhere, Professor,' exclaimed the Countess; 'but, alas! go where I will, I cannot escape the misery of my own thoughts, nor the disgrace which my unworthy son has brought upon my head.'

Without making any reply to this outburst of passionate feeling, the Professor took the Countess respectfully by the hand, and silently conducted her to his drawing-room. With stately step, the Countess entered, and walked slowly to the further end of the apartment; this gained, she turned round, and, when she had done so, a sight awaited her for which she was but little prepared. This was her son and Jessy Flowerdew, kneeling side by side, and, by their attitude, eloquently imploring her forgiveness. It was just one of those sights best calculated to work on the nobler nature of the Countess of Wistonbury, and to call up the finer feelings of her generous heart. For some seconds she looked at the kneeling pair, in silent astonishment; her eye, however, chiefly fixed on the beautiful countenance of Jessy Flowerdew, pale with terror and emotion, and wet with tears. Having gazed for some time on this extraordinary sight, without betraying the slightest symptom of the feelings, beyond that of surprise, with which it had inspired her, the Countess slowly advanced towards the kneeling couple. She still, however, uttered no word, and discovered no emotion; but a sudden change had come over her proud spirit. That spirit was now laid, and its place occupied by all the generous impulses of her nature. Keeping her eye steadily fixed on the kneeling fair one before her, she approached her, paused a moment, extended her hand, placed it on the ivory forehead of Jessy Flowerdew, gently laid back her rich auburn hair, and, as she did so, said, in a tremulous, but emphatic voice—

'You *are*, indeed, a lovely girl! God bless you! Alfred, my son, rise,' she added, in a low, but calm and solemn tone; 'I forgive you.' And she extended her hand towards him. The Earl seized it, kissed it affectionately, and bathed it with his tears.

'Rise, my Lady—rise, my fair Countess of Wistonbury,' she now said, and herself aiding in the act she commanded. 'I acknowledge you as my daughter, and we must now see to fitting you for the high station to which my son's favour has promoted you, and of which, I trust, you will prove as worthy, in point of conduct, as you assuredly already are in that of personal beauty. God bless you both! And may every happiness that the conjugal state affords, be yours! Professor,' she added, and now turning round to that gentleman, 'you will think this weakness—a mother's weakness—and perhaps it is so; but I would myself fain attribute it to a more worthy feeling, and, if I know my own heart, it is so. But let

that pass. I *am* reconciled to the step my son has taken; and reverently leave it to God, and fearlessly to man, to judge of the motives by which I have been influenced. I trust they are such as to merit the approbation of both.'

Surprised and greatly affected by the unexpected turn which matters had taken, so contrary to what he had anticipated, the worthy Professor had listened to these expressions of the Countess with averted head, and making the most ingenious use of the handkerchief, which he held to his face, that he could, to conceal the real purpose for which he employed it. When she had done—

'Madam,' he said, with great agitation and confusion of manner, and still busily plying the handkerchief in its pretended vocation. 'Madam, I—I—I am surprised—much affected, I assure you. Much affected, my Lady, with this striking instance of what a noble and generous nature is capable. I was by no means prepared for it. It does you infinite honour, my Lady—infinite honour; and will, I trust, in its results be productive of all that happiness to you which your magnanimous conduct so eminently deserves.'

'I trust I have acted rightly, Professor,' was the brief reply of the Countess, as she again turned to the young couple, who were now standing on the floor beside her. 'I hope I have; and, if my heart does not deceive me, I am sure I have.'

'You are warranted, my Lady, in the confidence you express in the uprightness, the generosity of your conduct on this very remarkable occasion—perfectly warranted,' replied the Professor. 'It is an unexampled instance of greatness, of liberality of mind, and, as such, I must always look on it.'

Thus, then, terminated this extraordinary scene. It was subsequently arranged, that the marriage of the Earl should, in the meantime, be kept as secret as possible, and that the young Countess should, in the interim, be sent, for a year or two, to one of the most celebrated seminaries of female education in England, under an assumed name, and that, when she should have acquired the attainments and the polish befitting her high station, she should be produced to the world as the Countess of Wistonbury.

Acting upon this plan of proceedings, the same carriage that brought down the Earl's mother bore away, on the following day, together with that lady, the young Earl and his bride: the latter, to commence her educational noviciate in England; the former, to while away the time as he best could, until that noviciate should expire, a period which he proposed to render less irksome by a tour on the Continent.

About two years after the occurrence of the events just related—it might be more, perhaps nearly three—Oxton Hall presented a scene of prodigious confusion and bustle. Little carts of provender were daily seen making frequent visits to the house. Huge old grates, in deserted kitchens, that had not been in use for a century before, were cleared of their rubbish and glowing with blazing fires, at which enormous roasts were solemnly revolving. Menials were running to and fro in all directions, and a crowd of powdered and richly-liveried lackeys bustled backwards and forwards through the gorgeous apartments, loaded with silver plate, and bearing huge baskets of wine. Everything at Oxton Hall, in short, betokened preparations for a splendid fête—and such, in truth, was the case. To this fête all the nobility and gentry, within a circuit of ten to fifteen miles, were invited; and such an affair it promised to be, altogether, as had not been seen at Oxton Hall since the marriage of the last Earl—a period of nearly thirty years. None of those invited knew, or could guess what was the particular reason for so extensive a merry-making. Its scale, they learned, was most magnificent, and the invitations unprecedentedly numerous.

The whole affair was thus somewhat of a puzzle to the good people who were to figure as guests at the impending fête; but they comforted themselves with the reflection, that they would know all about it by and by. In the meantime, the day appointed for the celebration of the proposed festival at Oxton Hall arrived; and, amongst the other preparations which more markedly characterised it, was the appearance of several long tables extended on the lawn in front of the house, and which were intended for the accommodation of the Earl's tenantry, who were also invited to share in the coming festivities. Towards the afternoon of the day alluded to, carriages and vehicles of all descriptions, and of various degrees of elegance, were seen, in seemingly endless numbers, streaming along the spacious and well-gravelled walks that led, by many a graceful curve, through the surrounding lawn, to the noble portals of Oxton Hall. These, by turns, drew up in front of the principal entrance to the house, and delivered their several cargoes of lords and ladies, knights and squires; all honourable personages, and of high degree. An inferior description of equipages, again, and occupied by persons of a different class, sturdy yeomen and their wives and daughters, found their way, or rather were guided as they came, to a different destination, but with no difference in the hospitality of their reception. All were alike welcomed to Oxton Hall on this auspicious day. By and by, the hour of dinner came, and, when it did, it exhibited a splendid scene in the magnificent dining-room of the Earl of Wistonbury. In this dining-room were assembled a party of at least a hundred-and-fifty ladies and gentlemen, all in their best attire. Down the middle of the spacious apartment ran a table of ample length and breadth, and capable of accommodating with ease even the formidable array by which it was shortly to be surrounded. On this spacious board glittered as much wealth, in the shape of silver plate, as would have bought a barony; while everything around shewed that it was still but a small portion of the riches of its noble owner. At the further end of the lordly hall, in an elevated recess, or interior balcony, were stationed a band of musicians, to contribute the choicest specimens of their art to the hilarity of the evening. Altogether the scene was one of the most imposing that can well be conceived—an effect which was not a little heightened by the antique character of the noble apartment in which it was exhibited, one of whose most striking features was a large oriel window, filled with the most beautifully stained glass, which threw its subdued and sombre light on the magnificent scene beneath. Hitherto the young Earl had not been seen by any of the company; his mother, the Countess-Dowager, having discharged the duties of hospitality in receiving the guests. Many were the inquiries made for the absent lord of the mansion; but these were all answered evasively, although always concluded with the assurance that he would appear in good time.

Satisfied with this assurance, the subject was no further pressed at the moment; but, as the dinner hour approached, and the Earl had not yet presented himself, considerable curiosity and impatience began to be manifested amongst the assembled guests. These feelings increased every moment, and had attained their height, when the party found themselves called upon to take their seats at table, and yet no Earl had appeared. The general surprise was further excited, on its being observed that the Countess-Dowager did not, as usual, take the chair at the head of the table, as was expected, but placed herself on its right. The chair at the foot of the table, remained also yet unoccupied; and great was the wonder what all this could mean. It was now soon to be explained. Just as the party had taken their seats, a folding door, at the further end of the hall, flew open, and the young Earl of Wistonbury entered, leading by the hand a young female,

of exceeding beauty, attired in a dress of the most dazzling splendour, over which was gracefully thrown a Scottish plaid. Bowing slightly, but with a graceful and cordial expression, and smiling affably as he advanced, the Earl conducted his fair charge to the head of the table, where, after a pause of a few seconds, which he purposely made, in order to afford his guests an opportunity of marking the extreme loveliness of the lady whom he had thus so unexpectedly introduced to them—an opportunity which was not thrown away, as was evident from the murmur of admiration that ran round the brilliant assembly—the Earl thus shortly addressed his wondering guests—

'Permit me, my friends,' he said, 'to introduce to you the Countess of Wistonbury!'

A shout of applause from the gentlemen, and a waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies, hailed the pleasing and unexpected intelligence; an homage whose duration and intensity was increased, by the singularly graceful manner with which it was received and acknowledged by her to whom it was paid. Nothing could be more captivating than the modest, winning sweetness of her smile; nothing more pleasing to behold, than the gentle grace of her every motion. On all present, the impression was, that she was a woman of birth, education, and high breeding, and nothing in the part she subsequently acted, tended, in the slightest degree, to affect this idea. The young and lovely Countess conducted herself, throughout the whole of this eventful evening, as she did throughout the remainder of her life, with the most perfect propriety; and thus evinced that the pains taken to fit *Jessy Flowerdew* for the high station to which a singular good fortune had called her, was very far from having been taken in vain.

At the conclusion of the banquet, the Earl entreated the indulgence of the company, for an absence, for himself and the Countess, of a quarter-of-an-hour. This being, of course, readily acquiesced in, the Earl and his beauteous young wife were seen arm and arm on the lawn, going towards the tables at which his tenantry were enjoying his hospitality. Here he went through precisely the same ceremony of introduction with that which we have described as having taken place in the banquet hall; and here it was greeted with the same enthusiasm, and acknowledged, by the Countess, with the same grace and propriety. This proceeding over, the Earl and his young bride returned to their party, when one of the most joyous evenings followed, that the banqueting room of Oxton Hall had ever witnessed. There is only now to add, that *Jessy Flowerdew's* subsequent conduct as Countess of Wistonbury, proved her, in every respect, worthy of the high place to which she had been elevated. A mildness and gentleness of disposition, and a winning modesty of demeanour, which all the wealth and state with which she was surrounded, could not, in the slightest degree, impair, distinguished her through life; and no less distinguished was she, by the generosity and benevolence of her nature—a nature which her change of destiny was wholly unable to pervert."

Such, then, good reader, is the history of the lady whose portrait, in which she appears habited in a Scottish plaid, adorns, with others, the walls of the picture gallery of Oxton Hall, in Wiltshire.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

FAMILY INCIDENTS.

THERE is a beautiful glen in Dumfriesshire, which I would willingly point out to any, as the very beau-ideal of all glens whatever. It is, in fact, entirely surrounded by high grounds, rising ultimately, towards the north in particular, into hills, or, more properly speaking, mountains, making part of the Queensberry range. In the centre of this glen, or vale, there is a round and conical green eminence, around which a small mountain stream winds and wanders, as if unwilling to encounter the tossings and turmoil of the linn and precipitous course beneath. I could never behold, or even think, of this snug quietude in the bosom of unadulterated nature, without, at the same time, considering it as emblematic, in a striking degree, of man's experience in life. In infancy and youth, all is snug, sunny, and peaceful, as this little sheltered stream; but the linn and precipices of after life assimilate but too closely to the foam, and tossing, and tumbling of the passage beneath. On the summit of that grassy mound, there once stood a thatched cottage, with which my story is connected.

It was evening, or rather twilight, or, as emphatically expressed in Scotch dialect, it was the "gloaming," when Janet Smith, a poor widow woman, sat in her own doorway—

"E'en drawing out a thread wi' little din,
And beaking her auld limbs afore the sin."

A large grey cat occupied the other side of the passage, and a few hens, with the necessary accompaniment, clucked and chuckled, and crowded around. Janet sat there in her solitude, an old, infirm, and comparatively helpless creature; but she was wonderfully contented and happy. Her own industry supplied her little wants; and she was protected, in a free house and kailyard, by Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, the princely and humane laird of Closeburn. The wheel had just ceased its revolution, and her spectacles had just been assumed, with the view of reading, by the light of a cheery spark, her evening chapter. A cake of oatbread was toasting at the fire, and a bowl of pure whey was set upon a stool, when Janet's ear was arrested by the approach of a horseman, who with difficulty urged his steed up the somewhat precipitous ascent. The horseman had no sooner attained the doorway, than he alighted, and, giving his horse to be held by a little urchin, whom he had beckoned from the wood for this purpose, he was at once in the presence of the aged inmate of this humble dwelling. The scene I shall never forget; for I was, in fact, the little boy whom he had enlisted in his service, by the tempting reward of sixpence. The horseman was tall and well-built; he might be about fifty years of age, and every way wearing the garb and the aspect of a gentleman. Having advanced towards the old woman, he looked steadily and keenly into her face, while his bosom heaved, and the tears began to indicate deep and tender emotion. The old woman seemed petrified with astonishment, and fell back into her arm-chair, as if some one had rudely pushed her down into it. At last, old Janet found utterance in these words pronounced in a quavering and almost

inarticulate voice—"In the name of God, who or what art thou?" These words, however, had not been pronounced, when the stranger had already dropped down on his knees, and had actually flung himself into the arms of his mother. Yes, of his mother—for so it proved to be, that this was the first meeting betwixt mother and child for the space of upwards of forty years. The old woman's mind seemed for a time bewildered. She endeavoured to clear her eyes, pushed the stranger feebly from her, looked him intensely in the face for an instant, and then, uttering a loud scream, became altogether insensible.

"Oh, what shall I do!" exclaimed the stranger; "what have I done? I have murdered, I have murdered the mother that bore me! Oh, that I had staid at Brownhill inn till morning, and had apprized my poor parent—alas! my only parent—of my approach!"

Whilst he was ejaculating in this manner, the old woman's lips began to resume their usual colour, and she opened her eyes and her arms at once, exclaiming, in an agony of transport—

"My son! oh, my son! My long-lost, long-dead, long-despaired of son!"

The scene now became more calm and rational. The stranger passed, with his mother into the humble dwelling. I tied the horse to the door-sneek, and followed, more from curiosity than humanity. The stranger sat down on what he termed his old creepy stool, from which, in days long past, he had taken his porridge. He drew his mother near and nearer him, kissed her again and again, and the tears fell fast and full over his manly and weathered cheeks; and, ever and anon, as old Janet would eye her tall and manly son, she would exclaim, looking into his face at all the distance which her withered arms could place him—

"Ay, me! and is that my wee Geordie!"

The facts of Geordie's history I have often listened to with more than boyish interest; for this stranger ultimately took up his abode in a beautiful cottage, built on the spot where his original dwelling stood; and, as I came and went to Closeburn school, Mr George Smith would take me into his parlour, and discourse with me for hour after hour, and day after day, on all the varied incidents of a stirring and eventful life. His father died early, having lost his life by the fall of a tree which he was assisting in cutting down, or felling, as it is termed. George was a first born, and, indeed, an only child; and the kindness of the Laird, with the industry of his mother, combined to rear him into boyhood. Being, however, under no paternal authority, he became wild and wayward, and, ere he had gained his thirteenth year, he was a greater adept in fishing, orchard-breaking, and cock-fighting, than in Ovid and Virgil. It was his early fortune to become acquainted with an old sailor, who had been in various engagements, particularly in that betwixt Rodney and De Grasse, in the western seas. This sailor, whose name was Bill Wilson, and whose trade in his old age was that of smuggling tea and brandy from the Solway to the Clyde, used to fill his head with adventure, and daring purpose, and successful execution. He had listened, he said, for hours to Bill's account of Niggers and Buccaneers, and dare-devils, who fed on gunpowder, and walked, whistling, amidst cannon

and musket shots. And then, prize-money, and Plymouth, and fun, and frolic, all night long! The thing was irresistible; so, with a letter in his pocket, from Bill to an old comrade in the Isle of Man, then the centre of smuggling, George Smith took a moonlight leave of his mother, and his youthful associates, and the bonny braes of Dunsyette, and was on board a smuggler at Glencleap Key, ere day dawned. He was conveyed, in the course of forty-eight hours, to the Isle of Man, and fairly stowed into the warehouse of Dick Davison, in the neighbourhood of the town of Douglas. His first adventure was the landing of a cargo of French brandy, in the Bay of Glenluce; but the night was dark and stormy, and the boat upset; and, according to a published account, all in the boat—namely, three souls—had perished. The fact, however, was, that, whilst clinging to the inverted boat, he had been picked up by a West Indian ship from Greenock, which had been driven into the bay by stress of weather, and carried out incontinent, as no land could be made, to the island of Jamaica. In the meantime, Bill Wilson thought proper to get sick and to die, and to confess the whole truth, with the dreadful catastrophe, to the poor distracted mother.

When George arrived off Kingston, in Jamaica, he resolved upon pushing his way, in one way or another, upon land; so, having bid his captain good-by, and thanked him sincerely for the small trifle of saving his life, he set his foot on shore, almost naked, friendless, penniless. As he entered Kingston, he encountered a runaway steed, which, with a young lady screaming on its back, was plunging forwards, and entirely without control. George, acting on a natural impulse, threw himself in the way of the unruly animal, and, by getting hold of the bridle, at last brought it up; but not without several severe bruises, as he hung betwixt its fore-feet, unable, for want of weight, all at once to check the horse's career. The father of the young lady had now overtaken them; and, having alighted, extricated first his daughter, and then poor George Smith, from their perilous position. The young lady, who had in fact sustained no bodily injury, was loud in praise of him who, by his promptitude and intrepidity, had rescued her, in all probability, from much serious injury, or even from death; and George was immediately invited to accompany the party (for there was a well-mounted servant likewise) home to their villa, in the neighbourhood of the town. As they walked it slowly (the young lady refusing to mount anew) up the rising ground to the south of Kingston, George had sufficient time to unfold the particulars of his short but eventful history; and to interest the father not less by his good sense and sagacity, than he had the daughter by his intrepidity and self-devotion. In a word, George found favour in the great man's eyes; and was introduced to the overseer of an extensive plantation, with instructions, to have him clothed, employed as a clerk or slave driver, and properly attended to in all respects. This seeming accident George used always to consider as one of those arrangements of Divine providence, by which good is brought out of seeming evil; and a total destitution of all the necessaries of life was in his case prevented. For three years, George continued to act on these plantations, receiving many acts of kindness from his really humane employer; and waxing into vigorous manhood, without seasoning fever, or any disease whatever. It was Mr Walker's habit, (such was the name of his benefactor,) to have George up with him to dine every Saturday, when he had renewed opportunities of becoming acquainted with the young lady whom he had rescued; and who was now budding sweetly into the perfect and accomplished woman. The distance in point of wealth, and consequently station, (in a country where wealth is the only rank,) betwixt George and Miss Walker, kept the eyes of the parent long blind to the actual position of affairs. But true it was,

and of verity, that Miss Walker's heart was fairly won, and George's was as fairly lost, without one word on the subject of love having been exchanged on either side. Wonderful, unsearchable passion!—the electric fluid does not more universally penetrate nature herself, than does this passion the whole framework of society; and yet the ethereal agency is not more remote and inscrutable in its workings and doings, than in love—

“Sae, lang ere bonny Mary wist,
Her peace was lost, her heart was won.”

It was the employment of Miss Walker, on warm, yet refreshing evenings, to sit in her open veranda or balcony, playing on the harp, and wooing all the sea-breezes with the witchery of sweet sounds. To George Smith, who had never been accustomed to such refined and overpowering entertainment, this performance and exhibition, (for what is there in nature so graceful as a fine female hand and arm sweeping the strings of the harp?) was perfect magic. A thousand times, as he sat and gazed, trembling all over, he felt inclined to grasp the fair performer, harp and all, to his bosom; and to squeeze them incontinently into himself. Again and again he has arisen, and partly withdrawn, as one would from a house on fire. Nor was Miss Smith, on her part, insensible to the presence of a youth, uncommonly handsome, who had so early recommended himself to her good graces. Her walks and rides over the plantation were frequent; and she took particular pleasure in observing the progress of that part of her father's property over which George Smith more immediately presided. Her questions and inquiries were truly astonishing; and she seemed as anxious to learn all about the process of cane-cutting and sugar-boiling, as if her whole happiness had depended on this knowledge. But George was conscientious; and, although loving the “bonny lassie” (as he said) to distraction, he understood it as a crime worse than that of witchcraft—namely, of ingratitude—to disclose his feelings. For some months, matters were in this position—the young lady's health manifestly suffering, and George evidently visited by strange and unaccountable fits of silence and mental absence. The overseer, who happened to be more quick-sighted than even the father, from repeated observations, guessed at the truth; and, thinking it his duty, immediately apprised Mr Walker of his suspicions. As Mary had been destined, for some time, to another—to a neighbouring planter, whose property was adjoining to that of Mr Walker—steps were immediately devised to prevent the lovers from coming to any more definite understanding on the subject; and, one night, when George had just fallen asleep, after having penned a few lines to “Mary, flower of sweetest hue,” &c., he was forcibly seized upon, manacled, and carried on board a ship, which was lying at some distance from the harbour. By daylight, the vessel was under way, and, ere noon, not a blue hill of Jamaica could be seen from the deck of his Majesty's ship Spitfire. It was needless to remonstrate or grumble—his fate, and the cause of it, were but too manifest; and he almost felt inclined to justify an act, which at once put it out of his power to prove ungrateful to so kind a benefactor. Still, still the bright idea of Mary haunted his imagination, and would not depart from his heart.

In this frigate of forty-four guns, there was a countryman, and even countyman of his own; who, having more recently left the sweet banks of the silver Nith, was enabled to give him more recent information respecting affairs in Dumfriesshire; and from him he learned, that his poor mother's heart had broken, and that she was reported to have died a few days before he had left the place. This distressed George exceedingly; for, though he had been an idle and wayward boy, under more strict management, it might have been otherwise; and he manifestly bore in his

bosom a kind and a feeling heart. But who can recall the past, or the dead from their appointment? So, in the active discharge of duty as a seaman, and in the enjoyment of the company of one or two intimate companions, George confessed that he soon chafed, in a great measure, the mournful tidings from his recollection. It was not so easy, however, to get rid of Mary; and he used to entertain his friend Tom Harkness with all the outs and ins, the hopes and fears, the pulsations and ecstasies of his love passion. In this ship, George sailed first to Rio Janeiro, then across the Atlantic to Cape Town, back again to the Azores, and ultimately, by the coast of France, into Plymouth. Although, during the whole of these voyages, they had had no wind-falls, no prizes, yet his pay had accumulated, and he landed with fifty guineas in his pocket. Having no friend or home, as he now conceived, to return to, he immediately took coach for London, resolved to make the most, in sailor phrase, of his fifty guineas. Over this part of Mr George Smith's history he himself ever preserved a veil; but I could easily gather, that his conduct, during four weeks spent in London, was, like that of many others similarly situated, anything but prudent, moral, or praiseworthy. Having at last got rid of the yellow boys, he bethought himself of returning to Plymouth, and of obtaining a berth as purser, if possible, in one of the many ships of war lying in that port. When on his way down to Plymouth, he became the fellow-traveller, in the stage-coach, of a lady of a *certain age*, fair, fat, and forty, who was on a visit to a relative in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. As his manners and person were both agreeable, he contrived to get into the good graces of the fair dame, who was yet ignorant of the "betters and the worse" of matrimony. So much was the buxom damsel taken with her travelling companion, that she invited him to visit her at "View Cottage," about a mile from Plymouth. This invitation was willingly accepted—the visit was paid, the reception was most flattering, and, in the course of a fortnight, George was in possession of the charming Miss Higgenbottom, with one thousand pounds for her portion. With this money and the wife, George contrived to spend a couple of months at a place near Exeter, as unhappily as possible. His wife was the daughter of a rich butcher in Whitechapel, and as unlike her husband in tastes, temper, and pursuits, as possible. She was, moreover, miserably addicted to the bottle, which, with the help of a sufficient quantity of opium, brought her to the grave in the course of the time mentioned. As George, during this period, had lived upon the principal of his wife's money, he was just now where he was before—ready to step on board ship, and to push his fortune. On board ship, therefore, he went, and was immediately in the western seas, keeping a sharp look-out after some privateers, which had been, for some time past, harassing our traders, and making prizes of our merchantmen. At this stage of his narrative, the hero of my tale used to get so animated, that I can still recall nearly the very words which I have heard, I am sure, fifty times at least.

"We had steered off and on for more than a month, betwixt Demerara and St Domingo, all along the stretch of the Leeward Islands. Our commander, Captain Broughton, was beginning to pet a little at our inactivity, and to thrust the tobacco into his left instead of his right cheek—a sure mark that he was out of tune. At last, a sail appeared on the horizon, which, from her rigging, seemed of a suspicious character, and the orders were immediately issued to bear down upon her. As we neared, she hoisted British colours, and slipped quietly across our bows.

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed old 'Broughty'; 'none of your tricks upon travellers, my lad—you are no more British than I am a kail-stock; and that we will very soon ascertain, by putting a few home-thrust questions to you.' So

saying, he ordered two shots to be fired across her bows. Upon finding that we were disposed to grapple with her, she instantly hoisted her own colours, and sent a broadside right across our quarters. The battle now began in good earnest, and, for a full half-hour, we bowled away, as if all hell had been on deck. When the smoke cleared a little, we could see that we had disabled our adversary, by shooting away part of his rigging; and the captain's orders were to arm and board instantly. We rushed on board like furies; but, in the desperate struggle, our captain fell, and almost every officer on board. There was the hesitation of a moment, which determined our fate; for the dare-devils rushed in upon us, fore and aft, and made sad work of it. Not a man, with the exception of myself, the first lieutenant, and the steward, was spared; the cutlass, and the deep soon obliterated the gallant crew of the Thunderer. It was, indeed, an awful sight; and, expecting every moment to be put to some horrid death by the monsters, I leaped from the deck into the sea, and remember nothing more till I awoke, as I conceived, in a state of future punishment. But over me there hung a countenance with which I was too well acquainted ever to mistake it: it was that of Mary Walker, my first, and dearest, and never entirely forgotten love. Her father sat by, wrung his hands in absolute despair; and Mary's face was strangely altered—wan, shrunk, and full of extreme misery. I scarcely could credit my senses, and was on the point of coming to some explanation, when a terrible tramping and bustle on board bespoke some approaching crisis. It was so. A British seventy-four was in the act of bearing straight down upon the crippled privateer, and the scarcely less disabled Thunderer, and all on board was despair and distraction. Resistance was found to be out of the question; so, in less than an hour, we were all conveyed safely on board of the Neptune—Captain Briggs, commander. We were immediately carried into Kingston, and landed at our own desire—Mr Walker having satisfied Captain Briggs in regard to my discharge from his Majesty's service."

The explanation of the whole matter was this:—Miss Walker, after her lover's departure, became very disconsolate, and her health ultimately became very precarious. The more temperate air of Britain was recommended, and her fond father had sailed with her, with the view of placing her somewhere in Devonshire, with a near relative. He proposed to return for a season, to wind up his affairs finally, which, of late, had not prospered, and to spend the remainder of his days and fortune in his native land. They had only sailed twelve hours, when, after a desperate and unequal struggle, they were captured, and put under hatches. During the desperate engagement which succeeded, the sequel explains itself. They were ultimately landed in safety at the pier from which they had started, and all slept, the following night, under Mr Walker's roof. George Smith and Mary Walker were married in the course of a few months, nor did her husband perceive that her health declined. She lived to become the mother of two children—a boy and a girl—when her father, whose affairs, from some unlooked for losses, had become embarrassed, died suddenly, not without some ugly surmises respecting the cause. Smith, after this, had no heart to remain on the island; so, collecting the remnant of a once princely fortune, he embarked, with his beloved wife and children, for Britain. Finding, however, that he could not succeed to his wish in his native land, he set out for Bourdeaux, where he established himself in the wine trade, and, in the language of sacred writ, "begat sons and daughters." There he lived many years, in domestic peace and happiness, enjoying the society and affection of a most attached and amiable partner, and getting his family disposed of, till only one daughter remained with him unmarried. At

last, death robbed him, in the disguise of a slow or typhus fever, of his beloved Mary; and, with his beautiful and amiable daughter, he sought again the shores of his own Scotland—his beloved Dumfries, his native Closeburn. Whilst dining with his daughter at Brownhill, he had learned that his aged mother was still alive, and an inmate of the same dwelling which he had himself inhabited. The rest of the story can easily be anticipated: his mother was well provided for during the few years—and they were but few—of her *happily* protracted existence; and his lovely and affectionate Eliza is now the mother of seven children, and the virtuous and beloved wife of the humble narrator of these "Family Incidents."

HOME AND THE GIPSY MAID.

I HAVE been at school and college, I have read considerably in books, and have attended debating societies to satiety. Thus I have picked up a deal of what the world calls useful knowledge and worldly wisdom. But there is one branch of education to which I am more indebted than to any other whatever. I was born in the retired solitude of a mountain glen. I was myself alone amongst the mountains, with my mother and two old women, my relatives. I did not know, at the time, that I was any way peculiarly situated. I felt joyous and happy from morn to night; but the cause of all this happiness was no matter of inquiry. In fact, I never thought of causes at all. I took nature as she appeared, and put no impertinent questions to her. There I lay by a little stream, which, after dancing gaily down a steep and broken rock, became, all at once, a deep *bumbling* pool. There I lay, amidst the daisies and buttercups of spring, on the green plot, listening to the song of a thousand throats, and marking the suspended trout, as it rose to the fly, or floated along in the watery sunshine. At intervals, I would stretch myself supine; and, with my eyes half-closed, convert the clouds which covered in our little valley, into what shapes and forms my fancy pleased. The wild bee passed in his hum; but I saw him not. The grasshopper chirruped from the adjoining grass; but I marked not his form or his locality. The buzz of insect life was in the air, and on the earth. I was not alone, and I felt it; my companions were the happy, the lively, the rejoicing, the exulting; and I partook of all their sentiments. I was, in fact, a unity lost in the midst of countless beings—a single throb in the great framework of animated nature. And, then, there were the woods which embanked and enclosed me all around. The oak, with its spread stole and broad leaf; the glorious birch, rising in pillows of green fragrance, and overtopping all; the hazel, in its less aspiring nature, peeping from betwixt the trees; and the sweet hawthorn, bestudding the brae, arrayed in a wedding suit of purest white. The tall ash tree was there; and the rowan-tree, and the sloe-thorn, and the rasp-berry, and the bramble. The whole valley was my own orchard; and I selected, at pleasure, without check or restraint, the nut, the sloe, and the hynd-berry. Upon the top of the tall ash, there I sat, with the mavis for my companion on one side, and the blackbird on the other. With all manner of birds I was familiar; from the pyat to the water-wag-tail. The searching for nests was my spring recreation, from April till July—I could tell at once the inmate from the construction of its abode. The eggs of the linnet, goldfinch, yorling, laverock, robin, titling, thrush, and blackbird, were as familiar to me as the letters of the alphabet. And if I wandered but a mile-and-a-half up the glen, I was in the midst of barrenness and solitude. The shepherd loomed from the distant horizon—the sheep roved along the steep—the goats clung to the cliffs. There the

hawk and the raven had their abode; and there hung their nests from the projecting rock, or the horizontal tree. The heath was the nursery of its wild inmates. The whaup, and plover, and lapwing piped, and whistled, and fluttered around me. I was in the midst of their nesting-ground; and they seemed disposed to sacrifice me to their fears. Overhead were the lofty peaks of Queensberry—the greater and the less twin pillars—over which the pediment of heaven was spread. The mist trailed and deepened. I beheld its approach; and witnessed its breaking up into shreds and patches. I saw the first gleam of the sunshine, as it struggled through the density, and stood revealed in all the glory of a full effulgence of sunlight. My fishing-rod, a hazel sapling, was in my hand, and I pulled, from streams and gullets of the most tiny dimensions, large black and yellow trouts. There they lay, amidst the wet spret, or on the velvet fringe of the streamlet, in all the glory of scale and fin. My soul leaped in unison to their motions; and I absolutely danced in ecstasy. When I gained the mountain summit—O my God! what impressions I have had of beauty and sublimity! On the one hand, the dark, southern range, ranging away eastward, in barren magnitude; on the other, the green and softly-outlined Leadhills, rounded into magnificence. Before me, and stretching far southward, the distant Criffell, lumbering on the horizon; the sunny Solway, gleaming in light; the Nith, winding and coquetting with its fertile banks and fruitful plains; the Annan, a younger but scarcely less lovely sister, running its lateral course to the same ultimate destiny; the nascent feeders of the Clyde, Carsehope, and Darr, bursting from their mossy cradles, into the wilderness around them, rejoicing in their solitudes, and in their numerous and undisturbed inmates. Oh, what is education—the alphabet in all its combinations and significations—to this! When in after life I have had occasion to animate my public addresses with simile, or to inspire them with sentiment—when at the desk, and with the pen in my hand, I have fished in my brain for metaphor or illustration—I have constantly recurred to my infant, my boyish home; to my native glen, and woods, and streams, and cliffs, and mountains; and when I have once seated myself on the Cat-craig, or on a branch of the oak or the birch, I feel myself quite at home. I can, indeed, call spirits, as I do now, from the depths of imagination and feeling—I can ascend, in the spiral movements of that blue smoke, which lies so soft and silky between me and the opposite greenward. I can sympathise with those devout and happy hearts, which, in simple female habiliments, are now plying the wheel, or preparing the frugal repast within. I see the domestic fowls in their sunny happiness, flapping their wings in the dusty corner of the kail-yard, or crowing in frolic till the echoes are awakened. There is but one world—one sinless, sorrowless, painless world—and this is it. Where then were the cares of the great world, which has absorbed this one? Where the jarrings of envy—the justlings of competition—the dread of disappointment—the frenzy of hope—the fever of love—the whole bevy of passions, which form the Corrievecken of the heart! They were then, like Abraham's posterity, in Abraham's loins; they were possibilities, mere futurities—sleeping undisturbed and undisturbing in the limbs of contingencies. Alas! that ever my soul awoke from this dream!—that ever, one fine summer evening, I discovered that a change had come over my nature—that I had crept unknowingly into youth—that there was a soft delicious fire in my blood, which made me look beyond my humble cottage, with its aged inmates, for gratification and happiness! Oh, the exquisite, the ecstatic delight of this first awakening into the manhood of feeling!—when the passion flower is just opening—when the nerves are troubled, for the first

time, by the sensibilities of sex—when the blooming cheek, the rosy lip, the inviting glance, and the happily moulded rotundities of the female form, become, for the first time, an object of fearful, of indescribable, of trembling interest! I ask any one of my readers, male and female, Was it not thus with you? Did not your first perceptions of the full compass of your nature, come upon you at once? Come, no blushing, now—no shuffling—it was even so; but you never liked to speak of it to any one. You thought that, in this respect, you were singular; but now that you see I have turned king's evidence, you are conscious that what I aver is true. Here, then, I fix my land-mark, with the age of puberty; all on this side is school, college, society, the world, care, troubles, and anxieties; all before this was that paradise from which I still pluck, as on this occasion, an apple or two, to refresh you and me as we journey along. Come, now, good-natured reader, and I will tell you a tale or anecdote of this primeval state of my being.

In one of my early fishing excursions, I had the misfortune to lose myself in a dense fog or mist. I wandered on and on, not knowing well where I was, (for it is well known that, in such circumstances, the most familiar objects assume a strange and unknown aspect,) till at last I sat myself down on the brow of a peat-hag, not knowing well whether to cry or laugh at my wanderings. Twice had I come upon a tethered horse, and twice upon a thorn-tree with a solitary nest in it; so I found that I was assuredly walking in a circle, the centre of which, for anything that I could learn to the contrary, might very probably be my own habitation. Whilst employed in listening for the response of a mountain stream by which I might be directed, as by an old acquaintance, to a more familiar locality, I thought I heard a kind of strange, unearthly noise, coming from—I could not well tell by the ear—what quarter. I listened again, and all was silent, and I began to think that the noise had proceeded from some bird or beast in my immediate neighbourhood. Again, however, as I moved cautiously across the moss, the sound came upon me more distinctly—it was manifestly the sound of wailing and moaning, intermingled with much and hysterical sobbing. What could this mean? Night was at hand, the mist was manifestly mingling with the coming darkness, and here I was alone, in the presence, seemingly, of some unearthly being. My head was full of fairies and brownies, and such like supernaturals; and my heart, under such apprehensions, was as that of the bird taken in a snare. It immediately occurred to me that this must be some decoy fairy, employed in entrapping me into that unchristian brotherhood. The story of young "Tam Lean," which my mother had often repeated to me, occurred opportunely, to augment my apprehensions, and increase my agitation. I already felt as if mounted on a fairy-steed—I was "pawing the light clouds," and shaking my belled bridle over my native dwelling, without the power of returning to it. Whilst such meditations as these shook my whole frame, the awful voice of wo was manifestly approaching me; and I immediately took to my heels, "with all convenient speed, according to the rules of terror." But, in endeavouring to increase the distance betwixt the object of my fears and myself, I ran immediately and directly in upon it; and had all but fainted, as I saw immediately before me a small female figure running about, and crying piteously. The form came upon my vision very indistinctly, and induced me to reverse my steps, and set off in double swift time in a direction opposite to that in which I had advanced. To my utter horror and amazement, the thing pursued me swiftly, and screaming at the top of its voice. This was indeed appalling, and I already felt as if I had taken up my residence in the dark recesses of a fairy-knowe. I ran and screamed, whilst it ran screaming too. Through moss and pool, and spret and

heath, there we coursed it along—startling the whaups and miresnipes with our music. At last I was fairly overcome, and threw myself head foremost into a peat-hag, whilst my pursuer halted immediately over my person. Oh, I could have wished to have concealed myself, at this moment, somewhere near the centre of the earth; when a couple of shepherd's curs appeared, and instantly afterwards James Hogg, the Mitchelslacks hind, (since better known as the Ettrick Shepherd,) stood before me.

"What's a' this o't, sirs?" said Hogg, eyeing my tormentor and myself with a look of perplexed inquiry. "What's the matter wi' ye, Tam, that ye're derned that gate into the throat o' a moss-hole? Get up, man, an' tell me whar ye fell in wi' this bit pair lassie."

The lassie, in the meantime, had lunged to the shepherd's knees, and was endeavouring, but unsuccessfully, to speak.

"It's a fairy!" I exclaimed. "O Jamie Hogg, it's a fairy!—hae naething to do wi't; it has pursued me this hour past;" (not in reality above two minutes!) "and I saw a great many more fairies up by yonder. O Jamie, dinna meddle wi't; it's uncanny, I'm sure."

Hereupon the fairy began to give utterance, in tones quite human, to a fearful statement, implying, that she had been carried off from Annan by some gipsies, and carried away by them to the wild hills; and that, about an hour ago, she had run away in the mist, and had fairly escaped, but become alarmed as the darkness approached, and had followed me, as her only guide and protector in these wild hills. I cannot tell how much I felt relieved by this statement; and, as I began to gather up my members into a human shape, I saw plainly that my pursuer was a fine, well-taught lassie, about ten or eleven years of age, and no unearthly fairy, as I had so lately believed. Hogg laughed heartily at my mistake, telling me that I had find the lasses, by an' by, muckle waur than the fairies; and that, instead o' rinnin awa frae them, I wad be rinnin after them. At the time when these words were spoken, I did not rightly understand their meaning; but, reading them through the spectacles of future experience, I now understand them to the letter.

Just as this conversation was finished, a great, tall, lumbering, but most athletic fellow, bore down upon us, through the mist. At sight of him the poor girl screamed piteously, and clung to Hogg, and begged most imploringly that she should not be given up to that "terrible man." Hogg had just thrown off his plaid, adjusted his staff, and put himself determinedly betwixt the stranger and the girl, when down came two brother shepherds, attracted, in all probability, by the noise, and guessing immediately that a battle was about to ensue. When the tinker saw that the odds were thus against him, he bent his course, as if he had mistaken his way, in another direction, and was immediately lost in obscurity. Home to my mother's was this poor girl conducted by Hogg and me; and for three days and nights she partook of my home and board. Her story was simple and consistent. She had been out pulling rushes, to make a rush-cap, in a wood adjoining to the town of Annan, when she was accosted by a woman, who was exceedingly kind to her, giving her some sugar-bools, and decoying her by fair words into the centre of the forest. There she found four or five men, with a great many women, children, asses, &c., employed in making spoons, pans, &c., at a fire lighted in the open air. The children immediately gathered around her, and endeavoured to engage her in some games, whilst the "terrible man," as she always designated the chief of the gang, patted her on the cheek, and said—

"You must come along with me, and be my daughter.

Meantime the whole party were in motion, and the poor child was tossed into a pannier, on the back of an ass, and,

being bound down with cords, was carried all night long, she knew not whither. By daybreak she found herself on the banks of a mountain-stream, and no human habitation within view. In this station, she had remained for three days, being always kindly used; but observing fearful scenes, and hearing dreadful expressions. At last, being worn out with crying, and partly gained over by the companionship of her playmates, she had assumed a more resigned and contented appearance, in consequence of which she ceased to be watched with so much vigilance. Taking advantage, however, of the mist, and of the absence of the greater part of the women, she had edged into the stream, along the almost dry channel of which she had run, till she lost sight of the encampment, and had taken at once to the hill without knowing whither she was flying. Fatigued, however, at last, and terrified, she had even resolved to retrace, if possible, her steps, when the occurrence above mentioned brought her refuge and safety.

I shall never forget the scene which took place on the occasion of the restoration of this sweet girl to her parents, who were immediately informed by Hogg of the asylum which the poor wanderer had found. But, as every breath in which the genuine feelings of humanity are implanted, will immediately conceive what such a meeting must have been, I shall not attempt to describe it. We were all in tears, and the poor mother fainted outright, as she grasped convulsively her lost lamb (as she tenderly termed it) to her bosom.

I have lived long, and so has Jeanie Paton, the now respected mother of a large family, and the wife of honest Willie Paton, the best fisher and the best weaver in all Annandale. When I take my annual excursions south, their house is my home, and a day's fishing with Willie in the Annan, is to me a treat of no ordinary delight—Jeanie welcomes us with her best, though to be sure I occasionally rub her a little too hard, in reference to the circumstance which made us first acquainted.

THE RETURN

'Alas! regardless of their fate,
The little victims play;
No sense have they of ills to come,
No cares beyond to-day.'

In passing by coach to Cheltenham, in the year 1831, I dined with a very agreeable fellow at Carlisle. It so happened that, in the course of conversation, I discovered that he was a class-fellow of mine some forty-five years ago. But we had been separated ever since; nor was there a single feature by which I could recognise his countenance. He wore a wig, was sallow, withered, and almost emaciated; whereas Charles M'Murdo, the boy of my acquaintance, was a chubby, rosy imp, with a heart as light as a feather, and feet as swift as a roe. Nevertheless, if I did not recognise him, he soon discovered me: the change upon my person being less remarkable, as I had never left my own country, nor been any way exposed to extreme climate, either of heat or cold. He having some business to transact in London, as I had in Cheltenham, we agreed, before parting, and whilst the guard was blowing his horn, to rendezvous, on my return, at Liverpool, and to proceed north in company with each other. Accordingly, at the appointed day and hour, we met; ordered a private room and a comfortable dinner at the Saddle, a bottle of good old port, and a strict watch upon all intrusion. What a night we had of it! All the scenes of our youth rose into review, and, as glass after glass, and perhaps bottle after bottle, disappeared, our souls warmed, our imaginations fired, our memories, like the churchyard at the day of

reckoning, "gave up the dead that were in them," and at last we all but embraced each other, shaking hands from time to time, as the toast arose to some old remembrance, some school companion now no more. There had been twelve of us in the same class; and my friend and I were all that remained, (like Job's friends,) to think or to speak of the fate of the rest. One, two, three, had gone to Jamaica, and had perished, sooner or later, in quest or in possession of competence or wealth; two had been ruined by dissipated company at college, had enlisted, and perished at Waterloo; one had done well as a surgeon at Sierra Leone, but had fevered at last, and died. In short, the roll-call was mournful—we were the skeleton of the class, its ghost, its shadow; but we were alive, beside a comfortable fire and a cheerful gas light, and with wine before us; and it is wonderful how soon we forgot the mournful recollection which would ever and anon peep in upon us through the mazes of our many-hued discourse. At last, our enthusiasm began somewhat to subside; we ordered tumblers and hot water, with the necessary accompaniments, drew in the table closer to the fire, for it was the month of November, and agreed each to give the narrative of his own life and experience. My tale was soon told, nor would it be any way interesting to the reader to hear it. I had been a home-bird, and had attained, without much adventure or difficulty, a respectable position in society; but my old companion had been tossed about in the world, as he expressed it, like a *quid* of hay in the throat of a cow; and I shall endeavour to put the reader in possession of the outline of what Charles M'Murdo, that night, betwixt the hours of seven and eleven, related to me in large detail.

"You know," said he, "my debut: I was sent out to Jamaica, by Mr Watson, a rich planter, to act as clerk on his plantations—in other words, to keep a large and terrible whip in constant employ. Our voyage was tempestuous; I frequently felt as if the ship, in her lurches into the trough of the sea, would never reascend, but would go down head foremost to the bottom of the Atlantic. But our captain was a skilful seaman, kept his men in heart, had his orders promptly obeyed, and we weathered the storm. Landing at Kingston, I was received in, what was termed, a warehouse, by an overseer, who, after reading Mr Watson's letter, cursed me as a supernumerary, and said I might go where I liked, but I could not be there; they had too many of my sort already. Watson, he called an old superannuated fool, who was determined, seemingly, to ruin the estate by the mere expense of working it. In a little, however, the storm blew over. Having drunk pretty deeply from a tumbler of rum and water—at least so he called it, though for my part I never could discover any trace of the water, and think this element might easily have proved an alibi in any court of justice—he made me partake of his beverage, and tumble in into a corner of a counting-room, beyond a number of chairs, desks, and old ledgers. My bed was none of the best, but the weather was exceedingly warm, and I contrived to sleep pretty soundly till morning. Next day, I was roused betimes, by a black slave, naked to the middle, and instructed in my day's work. I was to join some four or five slave-drivers at a common rendezvous, and with them to march a-field, suitably provided for my task. I saw the poor slaves hard at work—digging the soil, and planting slips of cane, under a most oppressive sun; I saw, likewise, my hardened and inhuman associates applying the scourge to mothers with children at the breast, to the old, and to the infirm. I could not stand it; my heart sank within me. Oh, how I sighed for my own native land, with all its advantages and endearments!—and how I cursed my ambition, that had been kindled at the wheels of the chariot of Mr Watson, who, though born poor as I was, had realized an immense fortune in Jamaica!"

Hereupon he burst out into a eulogy on Britain, and the administration which had given liberty to the slaves, and, at the same time, remunerated the unhallowed proprietors; but, after a short pause, during which I expressed my anxiety to hear the sequel of his story, he proceeded:—

“Well, custom will reconcile one to anything. You will scarcely believe me when I tell you that, though shy at first, and backward in the active discharge of my duty, I came at last to regard it as a matter of course, and to imagine that the poor blacks did not feel as I did, or experience the pain which such an infliction would have occasioned to myself. I was one day chastising a fellow, who absolutely refused to labour, on the score of indisposition, which I knew or believed to be put on, when a little child, of the African breed, came up to me, and, with a look of perfect nature and simplicity, said—

“Ah, massa, you no have father—you never know father—you no black man’s boy—you no born at all, massa—you made of stone—you have no pity for poor black boy’s pa!”

“The speech struck me exceedingly. I immediately ordered the father into the sick-house, and, patting the boy on the head, said he was a good, kind-hearted boy, and I would look after him for this. All this was repeated at head-quarters, and was represented as neglecting my duty, and conniving at the idle and the dissolute amongst the slaves; and I being summoned into the overseer’s presence, was examined, confessed the truth, and was immediately dismissed the estate.

“Where was I to turn?—Without a character, no other plantation would admit my services. The heavens over my head were iron, the earth was brass. I could get no employment, and to beg I was ashamed. I wandered down to the sea-shore, and in my excursion met with several ladies and gentlemen, riding on beautiful chargers, talking and laughing loudly all the while—and I wished to be one of them. It was this stimulus which had set me in motion, made me cross the Atlantic, and submit to great indignities—and yet here I was, an outcast less valuable than the wrecks which lined the bay. No one of the various cavalades took the least notice of me; and I seated myself, at last, on a rock, and began to plunge little water-worn pebbles into the smooth bay. After a considerable interval of most poignant despair, the little black boy made his appearance, and told me that he had just heard of my dismissal, and that his father wished to see me in the hospital. I went with the boy, half-stupified, and almost unconscious of either motive or motion. The poor, grateful creature wished me to take some money, which he had accumulated by his Sabbath afternoon industry; but I refused it at once, though I did so with tears of gratitude in my eyes. He then informed me that he had formerly slaved on an adjoining plantation, and that his former master was of a more kindly disposition than the present one. He had just heard of the death of one of his clerks, and, if I would present myself immediately, ere the next fleet should arrive with a fresh supply of slave-drivers, he had no doubt but, from my appearance, and my good hand of writing, I might find employment. I took the honest creature’s advice; and, accompanied by little Ebony, made the best of my way to Hillside plantation, about a mile and a half from Kingston. The kind-hearted boy went before me, and, chancing to meet Mr Ferguson, the proprietor of Hillside estate, he threw himself on his knees before him, in the most imploring manner—

“Young gentleman dismissed; but he no ill—he kind to poor father—he very kind to black man when sick. Massa know poor Gabby.”

“Ere the boy had risen from his knees, I had presented myself to Mr Ferguson, and told my own story precisely as it stood. Luckily for me, Mr Ferguson and my former employer

were upon the worst terms possible; so I found no difficulty in getting a temporary appointment, on trial. It is said, somewhere, that despotism is the best of all governments, when the despot is a good man. This is truly verified in these islands. Nothing can differ more than does the usage of the slaves in different plantations. The overseer, Mr Handy, on Watson’s plantation, he whom I had just left, was a brutal person, almost constantly under the excitement or reaction of rum, and his slaves were constantly beaten, and ill-used in every way; whereas the Hillside slaves were allowed all possible indulgences, and really seemed quite happy. They used to go about, on the fine Jamaica evenings, singing, dancing, and playing upon instruments, visiting and returning visits, and enjoying all the happiness of which their state was susceptible. I lived two years on this plantation, and was handsomely paid as a clerk. I now for the first time began to think of accumulating money, with the view of purchase or partnership. But an incident occurred at this stage of my fortunes, which gave them an unforeseen turn. I was kidnapped, whilst walking on the sea-shore, rather late one evening, and immediately carried on board a vessel, which sailed ere morning. This had been done, as I afterwards understood, under the direction of Handy; who, having heard of my good fortune and prosperity, persuaded a brother of his, who traded to Hudson’s Bay in the fur trade, to carry me there, and keep me out of his sight. He could not bear to think that I might possibly one day come to effect an establishment in his immediate neighbourhood. Captain Handy was a cruel, despotic, weatherbeaten piece of mortality; he carried me in a few months to Hudson’s Bay, and had me introduced into a great house in the fur trade. In vain, when I got ashore, did I remonstrate against the violence which had been used in regard to me; I was immediately clothed in warm garments, armed with a musket, and marched over land, along with about ten or twelve copper-faced Indians, towards the upper Lakes of the St Lawrence. Our ultimate destination was Lake Superior. There we were commissioned to trade with the Indians, exchanging muskets, spirits, and various kinds of cutlery, for fur skins. There was a small settlement in the centre of the lake, but there were not sufficient provisions for the additional numbers during winter; so we were expected to return on land, to the settlement on Hudson’s Bay ere the winter set in. But, this year, the American winter commenced a month earlier than usual, and with unprecedented severity. We had nothing but one log house to accommodate upwards of thirty people; but this erection was of considerable extent, and leaned against several growing trees. Our situation became immediately all but desperate. You can have no idea of an American winter in such latitudes.” (Hereupon, I stirred the fire, and helped myself to a glass of toddy.) “The snow comes on at once, and the atmosphere is so loaded and thickened with drift, that you may cut it into cubes with a knife. And then the snow, which in a few hours accumulates over your dwelling to the very roof, penetrates everywhere through your wooden erection. In spite of a blazing hearth, you are shivering almost in the midst of the flame. The horrors of that winter I can never forget; we were, long ere New Year’s Day, reduced to our daily shifts for our daily food. Had it not been for our Indian friends, we should have perished of hunger to a man; but their skill in archery and even in ball shooting is altogether incredible. Nothing borne on wings over our heads, escaped them. The bow was lifted immediately to the eye, the arrow was pointed, and followed for a small space the course of the bird; it flew, but apparently not straight for the object, but greatly in advance of it; but, ere it had gained its utmost ascent, the winged and the feathered objects had crossed on their courses, and the prey fell immediately, transfixed by the arrow. We broke the

ice, too, of the lake, which was often three feet in thickness, and, with bait prepared by the Indians, of the seeds of trees, decoyed occasionally some half-starved fish to our lines. But with all appliances and means to boot, we became perfect skeletons, several died of various complaints, all brought on by cold, and spare as well as unwholesome diet. Oh, what would I then have given for a dinner such as we have enjoyed this day! But, not to fatigue you with exclamations and with representations of suffering which to you must seem incredible, the winter gave way at last, and its departure was agreeably unexpected with its approach; the thaw came as much earlier as the frost had anticipated its average approach. Our boats were again on the lake, and we were enabled to ship off our skins for their ultimate destination, Montreal. As I had shewn considerable talents, and what they termed mettle, during the winter trials, the commander of the party had me boated off, along with the skins, for Mr Syme's warehouse, at Montreal. Here I met with a friend, in a cousin of my mother. He immediately took me into his warehouse.

"By this time I was sufficiently tired of a moving life; like the rolling stone of the proverb, I had gathered no fog—'*movebam, sed nil promovebam.*' I was very happy, therefore, when Mr Syme proposed my remaining at least some time with him, in the capacity mentioned. Montreal, as everybody knows, is situated upon an island in the St Lawrence, and few places could be more advantageous for trade, or more picturesque in appearance. In the centre of the island, there rises a beautiful eminence, still covered with trees of the primeval American forests; and towards the eastern skies lies the town itself, upper and lower, adorned with public buildings, and presenting, as you approach it, a very prepossessing aspect. Mr Syme had a warehouse, at a place called Chine, about eight miles up, and immediately upon the river. Here the furs were shipped for Europe, and Britain in particular, and here it was my duty to remain, except on Sundays, when I constantly dined with my kind relative. Mr Syme had an only daughter, two sons having died, and the mother likewise, whilst being delivered of the last. This daughter was now a young woman of nineteen, and sufficiently handsome for matrimony, considering that she was to inherit her father's wealth and business, which was itself a mine of gain. Her father, who in many respects was a kind-hearted and a prudent man, was as obstinate as an old oak-trunk when he took it into his head to be so. Most people have some weak side or other—and this was his. He had determined, from the time when Samuel Horseman, the rich merchant, (the richest, it was supposed, in the island,) had rocked his Nancy in the cradle, and had suffered himself to be scorned with the child, that Nancy should one day or other be Mrs Horseman; and that thus, by the union of their families and their fortunes, there should not be a firm in Montreal that would once be spoken of in the same day with Horseman, Syme, & Co. This idea had grown with the growth of the child, and had strengthened with her strength—it was never twenty-four hours out of his head. But, one dreadful afternoon, Horseman arrived from Quebec, with a little pretty French milliner, whom he had married. This was death to Syme's plans and prospects, and so he set immediately about cutting Horseman, and looking out for some other advantageous way of disposing of his *article*, which had now seen some fourteen summers. But before he could settle upon any particular individual, he was relieved from his disappointment, and restored to his intercourse with Horseman, by a gallant sergeant, who claimed Mrs Horseman as his lawful and married wife; in fact, there were several claimants; but one was as good as a hundred to Horseman, who, by this time, was heartily tired of his partner, and would have willingly seen her attempting a voyage of discovery over the falls of Niagara. Syme

soon redoubled his diligence, and gave his daughter to understand that, so soon as she had attained the age of nineteen, the age of her mother when she became a bride, she should be exalted to all the honours and privileges of Mrs Horseman.

"There are two, it is said, at a bargain-making; but that is merely the *minimum*: in this case, there were three, and ultimately four. Miss Syme had been exceedingly annoyed by her father's unreasonable arrangement; she, of course, disliked Horseman, as she did everything old, ugly, snuffy, and bandy-legged; but her father was incessant in his importunities, or rather commands, and matters were in this state when the friend now addressing you made his appearance, and took up his principal residence at Chine. It was not long before Miss Syme and I came to understand each other. I do not know how it was—I was not romantically in love—perhaps it is not in my nature; but I was willing to hear the poor girl's story, and to mingle tears with hers. We never talked of love; but yet, somehow or other, it made an inroad upon the debateable territory on both sides, till we felt that we were assuredly over head and ears, from the circumstance that, like Darby and Joan, 'we were ever uneasy asunder.' The father began to smell a rat, as they say—at least you and I have often said whilst at school—and he was in a furious passion, threatened dismissal to me and imprisonment to Nancy. In the meantime, death, in the shape of an ague, carried Horseman beyond the reach of matrimony—he went to that land where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; and I became every day more and more useful to my employer. It was manifest to all that his heart had now softened, and that he had come to see the utter folly of human schemes when controverted by the decrees of heaven. One day, he was up at Chine, seeing some furs shipped for London; when, in passing from the shore to the ship, he slipped a foot, and fell into the water. There was no one who observed this but myself, as all the men were busily engaged. I immediately plunged headlong into the somewhat rapid stream. He was not to be found. The current had borne him downwards, and a water-dog, which was kept on purpose on board, was in the act, as I perceived, of dragging the body ashore. I assisted the animal, and got the credit of saving my friend.

"I need not delay you longer. I married Mr Syme's daughter, and succeeded, at his death, to the whole concern, which I have just wound up; and, having left my wife and an only daughter in London, I am on my way to visit, by surprise, my aged mother, who still lives in the place of my birth, and to purchase, if possible, a property in the neighbourhood, there to spend in peace, and affection, and domestic love, the evening of my days.—Will you go with me to Lastcairn?"

I agreed. We drove up the glen, by Croalchapel; and my friend was all absence, and inward rumination, and anticipated delight. But the footsteps of death were in the threshold. His aged parent was still alive and sensible, but manifestly fast going. She was made sensible that her long-lost Charlie, who had been so kind to her in her old age, was before her. She tried to stretch forth her withered arm, but it was scathed by death. She received the last embrace of her son, said something about "depart in peace," and fell asleep.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

BILL WHYTE.

I HAD occasion, about three years ago, to visit the ancient burgh of Fortrose. It was early in winter, the days were brief though pleasant, and the nights long and dark; and, as there is much in Fortrose which the curious traveller deems interesting, I had lingered amid its burying-grounds and its broken and mouldering tenements, till the twilight had fairly set in. I had explored the dilapidated ruins of the Chanonry of Ross; seen the tomb of old Abbot Boniface, and the bell blessed by the Pope; run over the complicated tracery of the Runic obelisk which had been dug up, about sixteen years before, from under the foundations of the old parish church; and visited the low, long house, with its upper windows buried in the thatch, in which the far-famed Sir James Mackintosh had received the first rudiments of his education. And, in all this, I had been accompanied by a benevolent old man of the place, a mighty chronicler of the past, who, when a boy, had sat on the same form with Sir James, and who, on this occasion, had seemed quite as delighted in meeting with a patient and interested listener, as I had been in finding so intelligent and enthusiastic a storiest. There was little wonder, then, that twilight should have overtaken me in such a place, and in such company.

There are two roads which run between Cromarty and Fortrose; the one, the king's highway; the other, a narrow footpath that goes winding for several miles under the immense wall of cliffs which overhangs the northern shores of the Moray Frith, and then ascends to the top, by narrow and doubtful traverses along the face of an immense precipice termed the Scarf's Crag. The latter route is by far the more direct and more pleasant of the two, to the day traveller; but the man should think twice who proposes taking it by night. The Scarf's Crag has been a scene of frightful accidents for the last two centuries. It is not yet more than twelve years since a young and very active man was precipitated from one of its higher ledges to the very beach—a sheer descent of nearly two hundred feet; and a multitude of little cairns which mottle the sandy platform below, bear witness to the no unfrequent occurrence of such casualties in the remote past. With the knowledge of all this, however, I had determined on taking the more perilous road: it is fully two miles shorter than the other; and besides, in a life of undisturbed security, a slight admixture of that feeling which the sense of danger awakens, is a luxury which I have always deemed worth one's while running some little risk to procure. The night fell thick and dark while I was yet hurrying along the footway which leads under the cliffs, and, on reaching the Scarf's Crag, I could no longer distinguish the path, nor even catch the huge outline of the precipice between me and the sky. I knew that the moon rose a little after nine; but it was still early in the evening, and, deeming it too long to wait its rising, I set myself to grope for the path, when, on turning an abrupt angle, I was dazzled by a sudden blaze of light from an opening in the rock. A large fire of furze and brushwood blazed merrily from the interior of a low-browed but spacious cave, bronzing with dusky yellow the huge volume of smoke, which went rolling outwards along the

roof, and falling red and strong on the face and hands of a thickset, determined-looking man, well nigh in his sixtieth year, who was seated before it on a block of stone. I knew him at once, as an intelligent, and, in the main, rather respectable gipsy, whom I had once met with, about ten years before, and who had seen some service as a soldier, it was said, in the first British expedition to Egypt. The sight of his fire determined me at once. I resolved on passing the evening with him till the rising of the moon; and after a brief explanation, and a blunt, though by no means unkind invitation to a place beside his fire, I took my seat, fronting him, on a block of granite, which had been rolled from the neighbouring beach. In less than half-an-hour, we were on as easy terms as if we had been comrades for years, and, after beating over fifty different topics, he told me the story of his life, and found an attentive and interested auditor.

Who of all my readers is unacquainted with Goldsmith's admirable stories of the sailor with the wooden leg, and the poor half-starved Merry-Andrew! Independently of the exquisite humour of the writer, they are suited to interest us from the sort of cross vistas which they open into scenes of life, where every thought, and aim, and incident, has at once all the freshness of novelty and all the truth of nature to recommend it. And I felt nearly the same kind of interest in listening to the narrative of the gipsy. It was much longer than either of Goldsmith's stories, and perhaps less characteristic; but it presented a rather curious picture of a superior nature rising to its proper level through circumstances the most adverse; and, in the main, pleased me so well, that I think I cannot do better than present it to the reader.

"I was born, master," said the gipsy, "in this very cave, some sixty years ago, and so am a Scotchman like yourself. My mother, however, belonged to the Debatable-land, my father was an Englishman, and of my five sisters, one first saw the light in Jersey, another in Guernsey, a third in Wales, a fourth in Ireland, and the fifth in the Isle of Man. But this is a trifle, master, to what occurs in some families. It can't be now much less than fifty years since my mother left us, one bright sunny day, on the English side of Kelso, and staid away about a week. We thought we had lost her altogether; but back she came at last, and, when she did come, she brought with her a small sprig of a lad, of about three summers or thereby. Father grumbled a little—we had got small fry enough already, he said, and bare enough and hungry enough they were at times; but mother shewed him a pouch of yellow pieces, and there was no more grumbling. And so we called the little fellow, Bill Whyte, as if he had been one of ourselves, and he grew up among us, as pretty a fellow as e'er the sun looked upon. I was a few years his senior; but he soon contrived to get half a foot a-head of me; and, when we quarreled, as boys will at times, master, I always came off second best. I never knew a fellow of a higher spirit; he would rather starve than beg, a hundred times over, and never stole in his life; but then for gin-setting, and deer-stalking, and black-fishing, not a poacher in the country got beyond him; and when there was a smuggler in the Solway, who more active than Bill? He was barely nineteen, poor fellow, when he made the country too hot to hold him. I remember the night as well as if it were yesterday. The Cat-maran lugger was,

in the Frith, dye see, a little below Carlaverock; and father and Bill, and some half dozen more of our men, were busy in bumping the kegs ashore, and hiding them in the sand. It was a thick smuggy night; we could hardly see fifty yards round us; and, on our last trip, master, when we were down in the water to the gunwale, who should come upon us, in the turning of a handspike, but the revenue lads from Kirkeudbright! They hailed us to strike in the Devil's name. Bill swore he wouldn't. Flash went a musket, and the ball whistled through his bonnet. Well, he called on them to row up, and up they came; but no sooner were they within half-oar's length, than, taking up a keg, and raising it just as he used to do the putting-stone, he made it spin through their bottom, as if the planks were of window glass; and down went their cutter in half a jiffy. They had wet powder that night, and fired no more bullets. Well, when they were gathering themselves up as they best could—and, goodness he praised! there were no drownings amongst them—we bumped our kegs ashore, hiding them with the others, and then fled up the country. We knew there would be news of our night's work; and so there was; for, before next evening, there were advertisements on every post for the apprehension of Bill, with an offered reward of twenty pounds.

Bill was a bit of a scholar—so am I for that matter—and the papers stared him on every side.

'Jack,' he said to me, 'Jack Whyte, this will never do; the law's too strong for us now; and, if I don't make away with myself, they'll either have me tucked up, or sent over seas to slave for life. I'll tell you what I'll do. I stand six feet in my stocking-soles, and good men were never more wanted than at present. I'll cross the country this very night, and away to Edinburgh, where there are troops raising for foreign service. Better a musket than the gallows!'

'Well, Bill,' I said, 'I don't care though I go with you. I'm a good enough man for my inches, though I aint so tall as you, and I'm woundily tired of spoon-making.'

And so off we set across the country, that very minute, travelling by night only, and passing our days in any hiding hole we could find, till we reached Edinburgh, and there took the bounty. Bill made as pretty a soldier as one could have seen in a regiment; and, men being scarce, I wasn't rejected neither; and, after just three weeks' drilling—and plaguy weeks they were—we were shipped off, fully finished, for the south. Bonaparty had gone to Egypt, and we were sent after him, to ferret him out; though we weren't told so at the time. And it was our good luck, master, to be put aboard of the same transport.

Nothing like seeing the world for making a man smart. We had all sort of people in our regiment—from the broken-down gentleman to the broken-down lamplighter; and Bill was catching, from the best of them, all he could. He knew he wasn't a gipsy, and had always an eye to getting on in the world; and, as the voyage was a woundy long one, and we had the regimental schoolmaster aboard, Bill was a smarter fellow at the end of it than he had been at the beginning. Well, we reached Aboukir Bay at last. You have never been in Egypt, master; but, just look across the Moray Frith here, on a sunshiny day, and you will see a picture of it, if you but strike off the blue Highland hills that rise behind, from the long range of low sandy hillocks that stretches away along the coast, between Findhorn and Nairn. I don't think it was worth all the trouble it cost us; but the King surely knew best. Bill and I were in the first detachment, and we had to clear the way for the rest. The French were drawn up on the shore, as thick as flies on a dead snake, and the bullets rattled round us like a shower of May-hail. It was a glorious sight, master, for a bold heart! The entire line

of sandy coast seemed one unbroken streak of fire and smoke; and we could see the old tower of Aboukir, rising like a fiery dragon at the one end, and the straggling village of Rosetta, half cloud half flame, stretching away on the other. There was a line of launches and gun-boats behind us, that kept up an incessant fire on the enemy, and shot and shell went booming over our heads. We rowed shorewards, under a canopy of smoke and flame; the water was broken by ten thousand oars; and never, master, have you heard such cheering; it drowned the roar of the very cannon. Bill and I pulled at the same oar; but he bade me cheer, and leave the pulling to him.

'Cheer, Jack,' he said, 'cheer!—I am strong enough to pull ten oars, and your cheering does my heart good.'

I could see, in the smoke and the confusion, that there was a boat stove by a shell just beside us, and the man immediately behind me was shot through the head. But we just cheered and pulled all the harder; and, the moment our keel touched the shore, we leaped out into the water, middle deep, and, after one well directed volley, charged up the beach with our bayonets fixed. I missed footing in the hurry, just as we closed, and a big whiskered fellow in blue, would have pinned me to the sand, had not Bill struck him through the wind-pipe, and down he fell above me; but when I strove to rise from under him, he grappled with me in his death agony, and the blood and breath came rushing through his wound in my face. Ere I had thrown him off, my comrades had broken the enemy, and were charging up the side of a sand hill, where there were two field-pieces stationed, that had sadly annoyed us in the landing. There came a shower of grape-shot, whistling round me, that carried away my canteen, and turned me half round; and, when I looked up, I saw, through the smoke, that half my comrades were swept away by the discharge, and that the survivors were fighting desperately over the two guns, hand to hand with the enemy. Ere I got up to them, however—and trust me, master, I didn't linger—the guns were our own. Bill stood beside one of them, all grim and bloody, with his bayonet dripping like an eaves-spout in a shower. He had struck down five of the French, besides the one he had levelled over me; and now, all of his own accord—for our sergeant had been killed—he had shotted the two pieces, and turned them on the enemy. They all scampered down the hill, master, on the first discharge—all save one brave, obstinate fellow, who stood firing upon us, not fifty yards away, half under cover of a sand-bank. I saw him load thrice ere I could hit him, and one of his balls whisked through my hat; but I caught him at last, and down he fell—my bullet went right through his forehead. We had no more fighting that day. The French fell back on Alexandria, and our troops advanced about three miles into the country, over a dreary waste of sand, and then lay for the night on their arms.

In the morning, when we were engaged in cooking our breakfasts, master, making what fires we could with the withered leaves of the date-tree, our colonel and two officers came up to us. The colonel was an Englishman—as brave a gentleman as ever lived—ay, and as kind an officer, too. He was a fine-looking old man, as tall as Bill, and as well built, too; but his health was much broken; it was said he had entered the army out of break-heart on losing his wife. Well, he came up to us, I say, and shook Bill by the hand, as cordially as if he had been a colonel like himself. He was a brave, good soldier, he said, and, to shew him how much he valued good men, he had come to make him a sergeant, in room of the one we had lost. He had heard he was a scholar, he said, and he trusted his conduct would not disgrace the halberd. Bill, you may be sure, thanked the colonel, and thanked him, master, very like a gentleman; and, that very day, he swaggered

scarlet and a sword, as pretty a sergeant as the army could boast of—ay, and for that matter, though his experience was little, as fit for his place.

For the first fortnight, we didn't eat the King's biscuit for nothing. We had terrible hard fighting on the 13th; and, had not our ammunition failed us, we would have beaten the enemy all to rags; but, for the last two hours, we hadn't a shot, and stood just like so many targets set up to be fired at. I was never more vexed in my life than when I saw my comrades falling round me, and all for nothing. Not only could I see them falling; but, in the absence of every other noise—for we had ceased to cheer, and stood as silent and as hard as foxes—I could hear the dull, hollow sound of the shot, as it pierced them through. Sometimes the bullets struck the sand, and then rose and went rolling over the level, raising clouds of dust at every skip. At times, we could see them coming through the air like little clouds, and singing all the way as they came. But it was the frightful smoking shot that annoyed us most; these horrid shells. Sometimes, they broke over our heads in the air, as if a cannon charged with grape had been fired at us from out the clouds; at times, they sank into the sand at our feet, and then burst up like so many Vesuviuses, giving at once death and burial to hundreds. But we stood our ground, and the day passed. I remember we got, towards evening, into a snug hollow between two sand-hills, where the shot skimmed over us, not two feet above our heads; but two feet is just as good as twenty, master; and I began to think, for the first time, that I hadn't got a smoke all day. I snapped my musket, and lighted my pipe, and Bill, whom I hadn't seen since the day after the landing, came up to share with me.

'Bad day's work, Jack,' he said; 'but we have at least taught the enemy what British soldiers can endure, and, ere long, we shall teach them something more. But here comes a shell! Nay, do not move,' he said; 'it will fall just ten yards short.' And down it came, roaring like a tempest, sure enough, about ten yards away, and sank into the sand. 'There now, fairly lodged,' said Bill; 'lie down, lads, lie down.' We threw ourselves flat on our faces—the earth heaved under us, like a wave of the sea, and, in a moment, Bill and I were covered with half a ton of sand. But the pieces whizzed over us; and, save that the man who was across me had an ammunition bag carried away, not one of us more than heard them. On getting ourselves dis-interred, and our pipes relighted, Bill, with a twitch on the elbow—so—said he wished to speak with me a little apart; and we went out together, into a hollow, in front.

'You will think it strange, Jack,' he said, 'that, all this day, when the enemy's bullets were hopping around us like hail, there was but just one idea that filled my mind, and I could find room for no other. Ever since I saw Colonel Westhope, it has been forced upon me, through a newly-awakened dream, like recollection, that he is the gentleman with whom I lived ere I was taken away by your people; for, taken away I must have been. Your mother used to tell me that my father was a Cumberland gipsy, who met with some bad accident from the law; but I am now convinced she must have deceived me, and that my father was no such sort of man. You will think it strange; but, when putting on my coat this morning, my eye caught the silver bar on the sleeve, and there leaped into my mind a vivid recollection of having worn a scarlet dress before—scarlet bound with silver; and that it was in the house of a gentleman and lady, whom I had just learned to call papa and mamma. And every time I see the colonel, as I say, I am reminded of the gentleman. Now, for heaven's sake, Jack, tell me all you know about me. You are a few years my senior, and must remember better than I can myself, under what circumstances I joined your tribe.'

'Why, Bill,' I said, 'I know little of the matter, and

'twere no great wonder though these bullets should confuse me somewhat in recalling what I do know. Most certainly we never thought you a gipsy like ourselves; but then I am sure mother never stole you; she had family enough of her own, and, besides, she brought with her, for your board, she said, a purse with more gold in it than I have seen at one time, either before or since. I remember it kept us all comfortably in the *creature* for a whole twelvemonth; and it wasn't a trifle, Bill, that could do that. You were at first like to die among us. You hadn't been accustomed to sleeping out, or to food such as ours. And, dear me! how the rags you were dressed in used to annoy you; but you soon got over all, Bill, and became the hardest little fellow among us. I once heard my mother say that you were a *love-begot*, and that your father, who was an English gentleman, had to part from both you and your mother on taking a wife. And no more can I tell you, Bill, for the life of me.'

We slept that night on the sand, master, and found, in the morning, that the enemy had fallen back some miles nearer Alexandria. Next evening, there was a party of us dispatched on some secret service across the desert. Bill was with us; but the officer under whose special charge we were placed was a Captain Turpic, a nephew of Colonel Westhope, and his heir. But he heired few of his good qualities. He was the son of a pettifogging lawyer, and was as heartily hated by the soldiers as the colonel was beloved. Towards sunset, the party reached a hollow valley in the waste, and there rested, preparatory, as we all intended, for passing the night. Some of us were engaged in erecting temporary huts of branches, some in providing the necessary materials, and we had just formed a snug little camp, and were preparing to light our fires for supper, when we heard a shot not two furlongs away. Bill, who was by far the most active among us, sprang up one of the tallest date-trees, to reconnoitre. But he soon came down again.

'We have lost our pains this time,' he said; 'there is a party of French, of fully five times our number, not half a mile away. The captain, on the news, wasn't slow, as you may think, in ordering us off; and, hastily gathering up our blankets and the contents of our knapsacks, we struck across the sand, just as the sun was setting. There is scarce any twilight in Egypt, master; it is pitch dark, twenty minutes after sunset. The first part of the evening, too, is infinitely disagreeable. The days are burning hot, and not a cloud can be seen in the sky; but, no sooner has the sun gone down, than there comes on a thick white fog, that covers the whole country, so that one can't see fifty yards around; and so icy cold is it, that it strikes a chill to the very heart. It is with these fogs that the dews descend; and deadly things they are. Well, the mist and the darkness came upon us at once; we lost all reckoning; and, after floundering on for an hour or so, among the sandhills, our captain called a halt, and bade us burrow as we best might among the hollows. Hungry as we were, we were fain to leave our supper, to begin the morning with, and huddled all together into what seemed a deep, dry ditch. We were at first surprised, master, to find an immense heap of stone under us; we couldn't have lain harder had we lain on a Scotch cairn; and that, d'ye see, is unusual in Egypt, where all the sand has been blown by the hot winds from the desert, hundreds of miles away, and where, in the course of a few days' journey, one mayn't see a pebble larger than a pigeon's egg. There were hard, round, bullet-like masses under us, and others of a more oblong shape, like pieces of wood that had been cut for fuel; and, tired as we were, their sharp points, protruding through the sand, kept most of us from sleep. But that was little, master, to what we felt afterwards. As we began to take heat together, there broke out among us a most disagreeable stench;

bad, at first, and unlike anything I had ever felt before, but at last altogether overpowering. Some of us became dead sick, and some, to shew how much bolder they were than the rest, began to sing. One half the party stole away one by one, and lay down outside; for my own part, master, I thought it was the plague that was breaking out upon us from below, and lay still, in despair of escaping it. I was wretchedly tired, too, and, despite of my fears and the stench, I fell asleep, and slept till daylight. But never before, master, did I see such a sight as when I awoke. We had been sleeping on the carcasses of ten thousand Turks, whom Bonaparte had massacred about a twelvemonth before. There were eyeless skulls grinning at us by hundreds from the side of the ditch, and black, withered hands and feet sticking out, with the white bones glittering between the shrunken sinews. The very sand, for roods around, had a brown ferruginous tinge, and seemed baked into a half-solid mass, resembling clay. It was no place to loiter in; and you may trust me, master, we breakfasted elsewhere. Bill kept close to our captain all that morning; he didn't much like him, even so early in their acquaintance as this—no one did, in fact; but he was anxious to learn from him all he could regarding the colonel. He told him, too, something about his own early recollections; but he would better have kept them to himself. From that hour, master, Captain Turpic never gave him a pleasant look, and sought every means to ruin him.

We joined the army again on the evening of the 20th March. You know, master, what awaited us next morning. I had been marching, on the day of our arrival, for twelve hours, under a very hot sun, and was fatigued enough to sleep soundly. But the dead might have awakened next morning. The enemy broke in upon us about three o'clock. It was pitch dark. I had been dreaming, at the moment, that I was busily engaged in the landing, fighting in the front rank beside Bill, and I awoke to hear the enemy, outside the tent, struggling in fierce conflict with such of my comrades as, half-naked and half-armed, had been roused by the first alarm, and had rushed out to oppose them. You will not think I was long in joining them, master, when I tell you that Bill himself was hardly two steps a-head of me. Colonel Westhope was everywhere at once that morning, bringing his men, in the darkness and the confusion, into something like order; threatening, encouraging, applauding, issuing orders—all in a breath. Just as we got out, the French broke through, beside our tent, and we saw him struck down in the throng. Bill gave a tremendous cry of 'Our colonel! our colonel!' and struck his pike up to the cross into the breast of the fellow who had given the blow. And, hardly had that one fallen, than he sent it crashing through the face of the next foremost, till it lay buried in the brain. The enemy gave back for a moment; and, as he was striking down a third, the colonel got up, badly wounded in the shoulder; but he kept the field all day. He knew Bill the moment he rose, and leant on him till he had somewhat recovered. 'I shall not forget, Bill,' he said, 'that you have saved your colonel's life.' We had a fierce struggle, master, ere we beat out the French; but, broken and half-naked as we were, we did beat them out, and the battle became general.

At first, the flare of the artillery, as the batteries blazed out in the darkness, dazzled and blinded me; but I loaded and fired incessantly; and the thicker the bullets went whistling past me, the faster I loaded and fired. A spent shot, that had struck through a sand-bank, came rolling on like a bowl, and, leaping up from a hillock in front, struck me on the breast. It was such a blow, master, as a man might have given with his fist; but it knocked me down; and, ere I got up, the company was a few paces in advance. The bonnet of the soldier who had taken

my place, came rolling to my feet ere I could join them. But, alas! it was full of blood and brains; and I found that the spent shot had come just in time to save my life. Meanwhile, the battle raged with redoubled fury on the left, and we in the centre had a short respite. And some of us needed it. For my own part, I had fired about a hundred rounds; and my right shoulder was as blue as your waistcoat.

You will wonder, master, how I should notice such a thing in the heat of an engagement; but I remember nothing better than that there was a flock of little birds shrieking and fluttering over our heads for the greater part of the morning. The poor little things seemed as if robbed of their very instinct by the incessant discharges on every side of them; and, instead of pursuing a direct course, which would soon have carried them clear of us, they kept fluttering in helpless terror in one little spot. About mid-day, an *aid-de-camp* went riding by us, to the right.

'How goes it? how goes it?' asked one of our officers.

'It is just *who will*,' replied the *aid-de-camp*, and passed by like lightning. Another followed hard after him.

'How goes it now?' inquired the officer.

'Never better, boy!' said the second rider. 'The Forty Second have cut Bonaparty's Invincibles to pieces, and all the rest of the enemy are action a little after.'

We came more into action a little after. The enemy opened a heavy fire on us, and seemed advancing to the charge. I had felt so fatigued, master, during the previous pause, that I could scarcely raise my hand to my head; but, now that we were to be engaged again, all my fatigue left me, and I found myself grown fresh as ever. There were two field-pieces to our left that had done noble execution during the day; and Captain Turpic's company, including Bill and me, were ordered to stand by them in the expected charge. They were wrought mostly by seamen from the vessels—brave, tight fellows, who, like Nelson, never saw fear; but they had been so busy that they had shot away most of their ammunition; and, as we came up to them, they were about dispatching a party to the rear for more.

'Right,' said Captain Turpic; 'I don't care though I lend you a hand, and go with you.'

'On your peril, sir!' said Bill Whyte. 'What! leave your company in the moment of the expected charge? I shall assuredly report you for cowardice and desertion of quarters, if you do.'

'And I shall have you broke for mutiny,' said the captain. 'How can these fellows know how to choose their ammunition without some one to direct them?'

And so off he went to the rear, with the sailors; but, though they returned, poor fellows! in ten minutes or so, we saw no more of the captain till evening. On came the French in their last charge. Ere they could close with us, the sailors had fired their field-pieces thrice; and we could see wide avenues opened among them with each discharge. But on they came. Our bayonets crossed and clashed with theirs for one half minute; and, in the next, they were hurled headlong down the declivity, and we were fighting among them pell-mell. There are few troops superior to the French, master, in a first attack; but they want the bottom of the British; and, now that we had broken them in the moment of their onset, they had no chance with us, and we pitched our bayonets into them as if they were so many sheaves in harvest. They lay in some places three and four tier deep—for our blood was up, master—just as they advanced on us, we had heard of the death of our General; and they neither asked for quarter, nor got it. Ah, the good and gallant Sir Ralph! We all felt as if we had lost a father; but he died as the brave best love to die. The field was all our own; and not a Frenchman remained who was not dead or dying. That

action, master, fairly broke the neck of their power in Egypt.

Our colonel was severely wounded, as I have told you, early in the morning; but, though often enough urged to retire, he had held out all day, and had issued his orders with all the coolness and decision for which he was so remarkable; but, now that the excitement of the fight was over, his strength failed him at once, and he had to be carried to his tent. He called for Bill, to assist in bearing him off. I believe it was merely that he might have an opportunity of speaking to him. He told him that, whether he died or lived, he would take care that he should be provided for. He gave Captain Turpic charge, too, that he should keep a warm side to Bill. I overheard our major say to the captain, as we left the tent—'Good heavens! did you ever see two men liker one another than the colonel and our new sergeant?' But the captain carelessly remarked, that the resemblance didn't strike him.

We met, outside, with a comrade. He had had a cousin in the Forty-Second, he said, who had been killed that morning, and he was anxious to see the body decently buried, and wished us to go along with him. And so we both went. It is nothing, master, to see men struck down in warm blood, and when one's own blood is up; but, oh, 'tis a grievous thing, after one has cooled down to one's ordinary mood, to go out among the dead and the dying. We passed through what had been the thick of the battle. The slain lay in hundreds and thousands—like the ware and tangle on the shore below us—horribly broken, some of them, by the shot; and blood and brains lay spattered on the sand. But it was a worse sight to see, when some poor wretch, who had no chance of living an hour longer, opened his eyes as we passed, and cried out for water. We soon emptied our canteens, and then had to pass on. In no place did the dead lie thicker than where the Forty-Second had engaged the Invincibles; and never were there finer fellows. They lay piled in heaps—the best men of Scotland, over the best men of France—and their wounds, and their number, and the postures in which they lay, shewed how tremendous the struggle had been. I saw one gigantic corpse, with the head and neck cloven through the steel cap to the very briskeet. It was that of a Frenchman; but the hand that had drawn the blow, lay cold and stiff, not a yard away, with the broadsword still firm in its grasp. A little farther on, we found the body we sought. It was that of a fair young man; the features were as composed as if he were asleep; there was even a smile on the lips; but a cruel cannon shot had torn the very heart out of the breast. Evening was falling. There was a little dog whining and whimpering over the body, aware, it would seem, that some great ill had befallen its master; but yet tugging, from time to time, at his clothes, that he might rise and come away.

'Ochon, ochon! poor Evan M'Donald!' exclaimed our comrade; 'what would Christy Ross, or your good old mother, say to see you lying here?'

Bill burst out a-crying, as if he had been a child; and I couldn't keep dry-eyed neither, master. But grief and pity are weaknesses of the bravest natures. We scooped out a hole in the sand with our bayonets and our hands, and, burying the body, came away.

The battle of the 21st broke, as I have said, the strength of the French in Egypt; for, though they didn't surrender to us until about five months after, they kept snug behind their walls, and we saw little more of them. Our colonel had gone aboard of the frigate, desperately ill of his wounds—so ill that it was several times reported he was dead; and most of our men were suffering sadly from sore eyes ashore. But such of us as escaped, had little to do, and we contrived to while away the time agreeably

enough. Strange country, Egypt, master. You know, our people have come from there; but, trust me, I could find none of my cousins among either the Turks or the Arabs. The Arabs, master, are quite the gipsies of Egypt; and Bill and I—but he paid dearly for them afterwards, poor fellow—used frequently to visit such of their straggling tribes as came to the neighbourhood of our camp. You, and the like of you, master, are curious to see *our* people, and how we get on—and no wonder; and we were just as curious to see the Arabs. Toward evening, they used to come in from the shore or the desert, in parties of ten or twelve; and wild-looking fellows they were; tall, but not very tall; thin, and skinny, and dark; and an amazing proportion of them blind of an eye—an effect, I suppose, of the disease from which our comrades were suffering so much. In a party of ten or twelve—and their parties rarely exceeded a dozen—we found that every one of them had some special office to perform. One carried a fishing net, like a herring have; one, perhaps, a basket of fish, newly caught; one a sheaf of wheat; one, a large copper basin, or rather platter; one, a bundle of the dead boughs and leaves of the date-tree; one, the implements for lighting a fire; and so on. The first thing they always did, after squatting down in a circle, was to strike a light; the next, to dig a round pot-like hole in the sand, in which they kindle their fire. When the sand has become sufficiently hot, they throw out the embers, and, placing the fish, just as they had caught them, in the bottom of the hole, heaped the hot sand over them, and the fire over that. The sheaf of wheat was next untied, and each taking a handful, held it over the flame till it was sufficiently scorched, and then rubbed out the grain between their hands, into the copper plate. The fire was then drawn off a second time, and the fish dug out, and, after rubbing off the sand, and taking out the bowels, they sat down to supper. And such, master, was the ordinary economy of the poorer tribes, that seemed drawn to the camp merely by curiosity. Some of the others brought fruit and vegetables to our market, and were much encouraged by our officers; but a set of greater rascals never breathed. At first, several of our men got flogged through them. They had a trick of raising a hideous outcry in the market place for every trifle—certain, d'ye see, of attracting the notice of some of our officers, who were all sure to take part with them. The market, master, had to be encouraged, at all events; and it was some time ere the tricks of the rascals were understood in the proper quarter. But, to make short, Bill and I went out one morning to our walk. We had just heard—and heavy news it was to the whole regiment—that our colonel was despaired of, and had no chance of seeing out the day. Bill was in miserably low spirits. Captain Turpic had insulted him most grossly that morning. So long as the colonel had been expected to recover he had shewn him some degree of civility; but he now took every opportunity of picking a quarrel with him. There was no comparison in battle, master, between Bill and the captain; for the captain, I suspect, was little better than a coward; but, then, there was just as little on parade the other way; for Bill, you know, couldn't know a great deal, and the captain was a perfect martinet. He had called him vagrant and beggar, master, for omitting some little piece of duty; now, he couldn't help having been with *us*, you know; and, as for beggary, he had never begged in his life. Well, we had walked out towards the market, as I say.

'It's a.I nonsense, Jack,' says he, 'to be so dull on the matter; I'll e'en treat you to some fruit. I have a Sicilian dollar here. See that lazy fellow with the spade lying in front, and the burning mountain smoking behind him; we must see if he can't dig out for us a few *prans*' worth of dates.'

Well, master, up he went to a tall, thin, rascally-looking Arab, with one eye, and bought as much fruit from him as might come to one-tenth of the dollar which he gave him, and then held out his hand for the change. But there was no change forthcoming. Bill wasn't a man to be done out of his cash in that silly way, and so he stormed at the rascal; but he, in turn, stormed as furiously, in his own lingo, at him, till at last Bill's blood got up, and, seizing him by the breast, he twisted him over his knee, as one might a boy of ten years or so. The fellow raised a hideous outcry, as if Bill were robbing and murdering him. Two officers, who chanced to be in the market at the time, came running up at the noise; one of them was the scoundrel Turpic; and Bill was laid hold of, and sent off under guard to the camp. Poor fellow! he got scant justice there. Turpic had procured a man-of-war's-man, who swore, as he well might, indeed, that Bill was the smuggler who had swamped the Kirkcudbright custom-house boat. There was another brought forward, who swore that both of us were gipsies, and told a blasted rigmarole story, without one word of truth in it, about the stealing of a silver spoon. The Arab had his story, too, in his own lingo; and they received every word of it; for my evidence went for nothing. I was of a race who never spoke the truth, they said—as if I weren't as good as a Mahomedan Arab. To crown all, in came Turpic's story, about what he called Bill's mutinous spirit in the action of the 21st. You may guess the rest, master. The poor fellow was broke that morning, and told that, were it not in consideration of his bravery, he would have got a flogging into the bargain.

I spent the evening of that day with Bill, outside the camp, and we ate the dates together, that in the morning had cost him so dear. The report had gone abroad—luckily a false one—that our colonel was dead; and that put an end to all hope, with the poor fellow, of having his case righted. We spoke together for, I am sure, two hours—spoke of Bill's early recollections, and of the hardship of his fate all along. And it was now worse with him, he said, than it had ever been before. He spoke of the strange, unaccountable hostility of Turpic; and I saw his brow grow dark, and the veins of his neck swell almost to bursting. He trusted they might yet meet, he said, where there would be none to note who was the officer and who the private soldier. I did my best, master, to console the poor fellow, and we parted. The first thing I saw, as I opened the tent door next morning, was Captain Turpic, brought into the camp by the soldier whose cousin Bill and I had assisted to bury. The captain was leaning on his shoulder, somewhat less than half alive, as it seemed, with four of his front teeth struck out, and a stream of blood all along his vest and small clothes. He had been met with by Bill, who had attacked him, he said, and, after breaking his sword, would have killed him, had not the soldier come up and interfered. But that, master, was the captain's story. The soldier told me, afterwards, that he saw the captain draw his sword ere Bill lifted hand at all; and that, when the poor fellow did strike, he gave him only one knock-down blow on the mouth, that laid him insensible at his feet; and that, when down, though he might have killed him twenty times over, he didn't so much as crook a finger on him. Nay, more; Bill offered to deliver himself up to the soldier, had not the latter assured him that he would to a certainty be shot, and advised him to make off. There was a party dispatched in quest of him, master, the moment Turpic had told his story; but he was lucky enough, poor fellow, to elude them; and they returned in the evening, just as they had gone out. And I saw no more of Bill in Egypt, master.

Never had troops less to do than we had, for the six months or so, we afterwards remained in the country; and

time hung wretchedly on the hands of some of us. Now that Bill was gone, I had no comrade with whom I cared to associate; and, as you may think, I often didn't know what to do with myself. After all our fears and regrets, master, our colonel recovered, and, one morning, about four months after the action, came ashore to see us. We were sadly pestered with flies, master. I have seen, I am sure, a bushel of them on the top of our tent at once. They buzzed all night by millions round our noses, and many a plan did we think of to get rid of them; but, after destroying hosts on hosts, they still seemed as thick as before. I had fallen on a new scheme this morning. I placed some sugar on a board, and surrounded it with gunpowder; and, when the flies had settled by thousands on the sugar, I fired the powder by means of a train, and the whole fell dead on the floor of the tent. I had just got a capital shot, when up came the colonel, and sat down beside me.

'I wish to know,' he said, 'all you can tell me about Bill Whyte; you were his chief friend and companion, I have heard, and are acquainted with his early history. Can you tell me ought of his parentage?'

'Nothing of that, Colonel,' I said; 'and yet I have known Bill almost ever since he knew himself.'

And so, master, I told him all that I knew: how Bill had been first taken to us by my mother; of the purse of gold she had brought with her, which had kept us all so merry; and of the noble spirit he had shewn among us when he grew up. I told him, too, of some of Bill's early recollections; of the scarlet dress trimmed with silver, which had been brought to his mind by the sergeant's coat the first day he wore it; of the gentleman, and lady, too, whom he remembered to have lived with; and of the supposed resemblance he had found between the former and the colonel. The colonel, as I went on, was strangely agitated, master. He held an open letter in his hand, and seemed, every now and then, to be comparing particulars; and, when I mentioned Bill's supposed recognition of him, he actually started from off his seat.

'Good Heavens!' he exclaimed, 'why was I not brought acquainted with this before!'

I explained the why, master, and told him all about Captain Turpic; and he left me with, you may be sure, no very favourable opinion of the captain. But I must now tell you, master, a part of my story which I had but from hearsay.

The colonel had been getting over the worse effects of his wound, when he received a letter from a friend in England, informing him that his brother-in-law, the father of Captain Turpic, had died suddenly, and that his sister, who, to all appearance was fast following, had been making strange discoveries regarding an only son of the colonel's, who was supposed to have been drowned about seventeen years before. The colonel had lost both his lady and child by a frightful accident. His estate lay near Olney, on the banks of the Ouse; and the lady, one day, during the absence of the colonel, who was in London, was taking an airing in the carriage with her son, a boy of three years or so, when the horses took fright, and, throwing the coachman, who was killed on the spot, rushed into the river. The Ouse is a deep, sluggish stream, dark and muddy in some of the more dangerous pools, and mantled over with weeds. It was into one of these the carriage was overturned; assistance came late, and the unfortunate lady was brought out, a corpse; but the body of the child was nowhere to be found. It now came out, however, from the letter, that the child had been picked up, unhurt, by the colonel's brother-in-law, who, after concealing it for nearly a week, during the very frenzy of the colonel's distress, had then given it to a gipsy. The rascal's only motive—he was a lawyer, master—was that his own son, the captain, who was then a boy of twelve years or so, and not wholly ignorant of the circum-

stance, might succeed to the colonel's estate. The writer of the letter added that, on coming to the knowledge of this singular confession, he had made instant search after the gipsy to whom the child had been given, and had been fortunate enough to find her, after tracing her over half the kingdom, in a cave, near Fortrose, in the north of Scotland. She had confessed all; stating, however, that the lad who had borne among the tribe the name of Bill Whyte, and had turned out a fine fellow, had been outlawed, for some smuggling feat, about eighteen months before, and had enlisted, with a young man, her son, into a regiment bound for Egypt. You see, master, there couldn't be a shadow of doubt that my comrade, Bill Whyte, was just Henry Westhope, the colonel's son and heir. But the grand matter was where to find him. Search as we might, all search was in vain; we could trace him no further than outside the camp, to where he had met with Captain Turpic. I should tell you, by the way, that the captain was now sent to Coventry by every one, and that not an officer in the regiment would return his salute.

Well, master, the months passed, and at length the French surrendered; and, having no more to do in Egypt, we all re-embarked, and sailed for England. The short peace had been ratified before our arrival; and I, who had become heartily tired of the life of a soldier now that I had no one to associate with, was fortunate enough to obtain my discharge. The colonel retired from the service at the same time. He was as kind to me as if he had been my father, and offered to make me his forester, if I would but come and live beside him; but I was too fond of a wandering life for that. He was corresponding, he told me, with every British consul within fifteen hundred miles of the Nile; but he had heard nothing of Bill, master. Well, after seeing the colonel's estate, I parted from him, and came north, to find out my people, which I soon did; and, for a year or so, I lived with them just as I have been doing since. I was led, in the course of my wanderings, to Leith, and was standing, one morning, on the pier, among a crowd of people, who had gathered round to see a fine vessel from the Levant, that was coming in at the time, when my eye caught among the sailors a man exceedingly like Bill. He was as tall, and even more robust, and he wrought with all Bill's activity; but, for some time, I could not catch a glimpse of his face. At length, however, he turned round, and there, sure enough, was Bill himself. I was afraid to hail him, master, not knowing who among the crowd might also know him, and know him also as a deserter or an outlaw; but you may be sure I wasn't long in leaping aboard and making up to him. And we were soon as happy, master, in one of the cellars of the Coal-hill, as we had been in all our lives before.

Bill told me his history since our parting. He had left the captain lying at his feet, and struck across the sand, in the direction of the Nile, one of the mouths of which he reached next day. He there found some Greek sailors, who were employed in watering; and, assisting them in their work, he was brought aboard their vessel, and engaged as a seaman by the master, who had lost some of his crew by the plague. As you may think, master, he soon became a prime sailor, and continued with the Greeks, trading among the islands of the Archipelago, for about eighteen months, when, growing tired of the service, and meeting with an English vessel, he had taken a passage home. I told him how much ado we had all had about him after he had left us, and how we were to call him Bill Whyte no longer. And so, in short, master, we set cut together for Colonel Westhope's.

In our journey, we met with some of our people on a wild moor of Cumberland, and were invited to pass the night with them. They were of the Curlit family; but you will hardly know them as that. Two of them had been

with us when Bill swamped the custom-house Loat. They were fierce, desperate fellows, and not much to be trusted by their friends even; and I was afraid that they might have somehow come to guess that Bill had brought some clinkers home with him. And so, master, I would fain have dissuaded him from making any stay with them in the night time; for I did not know, you see, in what case we might find our *weasands* in the morning; but Bill had no fears of any kind, and was, besides, desirous to spend one last night with the gipsies; and so he staid. The party had taken up their quarters in a waste house on the moor, with no other human dwelling within four miles of it. There was a low, stunted wood on the one side, master, and a rough, sweeping stream on the other: the night, too, was wild and boisterous; and, what between suspicion and discomfort, I felt well nigh as drearily as I did when lying among the dead men in Egypt. We were nobly treated, however, and the whisky flowed like water; but we drank no more than was good for us. Indeed, Bill was never a great drinker; and I kept on my guard, and refused the liquor, on the plea of a bad head. I should have told you that there were but three of the Curlits—all of them raw-boned fellows, however, and all of them of such stamp that the three have since been hung. I saw they were sounding Bill; but he seemed aware of them.

'Ay, ay,' says he, 'I have made something by my voyaging, lads, though, mayhap, not a great deal. What think you of that there now, for instance?'—drawing, as he spoke, a silver-mounted pistol out of each pocket—'these are pretty pops, and as good as they are pretty; the worst of them sends a bullet through an inch board at twenty yards.'

'Are they loaded, Bill?' asked Tom Curlit.

'To be sure,' said Bill, returning them again, each to its own pouch. 'What is the use of an empty pistol?'

'Ah,' replied Tom, 'I smell a rat, Bill. You have given over making war on the King's account, and have taken the road to make war on your own.' Bold enough, to be sure.

From the moment they saw the pistols, the brothers seemed to have changed their plan regarding us—for some plan I am certain they had. They would now fain have taken us into partnership with them; but their trade was a wondrous bad one, master, with a world more of risk than profit.

'Why, lads,' said Tom Curlit to Bill and me, 'hadn't you better stay with us altogether? The road won't do in these days at all. No, no, the law is a vast deal over strong for that; and you will be tucked up like dogs for your very first affair. But, if you stay with us, you will get on in a much quieter way on this wild moor here. Plenty of game, Bill; and, sometimes, when the nights are long, we contrive to take a purse with as little trouble as may be. We had an old pedler, only three weeks ago, that brought us sixty good pounds.—By, the way, brothers; we must throw a few more sods over him, for I nosed him this morning as I went by.—And, lads, we have something in hand just now that, with to be sure a little more risk, will pay better still. Two hundred yellow boys in hand, and five hundred more when our work is done. Better that, Bill, than standing to be shot at, for a shilling per day.'

'Two hundred in hand, and five hundred more when you have done your work!' exclaimed Bill. 'Why, that is sure enough princely pay, unless the work be very bad indeed. But, come, tell us what you propose. You can't expect us to make it a leap-in-the-dark matter.'

'The work is certainly a little dangerous,' said Tom; 'and we of ourselves are rather few; but, if you both join with us, there would be a vast deal less of danger indeed.'

The matter is just this. A young fellow, like ourselves, has a rich old uncle, who has made his will in his favour; but then he threatens to make another will that won't be so favourable to him by half; and you see the drawing across of a knife—so—would keep the first one in force. And that is all we have to do before pocketing the blunt. But, then, the old fellow is as brave as a lion; and there are two servants with him, worn-out soldiers like himself, that would, I am sure, be rough customers. With your help, however, we shall get on primely. The old boy's house stands much alone; and we shall be five to three.'

'Well well,' said Bill, 'we shall give your proposal a night's thought, and tell you what we think of it in the morning. But, remember, no tricks, Tom! If we engage in the work, we must go share and share alike in the booty.'

'To be sure,' said Tom; and so the conversation closed.

About eight o'clock, or so, master, I stepped out to the door. The night was dark and boisterous as ever, and there had come on a heavy rain. But I could see that, dark and boisterous as it was, some one was approaching the house with a dark lanthorn. I lost no time in telling the Curlits so.

'It must be the captain,' said they; 'though it seems strange that he should come here to-night. You must away, Jack and Bill, to the loft, for it mayn't do for the captain to find you here; but you can lend us a hand afterwards, should need require it.'

There was no time for asking explanations, master; and so up we climbed to the loft, and had got snugly concealed among some old hay, when in came the captain. But what captain, think you? Why, just our old acquaintance, Captain Turpie!

'Lads,' he said to the Curlits, 'make yourselves ready; get your pistols. Our old scheme is blown; for the colonel has left his house at Olney, on a journey to Scotland; but he passes here to-night, and you must find means to stop him—now or never!'

'What force and what arms has he with him, captain?' asked Tom.

'The coachman, his body servant, and himself,' said the captain; 'but only the servant and himself are armed. The stream outside is high to-night; you must take them just as they are crossing it, and thinking of only the water; and, whatever else you may mind, make sure of the colonel.'

'Sure as I live,' said Bill to me, in a low whisper, 'tis a plan to murder Colonel Westhope! And, good Heavens!' he continued, pointing through an opening in the gable, 'yonder is his carriage, not a mile away. You may see the lanthorn, like two fiery eyes, coming sweeping along the moor. We have no time to lose; let us slide down through the opening, and meet with it.'

As soon done as said, master; we slid down along the turf gable, crossed the stream, which had risen high on its banks, by a plank bridge for foot passengers, and then dashed along the broken road in the direction of the carriage. We came up to it, as it was slowly crossing an open drain.

'Colonel Westhope!' I cried, 'Colonel Westhope!—stop! stop!—turn back! You are waylaid by a party of ruffians, who will murder you if you go on.'

The door opened, and the colonel stepped out, with his sword under his left arm, and a cocked pistol in his hand.

'Is not that Jack Whyte?' he asked.

'The same, noble colonel,' I said; 'and here is Henry, your son.'

It was no place or time, master, for long explanations; there was one hearty congratulation, and one hurried

embrace; and the colonel, after learning from Bill the number of the assailants, and the plan of the attack, ordered the carriage to drive on slowly before, and followed, with us and his servant, on foot, behind.

'The rascals,' he said, 'will be so dazzled with the flare of the lanthorns in front, that we will escape notice till they have fired, and then we shall have them for the picking down.'

And so it was, master. Just as the carriage was entering the stream, the coachman was pulled down by Tom Curlit; at the same instant, three bullets went whizzing through the glasses, and two fellows came leaping out from behind some furze to the carriage door. A third, whom I knew to be the captain, lagged behind. I marked him, however; and, when the colonel and Bill were disposing of the other two—and they took them so sadly by surprise, master, that they had but little difficulty in throwing them down, and binding them—I was lucky enough to send a piece of lead through the captain. He ran about twenty yards, and then dropped down, stone dead. Tom escaped us; but he cut a throat, some months after, and suffered for it at Carlisle. And his two brothers, after making a clean breast, and confessing all, were transported for life. But they found means to return in a few years after, and were both hung on the gallows on which Tom had suffered before them.

I have not a great deal more to tell you, master. The colonel has been dead for the last twelve years, and his son has succeeded him in his estate. There is not a completer gentleman in England than Henry Westhope, master, nor a finer fellow. I call on him every time I go round, and never miss a hearty welcome; though, by the by, I am quite as sure of a hearty scold. He still keeps a snug little house empty for me, and offers to settle on me fifty pounds a-year, whenever I choose to give up my wandering life, and go and live with him. But what's bred in the bone, won't come out of the flesh, master, and I have not yet closed with his offer. And, really, to tell you my mind, I don't think it quite respectable. Here I am, at present, a free, independent tinker—no man more respectable than a tinker, master—all allow that; whereas, if I go and live with Bill, on an unwrought-for fifty pounds a year, I will be hardly better than a mere master tailor or shoemaker. No, no, that would never do! Nothing like respectability, master, let a man fare as hard as he may."

I thanked the gipsy for his story, and told him I thought it almost worth while putting it in print. He thanked me, in turn, for liking it so well, and assured me I was quite at liberty to put it in print as soon as I chose. And so I took him at his word.

"But yonder," said he, "is the moon, rising, red and huge, over the three tops of Belrines, and throwing, as it brightens, its long strip of fire across the Frith. Take care of your footing, just as you reach the top of the crag; there is an awkward gap there on the rock edge, that reminds me of an Indian trap; but, as for the rest of the path, you will find it quite as safe as by day. Good-by!"

I left him, and made the best of my way home; where, while the facts were fresh in my mind, I committed to paper (for the express purpose of having it inserted among the Border Tales) the gipsy's story.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditinary, and Emaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DOMINIE OF ST FILLAN'S.

MY THREE OFFICES AND MY WIFE.

It is now about twenty years sin' I first opened my voice in the desk o' the kirk o' St Fillan's, in the parish o' that name, in the shire o' —; and, He wha out o' the mouths o' babes and sucklins did ordain praise, hath never thought meet, by means o' ony catarrh, cynanche, quinsy, toothache, or lock-jaw, to close up my mouth, and prevent me frae leadin the congregation o' St Fillan's in a clear melodious stream, to the worship o' the Chief Musician. When I was ordained session clerk, school-master, and precentor, I had already passed about thirty years o' my pilgrimage. Filled wi' Latin an' Greek, till my *pia mater* was absolutely like to burst, I had, notwithstanding, nae trade by the hand. My father, who had been for forty years sexton o' the parish, had seen, wi' an ee lang practised in searchin for traces o' death in the faces o' parishioners—for the labourer maun live by his hire, and the merchant by his customers, "and thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands"—a pleasant leucophlegmatic tinge about the gills o' Jedediah Cameron, my predecessor in the three offices already mentioned. As the husbandman in dry weather, when his fields are parched, and his braird thin and weak, watches the clouds that contain rain—mair precious to him than the ointment that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's dry beard—my guid father watched the dropsical signs or indications in Jedediah's face, daily and hourly, in the fair and legitimate hope o' gettin the aridity o' my starvin condition quenched and satisfied. He was an argute sexton, and had learned, in his younger days, some smatterin o' Latin, though I never could ascertain that he retained more o' the humane lear, than the twa proverbs, "*Vita mortalium brevis*," which comes originally frae Homer; and "*Pecunia obediunt omnia*," which comes frae the sixth chapter o' Ecclesiastes—"Money answereth all things."

But my father never was contented wi' his ain *prognosis*. His ain ee for death was as gleg as that o' the hawk for 'ts quarry; but the glegness wasna a mere junction or combination o' a keen and praiseworthy desire to live, and a lang experience o' lookin for death in ither; he had science to guide him; he knew a' the Latin names comprehended in Dr Cullen's "*Nosology*," an' Buchan's "*Domestic Medicine*" was scarcely ever out o' his hands, except when there was a spade in them. I hae the auld, thumed, and faulted, and marked copy o' our domestic *Æsculapius* yet; and, as I look at the store from which he used to draw the lore that enabled him to see, as if by a kind o' necromantic divination, a guid lucrative death, though still lodged in the wame o' futurity, I canna but drap a tear to the memory o' ane wha toiled sae hard for the sake o' his son. But I examine the book, sometimes, in a mair philosophic way—to mark the train o' my auld parent's mind, as he had perused his *vade-mecum* and text book; for it was his practice, when he saw ony o' the parishioners exhibiting favourable symptoms—such as a hard, dry cough, puffed legs, white liver lips, or even some o' the mair dubious indications, such as a pale cheek, spare body, drooping head, difficulty

in walking, morbid appetite or bulimia, the *delirium tremens* o' dram-drinkers, the yellow o' the white o' the ee o' hypochondriacs, and the like—to search in Buchan for the diseases portended by thae appearances, and, when he was sure he had caught them, to draw a pencil stroke along the margin opposite to the pleasantest parts o' the doctor's descriptions. I never saw mony marks opposite the common and innocuous complaints—*cholica*, or pain in the stomach; *catarrhus*, or cauld; *arthritis*, or gout; *rheumatismus*, or rheumatism; *odontalgia*, or toothache, and sae forth: thae were beneath his notice. Neither did I ever observe ony marks o' attention to what are called prophylactics, or remedies, to prevent diseases comin on: thae nostrums he plainly despised. But, sae far as I could discover, he had a very marked abhorrence o' what the doctors ca' therapeutics, or means and processes o' curin diseases, and keepin awa death; and as for what are denominated *specifics*, or infallible remedies, he wouldna hear o' them ava—shewin his despite o' them by the exclamation, "Psha!" scribbled with contemptuous haste on the margin. The soul and marrow o' the book to the guid man—Bless him!—were the mortal symptoms—the *facies Hippocraticus*, the Hippocratic face; the *raucitas mortis*, or rattle in the throat; *subsultus tendinum*, or twitching o' the hanas and fingers; the glazing o' the ee, and the stoppin o' the breath, and the like o' thae serious signs and appearances. A strong, determined stroke o' the pencil marked his attention to and interest in the Doctor's touchin account o' thae turns o' the spindle wharby the thread o' our existence is wound up for ever. It may be easily and safely supposed, that the melancholy words, descriptive o' the oncome o' the grim tyrant himsel—"and death closes the tragic scene"—sae touchingly and feelingly introduced by the eloquent author, werena lost on my respectit parent.

Guid man as he was, however, (I shall return presently to his study o' my predecessor's dropsy,) it is painfu for his son to hae to say that, though very generally respectit by people when they were in health and prosperity, he hadna the same veneration extended to him by the same individuals when they fell into disease. But though rejectin his visits, sae lang as a patient was in life and capable o' bein benefited by his lively manners, the breath was nae sooner out o' the body, than he was sent for, ye might almost say by express. It is some consolation to me, that my parent was far abune shewin resentment at conduct sae contradictory and offensive. In place o' bein angry when invited to the house o' a dead patient, from which he had been expelled during his illness, he uniformly appeared well pleased—repairin, wi' the greatest good humour, to the residence o' the deceased, and disdainin to exhibit the slightest indication o' pique or anger. There are some men wha brak the prophet's command—"Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy bein dead, but remember that we die all;" but I can safely and upon my honour and parole say, that my parent shewed nae greater signs o' happiness on the death o' an enemy than he did on the death o' a friend. A man has a pleasure in statin thae things o' a father.

These early associations hae a charm about them that's very apt to lead a person off his direct road: "*Patriæ fumus igne alieno luculentior*"—the very smoke o' our father's

fireside, is clearer than anither's flame. How bright, then, maun the virtue and honour o' a father and mother appear to a dutiful and affectionate son! I was stating, at the time when I was seduced into that pleasant episode, that my father kept up a daily inspection o' the leucophlegmatic face o' my predecessor, Jedediah Cameron; comparing, with the greatest diligence, the aqueous symptoms there discernible, with the description given by his oracle, Dr Buchan; and, as his hopes strengthened, edging me, by slow degrees, into the dominie's desk, and the school-master's chair o' authority, as the friendly and gratuitous assistant o' the dying man. But my father had mair sense than to trust, entirely and alienarly, in an affair o' sae gigantic importance, to ony dead authority. He was at the heels o' Dr Dennistoun, our parish physician, as often as that worthy man would permit his approach; and it was sometimes said, though in a jocular way—and nae man likes a joke better than I do—that he consulted the doctor as the farmer does the barometer, with a view to a guid crop. But, were this even *vero verius, certo certius*, how could my parent be blamed for being industrious? Unless you thresh and grind, ye hae little chance o' a dinner—" *Ni purgas et molas, non comedes*;" an auld saying o' Diogenianus, particularly applicable to my father, who had to support, by his industry, an idle son—*bos in stabulo*—long, bare-boned, ill-filled up, as hungry and voracious as a Cyclops, and never weel-dined but on the day o' a dead-chack. I might blame my respectable parent for consulting Dr Dennistoun about expected deaths and burials, if mortals could avoid ony o' the twa; but we hae nae Elijahs in thae days, "to be taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses." Death comes to a—*mors omnibus communis*; and Jedediah Cameron—bless him!—had nae chance o' bein made an exception; otherwise, my lank wame and lean cheeks stood a pair chance o' bein sae weel filled up as they afterwards came to be, when I held his three offices. But, if it hadna been to make certainty doubly sure, my father had nae occasion to hound after Dr Dennistoun in the way he did, to ascertain the probability o' the death o' Jedediah Cameron, or ony other mortal that stood a chance o' needin a bit turf and a kindly clap o' his spade. His ee was as sure as a cockatrice's. He needed nae howling o' the moon-baying tyke, nae death-watch, nae whip-lash on the table, nae dead-drap, nae dead-shaving at the candle, nae coffin-spark frae the fire, nae powers o' second-sight, dreams, or divin-ations, to tell him when he was to hae a guid job. He came to be able to read death in men's faces, as he could do a printed book. Jedediah Cameron didna deceive him. Ae day, when I was busy teachin the pair man's scholars, he came in, and whispered in my ear, that the parish clerk, school-master, and precentor o' St Fillans, was dead. I was, at the time, in the very act o' flogging an urchin wha had disputed my authority. The ferula fell from my hands; the urchin's rebellion was, I thought, ominous o' the rejection o' my claims o' succession; but, after a', there's nae oracle like the presentiments o' a man's ain soul, speaking frae the inspired tripod that is set ovr the hollow-sounding, murmuring gulf o' an empty stomach; and so the ancient Pythonissa o' Apollo's temple at Delphi, judiciously took her seat over the abyss called the *umbilicus orbis terrarum*. Being an honest man, I confess frankly that the first feeling produced by my father's lively whisper, was a kind o' pleasure, approaching as near to delight as any sensation I had yet discovered in my microcosm. But I remembered the seventh verse o' the eighth chapter o' Ecclesiasticus, directed against rejoicing over the dead; and, upon the very instant, set vigorously to work, either to expel the delightful emotion frae my mind, or, at least, to push the sweet rebel off the cerebral throne—the pincal gland—and plunge him into

some o' the deep ventricles, or dungeons, lying in the lower part of the brain, or ben in the cerebellum. It was a considerable struggle; but I succeeded to a perfect miracle—a circumstance I am the more pleased with, as I hate mortally that abominable cant of the Calvinists, about necessity, as if a man hadna the whip-hand, direction, and guidance of his own will.

The grave o' Jedediah Cameron was, in due time, dug by my parent—wi' what feeling, whether o' sorrow or satisfaction, I am not bound to say, because a sense o' delicacy prevented me frae being present at the breaking o' the earth; but I consider myself under an obligation to state, that I never saw my respected parent cover up a mortal body so cleverly. Lest, however, ony hasty-minded, sanguine individual, should, from this admission o' mine, suppose that that cleverness, or nimbleness, had ony connection with the alacrity o' joy, or the morbid quickness o' a sorrow that wishes to get an unpleasant job out of hands, I must explain that my father merely wanted—surely a most legitimate object—to catch as many o' the parochial heritors present at the funeral as remained on the ground, reading grave-stanes, or laughing and chatting thegither, after the body was clappit down—with the view o' securing their votes for me, as the singular successor (to speak as the lawyers do) to the three vacant offices held by the now dead dominie. But this is a sair subject—I can scarcely write upon it. My brain whirls like an auld woman's spindle the moment I think on't. Guidness! what a risk I ran o' losin my three offices, by the mere paternal fondness o' that honest man. Some o' the heritors had remarked the vivacity and agility o' my parent, in throwin in the heavy moil on the clatterin coffin, wi' mair noise, force, and fervour than was ever used on an occasion o' the same kind afore; pushin and shovelin great hillocks o' stanes and banes at ae mighty effort, usin his very feet in the process; sweatin, pechin, stumblin, and producin a noise frae the coffin lid, like distant thunner; and mair, peradventure, resemblin the risin than the lyin down o' the dead. The thing couldna be concealed. My father was excited beyond a' prudence or decent decorum; and, when he had finished the wark, or rather pretended to finish it—for it was at best a clumsy business—and, drawin near, wi' the shovel in his hand, to a knot o' the heritors, standin on a flat grave-stane, they asked him, wi' a significant expression, why he was in sae great a hurry in coverin up the pair dominie, a laugh rang among the grave-stanes—a guid answer to my father's request—that stuck in his throat; and, in place o' gettin a vote, he hadna the courage to ask ane. The thing deed awa afore the meetin o' the heritors, an' I was saved frae ruin—an escape for which I hae offerèd up many thanks to the Author o' our mercies.

That pleasant duty o' filial love is sae fu' o' artfu seduction, and winnin, pawky guile, that it has carried me awa frae my ain merits an' successes. The first thing I had to do was to keep a guid firm grip o' the schule, the parish books, and the dominie's desk; for I knew that possession is nine points o' the law. I got ready my testimonials wi' the greatest dispatch; the mair by token, that some o' them were in a very forward state before Jedediah Cameron's breath was out. I ca'ed at the houses o' a' the heritors wha had bairns at the schule, and praised wi' decent pride the progress they had made under my care—music mair sweet to their ears than even the Bangor itsel. Meanwhile, I exerted mysel on the Sabbaths, to sing, wi' the greatest pith and clearness, the psalm tunes. I kenned the folks were fondest o' such as the Auld Hunder, Mount Pleasant, and that excellent favourite the Bangor. My execution, pathos, quavers, semi-quavers, were wonderfu. The parishioners were astonished; and, followin my leadin tenor into the altitudes o' the highest inspiration, flew awa

into the very Elysian fields o' enthusiastic devotion. Some o' the auld, cunnin foxes, that never sang a stave, looked at me as if they saw through my drift; but I was far abune their envy, and was conscious o' the purity o' my heart. In the meantime, my most excellent and much-respected parent was hawking about among the heritors my testimonials; and at the next meetin o' the heritors, I was duly elected parish-clerk, schoolmaster, and precentor o' St Fillan's. Weel do I recollect that joyfu occasion. Our dinner exceeded far ony dead-chack I ever saw. My father took a free glass; and, inspired wi' the generous liquor, made a speech to me as lang as a funeral oration.

"Noo, Gideon," he began, "yer namesake, the son o' Joash, got his fortune read, by a dream o' a barley cake that fell frae heaven, as we find i' the Book o' Judges. Yer barley-cake hath come frae heaven, and the forces o' Midian are delivered owre to ye. I can do nae mair for ye. I hae fed ye, clad ye, made ye. In yer mouth I hae put men's lear, in yer heart God's fear. For yer sake I watched, as the husbandman does the clouds, for signs o' mortality in the face o' Jedediah Cameron; and the first symptom o' water I saw in his body, comin atween me and the sun o' my hope, made a glitterin rainbow in my paternal ee. Muckle do ye owe me, Gideon; but I'll no be ill to satisfy. I'll be pleased if ye measure yer gratitude by the size o' that lank, toom wame, whilk I never saw filled to satisfaction till this blessed day, when ye hauld the three principal offices o' this parish."

When I had fairly made up my mind to tak a wife, I set mysel to the wark systematically. The first thing to be done was to put mysel in a convenient position for being struck; but a knowledge o' my combustible nature suggested caution against mere love at first sight—*ex aspectu nascitur amor*—lest I might be caught in yarn toils in place o' a goold chain. After a', there's nae place like a dominie's desk, for shewin aff to the greatest advantage a man's personalities and graces. The openin o' the chest to let out the wind, naturally produces an erection o' the hail man. The keepin o' the time wi' the arm brings out a gracefu movement, just as if ane were to set aff in a minuet. The lightin up o' the ee, and the fine attenuation o' a' the sma' limber muscles o' the face, wi' the power o' the music, is a direct expression o' the pure pathetic, shewin at ance baith yer sentiment and yer beauty. Then singin itsel—and love, Augustinus says, will mak a musician out o' an ass—*musicam docet amor*—is a great grace and accomplishment, whether it be in warbling "Dundee's" wild measures, the "plaintive Martyrs," or "noble Elgin"—a' the very pick o' Psalm tunes—ranting "Tullochgorum," or spinnin out the lang, plaintive notes o' "The Flowers o' the Forest."

It may very safely be supposed, that I never lost sight o' thae advantages. A dominie, in urgent celibacy, has a' the invention aboot him o' a man in extreme hunger. In fact, I felt as keen to get a wife as I ever did to get my three offices. But I was weel aware that a' my dress—and Mr Meiklejohn himsel, the minister, hadna a finer gloss on his black coat, or a brighter white in his cravat—a' my posture-makin, my attitudes and smiles—a' my sentimental looks, and turnin up o' the white o' my een—could avail me little, unless I picked out some female as the object and mark o' a weel-directed and significant glowr. In case o' failure, I fixed upon twa—May Walker, the dochter o' Gilbert Walker, an auld cattle-dealer, wha rented Langacres frae a chief heritor; and Agnes Lowrie, the dochter o' Benjamin Lowrie, feuar o' Muirbank. Twa or three guid glowrs were a' that was necessary, in the first instance, to shew that I, the dominie o' St Fillan's, wanted a wife, and that I was even in a state o' great exigency. The moment I thought I had impressed my twa damosels with this idea, I laboured assiduously in my vocation of endeavouirin to produce, by my gracefu attitudes and sweet singin, a favour-

able impression on their hearts. I am a weel-disposed man, but love is a terrible thing, and it now hangs heavy on my conscience, that I did little else, during the duration o' Mr Meiklejohn's discourses, than to cast the glamour o' my attractions owre the een o' my dulcineas. There was ae particular occasion, however, beyond a', for expressin the pressure and exigency o' my situation, and, as it were, forcin attention to my wants and wishes. I used to gie out the purposed marriages at an early hour, before the congregation was half assembled; but I now took especial care, that the twa objects o' my affections should be calmly seated before I executed this part o' my duties. I began first by fixin my een on the ane I intended to devote that particular Sabbath to, (for I alternated my preferences;) and, as I looked at her as significantly as I could, I pronounced the emphatic words—"There is a purpose o' marriage between"—wi' sae muckle strong, heart-felt pathos—sometimes even inclinin my right hand a little in the direction o' my heart—that baith look and word maun hae pierced her very gizzard. It was perfectly impossible that this could fail. These preliminary operations I persevered in for sixteen Sabbaths.

Having prepared matters in this effectual—I may say irresistible way—I bethought mysel o' the maist efficient way o' followin up the advantage I had gained. I asked my respected parent which o' the twa lasses he thought I should attack first. He answered, wi' that wisdom for which he was sae remarkable, that that depended upon circumstances. Twa or three days afterwards, he said he was prepared to answer my question—the interval being, I presume, occupied in gettin intelligence about the wealth o' the respective fathers o' the young women. He said, that, sae far as he could answer, May Walker was the preferable damsel. I asked him his reason. He replied, that he had taen the trouble o' ascertainin the hail circumstances o' her condition; and, though her father wasna sae rich as Agnes Lowrie's, he was paler, and a guid deal mair cadaverous looking. If my parent hadna been speakin professionally, as the sexton o' St Fillan's, I might hae been inclined to think he was jokin, but he never was mair serious in his life; and, in fact, he had that very mornin been *Buchaneezin*, as he caed it, on Gilbert Walker's *prognosis*, and had come to a conclusion on his case, very favourable to my prospects in life.

The sixteen Sabbaths I had spent *in limine*, as it were, o' Cupid's temple, drove me sae *hard up*—in other words, increased the exigency o' my celibacy to such an extent—that, actin on my father's advice, I determined upon fa'in foul o' her the very first time I met her in an unprotected situation, and in a secret, sequestered, and convenient place. My respected parent aye said, that love was just like death. The twa powers are aye best, baith for themselves and their victims, when they tak them by sterm, or, as the French say, by a *coup de main*. A lingerin death and a lingerin love (said the guidman) make the heart sick, and, for his part, (layin aside his professional feelings,) he detested baith. He seized my mither, he said, just like an apoplexy, and she succumbed in a single groan o' consent. "Gideon, take example by me," he continued: "never seize a woman like what Buchan ca's a *hemiplegia*—that is, by halves; comprehend in your embrace liver, pancreas, stomach, heart, spleen, and then ye're surr to move her compassion, and settle the affair in an instant." Followin my worthy genitor's advice, I watched for May Walker, the next Sabbath, as she left the kirk after the afternoon's service. She was alane, and took the quietest road to Langacres. I dogged her most determinedly up the Willow Loan that leads into a solitary and sequestered howe, caed the Warlocks' Glen, a place sae intensely romantic, sae completely sacred to the high feelins o' love and poetry, that it seemed impossible there for a woman

to resist a man; and, if she might attempt it, she could look for nae mortal assistance. Having ogled her into a perfect state o' preparation, or predisposition to receive the attack, as the doctors say, I was quite certain o' success; and, just as an experienced sportsman lets a bird tak a lang flight afore he fires, to shew his ease, coolness, and confidence in his powers, I allowed her to be half-way up the Willow Loan afore I should pounce upon her. By some misfortune, however, she had got a glimpse o' me; for, just when I was meditating on the surest way o' makin my point guid, she took to her heels, like a springbok, and was off through the Warlocks' Glen in as short a time as I tak to gie out the first line o' a heroic Psalm verse.

I cam hame and reported my progress to my parent; but he wasna in the slightest degree dispirited; and next Sabbath, I got Andrew Waugh, a singin weaver o' the village, to officiate for me, under a pretence that I had caught a severe cauld. I repaired to the Warlocks' Glen, and sat down on a stump o' an auld aik tree, allowin freely the inspiration o' the place to seize me, and nerve my energies for the bauld project I had in hand. In a short time, I espied the streamers o' a woman's bannet wavin among the willows in the distance. Slouchin doun, like a tiger, behind a large broombush, I watched the onward progress o' the sweet nymph, doubtless my beloved May. It was absolutely and indispensably requisite that I should take her by ambush; for, if she had seen even the hem o' my garment, I'm satisfied her ambulation would hae been reversed, and in speed very considerably increased. I'm vexed to be obliged to mak this admission, which grates sae harshly against my self-conceit; but verity transcends, in beauty and importance, vanity; and I consider this biography to be naething but a confession frae beginnin to end. Keepin my slouchin, sneakin attitude as weel as my lang gaunt body would permit, I had at least the exorbitant satisfaction o' seein the dear young woman walkin mournfully along, unconscious o' the danger that awaited her. At a little distance from my lurkin place, she stood, as if she feared there was a snake in the grass; for the anxiety and solicitude I felt to get a glimpse o' her fair face, forced me to twist my body into unpleasant contortions, which produced a kind of a rustlin among the sere-leaves that lay on the ground. Findin a' quiet again, she seemed to renounce a' fear; though I secretly suspected that she kenned weel enough the cause o' the noise, for I had detected the hinder part o' my body in a higher state o' elevation than my will or security warranted, being considerably abune the broom, and, therefore, plainly in her ee. Keepin my suspicion to mysel, I watched her motions wi' still greater curiosity and intensity; because, if my suspicions were true that she kenned I was lyin sneakin there, her conduct, of course, required frae me a different rule o' construction. At last she sat doon, quite close to me—a circumstance that satisfied me still mair that she was aware o' my position, condition, and intentions—for it seemed to be a kind o' an invitation to me to dart upon her, and secure my prey. She spoke.

"Noo, this is no usin me quite weel," said she, "no to behere," (a mere blind, thinks I, to mak me think she doesna ken I'm lyin slouchin at her very side,) "when I had sae muckle to say to him. Though I was shy to him the last time I saw him, he might hae learned enough o' the heart o' woman to ken that we hae certain arts, and wiles, and guiles aboot us—a kind o' secret charms—to increase an affection that we think over languid, and bring it out o' the dead-thraw o' a starved love into the warm life o' a lively passion. It canna be, that, after sae lang a period o' lookin, followin, and languishin, he doesna like me. If he only kenned the condition o' this pair, flutterin, beatin heart, that fears to listen to its ain timid voice, as if it were treason to love—how muckle mair wad he prize my sittin here,

invitin—wae's my pair prudence!—thae very attractions I used to flee frae! But woman, weak woman, is doomed to be the sport o' men, as weel as o' her ain heart."

It was noo clearly my time to pounce. In fact, the young woman was invitin me. Up I sprang, like a jungle thief.

"How can you sit there, May," said I, "kennin I was lyin sneakin there under that broom bush, and yet abusin a faithfu creature for bein slow and languid in his love, when last Sabbath ye flew frae him wi' a' the pith o' a bitter hatred, disgust, and scorn! Languid in *my* affection! Is *that* like languidness?" (Throwing my arms fully around her, so as to include, if possible, the hail body in my ample embrace.) "Is *that*, dear May, like love in the dead-thraw? If *that's* no a sign" (still pressing her, as she struggled and cried) "o' the warm life o' a lively passion, as ye ca'd it, I kenna what is?"

As I thus held her in my impassioned grasp—as firm as a tiger's—she screamed most inordinately, makin the hail Warlocks' Glen ring frae end to end, rousin the mawkins on every side, and makin them skip over the whin bushes as if they had been followed by a pack o' harriers. But I wasna to be deceived. She had, when I was sneakin under the bush o' broom, gien me the key to this conduct, in her cunnin monologue. This was ane o' the arts, wiles, guiles, and secret charms, to increase a languid affection, and bring it out o' the dead-thraw o' a starved love into the warm love o' a lively passion. Her words still rung in my ears, and I was as determined as the very deevil to shew her that her efforts to increase my love were perfectly effectual. I hugged her closer and closer. Heart, liver, and pancreas, and a'thegither, as recommended by my father, were in my embrace. I squeezed the dear creature like a vice, sae strong was my determination, increased every minute by her screams, to prove to her entire satisfaction—in fact, to demonstrate, beyond the possibility of a doubt—that there was nae mair occasion for her female guile or charm, and that she might rest assured that my affection could, nae mair than my grasp, be increased in point o' intensity. But a' wouldna do—her heart seemed to be insatiable. In addition to my strong squeezing grasp, I kissed her ruby lips. She cried the louder, and the louder; and—oh, hae I lived to write it!—she actually spat on the face that was glowin red-hot wi' affection for her. Still I persevered; for I thought that even the *sputum* might be ane o' her secret charms. The struggle continued, and her cries increased. She had recourse to her nails, and I felt the blude streamin doun my cheeks. We fell on the ground. A man's voice behind me cried—"My love, my love! knock doun the spoiler!" A tremendous blow on the head took frae me my senses; and, when I recovered, I was in my ain bed, with my respectit parents sittin by me, watchin, with the greatest and tenderest care, the return o' consciousness to their beloved son.

I sune recovered my health, but my reputation and fair fame were for a time under a cloud. The parishioners, in place o' shakin me by the hand, looked at me with averted eyes. I was treated as a dog that had been in bad company. A sough went throughout the parish, that Simon Begley—or, as the folk ca'd him, with a humorous application to his craft, that of procurator-fiscal o' the county, Beagle—was busy takin a precognition with a view to layin the case before the Lord Advocate. But I was gien to understand, and privately, that the authorities didna intend, in the meantime, to lay hold o' me, as they had nae suspicion I would flee the country. Their object was to ascertain the truth o' the charge, and, if they found there was any real *delictum*, and Gilbert Walker and May persevered in their determination, to apprehend me then, and try me as an example and a warnin.

This misfortune brought upon me an attack o' hypo-

chondriacism; and Melancholy, wi' a her attendant hags, hounded me, as they say, frae house to hame. Weared o' concealin myself within doors, I sought the by-ways, the loans, and the unfrequented paths—still, however, doin my duties, and facin the public whar I couldna weel sneak out o' the way. Ae day, I was sittin on a fence, no far frae my ain door, musin on the curious turn my love affair had taen, and generally on the "vanity of human wishes." I thought o' the poem o' that name by the only poet whose works I could ever thole to read, and cured, in some degree, my despondency, by repeatin to mysel the lines—

"Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice."

"I hae dune baith," said a saft voice in my ear; "but the guid I hae prayed for is lang o' comin."

"It has a lang road to come, my bonny lass," said I to a young woman with a child in her arms, wha stood before me. "I, mysel, ken what it is to suffer; for a pickled rod is at this very moment on my puir back—sending, as it cuts its way, the nippin brine into my very marrow. But I am exercisin patience. What may your complaint be?"

"My complaint," said she, wipin a clear, shinin tear frae her bonny blue ee, "lies owre near my puir broken heart to be tauld to a stranger; for wha but Him wha is 'the saul's portion,' should hear the secrets, or is able to cure the waes o' a deserted wife? Ken ye the session-clerk o' this parish?"

"Owre weel," said I, guid woman; "for, personally, I am noo sufferin for that officer. I, mysel, hold that honoured office, wi' its twa appurtenances."

"You are then the very man I wanted to see," said she; "but I maun speak privately to ye. I hae come far to see ye, and heavy are the burdens I hae carried, baith at this bosom (lookin at her child) and in it; an' maybe ye may be the means o' relievin me o' ane o' them."

"Which o' them mean ye, woman?" said I, no a'thegither at ease. "I hope ye dinna mean the bairn. Ae misfortune's enough at a time."

"Na, na," replied she; "I dinna mean that you should be the faither o' the child; but ye may be the means, in higher hands, o' gettin back its faither, and thereby relievin me o' a' my burdens and a' my sorrows thegither."

"Nae man likes to do guid better than I do," replied I, wi' a decent complacency, "though I hae been sair defamed. Come awa wi' me, and tell me your story."

I took the puir woman hame, and, seein she was filled wi' naething but sorrow, ane o' the maist inflatin o' a' the *non-naturals*, (for Hippocrates himsel couldna doubt that it's ane o' them,) I supplied her wi' as muckle victuals o' ae kind or anither—no bein very particular about the agreement or concurrence o' the elemental parts o' the polymixia or combination—as I thought would hae the double effect o' gettin quit o' her hunger and her sorrow thegither. The puir creature ate like a rhinoceros. I doubt if she had had any meat for a week. Cakes, milk, cheese, herrings, tea, and honey, a' disappeared; and naething remained but a blush o' shame on, her bonny cheek, to tell how muckle abashed she was at her good appetite. Some ungracefu minded folks wad hae taen the sweet suffusion that covered her face, for the mere effect o' the fecht or warstle o' devourin sae muckle meat; but my delicacy suggested a truer, a mair feminine, and a mair gallant conclusion. I was sae muckle pleased with the delicacy o' mind that led to this discovery, that I couldna help bringin't out—for nae man should hide his candle under a bushel:—

"Ye needna be ashamed, my bonny woman," said I, "at eatin sae muckle; for, though it's no paid for, ye're perfectly welcome to it, ample and multitudinous as it is."

This had the desired effect; for the blush was instantly succeeded by a deadly paleness. I then asked her what

was her particular object, in wishin to see an' speak to me privately. It was some time afore she could answer—overcome, I fancy, by her admiration o' my delicacy o' sentiment; but at last, takin out a ragged handkerchief, as a kind o' preparation for a scene, a thing I like abune a' things—exceptin, maybe, that in the Warlocks' Glen—she began—

"I am the dochter o' an honest farmer, that lives down near the Tweed. His name is Arthur Græme; and my name—that, is my maiden name—is Lucy Græme. He was ance accounted rich, and I was—no lang syne yet—considered to hae some claims to beauty—twa things that hae produced a' my wae. I was courted by the neighbourin farmers, wha vied wi' ane anither for my hand and my affections; but, as a prophet has nae credit in his ain country, sae neeborin lovers were little respectit. The gree was born awa frae them by a perfect stranger, kenned neither to them nor to me. A young man, ca'ed, at that time at least, Hugh Kennedy, whose looks were, alas! his best recommendation, if I shouldna speak o' a soft honeyed tongue, whose sounds were music to my ear, recommended himsel to me at a neighbourin fair, and took frae me, whether I wad or no, my silly affections. He had heard o' my faither's siller, and he saw my bloomin face; but he never had the courage to come to our house and court me honourably, as my other wooers were glad and proud to do. Yet—strange backslidin o' the human heart!—I wadna hae gien a stowen kiss o' Hugh Kennedy, among the beach groves o' Sunnybrae, for a' the flatterin, wooin, and braw presents o' the rest o' my lovers thegither. The mere circumstance o' the puir youth bein banned, as he was, (for his secret courtship was sune kenned,) frae the very neeborin woods, bound him to my heart the closer and the firmer. Though twenty een were upon me as gleg as hawks, and I was watched like a convicted thief, I saw him, spoke to him, wept wi' him, lay in his dear arms, and got my tears kissed awa wi' his burnin lips. Oh, forgie me, sir! To ye alane, wha hae my fortune in yer hands, wad I speak in this wild strain, for my heart is fu' o' love, grief, and a still revivin hope that winna dee. I never asked him a question, sae worthless and silly in the thoughts o' a lover, whar he wad tak me, and what he wad do wi' me, if I ran frae my faither's house, and married him. What cared I for things that were to come, when a' my joys were centred in the single moment when I was in his arms? Na, I never asked him whar was to be our bed—whar we were to get our dinner. Love had made me as light, as gay, as free, as thoughtless, as the birds o' the grove, whose food and raiment, hoose an' ha', are provided by nature, wha is kinder to them than to us proud human creatures. I need say nae mair. I flew frae my faither's hoose, was married and ruined. My husband had nae trade by the hand, nae friends, nae hame. He trusted to my faither's wealth; but that took wings and flew away as fast as his dochter. We lived thegither, Gude kens hoo, for twa years, when, ae mornin aboot six months syne, he rose frae my side an' left me, an' I hae never seen him since. A month after, I bore this babe, wha hasna yet seen its faither. I inquired for him in every direction, an' at last I heard that he was livin in this parish, an' was on the eve o' bein married to a brow lass, wi' a better tocher than I could bring to him."

"This is a sad story, Lucy—Mrs Kennedy, I mean"—said I. "Your treacherous husband, and his unconscious victim, this second wife, whoever she may be, haena gien in their names to me yet, as clerk o' this parish; and Mr Meiklejohn is owre correct a man to marry them against the rules."

"Heaven be praised!" cried the poor woman. "I was afraid I might be owre late."

"Yer in braw time" said I; "but, if Mr Kennedy take

anither name, how will I ken him?—for he may forge certificates o' residence, or bribe some residents to certify him—tricks no uncommon in the traffic o' matrimony.

"But maybe ye may ken his *sweetheart*," said she, wi' a big heart, as she wrung the bitter name out o' her dry throat.

"It's no unlikely," said I; "I ken the maist o' the leevin folks o' the parish, and my faither kens a' the dead anes."

"Did ye ever hear o' a young woman bearin the name o' May Walker?" said she.

"I think I hae," said I, hesitatingly, as if tryin to recollect mysel; and looking suspiciously at her, for I thoct she had heard o' my misfortune, and was suspicious o' every individual that mentioned that charmed, dear, yet terrible name.

"I think I hae," repeated I, drawing my hand owre my weel-shaved chin, as if to try my beard; and, satisfied o' the ignorance and innocence o' the creature, wishin to keep my secret.

"Did ye ever see her, or speak to her?" continued Mrs Kennedy. "Is she bonny?—has she a sweet voice?—is she like—like me?" And she burst into tears.

"I hae seen her," replied I, tryin to keep mysel frae greetin too; but a loud blubber burst frae me, in spite o' a' my efforts to keep it amang the lower pairt o' my lungs. "I hae seen her—I hae kissed—hum—I mean I hae spoken to her. She *is* bonny—O ay!" (with an increased blubber;) "she *is* indeed bonny."

My answer increased the weepin o' the jealous wife, and we baith grat thegither.

"Has she muckle siller?" said she, calming a little.

"She *will* hae," replied I; "she *maun* hae, for her faither is in *very* bad health."

This new cause o' sorrow increased my paroxysm to a perfect buller.

"Ye are a maist sympathetic creature," said Mrs Kennedy, "to greet that way for anither's misfortunes."

"It's just my way," said I; "we canna restrain our heart o' our stomach."

The mention o' the last word made the puir creature blush. It even stopped her tears. On hoo little springs do our passions depend!

This scene bein acted in the way I hae thus (I hope pretty graphically) described, I began to tak a mair philosophical view o' this important business. With an acuteness as natural to me as to a snip's tool, I penetrated the prudential course o' my operations in an instant o' inspired intuition. I fancy it wad smack considerably o' the *inane negotium* o' supererogation, besides being exposed to the charge o' anticipation, to lay my plan before my readers in the clumsy way o' a chart, where there's sae guid a pilot. I like to seize a subject as my father did my mother when he courted and won her; or as I did May Walker, when I courted and lost her. To the heart at ance! I premised my operations, by askin Mrs Kennedy, in spite o' the gladiator-like way she had o' handlin her knife and fork, to remain in my house for a day or twa, till we saw whether her husband would ca' upon me, to gie in the names o' him and *his*—alas! what a change!—*his* dulcinea! In the meantime, Beagle's precognition was still proceedin; and Gilbert Walker and his dochter wouldna, it was said, relent. For about eight days, Mrs Kennedy sat and watched at the window, to see if she could espy her faithless husband; while I sneaked about, to try if I could ascertain the absolute truth o' her story, and the real facts o' my ain deplorable case. My inquiries, conducted under the disadvantage o' bein obliged to skulk, and beg, as it were, an answer to my questions, were not very successful. I, however, discovered that a young man, wi' black routhy whiskers, and a long romantic nose juttin out frae

amang them, like a promontory frae the side o' a thick wud, was busy courtin May Walker, whose heart had got entangled in the forest o' his face, and couldna be liberated by a' the ruggin o' her father and her friends. This description o' him agreed wi' that I got frae Mrs Kennedy, wha couldna describe the coverin o' his face without tears. I was satisfied it was the man; and my satisfaction was confirmed by a kind o' recollection—strugglin through the inspissated gloom o' the oblivion I experienced after bein knocked doon in the Warlocks' Glen—o' the figure o' an Orson-like individual, wi' a great rung in his hand; mixed wi' the evanescent sounds o' "My love!—my love!—knock doun the spoiler!" which produced, thegither, the conviction that Mr Hugh Kennedy was the very man on whom May Walker was waitin on that eventfu Sabbath, and who felled me sae unmercifully to the earth.

Mrs Kennedy and I persevered, with the asperity o' hedgehogs, *echini asperitate*, (Pliny,) in our watch. Ae day, as I was sitting ben the house, where the parish register lies, the puir woman cam rinnin into the room, in a state of dreadful agitation, crying—

"There he's—there he's passing the very window—comin in, nae doubt, to gie in the names. Ah, traitor!"

"Be quiet, foolish woman," said I. "Awa again to the kitchen. There he is!" (there was now a loud knocking at the door;) "awa we ye to the kitchen!"

And I hurried her, *oborto collo*, by the neck and shoulders, (for the exigency of the case obliterated every trace of my usual gallantry,) to the kitchen, whereinto I locked her, as firmly as guid smith's wark would permit. The prudence o' this preliminary step needs nae elucidation to them wha ken the nature o' a deserted wife. I then walked calmly to the door, which I opened slowly and decently, as became a session clerk.

"How do you do, Mr Willison?" said a man, with large, black, routhy whiskers, and a prominent nose, o' the aquiline, or romantic cut.

It was the very apparition o' the fever I caught in the Warlocks' Glen. He pretended never to hae seen me before; but a blue mark on my forehead tingled the moment it caught his eye; and, as I unconsciously raised my hand to gie it the relief it asked, he smiled—a fair detection; but I said naething to shew that I recognised him.

"As weel as can be expected," answered I, without mair significancy or intelligence than a babe or suckling would have exhibited.

"That is the answer of a lying-in wife in Scotland," said he, still smiling.

"Unfortunately, nane o' us hae ony experience o' that yet," said I, "if I can guess your errand to a parish clerk."

"You do guess rightly," said he. "I came here to request you, sir, to publish these banns, on the next three successive Sabbaths."

I received the paper he held out. It contained the names and designation o' the twa parties—George Webster, residing at Burnfoot; and May Walker, dochter o' Gilbert Walker, residing at Langacres.

"Where are your certificates o' residence?" said I.

He handed me a certificate, signed and attested wi' apparent regularity, but which I was predetermined to doubt, wi' a' the obstinacy o' a guid dogmatic sceptic.

"I fancy you'll be the George Webster mentioned here yersel, Mr Hugh Kennedy," said I.

He started, at the very least, three guid thumb-measured inches, frae my floor. The stroke was nearly as pithy as that he applied to me in the Warlocks' Glen.

"That is my name in the certificate, there," said he, recovering.

"I ken that brawly, Mr Kennedy," said I. "George Webster's your *present* name; but I forget neither auld names nor auld friends. Some folk, wi' new-fangled

notions, hae, now-a-days, three names. Even Mr Meiklejohn, guid man, baptized his son Finlay Johnstone Meiklejohn, to the admiration o' the twa-named congregation o' St Fillan's; but it canna be expected that, when the laddie comes up, we are aye to address him by his three names. It would be owre great an expense o' wind and time."

"I have neither wind nor time to spend in this foolery," said he. "That is my name in the pa'er, and there are your fees."

"I dinna want to quarrel wi' you, Mr Kennedy," said I, "because I hae owre muckle respect for Mrs Kennedy—Lucy Græme, the dochter o' Arthur Græme o' Sunnybrae, on Tweedside—and her bonny bairn, to get into a dispute wi' the husband o' the ane, and the father o' the other. But I can keep a secret, man. What are ye alarmed about? Though ye knocked me down in the Warlocks' Glen, I hae nae ill-will to ye. I dinna object to cry ye next Sabbath, wi' May Walker; but ae gude turn deserves anither—ye can do me a service."

This statement utterly confounded Mr Kennedy. He tried first to bluster and swear, denied the truth of my assertion, calmed, blustered again; in short, gaed through a' thae useless and affected turns and movements that a hooked salmon taks the unnecessary trouble to do before it turns up the white o' its wame.

"Calm yersel, my dear sir," said I. "Mrs Lucy Kennedy is in my power, under my key. She daurna stir. Ye may be married and awa lang afore she kens onything about it, puir thing. We can settle a bit o' ordinar business without the interference o' a woman. I pledge ye ye'll neither hear nor see her, if ye'll promise to do me the favour I want aff ye."

He fell back again into a rantin fit—swore he didna understand me—threatened to lick me—seized me by the cravat—took awa his hand again—gaed to the door—returned—calmed—rose, and calmed again.

"What a trouble ye put yersel to, Mr Kennedy!" said I, calmly. "I want naething frae ye o' ony consequence. Ye're quite welcome to May Walker." (A sentimental whine here treacherously insinuated itself into my speech.) "She's a braw lass, and will be a rich lass. Her faither's ga' blether's fu' o' ga' stanes, or, as my faither ca'es them, ga' nuts—a decided *icterus* or jaundice. My parent (ye ken he's sexton) says he's sure o' him in sax weeks, and, consequently, ye're sure o' yer tocher in that sma' period o' time. I dinna want to deprive ye o' a' thae blessings, though it's in my power, and I might be urged to't by baith love and revenge."

"What is't ye want, then?" roared he, at last, in a voice higher than Stentor's, while the fire flashed frae his ee in almost palpable scintillations o' fury.

"Just get yer sweetheart, May Walker," said I, softly, 'to write twa lines to Simon Begley, or Beagle, as they ca' him, the fiscal o' the shire, passin frae her charge against me; and ye'll be cried on Sabbath afore the congregation meets, and Mrs Kennedy will never hear o't."

"I'll admit naething about Mrs Kennedy," said he, as doggedly as a mule—"it's all an invention of the brain of a subtle dominie; but I'll get ye the line ye want, on condition that these idle fancies are lodged again safely in the addle-noddle where subtlety or folly engendered them, and whence self-interest brought them to aid ye in a bad cause."

"It's dune," said I; "but, mark ye, nae cryin till I get the discharge; at least, if I'm forced, as I may be, to do my duty, and ca' the names, there'll be somebody in the front seat o' the gallery to answer me. Ye understand, Mr Kennedy."

Dartin a furious look at me, no unlike what a person might fancy o' the minotaur, he flew oot o' the hoose. As he passed the window, the yells o' Mrs Kennedy resounded

through the house, and even, I believe, followed hard on the heels o' her husband, if they didna owretak him a'thegither, as he birred through the neeborin plantin like an incorporated personification o' fear. The moment he was oot o' sight, I liberated the puir, unfortunate woman frae her place o' confinement.

"Whar is my husband?" she cried—"whar is that dear man, wha, in spite o' a' his guile and treachery, I maun see anee mair, though it were only to hauld up in his face this bairn, and then drap down at his feet, and dee?"

"Calm yersel, my bonny woman," said I, dautin her on the back like a bairn. "It's time enough to talk o' deein—a subject my faither likes better than I do—when I hae renounced my endeavours to get ye back yer husband. It's a' in a fair way. He's got the shot. Ye may see, by the way he ran, he's got something better than sparrow-hail. Be assured he'll come down. A deevil couldna flee wi' the weight o' could lead he carries under his wing."

"God bless ye!" said she, "and prosper yer efforts! I'll wait yer time."

In twa hours after this, a man on horseback, bespattered wi' the red loam o' the Warlocks' Glen up to the chin, arrived at my door. He cam frae Langacres, and carried a letter, he said, for the session-clerk o' St Fillan's. I snatched the letter frae his hands in an instant; tearin it open wi' a' the anxiety o' a creature strugglin for his precious reputation. It was just what I wanted. I asked the man to come in and get some refreshment; and the very instant I had him fairly within the house, I shut the door on him, and, mountin his swift, roan-coloured mare, flew like lightnin to Simon Begley's. He was at hame. I handed him the letter. He said it was just the very thing he wanted, for he acknowledged that the public authorities had no wish to prosecute a case involvin the ruin o' a puir man; but, until they got the discharge o' the private prosecutor, they had nae power to relinquish their proceedins. He assured that everything was now at an end, and the sough o' the country would dree the fate o' a seven days' wonder.

Next day, I tauld Mrs Kennedy to dress hersel, and be ready, wi' her bairn and her marriage-lines, to accompany me to a neighbour's house. We departed thegither. We took the road to Langacres. I felt the necessity here o' the maist inordinate caution—for I never could have been answerable for the effects o' my bein seen at a distance, walkin in my ordinary, erect, bauld, and somewhat martial manner, upon the house o' a jaundiced invalid, wha possessed the idea that I had already assaulted, and endeavoured to abduct his dochter. He might, in the first place, either be placed in a situation o' intense fear and alarm—prejudicial, if not fatal, to an invalid—or he might fire upon me from the windows, wi' ane o' his auld sportin guns, for he was ance a great sportsman. At same time, it was necessary to conceal Mrs Kennedy, in case she might hae been recognised by her faithless spouse. We took, therefore, a circuitous route, under the cover o' a wood, that led up to the kitchen door. The moment I entered, the women in the kitchen began to scream and flee awa; but I soon shewed them I was perfectly canny, and even got the length o' bein allowed to daut ane o' them (but she was a little advanced in life) on the back. I was nae langer impeded in my endeavour to see Mr Gilbert Walker, whom I discovered in an arm-chair, as yellow as saffron, and as cankered as a nettle. He tried to start up when I entered; but, heaven be praised! his jaundice sune brought him to his seat again.

"I am come, sir," said I, "in a matter o' the maist interest in nature to you and your dochter May."

"How, sir," screamed he, "can ye dare to sully the name o' that innocent creature, by makin't run the gauntlet o' thae treacherous lips! Awa wi' ye, ye vile Nicanor! ye

wolf that carries woo on your back in place o' hair! Alas! what a world is this! 'Baith prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness.'

"Gilbert Walker," said I, calmly, "my intentions towards your dochter were honourable, and I am come here this day—little thanks to me!—to put you on your guard against one whose intentions are false, treacherous, and abominable. When I made love to May Walker, I wasna a married man; but I was scorned, knocked down, and nearly prosecuted, for merely bein owre warm and lovin in my chaste embrace; while the husband o' anither woman comes in and carries awa the prize frae the scorned though honourable Cœlebs. May Walker may, if she likes, despise me, her faithfu lover. Ninety-nine out o' a hunder would, for that mad act, convict her o' a vitiated and corrupt taste; but, if she had ane to side wi' her, she may, in a sense, be justified. But wha, save a Turk, could justify the taste o' a bonny maiden, wha married anither woman's man? There's no ane, there's no a leg o' ane, frae Buchanness to Ardnamurchan, frae the Mull o' Galloway to John o' Groat's, that would justify that taste in ane o' the chaste dochters o' virtuous Scotland."

"What is this?" cried May Walker, openin a side-door, and strugglin, in the arms of Mr Hugh Kennedy, to get forward. "What do I hear? Who says that George Webster is a married man?"

"Your greatest enemy!" cried Mr Hugh Kennedy; pointin theatrically with his outstretched hand. "Ha! ha! ha! Your spoiler, your rejected, dejected, envious, poisonous, adder-tongued lover, is he who has dared to spurt his venom on the meat destined for his rival. This is gratitude. He solicited me to get him discharged from your just vengeance, and now he endeavours to gnaw the fingers of the hand that awarded him his safety."

"I see, I see it a'," cried May. "I ken the fox, or rather wolf, i' the auld. I hae met him in the Warlocks' Glen. He can sneak under broom bushes like the hairy adder, or lurk in the green moss like the yellow-wamed ask. It's no i' the wud alane that thae creatures carry their poison. They dinna cast it aff at the threshold o' the farmer's ha, whar they can crawl, an' spit, an' wound, an' kill, as weel as in the green wud. Dinna trouble yersel wi' the reptile, dear George. I gie him nae faith noo, ony mair than I did when he attacked me in the Warlocks' Glen."

I saidna a word. I turned, and ran out, and, as I departed, I heard spinnin after me, frae a' their lips at ance—

"Ay, ay, awa wi' ye!—it is your time, fause, treacherous dog; never shew your face in this house again."

In three minutes, I opened the door again, wi' my peculiar gentleness and calmness o' touch, and, wi' a jaunty manner, tinged wi' a kind of native etiquette, handed in, bowin the while amais to the very carpet, Mrs Hugh Kennedy, wi' her bairn in her arms and her marriage-lines in her pouch.

"I beg leave to introduce to you," said I, "Mrs Hugh Kennedy, the lawfu wedded wife o' this man, whase real name is Hugh Kennedy, and no George Webster, which is a mere cover—a vile deceit, and an imposition."

I hadna time to get thae words fairly out, when Mrs Kennedy threw her bairn into my arms, and, fleein forward wi' the keenness and fire o' a love that had been lang repressed and now burst its chains, seized, wi' her longing, greedy arms, her husband round the neck, like a ferocious mastiff. It's a safe noo, thinks I. He may try and shake her aff if he can. The thing was just as impossible as it was for Prometheus to shake the king o' birds frae his liver. He shook, pulled, rugged, tore, kicked, and pinched her. Her grasp waxed firmer and firmer. She stuck like a horse leech, whase blude rins fair through it. Guid sense micht hae dictated submission, whar the evil was clearly beyond mortal remeid. But the foolish man struggled—vain, trebly

vain, foolish, insane effort! O pithless man! The struggle continued. He wrestled, and blew, and puffed. She grasped him closer and mair close. At first his struggle was for liberty, but now it turned mair serious; it seemed to be for life. Her grip had extended to his neck, and, choking up his wind-pipe, impeded respiration. His face waxed blue. His tongue began to jut out, as if inclined to hang. Foam cam frae his mouth. His een were turned up, to shew their whites. A hollow *raucitas*, or rattle, began in his throat.

"Save the man frae strangulation," cried Gilbert Walker.

"Haud the young Kennedy, May," said I, throwin the bairn into her arms, squallin wi' a great noise.

I flew to save the man's life. Gettin behind him, I unclosed the woman's hands, which were fixed as if in the grasp o' death. The moment she was deprived of her hold, she fell senseless on the ground, and Kennedy, staggerin back, leaned on the wa', and tried to recover himsel. In a short time, the puir woman cam to hersel.

"Hugh, dearest Hugh," she cried, strugglin to get to her knees, "can it be possible that ye hae tried to desert me for anither—me, wha left, for yer sake, my dotin father, my hame, an' a' the comforts o' hame; the bonny holms o' Sunnybrae, whar we courted sae lang in secret; the scene o' my youthfu pleasures, and my maiden loves—for aye and for ever!"

"I know ye not, woman," said he, doggedly.

"Dinna ken yer wedded wife!" cried she, weepin, an' searchin for her marriage-lines, which she held up in her hand. "Dinna ken Lucy Græme, dochter o' Arthur Græme, o' Sunnybrae, whase heart I hae broken by marryin you! Mercy on me! Does he wha, by thae holy bands, is bound to cherish and protect me, his wedded wife, deny a' knowledge o' me? This is the last, the warst, the maist unbearable o' a' the ills ye hae brought on my puir head. That bairn," (risin, an' seizin the child,) "that babe, that hadna seen the licht o' day when ye cowardly deserted its houseless, starvin mither, looks to ye as its father, and mocks your cauld, cruel ignorance, wi' its knowledge—got, dootless, frae heaven—o' its natural protector. O maiden, maiden," (lookin to May Walker,) "tak example by me. Yer hame here is warm and comfortable. Dinna leave it, dinna renounce it, but for ane ye ken, in heart, soul, name, pedigree, and means. He wha has ruined me wad hae trebly ruined ye; for he has taen frae me ony my hame, my daily bread, and peace—he wad hae taen frae ye a' thae, and, ayont them a', your honour."

Kennedy had seen it was a' up wi' him before the termination o' his wife's speech, for his ee began to play about the door o' the room. I watched him, but he was an overmatch for me. Runnin forward, he jostled me to a side—I stumbled and fell—the women screamed—and, before I got up, he had completely and finally bolted. The puir woman, wi' her bairn still in her arms, shrieked as she saw him depart, perhaps for ever. Nae power wad restrain her—she flew, wi' a' the force o' her feeble limbs, after her faithless husband, and we never heard o' them mair.

Gratitude for this return, on my part, o' guid for ill, in a short time completely changed the heart o' May Walker. I had saved her frae ruin. We were wed. I may some day write the fate o' my first-born, for that famous wark, "The Border Tales."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE EDINBURGH MEDICAL STUDENT.

NOTWITHSTANDING of all that has been said and written about the demoralizing effects of a life at college, the warning has had small influence in rousing the prudential fears of parents, at least in our country of Scotland; for we see every year the same system persevered in, of their throwing the reins of their authority over the necks of their sons, sending them into the very vortex of vice, supplied by their paternal hands with money, and by nature with the rebellious passions that belong to our species, and blindly trusting to indications of goodness observed at home, that, when the young men are absent, they will retain and act upon the self-denying principles which have so carefully been inculcated on them during early life. How dangerous, how fatally ruinous this practice is, every one who has had any experience of the modes of life followed by students in the University of Edinburgh, must well know, when every year brings forth its numbers of ruined victims, who, with constitutions undermined, principles perverted, loaded with debt, and arrayed in squalid misery, seek, in the holes and dens of the old town—little better than a foul Sybaris of vice and uncleanness—a refuge from the scorn of men; but find no relief from the ruin that is bound to them by the Vulcan-chains of depraved habits. The causes of the many instances of demoralization that occur among the students of the Edinburgh College, might not be difficult to point out; but our province at present is to shew effects, leaving to the parents whom it may concern, to seek such preventive means of saving their sons from the ruin that has engulfed so many, as ordinary prudence may suggest. To this, they may haply be stimulated by the narrative we are now to lay before them; and, in aid of its efficacy, we may assure them that it contains a picture drawn from life, and drawn, too, by the hand of one who was himself the victim of the ruin he describes. Thus begins our *ci-devant* student:—

“ ‘In the morning of our days,’ says the eloquent Burke, ‘when the senses are unworn and tender—when the whole man is awake in every part, and the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us—how lively, at that time, are our sensations!—yet how erroneous are the notions which we form of things!’ This observation struck me forcibly, as I, by mere accident, in turning over some old papers, the other day, met with a diary, in which were noted several circumstances connected with my early life. Placed now in very different circumstances, and after the lapse of many years, how different are my feelings, my sentiments, and the estimate which I form of the world around me! Such is the change, that, in the plenitude of my former dogmatism, I would have exclaimed—‘I am not now the same entity that I formerly was; the particles composing my body have been so completely changed and repeatedly renovated, that not an atom of the same fabric that thought, and felt, and reasoned then, now remains, to have the same feelings and reasonings.’ Yet my heart belies such wild philosophy; it thrills responsive to the associations of former days; and seldom have I experienced such excitement as when perusing these long-forgotten memorandums. I

seem, as it were, to have lived over again those few years of youthful ardour, gilded with the recollections of high enjoyment, but shaded with error, indiscretion, and the extreme of human misery.—I know not why I took it into my head to make choice of the profession of medicine; for, I believe, my family, and especially my mother, had destined me for the church, having, through the interest of powerful friends, a pretty sure dependence on promotion for me in the ministry. My own choice, however, being yielded to, it was resolved that, without delay, I should be sent to Scotland, to pursue my studies at the celebrated school of Edinburgh.

The sensations on leaving home for the first time—a happy home, where you have been watched, and tended, and loved with the most tender solicitude—to launch into a strange and untried world, are by no means pleasant. It is like the tearing up by the roots of a tender plant, and putting it into a different soil, where it droops, and withers, and shrinks its sensitive leaves, chilled in all its functions by the rude change. The novelty of any approaching departure had kept my spirits buoyant for some time previous; but, when the morning came that I was to take leave—when I saw my luggage packed up in the hall, and the coach that was to bear me away came rattling to the door—the morsel of food stuck in my throat, and the tea-cup, half-lifted to my mouth, was convulsively returned. But the fervent adieu of my parents, and the tender embraces of my sisters and little brothers pressing around, almost completely unmanned me, and I dashed forward, and sprang into the vehicle, overpowered with emotion. I passed the first night of my journey at the house of a friend of our family, where I expected to have met with a young gentleman, who was to have accompanied me to Edinburgh, destined for the same pursuits as myself. Unfortunately, he had just left home two days before, so that I had the prospect of finishing the rest of my journey still in solitude. I was hospitably received by this family; and once more finding myself surrounded by a domestic group, my depressed spirits partly resumed their elasticity. The young ladies, the sisters of the friend who was to be my future college companion, were very accomplished and amiable; they had just had a sorrowful parting with their brother, and perhaps received me, his friend, the more kindly on that account. Besides these, there were other two young ladies, the daughters of a neighbouring baronet; and little did I then think that, many years afterwards, I should meet them under very different circumstances. With music, songs, and various conversation, the evening passed off pleasantly; notwithstanding, an occasional pang would come across my breast. I must not omit, however, that repeated bumpers of the good host’s wine, which, in the fulness of country hospitality, he pressed upon me, had also no little share in fortifying my spirits. In due time, I arrived at the place of my destination. I was struck, as I believe every stranger is, with the romantic beauty of the capital of Scotland. The season of the year was chill and gloomy, and the country, of course, was seen to disadvantage; but the city, with its ranges of splendid edifices, surrounded with picturesque mountains, its castellated rock towering in the midst, and the calm blue Frith seen in the

distance, opening into the wide ocean, presented a scene which exceeded all my previous conceptions. Still, amid this scene, I was a lonely and desolate stranger. Accustomed every day to see faces that met me with friendly smiles and cheerful salutations, and to find myself every evening in a circle where I had an allotted place and consideration, I could ill brook to find myself jostled among a crowd, where even my name was unknown, and where smiles and nods of salutation were passing on every side, but no one was there to smile upon me. The bustle of procuring and arranging my lodgings, however, and the formality of entering the several classes of the University, soon occupied and diverted my thoughts, and served to banish all regrets and speculations.

While the various departments of study were new to me, I listened with attention to the lectures, and read with avidity the different works recommended, till, in a very short time, I mastered the general bearings of the science. Yet I could not be called an assiduous or persevering student. I had as yet, too, an aversion to the minute and practical details which are necessary for becoming thoroughly master of the art of medicine. I believe, however, I was on a level in attainments, if not rather superior, to a great majority of those I saw around me. In general, the first few years of a medical student's life is passed in great idleness, and, as the sequel will too fully shew, in something far worse. They have a contempt for lectures and lecturers, assume high pretensions to deep science, and are, at the same time, extremely superficial; and nothing can exceed the petulance and superciliousness of their general manners. They are admirable examples of the dangerous and disgusting inflation of 'a little learning.'

I have already alluded to a companion who was to have accompanied me in my journey to Edinburgh. Soon after my arrival there, we met each other; and, indeed, for a considerable period, he formed my sole acquaintance. We had known each other slightly at school, although he, being some years my senior in age, was in a different form; and our intimacy was not then great. Now, however, we became bosom friends; and, as I shall have frequent occasion to introduce him, I shall do so under the name of St John.

He was one of those characters in whom there is a strange and perplexing mixture of good and evil. With a tall and manly figure, and a graceful and refined appearance, he possessed features of the most regular and striking symmetry. Nothing could exceed the fine glow of his countenance, and the winning smile of his finely-waved mouth, when in a complacent mood; or the vivid flash of his piercing eye, and his curled-up, quivering lip, when in an excited or sarcastic frame. With all the warmer feelings and affections of the heart in full play, he had also those uncontrolled impulses which led him into folly, passion, and the extreme of vicious licentiousness. He had an extremely subtle and penetrating intellect, but a judgment not very profound or comprehensive; so that he generally failed to see the natural or just bearings of things. But, in truth, he bestowed no time or effort in weighing and balancing circumstances. He generally delighted in paradox; and seldom have I seen such a thorough sceptic, arising both from the disposition of his mind, and from a determination to be so. His maxim was to doubt everything, taking nothing for granted, and this more especially when exposed even to the slightest opposition. Yet, notwithstanding this, high and exalted notions of virtue, of beauty, and of excellence, were predominant in his mind. It might be said of him, to use an expression of Dr Johnson's, that 'his mind was all virtue, and his body all vice.' Had he not been possessed of some powerful redeeming qualities—and had, indeed, a sort of fascination about him—it is impossible that our intimacy could have continued for such a length of time as it did. Often have we spent whole hours and days in the most

opposing arguments. Often has splenetic passion, and even rudeness, appeared for the time to have caused our irreconcilable breach; but as often has some kindly trait, or the apologetic remorse of cooler and calmer moments, bound us again more firmly together. I have often been astounded at the reckless depravity of his impassioned moments—have been disgusted with the grossness of his vice—and have vowed, within myself, that henceforth I should abhor and avoid him. Yet have I as often been taken unawares, with some generous, noble, and kindly impulse of his disposition, which would entirely obliterate former opinions. He was to me a sort of Mephistopheles; powerful to lead me headlong with him into a sea of licentiousness, and to attach me to his person, even although I strenuously combated his opinions, and condemned his practice. I have seen him, when roused to resentment against any of his opponents, exhibit a malignity and ferocity truly fiendish; and, even in calmer moments, when satirizing the world in general, display a disposition wherein one would have supposed no single kindly feeling could be found. And yet, once that I was seized with a dangerous illness, he watched me with all the anxious solicitude of the kindest of beings; tended me with all the assiduity and officiousness of a female; and more than once did I detect him hanging over my bed in tears. How fearfully constituted—how incomprehensible and wonderful is the human heart!

With an active and inquisitive mind, I was now arrived at that period when the dogmatism of science, and the various wild dreams and imaginings of false philosophy, are but too apt to exercise full sway, and to imbue the mind with an unbounded self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, a great proportion of the works of science, and the whole tenor of our present system of public philosophical education, either by the negative fault of omission, or by the direct means of commission, are manifestly calculated to engender such opinions and speculations in the ardent youthful student. The whole doctrines of physical philosophy are too much abstracted from moral and revealed truth, and too much is attempted to be solved by the present agency of physical causes, to allow the mind to direct itself to that *First Cause* which must have been the primary law-giver of matter and the universe. I now gave up my metaphysical speculations, and even my poetry, and plunged into the labyrinths of French physics, until I found myself stuck fast in the despicable quagmires of materialism.

In my earlier days, I had been taught a reverence for sacred truths, both by precept and example; and, as far as I recollect, I had rather a devotional feeling, from the impulse of my heart; but I had never seriously investigated the truths of religion, or probed its doctrines to the bottom. I now disregarded them amidst the precious lucubrations of the geologists and physiologists; but these did not occupy my whole attention. There was a coterie of savans, of which St John was the head or president, and I a distinguished member, among whom certainly deep or abstruse study formed no part of the regular proceedings. We met every other evening, and drank deep or played cards until midnight; then we sallied forth, and rambled the streets, or explored the haunts of dissipation, and drank deeper still, or conducted ourselves like Thracians, till morning would dawn upon us; when we again returned home, and slept off the fumes of our debauch for, at least, half of the following day.

With my dreamy and imaginative disposition, it may well be supposed that I was susceptible of the tender passions in all their intensity. Even when a mere boy, I recollect to have been absorbed by the passion of love; but these earlier impressions had all been effaced, and I now only give the following recital of an attachment of my maturer years, to shew that the pure and genuine passion



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of love, though, in this case, foolishly and inconsiderately directed, has power to elevate the mind above the grossness of dissipation and dissoluteness.

I was lounging, one summer evening, on the road-side, in the immediate vicinity of Edinburgh, when, before the door of a very humble cottage, I saw a young girl, whose whole appearance struck me as being exquisitely simple and beautiful. She was leaning forward, with outstretched hand, feeding a pigeon that was perched on the window sill; while another, its mate, sat upon her shoulder, pecking the ringlets of her auburn hair. Her face was exceedingly beautiful, with a pure glow of health and innocence pervading it. Her dress was plain in the extreme; but there was about it something of extreme neatness, which added a charm to her slim graceful figure. I stood and watched her for a time, and listened to the prattle which she addressed to the doves. She called them each by a separate name, and they seemed to recognise the distinction by fluttering successively around her; but, turning round and perceiving a stranger thus watching her, she retired hastily into the house, with a blush suffusing her modest countenance. I reluctantly came away; but had not proceeded far, when I determined to return, and procure, by some means or other, another sight of her. I went up to the cottage, under pretence of inquiring a particular road. She answered my knock at the door; and, imagining, from my hesitation and repeated questioning, that I did not exactly understand her directions, she very good-naturedly volunteered to shew me the pathway. I endeavoured to lead her into conversation; but she was modestly reserved and brief in her answers. Having accompanied me to the turn of the highway, she made a pause, and again pointed out the way. I thanked her in the kindest manner; and, when I held out my hand to bid her farewell, and pressed her tenderly, she looked with such an air of timid and abashed innocence, perhaps mingled with a little surprise, at my earnest manner, as to make her appear a still more interesting object than before.

I returned home, glowing with an undefined intoxication of delight. At our evening coterie, I related my adventure with all the eloquence which a new passion in my breast inspired. At every pause in the conversation, my thoughts still recurring to the subject, I poured out encomiums on the object of my attachment, in such a strain as excited the ridicule of my companions. They began to quiz me unmercifully; and, perhaps piqued at the air of refinement I threw around the adventure, they strove, by every method of gross insinuation, to reduce it to the ordinary level of their amours. This suited not the mood of my mind, and I retired in disgust from their company; and, indeed, for a considerable time, kept myself a solitary and secluded being. Next day, my first impulse was to walk out in the direction of the cottage. I passed it several times; took my stand for, at least, an hour, where I overlooked it; but, unfortunately, I could not get a glimpse of its fair inmate. I was afraid to call so soon again, in case an over rashness should disappoint my hopes of a further acquaintance. I returned home, fretted and feverish with the irksomeness of suspense.

Next day, I was at the same place; for one moment, I caught a glimpse of the object of my admiration; but she instantly disappeared. I now waited till the hour when I first saw her feeding her favourite pigeons; and, much about that period, both they and their mistress made their appearance. She struck me as the same beautiful and graceful creature as before; and, as a proof of the intensity of my feelings, I, who on ordinary occasions had no lack of courage and address, now faltered and hesitated whether I should be bold enough to come again forward. I did so, however, under pretence of praising and inquiring about the pigeons. After sufficiently admiring their beauty and

tameness—and they were certainly of a beautiful kind—I asked whether such pigeons could be purchased. She said she did not know; that these were two doves left with her by her brother, who was far away; and that she tended them and loved them for his sake. While engaged in this conversation, her mother made her appearance—a pale, delicate-looking woman, with an expression of sadness deeply impressed upon her countenance. She also told me about the doves, and that they belonged to her son, who was far beyond seas in America. There was something that struck me in the appearance of this woman, too. She was neat, though plain in her attire; but her countenance, which was expressive of calmness and complacency, had a cast of staid melancholy; and she was care-worn, and evidently appeared much older than she in reality was. The glimpse that I got of their humble dwelling, too, shewed it to be clean and orderly, beyond what is generally seen in Scottish abodes of the same description. I did not lengthen my stay on this occasion, nor enter into further conversation, but soon took my leave. Many a day afterwards, however, on various pretences, have I called at the cottage, and entered into conversation with both its inmates. This woman was not a widow, though she lived thus solitary. Her husband had rented a small croft, or farm, at a considerable distance in the country. They had a family of two sons and this daughter; but times, it would appear, had gone hard with them. The father, from all accounts I could learn, was a man of superior abilities, but of strange and wayward opinions—such a man as is not suited to bear up with patience against the buffetings of the world. He had engaged in schemes, and failed in them; got involved in debt; and suffered all the miseries of a proud mind under misfortune; till, at last, despairing of success at home, he resolved to seek his fortune in America; and having, with great difficulty, scraped together as much money as paid their passage, he and his two sons departed for that country, leaving his wife and daughter at home, till he could provide an abode for them with himself, and be enabled to send them a pittance to pay their passage across the Atlantic. But he had now been several years abroad, and perhaps found difficulties there as well as at home; for he had never yet been able to send them tidings of success, or the requisite remittance. How the old woman and daughter contrived to exist, delicacy forbade me to inquire minutely; they, in truth, lived in all the bare simplicity of penury. The mother was allowed some trifle from a friendly society, and the daughter appeared to earn something by her needle-work. As I have already said, by various practices, I contrived to see this girl almost daily. I walked there frequently, and gave, as a reason, that my health required it; and, in truth, it had somewhat suffered from the effects of study and dissipation. As I became more acquainted, her natural shyness wore off considerably. With an extreme simplicity and ingenuousness of mind, she had also a natural playfulness, and even archness of manner, which occasionally displayed itself. I gradually began to flatter myself that my presence was not disagreeable to her. I thought that she lingered about the cottage door longer, and fed her doves more repeatedly, about the time that I generally passed them, than she at first used to do. I thought, too, I perceived a flush suffuse her countenance when we accidentally met; that she remembered many little things I told her, and seemed to adopt any the slightest suggestions which I made regarding the treatment of the doves, and many other trifles. Once, too, after that I had been some days inadvertently absent, I found her lingering in the lane, picking wildflowers from amid the hedgerow. I thought this might, perhaps, be accidental; but when, on another similar occasion, I met her there also, and encountered her mild, bright, half-downcast eyes beaming with emotion, the ecstatic and exulting thought—she loves me! at once confirmed all my hopes

My enthusiastic admiration may have biased my judgment ; but I then certainly thought, that, in this peasant girl, I perceived a refinement and sensibility of mind beyond what could have been expected in her station. Her knowledge was extremely limited—she almost knew nothing of the world—nothing beyond her immediate neighbourhood, and the companionship of her mother ; she was entirely a creature of nature and feeling. Yet her mind was acute, too ; and the questions she asked had a pertinence to the subject, joined also with an air of naïvete, that was highly engaging. I gave to her the story of Paul and Virginia, which she read with intense interest, and wept over too, believing that every circumstance and every word was true. Her questions suggested by this perusal were numerous ; it opened up a new world to her ; and her desire to know about the Isle of France, the scene of the story, was so great as to suggest the idea of putting an elementary book of geography into her hand. This pleased her even as much as the former volume ; and chiefly for this reason, that it gave her a knowledge of America, and that she could find out on the map the very place where her father and brothers resided. I often had a wish to bring her to the theatre, to watch her emotions at seeing this mimic scene ; but I forbore making such a request, well knowing that her mother's sense of propriety would be alarmed ; and for her own sake it was better I did not. Indeed, I found it necessary to proceed with great caution ; for, as our intimacy increased, and as she no doubt perceived that her heart was interested, her behaviour became proportionally more reserved and embarrassed—a struggle between her judgment, immature as it was, and her affections.

And I, too, felt, at times, my compunctions and embarrassments. Not that I was so utterly lost or abandoned as seriously to entertain the notions of a seducer ; but then, on the other hand, I knew that my present prospects, my station in life, and every other circumstance connected with the case, decidedly forbade my present passion. But, in truth, I banished thought on the subject, one way or other, and gave myself up entirely to the pleasing and all-absorbing delirium. My whole soul was so completely absorbed in this one precious object, that I recollect, one whole day that I was detained at home on particular business, I sallied forth at a late hour in the evening, merely for the purpose of walking round the cottage which contained the sole charm of my heart. I gradually came nearer and nearer it ; and, seeing a faint light from the window, I knelt down close, and looked in.

The mother and daughter, beside the light of an humble lamp, were at their evening devotions, according to the manner of the country. An open Bible lay on a chair beside them ; and their hands were clasped, and their countenances turned upwards in the attitude of prayer. I even heard the sounds of imploring mercy and forgiveness, and the petition to the Great Father of all, for aid and protection from evil. I retired heart-struck at the solemn and affecting sight. I almost fancied myself, for the time, a fiend sent to disturb this scene of holy piety and innocence, and for many days had a war within my bosom whether I should ever return. I did go back, however. The old woman was confined to bed with illness. She requested my advice ; as, from some little cures I had effected in the neighbourhood, she had always hitherto styled me Doctor. On this occasion, I did what my imperfect experience could ; and, as I saw that debility, and perhaps deficient nourishment, was the principal cause of her complaint, I, with considerable manœuvring, contrived to persuade her to accept of some wine and other little things that I sent her. I felt a satisfaction in thus being able to do some good—it soothed my ruffled conscience, also ; but still it was but too obvious a means of riveting still faster my passion. The assiduous attentions which Mary paid to her beloved parent, the anxiety she displayed about her, and the gratitude which she could not help expressing, through her tears and emo-

tions, for my services, touched me to the heart. For many weeks, my visits were repeated as frequently as before. Meanwhile, the mother recovered her wonted health. The season was now drawing to a close ; it was about the last month of autumn, and the weather had become very unsteady. For several days, I had been detained at home, with a cold and slight fever ; but, on the first tolerable day, I walked out as usual to the cottage. The morning, though bright when I started, soon became overcast, and a chill and cheerless day succeeded. On arriving at the humble dwelling, I was surprised to find the door locked ; for, in general, it was unsuspectingly left upon the latch. I knocked repeatedly, but no answer was given. I became alarmed in the extreme ; for I had never found it thus before. Still no answer was returned to my knocking, and not a motion was heard within. I went to the window, and peeped in, and there I saw that all was emptiness and desolation—the inmates were gone, and every particle of their humble furniture. My heart almost misgave me ; a cold sweat came over me ; and I staggered as if I would have fainted. I could not imagine to myself what was the meaning of all this. I stood stupified for a time, gazing on the bare walls of the house. At last, I bethought me to inquire at the nearest neighbourhood for tidings of the departed. The woman there could give me no information, but that they had 'fitted.'

'Good Heavens!' I exclaimed, in a state of extreme agitation, 'can you not tell me where they have gone to?—tell me instantly, for you must know.'

'Indeed, sir, I canna tell,' said the woman, with something of a malicious grin, as I thought, on her countenance. 'They made a moonlight fitting, maybe, and are awa.'

This appeared to me most unaccountable.

'They have, perhaps, only gone for a day or two? When did you miss them? Tell me, if you value your existence! But, no, that cannot be—their whole furniture is taken with them. But, let me see, are the pigeons gone, too?'

And with this I ran to look for them ; but of these, also, no traces could be found. I returned, and entreated the woman to tell me all she knew. She either would not or could not tell me anything ; but directed me, as a last resource, to inquire at the proprietor of the cottage. I went to him ; but he was from home, and could not be found. I returned once more, and walked round the cottage in a state of mind indescribable. I lingered about for some time ; and not till approaching dark could persuade myself to return home. I laid myself on my pillow, but shut not an eye all night. Next morning, I was at the cottage again ; but all was as desolate as before. A placard, with 'To Let,' placed on the cottage window, now left me no hope. I eagerly inquired at the proprietor where the former inmates had gone to ; but he seemed to know nothing about them ; said that they had paid the small pittance of rent ; and appeared disgustingly indifferent about the subject. Almost fainting with vexation and disappointment, I went and sat down on the spot where Mary and I had sat the last time I had parted with her. I speculated in a thousand ways about their disappearance. My first idea was that they had gone to America ; but, on second consideration, I was satisfied this could not be—they had not money sufficient ; and, besides, as I had managed their correspondence for some time past, I knew they had received a letter a few weeks before, but with no arrangements proposed in it for such a journey. My next and prevailing opinion was, that I myself was the cause of their removal. I had perceived the mother for some time uneasy at the attentions which I paid to her daughter—her prudence was alarmed, even with all my caution ; perhaps the daughter, in her ingenuousness, had confessed her own state of mind ; at all events, it appeared that they had taken this, the wisest step, of withdrawing with extreme secrecy ; and thus breaking up, in the easiest manner for themselves, the intimacy between

us. I now began to call up every minute circumstance in the behaviour of Mary on the last occasion I met her. For some time previous, I plainly saw she was pale, and as if mentally distressed. The day I last met her, was a sunny day in the end of autumn. The air was calm and serene. She walked out with me with less hesitation and embarrassment than she had done for a long time previous. We sat down on a green knoll, under a favourite tree, which was now profusely shedding its yellow-tinged leaves. She even entered into conversation more readily than she used to do, and seemed to return to the unreserved kindness and endearing manner of our first interviews. When I spoke something about the approaching winter, and the very few fine days like the present that remained to us to be thus happy, she seemed to make a long pause, and her face grew as pale as death; she even shuddered with emotion; and, when I remarked it, she said she had last night had a strange dream. She dreamed that her mother was dead, and her father and brothers, and that she was alone in a vast place, full of houses and strange people; she was dying with hunger, and yet she felt she could not eat though bread had been placed before her; there was no being around her that she knew, till at last I came up, took off a lock of her hair, and then vanished for ever.

'And was this your dream?' said I: 'then I shall realize one part of it immediately.' And with this I cut off with her scissors a ringlet of her hair. 'But, as to the other parts, believe me they are all vague imaginings, and there is, in reality, nothing in dreams.'

She had a book with her, too, which I had given her some time before, not expressly stating that it was to be her own. She proffered it back to me, which I, of course, did not accept. She accompanied me the whole length of the lane, and—a thing quite unprecedented with her—she held out her hand to me first in parting. I kissed her, and bade her adieu; but told her not to think I had 'vanished for ever, for that I would most certainly return again as usual.

It at last became my settled opinion that they had retired to some dwelling within the city; and in this I was the more strengthened, by finding out that their furniture was taken away by some person belonging to the town; but his name I never could ascertain. For a long time, I was continually on the look-out for the fugitives, and traversed every by-lane of the city many times; went to the stalls and market-places, and other resorts of the poorer classes, to endeavour, if possible, to find them; but my search and scrutinies proved in vain—no tidings of them reached my ear. The disappointment of this circumstance preyed upon my spirits, and so evidently affected my appearance, that St John absolutely forced me again into the usual coterie, which, for many months previous, I had almost completely forsaken; nor had its boisterous mirth then any charm for me. I was now, however, as reckless as ever, and plunged headlong into my former habits.

It may readily be supposed that, with our profuse and dissolute habits, we considerably exceeded the allowances made to us for our necessary support at the University. This every one of us had done for some time past, so that our debts were accumulating fast upon us. A thousand expedients were resorted to, to ward them off, and at the same time to raise the wind for future extravagance. I had often seen bills and promissory-notes negotiating among my companions and various tradesmen. St John was deeply and continually involved in such transactions; and I saw that it vexed and fretted his proud mind almost to desperation. I had always entertained a horror of such transactions, and endeavoured to keep clear of them, if possible. It would not do, however. I owed a heavy sum to a tailor; and, after various pleas and excuses, he would put off no longer. The horror which this man's unremitting dunning caused me, was excruciating. But this was not the only

claim; I had others equally clamorous; and, when I heard a knocking at my door, I have actually become sick with vexation, aware that it was some demand upon me which I could no more satisfy than I could fly.

One morning, while St John was with me, a knock came to the door, and I knew it was this same inexorable tailor. He was a sharp-faced, sinister-looking, tall figure, with a pair of grey eyes that pierced into your very vitals.

'For God's sake, St John,' cried I, 'face this man, for I cannot do it; the whole resources of my rhetoric are chilled up, and I am undone if you cannot arrange matters with him.'

The man entered, and began his clamorous request as usual; but the commanding figure and determined speech of my friend, seemed to awe him somewhat. St John and he sat down together; and, in a business-like manner, after perusing the claims of the bill item by item, and protesting that they were scandalously overcharged, (which I believe in my heart they were, almost twofold,) he at last got the tailor to agree to negotiate a draft, at a short date, for a sum considerably larger than his account, the balance to be paid to me in the meantime. Thus the matter was settled, and a sum procured for me to liquidate some of my other more pressing debts. But the relief, I saw, was only temporary; in a short time, I had again to meet the sum, now swelled still greater by enormous discount and various items.

I was distressed beyond measure. I saw that I had brought myself to the brink of a ruinous precipice, from whence there was no escaping with honour. Although at night I too frequently contrived to steep my sensibilities in oblivion, yet every morning when I awoke it was with terror at the thoughts of the heavy responsibility hanging over me; and the day of payment of the obligation was looked forward to as something awful. I long hesitated to disclose the matter to my family. My correspondence with them—which once used to be frequent, and my most delightful solace—for a considerable time past had been irregular, forced, and unsatisfactory. How often has a kind endearing letter, come from my mother, or one of my sisters, and stung me to the heart, when I thought how little I deserved such affectionate love and solicitude! But at last the time of payment was fast approaching, and I must write and disclose all. I made a fair, though not full confession, promised a new course of life, and vowed, seriously and solemnly, within myself, that I would keep my promise. Having written and dispatched this letter, I felt somewhat at ease; and I anxiously waited an answer. More than a week passed, and no answer came; almost another week elapsed, and I was wound up to the utmost pitch of suspense. One evening I was prevailed upon to join a party of my associates. It will give some picture of the utter recklessness of conduct, and the benumbing effects of a course of dissipation on the sense of moral rectitude, when I mention that these young men, who were plunged in debts equally with myself, if not more so, sat down to a table furnished with luxuries and wines, which a moment's calculation and thought would have shewn they were just robbing an industrious tradesman of; for none of them were possessed of the means, or perhaps ever contemplated paying for them. I say it was a temporary searing of the moral sense, and a drowning of all sober reflection, from the repeated and habitual effects of intemperance; for, withdraw these false excitements, allow time for thought, and I do not pretend to say but that their minds would have revolted at a deliberate act of dishonesty; on the contrary, many of the best feelings of our nature were to be found in their breasts.

This evening, the whole coterie talked of their affairs as in a state of desperation, and as if some crisis must soon ensue. Various vague schemes of future life were proposed. Some talked of going abroad immediately; others proposed

joining a company of strolling players; some were to write a tragedy, others a novel, and get rich by these visionary means. To vary the scene, others proposed to disguise themselves as beggars or gipsies, and perambulate the world in this disguise; and there were not wanting many imitations of the characters proposed; and spouting, singing, mimicry, and gesticulation, filled up the intervening hours. For my part, I lost myself in a silent dream of American forests, with my lost but beloved Mary with me there.

At a late hour I returned home, and threw myself on my couch, passing, as was usual of late, a restless and almost sleepless night. On the morning, I was aroused from an imperfect slumber, by the arrival of the long-expected letter. I grasped it with avidity, trembling and breathless with agitation. I found that it was written by my mother—not my father. I was somewhat calmed, also, by perceiving that it contained a draft for money; but, as I read on, its contents shocked and astonished me, and I fell back in bed, for a time stupified with emotion. To be brief, this letter disclosed to me the unexpected but utter ruin of my family, and under peculiar circumstances, too, which, to the world, until time was allowed for full and satisfactory explanation, would implicate my father in dishonour. My mother wrote under the greatest grief and agitation—grieved for her own misfortunes, but doubly grieved for my indiscretions, although her reproof was ‘more in sorrow than in anger’—I may say in words breathing the deepest anguish, which came like darts to my heart.

I forbear entering into the details of this letter of woes; but in it the future arrangements of the family were pointed out to me. It was absolutely necessary for my father to go abroad, to wind up his affairs; and my mother had determined to accompany him. The rest of the family were disposed of in the meantime, our old and much-loved home being completely relinquished. A line of life was arranged for me, and earnest solicitations enjoined me to follow it. It was expected that I had nearly completed my studies; and a sum was sent—every farthing that could be spared—to enable me to do so. Alas! it was not even sufficient, by one-half, to relieve me from my present pecuniary obligations; and, under the circumstances in which it was sent, when I looked again at the draft, I wished it had never been wrung from them at all.

My mind, before this, had been plunged deep into melancholy thoughts and anticipations; but here was a lower depth still. My own aberrations and difficulties, I hoped, might still have been arrested; but here was the sudden and total ruin of my family—an event which I had never in my life, in the most distant manner, contemplated. It now appeared to me that I was cut off from all hope of any future prospects, and nothing was left to me but to sink into friendless penury and despair; but, above all, I had the anguish of picturing to myself the forlorn condition of all those most dear to me, embittered with the thought that my own conduct added to and aggravated their misery. The dreadful tumult of my thoughts that day were such as I now shudder to reflect on. I spent the whole day in bed, in an agony of bitter musings, the incidents of the past mingling in wild and jumbled confusion with forebodings of the future. Next day, I arose, a haggard and miserable figure. My first business was to get my draft converted at the bank into money; part of this I portioned out to pay my most urgent and immediate necessities; with the remainder I went, in a state bordering on frenzy, to my relentless creditor, the tailor. On being ushered into his presence, I laid a sum before him, told him that it was every farthing I had in the world, or that I ever expected to have—that he might take my life, if he chose, which was now burthensome to me—but that more I could not, had not to give. He seemed a little startled at my energetic despair, counted over the sum, and, whether the slightest

dash of pity came across him, or whether, as I rather suppose, the sum in the meantime was more than he expected, and perhaps as much as covered his actual outlay, I cannot tell, but he mumbled something about getting an acknowledgment for the remainder, and he would allow it to lie over for a time. I left the house, and returned home, now without a shilling in the world. I sat myself down in a chair, and continued in this posture, with my eyes vacantly fixed on the fireplace, for I know not how many hours. The servant entered, to ask if I dined at home, to which I replied in the negative; but the usual dinner hour passed over, and still I had no inclination to move from my position.

About ten o'clock, St John entered my apartment. It struck me that there was something very unusual about his appearance. His countenance was dejected and care-worn in the extreme; yet he assumed a forced gaiety, and seemed determined to be merry. He requested some wine, sung a snatch of a song, and we sat down together. But my heart was too full of my misfortunes to permit me a moment longer from unbosoming them to him—I told him the whole contents of my letter. He seemed shocked in the extreme.

‘My dear boy, I came to you writhing under the grasp of my own destiny, but resolved to give you comfort—resolved to pass together one happy night more—the last night—last night, perhaps—for the game is up with me at last—all is over.’

I entreated him to explain. It appeared that, pressed hard with difficulties, he had drawn on his family to a pretty large amount; that, in the meantime, in the wild expectation of doubling this sum, he had engaged deeply in play with some military officers and others; that he had lost every farthing; that his father, already deeply in advance, had positively refused to recognise or accept his draft; that he was involved in a dispute with his companions, a challenge ensued, and they refused to meet him, (which afterwards turned out to be on the plea of his insanity, for the wildness of his manner impressed this on their minds.) This refusal, to his wildly-constituted mind, appeared the consummation of all his miseries, and he seemed now driven to the utmost despair. I endeavoured to soothe him, and reason with him; but it seemed to have little effect. His manner was such as I had never seen it before. In truth, we were both miserable; and, though we talked much and seriously, yet it was but the unsatisfactory cogitations of despairing and unsettled bosoms.

St John frequently sunk into profound reverie; and I recollect his starting up, on one of those occasions, and blowing out the flame of the candle. ‘You see,’ said he, ‘that flame has vanished, disappeared, and ceased to exist, leaving that wick a mass of charcoal. So is it with the soul. May it not also sink into nothing?’

Then, again, he muttered—

‘But that there’s an hereafter,
All nature cries aloud through all her works.’

Thus his mind seemed even dissatisfied with his own vague analogies. ‘Oh,’ said he, throwing himself on the sofa, ‘would that I could sink into utter annihilation! Heaven—if such a region of happiness exists—I do not even hope for; but I am sick of the utter hollowness of humanity. You have yet hope, my dear —. In your heart there is a well-spring of good and gentle thoughts, which will carry you onwards—here, here, there is nothing but hollow despair! ‘Sdeath! to think that I am despised, rated contumeliously, and treated like a poltroon! My brain burns with vengeance.’

We sat together all night, and when, towards morning, he rose, I accompanied him; and we paced backwards and forwards on the street, till dawn. He complained, at intervals, of a grievous headache; and, at last, with strong persuasion, I prevailed on him to go home and go to bed; and, as a means of relief, I bled him from the arm. I left him sunk

in slumber—but I never saw him more. His mind had been irretrievably fixed on suicide, and he carried it into execution. I forbear, for various reasons, detailing the awful particulars, which were, however, characteristic of his disposition.

I was now, indeed, utterly friendless and forlorn. How I was to shape my course, or what I was to do for existence, I knew not. It was expected of me, and, indeed, it was possible, I might, by this time, have had my education, as a professional man, finished. This was not the case, however. I had trifled away part of my time, and also part of my finances, which ought to have been devoted to this end; and now, although I was within a short period of the necessary time of completing my studies, I saw it was impossible to attempt to do so at present. At first, I had a strong impulse to return home, and see my family, before the departure of my parents abroad; but this I found impossible: they were to sail immediately after the date of my last letter; and, besides, on second thoughts, I found that I could not muster courage to face them. My unsatisfied creditors, also, now began again to harass and threaten me, especially after the sad fate of my companion was whispered amongst them. There was nothing for me, then, but flight or concealment. I chose the latter; and, with five pounds in my pocket, which I, with difficulty, procured from a friend to whom I had lent sums in my prosperity, and leaving behind me almost all my moveables, to satisfy some demands at my lodgings, I took up my abode in a mean and obscure part of the town, near the Abbey, resolved to live in disguise, and in a manner so as to husband my limited finances to the utmost.

The occupier of the house I went to live in was a shoemaker, or rather cobbler—a man of low, dissipated habits, and brutal disposition; indeed, the scenes of drunkenness, quarrelling, and low debauchery I frequently had the pain to witness in this man's house and neighbourhood, gave me a most melancholy picture of the condition and morals of the low population of a great city. One night he had been carousing in the neighbourhood, and returned brutally drunk. Towards morning, he had fallen from his bed on the hard brick floor, and wounded his head in a severe manner. Some hours afterwards, I heard a violent altercation, and screams from his wife. I went into their apartment, and found him in a furious rage, beating the woman unmercifully. It seems, on recovering his senses in some degree in the morning, he had felt the wound; and, rashly supposing that it had been inflicted by his wife, his passion impelled him to take immediate revenge. I was convinced this was the true state of matters, from the protestations of the woman, as well as from the whole circumstances of the case; and interposed in her behalf. He still persisted in his allegations, and fiendishly endeavoured to persuade me that she had made an attempt to murder him. The poor woman—whose conduct was really worthy of a better helpmate—was quite shocked at this accusation, and strenuously appealed to me for protection. I first endeavoured to pacify, and then to awe the monster, by threatening to bring the police to investigate the matter. He was at last temporarily appeased, but afterwards retained a dogged suspicion of me; and I evidently saw that I could not be safe from his resentment, did I remain longer under his roof. The idea of changing even this miserable hovel, now oppressed me, especially as I was now almost penniless; but, in a few days, at the termination of the week, I found it would be absolutely necessary for me to do so. I now found that my misery was drawing to a consummation, and my mind was troubled even to madness. I recollect, one day, in my usual retreat in a neighbouring sand quarry, meditating seriously on the awful alternative of suicide. I even laid my plan of operations; and so infatuated was my mind, that my great concern was how to manage matters so as to deceive

my parents and family into the idea that I had gone abroad, and met death at sea, or by some other accident, in order to save them the pain and shame of the real cause—so little did I then think of the future consequences of such an unwarrantable act, or of the great tribunal at which I had to appear, where there could be no concealment. I recollect the lines of Milton floated in my mind—

Did I request thee, Maker, from the clay
To form me man?

As if the potsherd dared say to the Potter, 'Wherefore didst thou fashion me?'—as if it was nothing for a human being to be formed, frail, erring, and helpless though he might be, yet a candidate and competitor for a glorious immortality! My plan was to have dug deep into the inner side of the sand-bed; and, as I penetrated, to fill up the mouth of the hole behind me, and thus construct a tomb where I might starve myself to death, and rot, ere the inquisitive eye of man could distinguish aught of my form or lineaments. I had, certainly, almost made up my mind to commence this deed when I returned next day, after I had written a letter, which was to go, by a circuitous route, to my family, and after I had tied together, and made up in a parcel, directed to a bookseller, some juvenile MSS., which I preserved during all my troubles, and which I, with strange fondness, looked forward to as credentials for future immortality.

But here an incident occurred—trifling in itself, and which will appear to the generality of people quite accidental, though it has been subsequently viewed in a different light by me—which diverted my thoughts in the meantime. While sitting, close in my usual position, with my head hanging downwards, I felt a momentary giddiness and throbbing of my temples, and I perceived, on the white sand before me, a drop of blood fall. I put up my hand, and discovered that my nose bled—a very unusual thing with me. My mind was staggered and directed from its purpose. It was also turned into a new train of thought; and the superintending providence of a gracious and long-suffering Being flashed upon my hardened and perverted understanding. I shed tears, and the dawnings of a penitential supplication rose faintly within me. I retired home, with my mind somewhat soothed from the agitations of the few previous days. Next day was mild, considering the season of the year; the sun shone out, and there was a balmy softness over the face of nature, which is doubly relished as coming amid our bleakest and coldest weather. I resolved not to visit the *pit* that day, but wandered out by the sloping sunny side of a hill, in a different direction. I walked, and stood, and sauntered here for about two hours, till, at last, being somewhat fatigued, I looked for a resting-place. At a little distance, I perceived several stones, by the side of a ruined wall, suited for a seat; and on one of them was placed an old man, busily engaged perusing some papers. I sat down beside him, and remained for a considerable time. He was intently engaged, perusing some printed leaves, and occasionally marking them on the margin. In appearance, he looked like some decayed tradesman of respectability. At length, seeing me, he entered into conversation; and, perhaps conjecturing, from my shabby-genteel-like appearance, my actual condition of a 'poor scholar,' he requested my opinion of some passage in the papers he was perusing. I gave it apparently to his satisfaction, and we entered into still more familiar talk. He told me that he was employed as a corrector or reader of the press for a printing establishment; that lately he had been in very delicate health, and he took this method of walking out and enjoying the air, at the same time that he followed his occupation. A thought struck me that such employment would suit me; and, after a little hesitation, I asked if such could be procured, at the same time letting him know that the veriest pittance would be a godsend to

me in my present circumstances. He readily agreed to give me immediately some sheets, which the delicate state of his health would not permit him to manage; and, after a little while of initiatory trial, it appeared my performances gave satisfaction, and I was intrusted with the revisal of the sheets of a large and heavy work, where there was a good deal of abstruse learning. For this I was rather better paid; but still the allowance was such as just barely kept me in existence. The intense anxiety of my mind, however, was greatly quieted; and I could lay myself down on my pillow at night with the hope that I had it in my power to provide for the necessities of to-morrow: and those harrowing dreams and reflections which formerly preyed upon me, did not now so often disturb my midnight slumbers.

Never, since my retirement into obscurity, had I ventured to make any inquiries, in the well-frequented parts of the town, for any of my former companions. I was now anxious, however, to see one of them; and, for this purpose, I summoned resolution to go to a public hospital, and mingle amidst the throng, several days, in hopes of discovering him. Even in the short time I had been absent, a vast number of new faces presented themselves among this crowd; and few, indeed almost none of those with whom I had any personal intimacy, could be discovered. At last, I met with one gentleman who I knew was slightly acquainted with my friend. He told me that, some time before, he had seen this friend attending in the fever wards of the hospital, or rather in a separate hospital, set apart for fevers, which were then very prevalent among the lower class of the population. This place I visited several times, but could not hear tidings of him. Like the others, perhaps, he had run his career, or had been recalled home.

It was while casually walking along one of the wards, on the last day of my visit, and making these observations, that, at the lower end, I perceived the waving curl of an auburn lock of hair. My heart throbbed, for it immediately recalled to me the auburn hair of my beloved Mary;—even all my miseries had not banished her from my remembrance. On the contrary, at the sight of a figure or complexion the least resembling hers, my bosom became agitated. I eagerly walked up to the couch where this sight struck me. There was, indeed, a being lying there—*young, pale, emaciated*—with her few straggling locks waving with the current of the open window; but she was cold, motionless, dead! I dreaded—I was almost sure it was her; but the ticket with the name, pinned to the couch, confirmed the dark and dreadful suspicion. I made inquiries—I got access to the hospital books; but nothing was known—nothing was mentioned of her but her name, and ‘no relatives.’ Ah! thought I, I must have passed her several times before, ere yet life was extinct; perhaps when she could have spoken to me—perhaps when strenuous efforts might have saved her. Such thoughts drove me to distraction. I believe I fainted; and, some time afterwards, found myself laid in one of the attendants’ rooms. I wished again to see the body, but was told it had been carried to the dead-room, previous to interment. It was, perhaps, as well. I sat for some time, pale and shivering. The good-natured nurse compassionately went and begged a glass of wine for me; my strength somewhat recovered, and sorrowfully I returned home. My persuasion was, that the mother must have previously died—most likely of the fever also; and that the poor girl, lone and solitary, and in utter destitution, had fallen a victim to the contagious disease, then so extensively prevailing among the victims of grief and poverty. Her affectionate and confiding heart—her perfect innocence and simplicity of character—her dream, too, came to my mind; and I thought my heart would burst with unavailing sorrow; mingled, too, with vague self-reproach, for I thought that I alone

was the cause of driving these friendless beings from their suburban abode to the pestilence of the city.

I can scarcely, even at this distance of time, reflect upon the state of my mind, after this discovery, without a pang. My spirits sank, and I became again disinclined to my mechanical labours. I conceived a strong desire for change of scene; and hearing, a short time afterwards, of a vessel which was to leave a port in the west of Scotland, on a foreign voyage, I made arrangements to join her; and my services were accepted as a clerk or assistant to the captain, with a view also of contributing my small share of surgical skill for the services of the crew. The first part of this voyage was to me delightful; but we had not been a month at sea when a mutiny broke out among the crew. The captain was barbarously murdered, and the vessel taken possession of, and her destined course changed, by the mutineers. It would be impossible, in the present space, to give a detail of this horrid transaction. Suffice it to say, against my own will, I was compelled, for nearly twelve months, to act a reluctant part in various piratical adventures on the wide main, where escape was impossible, and even a hint at remonstrance would have cost me my life.

On the first opportunity of our vessel touching port, however, I planned and executed my escape; and, with some difficulty, afterwards got myself conveyed to an island in the West Indies, where I had some expectations from a former acquaintance. I was not disappointed in those expectations. I had now seen enough of life to convince me of the propriety, the absolute necessity, of constant and rigorous application, in order to advance in society, or even to support existence. Aided by my friend’s advice and assistance, I made a commencement in business. I persevered with steadiness for several years, and at last found my endeavours rewarded with success.

While on a business visit to the island of —, I was struck, one day in church, with the appearance of a female whose face I thought was somehow familiar to me. Since the period I had lost sight of poor Mary, I never looked around on female society without a vague sort of hope of meeting with some features which might, in some measure, recal her to my view; but, until now, I had never been in the slightest degree successful. I was somewhat perplexed, then, on the present occasion; for the face and mien, and even expression, bore a certain resemblance to the dear lost being; and yet it seemed as if certain I had seen this person before. I lost not a moment in tracing out the lady; and, indeed, this was very easily done. She proved to be the daughter of the governor of the place, that same baronet in whose house I had, many years before, spent an evening on my journey to Edinburgh, and the father of my lost friend, the unfortunate St John. I need scarcely add, on introducing myself, I was warmly received by the family. A close intimacy sprung up between us, and, in a short time, I led my second ‘Mary’ to the altar. I cannot account for the accidental resemblance of this lady to the poor girl whose fate I have recorded. My marriage again so far changed my mode of life; but it now subsided into that tranquil and even character which is the least of all interesting to mankind in general. Besides many sources of happiness, I had the superior one of being able to extricate the affairs of my family.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

HUGH BAIRD'S WEST INDIA ADVENTURE.

A FRIEND of ours, who loved strange characters and strange adventures, and sought them with the avidity of an epicure, used to amuse us with small biographies of the great men of Lochwinnoch; and, among others, he had a story to tell of Hugh Baird, the road-contractor in that part of the country—long since dead, *naturaliter*; but as much alive in the memory of his own friends, as if he had died yesterday. He was, it would appear from all concurrent testimonies, a decent, honest, good-tempered man, well employed in his profession of a road-contractor, and other similar kinds of occupation, in the part of the country we have mentioned, (the neighbourhood of Lochwinnoch,) being greatly liked and respected by all who knew him. We have said he was a good-tempered man. He was so to a remarkable degree; but there *were* some things, though not many, that could ruffle him a little. He had, like most other people, certain permanent objects and subjects of dislike. But, of all the latter, there was none more offensive to him than any allusion to a certain expedition of his to the West Indies, which he had undertaken, and, in a way, accomplished, some fifteen or twenty years before the period to which our friend's narrative refers, and when he was somewhere about forty years of age. Hugh, in fact, not only hated all allusion to this expedition of his, but mortally disliked all reference, of whatever kind, to our western possessions, and to everything belonging to them. He could not endure to hear them named. There was a reason for this. His adventure had been rather a curious one. He had gone out to the West Indies to settle there, and, of course, to make a fortune; but was actually home again before the ship that carried him out. But we had better detail Hugh's proceedings, in reference to this passage in his life, as they actually occurred.

While quietly pursuing his calling in the quarter of his native country already named, and making a little money, too, Hugh all at once took it into his head, or was induced, by the representations of others—we are not sure which—to shut shop in Scotland, and to go out to the West Indies, to push his fortune in that quarter of the world, we suppose, by making roads over the Blue Mountains. But by whatever process he proposed realizing a fortune there—and this, certainly, was by making roads somewhere, and of some kind or other—out Hugh determined to go; and on this determination he forthwith acted. Having first wound up and settled all his affairs in Scotland, and, secondly, made the necessary preparations for his voyage, Hugh appeared, one fine day in the month of October 1794, on the west quay of Greenock, arrayed in a huge dread-naught greatcoat, and evidently prepared for a flight. Passing down the quay, he made up to a sailor who was in the act of securing a rope to a ring, and asked him—

“If he could tell him whar the ship, that was gaun to the West Indies, they ca'ed the Andrummockay, lay?”

The sailor slowly raised up his head, and, deeming him a rather queer-looking customer, surveyed him deliberately for a second from top to toe, spit out a mouthful of tobacco

juice, and then replied to the query put to him by propounding another.

“Are ye going out as cabin boy, friend?” he inquired, with a humorous turn of the corner of his mouth. “You're rather a smartish-looking craft, you are, though somewhat round in the stern.”

Hugh, not understanding the latter part of this address, replied to the first by saying that he *was* going out in the “kebbin;” and concluded by again asking where the ship lay. She was pointed out to him. He went on board—his passage having been previously taken and paid for—was shewn his quarters, and desired to have his luggage sent down immediately, as the vessel would sail within an hour.

Within an hour, the vessel did sail, and with Hugh Baird safely and snugly deposited on board of her. Now, Hugh, though a very decent and highly respectable man, was, by no means, a remarkably well-informed one. He had never read much in the course of his life; and, if the truth must be told, had no great love for reading. He was thus rather strikingly ignorant of many things with which more travelled or better-read men are familiar. Thus, his notions of the very place he was going to, were singularly vague and confused, and not a little odd in character. He had, in fact, no clear conceptions of it at all, but some unintelligible ideas about snakes, negroes, and sugar canes. Neither were honest Hugh's notions of the “wonders of the deep” a whit more clear, more extended, or more correct, than those he entertained about the land. It was, therefore, with no small surprise, and, we may add, with no small terror, that he saw the first of the wonders alluded to, in the shape of an enormous whale, that rose, one day, close by the ship, as he was sitting on the quarter-deck, leaning listlessly over the bulwarks.

“Ha! whatna brute's that?” exclaimed he, starting from his seat in the greatest alarm, and retreating a pace or two backwards. “Whatna fearfu brute's that?”

“It's a whale, sir,” said the captain, who was standing close by, and who was not a little amused at Hugh's alarm.

“A whale!” replied Hugh, returning to the side of the ship, and peering cautiously over the bulwark, in order to obtain another peep of the monster, as it careered through the waters. “That *is* a thumpin fish!” said Hugh, after gazing for some time in awe-struck silence at the uncouth gambols of the monarch of the ocean. “A dizen o' thae wad look prime on a string, or in a fishin creel. But is there nae chance o' his doin us a mischief, captain? Is he onyway o' a camstrary brute?” Being assured that he was not, and that they had nothing to fear from him—“Aweel, that's sae far satisfactory,” said he; “but I dinna like his looks. I'm sure he wad gie ane an awfu worryin, if he had haud o' them. It's my opinion,” added Hugh, with emphasis, “that that brute could gulp a body owre, head and heels, as fast's I could do a spoonfu o' kail, if he war onything hungry. He maun hae an awfu stamach o' his ain, and a maist pooerfu gift o' chowin. But, whatna brute's this, again?” he exclaimed, with renewed alarm, on seeing another huge animal approaching the ship. “We're surrounded wi' a' the monsters o'

nature, I think. I wish to heavens I was weel out o' their reach!"

"That's a shark, sir," said the captain, greatly enjoying Hugh's amazement and alarm. "That's the boy for the stomach and the grinders. Beats the whale out and out at a clean bite, and relishes nothing so much as a jolly gentleman like you for a luncheon. Splendid appetite."

Hugh felt his blood running cold at the appalling ideas suggested by this horrible remark.

"The abominable monster!" he said, in great agitation at the cannibal propensities of the shark. "Wad he hae the conscience to eat a Christian? My word, I think less might ser' him. It's a most unnatural thing o' the brute; but I warrant him he'll neither breakfast, dine, nor sup on me, if I can help it."

Here the captain of the ship suddenly burst in with—"See, sir! see! Do you see those animals flying there?" pointing to a shoal of small objects swimming through the air.

"Burd's!" said Hugh; "but, if they be, they're unco queer anes. They'll be some sort o' sea swallows, maybe."

"They're fish, sir," said the captain—"those are flying fish, sir."

"They're what?" exclaimed Hugh, with open mouth, and with that sort of interesting stare that indicates the extremity of amazement. "Flein fish! Do ye mean to say that fish flee?"—now with a laugh of incredulity.

"To be sure I do," replied the captain. "There is a certain description of fish that fly, and those are them."

"That beats a'!" ejaculated Hugh. "Fish flein! That's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard o'. They wadna believe a word o't at Lochwinnoch. Do they sing, too?" added Hugh.

"Like maivises," replied the captain, with a quizzical smile.

"Aweel, that does cove collyfloor," said Hugh, striking the end of his walking stick emphatically on the deck, to mark his profound sense of the wonder which had just been related to him.

"Sing they ocht weel?" inquired he again.

"Pretty fair," said the captain; "but very melancholy. The sailors call their ditty the Cods' Lament; it's so sad and heart-rending."

"Puir things!" replied Hugh; "I wad like to hear't."

Hugh, at this moment, however, heard something fully as much to the purpose. This was the steward's summons to dinner—a summons which was instantly obeyed, and which put an end, for the time, to Hugh's inquiries into the mysteries of natural history.

In the meantime, the ship made due progress towards the place of her destination—a fact which was indicated, amongst other circumstances, by the increasing heat, of which all, especially Hugh, were becoming every day more and more sensible. Hitherto Hugh had stuck by his dreadnaught through all weathers; but it now began to be too many for him. He, therefore, doused it one day, with a "Dear me, but it's awfu warm!" adding, "if this weather continue, we'll be a' scouthered thegither—birsled like a wheen peas." The weather *did* continue, to Hugh's great annoyance, driving him from expedient to expedient, to counteract its oppressive effects. By and by, he appeared without his coat, shortly after without his neckcloth, next without his waistcoat, and, lastly, without his stockings. He could go no farther.

"This is fearfu," said Hugh, in serious alarm, when he had doused the last article of his apparel which decorum would allow him to part with. "This is fearfu. I fancy I'll need to gang without the under-fittings by and by. Is that alloed in the West Indies?" he said, turning to the captain, who stood beside him. "If it isna, I needna gang there; for I'll be perfectly useless, I see, as lang's there's a stitch left on me."

"Oh," replied the captain, smiling at these affecting forebodings of the adventurous road-contractor, "I'll see you properly rigged out when we get to Kingston, if you'll be guided by my advice in the matter."

"Weel, weel, thank you!—to be sure I will," replied Hugh; "but I half wish already that I was back at Lochwinnoch again; for I doot this adventure o' mine's no gaun to do. However, since we're this far, we'll see the end o't."

So will we, good reader, and that very shortly.

By and by, Hugh's good ship, the Drummocky, as he called her, arrived in safety at her destination. On her coming to anchor, our voyager, and two or three other passengers, were bundled into a boat, and rowed on shore. Hugh was sitting in the stern, and earnestly was he gazing, as the boat approached the quay, on the strange sights that there presented themselves to him: persons dressed in wide, light breeches, light waistcoats, light coats, and wearing on their heads enormously broad-brimmed straw hats; and, still more curious exhibition, great numbers of all but entirely naked blacks, labouring away at various sorts of employment. For this last sight, Hugh was, in some measure, prepared; but the reality so far exceeded, on the score of extraordinary, his previous notions on the subject, that he could not suppress the emotions of astonishment and surprise which it occasioned.

"Gude preserve me!" he exclaimed, "how fearfu black the devils are!—and what a heap there's o' them!" Then, after a pause—"Man, but they're ugly—awfu ugly, the craters! What queer noses, and what curly heads!"

In ten minutes after, Hugh, having in the interim landed, found himself, to his great discomfort and annoyance, in the midst of a crowd of the abhorred blackies—for he had already conceived a mortal aversion to these unhappy beings—all eagerly offering their services to carry his luggage. "Massa Buckra, me hab stout rope, carry all your tings at one go," shouted one tall, muscular negro, with a hideous grin on his hideous countenance, at the same time forcing his way towards Hugh, and dangling in his hand the rope of whose efficiency he boasted. Being by no means sure that this rope might not be intended for his neck in place of his luggage—for he had not made out the explanation that accompanied its exhibition—Hugh recoiled before the formidable negro, retreating as the latter advanced; which, seeing Hugh's alarm, he continued to do, jabbering and grinning like a demon. The fellow, in truth, had some humour in him; and, marking the terror which he had inspired in the road-contractor of Lochwinnoch, he began to think of making it a source of amusement. With this view, and yet affecting all the while to be pressing his services on Hugh, he kept advancing on him, and, at the same time, lolling out his tongue, turning up the whites of his eyes, and making all sorts of hideous grimaces. Hugh bore the presence of this appalling figure for some time with tolerable fortitude, merely retreating before it, and keeping his eyes fixed on the horrors of the tremendous countenance before him. These, however, at length became too much for him. He could stand them no longer; and, being unable to stand them, he fairly took to his heels, and ran for it. The black fellow pursued, still affecting to be merely urging his service; and, to give his proceeding this appearance, calling out—"You employ me, saar? Stout rope—stout rope. Me do your work cheap, cheap, massa. Quashee, no rogue—Quashee, no cheat, Massa Buckra. Hab good crackter." Regardless of Quashee's good "crackter," as borne testimony to by himself, Hugh continued his flight; making for the boat which had just landed him, and which had been removed a little way further down the quay, where he knew he should find the captain and some of the crew, if she had not yet shoved off. Fortunately for Hugh, she had not; but she was just about to do so when he threw

himself headlong into ner breathless with his run. and speechless with terror.

"What the devil is the matter, Mr Baird?" exclaimed the captain, on seeing the extreme trepidation of that worthy person, and surprised at the reckless way in which he had entered the boat.

"The matter!" said Hugh, respiring hard as he spoke. "My feth, plenty the matter! Look at that infernal, murderin, black rascal there," pointing to Quashee, who was nodding and grinning over the edge of the quay to those in the boat. "He has chased me frae the head o' the quay, to murder me; an' it's a God's mercy I hae escaped him. This is an awfu country I hae come to!—and I doot I haena fun' oot the warst o't yet."

"Pho, pho! nonsense, Mr Baird," said the captain, smiling. "The fellow had no intention of murdering you, depend on it."

"Had he no!" replied Hugh, indignantly. "My feth, but he had though. He has the rope in his haun yet, the villain, that he meant to choke me wi'. An' I can say this, that, if he didna mean to murder me, he look't as like it as ever I wad wish to see onybody. See hoo he's turnin up the whites o' thae awfu een o' his, the ugly monster, every ane o' them like the face o' a watch!"

Affecting not to be aware of Hugh's alarm, Quashee, in the meantime, continued his requests for employment in his old formula, and which comprehended nearly all the intelligible English he was master of.

"Get out, you rascal!" exclaimed the captain, looking upwards at Quashee, and now beginning to suspect the facts of the case. "Be off, or I'll trim you! Mark that!"

"Shoot him, captain, shoot him!" cried Hugh, in great excitement. "Shoot the rascal!"

"Ah, you no 'ploy Quashee, I see, Massa Buckra," replied the facetious negro; and with another grin and hideous distortion of countenance at Hugh, he scampered off as fast as his bandy-legs could carry him.

"Did ye see yon?" said Hugh, addressing the captain, and referring to the faces which Quashee had just been exhibiting. "Wasna yon deevilish like? Isna he a dooms ugly-lookin villain?"

"He's no beauty, certainly," replied the captain. "But, comē, Mr Baird, I see I must not lose sight of you yet. I must see you to quarters, or, as I have little time, I must at least see you so far on the way. I'll go up to the entrance of the town with you, and point out the lodging-house in which I would recommend you to reside." Saying this, the obliging seaman leaped on the stair at which the boat lay; and, having assisted Hugh to perform the same operation, he conducted him to the town; securing his luggage, from which the latter had been driven by Quashee, as they passed along the quay. "By the by," said the captain, getting his eye upon a store as they entered the town, "I think you may as well go in here, and have a rig out of light toggery, Mr Baird."

"Naē objection," replied the latter. "It'll be necessar, I dare say; for I'm just meltin awa in thae claes, like a lump o' butter in a fryinpan."

The proposal agreed to, into the store Hugh and the captain went; and, in less than fifteen minutes, the former was a changed man, so far as externals go. In this time, a strange metamorphosis had taken place on Hugh's person, and queer enough was the figure he cut under it. His velveteen inexpressibles, which were in the shape of knee breeches, were exchanged for a pair of enormously wide nankeen trowsers; his long-tailed brown coat, for a light, rakish, short coat of striped jean; his rig-and-fur stockings, for a pair of smart silk socks; his stout, well-tacketed Lochwinnoch shoes, for a pair of jemmy pumps, with broad, flashy, black silk ties; and, lastly, his rough, long-napped castor, for a light straw hat, with brim broad enough, as

he himself said, to take a morning's walk upon. Thus rigged out, honest Hugh certainly cut a rather extraordinary figure; and he seemed to have a strong suspicion of the fact himself; for he kept constantly looking from his coat to his trowsers, and from his trowsers to his pumps; and, anon, taking off his tremendous straw scraper, and examining it round and round, with a smile of doubting curiosity; betraying, in short, altogether, great doubts of the perfect propriety of his own appearance. Such as it was, however, it was shortly after exhibited to the public; for, arrayed in his new guise, the old being left in the store, to be sent afterwards to his lodgings, Hugh, although not without great reluctance and hesitation, stepped out into the street, accompanied by his friend the captain. On their getting clear of the store, the latter suddenly stopped, and, surveying Hugh from top to toe—which, however, he had great difficulty in doing without bursting into laughter—

"Why, Mr Baird, your a different man now," he said. "Devilish smart and rakish. Something business like. Ship shape, old boy. Right and tight, fore and aft."

Hugh smiled grimly, and—

"I'm no sure about it, captain," he said. "I canna say I fin' a'thegither at hame in thae bits o' thin, queer-lookin things."

"Pho! you'll get used to them by and by," replied Hugh's friend.

"Maybe, but I'm sure this is a fright o' a hat. It's the awfuest like thing I ever saw; but I fancy it's the fashion hereawa, and I maun just put up wi't."

The captain assured Hugh that the hat became him exceedingly; and, then again stopping, he added that, as the boat waited to carry him out to the ship on some pressing business, he must now leave him; but, before doing so, he pointed out to Hugh the door of the lodging-house, at the further end of the street in which they then were, where he desired he should take up his quarters.

"Ask for Queen Mary herself," said the captain, "and tell her I recommended you to her, and you may depend on civil treatment and moderate charges."

"Thank you, captain," replied Hugh. "But Queen Mary!—that's a flashy title for a lodging-house keeper. What is she ava?"

"Oh, you'll discover that when you see her," said the captain, laughin. "She's a fine, kind-hearted old girl."

"But, maun I really ca' her Queen Mary?" inquired Hugh, in some perplexity.

"Why, to be sure you must—otherwise, you'll not fare so well, depend upon it."

Having given Hugh these directions, the captain shook him by the hand, promised that he would call on him on the following day, and went off, in the direction of the quay, to return to his boat. Hugh proceeded to the lodging-house, entered it, and was met in the passage by a negro girl, as black as ebony, who smiled, and curtsied, and grinned at Hugh, with great kindness and politeness of manner. Hugh acknowledged the reception by a stare of the most profound astonishment, curiosity, and dislike, all blended together in one perplexing feeling; for he had not been prepared to find black persons filling domestic situations, and forming the ordinary attendants in the household establishments of West Indians. To him, the circumstance, therefore, was quite a new discovery, and by no means a pleasant one. Having gazed, for a second or two, in mute silence, on the smiling black beauty before him, Hugh at length spoke—

"I say, lassie, is Queen Mary in the way, and could I see her a minute?"

"Oh, yes," replied the girl, who spoke much better English than Hugh expected to hear. "Walk in dis par-

lour, you please, saar, and Queen Mary come to you directly."

Saying this, she threw up the door of a small apartment that opened from the passage. Hugh stepped in, and waited, with some curiosity, to see what sort of a personage her majesty of the lodging-house was. He wondered what in all the world she would be like. He had not to wonder long. In a few minutes, he heard a loud, rattling female voice in the passage; in the next moment, the door of the apartment in which he was, was banged up to the wall, and the veritable Queen Mary herself sailed, smilingly but majestically, into the room. Hugh started involuntarily, and unconsciously retreated as far as the walls of the apartment would allow him; his face expressive of the utmost consternation, and of no small degree of alarm. And, truly, it was not without some reason; for, certainly, the royal dame was as curious a specimen, altogether, of the *fair* sex, as one could readily meet with. In the first place, she was as black as jet, and, in the next, of enormous dimensions. On this occasion, Queen Mary, who was in affluent circumstances, having made a vast deal of money by keeping a boarding or lodging-house—for which her extremely kind and obliging manners and disposition well qualified her—was dressed in robes of the purest white. On her head, she wore a lofty turban, of expensive fashion and material, and on her feet a pair of splendid red morocco slippers. On her sable bosom, lay a costly necklace; and from her ears depended a pair of large, glittering ear-drops, of great value. Her ebony fingers, also, bore their share of expensive bijouterie; being covered with shining and sparkling rings. Altogether, Queen Mary's presence was very imposing, and, so far as that went, she might very well have passed as a specimen of African royalty. Had her claims been to the dignity of a black princess, none, certainly, would have disputed them on the score of appearance.

"Glad to see you, saar," said her Majesty, smiling, and, at the same time, prosecuting a series of the most profoundly-gracious curtsies. "Glad to see you, saar; much obliged by your coming to my house, saar."

"Thank ye, mem, thank ye!" said Hugh, plucking up a little courage, but still keeping at a respectful distance from her majesty, whom he thought by far the most extraordinary-looking personage he had ever seen. "I was recommended to come to your hoose by Captain Ferney o' the Drummocky."

"Ah, my goot friend, Capitain Verny! I hab much reespect for de good Capitain. He very good friend of Queen Mary. And you shall be well used on his account, saar. You shall take something to eat, saar. What shall you hab?"

"Ou, anything that's in the way, mem—onnything," replied Hugh, still feeling uncomfortable in the awful presence of Queen Mary.

"Would you hab one lilly dish of pepper pot, saar, or one very nice lilly soup, fou-fou!"

"What's fou-fou?" said Hugh, attracted by the singularity of the name.

"Ah, very nice dish, saar. You shall see." And, again curtseying and smiling to her perplexed and somewhat awe-stricken guest, Queen Mary withdrew, to prepare the choice viands she had recommended. When she left the apartment—

"'Od's mercy! what an awfu woman!" said Hugh to himself. "Saw ony mortal ever such a cratur? Sae black and sae fat! But she has siller, though, I'm jalousin. A heap o' bonny trantalums about her, and that maks up for a great heap. But, Gude preserve us! sic a woman to mak a wife o'! They wad need to steek their een hard that ventured on't."

Then, after a pause—

"I wonder what kind o' things thae pepper pots, and fou-fous o' her's are? Queer names for Christian fude, if they be Christian fude. But we'll see."

Such were the reflections which the appearance and proposed refection of Queen Mary suggested to Hugh, and in which he indulged during the time that his fou-fou and pepper pots were preparing. This was not long. In a short time, these dainties were placed before him, by the jewelled hands of the sable princess herself, assisted by two black assistants; and it was while she did so, that Hugh discovered, or thought he discovered, in her looks and manner towards him, something odd, something that he did not like. This something was neither more nor less than an appearance, very slight, however, of an incipient attachment to himself, on the part of Queen Mary; and, surprising as it may seem, it was a fact—an undoubtable fact.

The case was one of love at first sight. Mary had been often wooed before; but she had been wooed in vain. None of her suitors had been able to carry the citadel of her affections. This was an achievement reserved for the road-contractor of Lochwinnoch. It is impossible to say what Queen Mary saw in the said road-contractor to captivate her fancy; for Hugh was, by no means, a strikingly-elegant figure, and his new dress had very considerably improved him the wrong way; but something or other of the description alluded to she did see in him—that's certain, and we can say no more about it.

But, to proceed. Having seen Hugh's table neatly and carefully spread, and having looked some soft things at Hugh himself, Queen Mary again withdrew, and left her charming guest to partake of the good things she had set before him. Hugh drew in his chair to the table, lifted the cover cautiously off a smoking dish, examined it carefully and suspiciously. It looked passable, and flavoured better. Hugh shoveled a quantity on his plate, and instantly fell to with great vigour and appetite.

Three mouthfuls, bolted rapidly, had he swallowed, without perceiving anything extraordinary about the article, further than that it was extremely good. A momentary pause at the fourth, however, gave opportunity to a certain slight burning sensation in the mouth to manifest itself. Hugh felt a little alarmed. He arrested the progress of the spoon to his mouth, and held it *in transitu*, to await, an instant, the result of the operation going on in his mouth, which result should determine whether he would go on eating or not. His decision was formed quickly enough. The burning sensation increased. It became intense—it became intolerable.

His mouth felt all in a glow, as if it had been converted into a little furnace. Hugh snatched up a rummer of cold water, and, in his agony, began bolting huge mouthfuls of it, to cool his burning tongue; but in vain—it afforded no relief—nay, it seemed but to increase the pain, which eventually became excruciating. In his extreme suffering, Hugh now leaped to the floor, and began walking furiously up and down the apartment, blowing and panting like a dog in June; his glowing tongue lolling out of his mouth—his eyes fixed in their sockets, and his cheeks streaming with the tears of intense agony. Hugh, in short, had got a dose of pepper-pot. While thus pleasantly occupied, the sufferer's majestic landlady entered the apartment, and, after viewing Hugh's condition for an instant, with some surprise, but certainly more commiseration—

"Ah, I see how dis is. De pepper-pot too strong, saar."

"Oh, curse your pepper-pot!" exclaimed Hugh, at the intervals of his panting expirations. "Could ye no hae tell't me what kind o' stuff it was? Foo, foo, foo, foo! I'll be burnt alive in this infernal country—burnt to a cinder. Roasted in the sun on the outside, and scorched wi' pepper on the in! What piece o human clay can stand it?"

"Now, now, my good saar, no passion, no angry wid your Queen Mary?" said that royal personage, coaxingly; laying one of her black paws on Hugh's shoulder, and peering with a look of soft blandishment into his tortured countenance. "It is dish much like here, but I cure you in one moment." Saying this, she hastened to a cupboard, and brought out a bottle of rum, and, filling up a glass with the liquor, desired Hugh to take a mouthful of it. He did so, and a howl of agony indicated the violent and sudden, but temporary increase of pain which it created.

"Ah, yes, worse for one moment," said Hugh's hostess, looking concernedly. "Dat is always de way, but cure directly. She was not wrong. In a few minutes after, Hugh felt a sensible and rapid diminution of the pain in his mouth; but he did not resume the pepper-pot, neither would he touch the fou-fou, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of his landlady, who assured him that it contained no pepper. At length, a fowl was placed before him, and on this Hugh eventually succeeded in making a very hearty supper; which having done, he threw himself on a sofa, where, suffering dreadfully from the heat, he soon fell into a sort of dozing sleep, from which he was, at the end of about half-an-hour, awakened by a gentle tapping on his cheek with the end of a fan. Hugh opened his eyes, and beheld before him the royal person of Queen Mary. She was looking excessively captivating; mingling modesty with coquetry—smiling, ogling, and tossing her head prettily from side to side.

"Ah, you sleep, saar," she said, with a deep-drawn sigh. "You not know what lub is, or you no sleep." And she sighed again, and more profoundly than before. "Oh, lub, lub, lub! Lub is de massacre of peace!—Is he not, saar?" looking languishingly.

"Indeed, mem, I dinna ken," replied Hugh, with great innocence of manner and stolidity of aspect; "for I hae nae notion what 'lub' is. It's a thing I never heard o' afore."

"Ah! you never hear of lub before?" said the black princess, with a look of surprise. "Happy man!—me wish me could say de same ting. Oh, from me soul me wish it!" And her majesty not only sighed, but, this time, accompanied the sigh with a tear.

Hugh was greatly perplexed how to act. He saw things were getting serious; and we need scarcely say that he saw it with no inconsiderable alarm; for, if his horror was great even at the sight of a black person, as it certainly was, how much greater was it where such advances were made as those in the present case! Hugh, in short, now became manifestly uneasy, and endeavoured to effect a temporary escape by edging away from his sable lover; who, however, undeterred by any of that squeamish delicacy which so often mars the secret wishes of less spirited females, pressed on the retreating road—contractor of Loch-winnock.

"Why you fly me, saar?" said the love-stricken lodging-house keeper, bursting at length into tears. "I hab great deal doubloon; and, if you marry me, you shall hab dem all, ebery one; and you shall be master of dis house, and shall hab everyting you want without work." Saying this, she fairly flung her arms about Hugh's neck, in a paroxysm of mingled affection and despair.

"Gude keep me, woman! what do ye mean?—what do ye mean?" exclaimed Hugh, in great trepidation, and struggling violently to free himself from the embrace of his huge black lover. "Aff, for God's sake, woman! Haud aff me! What hae ye ado wi' me? Let me go, let me go this minute!" And, by a dexterous jerk, Hugh flung himself free of his tormentor.

"Ah! cruel man! cruel man!" exclaimed Queen Mary, weeping abundantly, and holding a white handkerchief to her eyes, "to use a woman that lub you so thus! It is bad, bad of you, cruel, cruel man!"

"Gude help me, woman! wherem hae a been cruel to ye?" said Hugh, in a conciliatory tone, but in great distress of mind. "I'm sure I never did, nor wished ye ony harm. Never in my life."

"But you are cruel though, saar," said the black lady, now, to the great relief of Hugh, moving towards the door. "You are cruel, though. You hab no heart. Oh, you cruel man!" And, with this repetition of her opinion of Hugh's conduct, she flung out of the door.

"Gude preserve me! what's this come owre me!" said Hugh to himself, on her departure. "This is awfu! The black wretch to propose that I suld marry her! I wad as sune marry auld Nick, if that were possible." Then, after another of those pauses which were frequent in Hugh's soliloquies—"I doot," he went on, "this country 'll no do for me. A country whaur a' the men are for murderin ye, and a' the women for marryin ye; whaur ye're brunt alive wi' pepper-pots and sunshine; and whaur naething and naeboddy that I hae seen yet, hae onything o' a Christian look about them! I doot, I doot, it'll no do for me." Having indulged in a few more speculations of this sort, Hugh at length rang the bell, and asked the black girl, who attended the call, "If they used such things as beds in this country?" The negro girl laughed at the gravity with which the query was put, and assured Hugh that they had abundance of the conveniences he inquired for.

"Weel, lassie," said Hugh, "an' that be the case, will ye be sae guid as keep aere for me? I'll sleep here the night, but 'll gang oot and tak a bit turn till the darkenin."

Having made this arrangement with the fair Joanna, which was the name of Hugh's attendant, Queen Mary's handmaiden, Hugh sallied out to survey the wonders of the new world into which his adventurous spirit had brought him. He directed his steps towards the country; being curious to see the nature of its produce, and, perhaps, to obtain an "inklin," as he would call it himself, of the form and condition of its roads, a particular in which the reader will see reason for his being specially interested.

Having cleared the town, Hugh held on his way under a broiling sun, his hat in his hand, and his waistcoat open to the last button, till he had gained about the distance of a mile, when, being fairly overpowered with heat and fatigue, he suddenly stood stock still, unable to go a yard farther. On being brought to in this manner, Hugh, who was now on the summit of a small knoll or eminence covered with brushwood, that commanded an extensive view of the country on all sides, commenced a deliberate survey of the scene around him, vigorously and frequently—the while, applying a white handkerchief, which he carried in his hand, to his streaming forehead and dripping cheeks. Hugh was also respiring vehemently, blowing like a smith's bellows; for he was in much too good bodily condition for a West India climate. On being enabled to command the powers of utterance—

"Dear help me, but this is awfu!" muttered the half-roasted contractor, as he continued wiping the perspiration from his melting brow. "This heat's awfu. I'm sure I haena made oot muckle owre a mile yet, and still I'm as clean done oot as ever I was wi' forty at hame—and forty I hae made oot mony a time there, without turnin a hair. Oh, for ae fuff o' the caller breeze frae the Kilpatrick Hills! I wad gie a saxpence for a hat fu."

We here interrupt Hugh's soliloquy for a moment, to explain something of an error into which we have fallen, regarding the distance we have represented Hugh as having walked. We have guessed it at a mile, but, in truth, he had gone over at least three times that space—and we account for the additional ground thus. During his walk, Hugh had encountered, or rather espied—for he never allowed them to get near him—several negroes, one after another, crossing the fields in the direction in which he

was proceeding. Now, whenever Hugh obtained a sight of one of these much dreaded beings, and all of whom were in the present case rendered doubly formidable by their happening, each of them, to carry over his shoulder one of those huge knives with which the sugar cane is cut, he instantly diverged at a sudden and rapid rate, making a wide circuit through the fields to the right or left, as the case demanded, in order to avoid these appalling objects of his special abhorrence. Thus, the distance he had actually accomplished may be more truly reckoned at three miles than one. Yet, however this may be, Hugh, as we have already said, felt fairly done up; and, feeling this, he now looked around him for a resting-place, for some convenient spot on which he might sit. This he was soon fortunate enough to discover—a nice, little foggy bank, nestled amongst some green and fragrant bushes or shrubs. Delighted with his good luck, Hugh instantly seated himself on the little fog bank, placed his stick on one side, and his hat on the other, and was preparing to enjoy the rest to which his convenient position invited, when his attention was suddenly attracted to a particular point by a gentle motion and rustling amongst the leaves of the shrubbery. Hugh wondered what it could mean, and kept his eye fixed on the spot in considerable alarm; for, considering the very odd sort of country he was in, he did not know what might appear. His difficulties on this point, however, were soon solved. In less than a minute after he had heard the first sound, and seen the first motion amongst the bushes, the long neck, the flaming eyes, and open, hissing mouth of a huge black snake was protruded through the leaves. Its gaze was fixed on Hugh, and Hugh's, in unspeakable horror, was fixed on it in turn. He felt the hair of his head distinctly rising on end. Considering who the parties were, however, this was a position which could not long be maintained. Neither it was. With one appalling, unearthly shout of terror, Hugh started to his feet, and, leaving hat and stick behind him, took to his heels with a speed of which he himself had no idea he was capable, and never once halted or looked to the right or the left, until he found himself again under the roof which he had quitted about a couple of hours before. Breathless and exhausted, he threw himself on a sofa, rung the bell for Joanna; and, in a state of wild excitement, desired to be instantly conducted to his dormitory. His request was complied with.

Hugh tumbled into bed, and, notwithstanding his recent fright, slept soundly till morning, when he was awakened by a feeling as of something crawling about his legs. In great terror, he leapt on the floor, threw down the bed-clothes, and there beheld, between the sheets, a couple of smart, active centipedes, each about a foot long, and of the thickness of a whip-shaft. The disgusting sight instantly determined Hugh, previously more than half disposed to the same measure, as to his future course. This was, immediately to quit the land of negroes, pepper-pots, and centipedes. And, on that very afternoon, Hugh, bag and baggage, was shipped on board a vessel, which, fortunately, was to sail that very day for Liverpool; our adventurer thus completing a residence in Jamaica of somewhere about four-and-twenty hours!

THE GENTLE SUITOR.

"COME hither, Angus Oig," said a young Highland chieftain, suddenly stopping short in the midst of a silent, and, on his part, thoughtful promenade, in which he had been indulging for the preceding half-hour, along the entire length of the spacious baronial hall of his father's castle, and addressing himself to a person who was listlessly gazing through a window on the wild and wide

landscape which lay before him, and who seemed to be patiently awaiting some such interruption to his reveries as that which had occurred. "Come hither, Angus Oig," said the young chieftain. Angus Oig—a stout, thick-set Highlander, armed to the teeth, and having the bearing of a sort of inferior gentleman, or rather, perhaps, of one who had some subordinate command in a band of freebooters—obeyed. "Angus," continued the former, when the latter had approached him, "I am getting somewhat tired of this wild life of ours. I like a march in the moonlight as well as any one, but really I begin to think I should now prefer a quiet down-sitting somewhere. I should like to set up on my own account; to have a handsome where with; and to be relieved from the state of dependence upon my father."

"All very well, Mr Allister," replied Angus; "but how is that to be done? To confess a truth, I am getting tired, too, of this scampering up and down the country; for I never can discover that we are making anything of it, unless it be enemies, and heaven knows we can always have plenty of these, without being at such trouble to acquire them."

Before proceeding farther with the dialogue, we had better step aside for a moment, to inform the reader who the colloquists were. The superior of these was Alexander Stewart, a natural son of the Earl of Buchan, who was a younger brother of King Robert III., but better known by his significant soubriquet of the Wolf of Badenoch. Scottish history, teeming as it is with traits of lawless and ferocious character, presents us with none more terrible, none more fiend-like, than those of the Wolf of Badenoch; so called, it may be guessed, from his savage and ruthless nature. Murder, rapine, and devastation, by fire and sword, and in every possible variety of turpitude, were the chief occupations of this scion of royalty; and what, fortunately for the human race, is but of rare occurrence, his children nearly equalled their father in wickedness. His natural son, Duncan Stewart, possessed a disposition exactly similar to that of his parent; but Alexander, the subject of the present sketch, though equally fierce and daring with either of them, yet exhibited some redeeming traits, which were not to be found in the character of his father, nor in that of his brother. He was more daring than ferocious, and more wild than cruel. He was, besides, one of the bravest men of his day in Scotland, and eventually became one of her ablest soldiers, and one of her wisest statesmen. Long before the close of his life, he entirely abandoned the unprincipled courses which he pursued in the earlier part of his career, and became a steady and determined supporter of the laws, and an eminently useful and valuable member of the State. It was he, as Earl of Mar, who led the army which opposed Donald of the Isles at the celebrated battle of Harlaw. In this sanguinary contest, the Earl was amongst the last upon the field, where he continued fighting, after all was lost, at the head of a few of his surviving followers, till night closed around the gallant band, and put an end to the hopeless but noble strife.

At the period when our little drama opens, the son of the Wolf of Badenoch was just about to close his career of youthful delinquency; but one crowning and final deed of successful wickedness and daring was yet to be performed before his character underwent that decisive change for which it afterwards became remarkable; but the achievement to which we allude, will discover itself in the course of our tale.

Angus Oig, again, was exactly what he seemed to be—a retainer, but one of some consideration, of the Earl of Buchan; and the chief confidant, adviser, aider, and abettor of his son Alexander, in all his schemes, whether of love, revenge, murder, or spoliation. We now resume the dialogue where we left off.

"All very well, Master Allister," replied Angus, to the remark of the young chief, that he longed for an independency; "but how is that to be got?"

"Did you ever see the Castle of Kildrummie and the broad acres that lie around it, Angus; and, better than all, the fair lady to whom they belong?" said Stewart, putting a question instead of making a reply, while his bright laughing eye rested inquiringly on the surprised countenance of his Achates.

"I have seen all of them, Master Allister," replied Angus, looking, in his turn, inquisitively on the very handsome face of his young master; "but what of that? What can the Castle of Kildrummie, or its broad acres, or their fair mistress, be to you?"

"Why, nothing, man, nothing," said the former; "but I have taken a fancy to them, and think I have done as clever things in my day as take possession of the whole three."

"Hurra!" shouted out Angus, at the same time tossing his bonnet to the ceiling of the hall, in an ecstasy which he could not control, compounded of surprise, incredulity, and delight, at what he conceived to be a supremely absurd idea. "A bold scheme," he said, "and worthy of the son of the Wolf of Badenoch; but pray, Master Allister," he went on, "what would the country say to such a doing? What would the Justiciar say to it? What would the lady's husband, Sir Malcolm Drummond, say to it? And, lastly, what would the lady herself say to it? How, in short, would you propose to proceed in carrying this brave idea of yours into effect? By what means do you intend to get over all the little difficulties, and reconcile all the little contradictions and contrariety of interests with which it is associated?"

"Nothing easier—short and simple," replied the young chief, coolly and gravely. "I shall, in the first place, procure Sir Malcolm Drummond to be sent to heaven. I shall then besiege his castle, and marry his widow. Now, Angus, to come to the point," he continued, "you shall do the first for me, and I shall do the two last; and, when the work's completed, you and I shall square accounts."

"Why, if you are really in earnest, and think there is any chance of success, I have no objection in the world," said the ferocious freebooter; "but I must say, I can conceive very well how the two first things may be done, but it puzzles me to see how you are to accomplish the last. You talk of marrying the widow; but how can you calculate on the widow's marrying you?"

"Never fear, man," said Stewart; "leave that to me. I know something of womankind, and will take my chance of success in that part of the business. And besides, man, I know that she is not overly happy with this same Sir Malcolm Drummond; and that my own figure" (here he glanced downwards at his own powerful and well-turned limbs) "is not very frightful in her sight. We have met before, Angus, and I have guessed thus much. So, you see, I have some show of reason on my side, at all points."

The conversation which we have just recorded terminated in an arrangement between the son of Buchan and his confidant, to the effect, that the latter should proceed to the Castle of Kildrummie, find means of getting access to the interior, and assassinate its unfortunate lord; all of which was duly accomplished within a few days after that on which the atrocious project was first discussed between its suggestor and perpetrator. In this murderous deed, Stewart took care to have no hand himself; but, so soon as it was accomplished, it came to his turn to appear upon the stage; and, at this point of our story, the scene shifts to the Castle of Kildrummie, the residence of Isabella, in her own right, Countess of Mar, and now a widow. In less than ten days after the murder of her husband, Sir Malcolm Drummond, the romantic stronghold just named, one of the seats of Robert de Bruce, and amongst the most ancient buildings

in Scotland, was invested by a numerous band of Highland katherans or marauders, commanded by Alexander Stewart. The feebleness of the resistance on the part of the besieged, occasioned by the want of a leader and the impetuosity and ferocity of the assailants, made the siege of Kildrummie a very brief one. In a few hours, it was in the possession of the enemy.

During the short interval that elapsed between the first appearance of the katherans before the walls of the castle and their entering it, the Countess of Mar appeared upon the battlements, and was about to upbraid Stewart with the atrocity of his conduct, when the latter gallantly ung himself on one knee, doffed his bonnet, and made a low and submissive, but chivalrous obeisance to his fair foe. Struck with the singularity of this proceeding, on the part of one from whom she expected a very different salutation, the Countess paused, and it was some minutes ere she could command herself sufficiently to utter the reproof which she had contemplated. This, however, she at length effected; but it was remarked by those who heard it, that there was fully more courtesy of language in her upbraidings, than could have been expected under all the circumstances, and certainly infinitely more than had been looked for by those of her attendants who had witnessed the towering passion, proud step, and haughty mein, with which she had left her chamber, to ascend to the battlements to reprove her assailant.

To the charge of cruelty and unmanliness with which she wound up her accusations of Stewart, in his thus attacking a defenceless woman and a widow, the latter, still retaining the respectful position which he had first assumed, and in which he had continued during the whole time she spoke, replied—

"Fair lady, if I am cruel, yourself are the cause of my cruelty; and, if it be an unmanly thing to love one so fair of form and face as thou art, then am I indeed, as those sweet lips of thine have said, chargeable with unmanliness; but I take heaven to witness, that it is that love, and that love alone, that has brought me this day to Kildrummie. I have not come to leaguer thy castle, fair lady, but, with all humility, to seek to win the affections of its beauteous mistress; and, if I succeed not, to return home, a ruined and a broken-hearted man. And I add, my Lady Countess," he went on, "that neither thyself nor thine, nor anything that belongs to thee, shall suffer the slightest injury, either at the hands of him who now thus humbly addresses thee, or those of any of his followers. But—but," he added, casting a side-long glance towards the principal gate which led into the castle, and which his retainers were, all the while, busily, but as noiselessly as possible, employed in forcing—"But, but," he said, perceiving that they had succeeded in gaining an entrance, and now suddenly starting to his feet, "permit me, to prefer my suit to thee, where I can more freely and more becomingly urge it." Having said this, but without waiting for any reply, he hurried towards the gate which his men had forced, passed through the opening they had made, and, in the next instant, was at the feet of the Countess.

"Daring and desperate man," said the latter, addressing her extraordinary suitor, so soon as he appeared in her presence, "thou shalt dearly rue this day's work. Didst think, presumptuous wretch, that thou couldst win the heart of the Countess of Mar, as easily as thou couldst win her castle? Didst think that thy savage bands could aid thee in that conquest; or that woman's love was to be won at the point of the sword? But if, as thou hast dared to say, thou hast a regard for me, give me the only proof of it which I may accept. Leave my presence instantly, and withdraw thy followers from my castle."

"Most noble lady," said Stewart, still retaining his kneeling position, "I will immediately comply with thy request; for I came here, not to command, but to obey."

But hear me, I beseech thee!—hear me for one instant, ere I go, unfeeling woman, from thy presence, thy too beautiful presence, once and for ever! I have already told thee how distractedly I love thee, and how it was that love that drove me to this desperate measure—I acknowledge it to be so—of thus forcibly, as it were, intruding myself upon thee in thine own castle; but I have told thee this, it would seem, in vain, fair, but pitiless creature. Thou art determined to destroy me—since, for what I have already done, my life is forfeited, and there are those about Albany who will take care that I pay the forfeit. But, since I may not speak to thee of love, nor appeal, I fear, to thy clemency to save me from an ignominious death, permit me, my Lady, to speak to thee on the score of prudence. Thou art now unprotected. Thy husband is dead, and thou hast no longer one to guard thee, for thine own sake, from insult and from injury, or to avenge thy wrongs. Thy house is without a head; and the knowledge of this will, ere long, bring those around thee who will not care so much for Isabella as for her broad acres and ample revenues. In short, fair lady, it is impossible that thou shouldst ever know either peace or safety, in such a wild and turbulent land as this of ours, unless thou shalt invest some one with a legal right to become thy guardian—one who shall have the power and the will to protect thee; for, trust me, fair lady, there are more wolves in Scotland than he of Badenoch, and that thou mayst shortly learn, to thy cost, unless thou speedily appoint a faithful shepherd to watch thy flocks. But I weary out thy patience, my Lady," he added; "and now," rising to his feet, "as I have nothing more to hope, permit me to bid thee farewell, and to say that I trust thou wilt never have occasion to regret that thou refusedst to listen to the suit of him who is now about to leave thee for ever."

We are not sufficiently skilled in the mysteries of the human heart, especially of the female heart, to be able to say how it was that the mood of the Countess of Mar appeared to be considerably softened by the language which had just been addressed to her. Certain it is, however, that it was so. By the time Stewart had done speaking, the Countess had more than once applied her white handkerchief to her eyes, and more than once exhibited some unequivocal signs of emotion.

"Nay nay," she said, as Stewart was about to depart—an intention, however, which it is very doubtful that he really meant to carry into effect, until, at least, he should have seen some better grounds on which to rest a hope of ultimate success for his suit—"Nay, nay," she said, "I would not part from thee in anger either, Stewart; nor would I expose thee to the vengeance of the Justiciar. Atrocious as thy proceedings have been, I am not unwilling to forgive them, seeing that thou hast something like an apology, though a bad one, for what thou hast so daringly and unwarrantably done."

The quick and ready discernment of him to whom she spoke, instantly detected the impression he had made, and he lost no time in improving it. He now again flung himself on his knee before the Countess, again urged his passion, and again brought considerations of prudence to his aid; and it is not, perhaps, much to be wondered at, after all, considering the weaknesses of humanity, and considering, in this particular case, the circumstances of the weaker party's being a widow, an unprotected female, living in a wild and lawless country, where her wealth, instead of adding to her security, only increased her danger—we say it is not much to be wondered at that she should have been, at length, prevailed upon to listen favourably to the suit of one who was so well able to become, and who seemed, to her, at any rate, to have such disinterested motives for becoming her legal projector. Add to these considerations, that Stewart was singularly endowed with the most attrac-

tive qualifications of both mind and person, and we shall be compelled to acknowledge that the conduct of the Countess of Mar, in finally yielding to his suit, is not without apology.

Marked, however, as his progress now was in the good graces of the Countess, Stewart could obtain no positive assurance of entire success, and he had too much tact to press for it. He, therefore, concluded, by saying that he would now retire himself, and withdraw his men from the castle, in order to remove all appearance of a coercive influence over her ultimate decision.

"I would not have thee decide on my claim by compulsion, fair lady," he said. "Thou shalt be free to determine according to thine own judgment and inclination. To-morrow I shall again wait on thee, to know my fate—whether I am to be made the happiest or most miserable of men; but I shall wait on thee then, my Lady, in such ways as shall convince thee, and all else whom it may concern besides, that thou art still entire and uncontrolled mistress of thine own; free to choose and to reject, as may seem good unto thee."

Having said this, and much more, which it is unnecessary to record, the wily wooer, after bidding the Countess an affectionate adieu, which was not very harshly acknowledged, left the castle, and instantly proceeded to the execution of certain measures which were indispensably necessary to the bringing his designs to a safe and successful issue. One of these was, to warn the Countess' tenants and vassals to assemble, in the forenoon of the following day, at the castle, to witness the formal delivery, by Stewart, of the keys to its mistress. The other, was to request the presence of the Bishop of Ross at the same ceremony, to give it weight and consequence. This proceeding was necessary, to impart validity to the decision of the Countess in his favour—a circumstance on which he now securely reckoned.

On the following day, accordingly, the tenants and vassals of the Countess of Mar, all attired in their best, assembled in front of the Castle of Kildrummie. These having been disposed in two long lines, extending from either side of the principal entrance, Stewart, accompanied by the Bishop of Ross, advanced up the avenue thus formed, and were met at the gate by the Countess, arrayed in her most splendid robes, and surrounded by a crowd of her waiting-women, all richly dressed. On approaching the Countess, Stewart knelt on one knee, and presented to her the keys of the castle, on a cushion covered with crimson velvet, and having a golden tassel appended to each of its four corners.

"My Lady Countess of Mar," he said, as he presented the keys "in presence of my Lord Bishop of Ross, and all these witnesses present, I here deliver up to you freely, and with a good heart, these, the keys of the Castle of Kildrummie, to be disposed of as to you may seem most proper and fitting."

The Countess having accepted the keys, held them in her hands, and declared, on her part, that she freely chose Alexander Stewart for her lord and husband, and that she gave him in marriage the Earldom of Mar, the Castle of Kildrummie, and all other lands which she inherited.

Such is one, amongst the many remarkable and romantic incidents with which the earlier history of Scotland is crowded.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

TOM DUNCAN'S YARN.

WILLIAM DUNCAN had lived nearly thirty years in the service of a landed proprietor in Dumfriesshire; where his honest, upright, trustworthy character had gained him the esteem and respect of his employer; and he was looked upon more in the light of an humble friend, than of a hired menial. Nearly five-and-twenty years had elapsed since his marriage to Janet, who had long before been his "neebor" servant. Their family consisted of two children, a son and daughter; the latter of whom had been, at the time our story commences, for some time married to a farm servant, and was living in a cottage closely adjoining her father's. The son had been sent, when about seventeen years of age, with cattle, to Annan, and had there made acquaintance with some seafaring men, whose stories of the wonders of other lands had excited his curiosity, and awakened an irrepressible longing to witness the strange sights he had heard of. It was in vain that his father and mother strove to divert his thoughts into another channel; "he *would* be a sailor," and they at last wisely consented to what they could not prevent. About two years after his departure, Willie's good old master died; having left his faithful servant a small annuity, sufficient to make his old age comfortable—for he was now almost superannuated. The old gentleman had died childless, leaving his estate to a distant relative; and his successor, knowing the estimation in which Willie had been held by his late master, allowed him to live rent-free, in one of the cottages on the estate, and treated him, on all occasions, with great consideration and kindness. There was but one thing wanting to make the old couple happy: their simple appetites were easily satisfied; they had enough and to spare, without the toil of labour; but their son, their only son, was a wanderer, and years had passed since they had received any intelligence of him, and then they had only been informed that he had gone to some foreign station. "Oh, could we but see him aince mair afore we dee!" was often their exclamation.

One stormy night in October, the old couple were startled by a loud rap at the door.

"Preserve us!" said Janet, in great alarm, "what's that? wha can that be chappin at the door on sic a nicht as this? Maybe it's some puir seekin body, wantin shelter frae the blast. Up, Willie, man, an' ask wha it is?"

"It's me, faither—it's Betty," replied the voice of the daughter, in answer to her father's queries; "let me in."

"What's brocht ye oot, woman," said Willie, "in sic a clash o' rain as this?"

"There's a puir sailor lad come to oor hoose," replied she, "an' he wants something to eat an' drink, an' we haena a bite o' cake left: hae ye ony to spare? An', what think ye, faither—he kens oor Tam weel, an' says he saw him no that lang syne?"

"Kens oor Tam!" said the old man; "what for did ye no bring him wi' ye? Gie's doon my plaid; I'll gang an' speak to him mysel."

"Na, na, faither; ye maunna cross the door while it's

pouring this gate. I'll fetch him when he's had his supper. I'd hae brocht him afore, but I thocht maybe he might be makin ye think oor Tam was comin hame, or some sic clavers, an' ye wad be wearyin to see him, an' maybe no see him after a'."

"An' what for might he no be comin hame?" said Willie; "it's time he war, I think, if he wishes to find the auld folk to the fore."

"Well, but, faither, suppose he war to tell ye that he had seen oor Tam, twa three days syne, an' that ye might expect to see him hame sune?"

"Mercy, lass! what's the matter wi' ye, wi' yer maybes an' yer supposes? What gars ye gang swaggerin up an' doon that gait, lookin as ye war demented? There's something pleasin ye by common. If't war Tam himsel, ye couldna be mair uplifted."

"An' guid richt hae I to be uplifted, mither, if ye kenned a'."

"Eh, it's Tam himsel!" almost screamed the old woman; "where is he? Let me see my bairn."

"Here's all that's left of him, mother," said a fine, stout-looking sailor; who, unable any longer to restrain his impatience, stumped in on a wooden-leg, just as Janet was speaking.

"My bairn! my bairn!" sobbed the old woman, thrower arms round him; "mony a lang day hae I prayed to see ye aince mair; an' noo that I hae ye, oh, do I see ye a puir cripple!"

"Oh, that's nothing, mother; nothing but the fortune of war. If I'd lost my head instead of my leg, mother, I wouldnt' have been here to tell my own story."

"That's Gude's truth; an' great reason hae we to be thankfu it's nae waur. But, oh! it's a sair dispensation."

"Ah, old boy! how are you?" said Tom, shaking his father heartily by the hand; "all alive and hearty—eh?"

"Weel aneuch, weel aneuch, Tam; just choppin on; but richt glad am I to see ye again, my son. But, Tam, that waisna the gate ye wad hae spoken to your auld faither, afore ye gaed frae hame."

"My manner of speaking may be changed, father," replied the young man, respectfully; "but there's no change in my heart—that's true blue still; and it'll be long before I can clear off my reckoning with you, for all your kindness to me. No, no, father, my *heart's* in the right place still."

"Weel, my man, I hope sae. Sit doon an' tell us a' that's happened ye, sin' we last heard frae ye. But, wait a wee. Janet, seek oot the best that's in the hoose for the puir fallow; an', whan he's had a guid supper, he'll be in better fettle for gien us his cracks."

"Tak aff yer jacket, my bonny man," said his mother; "an' hing it up afore the fire, an' draw in till't yersel. Willie, I'm thinkin there's something in the bottle. I'll put on the kettle, an' we'll gie the lad something he'll be nane the waur o'."

After the sailor had done his devoirs at the supper table, the whole party drew round the fire, and the old man, lighting his "cutty," said—

"Noo, Tam, tell us a' about what ye've been doin, an' hoo ye cam to lose yer leg."

"It's a terrible long yarn, father, and I'm afeard ye'll be glad to sing out Avast! before I've spun it out; besides, you'll not understand my sea lingo."

"Nae fear o' that," replied he; "ye ken I was aince a bit o' a sailor mysel. We could see the Solway frae the hoose I hired at when I was a callan."

"But, eh, Tam, my man," said old Janet, "ye talk English as weel's the grand folk doon by."

"Ay, ay, mother; leave me alone for that. My messmates used to say as how I ought to have been a methy preacher, seeing I know'd so well how to tip them the dixnary."

"Hear till him!" said the delighted mother, holding up her hands in admiration.

"But, howsomedeever, they havn't made me proud on't, you see, with all their blarney. But I must carry on, or my yarn 'll reach from this to the end of next week. It's now six years since I got a berth on board one o' them Newcastle colliers, and a jolly time we had on't; for, though we'd lashins to do, and no want of wet jackets, there was always a full bread-bag, and swipes, and grub at no allowance. They're the craft to teach a man his duty! Well, I'd been in that trade about a year, when I goes ashore one day with the mate, at Wapping; and, while we were sitting comfortably swigging our grog, the landlord comes running in, and, says he, 'My lads, you must brush; there's the pressgang a-coming.' Hearing that, the mate and I bolted out of the door, and ran for it; but they twigged us, and gave chase. They nabbed the mate in less nor no time; but I cracked on a press o' sail, and was dropping them astern fast, when, as I was looking back at them over my shoulder, I ran stem on to an old fishwife. My eyes, what a crash! I sends her and her sprats a-swimming in the gutter, and I falls as flat as a flounder on the pavement, spouting out blood from my nose, like a whale. Well, to cut a long yarn short, we were taken on board the tender, and afterwards drafted into the Fire-eater frigate, which was stationed on the north coast of Ireland. I was very well off on board the frigate. 'Sharp' was the word, to be sure, and the cat often wagged her tail; but then, as long as a man was smart and willing, he'd never no 'casion to be afeard: there was never no favour nor defection there. Well, as I said afore, we were cruising off the coast of Ireland, when, one day, it came on to blow great guns from the westward. For three blessed days, there was the little Fire-eater tossing and tumbling, and kicking up her stern, and going through as many manœuvres as a dancing master, till at last we were driven so far west that we made the coast of Argyle; then, 'bout ship we went, and stood away again to the eastward. Well, we carried on for a matter of four-and-twenty hours, with a little more northing in the wind, when we made land again, and hauled up two or three points, to clear it. The weather was so thick ye might a'most have cut it with a knife, and there wasn't sich a thing as a dirty face on board; the sea made a clean wash of ev'rything, and it blow'd—my eyes, how it did blow! Mayhap, you call this a gale, but you wouldn't have heard it beside that. It was bad enough to be on deck, but ten times worse below; a devil of a sea smashed in some of the ports, and the leeside of the main deck was three feet deep in water. And then, while we were hard at work, stuffing up the holes where the water was pouring in, and pumping, there was an awful stramash on deck; for there was the land again, close aboard of us a-head. 'Wear ship!' was now the cry, and away went the little hooker again on the other tack, and bravely did she behave—a better sea-boat never swam; for, batter'd and knocked about as she was, she shewed true pluck; no sooner was she knocked over by a sea, than she rose again like a duck, though she was forced to shake her feathers now and then. Well, at eight bells

in the first watch, (midnight,) we thought it was all up with us again, for there was the surf breaking on the rocks little more than half-a-mile on the lee bow—and touch and go it was; but our tight little barky—though she was anything but tight by that time—though she lay over till she was half-buried-alive, look'd boldly up in the wind, and shot past like a sea-bird. If there hadn't been such a devil of a noise, you might have heard a pin drop just then. There was not a man on deck who did not hold his breath, and gasp, when the danger was past, like one that's just escaped drowning.

'By the powers!' says I to Bill Jones, 'that was a close shave.'

'You may say that,' says he.

Just as he was a-speaking, the moon shone out, and there, not six hundred yards to leeward, were breakers again: the sea was running as high as our tops at the time; but, beyond and above it, we saw the breakers curling their white tops, foaming, and dashing, and roaring, as if they were raging to get at us, as you may have seen wild beasts tearing and leaping, and striving to break their chain to get out of the menagerie at their prey. Now indeed, it seem'd there was no chance of escape—there was no room to wear, and the ship was already half-buried under her canvass; our only hope seem'd to be in our ground tackle, and orders were given to clear away the anchors, and to have all ready for cutting away the masts. That was an awful moment; we thought it was all up with us, and there was many a pale cheek, and many a mutter'd prayer for mercy and deliverance; for the worst amongst us are glad to look aloft, when death is staring us in the face below. Our captain was as brave a fellow, and as good a seaman, as ever stepped a plank. What his feelings may have been, it's impossible for the likes o' me to say; but I never seed him more cool in a calm, than at that moment, when the bravest might have flinched, and no man could have cast it in his teeth. His voice never shook when he gave his orders, loud, clear, and distinct; and his gallant bearing cheered the downhearted, and gave fresh pluck to the daring. He was a trump, that fellow! He ordered the foretopsail and foresail to be set. It seemed to be a rash and dangerous experiment, but it succeeded. Nothing venture, nothing win; we might have lost our masts, but we saved the ship. The little frigate lay over for a minute, as if she was never going to rise no more; all hands thought the masts must go, for ev'rything aloft grinn'd again, and the rigging was as taut as bars of iron; but it held on, and the frigate righted again, and sprung a-head, as you have seen a hare make a fresh stretch from the hounds—and we were all saved. We shaved the reef so close, that I'm bless'd if I couldn't a'most have chucked a biscuit on shore."

"Mercy!" said the old woman, "what an escape!"

"Ay, mother, we sailors have many a narrow squeak for it, that you 'long-shore folks never dream of; but you know, as the song says, 'There's a sweet little cherub sits perch'd up aloft, to take care of the life of poor Jack;' and we're as safe, for the matter o' that, on the stormy sea, as you are on the terry furmy, as our doctor used to call the land."

"Weel, but what was the upshot o' the business?" said Willie.

"Why, ye see, though we had escaped so mirac'ously like, we were still too near a lee shore to be quite comfortable; for we'd another headland to weather afore we could say we was clear o' danger. There was never an eye closed on board that night, and a long and weary night it was. Bless'd if ever I seed a craft stand up under her canvass as our little barky did, carrying on at the rate of seven knots an hour, while the sea made a fair breach over her every now and then, and made her stagger from stem

to starn. At last, 'old roarer,' as I've heerd our doctor call the daybreak, made its appearance, and we saw the land we was afeard o', some distance astarn. After that, the gale began to moderate, and a fair wind soon took us into our anchorage.

Here old Janet interrupted her son, with, "Weel, but Tam, ye haena tauld us yet hoo ye cam to lose yer leg."

"Never hurry no man's cattle, mother," replied the sailor; "leave me to spin my own yarn my own way, and I'll come to the end on't at last; I told you you'd cry out Avast! afore I'd done."

"Hoot, Janet," said Willie, "let the lad tak his ain gate. It just astonishes me to hear him rinnin the words oot sae glib, and him sic a solid callant as he used to be."

"Weel, weel, gang on, my man; I'll no meddle wi' ye ony mair."

"Then here goes! Carry on again, says I," replied Tom. 'The frigate I belonged to afterwards went on the Jemmakey station, and cruised about, to purther the merchantmen from the pirates as infestigated their seas. Well, we were dodging about one night, under topgallantsails, off Cape St Antonio, with just wind enough to make the barkly crawl through the water. It was my look-out on deck, and I sees something like a large bird as it seem'd to me, hov'ring about in a patch of clear sky; so I stared at it, and stared at it, but I couldn't make out what it could be, for it kept moving backwards and forwards, but always in the same part of the sky. So I calls the midshipman of the watch, and says to him—

'D'ye see that large bird a-flying about there, sir? It's the biggest I ever seed, and it keeps always about the same place; I can't make out what it can be after.' Well, he looks and wonders like myself, and then he goes to fetch the night glass; and, after he'd squinted through it for a minute or two, he just mutters to himself, 'The devil!' and away he runs aft to the lieutenant of the watch, and brings him a running back with him.

'Whereabouts?' said the lieutenant.

'There, sir; just under that cloud that's hiding the moon.'

'Ay, so it is!' said he; 'I see her spars plain enough; nothing but a royal loose—and there's her hull!' he continued, as the moon broke out, and shewed us a long, low, rakish-looking square brig, lying as snug as a duck in the water, about two miles on our lee-bow. 'I don't like the look of her at all,' says the luff, and away he goes to make his report. She seem'd to have twigged us at the same time, and didn't like the looks of us neither; for, almost before the smoke had cleared away from our bows, after we had spoken to her with one of the fore-castle guns, we could hear the pipe on board of her, the night was so still; and, in a crack, she was one cloud of canvass, from the truck to the lower boom. Blow'd if ever I seed a man-of-war do the thing smarter. 'All hands make sail in chase!' was the cry on board of us, and, in a very short time, the water was talking Spanish under our bows. Every stitch of sail was packed on the ship; but the stranger stood right away before the light breeze, and crawled away from us fast, for that was our worst sailing point. We kept a-blazing away with our bow guns, to bring her to; but the more we fired, the more she wouldn't stop; and we might just as well have fired at the moon, for all the mischief we could do her. At daylight, she was hui'd down a-head; but the breeze freshened with the rising sun, and we began to to fetch up our starnway, and, before noon, we began to drop our shot into her. She wasn't slow in answering at first from her stern guns, which were uncommon well sarved, and every now and then walked a ball through our sails, but luckily did not strike our masts. We were overhauling her in great style, peppering away as fast as we could, when all at once she began to yaw about, and,

giving a broad sheer away to port, she shortened sail, and then came to the wind again on the starboard tack, with her maintopsail to the mast, and doused a red rag she had a-flying at the main. We gave over firing, and soon bowled up alongside of her, rolled up the small sail, hauled up the foresail, and backed the main-yard. Our captain hailed her in a devil of a rage, and was answered in some lingo I couldn't understand; but the fellow pointed to his boat as had a plank knocked out of her side; and orders were given to man our boats, and send them on board, to take possession of her. Well, just as we were a-lowering the boats, and all hands pleased at the thoughts of a good prize, blow'd if she didn't quietly steal her fore-yard forward a little, to gather way, and, before you could say Jack Robinson, she was braced sharp up, with all her small kites set, and, as she stood across our bows, she pitch'd it into us in style. It was a blind look-out, sartinly, to let the sneaking scoundrel slip through our fingers that way; but there was no help for it now; the boats were secured again, and, in a few minutes, we were after her. As long as the breeze held strong and steady, we had rather the best on't; but it soon began to die away, and then we thought we would lose her for sartin, when a lucky shot crippled her gaff, which soon snapped like a carrot. Now that so much after sail was off her, she couldn't keep her wind, and we neared her fast. 'Don't spare her, my lads!' shouted the captain; and we *did* pour the grape and canister into her in fine style, till she was a regular wreck; but she shewed pluck to the last, and kept blazing away at us as long as she was able. At last, she got tired, and gave over firing, and struck her colours. The boats were well manned and armed, and were again sent to take possession of her; the frigate running almost alongside, and threatening to blow her out of the water if she attempted any further resistance. When we were coming up under her quarter in the boats, we heard the sound of loud quarrelling on board, and, when we got fairly on the quarter-deck, we found the captain of the pirate swearing like a trooper, and saying as how his crew had betrayed him, like cowardly dogs as they were. He kept stamping up and down the deck like mad, looking as if he could eat the lieutenant, when he took his sword from him. Ten or twelve desperate-looking rough'uns as ever I seed, gather'd round him, muttering that it was better to die on the quarter-deck like men, than hang like dogs at the yard-arm, and all at once they snatch'd up some tommyhawks as was lying on the deck, and made a desperate rush upon us. We had an awful tussle for it; and, just as we were in the thick on't, hand to hand, up runs a young man from below, and sings out to us, 'Save me, save me!' As soon as the pirate captain seed him, he ran at him like a tiger, and, seizing him by the throat, shouted out—"Dead men tell no tales," and raised his tommyhawk to cleave him to the skull. Poor lad! he thought his signal for sailing was made, that it was all up with him. He muttered, 'Mercy, mercy!' But poor mercy would he have met with, if I hadn't run up just in time, and fetch'd the fellow a slash with my cutlash, which made him drop the tommyhawk like a hot potato. He left the lad, and turned round upon me, gnashing his teeth like nothing at all, with very rage, and, before I had time to wink my eye, he snatches a loaded pistol out of my belt, and smashes my leg to shivers. Down I dropped; but before he could finish what he had begun so cleverly, a pistol flashed close to his head, and he staggered, and fell, never to rise no more. When I came to my senses agin, I found myself in the sick-bay on board my own ship. The surgeon was forced to cut off my leg, to save my life; and when we arrived at Port Royal, I was sent ashore to the hospital, and a-terwards got my discharge."

"An' what o' the—what d'ye ca' them—rats?" said old Janet.

"Oh, they were taken into Port Royal, and tried for piracy; there was lots of evidence against them, the blood-thirsty rascals, and they were all hanged, except three or four. And so there's an end of my yarn, father; and a precious long one, I daresay, you think it is; and here am I come home a poor useless cripple, to moor myself for life, if so be you'll let me come to an anchor under your lee."

"Ay, my boy," replied the old man, clapping him kindly on the shoulder; "as long's there's a plack to the fore in the purse, or a gowpenfu' o' meal in the kist, ye'se aye be welcome to a share."

"True blue, for ever!" shouted Tom; "but, father, it's not come to that yet; I'm not going to anchor without paying the harbour dues. Here," continued he, tossing a well-filled purse to the old man; "I haven't been so long afloat for nothing; there's a good whack of prize-money there, and I'll come in for a pension, by and by, if I've luck."

"Keep it yersel, Tam," replied Willie; "I'm no gaun to touch a bawbee o't. Gude be thankit! I hae aneuch, an' to spare."

Finding his father firm in his refusal, Tom at last said, "Well, well; keep it for me, if you won't keep it for yourself. It won't keep company with me long; for, somehow, whenever I cast off the standing part of a guinea, it dev'lish soon unreeves itself, in quarter less no time. Stow it away in your own lockers, and serve it out to me, now and then, when I wants baccy."

As this seemed a very rational kind of arrangement, the old man consented to become his son's banker.

"And now that I've run all my line off the reel, father, you must give me a spell, and let's hear all that's been put down in your log since I left you."

"Oh, it's no muckle I hae to tell, Tam," replied he; "ae day has been as like the ane that gaed afore't, as ae pear to anither; I was born here, and here I'll maist likely die."

"But what's become o' bonny Jean Cameron, father? I remember well, how fond I was of her, when I was a boy at school; I've oft thought on her, when we've been keeping up Saturday night, at sea. Many's the tot I've emptied to her health."

"She's still to the fore, Tam, and 'maist as bonny as ever; she was married four year syne, but she's a widow noo." He then went on to tell his son the other changes that had taken place since his departure, the principal of which was the death of his late master and kind friend, Murray of Greenha'. "He was a guid freen to me," said Willie, drawing the back of his hand over his eyes; "but he's gane noo. I've nae cause to compleen o' my present maister, for a kinder couldna be, but he'll never be to me like him that's gane."

James Hamilton, old Willie Duncan's present master, had made a large fortune in the West India trade, and was proprietor of a valuable estate in Jamaica. For a series of years, so rapidly had he amassed wealth, that he seemed to be a peculiar favourite of Fortune; but Fortune has ever been a capricious dame, and those who are apparently highest in her good graces, are often made to feel how uncertain is the tenure by which they hold them. She seems, like some of the savages of the western world, to pamper her victims with the good things of this life, only to make them feel more keenly the reverses she is preparing for them. James Hamilton was one of those men, unfortunately too rare, who do not allow themselves to be dazzled by the flattering appearances of present prosperity; but who, aware of the changeable and fleeting nature of all earthly possessions, hold on the even tenor of their course, with minds prepared for every vicissitude. He always acted upon high and pure principle, and never, in the height of prosperity, forgot that the same Supreme

Benefactor who in his bounty had blessed him with abundance, might, in his wisdom, think fit to try him with adversity. He was a kind-hearted and liberal man, but withal cool, quiet, and methodical in his manners and actions. Heedless of the opinion of the world, he acted up to the dictates of his own conscientious feelings of right and wrong; and his strict notions of even-handed justice often led him to enter into engagements, and to perform actions, which, though perfectly just and rigidly honest, bore, in the eyes of a misjudging world, the impress of calculating selfishness and niggardly ill-liberality. But, notwithstanding, there was such straightforward honesty, such child-like, confiding simplicity, and such pure and unpretending Christianity evident in his character, that it was impossible for those who knew him well, not to esteem and love him. His principal failing was one which "leaned to virtue's side." Upright, and honourable, and candid, he thought all others like himself, and was often the dupe of designing and crafty men; who, with more worldly wisdom, were far his inferiors in judgment, and sound, practical sense; but who practised upon his confiding nature, by the semblance of qualities which they did not possess. He had long been blessed with the companionship of an amiable and excellent wife; and, when she was snatched from him by a sudden and virulent disorder, he could ill have borne his bereavement, had he not been supported by the conviction that she was only removed to a purer and happier state of existence; and he bowed with submission to the decrees of that Being who "doeth all things wisely." His only son, John, who had been an object of most tender solicitude to both his parents, had been educated with the greatest care; and, though apparently born the heir to great wealth, had undergone a regular probation in a mercantile house in the city, of which he hoped soon to become a partner. Many of the elder Hamilton's friends, had expressed their surprise at his choice of a profession for his son, and wondered that, rolling in wealth, as he was supposed to be, he should condemn his heir to the drudgery of a counting-house: but events proved that he had acted wisely and well. The sudden and totally unexpected failure of a large West India house with which he was connected, and to support which he had advanced considerable sums, gave the first shock to his credit; and, as is often the case, reverse followed reverse afterwards, until utter ruin seemed to be inevitable. Undazzled by prosperity, Hamilton proved himself to be equally unshaken by adversity. His character as a mercantile man stood so high, for unimpeachable integrity and indefatigable industry, that he might have made head for some years longer, against the stream of adverse circumstances, and might, perhaps, eventually have overcome them; but the plain path of duty was the one he had followed through life, and he did not desert it now. He immediately wound up his affairs, and, having settled with his creditors to the uttermost farthing, he found himself almost destitute, with the exception of his personal property, and the West India estate; which, however, had for some years barely paid its own expenses. It was now that Hamilton had reason to rejoice that his beloved son had, by his wise foresight, been rendered independent of circumstances, and had been bred up in habits which would enable him soon to acquire a comfortable establishment for himself. He immediately sold his house and furniture, and retired to an humble lodging in the city, where, with patient and laudable energy, he exerted himself to recover the ground he had lost. Sudden and unexpected as his reverses had been, he never murmured at the hardship of his lot, convinced that all the dispensations of Providence are wisely and mercifully ordered, and happy in the consciousness that he had nothing to reproach himself with, as far as

concerned his dealing with his fellow-men. About this time, his son, John, was sent out to Jamaica, on some mercantile speculation, by the house with which he was connected, and obtained permission to remain some time on the island, to inquire into the management of his father's plantation; and, if necessary and possible, to effect its sale. He was about twenty-four years of age; tall, and handsome in his appearance, and a youth of excellent dispositions and steady principles. By his persevering and conscientious attention to his duties, he had gained the confidence and esteem of his employers, and had acquired the character of an active and clever man of business. He had long been a secret admirer of Ellen Winterton, the orphan child of an officer in the army, and who was living under the guardianship of the head of his firm. Accustomed, however, always to keep his feelings under control, and to regulate his desires by the rules of honour and of prudence, young Hamilton did not think himself justified in making his proposals in form until fortune should have enabled him to do so as an independent man. The change in his father's circumstances, while it called for fresh exertions on his part, seemed to separate him still more widely from the object of his wishes; but he bore his prolonged probation with cheerfulness, and his grief at parting with Ellen was almost neutralized by the animating prospect of serving his beloved father. After an absence of some months, during which he had written home several times, a letter was received from him, announcing his having left Kingston harbour, in the fast-sailing, well-armed merchant-ship the *Delight*, and expressing his hope soon to join his father again. Fortune, in the meanwhile, had smiled again upon the elder Hamilton, in a way he little expected. He was surprised one evening by the receipt of a note from a gentleman, whose signature was unknown to him, and who requested a personal interview with him next morning, at a neighbouring coffee-house. Thither he repaired, accordingly, wondering what could be the nature of the communication the stranger wished to make to him.

"Mr Hamilton, I believe?" said a gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, to whom the waiter pointed him out, as he entered the room. "I know you well by name and character, Mr Hamilton, though I have not the happiness of your personal acquaintance, and I am happy to be the bearer of pleasing intelligence to you. I am one of the executors of Mr Murray of Greenha', who died childless, and, in consequence of the demise of his nearer relations, has made you his heir; and I have to congratulate you upon your accession to a valuable landed property and a handsome fortune."

Mr Hamilton was not a little surprised at this announcement. Murray of Greenha' was a distant relation of his late father; but the families had had no communication for several years, and he had almost forgotten that such a person was in existence. This unexpected revolution, by which he was again restored from poverty to wealth and comfort, excited his warmest feelings of gratitude and thankfulness towards that Being in whom he had always trusted with unwavering confidence. He immediately set off to the north, to visit his newly-acquired property, and to carry into effect the provisions of his benefactor's will. Among other duties devolved upon him, was that of providing for our friend Willie Duncan, whose upright, manly character, and grateful attachment to his late master, gave him strong claims upon the good-will and respect of his successor. He had been some time in the north when he heard of his son's having left Jamaica; but months instead of weeks had elapsed, and still no further accounts had been received of him, and he began to be seriously alarmed on his account. His agent in town, in reply to his anxious inquiries, informed him that the

Delight was known to have left Kingston harbour at the time specified, but that she had not since been heard of; and, as she was so very much beyond her expected time, and several ships had arrived in England which had only just reached the harbour when she left it, there was now little doubt of her loss. This was sad news to the elder Hamilton, and it required the exercise of all his Christian fortitude to enable him to bear up under the heavy dispensation. He had gained unexpected wealth; but he for whom he prized it had been snatched from him. One afternoon, shortly after the return of the sailor, Tom Duncan, Mr Hamilton was sauntering, in a melancholy mood, along the high road near Greenha', and was scarcely aroused from his abstraction by the rattling of a post-chariot, which was almost upon him before he was aware of its approach.—"Stop!—stop!" said a voice from the inside. The door was dashed open, and, in a moment, the bewildered father was in the arms of his long-lost son. It was some time before either of them could speak. At last, the father sobbed out—

"My dear, dear son! I thought you were torn from me for ever! Heaven be praised for all its mercies! I shall now die happy. But how have I been so cruelly deceived? They told me you were lost, and my heart was almost broken. But come, come away to the house, and, after you have refreshed yourself, you can gratify my curiosity." On entering the house, John congratulated his father most affectionately on the change that had taken place in his affairs. "I am glad of it on your account, John; for myself, I care not. I was as happy with my crust and cheese, and with my consciousness that I was doing my duty, as I am now—rich beyond my fondest hopes. Yes, John, I thank Heaven, for myself, that I am blessed with a contented spirit; and, for you, that, when I die, you will be amply provided for." As soon as John had done ample justice to the substantial lunch placed before him, his father said to him—"If you are not much fatigued, we will take a stroll, and, while I am shewing you the lions, you can be telling me your adventures."

"With all my heart," replied he.

"When we left Kingston harbour in the *Delight*, we were all in high glee, in the anticipation of a speedy and pleasant voyage. Our ship was one of the fastest of her class, well-armed, and manned with an active and spirited crew; so that, to all human appearance, we had little to dread, either from man or the elements. We had scarcely lost sight of the land, when the wind died away to a dead calm, and the sea became as smooth and clear as a mirror, glancing back the reflection of a bright and cloudless moon. The sails flapped heavily against the masts, as the ship rolled helpless and unmanageable in the long swell, and the water dripped from her channels, as she rose again, after dipping them deep into the sea. All at once, a small, dark cloud appeared on the larboard beam.

"Oh, it's nothing," said the mate.

Not so thought the captain, who fortunately came upon deck at the time.

"All hands shorten sail!" shouted he. "Bear a hand! Up foresail!—in royals and topgallantsails! Brace the yards round to port! Stand by topsail—haulyards and sheets!"

These orders were barely carried into effect, when a sudden and tremendous squall struck the ship. The small sails were clued up, and the topsails on the caps; but the gallant little bark staggered under the shock, lay over till her gunwale almost touched the water, struggled for a moment, and then rose again. The squall had overtaken them with lightning-like rapidity, and was gone again almost as quickly. A few moments before, and a neater and snugger ship never swam the water—now, she was almost a wreck aloft. The foretopmast was hanging

over the side, the jib-boom gone, the maintop-gallant-mast snapped short above the step, and the maintopsail in tatters. All this desolation had been the work of a moment; the demon of the storm had passed, and all was again calm.

'Thank Heaven, it's no worse!' said the Captain. 'Two minutes sooner, and we should all have been lost! Better lose a few sticks than the ship herself. But this will be a warning to you, Mr Rogers,' said he to the mate, 'not to be foolhardy for the future.'

All hands were immediately set to work to clear away the wreck of the spars, and were busily employed all night. It was late in the forenoon before the wreck of the foretopmast was launched clear of the ship, and a new maintopsail bent. During this interval, a light breeze had sprung up, and a strange sail hove in sight to windward. The Captain mounted the rigging, and got his glass to bear upon her, and, after a long and anxious look, paced the quarter-deck with hurried and irregular steps, glancing uneasily aloft, and hailing the men to bear a hand with their mast-ropes.

'Rogers,' said he to the mate, at the same time handing him the glass, 'take a look at that craft, and tell me what you think of her.'

The mate looked long and carefully at her, and, returning the glass to his superior, looked doubtfully and inquiringly in his face, and shook his head:—

'I don't like the look of her at all, sir.

'Nor I, Rogers; however, we'll say nothing about her just now. If the air continues so light, it will take her some time to reach us, and we must make good use of the opportunity. Hurry the men with the topmast. Heaven send us a cloudy night! As soon as it's dark, we'll alter our course.'

By dint of hard work, and a suspicion among the crew that the stranger was an unpleasant neighbour, we were all ataunto, as the sailors call it, before midnight, and were standing away before the light breeze. At daylight, the captain's glass swept the horizon, and soon rested upon the object of his search. A long and steady gaze seem'd to confirm both him and the mate in their first suspicion. The vessel, now considerably nearer us, had been, evidently watching our motions, and was as evidently in pursuit of us. She was a long, low, rakish-looking brig, creeping along before the faint breeze, and aiding its efforts with her sweeps.

'It's the Dare-Devil, sir!' said the mate, his cheek paling as he spoke; 'I know her now by the black fiddlehead and her mast-heads black. A bloodier pirate never swam. The Lord have mercy upon us, for *he* won't!'

'Call the hands aft!' said the captain.

The men assembled on the quarter-deck in stern silence. They seemed to anticipate what was to follow; but it was evident theirs was not the quietness of fear, but of determination.

'My lads,' said the captain, 'that stranger, we have every reason to believe, is a pirate. If there had been anything of a breeze, we might have escaped; but, now, our only chance is to shew her what metal we're made of. You will have to fight for your lives; for, so soon as they set foot on this deck, they will murder every soul on board. What say you, my lads?—will you die like dogs, or fighting like brave men?'

A simultaneous cheer from the crew was the only reply, and they were immediately dismissed to prepare for the impending conflict.

'Ah, there she shews her teeth at last,' said the captain, as a puff of smoke burst from the brig, followed by the flash and report of a gun, the ball from which struck the water some distance from us.

'It is of no use our attempting to escape, Rogers!' said

the captain; 'he is gaining upon us fast. We will not fire a gun till he is close aboard of us, and till every shot will tell.'

The guns were all loaded with grape, the fire-arms placed in readiness on deck, and the men ordered to lie down at their quarters, and not to fire a shot till the order was given. Meantime, the pirate rapidly approached, and her shot began to tell upon our rigging and sails. The Delight kept steadily on her course; but her yards, which had been nearly square, were drawn quietly forward, one by one, to port. The pirate was sweeping up at some little distance on our quarter, and had hailed us to heave to directly, or she would sink us. 'Now, my lads,' said our captain, 'be cool and steady. I'm going to cross his hawse: as soon as the guns bear upon him, blaze away.'

The helm was put a-starboard, and, as we crossed the bows, we poured our grape into him. The fire was not such a *raking* one as we expected; for he was too quick for us, and sheered to port almost as soon as ourselves; but it was evident that we had almost sickened him, for he widened his distance, and before night was almost hulled down to windward of us.

'I hope we have got rid of our troublesome customer, sir,' said Rogers to the captain.

'Don't hollow till you're through the wood,' replied he; 'we haven't done with him yet, I'm afraid. I'm much mistaken if he is not trying to play a game at humbug with us; as soon as it is dark, he will edge down upon us, and endeavour to take us by surprise. We will keep the men at quarters all night, and haul close to the wind, on the starboard tack, when darkness comes on.'

At nightfall, strict orders were given that all the lights should be put out, except that in the binnacle, and the ship's course was altered. We were in great hopes that by these means we would elude the pursuit of the pirate; for, though the breeze was still light, the night was dark and cloudy, and the mate, after sweeping the horizon with his night glass, said, in a joyous tone, to the captain—

'I think we have outwitted him, sir; I see no signs of him now.'

'Let me look,' said the captain. 'Hollo! What is that dark body to the northward? That infernal brig, I'll be bound. How could he have seen us?' As he spoke his eye glanced aloft, and there, to his great surprise, was a light shining at the mizentop-gallantmast-head!

'What light is that?' shouted he; 'who has dared to disobey the orders? Jump up there, one of you boys, and douse it. Rogers, there's a traitor on board.'

'Then Jose's the man, sir!'

The Delight had lost a few hands in harbour, by fever; and, a few days before she sailed, a Portuguese seaman had been shipped to supply the place of one of them. He was an active, able-bodied fellow, and produced excellent certificates from former ships; but there was something extremely forbidding and repulsive in his countenance, and the mate was very unwilling to obey Captain Forbes's order to receive him on board. He was a man of few words; but his eyes were constantly wandering, with a furtive glance, round the ship; and, when he did speak, it was generally to express his fear of pirates, and to inquire into the means of defence, of the Delight. On the evening before the ship sailed, he went on shore as one of the boat's crew, but did not make his appearance again till next morning. For this breach of duty, he made some plausible excuse, which was unfortunately accepted. It was afterwards proved that he was one of the crew of the pirate, and had been employed to gain all the information in his power, as to our guns, time of sailing, &c., and to make private signals, if necessary.

The brig kept hovering about till daylight, and then bore down upon us, and, when within range, fired a

shot across our bows, to make us heave to. 'To this salutation no answer was returned, but we stood steadily on, as before, reserving our fire for closer quarters. Shot after shot was dropped into us, but still not a hand was moved on board. At last the pirate came within hail, and swore with the most horrid oaths that he would sink us, if we did not immediately heave to.

'Now, my lads, stand by!' The men were on their feet in a moment. 'Starboard a little! Fire!' Again our grape rattled into her, and we could judge, by the bustle on her decks, and by the loud cries and execrations that reached our ears, that our fire had been a destructive one. Two of our men were killed by his discharge, and our boat amidships smashed to pieces; but he again sheered off, and, shaking his sails in the wind, dropped slowly astern. Again our hopes revived, but only to be miserably disappointed. When he was beyond the range of our short carronades, he kept dropping shot after shot into us, with deadly precision, from his long gun.

'Rogers,' said the captain, 'if this game lasts long, it is all up with us; unless the breeze freshens, we shall all be murdered like so many sheep.'

In vain did we endeavour to come to closer quarters with him; as we shortened sail, so did he. Our guns were useless, while—crash—crash—crash—followed each remorseless shot from his long twelve. The breeze, instead of freshening, gradually died away to a calm, and we lay entirely at his mercy, for he kept sweeping round us, and, unhurt himself, inflicted deadly injuries upon us. At last, we lay a complete wreck upon the water; our gallant captain was killed, and fifteen of the men either dead or desperately wounded, and the gallant, but exhausted remnant of the crew were persuaded by the mate to consent to surrender. Our colours were accordingly hauled down; but the pirate for some time paid no attention to this mark of submission on our part, but seem'd determin'd to gratify his thirst for slaughter by putting his threat of sinking us into execution. At last, he ceased firing, and, sweeping up on our quarter, hailed to order the captain of the *Delight* on board.

'Our captain is killed, and we have not a boat left that can swim.'

'Oh, then, if you can't come to me, I must go and fetch you!' A boat well manned soon pushed off from the pirates, and in a few minutes dashed along-side of us. The first man who boarded us was the captain, as ferocious looking a monster as I ever beheld; and his followers, who swarmed up the side after him, were in appearance worthy of their leader. They rushed on board with cries of exultation and rage, brandishing their cutlasses, and shouting, 'Down with them!' Cut them down, and make an end of them at once! And they were proceeding to put their threats in execution, when they were checked in a moment by the loud and commanding tones of the captain. 'Stand back, all of you! I'll shoot the first man that lays a hand upon them! No, no, my lads; it would be letting the rascals off too cheap to kill them at once; we'll dispatch them in pairs at a time; there are twelve of them, so we shall have six days' sport instead of one.' This proposal was received with shouts of savage joy by the crew. 'We'll keep these two till the last,' continued he, pointing to the mate and myself, 'that they may have the pleasure of seeing all their comrades walk the plank before them. But, come my lads, be smart; we have no time to lose; put all these fellows on board our little hooker; and then we'll see what's to be done below.' We were all immediately forced into the boat, and rowed on board the brig, where some of us were put in irons, and others lashed to ring-bolts on the deck. The boat then returned, and the work of plunder commenced; and for some hours the pirate crew were busily employed in transferring to the brig all

the valuables they could lay their hands upon on board the *Delight*. When they had taken everything available, they scuttled the ship, and left her, and obliged us, with many taunts and blows, to watch for the catastrophe. It was a heart-rending sight to us all, to see our gallant little ship gradually settling in the water, rolling deep and uneasily, till, at last, after a heavy lurch, she dipped her bulwarks low into the water, and, struggling in vain to recover herself, sank to rise no more. A groan of horror burst from us all; we felt as if our last connecting link with humanity was broken; we were left powerless in the hands of monsters, in human form, but with the spirit of demons. Alas! our fears were but too well verified: that very evening two of our poor shipmates, after having been tormented in the most savage manner, were blindfolded, and compelled to walk out upon a plank launched from the gangway, from the end of which they fell into the sea—shrieking with horror as they fell. As their bodies plunged heavily into the smooth water, the captain turned to us with a savage sneer, and said—'They were too well fed by half—when it comes to your turn, you won't make such a disturbance amongst the fishes.'

But why need I dwell longer upon these horrors? For five succeeding days, the same murderous scene was enacted; we were fed on bread and water, and tormented in every way that cruelty could suggest, and then had the horror of witnessing the death of our companions, and of anticipating the same cruel fate for ourselves. At last, the mate and I were the only survivors, and we were brought to the gangway, to mount the same fatal plank which had been the instrument of death to our unfortunate shipmates. Our eyes were blindfolded, and, weak and exhausted as we were, we looked forward to death as an easy and happy release from our miseries. We bade each other farewell:—

'Our murderers allow us one blessing, Rogers,' said I—'to die together.' That remark saved my life.

'A blessing is it?' exclaimed the captain; 'then it's one that I'll be hanged if you enjoy. You shall go to the devil by yourself. Take the handkerchief off that sentimental gentleman's eyes, and let him see his dear friend take a leap in the dark. He can moralize about it till to-morrow evening.'

Poor Rogers!—I did, indeed, feel deserted, when the sullen plunge announced that the sea had closed over its prey! To this refinement in cruelty, on the part of the pirate, however, I eventually owed my deliverance. Slowly and painfully did the first hours of that night pass over my head. My thoughts constantly recurred to the horrors I had witnessed, and to the dreadful doom that awaited me on the morrow. The tears filled my eyes as I prayed for forgiveness of my past sins, and for strength to support me through the coming trial. The brig was tumbling about on the almost calm sea, with all sails furled, except the topgallantsail, which, by some chance, had broken adrift, and the crew, not excepting the look-out man, were all asleep, when, all at once, the report of a gun came booming over the water. The sound acted like magic upon the slumbering crew—they were on the alert in a moment—the sails were set with wonderful quickness—the sweeps were manned, and the little schooner rippling through the water. Next morning, we had distanced the stranger considerably, and the pirate was in great hopes of escaping; but the breeze freshened, and, before noon, the frigate, for such she proved to be, had gained so much upon us, that her shot began to tell upon us. I was now hurried below, and a sentry was placed over me; the captain ordering him to blow my brains out if I attempted to escape; and adding—'I'll settle his account, by and by.' It was with impatience, almost amounting to agony, that I listened to the strange medley of sounds which reached

my ear—the creaking of the sweeps, the curses and shouts of our crew cheering each other at their work, the loud report of our guns, and the more faint and distant sound of those of the frigate; and I prayed for deliverance—prayed that some lucky ball might find its way into the cabin, and put an end to my suspense and to my miseries at once. At last, the sound of the sweeps ceased. I heard the rattling of blocks and the sound of running feet. I felt, by the motion of the vessel, that some alteration was made in her course, and then—I burst into tears—I heard a voice hailing the brig! I felt that the hour of my deliverance was at hand, and I breathed a prayer of silent thankfulness to heaven. Again there was a movement on deck—the brig laid over to the breeze, and a loud shout burst from her crew as they discharged the guns. Merciful powers! she had escaped, and my spirit sank within me. But the avenger of blood was behind us, and his voice spoke in the thunder of his guns. I heard a crash upon deck, then the noise of something coming down from aloft, followed by the muttered curses of my sentry, as he exclaimed—“The gaff is gone!” The report of the frigate’s guns now became louder and louder, and the little brig absolutely staggered, when the grape shot rattled against her sides. Her crew, however, seemed to be fighting with the desperation of madmen, for they maintained a warm fire. At last, all was silent on board; the firing ceased, and not even a voice could be heard. Presently, I heard the dash of oars; then the grating of a boat against the vessel’s side; then loud and angry voices, and afterwards all the sounds of a desperate conflict. I looked up the companion—my sentinel had deserted his post, to join in the fray. I saw the boat’s crew of the frigate engaged in a deadly struggle with the pirates. I rushed over to them, and had just joined them, calling for help, when the pirate captain seized me by the shoulder, and raised his tomahawk to cleave me to the deck. Weak as I was, I must have fallen a victim to his fury, had not a gallant sailor rushed between us, and inflicted a severe wound upon his upraised arm. I saw my brave deliverer fall immediately afterwards by a pistol shot; but he was well avenged, for, the next moment, the pirate fell lifeless on his body. I saw no more. I was carried, in a state of insensibility, on board the frigate, and it was long before I recovered from the effects of my severe discipline on board the pirate. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I wished to hasten homewards immediately; but I was obliged to remain, to give evidence against the crew of the piratical brig, all of whom, with the exception of three or four, suffered the extreme penalties of the law. And now, my dear father, my tale is at an end, and grateful am I to the merciful Providence which has restored me to your arms.”

“My dear, dear son!—doubly endeared to me by the dangers you have undergone on my account—I am thankful that my altered fortunes now enable me to gratify what I know to be the dearest wish of your heart. Go to her, John—go to Miss Winterton—she is worthy of you: no longer restrained by the clog of poverty, you may freely indulge the feelings of your heart.”

As the father and son were walking along the road, they saw two men approaching them at some distance.

“Whom have we here?” said John Hamilton.

“One of them is old Willie Duncan, a cotter of mine; and who the lame man is that is with him, I know not. By the by, I heard that his son was returned from sea; perhaps that’s the man.”

Willie Duncan respectfully saluted his master, when he approached, and said—

“I was juist bringin my son to”——

“Good heavens!” exclaimed John Hamilton, gazing earnestly at the disabled man; “it cannot be—yes, it is—

my brave deliverer! My gallant fellow,” continued he, shaking him heartily by the hand, “how rejoiced I am to see you, and to have an opportunity to prove my gratitude to you! I heard you were dead—how did you escape?”

“Why, blow me, your Honour, if you didn’t take me quite aback. I couldn’t make you out at first—you’re twice the man you were when I see’d you on the pirate’s deck; and I’d never no thoughts of falling in with you so near home. I’m right glad, however, to see your Honour once more.”

“Duncan,” said Hamilton, senior, with a trembling voice, “I owe you a debt I can never repay. You lost your limb in saving the life of my son—it shall be my endeavour to make the loss to you as light as possible.”

“And is the gentleman the son of my father’s good master? Then a fig for the leg!—it couldn’t have been lost in a better cause. And, as for gratitude, sir, you owe me none; his Honour, here, would have done the same for me, if the case had been *nyisienersal*, like—if he’d been the sailor, and I’d been the gemman.”

“Well, well, my good fellow—no doubt—we won’t argue on that point; only tell me how I can serve you, and I will do so to the best of my ability.”

“Why, your Honour, I wants for nothing just now. I’ve got a lot of prize-money, and my father’s snug roadstead to anchor in; but, if your Honour likes to give me a few ounces of baccy, I won’t say but what I’ll be obligated to you.”

“A modest request, certainly,” said Mr Hamilton, laughing; “but we must give you something better than tobacco, and as much of that as you like, into the bargain. Come, William, as your son won’t speak, you must do so for him. Tell me how I can best serve him.”

A whispering consultation here took place, between father and son, which was put a stop to by the latter addressing Mr Hamilton, in a sheepish, confused manner, twirling his hat in his hands at the same time, and feeling the rim all around, as if to ascertain that it was all there.

“Why, your Honour, as your Honour’s so kind—Blow’d if I can speak about it, father! You see, your Honour, I’m a first-rate hand at a yarn on a Saturday night; but, somehow, my jawing-tacks gets all bedevilled, when I begins to speak about *she*.”

“And who’s she?” said Mr Hamilton, laughing—“some old sweetheart, that has been waiting for you?”

“Why, it’s bonny Jean Cameron that was when I went away. She’s a widow now, your Honour, and, as I wants to be spliced, and she’s no dejection, why, if it’s not making too bold, if your Honour would let us have one of your empty cottages, we’d join company at once, and sail together for the rest of our cruise.”

We need hardly say that the sailor’s request was cheerfully granted; and, in a few weeks, he and his wife were happily settled in a neat cottage, comfortably and substantially furnished by Mr Hamilton, who likewise settled upon him an annuity, sufficient to keep him from want, but not so large as to encourage habits of idleness or dissipation. John Hamilton was equally successful in his suit; and his union with Ellen Winterton proved that those who have been tried by adversity, are best qualified to enjoy prosperity.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. IX.—THE THREE LETTERS.

It is a difficult question how far doctors ought, voluntarily, to interfere in matters of wills. One half of our profession advocate the moral necessity and propriety, of not only putting their patients in such a state of knowledge as to their bodily condition as to bring out by *inference* the prudence of arranging their temporal affairs, but of adding suggestions and recommendations to the effect of inducing them to perform this indispensable duty, before the grim tyrant's advances may render it impossible. The other half smile at their bolder and more philanthropic brethren, as fools who interfere with what lies beyond their province, and limit their statements or advice to those necessary replies which are called for by the questions of the patients themselves. Upon all such points, where the truth is sought for *in partibus extremis*, much has been said, and will be said; and, perhaps, a thousand years hence, the profession and the public may be as far from any simple designative proposition of the real moral truth of the subject, as they are at present. The fault lies in men's minds, which, seeking eternally to generalize, lose sight of the grand fact in Nature—that, as in botany she defies man in his attempts at a natural classification, so, in moral states and conditions of society, she equally defies him to manufacture verbal rules, for the regulation of individuals or masses, under all existing circumstances. For my part, I have always avoided these verbose questions; and, though I have practised for many years, I have never experienced any difficulty in so regulating my statements and advices to dying patients, as might best suit their temporal interests of health and wealth, without losing sight of what was due to higher and more sacred feelings and prospects of a world to come. To tell some patients that they are dying, would be to commit a species of homicide; to conceal from them the state of their bodies, and their approaching dissolution, may be to be accessory to worldly wrongs, to be felt for generations, and to that condemnation that is to be felt for ever; but, between those extremes, there ranges a wide field for the workings of prudence, an ample space for the exercise of a noble and manly virtue, and scope enough, and to spare, for the exhibition of all those elevated feelings of good hearts that add grace and beauty to the possessors, and are displayed for the benefit of our fellow-creatures. No man has so much in his power for the benefit of mankind, as a medical practitioner; and, proud am I to say, that no man, speaking generally, more seldom loses the opportunity of turning it to the proper account. These observations are called forth by a case that, some time ago, came under my observation, where the hand of a ruling Providence spurned the schemes of weak mortals, and took the regulation of a dying person's affairs out of her hands, in a manner as strange as it is dark and mysterious.

Mrs Germain, a widow lady of fortune, sent her niece, a young woman about twenty-three years of age, to request that I would visit her in my professional capacity. The case, I was told, was not an urgent one, and I might call

at any time during the course of the day, as suited my arrangements and leisure. I went, accordingly, in a short time afterwards, and was introduced into a very splendid drawing-room, where I observed an elderly lady, whom I took to be Mrs Germain herself, reclining on a damask-covered couch, with the young person who had waited on me, sitting on a footstool by her side. The two individuals were interesting in many respects, even at first sight: there was a singular elegance of taste displayed in the dress, though a dishabille, of the elderly one, which, co-operating with a set of features, at one time undoubtedly handsome, and now noble and intellectual, bespoke the lady by birth, and one that had cultivated the art of making the body and the mind reflect, on each other, mutual beauty and adornment. The young one, whom I had seen before, but under the shade of a jealous veil, was one of those *blondines* so highly prized in French novel writing, and seldom seen in our country, in the perfection of contrast, of dark piercing eyes, and light auburn tresses, so frequently seen in France. She was also very elegantly attired; and the graceful manner in which she reclined, with her left arm on the side of the couch, and her right holding a richly gilt book, from which she had been reading to her aunt, produced an effect which an artist or a lover would not have been slow to acknowledge. On a nearer approach, I soon detected, in the composed and bland features of the elder, the delicate, yet certain touch of the finger of some latent, lurking disease; which, by draining the blood from the lips, blanching the lower confines of the temples, and depressing the globes of the eyes, had given a melancholy premonition of serious changes about to be effected in vital parts.

Having been introduced by the niece, who rose and handed me a chair, I sat down by the side of the couch, and received an account of the symptoms which had exhibited themselves to the invalid—from which I learned that she had been ailing for several months; but that no indications of serious disease having been detected by her, she had put off her application for medical advice from day to day, in the hope of getting better. How little did she know that, during all that time, she had been unconsciously, yet progressively, travelling the dark path of death!—how little did she now know, as she lay there, arrayed in the tasteful and costly decorations of the body—her face clothed with the composure of easy indolence and the expression of noble pride, and her soft languid eye lighted up with the hope of a long course of happiness, supplied from the resources of wealth—that death was busy with the secret parts of her heart! I understood her complaint at the first description of her symptoms—an aneurism or tumour in the region of the fountain of life, which would burst in an instant, and precipitate her in another moment into eternity.

Her complaint defies all the efforts of our profession, and it is, moreover, one which never can with propriety be explained to a patient, because there are few that have firmness enough to enable them to bear up under the certainty of an instantaneous dissolution, and the uncertainty of the dread moment. I therefore exercised that allowable and humane dissimulation which the searching eyes

of patients, or that of friends, render necessary for their freedom and relief from fears that would often kill as certainly as the disease which generates them. This might not have been called for, by any vigilance on the part of Mrs Germain to read my face—she felt no apprehension, and put no questions as to what I conceived to be the nature of her complaint; but I saw the dark eyes of the niece fixed upon my countenance, with a searching intensity of look, and solicitude of expression, which shewed that, if she could, she would have read the most secret thoughts of my heart. There was affection deep and pure in that look, and the fear of the bursting asunder of ties more dear to her than her own existence. She continued her gaze silently, but thoughtfully; and the conversation of her aunt, which, notwithstanding her weakness, was spirited and buoyant, touching many indifferent topics lightly, and with the ease and grace of high breeding and fine cultivated fancy, struck her ear, without carrying a meaning to her mind. I indulged the confidence of the patient, and witnessed, with feelings which we only can know, the delusive spirit of life flapping his golden-coloured wings round the heart whose citadel was already occupied by the demon of death. Such scenes are familiar to us; but there was something in this different from any I had yet witnessed; and I took my departure with an assumed placidity of look, while the inmost recesses of my spirit were convulsed by the laugh of the patient, and the silent brooding, and fearful, searching eye of that angelic being whose existence seemed to be wound up in her friend.

Even in desperate cases, we must prescribe; and, in the evening, I sent some medicines of the paregoric and hypnotic kind, with a view, simply—for I could do no more—of relieving a slight pain which occasionally, but at considerable intervals, interfered with her good spirits. I continued my visits, and often witnessed scenes similar to those I have described. The patient was gradually approaching the dread issue; and still, at every meeting, that beautiful young woman watched my every look, and searched my heart with those brilliant eyes, that spoke some mysterious language, which even the deepest feelings of friendship for her benefactress would scarcely explain. The patient herself felt no solicitude, she saw no danger. It was clearly otherwise with her niece; but what surprised me was, that this devoted girl only looked her intense feelings. She never asked me if her aunt was in danger. Every glance, every movement, shewed that she felt it; but the fear of having her apprehensions confirmed—such, at least, was my construction of her strange conduct—sealed up her lips, and constrained her to a solemn silence.

One day, I called, and was shewn into an anteroom, until some friend had departed. I heard words in an adjoining closet, and knew the voice of Louisa—for such was the name of the fair creature who had claimed so much interest from me.

“Why will not you, my dearest Louisa?” said the soft voice of a young man. “This is terrible! Think, love, meditate, what will be the dreadful issue. Oh, sweet, angelic being! why were you fated to make me adore you for acting against those wishes I now breathe in your ear! Ask the doctor; tell him the awful secret, that our happiness depends on ten written letters of a name; and he has only to say write, and it is written.”

“I have already tried to speak to him, but I cannot. Alfred, I see our danger. My aunt, I fear, is dying. The £20,000 left her by her husband, go to a sordid wretch, his brother, if she dies without a will. There is none on earth she loves, but me and Alfred. O, beloved Alfred! you alone divide, with that angelic woman, the affection of your Louisa. You are poor; I know it; I have wept for it. I have nothing on this earth. If she die without a will, we are beggars, and her last breath will wail our destiny, and her

last tear tell her too late her unavailing sympathy. I know all this. It is my night thought, my day dream, my love's whisper, my Alfred's theme; but, God help me, I cannot break this subject to the doctor; my very heart bounds within my bosom at the thought of raising one slight fear in the breast of that woman to whom I owe all the happiness I have ever experienced upon earth. What, oh, what shall be done, Alfred!”

I heard her sobs burst from her, as she sought for sympathy in the bosom of her lover.

“Louisa, love, lift up your head,” he answered. “You are sacrificing both of us to a feeling which that excellent woman herself would pronounce a weakness and a cruelty to both you and her. Think, love, what shall be the thoughts, the agonies of your aunt, if she find herself firmly locked in the arms of death, and her hands bound up, by his rigid grasp, from obeying the dictates of a bursting, breaking heart. The thought that Augustus Germain, the man she hates, inherits all her fortune, and that her dear Louisa is left by her a beggar, will drag her parting spirit to the confines of the flesh, and torture it in the body's expiring struggle. You tremble at rousing in her a fear of death, by the mention of the will; and you inflict a thousand agonies, by leaving her unprepared for that death when it comes. Louisa, Louisa, lift up your head, and say if these are not the words of truth.”

A silence succeeded these words. The girl was in tears; and her feelings choked her reply.

“I feel that you have spoken truth, Alfred,” said she; “yet I cannot do it, I cannot—I will rather be a beggar.”

“And you *will* be a beggar, sweet but deluded girl,” rejoined the lover; “and Alfred, who would have died for his Louisa, will be also a beggar, through her weakness. Love is hated by the Fates.”

Another pause intervened, of some moments.

“But, Alfred, resumed the sobbing girl; if, if—oh, I tremble at the word—if my aunt should die without a will, and your Louisa, in place of having twenty thousand pounds, is, as she will be, a beggar—will your love for me, Alfred—ah! I choke—the thought swells my heart——

“I know it—I know it, Louisa,” replied he; “mention it not—it is well that your swelling heart binds up the treacherous word—would not Louisa, with all her aunt's wealth, take Alfred who has nothing—shall not Alfred, who has nothing, take his Louisa, a beggar? Lovely girl!—good, elevated, and noble as you are—I question if you sufficiently appreciate the devotedness of your Alfred. But, Louisa, think again of what I have said. I see you again to-morrow. Oh, how time flies, when I think of your aunt!—how it lags when I think of you! Think—think, ere it be too late.”

“I cannot—I cannot,” replied she.

There was an embrace; he departed, and the disconsolate Louisa sat and wept bitterly alone.

The servant came and told me that Mrs Germain was now alone. I hastened to her. She was, as usual, on the couch. The disease was gradually progressing, but without making much of external ravage; and her spirits were as good as usual.

“Ha, doctor,” she said, briskly, as I went forward, “that was Augustus Germain who now went from me. Know you him? He is the brother of my deceased husband; and now, when I am ailing, though, Heaven be praised, not dying, he has begun to sneak about me, for his own private ends. I have not seen his face these six months. Do you know he is in my power? I can leave the whole fortune I got from his brother, past him—to whom I please. Ha! ha!”

“And do you intend, madam, to leave it past him?” replied I, looking in her face gravely.

"Intend!" cried she, with another laugh, which I feared would burst the tumour, and end her life in the instant. "Why, to be sure I do. Louisa Milford shall be my heir, though I had a million for every thousand. That girl, sir, is a jewel beyond the value of all that Golconda could give up from its inmost recesses. She loves Alfred Stanford, a young man as noble in his sentiments as she is kind, and gentle, and true in her affections; but he is poor, and, praise be to Heaven! I have the means of making them rich and happy."

"And why do you delay this act of kindness and duty," said I, with a look fixed on her eyes, "when you and all others are aware how very brittle a thread life hangs by?"

She looked at me firmly and intently as I pronounced these words, and paused a little, as if she felt some slight shock, which she required to overcome.

"Do you think, sir," replied she, "that I ought not to delay that act?"

"Though you were in perfect health, madam, I should answer, yes, undoubtedly," said I, with eagerness.

"Then I may as well do it now, when I am only slightly ailing," answered she, recovering, in a moment, from the slight uneasiness I had caused her; "yet, somehow or other, I am so filled with the spirit of life—so young—I mean comparatively—with so many years before me—with such a gay world around me, that I cannot help laughing at making a will. I must put on spectacles, I presume, when I sign it, and look grave and antiquated. Ha! ha! Well, I shall send for old parchment Jenkins in the evening; and, as I would wish you to be present at the execution, I will thank you to make your visit to me in the evening to-morrow. Old Goosequill and you may partake of a glass of my burgundy, vintage '94, on the head of the young widow's settlement."

"I shall attend, madam," said I; "and, if you please, I shall send Mr Jenkins to you just now as I pass."

She eyed me somewhat closely again; but the feeling flew off.

"Do so—do so," she replied, and I left her.

As I proceeded out to the main door, I passed the small room where Louisa Milford still sat, with the effect of the extraordinary scene that had taken place between her and the young man called Stanford, pressing on her bosom. I stood a moment, and heard distinctly her deep sobs and stifled moans. Her sentiments were beautiful, her conduct noble: she would sacrifice twenty thousand pounds to avoid giving the aunt she loved a moment's uneasiness; and she had resisted the impassioned importunities of a lover, who was suspended between beggary and affluence, and who had adroitly addressed himself to the young heart of love, as well as to the immature judgment of youth. I had no liberty to say one word to her of her aunt's intentions; yet I had, for some time, resolved to communicate to her the true state of her relative's health, with an injunction to keep the fearful nature of the disease a secret from the patient. I knocked at the door, and was requested to walk in. She was hurriedly occupied in drying up her tears, and removing the signs of grief.

"You have been weeping, Miss Milford," I said; "is it for your aunt?"

"Forbid that I should require to weep for her!" she cried, starting, as if stung with pain. "I cannot bear the idea of that woman being in danger. I have watched your eye daily, and have read in it fearful things; but I will comfort her; she shall never know that there is danger near. I will ward off the sad thought; and oh, sir! for, mercy's sake, co-operate with me in my love, while you try to save her from the danger the thought of which she shall never know!"

The remembrance of what had passed, a few minutes before, between her and her lover, brought out the full

effect of the purity of thought that dictated her impassioned words. I surveyed her, for a moment, with admiration.

"I did not think my *professional* eye was so easily read, Miss Milford," I replied. "You have read it correctly. Your aunt cannot live. I have thought it my duty to inform you of this. Her complaint is in the region of the heart, and she will likely die in an instant."

She stood, for a moment, pale and motionless, as if her heart had suddenly ceased its functions. A slow heaving of the bosom shewed the approach of a paroxysm of grief; and I trembled lest the sounds should reach the patient's room. I pointed in the direction, silently. She understood me; and the strongest workings of nature were overcome, by the strength of her fear to cause pain to her she loved. She struggled against the rising passion, and, turning to me, fell suddenly at my feet, and held up her clasped hands in the direction of my countenance.

"And you will not tell her!" she cried, while struggling sobs impeded her speech; "no, no, pity demands it, and I pray for it—let her live in the hope of life! Say, good sir, for heaven's sake, that you will conceal it from her, and from all others—none shall know it from me—I will die rather than divulge it. She will thus be happy to the end. She requires no preparation—she is spotless—pure as the child unborn; and as she has lived, so shall she die!"

"It is not my intention to communicate it to her," replied I.

"Ah! thanks, thanks, good sir," she replied, in the same impassioned voice; "Bless you—bless you!"

"But this ignorance, Miss Milford," said I, "prevents a settlement of a patient's worldly affairs."

"If that settlement, in the case of my aunt," replied she, fervently, and turning up her eyes to heaven, "is to be purchased by one moment of pain to her, let Augustus Germain take all."

"Extraordinary sentiment!" muttered I—"extraordinary being!" I left her to her grief, and proceeded to the attorney's house. He was at home, and promised to wait on Mrs Germain that day. He called afterwards, and told me that the will would be ready next evening at seven, when I was requested to attend to witness it, along with him. I attended accordingly. The lady was in her usual state of spirits. She sat up on the couch, arrayed in a superb undress. Miss Milford was not present. I observed her in her own room, as I passed, with Stanford sitting by her, holding one of her hands. The attorney, and one of his clerks, and myself, were the only persons present besides the invalid.

"I am dying to hear a will, Mr Jenkins," said the patient, laughing. "I don't think I ever heard one in my life; for my husband's settlement was a contract of marriage, and I fear there is *some* difference between the two papers."

Mr Jenkins read the settlement.

"Will you not allow me a glass of wine, Doctor?" resumed the invalid, in the same strain. "It may steady my hand. I declare I am as nervous as a young bride."

I poured out a glass of her old burgundy, and gave it to her.

"Here is to my own health first!" said she—"for, you know, I'm an invalid; and, secondly, here is to you all, and may you never be worse than I am until you come to die!"

She took up the pen and began to write her name. I looked over her shoulder. She had written Margaret Germ—and the pen was quivering in her hand. She uttered a scream, and fell back—a corpse. In an instant, Louisa and Stanford rushed into the room.

"Is she dead?" cried the attorney. "The will is not signed. It wants three letters. It is useless."

"She is gone," replied I, "for ever."

Louisa threw herself upon the body of her aunt. Stanford looked on like a statue of marble. The scene was heart-rending; for the devoted girl clung with such force to the dead body, that it was with difficulty I could get her detached. The loss of the £20,000 was to her nothing. She did not even hear—at least she understood not the writer, when he cried out that the will wanted three letters, and was void. Her whole soul was occupied with the engrossing idea that her aunt was dead; yet so painful was the thought, that she could not bear to hear the truth, and cried with a loud voice on the dead body to answer her with one word of consolation. All this time, Stanford fixed his eye on the fragment of the name to the will. The three letters were worth a fortune.

"Heavens!" I heard him mutter—"is it so? Are my fears realized, and in this dreadful form? Hope on the very brink of being realized, swallowed by the fell demon of despair!"

Louisa was carried out senseless, and Stanford rushed out of the room like a maniac. The dead body was spread out; the will was rolled up in a scroll; the writer went away; and I sought home with eyes filled with tears.

I afterwards learned that the brother came in as heir. Louisa was, indeed, a beggar; but Stanford married her. They are yet poor, and may remain so for life.

CHAP. X.—THE GLASS BACK.

I HAVE already laid before the public one well-authenticated case, of a false conception of identity, arising from the disease called hypochondria. In that case as well as in most of the others generally met with, the supposed change of identity that takes place is complete, extending to the whole body, which is imagined to pass into a new form of being, different from man, and often into a piece of matter not imbued with life or motion at all. Of this latter case, by far the best known transmutation is that into some very brittle commodity, such as glass; and this is not to be wondered at, even amidst the darkness of our ignorance of the secret workings of those extraordinary changes which seem to shame even the invention of Ovid; for the idea or fantasy, in that case, is only a peculiar type of the feeling of the nervous apprehension or terror, which is the peculiar pathognomonic symptom of the disease itself. It is not difficult to suppose that, when the heart is filled with fear of personal injury, and yet the eye surveys no cause of danger, the mind itself will supply imaginary causes—and this accordingly we find to be the case; neither does it seem to defy our *a priori* conceptions, that, while imaginary objects of detrimental efficacy shall be conjured up from the depths of a dark fancy, a corresponding notion of peculiar brittleness in the body itself shall be generated, to give plausibility to the pre-existing apprehension of serious evil. Indeed, the two seem to be counterparts of each other; and we have only to proceed a step further, to the species of brittleness or liability to detriment, to come to that extraordinary conception, which almost every doctor of extensive practice has witnessed once or twice in his life—that the body is composed of glass, and therefore in continual danger of being cracked or broken to pieces, from the appulse of objects that are every day impinging upon us without doing us any harm. The frequency of the "glass man" is therefore not a matter of very great wonder to a philosophical mind, after the casual condition of the change is admitted. The case has so often occurred, that it now excites little curiosity; but I question much, if the case of a fancied *partial* transmutation of the flesh into glass, may not, as well from its rarity as its grotesqueness, claim a greater share of interest from the faculty, and from the general reader; and when I

state, that the instance I have to record was witnessed and studied by myself, with a view to the interests of science—a fact of much importance in all reports of extraordinary positions of human nature—I need say no more in recommendation of it to the attention of the public.

The unhappy subject of the case was a poor man, called Patrick G—, by trade a tailor—a profession, by the way, which is more productive of hypochondria than any other with which I am acquainted, arising, doubtless, from the sedentary habits of the individuals, combined with their irregular modes of living. I have always noticed a peculiar *outré* character in the ideas and feelings of people inclined to hypochondria; and those who have been permitted to enter the *penetralia* of the workshop, where the *board* is covered with these unfortunate beings, will justify the remark, by their experience of the strange sayings, grotesque art, and recondite humour, to be found in the peculiar atmosphere of that temple of taste. I make this allusion, of course, with a scientific view, as elucidating a fine point in psychology, and not in the slightest degree influenced by a love of the mere garbage of the food of an ill-timed curiosity. The peculiarity of thought and feeling, incidental to this class, might easily have been discovered in the individual who was so unfortunate as to require my aid; and all his physical appearances would have justified the anticipation of the peculiarity, before he opened his mouth. His complexion was so decidedly what we call *saturine*, that it approached to the colour of green. He was at all times excessively irritable, so much so that he was often attacked with spasmodic affections; and at these times he was so easily acted upon by slight and trifling external causes, that his wife, a very sober and decent woman, required to observe the greatest caution in conducting those affairs of her domestic establishment which interfered with either his mind or body. If he was not in this state of irritability, he was sure to be under the power of an extreme rigidity of solids, and torpor of the nervous system, accompanied by their usual concomitant of melancholy, which suggested even a *bizarrerie* of thought quite different from that of ordinary men. I thought the seat of his disease was the spleen, in consequence of finding an enlargement of that organ; but I afterwards came to be satisfied that his liver, too, was deranged—an opinion very well justified by what afterwards befel him.

The symptoms I have mentioned continued in the man for a period of a year and a half; but an aggravation of them became soon thereafter apparent, in a very marked increase of his melancholy, accompanied by a shaking nervousness on being approached by any heavy article, subject to movement. When forced out by his wife for the benefit of his health, he kept the side of the wall, shook at the risk of a jostle, as if a push or drive would have killed him, and ran into closes and avenues to be out of the reach of carriages that were steadily keeping the middle of the highroad. I have observed these symptoms (to us well known) in very aggravated diseases of the stomach, without very marked derangement of the neighbouring organs; and calmed the fears of his wife, by stating that they would probably abate, as the medicines I gave him (chiefly tonics) began to operate upon his system. I had, notwithstanding, all my fears that a deeper type of hypochondria was on the eve of exhibiting itself—an opinion formed chiefly from the study of his eye, which was getting daily heavier and gloomier, more turned to the angle of the orbit, and filled with morbid terror, on the approach of any moving thing, however innocuous. To test further the truth of my deduction, I gave him a gentle push aside, and observed that he shrank as if he had been stung by an adder, retreating back from me, and eyeing me with suspicion and dread, as if I had been about to kill him. He was now, I suspected, on the eve

of falling into one of two positions, depending upon the temperament of his mind. He would either (as happens with people of an imaginative turn) create fanciful objects of fear that might do him bodily injury, retaining his conception of personal identity unimpaired, or he would pass into the false conviction of being made of some tender substance, capable of being injured by the approach of external objects, but retaining otherwise his conceptions of external things entire—a result more common to minds of a sedate, phlegmatic kind.

My fears turned out too true. The next time I visited him, I was met by his wife in the passage, who said she wished to speak a few words to me before I entered. She whispered that she feared her husband had entirely lost his senses—for that, on the day previous, he had gone to bed, where he had lain ever since in the same position—*on his face*; and yet, so far as she could ascertain, there was nothing the matter with his back. When she asked him why he lay in that extraordinary position, he turned up a piteous eye in her face, and replied, with a sigh that came from the deepest part of his chest, that she would know that soon enough, requesting her, for the sake of heaven's mercy and a wife's love, not to touch him, and to keep the bed-clothes as light upon him as it was ever, ever in her power to do. I could not, even by the power of anticipation, derived from an ample experience of diseases of this sort, divine the peculiarity of this patient's complaint; but I was soon to have sufficient evidence to unravel the mystery.

On going forward to him, I observed that he was carefully laid on his face, with just so much of his left eye exposed as to serve for a watch over his body, and exhibit the apprehension which filled his soul, and engrossed every other feeling.

"Why in this position?" said I. "The back is the resting-place of patients. Turn, and you will experience the truth of what I say."

"Turn!—oh, that I could!" said he; "but, alas, alas! I dare not, I dare not." And he accompanied his words with a peculiar nervous glance, indicating great uneasiness and fear.

"Why?" rejoined I.

Ah, sir," he cried, in a choking voice, "I must keep this side uppermost. Glass is brittle, very brittle. I dare not turn; the crash—ay, sir, the crash—would be tremendous. I would be in a hundred pieces in a moment. Dreadful thought!—Do not touch me, for heaven's sake! approach me not. It is brittle, brittle—ah, very, very brittle!"

These words he accompanied with the same glance of intense fear. I saw at once where the secret lay; but the poor wife stared with glaring eyes, as if she had seen a spectre. She understood nothing; but she watched her husband's eye, and she had never seen there such a wild light before. Argument in such cases is altogether *hors d'œuvre*, or rather it does much injury, and my course lay in a direction entirely opposite. I had first the precise vitreous locality to discover which could be done only by an expression of belief of his extraordinary condition.

"Calm yourself," said I,—"we will deal with you quietly. Which is the dangerous part?" I laid my hand between his shoulders, and the bed-clothes shook with the tremor of his limbs.

"I never can sit more upon this earth,"* he cried, and then paused and sighed. "My occupation's gone," he continued, in the same trembling, choking voice. "Merciful powers! what is to become of one of my profession, if he cannot sit without a crash? Do I not make my bread sitting? and yet, sir, I put it to you—I put it to you who know

the strength of a window pane—how can I sit? how can I ever earn a livelihood for that weeping wife? Terrible! terrible!"

His wife, still at a loss for an explanation, looked into my face, where she saw the gravity of a philosophic doctor contemplating one of the miseries of his fellow-creatures and, besides, interested scientifically in the case before him—one of partial vitrification, where the seat of the fancied transmutation was curiously connected with the prior habits of the individual. The case was serious; and, though I did not wish, by an expression of my real apprehensions, to frighten the poor woman, I could not belie my feelings, by assuming any appearance of carelessness, far less of levity, which I did not in sincerity feel. I could do nothing for the invalid in the position in which he now was, and left him, to consider what plan I should fall upon to dispossess him of this false belief, which, with all the determination and perversity of his complaint, had taken a firm hold of his mind.

Next morning, the patient's wife called upon me, and stated that she had got alarmed at the state of her husband, in consequence of his extraordinary conduct when she endeavoured to get his couch spread up for their night's repose. On taking hold of him, though she did it in the gentlest manner possible, with a view to assist him out of the bed, he screamed out, that she was breaking him to fragments, with such vociferation that the neighbours flocked in, to ascertain what was the cause. She could give no proper explanation; for, although she had already got some insight into the nature of the disease, she felt ashamed to exhibit the weakness of her husband; but he, who felt no delicacy on the subject, accused her, with tears in his eyes, of an intention to break him into pieces; called her a cruel woman, and appealed to several of those present whether it was reasonable to suppose that a person who had a part of his body made of glass could be safely handled in the rough manner in which the careless and temerarious woman had begun to touch and move him from the only safe position he could ever enjoy on earth. The poor woman wept as she told me that his speech was received by the neighbours with a loud laugh. I sympathized with her, and told her, with much grave and real sincerity, that I would do everything I could for her husband; and, in the meantime, recommended her again to try to get him out of bed by the hour of twelve, when I would call and see him, and try some remedy for him.

I called accordingly, but found that the wife's efforts had proved unavailing: he was still in bed on his face, and murmuring strong and bitter reproaches against his helpmate, whom he eyed with an expression of mixed anger and terror.

"Is it not horrible, sir," he vociferated, "that a woman should attempt to take the life of her husband? Say, as a Christian and a man, if I ought not to be handled in a manner suitable to the nature of the substance of which a part of my body is composed? Heavens! 'tis dreadful to be damaged irretrievably by the hands of one who should treat me more softly than others. Ha! my queen, you wish to get quit of me!—but I shall guard the vital and brittle parts from your evil intention. My hands and arms are still of flesh and blood."

I tried to convince him that his wife had no evil intention towards him; but he continued to throw at her wild glances, in which there was apparent, however, much more terror than anger. I tried him on the question of rising; but he fixed his eye upon my face with a piteous expression, and said, in a calm, serious tone—

"Would you, sir, rise if you were in my position, with the danger staring you in the face of being crushed or broken by the first hard substance you came against. What would be my consolation in having the most im-

* A case of this kind occurred also in or near the Town of Dundee in Scotland, where the glass was limited to the same regions—below the lumbar.

portant part of the body—at least to some of my profession—picked up in fragments, and laid in my coffin?”

“Better run the risk of being damaged,” said I, seriously, “than starve in your bed. Your wife says you have work lying to do, and that there is no money in the house.”

This statement produced a strong effect upon him. He shook between the horns of the dilemma in which he was placed, and threw a look at me, which said plainly—“Is not my situation horrible and heart-rending?” But I retained the sternness of my expression, and yielded him no sympathy where I felt it to be my duty to use severity. I thought it better to leave him in this mood, and took my leave. I had made the statement regarding the necessity of working, at random, and was very well pleased to have it confirmed by Mrs G——, who followed me to the door, and told me that she was, indeed, in great perplexity, in consequence of a large order for mournings having come in that morning, and the two apprentices could do absolutely nothing to it. The case was one of domestic calamity, which I could do little to ameliorate, beyond giving another recommendation to her to strain every effort to get him up.

Something occurred to prevent me calling next day; but, on the next day after, I waited upon my unhappy patient. The bed was empty. I looked round, and saw no one in the apartment. I was surprised, and dreaded some additional misfortune; but Mrs G——, who came out of the small room in which her husband wrought, stepped cautiously up to me, and whispered in my ear, that he had that morning got up, with the determination to commence work; but that he was still under the same delusion. “Come here,” she added, retreating softly to the workshop. I followed her; and, at her desire, directed my eye through a small opening by the side of the door, which was partially open. A most extraordinary sight was exhibited to me. Two apprentices were sitting on a board, working fiercely at the mournings, and holding their heads down, as I thought, to prevent their cruel laughter from being seen by their unfortunate master, who was clearly the cause of their ill-timed and mischievous merriment. At a little distance from them, with his back turned to the wall, was my pale and emaciated patient, busy sewing—*on his feet!*

“Is not that a dreadful sight, sir?” whispered Mrs G—— in my ear, with a woful countenance. “He has stood in that awful position since six o’clock this morning. He can come no speed; and see you how his apprentices are biting their lips, and holding down their heads, to conceal their merriment?”

I was too much occupied studying the motions and appearance of the invalid, to reply to the statement of his wife. He was standing in such a situation that no one could get behind him. There was a deep melancholy over his countenance, which was grotesquely relieved by the nervous light of his grey twinkling eye, as he lifted it at times from the piece of cloth he was busy with, and threw it fearfully in the direction of the apprentices, as if he watched their motions. It was clear that he laboured under an apprehension that some effort would be made to get him to sit, and that he was *mordicus*, determined that he would not be broken and immolated in that way—from all which I was satisfied that his wife, or some other person, had been already that day making some attempt upon him to get him to sit down, and thus roused him to the state in which I now saw him. He looked as if he felt the truth of the motto, *nusquam tuta fides*. He had faith in none, and was on the quick watch to guard and save himself. The sight was undoubtedly an interesting one, in more respects than as a scientific study of one strange phase of human nature; but the only feature in it that surprised me was, that the patient was working with so much ardour—because lethargy, with a total prostration

of spirit, is the prevailing symptom of the disease. I could only account for this anomaly, by supposing that the old excitement of a job of mournings had, for a time, overcome the depressing energies of his complaint.

I had meditated a curative process to be applied when he got out of bed; but he was now evidently too much on the quick alert from his alarm, for its application at that time—his studied proximity to the wall excluding all hope of getting behind him; and I augured, besides, some relief from his application to business. I therefore told Mrs G—— that it would be improper to rouse his fears farther by any unsuccessful attempt at dislodging, from his addled brain, his false belief, and that I would call next day, when his confidence in those around him might, in some measure, be restored.

On my calling next day at the same hour, Mrs G—— informed me that he had continued working on his feet for the greater part of the preceding day—turning himself fearfully round when he required to move, so as to keep the supposed brittle region out of the reach of all danger; when he retired to bed, he had laid himself on his face; and he was again working assiduously, in a standing position, in the same way as when I saw him last. I again applied myself to the opening, and satisfied myself that the statement I had received was correct. The scene presented all the extraordinary features—the same standing position, cadaverous face, and nervous, watchful eye in the patient, and the same look of mystery, wonder, and repressed risibility on the part of the apprentices. I opened the door, and entered, requesting Mrs G—— to bring me a chair, on which I sat down right opposite to the patient, who, almost simultaneously with these movements, retreated back, and, coming in contact with the wall of the room, uttered a sudden scream of fear, and again resumed his position. His wife looked at him with pity and affection; but the rebellious apprentices broke forth into a cachinnation, which I instantly repressed by a look, which conveyed a serious reproof, as sincere as it was strong and stern. I proceeded to endeavour to acquire his confidence; but he exhibited great shyness, and kept up a studied system of eyeing me askant, placing his back as near to the wall as he thought consistent with his safety, and keeping a sharp look-out for intruders in that direction. To my inquiry how he felt, he replied, peevishly, that he was so utterly beyond the powers of medicine, that he did not see the use of my visits.

“Heaven help me!” he ejaculated; “I am safe nowhere but in my bed. No necessity will draw me from it, if I’m once there again. My ungrateful wife may starve. I will turn off these rebellious, unfeeling scoundrels. I am surrounded by enemies, murderers, who would laugh if they saw me cracked in a thousand pieces. They gloat on my screams, as they take every opportunity to pass behind me and jostle me. Better be dashed at once like a potsherd among stones, than exposed to this horrible state of eternal apprehension.”

“You nourish vain fears,” replied I. “Why not try to sit and compose yourself?”

“Ha! ha! ha!” he cried, with a shrill, sardonic movement of his lungs—“sit on a glass globe!—ha! ha!—all enemies together—murderers all—it is not three hours yet since that woman placed a chair for me, and one of these unfeeling ruffians asked me, with a sneaking, whining sympathy, to take my place on the board, while his ears were tingling for the crash. I’ll swear a lawburrows against you all—every mother’s son of you.”

“You may at least try to sit,” said I, calmly rising from the chair—a movement that operated upon him like magnetism—making him throw down the cloth he held in his hand, recoil still farther back, and scream again, loud and shrill.

I made a step forwards to him, which roused his fears still higher; for he was clearly possessed with the idea that I was to force him to sit, or to press him against the wall, and thus shatter him to pieces. The one mode of destruction was just as fearful as the other; and, as I took another step nearer him, he raised a yell that made the whole house ring; and, changing his position, with his back still to the wall, he glided swiftly aside, and seemed, by the furtive glance of his terror-struck eye, to wish to make for the door—which, however, was guarded by his wife. By this time, the two young men had started to their feet, so that he was surrounded by foes on every side; and, as the utter desperation of his case thus seemed to increase, he became more and more terrified—repeating his screams at shorter intervals, and placing himself, with a caution which, in his excited state, had a strange appearance, closer and closer to the wall. The sight was a grievous one to his wife, and far from an agreeable one to myself; but the apprentices—probably from a spirit of retaliation roused by a memory of former inflictions—enjoyed it with a cruel delight. Having thus far roused his terror, I thought it prudent not to stop short in an operation which, at whatever time performed, must necessarily be attended with all the pain he now suffered; and, throwing out a signal to one of the young men to stand by the chair, and to the other to come to my side, I made boldly towards him; and, notwithstanding of his heart-rending screams and looks for pity, seized him by one arm, while the other was willingly laid hold of by my assistant.

At this period of the operation, I was rather impudently addressed by Mrs G—, whose feelings—for she was an irritable creature, and distractedly fond of her husband—overcame her.

“For heaven’s sake, let him alone!” she cried. “The neighbours will think we are in reality murdering him. His screams go to my heart, and I cannot stand these wild looks. Heaven pity my unfortunate husband!”

“I am only performing my professional duty,” I replied, loudly, to make myself heard in the midst of his screams. “You called me to him; and, if you really wish it, I will leave him to his fate. No man of his profession can do any good in the world by working on his legs. The disease is deep rooted, and can only be overcome by strong remedies. I think I will cure him; and, if you stop us in the operation, the consequences will be entirely attributable to yourself.”

I spoke at this length with the view, purposely, of keeping the patient for some time in the high state of terror to which he was roused; because I was satisfied that, in proportion to the height of his apprehension, was the chance of benefit to result from my expedient for curing him. The woman saw the affair in its proper light; and, though still greatly moved by his screams and pitiful looks, she forbore further entreaty or interference. The apprentices, meanwhile, were all alive and ready for action, expressing, by their eloquent leers, which I could not repress, their pleasure in thus having an opportunity—such is human nature—of repaying their taskmaster for his severity, as well as of witnessing one of the most curious operations they had ever heard of. All this time, the patient continued his screams—having, at intervals, recourse to exclamatory expostulation.

“Cruel fiends!” he cried, “will you dash me to pieces? Will nothing less serve you than to see a poor harmless being, who never injured one of you, reduced to atoms? And you too, hard-hearted wretch, whose duty it is to protect me, stand there a witness of my destruction! Unheard of misery, to have the tenement of an immortal soul reduced to particles no bigger than a farthing!”

We proceeded to drag him forwards in spite of a resistance strengthened by the energy of terror and despair; and,

heedless of his cries of “Save me, save me!—death, death in any form but being dashed to shivers!” Having brought him to the chair, the back of which was held firmly by the other apprentice, we turned him round so as to make the bottom of it (composed of hard wood) as fair a mark as our eyes could judge. He was now, as he thought, on the brink of utter extermination; and I was afraid that the terror might have the effect on him, which I have noticed in criminals at the moment when the fatal drop is to fall, and, by inducing a fit of syncope, destroy all our labours. It was, however, otherwise, though I never saw a patient on the eve of undergoing the amputation of a limb, in such a condition of terror and agony. We were bound to disregard all this; and, having made my assistant understand that it was necessary to lift him, (for a simple seating without a fall, I was satisfied, would do no good,) we raised him a foot or two, by the application of considerable strength, and let him down upon the bottom of the chair, with a crash. A louder scream than he had yet uttered, announced his fancied death-blow.

“I am murdered! it is all over now!” he ejaculated, with a gasp, while his hands were busy groping about, to feel the pieces of broken glass, which must necessarily be scattered in every direction.

This operation, on his part, I wished to encourage, and liberated his arms, to give him greater scope, while we continued to hold him firmly down on the chair, till we satisfied him that he had received, and could receive, no injury, from pressing upon it with all the weight of his attenuated and sickly body. His groping was accompanied by a trembling that shook all his system; and I saw his terror-struck eye wavering on the pivot of doubt, whether it might be inclined downwards to witness the wreck of his shivered body. Deep convulsive sobs, the result of the restrained breath, broke from him in strange sounds, mixed with the groans of one who thought himself in the firm grasp of death. At length he ventured to add the testimony of his eyes to that of his hands; and when he found that there were no pieces of glass lying about the chair and floor, he turned up the panic-struck orbs in my face, with an expression of mixed wonder and terror that, to any one but myself, acting in a serious medical capacity, would have appeared ludicrous to an extent infringing upon the diaphragm. As we held him firmly down, in spite of his efforts to bound up, the false conviction, so firmly fixed in his brain, was apparently suffering a silent progress of qualification; and the difficulty of reconciling the belief within, with the actual state of safety without, was drawing him to the favourable condition of doubt, from which we might augur benefit. As the old conviction rose, at intervals, more strongly on him, his hands were again busy to ascertain the actual state of safety of his body; then his eye sought my face for an assurance in favour of the evidence of touch, and he was for a moment reconciled; again the false conception seized him, again he groped, and felt, and looked, and thus was he precipitated into a state of perplexity, from which he could not get himself disentangled, but from which he might ultimately, as I hoped, rise into a natural belief.

“Where are your smashed glass organs now?” said I. He could reply nothing; but turned up his eye, filled with wonder and doubt, in my face. “You have been labouring under a wretched delusion of the mind. There’s no more glass about you than there is about me—and that is my watch-glass. Are you satisfied?”

“Heaven help me! I know not,” he replied, in a melancholy tone. “I am perplexed. I cannot conceive why I’m not broken. How is it possible I could have stood the shock? Strange!—wonderful!” And he seemed, for a moment, lost in the mist of a confused amazement. This was his medicine, and we allowed it to

work, by still holding him firm in his position. "It cannot be!" he ejaculated quickly, as he emerged from his dream of wonder. "It is impossible! I am damaged! Let me up! let me up!—and you will see the melancholy wreck."

This request was a fair one, and we removed our restraining hands. In a moment he started up, with a bound, to his feet, casting a fearful look on the bottom of the chair, and clasping the supposed brittle region with his hands, to ascertain whether he was in reality uninjured. The laugh of the apprentices, which I had hitherto restrained by my serious looks, now burst forth, in spite of all their efforts; and, averse as I am to such exhibitions of levity in cases of serious ailments, I could not help now looking upon this powerful ridicule as a necessary and salutary ingredient of the medicine administered to him.

"You are all safe, sir," said I; "not one jot of you injured. I hope to hear no more of your glass. Next time I call, I expect to see you seated at your work, as becomes the decorum of your profession."

I now left him; but I was by no means satisfied that he would not pertinaciously account for his being uninjured, by a recourse to some fallacious reason—such as the strength of the glass—to satisfy his prior conviction; for, before I departed, I saw that his look was as furtive and nervous as before, and his old partiality for the wall was strong within him. My anticipations were too well founded; for I ascertained, next morning, that he was not cured. He had given up work, and betaken himself to bed, where he had gradually relapsed into his old belief—accounting for his entireness by the strength alone of the crystal. I told the woman to call again, and tell me when he ventured up, and I would essay another experiment, which might turn out more successful. Three days passed before I received the announcement, that he had again betaken himself to work on his legs. I lost no time in getting two assistants who could work better to my plan than my former coadjutors, and went to the house. It was the dinner hour of his apprentices, and I had arrived in the opportune moment when the door, which had been bolted all day, to keep me and others out, was still open, after the exit of the workmen. I went, with the assistants, straight in upon him, and got a chair handed to me, precisely as on the former occasion. I soon saw that he was still under the influence of the delusive fiend that had usurped the seat of reason.

"I am determined," said I, resolutely, "to break this brittle appendage. I have made my calculations, and am satisfied that I can smash it and remove it without injury to the vital organs that lie within it. It is, I am satisfied, a mere glass covering, without the slightest connection, in an organic view, with the parts beyond it. Fear not when you hear the crash; for I pledge myself you will thank me for the operation after it is performed."

"No, no!" he vociferated with screams; "I shall die, inevitably perish, if it is broken. You may as well break my head to pieces with an axe, and say that, because my heart will remain untouched, I will live. Oh, for the love of heaven, have mercy on me!"

His screams and exclamations produced no effect upon us. We proceeded to take off a part of his garments, and led him, in spite of the most determined and tortuous struggles, to the chair.

"We must break it thoroughly," said I. "Lift him up as high as possible."

My assistant obeyed my directions; and, having raised him as high as our strength would permit, we brought him down with a hard crash, as formerly, on the chair, at the very moment that my other assistant dashed, with great force, on the floor, a large glass globular bottle, which he had, by my desire, brought with him for the purpose. The

crash was tremendous, and rung in the victim's ear like a death-knell.

"Pick me up—pick me up!" cried the patient. "I'm all in atoms. You would not believe me once that I was made in these parts of glass. Ah, you see now the melancholy evidence of the fact."

We held him steady, and he rolled his eyes from side to side, surveying the broken fragments of his vitrified substance with symptoms of horror. I noticed the hair on his head rise and stand as stiff as porcupine's quills, and all his body was shaken by tremors that seemed to reach his heart. After allowing the conviction, that the appendage was absolutely broken, to take proper root in his mind—

"You are cured," said I. "The glass lies about you, and your body is entire. I was right in my diagnosis. It is proved—the glass was a mere covering—a species of fourth skin over the epidermis; and, being gone, the natural body is freed from the incumbrance. Rise, and judge for yourself."

These words, with the slow progress of his own mental workings, and, above all, the sound and sight of the glass, wrought wonders. He rose deliberately from his seat—examined himself—looked around him—turned and returned—looked at me and my assistants—at his wife, who came in wondering at the noise and strange appearance of the glass—and at the broken evidence, at once of his disorder and his cure.

"This is most wonderful," he at last ejaculated. "Margaret, woman, look at that; where is your scepticism now, your laughs, and your jeers, and your vain efforts to shake my belief? This may teach you sobriety of thought, and inspire you with confidence in my opinions. I was never deceived in my life. Man never found me wrong; and here is my last victory over the foolish prejudices of all my neighbours."

Saying this, he took a part of the glass, and turned it round in his hand.

"Perfect, pure, brittle glass," he continued. "A pier glass might have been made of it."

"I would rather say a *convex* mirror, Mr G——," said I laughing, contrary to my professional gravity.

"But, doctor," said he, "why were you so hard of belief? It was long ere you would believe me. I have conquered you, too; but, I must confess, you have conquered my disease."

"Yes, I have mastered it at last," said I; "it will never trouble you again. Would you have the goodness to allow me to take a part of the fragments home with me, to put in my museum."

"Most certainly," he replied; "but it's natural that I should have the liberty of retaining a considerable part, to evidence for my sincerity; and to exhibit, as a great natural curiosity, to the world."

This matter was easily arranged. The patient mended from that day. The joy of the relief he had experienced, shot its rays through his heart and system, quickened his blood, and roused his lethargic nerves. His day-dreams vanished, and his nervous fears were replaced by a healthy, firm confidence. He was, last time I saw him, a very healthy person; saw through the glass clearly, and laughed heartily at my ingenuity in overcoming his complaint.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

BAULDY CRABBE.

THERE was a time in our country, and it is not yet forty-five years since, when the two great spirits of democracy and aristocracy rose out of the ensanguined circle of French necromancy, and stalked over the earth, inspiring mankind to speak big words which they did not very well understand, and to deal blows which they could not very well bear. We do not say that the demons are yet laid—for we see them even at this day reddening the eye-balls of friends and foes, and making their hearts swell with patriotic emotions, as if they would again embroil the quiet sons of the earth in the *melée* of political warfare, and set men a-cutting each other's throats for entertaining sentiments which the creatures themselves would require a political schoolmaster to make them thoroughly understand; but these times of agitation are quiet times, in comparison with the boisterous period to which we allude; and those now alive who took a part in the old struggle, cannot look back to the days when citizens viewed each other with suspicion, and when friends were made bitter enemies by abstract speculation, without having reason to felicitate themselves on the improved system of managing these recondite matters now in vogue; for all men may now speak as loud as ever they please on the grand subject of political perfectability. If they get out their bile in a good flaming speech, they can be as good friends with each other (though on opposite sides) as ever; and sedition being, as it were, expelled from the statute-book, the crime of speaking against those in high places has become, not only not punishable, but fashionable. We intend farther to shew the happiness of our times, by a contrast with those gone by, in rescuing from oblivion some incidents that befel honest Archibald Crabbe, otherwise called Bauldy Crabbe, an individual well known to the inhabitants of Edinburgh in the end of last century, and who, if he were now living, would have as much reason to felicitate himself on the demise and interment of sedition, as we ourselves, or any other well-disposed member of the State. This humble individual was nothing but a small shoemaker, occupying a stand at the foot of the Old Fishmarket Close of Edinburgh. Like the rest of his tribe, he was a great lover of St Monday; or, as the tailors call it, "little Sunday." But he was remarkable for two things; and these were, a love of a good joke, and a hearty contempt for all political speculating—deeming that so long as a penny loaf could be got for a penny, men were stark mad to take up their time and political cudgels, and waste their wits, in twining political arguments, which could only serve to hang their worldly prosperity by the neck, if not to bring their own craigs within the loop of the wuddy.

Now, though it may be an humble beginning to a story of great political importance, a love of truth forces us to descend to state, that the one of these peculiarities brought upon the subject of our history all the evils which the other ought in fair justice to have freed him from; and the manner in which this was brought out, will be evolved from the statement. One night when we choose seriously to begin our narrative, Bauldy was busy finishing a pair of dancing shoes for a prim scion of Radicalism, who was going to a

gay marriage party, that was to hold festivity in a house near the Luckenbooths. Though the young prig, whose name we think was Bill Williams, was a customer of Bauldy's, this did not in any degree prevent him from gratifying his two master passions at the expense of the young dabbler in politics; and, as he wrought assiduously, to have the article ready by the hour appointed, he meditated, like Puck himself, on the manner in which he might play off some merry trick on this precocious "friend of the people." As all humour is low, so that of tricks cannot boast of a very high place in the temple of Momus; but we cannot find fault with an aristocratic shoemaker for not being aristocratic in the way in which he gratified his love of fun, and his hatred of Radicals and Radicalism. The hour came, and with it came the victim of Bauldy's scheme. He was dressed after the manner of the times, and particular attention had been bestowed on his head, which was covered with a profusion of curled hair, fresh and odorous from the hands of the barber. Bauldy surveyed him attentively; and, in order to occupy his attention, got him engaged in a flowery oration on the rights of man—a subject which no marriage party on earth could have prevented Bill Williams from expatiating on with all the eloquence of political-club oratory. His auditor seemed to listen; but he was, meanwhile, as busily engaged as man could be in applying to the hat of the orator a goodly supply of his staple article, rosin. The oration was finished, and so was Bauldy's operation. The shoes were fitted, the hat was placed carefully on the frizzed hair, so as not to derange a single curl, and the neophyte strutted away to the dancing hall. If we could portray the prospective views of the *effect* of his appearance, that occupied his mind as he went along, we might greatly enhance, by contrast, the real effect of that appearance itself; but, as we cannot do that, we must be contented with stating that, when he entered the dancing-room, he proceeded to comply with an ordinary custom of the times, which was to step up to the middle of the floor, take off the hat, and bow almost to the ground. So, up he strutted, with a big swelling breast, to the spot, determined to shew off his very best grace, by the style and depth of his bow. He attempted to take off the hat, without which a bow was nothing; but Bauldy's rosin was not to be *done* in that way; the hat stuck like a bur on a hedgehog; he rugged, tugged, and did more than his common best, but still the hat stuck. The people began to titter, and Bill to be ashamed; but to retreat was impossible, to bow *with the hat on* was terrible, and there he stood, for a longer time than ever was occupied by a bow before on earth, twisting, grinning, scraping, and tugging, to the increased amusement of all around. At last, he succeeded, but it was too late for a triumph; and, besides, when the hat *did* come off, it was with a harsh, tearing noise, as if the skin of his head was coming with it; and, to be sure, the noise was not for nothing, for he tore a great part of the frizzed hair with it, and what remained was like the prickles of a porcupine. It was a sad business; the bow was made, but Bill plotted a great deal more revenge than reels on that eventful night.

He went home in deep chagrin, swearing all the way and turning in his mind how he could best execute a successful revenge on the aristocratic snab who had done him

so grievous an injury. We must leave him in that humour, with the promise of telling, by and by, the result of his scheme, to inform the world that Bauldy was sorely grieved, about this time, by a young raw lad of a nephew, called Tom Crabbe, by trade a printer, whose precocity of political talent had already made him a kind of secretary to a society of Friends of the People, of which Bill Williams was also one. All the efforts of Bauldy could not operate in inducing his nephew to renounce his seditious practices. The young man was bit by the rabid teeth of the political monster, Liberty, and was determined to be as mad as his compeers. One evening, he was apprehended, and lodged in jail, under a charge of sedition. Bauldy got the intelligence as he sat at work. His genius for getting a person out of a scrape, was as fertile as that for getting one in. In a moment, he was off to St Mary's Wynd, where he purchased a suit of corduroys, such as are worn by boys—jacket, vest, trousers, a complete set of neophyte's habiliments; and, next morning, Tom's mother entered the jail with her bundle.

In a very short space of time, every trace of manhood was erased from Tom's face, and he had the appearance of a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age, with his all-in-one clothes, his bare neck and breast, the neck of his shirt covering his shoulders, and his long, light, brown hair combed down his back, and shaded equally to each side upon his brow. His mother gazed upon him in astonishment, at the change produced by Bauldy's ingenuity; while, first, a faint blush for his boyish appearance, then a look of conscious security, mantled over his countenance.

"Ah, Tommy!" said the mother, "I wish frae my heart I had ye at hame again, as innocent an' safe as ye was when ye last wore that dress. What will become o' me if anything come owre ye?"

"I have not the smallest fear, mother," replied Tom. "My uncle's plan will save me; all will be as you wish; I feel quite secure that I will speedily be set at large, and resume my former appearance, with a farewell to politics for ever."

She left the jail with a heart distracted between her hopes and fears. Meanwhile, Tom studied his part, and anxiously waited for the officers to take him to be examined by the authorities; nor did he remain long—for, in the course of the forenoon, he was taken to the Sheriff-Clerk's office, where the Sheriff and the Lord Advocate, and several others, were in waiting, to hear and assist in the examination of the democrats—the all-absorbing topic of the time. It were a vain attempt to describe the looks of chagrin and astonishment that were passed from the one to the other, as Tom was ushered into the room. His light leather cap he loutishly never attempted to take from his head, as he was led up to the end of the table by the officers; and there he stood unmoved, affecting a boyish wonder, with his hands stuck into his pockets. The Lord Advocate first broke silence, in an under tone of voice, to the Sheriff:—

"There is surely some mistake here," said he; "this is no proper subject; it will not do to try boys for sedition."

"My Lord," replied the Sheriff, "I am no less astonished than you are, and cannot conceive how we have fallen into this mistake. The democrat's a suckling."

"What is your name, sir?"—(to Tom.)

"Tammy Crabbe, please your Honour," replied Tom.

"How old are you, sir?" was the next question.

"My mither kens. It's in our Bible," was the reply.

"What is your father?" again said the Sheriff.

"I hae nae faither," replied Tom; "he's dead mony lang years syne. I'm a puir orphan."

"Where do you live?" was the next question.

"Wi' my mither," replied Tom.

"Who took you to the meeting?"

"I liked to hear them speaking," responded Tom, "an' gaed mysel"

"Did not you act as secretary to the society?" again asked the Sheriff.

"If writing for them," replied Tom, "is what ye mean, I was their secretary. Few o' them could write themselves." At this point, a pause of a few minutes took place.

"This is a mysterious, awkward business," said the advocate; "I do not see how we can proceed further with this individual. It would bring ridicule upon our whole proceedings, were we to produce him in court, or even keep him in jail with the others. I am of opinion we must send for his parent, and give her an admonition to keep him at home in the evenings, and send him to a trade, if he is not at one already."

"I will do as your Lordship recommends," replied the Sheriff. "Thomas Crabbe, are you at any trade?—Pay attention to what I say, sir," he added—for Tom, to conceal the joy that he feared might appear in his looks, was gazing up to the ceiling at one time, and round the room at another.

"I'm learning to be a printer," replied Tom.

"I fear you will make but an indifferent one," continued the Sheriff, "if you do not pay more attention to your work than you appear to do to what is said to you. Now, sir, let me tell you—I am going to send for your mother, to give her strict charge to keep you from attending any more seditious meetings; and I warn you that, if you are ever brought before us again, you will be severely punished. Officer, let him be kept in a side-room, and his mother sent for."

In a few hours afterwards, Tom was at large, in his mother's house, in his boy's dress, which he feared to put off, and resume his manly attire, till all was quiet. In the evening, Bauldy paid him a visit, when it was resolved that to be out of harm's way, he should set off in the morning for London. None of them could be secure while he was in town, for the investigations were going on, and the trick might become known; so, bidding him adieu, Bauldy returned home, rejoicing in the success of his stratagem.

Now, it happened that, after Bauldy had performed this famous trick upon the authorities, he was engaged to attend the marriage of a cousin at Musselburgh—an occasion of merrymaking he delighted in exceedingly. It was intended to be a species of penny-wedding; but he, as a friend, would be admitted scot-free; and he set about inviting a great number of people who were as fond of the ploy as he was himself. All this came to the ears of his old enemy, Bill Williams, whose affront still *stuck to him* as firmly as ever, and whose ingenuity was stimulated by revenge. What better opportunity could he ever have of getting the aristocrat apprehended for seditious practices? Was he not engaging persons for a "meeting of friends?" and, besides, as the uncle of Tom, was he not liable to suspicion. He knew that, after the dismissal of Tom, the authorities were not satisfied that the stupid-looking boy they had had before them was the real secretary, and, knowing that he had an uncle of the name of Crabbe, they had resolved to keep a strict watch over his actions. So Bill's opportunity was just as favourable as he could wish; and, to make him better prepared, he watched the motions of his enemy. He ascertained that it was agreed to meet in Johnnie Dowie's on the Thursday evening, to make arrangements for the following day; that there they accordingly met, spent a joyous evening, and agreed to meet under the piazzas of the Palace, at two o'clock, and proceed to Musselburgh in company. In their mirth and jollity, they had constituted Bauldy as their preses, addressing their discourse to him as if it had been a formal meeting—gave, with all the honours—"Happiness and success to the meeting of friends in Musselburgh," &c., and unanimously resolved, that the president of the present meeting should preside over that of to-morrow, if their influence and votes could carry him. Bill was all the time seated in the next apartment, where all could be heard. In a moment, he got an officer, and they listened

together. The words—"Preses, meeting of friends," &c., fell upon the ears of the red-collar like music. Here was a secret of importance! He had heard the latter part of the convivial discourse, after the arrangement had been made; but he had heard enough. They again repeated their engagements to attend the meeting of friends at Musselburgh, and to collect at the Palace. The first care of the officer was to ascertain the names of the company from the landlord—the preses he knew from Bill; and, as soon as they had left the house, he went away, rejoicing in his good fortune, and anticipating a reward.

The consequence was, that, next forenoon, as Bauldy sat at his work, with everything on but his coat, putting the finishing hand to a pair of shoes he wished to take home before he left the town, a summary warrant was making out for his apprehension, in the Council-Chamber. He had finished his work, locked his door, and passed out at the foot of the close, when the officer and two of the town-guard entered it. When they reached his door, they found it shut. No answer having been made to their repeated knockings, they inquired at the crowd who stood looking on, for Bauldy, and were immediately told that he had just left the shop with a pair of shoes, and turned down the Cowgate. Away they set in pursuit, and soon overtook their prisoner, just as he had nearly reached the foot of St. Mary's Wynd. Without ceremony, the officer seized him by the collar—"You are my prisoner," he said; "I arrest you in the King's name."

"For what?" asked Bauldy.

"For what?" re-echoed the officer; "for seditious practices, to be sure, you demicraw."

"I'm nae mair a demicraw," replied Bauldy, "than you are."

"Where were ye going just noo in this fine president's dress?" again inquired the man.

"Hame wi' my wark," replied Bauldy.

"I mean," rejoined the other, "after ye had delivered it? Ye seem dressed for an occasion."

"To be sure I am," replied Bauldy, simply. "I'm going to a meeting o' freends in Musselburgh."

"Say nae mair, say nae mair, ye vile demicraw," cried the man; "ye hae confessed as much as may send ye to Botany Bay. Dinna speak to me another word. Keep what ye hae to say, for yer betters."

With this, he stopped Bauldy's mouth, as he was about to reply and explain the object of his visit to Musselburgh; and a sudden alarm coming over his mind at the same time, made the officer's effort an easy one. He feared, naturally, that the share he had taken in his nephew's escape, had been discovered by some means, and was the cause of his present disagreeable situation. His heart sunk with fear, and he trembled like a culprit. The officers had got a prize, and away they stalked with Bauldy to the Council Chamber; an officer on one side, a town-guard soldier on the other, with his bayonet in his hand; and another in the rear. The wondering crowd gathered as they proceeded, anxious to get a glance of the democrat; and, in this manner, was poor Bauldy marched along the street, till they came to the council-room, where he was to await the pleasure of the bailies.

While Bauldy sat thus guarded, his fears began gradually to become less unbearable, and his mind more collected. He resolved to act with the utmost caution, and say as little as he possibly could, lest he might commit himself. He was still satisfied that his crime was his participation in Tom's escape; but he could not conceive how they could have learned anything of his share in that clever metamorphosis, for he had not appeared in it, and there was nothing he had ever said or done to excite suspicion. It was his only assailable point, and there was tolerable ground for alarm. In the middle of his melancholy mus-

ings, the bell was rung, and he was led to the dreaded interview.

There were seated at the council-table several of the magistrates, who had heard of the affair, which had lost none of its importance in passing from one to another. As he entered, many eyes were fixed upon him, in which was strongly expressed fierce, aristocratic anger. The little confidence he had acquired left him, the colour forsook his face, his breathing almost stopped, while his heart fluttered as if it would open his chest by its violence; his mouth became dry and parched, till his saliva had become viscid as glue; his breath felt like a furnace, and his tongue rattled in his mouth like a piece of dried leather. He would have fallen to the ground, had not the officer still had a hold of his collar. Thus he stood, more dead than alive, under the severe scrutiny of those fearful judges; and could hear them make their remarks to each other, unmindful of his feelings or situation.

"Shall we proceed with the examination of the prisoner, or wait the arrival of his Lordship?" said the first bailie.

"In my view of the matter," said the second bailie, "we had better delay until his Lordship's appearance. This is a case of no ordinary importance. Treason, sedition, to end in murder and robbery! Are not these dreadful times, when coblers set up for reformers of the Government? We must take sharp measures with them, or there will soon be an end of all social order. Look to France! my brother magistrates, look to France! Ay, that's the charmed word." And, to prove it, he wrought himself into a fury, struck the table with his clenched fist, and looked grandly around him, as if he had raised the devil.

"Do ye no think the culprit has a swatch o' Robespere in his face?" said the third bailie. "Are ye sure, officer, he has nae weapon about him? Was he searched? He may slay us in an instant!"

"Officer, search his person."

The command was obeyed; the unresisting and stupified Bauldy, during the operation, looking more like a corpse than a living man; but all that was produced was his measuring stick, and the shoes he was in the act of carrying home when he was taken prisoner.

"You say, brother, the prisoner resembles Robertspere?" said the second bailie. "I neither know nor care whom he resembles; but this I know, I never see one of those vile democrats, but I can read villain stamped upon his face. Had I the power, I would deal with them here, as they are dealing with the friends of social order in that accursed country where might is turned into right."

"Things are indeed come to a sad pass," said the third bailie. "I can see nae way o' securing the Government, but by hanging or cutting aff the heads o' some scores o' the wretches. It's my firm belief that there will not be such a dignitary as a bailie in the land, by and by; and I'm sure that would be a terrible state o' affairs."

The convertasion had proceeded thus far, to the amazement and terror of poor Bauldy, when a message arrived, that his Lordship, being particularly engaged, could not attend the examination. It was therefore agreed to proceed forthwith. The first bailie immediately took the chair, and directed the clerk to prepare to write down the questions and answers, as they were put to the prisoner. An awful pause of a few minutes succeeded; but it was not more awful than the thundering words that followed—"Bauldy Crabbe, stand up!" Bauldy had been on his feet since he first entered the room; but, unable to stand upright, he had been leaning with his hands on the table.

"What is your name and designation?" began the first bailie.

"Archy Crabbe, an' please yer Honour," was the answer

"I wish to know from yourself your designation—sir speak out!" was the next question.

"I hae nae *design*," said Bauldy, "but to live at peace wi' a' mankind, please yer Honour."

"No equivocation, sir!" rejoined the questioner. "What is your designation?"

"I hae nae designation I ken o'," was the answer. "I dinna tak ye up, yer Honour."

"Stupid fool!" cried the other. "I ask what is your trade, and where you live—do you understand me now?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Bauldy. "I'm a shoemaker; an' I live near the foot o' the Fishmarket Close."

"Note that down, clerk," said the bailie. "What were you going to do in Musselburgh to-day?"

"I had particular business," answered the prisoner, "which I wad not really wish, on any account, to be absent frae."

"Was it so *very* particular?" said the bailie. "Please to tell us what that business was, that you are so much grieved to be kept from."

"Please yer Honour," said Bauldy, "it is a meeting o' friends."

"Clerk, be particular in noting down his answer," said the bailie. "This is of gigantic importance. He begins to confess. You were to be a leading man at this meeting, I presume."

"I maun fairly confess," answered the prisoner, "I never was a backward member at meetings o' friends. They are the main southers o' society."

"Audacious miscreant!" cried the questioner—"do you glory in such meetings? Clerk, be correct in copying his answer—he would have presided at the Musselburgh meeting, and has attended many such—they are the safety of society. You would" (to Bauldy) "have been a leader, I presume, had any disturbance occurred? No equivocation, sir!—give me a distinct answer to my question."

"There's nae doot o't, yer Honour," replied Bauldy; "had ony disturbance happened, I assure ye I wadna hae been the least active or maist backward in helping an' siding wi' my freends; their quarrel wad be my quarrel; their fecht my fecht."

"Bloody-minded man!" cried the bailie; "would ye have carried the matter even to fighting?"

"An' wha wadna?" replied Bauldy. "I ca' him nae man that wad stand wi' his hands in his pouches, an' see his freends fecht, and no lend a lift to the good cause. But, please yer Honour, may I be sae bauld as to ask for what I am here before you? I am sair at a loss to ken."

"Bold, bloody miscreant!" ejaculated the bailie, angrily; "do ye add folly and affected simplicity to your villany? Know ye not what you have confessed?"

"I hae confessed naething," was the answer, "o' which I need be ashamed. What *hae* I done to cause me to be gripped an' led through the streets o' Edinburgh like a thief?"

"Hold your peace, sir!" said the other. "Do you think that the laws of this great nation are in abeyance, or administered by imbeciles? You have already confessed as much as may hang you."

"Oh, God forbid!" cried Bauldy. "I hae tauld ye the hail truth as it stands. I can see nae harm in the meeting, but much good to the country, which, in my humble opinion, would sune gang to ruin but for thae useful, I may say national occasions."

"Dare you speak sedition even to us, his Majesty's representatives in the council!" cried the third bailie. "You must march back to jail, sir, and abide your trial. Botany Bay will be too good for ye."

"I wish to put a few more questions," added the first bailie, "before he is dismissed to a higher power. Archibald Crabbe, shoemaker, what is your opinion of our happy and glorious constitution, as at present established by law and the wisdom of our ancestors? Answer me that, sir."

Bauldy looked confused and puzzled by the question, and stood silent a few minutes.

"Indeed, an' please yer Honour," at length said he, "I fear ye wadna be pleased were I to gie ye my opinion on the subject. I hae nae words to express what I think even o' ordinary things, far less o' that tremendous subject."

"Clerk," said the bailie, "draw a line beneath this question and the answer—it is of vital importance. So you decline giving your opinion?"

"Because," rejoined Bauldy, "I hae nae words sufficient to express my opinion on the point."

"Enough—enough," rejoined the second bailie. "Base wretch, you are the most hardened fellow I ever saw examined in all my official term of servitude for the welfare of the community; and it has not been a short one. Mark, clerk—he says he wants words to express his opinion of our glorious government."

"What do you think of the present constitution of Parliament, sir?" was the next rapid question.

"Yer Honours surely tak me up wrang," said Bauldy. "I can gie nae answer that seems to please ye; so I think I had better answer nae mair o' yer questions."

"Well," rejoined the questioner, "have you any particular objection to answer my last question? Say direct, yes or no."

"What objection can I hae, please yer Honours?" was the reply; "only, I think, it may not please folk o' your station; but, if ye really wish me to tell ye what is Bauldy Crabbe's notion o' a house o' Parliament, I can hae nae objection to gratify you."

"Well, take it your own way," said the other. "Give us your opinion of the British Parliament."

"I think," said Bauldy, "that the Parliament is a meeting o' Gentiles, wha gang to London to do just what Willie Pitt an' the King wishes them to do."

"Clerk, draw a line beneath this answer," said the bailie. "We require to proceed no further in this examination; it is becoming too serious for us to handle. I propose that a clean copy be made out from the scroll of the examination, and sent to the Lord Advocate, as soon as it is signed by the prisoner."

Bauldy looked on in the utmost surprise at this announcement. In vain, he puzzled his brain in endeavours to comprehend the offence for which he was detained. The only point upon which he felt uneasy, had never been touched upon, and yet he saw himself on the eve of a justiciary trial. At length the clerk read over the whole of the examination, both question and answer, when the first bailie asked if he had any objection to sign it.

"I am no sure if I should," said Bauldy.

"Wherefore, sir?—is it not correct?" said the bailie.

"Please yer Honour, I see naething wrang in it."

"Then why refuse to affix your signature?"

"Merely because I'm feared my handwriting will please ye as ill as my answers appear to hae done," said Bauldy; "for really I'm no gleg at the pen; an' I dinna wish to anger ye mair than I hae already done."

"Will you sign it, or will you not? Say at once, sir."

"Gin ye insist on't, I'll do my best to please ye," said Bauldy; and he signed the examination. "Noo, yer Honour," he added, "that I hae answered a' yer questions, an' done a' ye want, as far as I am able, will ye be pleased to allow me to gang my ways to Musselburgh, to join my freends at the meeting? I assure ye they, as weel as mysel, will be sair disappointed if I ain kept back. A few mair, wha were gaun to join, are waitin me at the Abbey, for company's sake; we were to meet at twa o'clock; it only wants half an hour o' the time; an' the business canna proceed if I'm no there, as I'm, ye see, to be best man."

Before Bauldy had concluded his petition, the third

baillie left the council-room, after a significant signal had passed between him and his colleagues.

"Fellow!" said the first magistrate, "were it possible to be more astonished at anything than I have been at the nonchalance of your answers, it would be at the assurance of your bold request, after signing such a confession as you have now done; but let me tell you that you have a far better chance of visiting Botany Bay than Musselburgh."

He now rang the bell, when the officers entered, to convey Bauldy from the Council-Chamber to the Tolbooth. One of the officers was dragging him from the table, while the other was loosing his hands from it, when the Lord Provost entered, and ordered the officers to retire, as he wished to put a few questions to the prisoner.

After a short conversation with his brother magistrates, he lifted up the scroll of the examination, and read it carefully over. Bauldy looked earnestly in his face, to catch a glimpse of hope, but he could make nothing of it; at length he laid down the paper, and looked Bauldy in the face with a searching gaze.

"My good fellow," said his Lordship, "this is a serious charge against you, I find; it is no less than sedition against his Majesty's government. From these answers to the questions put, you appear to be resolute in your opinions, and not to wish to palliate your intentions. How long has this meeting of friends, as you call it, been in agitation?"

"They hae been speaking about it this long time," replied Bauldy; "but put it off frae day to day, till a' things were ready for the occasion."

"Assuredly they have been very deliberate and circumspect," rejoined the Provost, "in going about it, since it came to our knowledge only this morning."

"Please yer Honour," said Bauldy, "they didna care to hae it mickle spoken o' until they were sure it wadna gang back; and it was, therefore, only whispered among the freends that such a thing wad tak place, if naething unforeseen occurred to prevent it."

"And you, no doubt, knew about it among the first?" said the other.

"I canna say I did," replied Bauldy; "yet I jaloosed that something wad come o' their secret meeting thegither, months ago."

"And, when the day was fixed, you were invited?"

"Just sae, yer Honour."

"There must have been remissness somewhere," rejoined the Provost, "that we never heard of it"—(looking at the other magistrates.) "When was the day fixed?"

"I was invited four days since," said Bauldy, "an' hae been inviting a' I thocht wad gang sin' syne. But time passes, yer Honour; I maun awa. I canna disappoint them," he added, after a pause.

"So far from setting you at liberty, sir," said the other, "your offence is not bailable. It is very strange we never got any notice of such a meeting. Your proceedings must have been very secret."

"I made nae secret o't: why should I, yer Honour?"

"This is to me incomprehensible; there has been gross neglect, that we got no word of it."

"Oh, it never entered my head," cried Bauldy, "that any o' yer Honours wad hae come, or ye wad hae been the first I wad hae asked; an' proud wad we hae been o' yer presence. I beg o' ye no to tak it sae sair amiss: for, if it will make amends for my fault, I invite you a' this very moment."

At this effort of Bauldy to conciliate their favour, the worthy bailies looked upon each other in the utmost surprise; but the pride of the rulers was roused by what they thought consummate impertinence.

"You are either very stupid, man, or affect to be so," said the Provost, "or you would not speak in this manner about an affair of such importance to the State. Are there

any papers you know of belonging to this meeting? Who called it together?"

"My uncle was a principal hand," said Bauldy; "and has done all in his power to make it as respectable as possible. I beg your Honour to let me gang; an' I promise to come back the morn, an' tell ye a' about it."

"Foolish man! it is not in my power," said the Provost. "Answer my question. Are there any books or papers belonging to the meeting that you know of?"

"There are nae books," said Bauldy, "that I ken o', save the session-clerk's; an' I hae the lines in my pocket."

Here the voice of Bauldy was drowned by a tumultuous sound of voices in the Parliament Close, and a great bustling in the narrow entrance to the Council-Chamber. The magistrates became pale with alarm; looked fearfully around them, at each other, as if they wished for some way to make their escape; and Bauldy was equally perplexed. The third baillie rushed into the room, blowing hard, and seemingly much agitated. To add an air of immense importance, he wiped his forehead, and, bowing to the Provost, began, as well as his breath would allow:—

"My Lord, I have the happiness, the honour, and the satisfaction, to say, that I have had this day achieved a deed that few except myself could have accomplished, in the face of such dangers as I have surmounted." (Here he paused, and looked round in triumph, while the noise without was still loud.) "My Lord, I have captured six of the traitors, the associates in crime of this miscreant, in the precincts of the Palace; and, although they did affect surprise at their apprehension, their guilt is just as clear as your Lordship's chain. They all admit that they were on their way to Musselburgh, by appointment of the prisoner before you; and they await your Lordship's pleasure in the outer room, under a portion of the Abbey guard, which I obtained, to assist the civil officers, to prevent a rescue by the furious rabble, who are now yelling without."

A pause ensued, and the pompous baillie stood, with open mouth, to devour the praise he expected from his brethren. Bauldy was the first who broke silence:—

"Wha could ever hae thocht," he cried, "that yer Honours wad hae taen the neglect o' an invitation sae het? Ane would think that bonny Ailie Sim was a king's daughter, an' marrying against her faither's will. Folk say our government is a tyranny; but this coves the gowan."

"Silence, sir, silence!" cried the victorious baillie. "My Lord, order this fellow to be withdrawn, and placed under guard, until the others be examined; it may be necessary for me to convey them to the Castle. I am conscious that it is an affair of gigantic importance to the State."

His Lordship gave the order. Bauldy was removed from the council-room; and William Taylor, a supposed auxiliary, was introduced.

After the usual inquiries. "So you were going to join a meeting at Musselburgh," said the Provost, "along with the others who were taken at the Abbey in your company?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied the man.

"Are you one of the originators of this scheme, or were you invited?"

"I knew nothing of it," said the prisoner, "until yesterday forenoon, when Archy Crabbe persuaded me to go, for a little amusement. We had no idea of anything amiss in going to a wedding."

"A wedding!" ejaculated the Provost; "was it not a seditious meeting—a meeting of friends, as Archibald Crabbe calls it?"

"If I had thought," replied Taylor, "that there was to be quarrelling or sedition either, I would not have agreed to go."

"Ha! ha! my Lord," said the third baillie, "this fellow attempts to deceive us. Archibald Crabbe has con-

fessed everything, sir; so you had better, for your own sake, confess too. It will save trouble."

"My Lord, I have told the truth," said the man, "so far as I know, and have nothing further to confess."

Two others were in turn examined, and gave the same account. The bailies began to look at each other, and blush. The captor of the Abbey conspirators appeared quite sunk, and hung his head. Bauldy was again brought forward to the table; and his Lordship looked first at him, then at the crest-fallen bailies—struggling with the smile that sat upon his face, and striving to smother a laugh.

"So it was a wedding you were going to," said he; "why did you call it a meeting of friends?"

"What else could I ca' it," replied Bauldy, "but a meeting o' friends, to countenance Ailie Sim and her lover?"

"Why did you not say so at once?" replied the Provost, laughing.

"How could I?" replied Bauldy. "I scarce could get in a word, the questions were put sae thick; I was sae misca'ed an' taen up in a wrang sense, that it seemed to be a' the same what I said. To mak amends, however, just let me awa; for, if I'm no there, there will be nae wedding. How can there be, when I hae the marriage-lines in my pouch?"

"Allow me to see them," said the Provost.

Bauldy handed them to his Lordship, who read aloud "the certificate of marriage between Peter Wilson, weaver in Musselburgh, and Alison Sim, spinster there." He could contain himself no longer, but burst into a loud laugh. The third bailie slipped out of the room; the others, mortified as they were at their mistake, and the failure of a display of their zeal, were yet too much of courtiers not to join in his Lordship's laugh. Bauldy's spirits rose in proportion to his Lordship's mirth; and, after a short time spent in consultation, he and his friends were dismissed, upon their own recognisances to appear when called upon.

It was now past three o'clock in the afternoon; but the companions still resolved to enjoy themselves, though it were only to make themselves amends for their late alarm. They reached the scene of their intended enjoyments, after the marriage party had almost given up all hopes of their arrival. A messenger had actually been dispatched to ascertain the cause of delay, and (if Bauldy could not attend) to procure the marriage lines from him, which the bridegroom had been forced to leave in the session-clerk's hands, for Bauldy to bring out, as he had not, at the time, so much cash upon him as the fees amounted to. Hilarity was now the order of the day. The marriage party set off for the minister's, while the others commenced dancing until their return. The feast began in the greatest harmony. The tables were removed to make room; the dancers, of whom there were never less than three parties on the floor at once, set to work; while the seniors sat at each end of the room, looking on and enjoying the scene, or helping themselves to the liquor which abounded. Bauldy and his friends were the very life of the meeting; they danced and shouted as if nothing had ever occurred in the shape of an apprehension. The enjoyment rose to the highest—all was mirth and glee; but matters were not long to continue in this state—the affair of sedition was not yet finished. The officer who had given the information, had yet continued his inquiries, and, from some of his acquaintances, had learned the name of the place in Musselburgh where Bauldy was to meet with his associates. Engaged after the apprehension, he had not learned that he had been set at liberty; but away off for Musselburgh, with all his speed, in hopes of finishing the discovery he had so happily made, in such a manner as would give him a claim upon the authorities, and rear for him a character for sagacity and vigilance that would make his fortune. With his mind full of these anti-

cipations, he reached Musselburgh about seven o'clock in the evening, and immediately proceeded to the authorities to whom he gave a most alarming account of a meeting of the disaffected that was assembled, or about to assemble, in the ancient town—adding, that he had made the discovery the evening before; that one of the ringleaders had been lodged in the jail of Edinburgh that forenoon; and that the officers were in search of others, whom he hoped to be able to secure, by their assistance, in one or other of the houses on the river side, close by the stone-bridge. The astonishment of the civic rulers, at this astounding information, as important as unlooked for, was immense; and, after putting a few questions to their informant, whose answers tended more and more to urge them to put forth their zeal, the constables were warned out. This was done in the most cautious manner, lest the democrats might get notice and make their escape; for, at this time, politics ran to such a height, and the disaffection to the government was so general, that those in power scarcely knew whom to trust out of their own pale. In a short time, about a dozen of constables were collected, and, with the magistrates and officers at their head, proceeded to disperse the meeting, and seize the principals. It was just upon eight o'clock, when one of the neighbours, who had been down at the town, came in, in great alarm, crying—"Lads, lads, tak care o' yersels!—I hae just passed the pressgang, coming up the water-side in this direction; they'll be on ye in a minute." In a moment, the fiddles stopped; the dancers (for many were seamen) looked at each other, aghast; a scramble for hats ensued; and all the fishermen left the scene of festivity by the back windows, to avoid the press, to which they were liable. War with France had been proclaimed only a few months before, and the pressing of seamen, to man the fleets, had been so very general and severe, that their alarm was well founded. In truth, none of the young men felt secure, and all were endeavouring to conceal themselves and get out of the way, when those at the front of the house were denied egress. A violent battle was meanwhile raging at the back windows between the fishermen and constables, in which it was pretty doubtful who were to be the victors; for the constables, like prudent men, had stationed themselves on the outside of the wall that enclosed the back ground, and contented themselves with preventing the fishermen from climbing over, by pressing them back as they mounted to run off. Two or three rushes had been made, in vain, at the door, by the desperate and dauntless fishermen; but it opened outwards, and was kept shut and guarded by the constables. Matters were in this state in the rear, while no less hostility was manifested in the front of the house. The candles, as a matter of precaution, had all been extinguished; but sufficient light was given by the bright coal-fire, to distinguish a group of females in the centre of the room, in tears and alarm for their sweethearts; while several old men stood around them, doing their best to console and allay their fears. The bride and her mother, with their washing-beetles, stood in the door-way, like two Amazons, backed by several other robust females, armed as they best could, and threatening destruction to the first that dared to enter the house. At length one of the magistrates advanced a little forward:—

"Mary Sim," he said, "I declare, in the King's name, every person at present found in your house my prisoner, and demand admittance at your peril."

"At your peril enter my house," replied the bride, "to lay a finger on any one in it! The man that lays his hand on Peter Wilson, I'll brain wi' this beetle;" (and she raised it above her head;) "he is now my lawful husband, an' a' the pressgangs in Scotland shanna tear him frae his wife. Will our very bailies and townsmen come to press away our men frae us? Shame on ye!—awa, and mind yer ain

business, and leave pressing to them whas trade it is their misfortune to be."

"Force the door!" cried the Edinburgh officer; "we lose time; the traitors may escape."

But scarce were the words out of his mouth, when he got a push in the stomach from one of the females, with the handle of a broom, that laid him sick and sprawling at the feet of the constables. The others drew a step or two further back, and one of the bailies went forward:—

"Mary Sim," said he, "we have not come here to press, but to seize a band of democrats that have met for treasonable purposes in your house. I once more warn you of the danger you incur, by harbouring such a crew. Admit us peaceably, that we may seize upon our prisoners."

"Deil tak the liars!" cried Mary; "there is neither democrow nor uncustomed goods within my door; an', as for the lads an' lasses that were here at Ailie's wedding, they're as decent an' creditable as ony in their station in a' the Lothians. Lay a finger on them, I say, as Simmie said to the deil, and 'I'll fecht ye claw to claw, and deil tak the shortest!' Sae, gang yer ways in peace if ye're a wise man."

The magistrates and constables looked at each other in surprise; then at the Edinburgh officer, who had not yet risen, but was recovering fast, while the females stood firm to their guard, as resolute as lions.

"So it is only a wedding in your house," said the bailie, "and not a political meeting?"

"Is the man demented," replied Mary. "What hae I to do wi' sic things? Ye ken I'm a lone widow woman, wi' only ae dochter, an' this is her marriage nicht, as ony o' the neebors wad hae tauld ye, had ye only had the sense to speer before ye cam we yer king's names to try to fear folk; but, by my faith, ye's no ride on the tap o' yer commission wi' me, bailie."

"My good woman," said the bailie, "if it is as ye say, I am ashamed for disturbing the mirth at your daughter's wedding. I shall make the bride a good present, and now proclaim peace."

"Wi' a' my heart, bailie," replied the sturdy Amazon. "No that I fear ye an' a' yer backing, but peace is better than war at ony time. Licht the candles, lasses."

The cessation of hostilities was proclaimed at the same moment in the back-yard. Bauldy, who had stood close behind the females at the door, either to aid or seize a favourable opportunity to escape, came to the front as they slacked their order of battle, just as the officer had recovered his feet. He recognised his captor of the forenoon, and his choler began to rise; but he was as prudent as irascible, and began to turn in his mind modes of revenge. As soon as an explanation was made, the magistrates and constables turned upon the producer of their awkward predicament, who fain would have slunk away, but was prevented by his fears of the crowd who had gathered around. Forced to stand and listen to the taunts and abuse that were poured upon him from all sides, it was with difficulty that the constables could protect him from the crowd, who attempted to tear him from them, and duck him in the river. His attempts to excuse himself were looked upon as an aggravation; for he now, by his own confession, was both a spy and informer.

This was the moment Bauldy seized for his revenge. He stepped up to the magistrates, and began by stating that he was an inhabitant of Edinburgh, and had seen the person who had played them this scurvy trick, for what purpose he could not conceive, unless to ridicule them; that it was not the first of the kind he had played; for that that very forenoon he, himself, had been taken before the Magistrates of Edinburgh, he believed by his means, and had been nearly thrown into jail, and prevented coming to the wedding; that he had again endeavoured, with their aid, to put a

stop to that; that if they submitted to be made the instruments of any person's private pique or revenge, they were unworthy of their office; and that they would not do their duty to themselves and the public, unless they kept the person in safe custody until they had corresponded with the Magistrates of Edinburgh, whose officer he said he was, though he could not believe he held that responsible character.

The Magistrates applauded Bauldy for his suggestion, by saying it was the manner in which they had resolved to act; and the informer was immediately escorted to jail by a party of the officers, where he got leave to reflect upon his ruined hopes of a rich reward. As soon as he was marched off, the bailies and a few of the constables entered the house. The dancing commenced with, if possible, more life, from the late alarm and interruption. The Magistrates danced with the bride and bride's-maid, and were as jovial as any one present. Before they retired, they collected among them a handsome present for the bride, who, along with her mother, thanked them kindly for their visit, and hoped all bygones would be bygones in time to come.

Soon after they were gone, supper was introduced; after which, one room was set apart for dancing, and the other for singing. Thus the night was spent until far in the following morning, when Bauldy and his Edinburgh companions left the festive scene, and returned home.

Bauldy soon came to the knowledge how well he had been repaid for the rosin he placed upon Bill Williams' hat; but whether or not he took his revenge in turn, history sayeth not.

A LEGEND OF THE PARLIAMENT CLOSE.

A FEW years after the accession of George III. to the throne, when Edinburgh was still contained within its ancient walls, the inhabitants retained their ancient simplicity of manners, and every individual was known, in some degree, to his fellow. The Kirk-treasurer, or Treasurer of the Charity Workhouse as he is called now, was a bookseller, and had his shop in the Parliament Square, on the east side, near the President's Stairs. As shopman, he had an interesting young man about seventeen years of age. He was the only son of a widow, a distant relation of one of the ancient and reduced families that abounded in Scotland at that time. A full cousin of his was also shopman or clerk in a clothier's in the High Street; and between the two there existed a friendship and affection almost fraternal. In the month of August—the most pleasant month in the year for an evening walk—the eight o'clock bell had just begun to ring, and the clatter of shutters, preparatory to shutting up for the night, resounded through the Parliament Square. The happy apprentices, with an alacrity they displayed at no other avocation, performed the last operation of the day; for it was the prelude to enjoyments which they could only partake when emancipated from their labour in their small confined workshops or the dingy apartments of the houses of that period. The clock of St Giles had struck the quarter past eight; the whole square had fallen into the stillness of midnight; all but the treasurer's shop was shut and secured; their inmates, even the most dilatory, having left the scenes of their cares or daily toils; and the only person who now was to be seen loitering in the busy scenes of the day, was the town-guard soldier, who mounted guard at the statue of King Charles. Walking backwards and forwards on his allotted ground, he stopped occasionally, to greet some passing acquaintance and exchange snuff with him. And the cousin of the treasurer's clerk, who stood in the foot of the President's Stairs, fretfully knock-

ing one heel against the other, or occasionally moving out slowly past the diminutive shop window, casting a furtive glance into the interior, as if anxious to ascertain what business detained his friend, or who it was that so deeply interested the systematic treasurer, as to detain him five minutes after the hour had struck. All was still within. He could see no individual, even the friend he waited for. He thought it very strange; became anxious and alarmed; and, ceasing to be contented with a passing glance, stood still, and scanned, with a scrutinizing glance, the whole interior of the shop. No human form was visible. The two chairs, by the fireside, were vacant; the master's seat, and a spare one for a friend, stood as if they had not been moved since the morning. What could have happened? Was the door locked? Was his friend gone to the place of appointment without him? He could not suppose it for a moment. He put his hand upon the latch of the door; it yielded to his touch; he opened it, and slowly peered around. No one was within—no alteration could be seen on the premises. He looked behind the counter, and, uttering a cry of horror, was transfixed to the spot where he stood. His beloved friend lay dead before him; the upper part of his body and head in a pool of blood; a Bible still in his hand, which appeared to be the last thing he had touched alive; his arms stretched out before him; and his beautiful yellow hair steeped in gore. A sickness of the heart came over his friend; he would have sunk senseless upon the floor, but, by a nervous effort, he started up, rushed from the spot, almost bereft of consciousness, ran to the guard at the statue, seized him by the arm, and, unable to utter a word, pointed to the spot, and attempted to drag him towards it. Struck by the horror expressed in the youth's countenance, the man hurried with him to the spot, gazed for a moment on the spectacle, and shouted for help.

A crowd of horror-stricken citizens soon assembled. Surgeons were sent for; but the unfortunate victim had been dead for some time. A guard was placed upon the door, to prevent the intrusion of the curious and excited citizens, who all strove to get a peep at the scene of blood and violence. The surgeons, in the meantime, examined the body. A fracture of the skull at the back of the head, caused by a blow, evidently given with the claws of a joiner's hammer, was clearly the cause of death. The premises were searched; no such instrument could be found; but it was ascertained that the strong box that contained the poor's money was gone.

So dreadful an event spread through the great city in an inconceivably short space of time. Deep groans, mixed with the wailings of females, were heard in the Square; the feelings of the crowd, urged to utterance by the arrival of the distracted mother of the youth—her hair dishevelled and floating upon her shoulders; grief and agony depicted upon her venerable face. She urged forward through the dense, but, to her, yielding crowd. She made no answer to the heartfelt words of sympathy addressed to her; her heart was too full to give utterance to her thoughts. Pressing on, she tossed her arms in the air; clutched her greyish locks, tore them out, and scattered them around. Her eyes either wandered eagerly about, as if in search of some object, or were turned to Heaven in silent prayer. She seemed urged on by some involuntary impulse; for she looked not at any one, heeded not over what obstacle she made her way onwards; but, rushing to where the object of all her soul held dear on earth lay a bloody corpse, she entered the shop—she stood for a few moments, pale as the boy who lay lifeless before her; then, uttering one long and piercing shriek, that no one who heard it could ever forget, she sank upon her boy, insensible. The same bearers carried to her house the mother and her murdered son, and the same company attended the funeral of both to the Greyfriars' churchyard.

Every exertion was made by the authorities; rewards were offered for the apprehension of the murderer. Every citizen, high and low, rich and poor, joined in the search for one who had been guilty of the most revolting of all crimes—murder, and the next in guilt, sacrilege; for he had carried off the money of the poor, the farthing of the lone widow, and the silver of the rich, given in the love of God to feed the destitute. But no discovery was made; the guilty wretch lived on unpunished, save by his own unsparing conscience. Nearly twenty years had rolled away, and the event, though not forgot, was only remembered as one of the many traditions of the city.

There lived at the head of the Cowgate an old man, a wealthy master joiner, and an elder of the church, with a numerous family. He had been for some time very poorly and declining in health; a lowness of spirits and restlessness seemed to consume him, and he never left his house. His son, a married man, had conducted the business for several years; all the former acquaintances of the father were denied access to him, nor were any of the neighbours admitted into the house. The circumstance attracted little attention; for many do not choose to allow strangers to see their sick friends; but it was also remarked, that no physician attended the old man, and this excited the remarks of the observant neighbours, who became more watchful than they perhaps would have otherwise been. The children were not favourably thought of, for not having a physician to their father, and their harshness in denying, though civilly, the visits of his acquaintances. The old man's cries and groans were heard night and day, by those who were passing up or down the stair; and the next neighbours, in the still hour of midnight, could hear threats and remonstrances, used to cause him cease the utterance of his cries. They could make out distinctly—"Oh, allow me to confess to any one!—I am lost!—lost!—lost!" This he would repeat, until his voice failed from exhaustion; then, and after a pause, he would shriek—"Oh! what will wash away innocent blood?" These cries caused a great sensation in the neighbourhood, and gave rise to many conjectures. Several of the older inhabitants about the place called to recollection the murder of the youth by a joiner's hammer. They also remembered that he who uttered those cries was, at the time of the murder, a poor man, with a young and numerous family, and, about the time of the murder and robbery, began to mend in his circumstances, and the appearance of his family was altered, much for the better, without any assignable cause. He did not put on the appearance of wealth suddenly, but left off being a journeyman, and became a master, at first in a small way, and gradually extended his business. No one could account for the way he had contrived to become rich in so short a space of time. The conclusion drawn by the neighbours was, that he had been the ruffian who perpetrated the double crime. Whether just or unjust, the conviction became general. Whether he was guilty or not, his own family, by his death-bed confession, if he made one, could only know; but so great was the horror of the man and crime, that his children were the sufferers; for few would hold intercourse with them, or wished to be thought of their acquaintance. Those who were in business, found their employers suddenly desert them; and they were all forced to emigrate from the city to other towns.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE TWO GRAVE-DIGGERS.

WE do not, at this moment, know a more beautifully-situated churchyard than that which is attached to the little village of Sunnyraig, in the west of Scotland. It is, in truth, quite a picture of its kind. The simple, unostentatious and primitive-looking cemetery, where

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"

is open on all sides, or, at most, but faintly defined by a low green mound of earth—a circumstance which, somehow or other, adds much to the picturesqueness of its appearance. We have said somehow, because we do not know very well how it should be so—perhaps, because it inspires more pleasing ideas to see the appropriated receptacle of the dead forming, as it were, rather a portion of nature's common, and thus keeping alive, in some measure, that ideal communion between the material and immaterial world in which it is so agreeable to indulge, than those suggested by the cold and formal seclusion of stone walls, which so distinctly and painfully mark the entire separation between the living and the dead.

Be this as it may, the openness on all sides of the little cemetery of Sunnyraig, most certainly *does* add much to the picturesque effect which its other adjuncts complete. These adjuncts are—the little ancient Gothic church, white as snow, with its short steeple and ancient dials, which stands at the upper end of the burying-place; the lofty range of tall elms with which the latter is surrounded; the two large, umbrageous, and melancholy yews, which stand at either end of the church—sad, but becoming features of the scene; and the still, winding river, which glides noiselessly past, at the distance of about twenty yards from the little Gothic pile, the intervening space being a gently-sloping and open terrace of the brightest verdure.

Such, then, as well as we can describe it, is the churchyard of Sunnyraig. But what is a description of a churchyard, if it does not include a description of its grave-diggers? Why, all but nothing. The most incomplete thing in the world. No *life* about it whatever. Aware of this, we hasten to supply the want.

The churchyard of Sunnyraig, the parish being a populous one, was provided with a couple of those necessary officials. It was manned by two grave-diggers—Jamie Morton and Davie Blythswood. Jamie was captain commandant, and took upon himself the responsibility of all their joint professional proceedings. Be it observed, however, that the rank and authority Jamie claimed and exercised, was not formally deputed to him by any superior, either in the shape of an individual or a body; neither was it provided for in any way, by legal statute; nor did any distinction, in point of pecuniary emolument, between him and his colleague, point out the chief from his vassal. In this respect, they were precisely on the same footing. Jamie, in fact, at his own hand, assumed the superiority he exercised; but he did so on good grounds. These were—a greater length of service than his neighbour; and, stronger still, an infinitely greater length of head—at least, such was Jamie's own opinion, and on that opinion he acted, although there were many who disputed his measurement in this particular, and thought him by no means a very remark-

able genius. That he handled the spade well, there was no denying, and vain enough he was of his dexterity in the management of this useful implement; but there were not wanting those who denied this to be a perfectly satisfactory proof of one of the highest order of minds. For such envious sneerers, however, Jamie cared little; he felt conscious of his own superiority, and, very properly, availed himself of every opportunity of asserting it.

In person, Jamie was square and stoutly built, with a hale, round, ruddy countenance, whose chief and most marked expression was of that peculiar kind which intimates the possessor's being on an excellent footing with himself, and his being by no means disposed to think lightly of that person's qualifications. Some people would have called the expression we allude to, as it appeared on Jamie's chubby face, a compound of stupidity and conceit; but we will be no party to such rash, harsh, and uncharitable strictures on the "human face divine"—least of all, on that of Jamie Morton.

Of Jamie's neighbour, Davie Blythswood, we have not much to say. He was a thin, sallow creature, of quiet demeanour, and a most lugubrious cast of countenance—so lugubrious, that one would have thought he grieved for the mortality by which he lived, and that he wept over every grave he dug. Davie's was, altogether, an admirable grave-digger's face—sallow, dismal, and lachrymose; and, when half immersed in a grave, his look, as he threw up the shovel-full of earth, on each side of him, was exceedingly becoming his circumstances and situation. It was, in fact, a credit to the profession.

Now, be it known to all whom it may concern, that there was a certain little public-house adjoining the principal entrance into the churchyard of Sunnyraig, where the whisky was excellent, and the small beer superb—"not," as Jamie often said, when speaking of the latter, "that flat, headless, watery trash, that was sae aften to be met wi'; but fine, smart, frothy stuff, that brought the water to ane's een like a raw ingan—the regular cut-throat, and just a pleasure to look at in the cup, singing and hiss in as if a hot cinder had been thrown in't." Such was the general strain of Jamie's eulogiums on the small beer to be found at the sign of the Mortsafe, which was the appropriate emblematic designation of the little public-house in question. But, if he was so eloquent in praise of the swipes of his favourite place of refecation, how much more so was he when his whisky was the theme of his laudation! Ay, that may be asked indeed. But we cannot spare room, nor think of taking up the reader's time with any more of Jamie's eulogiums on his favourite liquors. Suffice it to say, that, of the whisky of the Mortsafe, he said, "It was just grand, and, in strength, at least ten-dram power above ony ither." In all these opinions regarding these elegant beverages, Davie cordially concurred. He said less indeed on the subject than his neighbour, for he was naturally much less loquacious; but the grave nod of the head, with which he assented when the subjects of laudation were absent, and the quiet look of cordial satisfaction which he exhibited when they were present, sufficiently shewed that he was fully alive to their merits.

With these favourable sentiments regarding the creature comforts of the Mortsafe, it will not surprise the reader to find that both Jamie and Davie were frequent visitors of

the house, and pretty large partakers of its good things. This, in truth, was the case. They adjourned thither almost every evening after they had quitted work for the day, especially when they had had what Jamie called a regular field-day; and this he never reckoned the case, under six graves. It was not often, however, although business, on the whole, was always pretty brisk with him, that he had such a turn-out of earth as this. The average was two and three per diem, and sometimes as high as four, but rarely six. Six, however, he certainly had occasionally; and he as certainly had this precise number on one day in the latter end of September, or beginning of October, 1833. We are particular as to the date of this special occasion, because our story requires it.

Having filled up the last grave on the day alluded to, and seen the last lingerer of the melancholy train that had accompanied its lowly tenant to his final resting-place on earth, out of the churchyard, Jamie took an opportunity of giving Davie the hint, that "he thoct that day's wark wad stau something;" and, while he said this, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, with a somewhat soiled and tattered blue cotton handkerchief, with one hand, and supported with the other a huge plank which he was in the act of removing from the grave that had just been filled up, to a place of security—a certain little house in one of the corners of the churchyard, where all the tools and implements employed in the art of grave-digging were kept.

"I think it ocht," was the brief and simple reply of Davie, to the matter propounded by his colleague—"I think it ocht," he said, shouldering a lot of shovels and rakes, and walking off with them towards the appropriated depository of these valuables. The important matter of an adjournment to the Mortsafe being thus arranged between Jamie and his sub, they lost as little time as possible in carrying it into effect. In ten minutes after, they were both comfortably planted beneath the fir of a small side-room, with well-sanded floor, bright blue walls, elegantly hung round with the four pictures of the Seasons and a variety of other designs, without frames, in red and yellow, nailed on with tacks; and, before them, a modicum of aqua, a wooden cap, a diamond-shaped piece of crisp oaten cake, much curled up on the side, and a bottle of that superb small beer so much and so deservedly eulogized by the discriminating Jamie Morton.

"Weel," said Jamie, after he and his friend had emptied a bicker or two, "although I say't that, maybe, souldna say't, Davie, I'll no gie way to ony man I ever saw yet, at a thirteener, sax by three, an' that's nae trifle o' an openin to mak in anything o' solid yird."

"Feth, an' it's no that, Jamie," replied Davie, with a quiet smile and shake of the head, as he laid down his glass. "It wad try ony man's mettle, especially in a het day in June. But ye're a guid haun at the spade, Jamie—I'll say that o' ye; I never saw a better. Ye turn't owre like sowans!"

"A' practice, Davie—a' practice," replied Jamie, with a self-complacent smirk, and an affectation of denying merit, "an' something o' a sharp ee, maybe, an' a stout arm. It a' lies in that thegither."

"Atweel, I daresay it does," replied his companion. "But I say, Davie, man," he continued, "do ye think this cholera's gaun to do us ony guid? It looks weel in the meantime. I've noticed that we've had sax for ane this while back. Will't stau, think ye? I'm fear't it's owre guid to last."

"Troth, Davie, I'm a wee frichtened for that, too. But we ocht to be thankfu for the mercy in the meantime; and, if it should slacken, Davie," continued Jamie, with a pious expression of countenance, and, at the same time, filling up his glass, "we maun just submit to the will o' Providence. But they say it's takin them aff in scores in some pairts o' the country."

"So I'm tell't," replied Davie. "It has beat the doctors, I understan—our best friens, Jamie," he added, with one of his quiet laughs, farther enforced by a knowing wink.

"Atweel, they're that," said Jamie, laughing. "I dinna ken what we wad do without them. We wad starve oot-richt. No ae job for a dizzen that we hae 'enoo. Feth, Jamie, we'll drink the healths o' the M.D.'s, an' ye like. We're muckle behadden to them; and, I'm sure, for ane, I'm gratefu."

"And so am I, I'm sure," replied Davie, filling up his glass. Both being charged, success and prosperity to the medical profession was drunk with enthusiasm by the two worthy grave-diggers of Sunnycraig.

Leaving these useful members of a useful profession to prosecute their refection, we request the reader's attention, for a moment, to other two persons who came into the same room with the grave-diggers, a little before the discourse we have just quoted had drawn to a close, and planted themselves down at a little table at a farther corner of the apartment, and who evinced, by their whole manner, something like a desire to avoid being particularly marked. Before them was placed a dose similar to that with which Jamie and his colleague were regaling themselves. Both of those persons had something peculiar in their appearance—something repulsive and equivocal. You could not well tell what they were, nor what to make of them. They had neither of them the sedate manner of the regular mechanic, nor the decent appropriateness of dress of that class. They were both arrayed in rusty blacks, with "shocking bad" hats, shirt-necks and neckcloths to match—that is, both ill-coloured and most unobjectionably dirty; complexions, cadaverously sallow; looks, sinister; and a very remarkable owl-like propensity to avoid the light. Such, in externals, was the mysterious pair that first entered, and then occupied a quiet and remote corner of the blue chamber of the Mortsafe, in which were Davie and his colleague. The latter lowered their voices on the entrance of the former; but they were overheard, nevertheless, although not aware of it; for the two strangers, though appearing to pay no attention to the conversation of Davie and his friend, were yet intently listening to catch the subject of their discourse; and that they had not only done this, but had made out, also, what was the profession of the colloquists, was rendered sufficiently clear, by the fact of one of them clapping his finger to his nose in a very significant manner, and tipping, at the same time, a highly intelligent wink to his neighbour across the table. When translated into plain, sound English, these elegant and impressive signs meant—"Are ye up? The very men. A couple of grave-diggers." This telegraphic communication on the part of the strangers, was immediately followed by a low, whispering conversation between them, and that, again, by an overture, made with great apparent cordiality, to Jamie and his friend, to join them in their potations. Nothing loth, Jamie and his friend at once closed with the friendly offer, and, in a minute, the whole four were seated at one table. In two or three more, aided by a few rounds of the gill stoup and ale cup, they were all as thick as ben leather. Gill succeeded gill with hilarous rapidity—and who were so gracious as the two strangers and the two grave-diggers of Sunnycraig? We need not say that the conversation gradually became highly animated; but we need say, perhaps, that it was occasionally relieved by the sweet voice of song; Jamie sang like a mavis, under the influence of the ale cup with a cinder in it, as he scientifically called the addition of a little of the alcohol to the more innocuous "swats." Davie sang, too, most melodiously, from the same cause; but all his songs were of a most dolorous kind; for Davie was rather lugubrious and sentimental in his

tastes, while his colleague was quite the reverse. Jamie's songs, therefore, were generally of a cheerful and lively kind, partaking little of the gravity of his profession. The shocking-bad-hatted strangers contributed their share, also, to this department of the evening's entertainments; but in these contributions there was nothing peculiar nor remarkable, excepting that one of them sang with a most amazingly gruff and sepulchral voice.

For upwards of two hours, the mirth, good-fellowship, and social harmony of the company continued rather to increase than diminish, when, lo! all at once, and just as the hilarity of the party seemed to have attained its height, the noisy sounds of revelry ceased. A sudden calm succeeded, and the loud, off-hand talk, which had hitherto prevailed, sank into low but energetic whisperings. It was a strange change, but not unaccountable, as the sequel will shew. This mysterious communing continued for about half an hour or thereabouts, when the party broke up, but still retaining the altered manner which had so suddenly come over them. They got up from the table at which they had been sitting, in silence; but there was a quiet and earnest shaking of hands, an exchange of looks and short sentences, that plainly indicated the fact of some curious and secret understanding having taken place between them. Now, this was true; and what that understanding was, we shall learn, by accompanying Jamie and his colleague Davie towards their domiciles, after they had parted with their two new friends.

On leaving the Mortsafe, our two heroes, who, we need scarcely say, were, by this time, pretty much by the head, walked on for some time in silence, both having their hands thrust into the bosoms of their waistcoats, and both thinking profoundly. At length, after a lee lurch, which brought them rather suddenly and violently into contact, as they stoutered along, and which seemed to have the effect of starting the following conversation—

"What think ye o' this business, Jamie?" said Davie, sententiously.

Jamie squirted out a mouthful of tobacco juice, and replied—"It'll turn the penny, Davie."

"Nae doots o't. I think we may mak a guid thing o't, if we manage weel. But we maun be very carefu. It wad be an ugly business if we war found oot."

"Ill-faured enough, nae doot," replied Jamie; "but we maun tak tent, an' gang cannily to wark. Twa in a week, I should think, 'll no be missed."

"How muckle did they say they wad gie for them?" inquired Davie.

"Five poun, I thocht ane o' them said," responded Jamie. "That is, I fancy, for a guid shusy. It canna mean, I should think, although I didna ax them, ane o' thae kists o' dry banes that we sometimes get—thae creatures wha hae stuck sae lang to the earth—misers, likely—that they naena an inch o' flesh on their banes, an' absolutely rattle in their coffins as ye let them doon."

"But whan do they pay?" inquired Davie.

"On the nail," said Jamie. "Deil a minute's credit we'll gie! They maun doon wi' *their* dust, before we put a spade in *oors*."

"An' richt too," replied Davie, emphatically, and deeply impressed with the prudence of this determination. "Nae tick for the like o' that. Cash doon's the thing. Didna they say the morn's nicht?"

"Ay, the morn's nicht at twal; an' we're to gie them the ane that was buried yesterday in the aisle," replied Jamie.

Davie gave what is expressively called in Scotland a *grou*, when the hour of performance was named; for, though a grave-digger to profession, he entertained a wholesome dread and dislike of the churchyard at unseasonable hours, and did not half-like the notion of working in it at mid-

night; and, to tell a truth, as little did his chum, Jamie; but the temptation of the gain thereby to arise, was more than a match for their fears, and reconciled them to the appalling proceeding.

With this conversation, followed by some secret arrangements regarding the intended operations of the next night, the two friends parted; and their doing so affords us an opportunity of stating more explicitly than the colloquy just quoted is calculated to do, the circumstances to which it refers, and from which it arose—in short, to tell all about it. To begin then, although the reader may, probably, have guessed this already, the two strangers, the gentlemen in the rusty blacks and dilapidated tiles, were no other than a couple of resurrectionists, who had come on an exploratory expedition from Glasgow, to see how the land lay about Sunnycraig with reference to their professional pursuits.

Before going into the sign of the Mortsafe, they had made a regular survey of the churchyard; and found it, as one of them expressed himself, highly eligible. This was an opinion suggested by its happy local position for doing business; and, above all, by the important circumstance of its being unprotected by walls. Having made their observations, they repaired to the house, where they met with the two grave-diggers, as already described at some length. Now, on discovering who or rather what Jamie Morton and Davie Blythswood were, the two resurrectionists at once determined on a bold stroke of policy. They determined on trying whether they could not further increase the security of their intended operations on Sunnycraig burying-ground, by converting the grave-diggers into a couple of colleagues. To secure them, they felt, would be to complete the thing, and to preclude all chance of detection or interruption. They made their overtures to this effect, with great caution and dexterity. They assailed the grave-diggers' integrity with soft insinuation, and wrought upon the mercenary part of their natures by direct monetary calculations. They triumphed, and Jamie and his colleague fell—fell before the omnipotence of Mammon. But, alas! their fall was not unheeded nor unmarked. The landlord of the Mortsafe—one of those facetious and practically-witty old Scottish landlords, who are yet, occasionally, to be met with, but who are now fast wearing out—overheard the conversation which announced Jamie's defection from the straight path of integrity, and, on the moment, determined to convert the occurrence at once into a subject for one of his "good stories," and to cure Jamie of the evil practices into which he was being initiated.

Having thus explained some things which we imagined stood in need of explanation, and prepared the reader for what is to follow, we return to the proceedings of our old friends, Jamie and Davie. It had been arranged with them, that *they* should disinter the body in the aisle of the church, which had been proposed as the first subject to commence with, and that their friends—one of whom, by the way, we may as well mention, was known amongst the young medical students of Glasgow by the professional name of Coffin Dick—should be waiting, precisely at twelve o'clock at night, at a certain low, Gothic-arched window, that looked into the aisle, the scene of intended operations, with a sack and other conveniences for carrying off the body. Let us further remark, however, that it was also stipulated between the high contracting powers on this occasion, that the five pounds formerly alluded to, should be handed through the said window, before the *subject* was transmitted by the same outlet. Such were the details of the proposed proceedings, and nothing now was wanting but the arrival of night to carry them into effect. This was a want, which, it will readily be believed, was not long of being supplied. The eventful night came; and come, too, with a vengeance—that is, it was a tremend-

ously wild and stormy one, and altogether so terrible, that both Jamie's and Davie's hearts sank within them as they looked at it, listened to it, and thought of the dreadful business in which they were to be engaged in the midst of its horrors. It was dark as pitch, too, excepting when the quarter moon glistened, for an instant, through the brief openings, formed by the huge dark masses of clouds, that now wildly and fiercely swept along the face of the troubled sky. The wind, too, roared eerily in the chimney, and the rain pelted against the window of Jamie's domicile, with a most dismal and courage-demolishing sound. Jamie felt strongly the disheartening influence of these adjuncts of the evening; and was, more than once, half tempted to keep the house, and leave his friends, Coffin Dick and his neighbour, as he said, or rather thought, to "whistle on their thooms." But, again, the clink of the rhino sounded in his ears, and again wound his courage up to the sticking-place. The struggle, however, which Jamie had with himself was severe, and his uneasiness palpable to his wife and family, although they could not divine the cause, as he had not thought proper to make any of them privy to the business he had in hand. This he kept a profound secret even from them. As we have said, however, his disturbed state of mind was sufficiently evident; and it became more and more so, as the fatal hour approached. He went to the door every five or ten minutes, opened it, peered out, and again closed it, addressing to his wife, each time, some such pertinent remark as, "What a gusty nicht!" or, "Preserve me! saw onybody ever sic a bicker o' rain!" He would then resume his place at the fireside, and listen, with moody silence and with most dismal countenance, to the howling of the storm without. Jamie's fears and misgivings were most saddening. At length, however, the hour of cause approached. It was now a quarter past eleven; and, at the twenty minutes past the hour just named, he was to meet his colleague, Davie, at a certain corner, a little way distant from the churchyard. Tying a huge red comforter, therefore, about his neck, and wrapping himself up in a tremendous dreadnaught coat, which he kept for especial occasions, Jamie sallied out, on pretence, to his wife, that he was going to see that "a' was richt about the gruns," and hastened to the appointed place, where he found Davie already waiting him. We have not described what were Davie's particular feelings on the occasion, because we could not conveniently do so; nor is it necessary now to say more about them, than that they were quite akin to those of his coadjutor, only several degrees more oppressive and unnerving.

"An' awfu nicht, Davie," was the grave and brief salutation of Jamie, as he approached his colleague.

"Juist dreadfu!" responded the latter, in a sepulchral tone; "I wish we hadna meddled wi' this business."

"Indeed, I'm half repentin o't, too," replied Jamie; "but I suppose we had better try an' gae through wit'."

"I fancy we maun," said Davie. Then, looking up to the sky—"Man, it's a fearfu nicht! The moon's skippin frae clud to clud, like a rabbit joukin amang whins."

Having thus expressed themselves, the two grave-diggers proceeded in silence towards the appalling scene of their midnight labours. On reaching the churchyard, the first thing they did was to repair to the little isolated house in which were kept the implements necessary in their professional avocations—pickaxes, spades, rakes, &c.; and, having provided themselves with the assortment requisite for the present occasion, they proceeded to the church, of which Jamie always kept the key. Having opened the door as gently as possible, they both peeped in, and, locking it carefully behind them, groped their way towards the aisle, which occupied the further end of the little Gothic building. It was a dismal place this aisle. The floor was

of soft earth—the atmosphere of the place, raw and damp, and strongly impregnated with a heavy, disagreeable smell. Its roof, which was continually distilling an impure moisture, that fell drip, dripping, with a melancholy sound, on the puddled floor, was supported by two short, thick, Gothic pillars; and all around were melancholy tokens of the sad purpose to which the place was appropriated—namely, the interment of persons of note in the parish. These tokens were small iron-railing enclosures, within which lay the quiet dead; tablets of marble, sometimes crowned with urns, on which their names and virtues were inscribed; and, in more places than one, huge piles of coffin fragments told of the long succession of tenants by which the place had been occupied. One small Gothic window, half built up, and in which was no glass, alone admitted the little light that found its way into this dismal place of sepulture.

On reaching the spot of earth on which they were to perform, and which, from their familiarity with the place, they readily found, Jamie and his colleague commenced operations; but it was with trembling hands and quaking hearts. They were, in truth, both, at this moment, perfectly nervous with terror, and frequently paused to ask each other—"What's that? Did ye no think ye heard something?"—questions these, which, by no means, tended to increase the fortitude of either of the querists. Jamie and Davie were thus proceeding in the business of disinterring, when, all at once, the little Gothic window was darkened by some object suddenly filling it up.

"What's that, Jamie, at the window?" exclaimed Davie, who was first aware of the visitation. "There's something or somebody. Gude send us safe oot o' this!—and catch me tryin' again!"

Jamie looked towards the window, and was about to utter a shout of terror on seeing the movable object at it, to which his colleague had directed his attention in so vehement and awe-stricken a whisper, when he was prevented, and both his and Davie's fears relieved, by the inquiry from without, of—"Is that you?" spoken in a familiar and confidential under-tone.

"Ay, it's us," exclaimed Davy, gasping for breath, and recognising in the querist, Coffin Dick, who was at his post at the hour appointed, accompanied by his coadjutor, Crossbones, as the latter was baptized by the same facetious authority whence the former cognomen had emanated.

"Are ye weel on?" now inquired Coffin Dick.

"We're within a fit o' her," replied Jamie, smashing away with his spade.

"That's richt. Drive on, and bundle her oot here as fast's ye can. Here's the siller ready for ye."

At this moment, a flash of lightning, accompanied, instantaneously, by a loud crash of thunder, flung a wild and momentary gleam into the aisle, through the little Gothic window. Coffin Dick leaped to the ground in sudden terror, albeit not given to flinching for trifles; and Davie and Jamie, pausing in their work, looked in each other's faces in silent horror and alarm.

"We haena the blessin o' Providence in this wark Jamie," said Davie. "That's clear."

"We could hardly expeck it," replied Jamie. "But, heaven an' earth, what's that, Davie? Did ye see't?—did ye see't?" he exclaimed, as if he had gone distracted, and pointing to a remote part of the aisle. "There it's!—there it's!"

Davie looked, and, horrifying sight! saw, through the gloom of the interior of the aisle, a dim, white figure, gliding from pillar to pillar, with noiseless steps and rapid movement. In a moment after, a loud, wild, and maniac laugh rang through the aisle, and reverberated through the dark, silent, and empty church adjoining.

Mercy!" cried Jamie. It was all he could say; but there was much meaning in the brief exclamation. It bespoke the extremity of terror—of powerless, speechless terror.

"Hoo-oo-oo!" bawled Davie—it was all *he* could do or say—in a strain no less expressive of his feelings than that of his unhappy colleague.

Again the wild and unnatural laugh was renewed; and, immediately after, the following verses were sung in a clear, shrill, and unearthly voice:—

"Hie away! hie away! to the lonely pile,
Where the dead lie entombed in coffin and shroud,
Underneath the dark arch of the dreary aisle,
Where the toad has his home, and the wind sings loud.
In the stormy night,
As the pale moonlight
Falls dimly on pillar and tomb,
And the snail's glistening track
Flings the cold rays back,
In many a fold, through the gloom.

"There, there, let us meet, at the midnight hour;
That aisle it shall be our festive bower;
With fragments of coffins we'll deck it round,
With skulls and with bones ta'en fresh from the ground;
And we'll make it a gay and cheery place
For the midnight sports of the dead;
And loud shall we laugh as each pale, cold face
Down the dance by its partner is led.
Rare sight it shall be,
My mates, to see,
The cold, stiff corpses glide
With noiseless step o'er the floor of the aisle,
Their nice-trimmed shrouds all flaunting the while,
In sullen and ghastly pride."

Another wild, yelling sort of laugh here wound up this strange canticle.

"Heaven!" exclaimed Jamie, who had stood all this time petrified with terror; his teeth rattling together, as if he had been seized with a fit of the ague; his eyes fixed in their sockets; and his hair standing on end, as stiff and upright as a clothes-brush.

On Davie, again, the effect of the ghastly minstrelsy had been still more serious. It seemed, in truth, to have already affected his brain; for he was, or might have been, heard chirping over to himself, in a low and almost inaudible voice, in which, however, terror was still discernible, part of the wild strain which had just been poured into his ear; his imagination being evidently engrossed by it, and no longer under the control of his reason.

"In the stormy night," he began, with a ludicrous, but, no doubt, involuntary imitation of the tones he had just heard.

"In the stormy night,
As the pale moonlight
Falls dimly on pillar and tomb,
And the snail's glistening track
Flings the cold rays back,
In many a fold, through the gloom."

Having got this length, he recommenced, "In the stormy night," and back to it again, in an uninterrupted round.

Again the wild laugh of the apparently supernatural visitant rang through the aisle, and again it was followed by a sepulchral ditty, although in a livelier strain:—

"Welcome, welcome, my merry mates all!—
Let's joyously open the spectral ball;
Come forth! come forth of your graves, ye dead!
A measure wild with us ye must tread.
"They come! they come! See, they're rising round!
So slowly and stately they merge from the ground!
And the blue lightning plays through the vaulted arch,
To light the dead on their silent march.
And, without, the wind is howling loud,
And the dreary rain is falling fast!
Who's cold, let him gather around him his shroud,
To protect his bones from the piercing blast!"

Here the ghastly singer paused an instant, then resumed, with a suddenly-increased rapidity of utterance—

"Quick, quick, increase the dancers' speed,
Yet, yet a quicker measure lead;
For, see, through yonder arch doth gleam
A ray of morning's early beam.

Haste, hasten then, the mazy dance;
Quick, quick retire, and quick advance;
And, round and round, in rapid wheel,
Ply rattling limb and bony heel."

Another pause, and the more solemn strain was resumed:—

"What sound was that? Hist! do ye hear?
Know ye that strain, so sad and clear,
That calls unearthly guests away,
And summons holy men to pray—
That tells of night's departing gloom,
And hurries back the wandering spirit to its tomb?
The cock, the cock, my mates, hath crown,
And our short hour of earth has flown;
Once hath he sung his warning strain,
And, hark! he sings it o'er again.

"Stop, stop the dance! In silence all
Await the third and final call,
And, when it sounds, one piercing yell
Must of our finished pastime tell.
He crows again! 'Tis done! 'tis done! Hurra! hurra!
To your graves, ye dead! Away! away! away!"

And, with these concluding words, which were finished off with a hideous and most appropriate yell, the mysterious and terrific visitant rushed, with open arms and appalling shriek, towards the petrified grave-diggers, who neither had dared nor had power to move from the spot they were in, during the whole of his, her, or its performance. The effect of this movement, on the part of the midnight songster, was rather curious. It instantly restored both Jamie and Davie to the full use of their physical faculties, and inspired them with that natural instinct which prompts to self-preservation. With a yell, or rather a pair of distinct yells, not a whit less tremendous than that which excited them, both the grave-diggers now flew madly towards the door of the church, to effect their escape; but still eagerly pursued by their dreadful visitant, who, however, did not exhibit that knowledge of the localities of the place of which a ghost might have been expected to be possessed; for he, she, or it seemed to have considerable difficulty in following out in the dark the track of the fugitives—a circumstance this greatly in favour of the latter, who were thereby enabled to distance their pursuer so far as not only to gain the door, but to open it too, before he could close on them. This they did, then; and, rushing wildly out, commenced clearing the churchyard at a rate which nothing possessed of only two legs could possibly have surpassed. Jamie led, and Davie followed, shouting, in his distraction, as he ran, at the top of his voice—

"In the stormy night,
As the pale moonlight," &c. &c.

But Davie and Jamie ran not alone. They were joined in their flight by the two resurrectionists; who, on hearing the strange sounds within the church, had skulked round towards the door, to see if they could there discover any thing or any appearance to account for it; and they were thus employed, when out rushed their two friends, in the way already described. They were amazed. They could not understand what it meant, but they kept their ground. They did not keep it long, however. On the appearance of the appalling white figure, which was the cause of their colleagues' hasty evacuation of the premises, and which bounded out after them with a shriek and a yell that struck a sudden and harrowing terror to their hearts, they took to their heels also, not having the smallest doubt that they had at length encountered a genuine and unadulterated ghost—a description of personages whose existence they had hitherto denied, with a laugh of scorn, and for whose histories they had always entertained and expressed the most profound contempt. But the experience of this night had, in an instant, converted them from heretics into firm believers; and it was in the light of this regeneration, that they now flew over the churchyard, with a speed which soon left even the spectre considerably behind—

that personage by no means exhibiting the rapidity of locomotion which has been ascribed to his kind. The fugitives had now got into what is called Indian file—that is, a string; and, thus disposed, were they driving on, as if between life and death, to escape the icy, yet deadly grasp of the frightful apparition by which they were pursued, and which each thought he should, every moment, feel upon his shoulder. The spectre, in the meantime, was doing his part in the performances of the evening. He was continuing the chase with unabated vigour, and occasionally adding to the zest of the thing, and to the speed of his friends, by certain unearthly whoops and haloots, varied, now and then, by one of his appalling “eldritch laughs,” which mingled very inspiritingly with the howling of the wind amongst the trees—the former, at this moment, blowing a perfect hurricane. Having gained the village, the fugitives, who were still continuing at the top of their speed, and who had never yet had a moment’s time or breath to exchange a syllable with each other on the cause and nature of their proceedings, or on any other subject, suddenly split off in different directions. The two resurrectionists bolted up one street, while Jamie and Davie, guided rather by instinct than reason, flew in the direction of their homes, into which they finally burst—being further impelled thereto by a parting yell from their hideous pursuer—as if they had been discharged into them by a couple of cannon.

“Gude preserve me! Davie, my man, what’s the matter wi’ ye?” said the wife of that functionary, on his entering the house in the frightfully-troubled condition into which his recent adventure had thrown him.

Davie stared wildly at his wife for a moment, without speaking, then cracking his finger and thumb, and flinging up one of his legs with a mirthful twitch, he commenced, smiling in a most ghastly manner the while—

“In the stormy night,
As the pale moonlight,” &c. &c.

Dreadfully alarmed by the condition of her husband, whose intellect she now plainly saw had been disturbed by some fearful occurrence or other, Davie’s wife ran out to procure the assistance of some of her neighbours; and, by their aid, he was finally got to bed, where, however, he still continued to dream of the spectral ditty. Several attempts were made, both by his wife and those who were now in attendance on him, to obtain from him some account of what had happened to him; but to all the queries put to him with this view, his constant and unvarying answer was—

“In the stormy night,” &c. &c.

A deep and refreshing sleep, however, which at length fell on the weary eyelids of the distracted grave-digger, and which lasted for twelve mortal hours, had the effect of entirely restoring him to his senses. When he awoke, a moment’s bewilderment was succeeded by a full consciousness of all that had befallen him, and by a perfect recovery of all the judgment he ever possessed. On the subject of his adventure, however, he kept as silent as the grave he had gone to disturb, and would give no satisfaction to any one who sought to possess themselves of his secret.

Jamie’s conduct, again, on this eventful night, was exactly similar to his colleague’s, excepting that his terror had never mastered his reason. But he discovered nearly a similar state of agitation, and preserved a precisely similar silence regarding its cause. Neither of them, however, had any doubt that it was the angry spirit of the “shusy” whose mortal remains they had engaged to put into the hands of Coffin Dick, that had interrupted their impious employment, on the memorable night in question. Need we add, good reader, that a better solution of the mystery is to be found in the circumstance of the landlord of the Mortsafe having overheard the conversation between Jamie

and the resurrectionists, as formerly mentioned? The ghost of the grave-diggers of Sunnyraig, was no other than that worthy and facetious person; who, with the assistance of a friend of the same kidney with himself, performed the part we have ascribed to him. Whether Coffin Dick and his colleague, Crossbones, ever learned the real facts of the case, we do not know; but we do know, that they never looked near Sunnyraig churchyard again—at least, not professionally. We further know, that an early discovery of the fact (which the good-natured landlord of the Mortsafe could not conceal from them, although he carefully hid it from others) to Jamie Morton and Davie Blythwood, enabled them, timeously, to remove all traces of their little enterprise, and to save their reputations in the particular of “shusy”-dealing, unharmed—and this the more effectually that they never attempted it again.

THE TWO SHEEP-STEALERS.

THEY say there is honour amongst thieves—and, perhaps, there is; but we fear the following story will scarcely be held as a proof of the existence of this virtue amongst that celebrated and distinguished class. We should be sorry, extremely sorry, to traduce the characters of the *chevaliers d’industrie* needlessly; but we insist on our right to relate facts when we find them, even although they should be somewhat to the discredit of the well-known sentiment referred to at the opening of our tale.

Some forty or fifty years since, there lived, in a solitary spot in a certain muirland parish, in the west of Scotland, situated between the picturesque and antique villages of Strathaven and Kilbride, a couple of “Scots Worthies,” of the names of Sandy Dinwoodie and Peter Spenser. A curious pair these two were. Nobody knew exactly how they made their living; for they rarely applied themselves to any regular employment, and yet they appeared to be as comfortable in every respect as their neighbours. It was rather a mysterious case, and people were sorely puzzled to account for it. They had, indeed, certain suspicions on the subject; but who, amongst them, dare give utterance to these suspicions where there was not a shadow of proof to support them? No one. It is true that there was a constant missing of sheep by the proprietors of flocks in the neighbourhood of these two persons’ residences—two, three, and four disappearing every week from some drove or other, over a space of eight or ten miles—for so widely were these depredations extended; but who could attribute this defalcation to the secret operations of Sandy Dinwoodie and Peter Spenser? They would have acted very imprudently who should. But, good reader, there is no occasion for us observing this delicacy. There is nothing to hinder us from speaking out regarding a matter which proof has established, and time left at such a distance behind. We say it distinctly, then, that Sandy Dinwoodie and Peter Spenser were really and truly a pair of the most notorious sheep-stealers that this or any other country ever had the honour of producing; that it was no other than these two that *de-sheeped* the country in the way spoken of; and that this was the laudable occupation by which they lived; but they conducted their proceedings with such caution, such ingenuity, such masterly skill, that it was long before any one could openly charge them with anything like an inordinate love for mutton-chops or sheep-head broth;—yet true, nevertheless, it is, and of verity, that such love they entertained, and in such love largely indulged.

The residences of these two mutton-fanciers were admirably situated, too, for the exercise of their calling. They stood in a hollow; two houses joined together, in the midst of a barren muir, or rather waste of bog—a wild,

dreary, and solitary spot, with no neighbours within a couple of miles of them, and where intruders of any kind were rarely seen—none, in truth, save a stray herd or shepherd now and then, and, in the season, a wandering sportsman or two.

It is quite unnecessary for us to say that Sandy and Peter entertained all the regard for each other which the similarity of their pursuits, and the circumstances altogether in which they were placed, were so well calculated to produce. They had the utmost confidence in each other, and to each other disclosed every secret wish of their hearts. They were, in fact, a beautiful example, at least for many years, of that love and cordiality which should always subsist between gentlemen of the same profession. They would—as, indeed, they did every day—trust their lives to each other; and, in their confiding love, could lie down at night without the smallest dread of the halter—a subject on which, from the peculiar nature of their pursuits, they could not help sometimes reflecting. We have elsewhere said that the prudence with which Sandy and Peter conducted their proceedings, kept them clear of everything in relation to their peccadilloes, except suspicion; but that suspicion was very strong—so strong as to amount to conviction with many, and, moreover, to subject their houses to certain unseasonable domiciliary visits, occasionally, from shepherds and others, whom they had interested in their proceedings. These visits were not openly made under their real character, but were merely sly surveillances, to see if anything would present itself, bespeaking surreptitious mutton. Nothing of this kind, however, had ever been discovered in either of the houses; but of these visits Sandy and Peter stood in great dread, especially after any very bold stroke in the way of their calling, which was almost sure to be followed by one of them. On this they always counted, and exercised a discretion in that particular, accordingly.

For many years, the firm of Messrs Dinwoodie & Spenser, sheep-stealers, went on smoothly and without any very serious interruption. The partners were steady, intelligent, laborious men, and knew their business well—were true to each other, and bold, yet judicious, in their speculations; but, alas! by how frail a tenure is all human prosperity held!—and when self-preservation demands a sacrifice, who is there amongst us that would hesitate to offer it in the moment of peril, even to the destruction of our nearest and dearest? 'Tis a painful view of human nature; but, alas! there are but too many instances of its truth upon record. We have now to add another.

It happened, on one occasion, that Sandy Dinwoodie made a foray on his own individual account—that is, without being accompanied, as usual, by his trusty coadjutor, Peter Spenser. How this had arisen in the present case—being a thing that had but rarely, if ever, happened before—we cannot explain; but so it was. Sandy, one night, started alone, to see what a little single-handed diligence could effect. He knew well where to go, and felt pretty confident of making sure of at least one good fat wedder, “to keep the weans chowin,” as he said himself. Full of this confidence, inspired by a long course of successful practice, Sandy hastened away to a certain hill-side, which he proposed to make the scene of his exploit, on this particular night; and, having gained it, esconced himself in the cleft of a rock, that he might, from this safe place, scan, at his leisure, the merits of the different individuals of a large flock that was grazing hard by, and many of whom came, from time to time, within arm's-length of him in his hiding-place. Sandy, be it observed, was none of your hurried, flurried practitioners, who, placed in circumstances similar to those in which we exhibit him, snatch at the first animal that comes in their way, without regard to its quality or condition. Sandy was none of these. He

was a special good judge of sheep, and he made a deliberate and highly-advantageous use of this knowledge, in his selections on such occasions as those we allude to. He examined leisurely and cautiously, and never failed to finish happily in the choice he eventually made, by securing the largest and fattest in the flock. Sandy's practice on the night in question, was not at variance with his usual proceeding in such cases. Lying *perdu*, in the concealment of which we have spoken, he surveyed the living specimens of fleecy hosiery about him, with the eye of a connoisseur.

“There, now,” he said to himself, as he lay extended at full length upon the ground, with his looks intently rivetted on one of the sheep that were grazing before him; “there's a bit fair beast, noo; five stane, sinkin' offal, if it's an unce; but there's better than it there, I'm thinkin', guid as it is. Ay, eh, man, there's a noble ane—that white-faced ane. What a wapper! It's like a cow. That's the ane for my siller!” And he drew himself a foot or so cautiously out of the hole in which he was concealed, in order to seize the animal, which, with inexpressible delight, he saw edging towards him. When it came within his reach, which it shortly did, Sandy made a sweeping grip at its legs, and had it instantly over on its side. This done, he pulled a cord from his pocket, and, in a twinkling, secured the animal's feet. A moment after, he was on his own feet, and the sheep safely lodged on his shoulder, with its manacled legs round his neck. Thus happily burdened, he marched off, directing his steps towards a certain burn at a short distance; where, on his arriving, he threw down his load, held the head of the sheep over the stream, and, drawing a sharp knife from his pocket, “settled its hashy,” as he himself elegantly expressed it. Having allowed the animal to bleed thoroughly into the water—choosing this receptacle for its life's blood for a reason which is too obvious to need explanation—he again shouldered his burden, and, by pursuing an ingeniously-circuitous route, reached his own house in due time and in perfect safety. Having no fear whatever of the sheep being missed until the following day, at the very soonest, and, therefore, no dread of an immediate domiciliary visit from its late guardian or guardians, Sandy laid the carcass of the slaughtered sheep openly on his kitchen floor, and began, with great deliberation, the process of skinning it—at which he was an adept, as he literally killed and dressed all his own mutton.

“There's some prime patsfu' o' kail in that brute, Jenny,” he said, addressing his wife, as he turned the carcass of the animal from side to side, during the operation of flaying. “I'll wad my lugs, ye'll see the fat on them an inch thick—juist like a lid, woman”—and Sandy licked his lips at the captivating picture of fat *kail*, which his lively fancy had drawn.

“It's guid meat, Sandy,” replied his wife, briefly, too much accustomed to such a scene to think anything of it, and, at the same time, cursorily glancing at the subject of her husband's eulogium.

“Juist prime, woman,” replied Sandy; “it's the pick o' Deanside—the floer o' the flock. Leave me for walin a guid sheep! But, what's that?” he suddenly exclaimed, in great alarm, clapping his knife between his teeth, and raising his head from the work in which he was engaged, to catch the sounds that had struck him, more distinctly. “Didna ye hear a whistle? It's somebody comin up the road, and we're dune for noo. It's the twa herds, and they'll be in upon us an' see a'.”

Saying this, Sandy jumped to his feet, threw the carcass of the sheep on his shoulder, took up the skin, which he had just detached, in one of his hands, and rushed out of a back door, which opened on a kail-yard that lay behind. But here there was no refuge, no concealment; and already

the visitors, whoever they were, were thumping vehemently at the door—not Sandy's, however, but his neighbour Peter's, where they seemed disposed to begin their search—to gain admission. What was to be done? A thorough search of the premises would be made, and a discovery of the robbery would immediately follow; and that guilt which had so long baffled detection, would, at length, be revealed. And, harder still, as Sandy thought, the clear proof of his and Peter's depredations which was now about to fall into the hands of the enemy, would bear upon him alone, as with him alone it would be found in the present instance. Sandy was, in truth, in a miserable quandary. He did not know what on earth to do; but, at this moment, a happy thought struck him—a thought so wickedly ingenious, that it must have been suggested by the old boy himself. Running up to the further end of his own garden, which adjoined that of Peter Spencer's, from which it was separated by a stone dyke of about four feet in height, he threw over the sheep into his neighbour's garden, taking care to pitch it to such a distance, and that it should alight in such a situation, as would make it appear that it had been attempted to be concealed there. Having done this, the cunning vagabond ran to a little back window of his neighbour's. It was a single pane which opened on a hinge, and gave light to a small closet. This pane he thrust gently up, and, slipping the wet skin into the closet, drew it cautiously to again. All this accomplished—and it was but the work of a very few seconds—Dinwoodie returned to his own house, seated himself by the fire, and awaited, with all the composure he could command, the result of the search that was now going on in his neighbour's house, and which he momentarily expected would extend to his own. That a search *was* going on there, we need not more explicitly say. The abstracted sheep had, by mere accident, been missed in less than an hour after it had been taken away; and suspicion, as usual, had fallen on Spenser and Dinwoodie. The persons now endeavouring to trace out the guilt to them, were two shepherds, and two friends, well armed with sticks, whom they had brought along with them, in case of resistance being made. To revert to the proceedings of the night:—We need not say how much Peter was surprised at the visit that was now made him, conscious, as he was, that he had been an innocent man, not only for that day, but had actually not touched live mutton for nearly a week before. His surprise, then, we say, was great, at this unexpected visit; but he was supported by the consciousness of freedom from very recent guilt, and a perfect assurance that nothing could be found in his house, of a character the least equivocal or suspicious. These feelings made Peter strong and bold as a lion. He faced the intruders like a hero, and demanded what they wanted.

"We want a bit sheep," said one of the men, "that has strayed frae us, and which, we thocht, micht hae wandered in here, as we've heard they sometimes do."

"It's no unlikely," replied Peter, ironically; "no unlikely ava," he said, laughing heartily; "sae juist tak a bit look through the hoose, an' satisfy yersels, lads. It'll be amusement to ye for twa three minutes."

"We'll juist do as ye recommend, Peter," replied one of the men, coolly; "an' we'll begin wi' this bit closet here, an' ye like. I've seen a sheep hide itsel in a waur place." Saying this, the speaker entered the closet, and, as it was dark, began groping about for anything suspicious which chance might throw in his way. He had not been long thus employed, when his hand came in contact with something soft and woolly. The man guessed at once what it was, drew it forth—and, behold! it was what he knew it to be—namely, a sheep-skin, and one recently detached from the carcass. "Juist the very thing," said the man who had found this damning proof of Peter's guilt, as he

brought it forward to the light. "Hoo can ye by this, Peter?"

Surprise, amazement, and every feeling that is confounding, prevented Peter from making any reply for a few seconds; a circumstance that was at once, and very naturally, set down as another proof of his guilt, by the bystanders. When Peter, at length, did speak, it was to deny, in the most solemn manner, all knowledge of how the sheep-skin came there—a denial which was, of course, heard, by all present, with expressions of undisguised incredulity. The skin was next examined, and found to bear the mark of the flock from which it had been abstracted—leaving no longer the smallest shadow of doubt, that Peter was the thief of the missing animal. Elated by the success of their search, the men now proceeded to the house of Peter's neighbour, in the hope that they might find something there too, that would involve the latter in the guilt of the former—something which should fix him as, at least, *airt and part* in the robbery. In this hope, then, they accordingly entered.

"Weel, lads, what's wanted?" said Sandy, with the utmost composure and innocency of countenance.

"An unco smell o' singin sheep-heads here," replied one of the visitors, snuffing the air, and affecting to feel the particular kind of *eslavina* he alluded to. "Hae ye ony gear o' that kind about ye?"

"No," said Sandy; "but I ken whar there's ane, though it's no muckle worth."

"Whar is't?" inquired the first speaker.

"Between yer ain twa shouthers, Archy," rejoined Sandy.

"Ay, ay, my man," said the subject of Sandy's joke angrily, "but it's heads wi' horns on't that we want."

"If a' tales be true, yours doesna want thae either," replied Sandy, with a composed smile of sly meaning. He had made a hit, and the reddening face of the victim of his wit, and a burst of laughter from his associates, announced that he had done so.

The party now proceeded to search the house with the most careful scrutiny. They searched below beds, they rummaged presses and closets, (Sandy himself aiding them in their efforts, and, from time to time, expressing a virtuous indignation at the idea of his being supposed capable of dealing in unlawful mutton,) and, in short, left no place unexamined in which even a *trotter* might be concealed. But all their vigilance was vain. They could discover nothing to implicate Sandy in the present robbery. On finding this, they dispatched one of their number to their master, who shortly after appeared, accompanied by a messenger, who instantly took the unfortunate sheep-stealer, Peter, into custody, and marched him off, that same night, to Hamilton jail, whence he was, in due time, removed to Glasgow, where he was brought to trial, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation—his guilt, when coupled with his well-known character, appearing as clear to the judge and jury as it had done to those who first took him into custody.

It is said that Sandy, on finding the coast clear—that is, when his unfortunate neighbour and his cortege, or guard of honour, had marched off—regained possession of his mutton, and did not find it relish a bit the worse for the adventure to which it had been a party.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE ROYAL RAID.

Among the promoters of the wars and disturbances which so long ravaged the Border counties, authors have been anxious to class prominently the tender sex; not, however, in the way in which it was imputed to these fair assigners of man's misfortunes, that they shed the blood of knights, in the times of Froissart. A whole book has been penned—and another might follow it—on the wars and dissensions produced by beautiful women; and, without mounting upwards to Eve, it has been thought very well to begin with the maiden of Troy, who produced the most spinned piece of knight-errantry that ever was acted on the stage of the world. But, in almost every case on record, it was the beauty of the fair disturbers, that, inflaming the spirit of rivalry, set men a-fighting with so much zeal; and true it seems to be, that, when beauty went into disrepute, and gunpowder came into fashion—both much about the same time—we have never had what may be called a *bona fide* heroic battle. But the part which the Border fair ones had in the bloody scenes of that distracted section of the country, is represented to have been very different. The housewife, in those times, served up to her hungry lord, under an imposing dish, a pair of spurs; and this is represented as having been the gentle mode by which the dame intimated that it was necessary for her lord to supply the lacker. The Flower of Yarrow herself did not disdain to stimulate, in this way, the foraging spirit of old Harden. But we have good authority that there were beautiful exceptions from this barbarous practice; and among these we may safely place the unfortunate lady of Cockburn of Henderland, the fair subject of the pathetic ballad of "The Border Widow"—a strain which, so long as poetry shall hold any influence over the heart of man, will continue to draw "soft pity's tear." If every Border chieftain's wife had been like this lady, we would have heard and read less of raids and robberies: the dish of spurs, that sent their lords to the fray, would have been exchanged for the soft embracing arms of affection, applied to keep them at home; and the blessings of domestic peace would have harmonized with and softened the spirits which a love of riot and rapine inflamed into excesses so often ending in death. We have wept over her grave; and who that has seen the old stone in Henderland churchyard—now broken in three pieces, but bearing still that epitaph which Longinus would have pronounced sublime, "Here lies Parys of Cockburn, and his wife Marjory"—and looked on the old ruins of their castle, now scarcely sufficient for a resting-place for the grey owl—could resist the rising emotion, or quell the heaving breast of pity? There lie Parys of Cockburn, and his wife Marjory! How little does that simple chronicle tell! and yet, how much! The eloquence of that pregnant negative of ultra-simplicity, is felt by those who know their fate; but how many have trod on the three parts of the broken tombstone, deciphered the divided syllables, and walked on, and never inquired who was Parys of Cockburn, or Marjory his wife! Their bones have long mouldered into the dust that now feeds a few wild

alpine plants; their tombstone is a broken ruin, and will soon pass away; their castle, at a few paces' distance, is also a ruin of a few black, weathered stones; and the land they were proud to call their own, dignifies another name. The sculptor has failed, but the poet has succeeded; and time may flap his dark pinion in vain over the deserted churchyard of Henderland.

The Cockburns of Henderland were an old family of Selkirkshire. Long before the estate passed into the hands of strangers, we find the name and title holding a respectable place among the lists of chieftains that held a divided rule on the Borders. Those who have gratified themselves, as we have done, by a view of St Mary's Loch, and the classic streams of the Etrick and Yarrow, cannot fail to have seen the old property of Henderland, situated on the Megget, a small stream that runs into the loch. That was once the seat of the Cockburns; but there is a sad change there now. In the time of Lesly the historian, the whole of the country round Henderland, and the property itself, were covered with wood, that afforded shelter to the largest stags in Scotland; and now, there is scarcely a single tree that rears its head for miles around. Not distant from the mansion-house of the present proprietor, the ruins of the old castellated residence of the Cockburns may be seen; and, in the deserted burying-ground that surrounded the chapel, there is the broken tombstone, recording the deaths of the last members of the family, in the simple terms we have already mentioned. These are the appearances presented now; but, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Henderland was a close retreat, surrounded by wood and water. The family castle stood in the midst of a dense wood of firs, mixed, in those parts where the soil supported the king of the forest, with large oaks. The Megget, rolling along its brattling stream to St Mary's, was, when in its calm moods, made available for the ends of picturesque beauty; and, when swollen by the mountain rills, served as a defence to the grounds and residence. In building their strengths, all the Border chiefs had particular reference to the natural advantages of the situation: the middle of a morass, the edge of a precipice rising from a mountain torrent, or a small island in the midst of a lake or river, were held to be favoured localities; and Selkirkshire, in curious accordance with the habits of the people, had and has no want of these natural strongholds. Henderland had, perhaps, less to boast of, in point of natural strength, than Tushielaw, Mangerston, and some other of the Border residences; but, in the beauty of its wooded scenery, and the picturesque effect of sleeping lochs and roaring torrents, it might not be excelled in all the Borders.

In the minority of James V., Henderland Tower was occupied by Parys (supposed to be a corrupted orthography of Paris) Cockburn. He was then comparatively a young man, and inherited, with the property of a Border chief, all the usual characteristics of that class of lords—a natural, inherent valour being looked upon as the principal of all the qualities of the heart; and yet, unfortunately, applied, by a habit that had assumed the strength of an instinct, to the strife of contending families, the enterprises of pillage, and the contentions of a circumscribed and local

ambition. There was no peculiarity of the Borderers more remarkable than the union of a high valour that would have immortalized many a knight within the palisades, and the habit of overturning the rights of property—descending even to the grade of petty larceny. Nowadays, theft and cowardice are generally supposed to be nearly allied; but, in those days, the chief of a large clan, inhabiting a stately castle, and famous for a noble courage throughout the land, could pause, in the progress homewards, with half-a-dozen of his neighbour's kine; look, with a furious eye, on a bundle of hay, and regret, in his heart, that it had not four legs like a cow, by which he could make it steal itself home to his semi-baronial residence.* These apparently inconsistent and opposite qualities were possessed by the laird of Henderland. There was not in all Liddesdale a nobler champion of the rights of war; and few there were that entered more keenly into the spirit of enterprise, to take from his neighbour a fat steer, and then fight, as nobly as ever did King Robert for a lost kingdom, in defence of his horned prey. The riever in Cockburn was, however, a character of mere habit; for he possessed qualities of heart and mind which raised him far above the Border chiefs with whom he was usually ranked. He could fight, to the effusion of blood that came from within an inch of the coronary veins of his heart, for the property of a cow, that, next day, he would divide among the poor; and he was often heard to say, that, if Henderland had been among "the Lowdens," he would have been a gay courtier, a supporter of the throne, and a friend of the poor, if not the King's almoner himself. In addition to these qualities, he carried a noble figure, and an open, intelligent countenance, that expressed the feelings of a heart as susceptible of the social affections as it was of the emotions that produced his lawless enterprises.

The interior of Henderland Castle, at this time, was graced by the presence of one of the fairest of women, and the most dutiful and affectionate of wives. The lot of Marjory Scott, the wife of Cockburn, was, indeed, in all respects, save in the possession of a husband she loved devotedly, unfortunately cast; because, in person, mind, and heart, she was formed for gracing the polished drawing-room of refined and civilized life, and imparting to the nursery the charm of a soft, kind, and doting mother, whose love of strict moral discipline was only one phase of her maternal affection. Become the wife of a Border chief from the force of an irresistible early passion, she was as much the domesticated lover of in-door enjoyments, the cultivator of the social affections, and the admirer of love and tranquillity, as if she had occupied a retreat in Arcadia. She had brought her husband three children, all as fair as herself, one girl and two boys, whom she, in playful kindness, declared she would rear in the fear of God, the love of man, and the hearty hatred of Border rieving in all its gradations, from the laird's enforcing of blackmail, to the prowess of the laird's Jock, whose depredations extended to the *minutiae* of Laverna's sacrifices—

"Baith hen and cock,
And reel and rock,
The laird's Jock
All with him takes."

She had early entertained the expectation that she would cure her husband of his Border practices; and, though she had not as yet succeeded in that hope, she had placed before him such a picture of domestic bliss, in the working influences of all the finer and higher sentiments, seen and heard in the acts and speech of every member of his little family, that he became daily more reconciled to her views of the happiness of life, at the same time that he could not resist the heart-stirring stimulus of a raid, to give him, as

he said with a smile, a higher relish for his domestic enjoyments.

A fine family picture, preserved as a legend of the house of Henderland, represents Cockburn and Marjory sitting beneath an immense elm, the only tree of that kind near the Castle, and rendered curious on another account, with their three children beside them, engaged in swinging from its branches, and other gambols of innocent childhood. The anxious wife had, for a time, succeeded in her endeavours to keep her husband at home; but, latterly, some indications, on the part of the chief's retainers, having been caught by her vigilant eye, she dreaded another outbreak of that daring spirit which she had not yet been able effectually to quell.

"It will not conceal, Parys," said she, "that there are yet in this bosom, where your Marjory's head has sought the refuge of love, frightened by war, some embers of your old spirit ready to flame again. Is it not so? Love hath sharp eyes. It is not for stag-hunting that your followers are stringing their bows. The love of your old pastime is like that of an old concealed passion; it will act in such a manner as defieeth all the art of concealment. I noticed, last night, as you spoke to Scott's John, who was booming his bow to shew the power of the cord, that the sound went to your heart. Tushielaw oweth you a debt of vengeance. Is it not so? Come, now, confess that it is not for nothing that the old sword points have been rispied on the sharpening-stone in the ballium?"

"Tush, Marjory!" replied Cockburn, "you alarm the ear of the watchful Helen, who suspendeth her play to listen to her mother's fears. Such is thy training, that our young Hector will lose Henderland before the sods have grown together over his father's grave, in that small burying-ground around our chapel. And you have unmanned me too, Maudge. You have much to answer for to the manes of the old Cockburns, who lie sleeping in their quiet beds there, after a jolly life of sturdy stouthrieving from Yarrow to the Esk. What would the laird of Gilnockie say if he heard that Cockburn's bairns were taught to read—ay, and to play on harpsichords, and teylins, and dulcimers. By my faith, Maudge, but he would laugh a good laugh."

"And yet," answered she, "I have seen the clear drop shining in her father's eye as Helen touched the strings to the soft melodies of Auld Scotland. Come, now, Parys, was not that sweet dream dearer to ye than the fever of the strife of Border foray?"

"Ay, Maudge," responded he, "I confess that you have taught me that there is more in man's heart than he himself dreams of. I once thought that the highest of human enjoyments was a victory lost and won, with a hundred head of cattle driven before the returning host, in triumph, to Henderland; but, in yon withdrawing-room in the west wing, in which your cunning hands have placed the seductive couch, where one may lie and see roses blooming so near that he may smell their odours, and hear witching strains stealing from these musical things of wood and wire, the charm of the foray is broken, and the riever's spirit overcome. I wish I saw old Mangerton twisting his leathern cheeks under these arts of domestic peace. Every tear would have its avenging oath. He would trow old Henderland turret bewitched."

"But you have cunningly led me away from my subject, Parys. Is it not true that you are to cut through my silken bands with the restless sword? Are you not again to turn the fearless eye of the eagle on the cliff where Tushielaw hangs like a beetling crag? Is Helen's song to be changed for the raven war-cry; and the blessings of our peaceful household, for the curses of revengeful war?"

"How high mounteth Hector on my grandfather's elm!" responded Cockburn, playfully, evading her question. "The

* The old story of Scott of Harden and the hay sow, is well known.

fearless rogue will hang himself, and realize the prophecy of Merlin the wild, regarding our house—

‘On Cockburn’s elm, on Henderland lee,
A Cockburn laird shall hangit be.’”

“God forfend!” ejaculated Marjory. “Hector, undo that cord, and descend. My ears ring with old Lailoken’s prophetic rhyme, when I look on that swing. I shall have it removed.”

“Ha! ha!” cried Cockburn, laughing, and glad to get rid of the original topic. “Don’t you know, Mause, that my grandsire was a dabbler in prophetic visions; and, think ye, he would have been fool enough to plant and water, as he is said to have done, his descendant’s wuddy? But I have a good mind to cut down the tree, and make Lailoken’s prophecy a physical impossibility.”

As Cockburn spoke, he cast his eye wistfully to the sky, as if he felt an anxiety as to the state of the weather; an act which did not escape the observation of his wife, on whom the allusion to Merlin’s prophecy, generally current at that time, had produced an effect not remarkable at a period when this species of soothsaying still retained the credit it had acquired by the success of the poet of Ercildoun. At another time, her strong mind would not have acknowledged the power of the rhythmic ravings of a wandering maniac; but she had got some obscure hints of the wrath of the young King James V. against the Border chiefs; and the tender solicitude of a dotting wife traced, by a process perhaps unknown to herself, some connection between Merlin’s saying and the proof she now had of a concealed intention, on the part of Cockburn, to disregard all her efforts to reclaim him, by imbuing his mind with a perception of the pleasures of domestic happiness, from his old habits of rieving and fighting with his neighbours.

“It is—it is, Parys,” she exclaimed, with a trembling voice—“It is too true that you are bent on the execution of your old threat against Tushielaw. I have an accumulation of proofs against you, and can read it even in your countenance. Do you love me, Parys?—say if you have any love for your Marjory—say if your affection is changed towards those dear pledges of our happiness, who, enjoying the sports of their age, are unconscious that their father is meditating that which may, ere the morn’s sun gild those woods, render them fatherless, and bring sorrow o’er the house of Henderland? There are two dangers awaiting you: Tushielaw’s arm, that has incarnated the waters of Etrick with the blood of many a proud foe; and the vengeance of King James, whose youthful fire his nobles, they say, cannot quell.”

“This is not the cry of ‘houghs in the pot,’ Marjory,” replied he, still laughing—“the hint of the Border chieftains’ wives, when they want more beef for the larder. But calm ye, love. Young James will not travel hither to fulfil old Lailoken’s rhyme, and Tushielaw’s arm hath no power over Cockburn. Truly, I do intend to weed thy pretty arbour, Maudge; and, peradventure, I may even essay to sing a bass to thy sweet ballad of “Lustye May, with Flora Queen;” and such a domesticated creature shall I be that, like Hercules, you may see me, ere long, ply the distaff—a pretty sight for Adam Scott’s warlike eye.”

Cockburn’s merriment fell with a lurid glare over the heart of his wife, who, seeing him determined to cover his designs by light raillery, replied nothing; but, calling to her her three children, kissed them, and bade them set aside their sports, and return with her to the Castle. As they passed along, Cockburn still cast a wistful eye to the skies, which wore a threatening aspect—the sun having been surrounded in his setting with large folds of clouds, whose bellying forms came dipping near the mountains; while the pale form of the moon, scarcely distinguishable in the falling gloaming, seemed to be sailing through broken masses of vapour, like a labouring bark in a stormy

sea; and, now and then, a deep hollow moan among the woods came on the ear, like the far echo of dying thunder. About the Castle, the followers of Cockburn were observed, by the anxious eye of Marjory, to be all secretly employed in repairing their arms or habiliments—an occupation they threw aside, stealthily, when they saw their mistress; but not until she had observed what they had thus endeavoured to conceal. Their countenances exhibited that mixture of repressed joy and affected seriousness which the expectation of being gratified by a luxury from which the heart has long been debarred by some external power, produces in the presence of one hostile to the gratification. So strong was the desire of marauding and spoliation in that distracted part of the country, that an expedition was then looked upon in nearly the light in which a fair, or maiden-feast, or penny-wedding, would be contemplated by more civilized revellers. These indications Marjory noticed; and, turning up her eyes in the face of her husband, she sighed heavily, and sought her apartment. Soon afterwards, she proceeded to put her children to rest, making them offer up to heaven a prayer to avert from the head of their father a danger they did not understand; but enough to them, if they saw it in the face of their mother, whose looks were their laws, and whose smiles were the sunlight of their young hearts.

“This is a prettier sight,” muttered she, in soft accents, as she looked upon the faces of the beautiful and innocent supplicants—“this is surely a fairer sight, and better calculated to fill and delight the heart of mortal, than what my Parys is now, I fear, preparing to behold. How different is the expression of the faces of these innocents, upturned to heaven in supplication and thankfulness, from the torch-flared countenances of blood and revenge, which these retainers will turn on the heights of Tushielaw, in the presence of their master! Nor is my Parys insensible to this difference; but, wo for the force of education and habit over good hearts! Ask, my little Hector, of your Father in heaven that, if you live to be a Border chief, you may be loyal to your King, and a promoter of peace in the castle, and contentedness and happiness in the cottage.”

The little embryo chieftain obeyed the words of his mother; and all looked up in her face anxiously, as they saw the tears stealing down her cheeks. Each asked the cause of her grief, and volunteered an assuagement, as if their little swelling hearts contained the power of the instant amelioration of her sorrow. She looked upon them in silence; and, in a little time, they were consigned to rest and sleep, and utter oblivion of all the cares of this world.

After these maternal cares, Marjory sat and listened to the proceedings in the ballium of the Castle. Cockburn did not come up, being either occupied in preparations for his expedition against Adam Scott, or unwilling to expose his designs again to the danger of defeat, by the expostulations or entreaties of his anxious wife. Meanwhile, as she listened, every whisper or accidental sound of sword or spear went to her heart, and stirred up, in confused array, the fears of love. One hope remained to her, that the moon would hide her head, and leave the world to the empire of darkness—so unfavourable to the designs of the riever, that the moon’s minions would not fight under another power. There were clear indications in the heavens of a coming storm; for the moon still toiled on through the clouds, and the booming of the low, sullen wind in the woods was getting higher and higher. These sounds she hailed with hope; but, the next moment, the clang of a falling spear consigned her to her fears. At a late hour, Cockburn came up to his sleeping-room, and silently retired to pretended rest; while she, with her solicitude increased, retired also to her couch, but with no disposition to become oblivious of the fatal operations of her husband,

though her tender nature forbade further efforts in a cause that seemed hopeless. Resigning herself to the powers of fear, and the other disquieting influences of the solemn hour of midnight, she lay quiet, and submitted to the current of inauspicious thoughts that flowed through her mind. A disturbed slumber fell over her, sufficient only to make a slight division between the world of dreams and that of reality, and to allow her waking thoughts to pass in new and changing forms before the eye of the dreaming fancy, which again, in its turn, invested them with attributes suitable to the complexion of her waking sorrows. During this interval, Cockburn rose; and, dressing himself, went quietly out of the chamber—his movements having only tended to give some new impulse to her half-dreamy sensations, ineffectual as they were to recall her to the cares of a night vigil. A loud crash was the first sound that awoke her; and, opening her eyes, and becoming collected, she recognised, in the sharp sound, the grating fall of the portcullis. A shrill horn now winded among the woods, though its sound was scarcely distinguishable among the repressed bellows of the night winds that seemed to have risen considerably since she had been overcome by her slumber. She was satisfied that the whole retinue, with her husband at their head, were off to the beetling Castle of Tushielaw, from whose heights so many a riever had been precipitated into the Ettrick.

This conviction, coming, as it did, on the back of a disturbed slumber, in which her dreams had partaken of the dire nature of a nightmare, increased her fears. She could rest no longer, and, rising and dressing herself, she sat down at the casement, and listened to ascertain if any of the sounds of the cavalcade could be distinguished. She could satisfy herself of enough to indicate the route they had taken—away over the hills that separate the vales of Ettrick and Yarrow, and by the path that has since got the name of the King's Road, leading directly to the Tower of Tushielaw. But a quick and threatening change in the weather soon attracted her attention. The booming of the wind seemed to cease, and, shortly after, the clouds, through the openings of which the moon had been seen labouring during the previous part of the night, appeared to run rapidly together, so as to conceal the face of the night queen, and to present a homogeneous mass of dark vapour over all the heavens. A flash of vivid lightning now flared in her eyes, and left her for a moment in suspense whether she had not been blinded by the bright fluid; then on came the peal of thunder, which, reverberating among the mountains like discharges of artillery, filled her with that peculiar awe which the speaking clouds throw over the hearts of mortals. The rain came down in torrents, and had scarcely begun to pour, when the spearrills of the high lands were heard dashing down like angry spirits, to swell the Henderland Burn and the Megget, and raise the fury of these mountain streams. The sound of the thunder had awoke the children, who, leaving in terror their beds, came running to their mother, to seek that protection which could alone allay their fears. Circling round her knees, they hid their heads among the folds of her clothes, or clambered to her bosom, and twined their arms round her neck. It was in vain she asked them to return to bed; they conceived themselves safer on the breast of their mother, though she still sat at the casement, and the lightning glanced in their eyes, than they could be in their beds, muffled up in the bedclothes, and listening to the successive peals of thunder. As she sat in this attitude, with the children cowering into her bosom, like little chickens under the wing of their mother, she observed that the thunder approached nearer and nearer, as the period between the flash and the peal diminished gradually to a second; and a sudden flash among the trees, accompanied with a crackling noise, connected with some destructive

operation of the bolt, indicated that mischief had been done in that quarter of the wood. It was where the elm stood, the subject of Merlin's rhyme; and this circumstance sent the current of her thoughts in that direction, where there was so much aliment for her excited fancy. She silently prayed that the tree might be destroyed; and its towering top, above all others of the wood, held out some hope that her strange wish might be realized.

The sound of a man's voice—that of Dick of the Muir, as he was styled—the individual who kept the gate of the Tower—was heard shouting to some one without, in reply to some request made by the latter. It was now about two in the morning, and Marjory could not conceive what could be the purpose of the stranger's visit at that dreary hour.

"What want ye wi' my Leddie at this time, man?" said Dick. "My master's frae hame, and my commission doesna extend to opening the gate to strangers on night visits."

"But I'm nae stranger, Dick," replied the other. "I served the Cockburns before ye was born, and hae wandered many a weary step, in the midst o' this storm, to speak a word to the ear o' my Leddie. The time o' my visit is a good sign o' the importance o' my counsel. For God's sake, open, man! or ye may rue this hour to that o' your deein struggle, when Laird and Leddie may be in the moil there, ahint the auld chapel, and a' through the laziness o' their warder."

"Raff i' the Mire!" cried the warder—saluting him after the custom of the times, when every man had a distinctive appellation, in the absense of surnames. "I took ye, man, for ane o' Tushielaw's scouts."

The creaking of the hinges of the gate was now heard.

"What brings ye frae Peebles, man?" continued the warder, "in sic a night as this, when a witch wouldna venture on the Skelf Hill, far less owre North Berwick Law."

"It's no to tell ye that Merlin's elm has fa'en," rejoined Ralph; "but three oaks on three sides o't are lying on the earth, and that stately tree may be a gallows still. You say, Henderland's frae hame. I'm glad o' the news. It's his leddie I want to see: an' she maun be roused frae her couch to speak to her auld servitor. Time bides nae man; neither does King James."

Another peal of thunder drowned the conversation of the man; and Marjory, rousing her little refugees, urged them to return to their beds, that she might be left to hear the intelligence of this midnight messenger, whose words already, so far as she had heard them, carried tokens of evil. His reference to the King struck a chord that prior solitude had made sensitive; and even the remark as to the tree that had escaped the bolt, had in it a peculiar power over her shattered nerves. Her fears operated upon the children, who, even to the youngest, put strange questions to her.

"Why are you here, mother, in the lightning?" cried Hector.—"And where is my father?" inquired Helen.—"See that flash again!" said Margaret, as she buried her head in her mother's bosom.

"Poor, helpless, little ones!" ejaculated she. "How little know ye that that which fears ye most, is to me the smallest of my terrors! If man's wrath were quenched, heaven's would be easily averted. This messenger's intelligence may seal your fates, and be felt in its consequences to the last term of your lives. Come, loves, to bed. Hear ye that foot in the stair?"

The allusion to a mysterious visiter accomplished what the lightning of heaven could not effect—such is the secret power of mystery over the young heart. Rising from her lap, they hurried away to their beds, and left the not less terrified mother to hear the intelligence of the night messenger. The door opened, and Ralph stood before her.

"God be thanked, my Leddie Cockburn," said he, in a

repressed voice, and with fearful looks—"God be thanked, for Henderland's absence! The King, wi' his nobles, are at Peebles, on their way to Liddesdale, to tak vengeance on the chiefs o' the Borders, wha hae been foremost in the foray and the rieving raid. They whisper yonder that there's a hangman in the train, wi' ropes, to hang the ring-leaders on their castle buttresses; and Henderland is to be their first victim. O my Laddie! dispatch, quick as thae flashes o' levin, a messenger to the master, and tell him to flee to England, till the King's wrath has blawn owre. I hae braved this awful storm, auld as I am, to save my master; and, if I but saw him safe frae the King's ire, I could lay my banes at the foot o' the grave o' the Cockburns."

"I have been looking for this, Ralph," answered Marjory, as she lifted her hands to seize her hair, in her distress. Even now, God be merciful! my husband is in the very act of rieving and rebellion. But what said ye of Merlin's Elm, man? Is it not skaited? Speak no secrets, now: are the trees beside it blasted, and does it stand?"

"I hae heard yer Leddieship laugh at that auld rhyme," replied the servitor. "Fear naething for a madman's freak. But it's true that three oaks by its side are blasted, riven and laid on the earth, and yet its stands."

"Strange, strange are the ways of heaven," cried she, wringing her hands. "Ralph, you must be the messenger to my husband. Haste and saddle my grey jennet, and flee, by the Riever's Road, to Tushielaw. Tell Henderland and Adam Scott, that King James comes, with a halter, to avenge the rights of royalty and peace. Cry it forth in the midst of their battle. If he will not flee, take his horse's head, and lead him to England. Away, away, for mercy and Henderland's sake, good Ralph, and whisper in his ear—hark ye, man, 'tis no woman's dream—whisper the fate of Lailoken's tree. The thunder may drown his laugh."

The faithful servant obeyed the command of his former mistress; and, hastening as fast as his old limbs would enable him, mounted Marjory's grey jennet, and was soon out in the midst of the storm. The only remaining servant left in the tower, besides the warder, was, at the same time, despatched, by his half-frantic mistress, to proceed on the road to Peebles, and reconnoitre the King's company, and convey to her what intelligence he could learn in regard to its movements. By this time it was now about three o'clock; but the morning was still dark, the storm had not abated, the rain still poured, the lightning flashed, and the neighbouring streams rolled over their rugged channels with a noise that equalled the thunder which yet shook the heavens. Marjory again took her seat on the casement; and her fancy, stimulated by her fears, became again busy in the conjuration of images which, however fearful, unhappily stood too great a chance of being realized. The substratum of indisputable facts was itself a good foundation of fear:—The King, angry, and breathing revenge against his rebellious subjects of the Border, was at hand—even within a few miles of her husband's residence; and the ensign of his authority and punishment was borne by the common executioner; then he would detect her husband in the very commission of that rebellious act against which the royal vengeance was to be directed; and, above all, she feared—nay, she was certain, from her knowledge of Henderland's free, bold spirit, that he would disdain to fly, and would at once commit himself into the hands of a young incensed monarch, who had travelled forty miles for his blood. These were fearful, incontrovertible facts, and they were contemplated by a solitary female in the dark hour of night, in the midst of one of the fiercest storms that had ever visited that part of the country, and under the blue lights of a fancy that, in spite of the appeals of judgment, reverted to an old prophecy of a wonderful being, which seemed to have been respected even by the lightning of heaven: the elm still

stood; its brethren of the forest had fallen; and the rope to be attached to it was on its way to Henderland. Fearful forebodings took possession of her mind; and, as her fears rose higher and higher, she looked out in the dark, while the gleams of lightning played round her couch, and every sound that differed from the roaring of the storm arrested her ear, and kept her on the rack of painful anxiety. Her little children, meanwhile, who had caught sympathetically her fears, and could not divine the cause of their mother's vigil by the window in a thunder storm, had renounced sleep; and, disregarding her efforts to restrain them, must see her at intervals, and question her again and again; and even from their sleeping apartment they sent their exclamations of fear, and aggravated, by their sorrows and terror, the misery of their mother.

In this condition Marjory remained for another hour. There was no stir in the Tower, where a female domestic or two lay, or slipped about, under the weight of a fear the cause of which had not been explained to them. The silence internally, broken at times by the cries of the restless children, formed a strange and awe-inspiring contrast to the turmoil without, where darkness and the storm still held sway over the earth. Oppressed by the sight of the black heavens, she yet trembled to look for the first glimpse of dawn, which might be soon expected to be seen struggling through the vapours of the storm. Light would bring the King and the executioner; and she prayed that she might have an opportunity of seeing her husband before the arrival of the royal cavalcade, that she might fall on her knees, and implore his instant flight into England; but her ears caught no sounds in the direction of Tushielaw, save the thunder and the rain, and, at intervals, the scream of the drenched owl or frightened hawk, or the wheep of the restless lapwing, driven from the morass by the overwhelming torrent. Then came the cry again, of "Mother, mother!" from her sleepless children, responded to by her own "Hush, hush, my darlings! your father cometh!" when her pained ear sought again the direction of Peebles, and she trembled as her fancy suggested the sound of hoof or horn.

Thus another hour passed, and her racked feelings were still uncheered by a glimpse of hope. The strength of her soul seemed to have passed into the physical organs of the eye and ear; and every change, from darkness or silence, produced exacerbations of her fear, and painful apprehension. The faint shade of light in the eastern heavens, which gave tokens of the new-coming dawn, might be a precursor of the King and his retinue; and, as her eye fell upon it, she listened again for the coming tread. A very faint sound was now heard, and it was too evident that it came not from Tushielaw; it was from the direction of Peebles, and it sounded as if it were the tread of a horse. It must be, she instantly thought, the scout of the King's cavalcade; for, in her painful anxiety, she had forgotten her own messenger. The step approached nearer and nearer; and more intense, in the same degree, grew her apprehension, till the sound of her messenger's voice, calling the warder, struck her ear—and she imagined she never heard a voice so hollow and ominous of death. The man was admitted, and his heavy step up the spiral stair, flustering in the toil of a vain precipitude in the dark entrance, declared the impatience of his intelligence.

"Ah! my Laddie," said he, as he ran forward, breathlessly and fearfully, "Ralph spoke truth. The King's party will be at the Castle in less time than an eagle may flee frae Dunyon to Ruberslaw. I hae seen them. They carry torches to shew them the hill-paths, and keep them oot o' the saft bogs. The light shone fearfully on the hill-sides, and the clatter o' their horses' hoofs rang in my ears. I had seen enough, and made the greatest speed to bring the ill news."

"Cockburn, Cockburn," ejaculated the disconsolate wife,

"what power may now save ye from thy fate? His proud spirit will disdain flight—ay, and prompt a meeting with his executioner. What has become of Ralph? Everything conspires against the ruin of my hopes. You must to Tushielaw, Thomas, and give a second warning to your master. Tell him of this torch-light progress of the royal executioner, and warn him again to fly for his life, and the life of one who lives through him. Yet, stay—shall I not go myself? One messenger hath failed already—shall a wife fail in the cause of her husband's life?"

"The mountain torrents are swelled, my Leddie," replied Thomas of the Woodburn, "an' will be noo sweepin owre the Riever's Road, carryin baith man an' horse to the howes; an' nane but an auld hill-roadster may ken the richt tract frae that to ruin in the midst o' the darkness. Ye micht as weel try to pass the Brig o' Dread, my Leddie. Yer bonnie body wad be fund a corpse wi the mornin's licht, an' Cockburn, pardoned by the King, maybe, micht greet owre't. Besides, ye should be here. A woman's voice turns awa meikle wrath."

"Away, then, yourself, good Thomas!—I believe your counsel is good. Heaven speed the message! Cockburn's delay gives me a glimmer of hope, that Ralph hath already turned his head to England. If so be it, you will report to me privately, and away from the ear of the King's followers. If not, and if he cometh to meet the King, heaven look down in mercy on these poor children, who still cry for their mother, and will not rest!"

Thomas obeyed; and, as she turned to comfort her children, before she again betook herself to her weary station, she heard the clatter of the horse's heels over the gateway. The restlessness of her little ones pained her: she imagined she saw, in their instinctive anxiety and fear, some presage of coming evil, whereby, before another night, they might be orphans; and all her efforts to remove the impression only tended to confirm it—thus strangely and fantastically prophetic, is the apprehensive heart. After again assuring them that their father was coming, she sought her seat at the casement; and saw, now, the grey dawn, throwing a stronger light over the bleak hills, and exhibiting the white, foaming cataracts, dashing from brae to brae! Any hope of seeing Cockburn, now, before the coming of the King, had gradually dwindled away, and was extinct; and she as much feared to hear a sound from the direction of Tushielaw, as she, an hour before, was anxious for that indication of her husband's approach. Every instant she might expect to hear the tramp of the King's horses; nothing could avert that sound from her ear, or prevent it beating upon her heart. It came at last; she heard it audibly, mixed with the discordant jingle of armour; and striking her ear at the same time that a horrid glare of torch-light pierced the deep wood, and arrested her eye. In a few minutes more, a trumpet sounded a shrill blast; the feet of many restless horses raised a confused noise, that was mixed with broken, under-toned ejaculations, and clanking of swords and bucklers, and, after a minute or two of comparative silence, the high tones of a herald's voice, demanding admittance in the name of King James. The warder repaired to his mistress, and got his answer. The gate was opened, and Marjory saw the cavalcade enter the base court surrounding the castle; while two large bodies of soldiers, coming up about the same time, took their stations on each side of the entrance. A circle was now formed by those who were within the court; and the grim faces of the nobles, as they reflected the glare of the torches, were revealed clearly to her gaze. In the middle stood the young King, in close and secret counsel with his confidential advisers, and, at last, the warder was called before his Majesty, to account for the absence of his master, tell where he had gone, and record his proceedings. The man reluctantly obeyed the call.

"Where is thy master, sirrah?" inquired the King.

The warder was silent, and the question was repeated in sterner tones.

"I keep only this castle, your Highness," replied the warder; "my master is his ain keeper—an' a better there's no between the twa Tynes."

"Thou art a good keeper of thine own tongue, at least," said James, angrily; "but we come not from court unprepared with remedies for opening the mouths of close-hearted seneschals. Let Lithcraig attend."

An opening was now made in the circle of nobles, and a man, dressed in a long black doublet, came forward, holding in his hands a rope, ready to be suspended, and to suspend, in its turn, the disobedient warder.

"Throw thy cord over the buttress, there," cried one of the nobles; "give the noose mouth enough to tell its own tale, and I will answer for it bringing out his."

The man proceeded forward to a buttress of the castle completely exposed to the eyes of Marjory, by the gleams that flared from the torches; and she saw him deliberately go through the operation of making the projection available for the purpose of a gallows, by binding the cord to it, and suspending a running noose, which seemed to gape in grim gesture for its victim. The moment the rope was suspended, James pointed to it, and asked the warder to proceed and answer his questions. The terrified man cast a wild eye on the relentless crowd around him, and then on the engine of death that dangled before him, and, with faltering tongue, told the King that Cockburn had gone on a midnight raid against Adam Scott of Tushielaw, who, some time before, had made an assault on Henderland, and carried off twenty head of cattle, besides wounding several of Cockburn's men; he stated, farther, that there had been many raids of late in Liddesdale; but that his master had had, until Tushielaw roused him, scarcely any share in these struggles, preferring the society of his lady, the fairest and the kindest woman of the Borders, to the pleasures of rieving. This statement was received as evidence against Cockburn.

All these transactions had been narrowly watched by Marjory, who was now more and more satisfied that the doom of her husband was sealed, if he made his appearance before the King in the humour he now exhibited. She saw them bind the warder with ropes until their trial was over, that he might remain in pledge for the truth of his statements; and the heads again held counsel on the next step they should take in the unexpected event of the "traitor," as they called him, not being found at home, notwithstanding of their attempted surprise by a night visit. These doings had occupied as much time as allowed the glimmer of early dawn to pass into a grey light, that, while it did not render the torches unnecessary, exhibited in strange and grotesque shades the group of dark figures, their changing faces, moving heads, and inauspicious gestures, on which the gleams of the torches flickered faintly, in struggles with the rising morn. Above them, the dangling noose claimed her averted eye, and sent through her nerves shivers that seemed to make the blood run back in the veins, and stagnate about the heart. In any other position but that in which she was placed, she would have made the castle ring with involuntary screams; and it was only the intense anxiety with which she watched every sound in the distance, in the struggling hope that Cockburn would not make his appearance, that bound her down in the silent, breathless mood which she now exhibited. Neither could she have borne the extraordinary spectacle below her casement, had it not been that her wish to watch every indication in the direction of Tushielaw, overcame the feelings inspired by the moving tumult of fierce men that waited there for the blood of her husband. Sometimes the thought found its way through her anxiety

—why did they not call for or visit her? But the solution was not difficult; for she knew that men bent on purposes of cruelty, do not court the mediation of women. And then again she meditated, for a moment, a descent to them, and an attempt, by throwing herself at the feet of the King, to secure, by anticipation, mercy to her husband, when he might, if ever he should, be found. This last thought was passing through her mind, and she had intuitively drawn her clothes around her bosom, as a preparation for her rising resolution, when her husband's horn, in all its well-known windings, struck her ear. That sound had hitherto inspired the pulses of a living heart, and sent through her veins the delightful tumult of a gratified hope; it had been the prelude to the close embrace of affection; the flourish of joy on the meeting again of separated hearts. It was now the death-knell of both. She would have sunk to the ground as the sound fell on her ear, but that the recess of the casement sustained her powerless frame. After a few moments of insensibility, she again opened her eyes; and the first vision that presented itself to her, was her husband marching into the castle between two rows of the King's troops. He came nobly forward, with a free, erect carriage, and a look undaunted by the scowls that fell on him from every side. On coming up to the King, who stood in a haughty, indignant attitude, he was prepared to throw himself at his feet, when his eye caught the rope, with the noose at the end of it, hanging from the buttress. He started, and threw a hurried look up to the casement, where Marjory sat watching his every movement; but his fortitude returned again, and, making a step forward, he threw himself at the feet of the King.

"Here doth an humble subject," he said, "deposit the loyalty he oweth to his lawful King."

"On the eve, or in the midst of rebellion," cried James, in ironical anger. "Seize the rebel! One caught in the act, maketh a good beginning. Four reigns of Jameses have been merely borne or suffered, by beggarly tolerance, by these Border sovereigns, and the best part of a kingdom made an arena for the strife of the contention of petty kings, who rob, and steal, and kill on all hands, heedless whether the victim be king or knave. This shall be ended—by the faith of Scotland's King it shall! 'Habit and repute,' is good evidence by our old law, against common thieves; and I ask my nobles, too good a jury for such caitiffs, what a common thief deserves."

"To be strung up to the buttress," replied several voices, in deep hollow sounds, that rung fearfully round the recesses of the ballium, and reached the ear of Marjory.

"Parys Cockburn of Henderland," cried James, "hath, by a jury of our nobles, been deemed worthy to die the death of a thief, and a rebel against our authority. Let him be forthwith hanged till he be dead on the buttress of his own tower, as an example to evil-doers in time to come."

A quick movement of simultaneous, and, in many cases, intuitive agitation, followed this order. Two men seized the unfortunate gentleman, and proceeded to bind his hands behind his back, while the executioner proceeded to let go the end of the rope, so as to bring within his reach the noose, which had previously been purposely elevated, so as to be more exposed to the eyes of the beholders. Every step of these proceedings was observed by Marjory from her seat at the window; and it was not till she saw the men lay hold of her husband, and the executioner proceed to adjust the rope, that she ceased to be able to watch the details of this extraordinary mock trial and real condemnation. At that moment, she uttered a loud scream, and fell on the floor in a state of insensibility, from which she was roused by her little daughter, Helen, who had come from her bed to ascertain her mother's illness. Rising in

a state of frenzy, she sought the door of the apartment, with a view to throw herself between the King and her husband; but the door was locked in the outside—a precaution, doubtless, taken by the King's orders, to prevent a scene of a woman's unavailing grief. The prospect, now, of being forced to remain in a chamber a few feet above the gallows on which her husband, and the object of her strongest and softest affections, was to be suspended, and hanged like a common malefactor, rose on her bewildered view. Though she might place her hands over her eyes, the *sound* of his death would reach her ear—the jerk of the fatal cord, the struggle of the choking breath, the last sigh of her beloved Parys, would come to her, and reason might remain to bear it. If she could close up both eyes and ears, her fancy would exaggerate the acts performing around her, and fill her mind with shapes and forms, if possible more hideous than the dread spectres of the waking sense. Breaking loose from Helen, and also from Hector—who had joined his sister, and had from the window got some glimpse of the dire operations in progress in the court, and thus ascertained the cause of his mother's scream—she ran round the apartment, in the way of unfortunate maniacs, till her brain became dizzy with the quick circumgyrations, and then stood ready to fall, staring wildly at her children, who had followed her in her progress with loud screams. Meanwhile, the buzz of the preparations for the execution fell on her ear, and, running to the window, she held forth her extended arms, and implored the King, in wildly pathetic words and moans, to spare her husband. The King never moved his head; but many of the men turned up their grim, embrowned faces, fixed their eyes on her beautiful countenance, and saw her white arms wildly sawing the air, without shewing any indications of being moved. Cockburn himself, who stood with his arms bound behind his back, his armour off, and the neck of his doublet rolled down on his shoulders, could not trust his eye in the direction of his wife and children, but stood with a look fixed on the grey walls of his tower. The voice of the King was now heard, crying, "Is everything prepared?" and, "Yes, my liege," rolled forth from the mouth of the rough-toned executioner. The unfortunate Marjory, in this extremity, turned from the window, and rushed into a neighbouring room, from which a few steps of descent led to a window, not so far removed from a broken part of the wall as to prevent her getting to the ground. In this, by a mighty effort, she succeeded, hearing, as she hastened away, the shrill cries of her children following her and imploring her to return. Her brain was fired beyond the capability of sane thought. The soldiers, who saw her fall on the ground, lifted her up, and then pushed her rudely away from the ground they were ordered to guard, confronting her otherwise impossible efforts to get forward by their swords, and threatening to do her bodily injury if she dared to resist their authority.

At this moment, she heard a voice commanding some one to seize and confine the wife of the culprit; and, getting more confused by the occurrence of new and more harrowing incidents—the cries of her children sounding from the window—the noise of those forwarding the execution, if not at that very time, binding her husband to the gallows, filling all the air with a confused buzz—and the coming of the men to bind and secure her—she sprang forward out of a postern, and, with the rapid step of flying despair, endeavoured to get beyond the dreadful sounds which haunted her ear. In her flight—the consequence of the spur of frenzy, as much as of a wish to lessen pain which was insufferable—she came to the Henderland Linn, a mountain stream, that comes rolling down the heights with a loud noise. It was much swelled, and the waters were gushing and roaring over a ledge of rock that crosses its course, and forms, in that quarter, a cascade—beautiful

in certain states of the river, but frightful when the spirit of the storms has sent down the red stream to dash over the height. The noise was welcome to her; and, exhausted, she threw herself down on a seat by the side of the linn;* yet, so quick is the ear, to catch, through other sounds, that of the cause of a pregnant grief, that she heard the increased noise of the crowd of the Castle, consequent on the execution of the sentence of condemnation of her husband—a swelling sound, as of a completed triumph, came on the wind; and, unable to bear this consummation of all her woes, she ran forward, and threw herself down with her head in the line of the cascade, that the roar of the waters might drown the dreadful sound.

How long she lay in that extraordinary predicament, she was never able to tell; but the sound of the roaring waters rang in her ear for many an after day. When she ventured to raise her head, everything seemed quiet at Henderland Tower; and the silence now appeared to her more dreadful than the former excitement. The storm, which had been gradually ceasing, was lulled, and the morn had now attained to a grey daylight. She knew not what step to pursue. She would remain, and she would not remain; she would return to the Tower, and she trembled at the thought. Starting up, she began to retrace her steps slowly back through the wood, stopping at every interval of a few moments, to listen if she could hear any sound. Looking around, she saw, disappearing from an old road that led away to Tushielaw, the last of the King's troops; and she omened sadly that they had completed their work. She hesitated again, whether she should proceed to a place where she would inevitably behold a sight that might unsettle her reason. But whither could she fly? What could she do? Her little children were there; it was still her home, and the dead body of her beloved husband was also there. But judgment might vacillate according to its laws; her feet had an impulse forward, which philosophy might not explain. She was hastening towards the Castle, and she scarcely knew that she was occupied in that act, in the absence of distinct volition. Looking up, she saw an old domestic running towards her; who, on coming up, wished her to give up her determination to go towards the Castle, and requested her to sojourn, for a time, in the woods, or wait till she sent her a jennet, to carry her to some house. She would give no explanation of her reasons for this advice; but looked terrified and confused, when Marjory put to her some broken words of interrogation. Marjory could abide no parley, and, gently pushing the old attendant aside, hurried forward to the Castle, and entered the postern. The ballium was empty; the retainers of her husband had been marched off before the forces of the King; and any domestics that were left, had fled to the woods in terror. She lifted her eyes to the buttress, and saw suspended there the dead body of her husband. At the window of her apartment, were her children, looking on the dreadful spectacle. The two elder had cried till their throats were dried and paralysed; and the youngest, who understood nothing of these proceedings, laughed when it saw its mother, and clapped its little hands for joy.

A knife, that lay alongside the place of execution, was seized by the unhappy wife; and, through a loophole that was opposite to the rope, she stretched her hand, and severed the fatal cord. The body fell with a crash upon the ground. Life was extinct; but who would convince the frantic wife that her beloved Parys was gone for ever? She hung upon the dead body, till, as the day advanced, the terrified domestics came in, and took her away from the harrowing spectacle. Force had to be applied to effect the humane purpose; and, for many a night, the screams

that came from the west wing of Henderland spoke eloquently the misery of this child of misfortune. Cockburn was buried in the chapel ground near the Tower. Some time afterwards, when her grief could bear the recital, she wished to know what took place between her husband and the two messengers on that dreadful night—and she was gratified by the intelligence. Scott of Tushielaw had got intelligence of Cockburn's intentions, and was upon the watch to defend his property. A severe conflict ensued, in which several men on both sides were severely wounded. In the very midst of the fray, Ralph rode up to Cockburn, and delivered his message; but the proud chief replied, that he would face King James if he were the Prince of Evil himself; but that he could not pay his respects to his King, till he first humbled the proud Tushielaw. A like effort was made by Thomas, and with a similar result. In fact, it appeared that Cockburn entertained no fear of danger from the visit of the King, and treated the story of the gallows' rope as a mere vision of some terrified mind; at least, if he had any doubts on that subject—and reports of the fiery temper of the King might have roused his suspicions—he conceived that a bold bearing would do him more good than a pusillanimous demeanour; and, as for flight, he despised it, as well as disapproved of it, on grounds of fancied prudence, seeing that he would thereby admit his guilt, and prove his pusillanimity, while it might ultimately turn out that the King's intentions were not hostile, whereby he would be exposed to the ridicule and scorn of both King and subjects. Having beat off Scott's retainers, and secured, in this way, as he thought, a fancied victory, he marched direct on to his own Tower; and, as he approached, sounded his horn, in his usual way, to tell his wife that he entertained no fear, and to impress upon the mind of the King the boldness of the innocence of a man who had only been performing an act of self-defence, in teaching an old enemy that he would not commit an assault upon him again with impunity.

In the course of time, Marjory Cockburn recovered slightly from the effects of these terrible visitations, and often she expressed her surprise that Lailoken's prophecy about the elm tree had not been proved by the events of that night; but some people thought that King James, who knew the prophecy well, wished to reduce the credit of soothsaying, and therefore hanged Cockburn on the buttress of the Tower, instead of the tree. Her little children played, as usual, round her; and, if a relenting fate had had in reserve any means for alleviating her grief, surely they might have been found in the prattle of innocence, and the hopes of a mother; but it was not ordained that she should be thus relieved. Every day saw a change on her; she gradually declined, till she took on the appearance of a skeleton. About three years after the death of Cockburn, Marjory died, doubtless, of that disease which (though discredited by many altogether) kills more mortals than typhus itself—a broken heart. The property had previously been escheated to the King, and the name of the Cockburns of Henderland never flourished again. She was buried in the grave of her beloved Parys; and some relation, who knew the loves and misfortunes of the pair, caused the foresaid stone to be erected, with the inscription we have copied, and shall copy again—"Here lie Parys of Cockburn, and his wife Marjory."



* Few travellers on the Borders have passed unnoticed "the lady's seat."

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditinary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE HIGHLAND BOY.

STRANGE, sometimes, are the destinies of men, and mysterious the ways of Providence. In these expressions there is nothing new, for they have been repeated a thousand times before; but we are not sure that they have often been more strikingly illustrated than in the following short narrative—alas! “owre true a tale!” Within a short distance of the town of Inverary, in Argyleshire, there lived, towards the middle of last century, a person of the name of M’Lauchlane. He was a miller to business; but, if any idea be formed of his circumstances as such, or of the general condition and appearance of his establishment, from those of the “jolly millers” of the low country, with their large, well-built, slated mills, filled with expensive machinery—their comfortable houses, and rough and round abundance—it will be a very erroneous one. The Highland miller—he, at any rate, of the last century—was a very different person, and very differently circumstanced. His business was trifling, as it must, of necessity, have been, in a country yielding but little corn—just sufficient, and barely so, to support, with other aids, its thin and widely-scattered population. His mill was a small, thatched, crazy building; and its machinery, (almost all of wood,) the clumsy, rude workmanship of the miller himself. Such, at any rate, was M’Lauchlane’s establishment—a very poor affair; and very poor, though very industrious, and an honest and upright man, was M’Lauchlane himself. Yet, strange as it may seem in a person in his situation in life, he was not only an upright man, but a man of some education, of a grave and intelligent cast of countenance, and of a tall and athletic form.

For fifteen years, M’Lauchlane toiled on his little farm with unwearied assiduity, struggling with a barren soil, that scarcely yielded a subsistence for his family, leaving no surplus for sale, the rent being paid by a few black cattle reared for the purpose; and more than half of that time dividing this labour with attendance on his little mill; and other fifteen years, had he lived so long, would, in all probability, have found him still thus employed, had not a circumstance occurred which suddenly changed his destiny. He quarrelled with his landlord, and resolved suddenly, in a fit of exasperation, upon leaving his mill. He never gave any further particulars of the occurrence which had galled his proud spirit. He never said what was the cause of quarrel between him and his laird; but the fancied disgrace of some harsh word which the latter had used towards him, preyed on his mind, and, in less than a fortnight after, he resigned his mill and his farm, and proceeded to the low country in search of employment. This he found in Edinburgh, where he had some friends, in the humble capacity of a caddie, or chairman.

On leaving the place of his residence in the Highlands, M’Lauchlane left behind him, until he should fall into some way of earning a subsistence, his wife, a son, and two daughters. The former was, at this period, about fifteen years of age; a fine, manly-looking boy, of kind and amiable dispositions, the pride of his mother’s heart, and the stay of his father’s hopes. It was not doubted that, on the latter’s

obtaining employment, he would succeed in procuring some situation or other in Edinburgh for his son also; and, with these, and sundry other little plans and prospects, the family of M’Lauchlane, including himself, looked forward to the enjoyment of some happy days. Having obtained employment for himself, M’Lauchlane lost no time in looking out for an engagement for his son; and, at length, found an opening for him in a merchant’s counting-house in Leith. This good fortune he speedily communicated to his family, desiring that James should immediately set out for Edinburgh. James, however, had been already unexpectedly provided for, although not altogether to his liking. He had been engaged to assist some salmon-curers who had an establishment in the neighbourhood; and with these he was now employed. The wages, however, were small, and the work heavy; but it was considered by the dutiful boy himself a desirable situation, as it enabled him to reside with his mother, whom he tenderly loved, and to contribute more promptly and efficiently to her support than if he were at a distance. On these accounts, therefore, he determined to remain in his present employment for some time at least—this was till the ensuing term, when it was proposed that the whole family should proceed to Edinburgh, to join their head; and this was stated in reply to James’ father, who, though he longed to have his boy with him, acquiesced in its propriety; and thus matters stood for several weeks, when it was found that James’ strength was unequal to the labour imposed on him. The poor lad was long unwilling to admit this, even to himself, and continued to toil on with uncomplaining perseverance; but a mother’s anxiety and scrutinizing solicitude soon discovered what he would have concealed. She saw, from his wan cheek and sunken eye, that he was tasked beyond his strength, and that a continuance much longer in his present employment might even endanger his life. Impressed with this idea, she insisted on him quitting it, and proceeding immediately to Edinburgh to join his father.

“But, mother,” said the affectionate boy, “what will you do without me? My wages, though small, are a great help to you.”

“They are, James, no doubt,” replied his mother; “but what are your wages, or what would all the gold and silver in the world be to me, compared to your life, my child? Think ye that anything could compensate that to your mother, James? No, no; all the wealth of the Indies, my son, would be nothing to me, if anything was to happen you. Besides, you can help me even where you are going. You can remit me a little of your wages, along with what your father sends from his; and, at the term, you know, which is now only four months’ distant, we will all be together again, and as happy as the day’s long.”

Thus reasoned with, and feeling his own physical inadequacy to continue in his present employment, the boy finally consented to leave it, and to proceed to Edinburgh, to join his father. It was not thought necessary to give the latter any previous intimation of this change in his son’s views; and no communication, therefore, took place on the subject.

The day fixed for the boy’s departure having arrived, a little bundle, containing some small articles of wearing ap-

parel, and some bread and cheese, was made up for him by the hands of his doting mother, whose tears fell fast and thick on the little, humble package, as she tied it up. This completed, the boy took down a staff from amongst many that were hung to the roof of the cottage, thrust one end of it through the bundle, shouldered it manfully, clapped his bonnet on his head, and was about suddenly to rush out of the house, finding that he could not stand a more deliberate parting, when his mother, flying after him, caught him by the arm just as he had reached the door, and, murmuring his name, clasped him in her arms, and, in silent anguish, pressed him convulsively to her bosom. The weeping boy returned the fond embrace of his mother; but, at length, tore himself away, and hurried off, with a speed that soon carried him out of her sight.

The lad had now a long journey before him, not less than a hundred and fifty miles, the whole of which was to be performed on foot, for there were then no conveyances on his intended route; and, although there had, he had no money to pay for their use; but, as he was active and vigorous, and accustomed to rove over his native hills like a young deer, a journey on foot of even a hundred and fifty miles had nothing formidable whatever in it for him; and it was, therefore, with a fearless heart and bounding step that he now took the long, wild, and dreary Highland road, that was to conduct him to the city in which his father resided.

In about four months after the boy had left home to join his father in Edinburgh, his mother, with her two daughters, also proceeded to that city, and for the same purpose; the period having arrived which, according to previous understanding, was to see the family once more united under one roof. We will not attempt to describe the poor mother's feelings of joyous anticipation on this occasion, as she looked forward to the exquisite happiness of embracing the two objects whom she loved best on earth, her husband and son. These feelings were such as the reader can imagine for himself without our aid or interference.

On M'Lauchlane's wife and daughters arriving, which they did in due time and in safety, at the humble domicile which the farmer's dutiful affection had provided for them in Edinburgh, the first question she asked of her husband, and she put it ere she had yet fairly entered his door, was—

"Where is James? Where is my dear boy, Fergus?"

"Why, Margaret," replied M'Lauchlane, laughingly, "you should know that fully better than I do. Where did you leave him?" The boy had never reached his father's house.

"Come, come, now, Fergus, none of your tricks," said his wife, smiling. "Tell me where my boy is—I cannot rest till I see him."

"Ha, ha!" rejoined her husband, now laughing outright, "you keep up the farce very well, Margaret; but, come, now, let James be produced; for I am impatient to see him. You want to tantalize me a little."

"Or rather it is you that wish to tantalize me, Fergus," replied his wife, good-humouredly; "but do not keep me longer in pain, I beseech you. Go and bring James to me immediately. Do now, I entreat of you."

"Margaret," said M'Lauchlane, now somewhat alarmedly—for the earnest manner of his wife struck him as very strange, and as carrying very little of jocularly in it—"Margaret," he said, gravely, "is this jest or earnest? Is James not with you?—and, if he is not, where is he?"

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed his wife, in an agony of horror—she in turn having marked the serious manner of her husband—"what is this come over us? O Fergus, Fergus," she said, in dreadful agitation, and flinging her arms around her husband in wild despair, "has not James been with you for these three months past? He left home to come to you then, and I always believed him to be with you. O my God, my God! where is my child? What has

come over my boy?" And she gave way to a fearful and uncontrollable paroxysm of grief.

During this scene, her husband sat silent and motionless; but there were dreadful workings going on in his bosom. His face was deadly pale, and his lips quivered with agonizing emotion.

"I have never seen him, Margaret," he at length said, in a slow and solemn tone—"never seen him. What has come over my boy?" And the strong man burst into tears.

We need not prolong our description of the scene of misery which ensued on the appalling discovery being made, as it now was, that the poor boy had never reached his destination. His distracted father instantly set about the apparently hopeless task of ascertaining what had been his fate; but, for some weeks after, all remained as great a mystery as ever; and no exertion or inquiries he could make, led to the slightest elucidation of the fact. At length, however, a clue to the mystery was obtained. It was gradually unwarping, and a train of circumstances finally unfolded the dreadful tale. In discussing this tale to the reader, however, we have no occasion whatever to go through the tedious and digressive process by which M'Lauchlane ultimately arrived at the history of his unfortunate son's fate. Ours is a much simpler and much easier task. It is merely to place the facts in their order, divested of all extraneous matter; and this will be best done by our retrogressing a little, and resuming the history of the unhappy boy's proceedings after leaving his mother, at the point where we left it.

On the evening of the second day after his departure, the lad arrived at Stirling, and had thus accomplished about half his journey. On reaching this town, where he intended remaining for the night, young M'Lauchlane repaired to a certain public-house, which he knew, by report, to be much frequented by his countrymen, when going to and from the Highlands and the low country. This house was usually crowded with guests; but it happened that it contained but one on the night of his arrival. The solitary stranger was an Irishman, on his way to Edinburgh, as he said, to look for employment. Between young M'Lauchlane and this person—they being the only two guests in the house—a familiar footing was soon established, chiefly through the advances of the latter, who affected a sudden and strong liking for his young companion, whom he insisted on treating with some liquor. In the morning, they breakfasted together, and, immediately after, set out together for Edinburgh—M'Lauchlane delighted with the kindness and rattling off-hand glee of his companion, who seemed, to his unsuspecting and unsophisticated nature, one of the best and merriest fellows he had ever met with. In place, however, of shewing an anxiety to prosecute the journey with the expedition natural to those seeking a distant destination, M'Lauchlane's companion seemed bent on living by the way. Every mile, and often within shorter distances, he insisted on his young friend's taking some refreshment with him. He would, in truth, scarcely pass a single public-house on the road; but he paid, in every instance, for the entertainment to which he invited his companion. Two consequences resulted from this manner of proceeding. These were—young M'Lauchlane's getting, for the first time in his life, somewhat intoxicated; and the expiry of the day, before they had completed their journey that comprehended the distance between Stirling and Edinburgh. The shades of evening were thus just beginning to gather, as the travellers reached a small village about six or seven miles from Edinburgh; and it had become pretty dark by the time they had got midway between the two places just named. At this particular locality, young M'Lauchlane and his companion passed a well-dressed, respectable-looking, elderly man, on the road, who was going in the same direction with them—

selves. On having gone beyond him, about the distance of a hundred yards or so, the Irishman suddenly stopped, and, addressing his young friend, said—

“I owe that old rascal that we passed just now, a grudge, and have a good mind to go back and give him a taste of this twig, by way of recompense”—shaking a stout cudgel that he carried in his hand. “Will you lend me a hand?”

Stupified, or rather, perhaps, distracted with the drink which he had swallowed, the poor, unreflecting boy at once agreed to assist his friend in revenging the injuries of which he complained. What these were, or when, where, or how they had taken place, he never thought of inquiring. It was enough for him that his companion had been injured, and enough also for him was the assertion of the latter that he had been so, and that the old man they had just passed was the inflictor of this injury.

In a minute after, the old man, whom they had now approached, was knocked down by the bludgeon of the Irishman—young M’Lauchlane standing close by. On his falling—

“Tip his watch there,” said the former, in a hurried whisper to his companion, at the same time nudging him with his elbow; “and feel if the old fellow has any clink in his pockets. Out with it if he has. He owes me ten times more than he has about him, let that be what it may.”

Without a moment’s thought or hesitation, the unthinking boy, doing as he was desired, flung himself on the prostrate old man, seized his watch chain, and had just dragged it from its pocket, when he was seized by the collar from behind. On turning round, he found himself in the custody of two men, who had come up accidentally, unheard and unobserved, at least by him; but not by his companion, who, aware of their approach, had, without giving the unfortunate lad warning, darted through a hedge, and disappeared. It was in vain that the unhappy youth, on perceiving the dreadful predicament in which he stood, urged the extenuating facts of the case to his captors. All the circumstances of a highway robbery, aggravated by personal violence, were too apparent, and too clearly referable to M’Lauchlane as the perpetrator, to allow of anything he might assert to the contrary being for an instant believed.

On the recovery of the old man (whose face was streaming with blood) from the temporary stupefaction which the blow he had been struck had caused, M’Lauchlane was conveyed a prisoner to Edinburgh, handed over to the police, and eventually thrown into jail on a capital charge.

We may here pause a moment to remark that, at the period of our tale, the penal code of this country was enforced, with the most unrelenting ferocity, against all offenders who came within the reach of its sanguinary enactments. Mercy was then unknown in the dispensation of the criminal laws, which, written in blood, were executed to the letter, without regard to any of those considerations which are now permitted to have their influence on the side of clemency. The ultimate fate of the poor Highland boy may be anticipated; and this the more certainly, that his seducer was never taken, or even heard of; so that no chance was left him of the facts of his unhappy case being ascertained.

Shortly after being committed to prison, he was capitally indicted to stand trial before the court, which happened to be held in Edinburgh about six weeks after his apprehension; and, on the evidence of the old man and the two persons who had assisted in his capture, he was convicted of highway robbery, condemned to death, and actually executed at the usual place of execution; neither the boy’s extreme youth, nor the extenuating circumstances connected with his case, (which, indeed, the Court was not bound to believe, seeing there was only his own bare,

unsupported assertion of the facts,) having the slightest effect on his judges, who, partaking at once of the spirit of the times and of the laws, were sternly rigorous in the execution of what they conceived to be their duty—seeing no safety for society but in a frequent and unsparing use of the gibbet.

We have now to explain the most extraordinary part of this piteous case—and that is, how it was that the poor boy’s parents knew nothing of his miserable fate till it was discovered by the inquiry of which we shall shortly speak. In the first place, his father took it for granted that he was at home with his mother, and his mother believed that he was with his father, and thus his absence was known to neither; and, therefore, no unusual interest regarding him was excited. During his confinement, and at all his recognitions, the infatuated boy steadily refused—though for what reason, we know not—to give up his name, or to give any account of himself whatever. He would neither tell where he came from, where or to whom he was going, nor what nor who were his parents; and in this resolution he remained to the last; and, as no one knew him, he was thus finally executed, without any single particular being known regarding him, excepting that for which he suffered. Neither could he be prevailed upon to make known his situation to any of his friends. In short, he seemed to have determined to prevent his fate from ever being associated with his identity.

What his motives were for this extraordinary conduct—whether it arose from a fear of disgracing his family, or from tenderness to the feelings of his parents—we cannot tell, nor will we trouble the reader with conjectures which he can make as well for himself. We content ourselves with relating the facts of the melancholy case, as they actually and truly occurred.

It was by an inquiry at the police-office of Edinburgh, whither he had gone, as a last expedient, to endeavour to find some trace of his son, that M’Lauchlane obtained the intelligence that led to the discovery of his unhappy fate. He had gone to the office, however, without the most remote idea that he should there learn anything of his boy as a violator of the laws, but merely as a repository of general intelligence on such subjects as that in which he was at the moment interested. Having stated his errand to two officers whom he found there, they asked him to describe the boy. This he did; when the men looked significantly at each other. Poor M’Lauchlane observed the look; and he felt his heart failing him, as he imagined, and too truly, that he saw in it something ominous.

“Do you know anything of my boy?” he said, looking piteously at the officers.

They made no reply, but seemed a good deal discomposed. They felt for the unfortunate father—having little or no doubt, from the personal description, and other particulars he gave of the boy, that it was he who had been executed for the robbery on the Stirling road.

“Tell me, for God’s sake, if you know anything of my son,” said the poor father, imploringly, after waiting some time in vain for an answer to his first inquiry of a similar kind.

The men would have still evaded a reply, and were, indeed, both edging out of the apartment, to avoid being further pressed on the subject, when M’Lauchlane seized one of them by the arm, and besought him not to leave him, without giving him what information he possessed on the subject of his inquiry. “Has any accident happened him?” said the miserable father. “Is he dead? Tell me, for Heaven’s sake, tell me the worst at once. I can bear it. If he is dead, I say, God’s will be done. Is it so or not, my friend?” again said M’Lauchlane, with a look of wretchedness that the man could not resist.

“I am afraid he is,” was the reply.

"Still, I say God's will be done," said M'Lauchlane, endeavouring to display a composure he was far, very far from feeling. He next inquired into the time and manner of his death. On being informed, the unhappy man instantly sank down on the floor in a state of insensibility. He had little dreamt of such a horrible catastrophe; and, however resigned he might have been to his boy's having met with a natural death, his fortitude was unequal to the dreadful trial it was now called on to sustain. On coming again to himself, the unfortunate man left the office without exchanging a word with any one, and returned to his own house. When he entered, his wife, as was her usual practice, eagerly inquired if he had yet heard any tidings of their son; but she soon saw that she had no occasion whatever to put the question. The haggard countenance of her husband—a countenance in which the utmost depth of human misery was strongly depicted—assured her at once that tidings had been heard of the boy, and that these were of the most dismal kind.

"He's dead, then," she screamed out, on looking on the wo-begone, or rather horror-stricken face of her husband—"my boy is gone." And she flung herself on the floor in a paroxysm of grief and despair.

To his wife's exclamations, M'Lauchlane made no reply, but threw himself on a bed, and buried his head beneath the clothes. But this covering did not conceal the dreadful writhings of the crushed spirit beneath. The bed-clothes heaved with the violent emotions that shook the powerful frame of the miserable sufferer. From that bed M'Lauchlane never again rose. He never, however, told his wife of the unhappy death her son had died; steadily and even sternly resisting all the importunities on that appalling subject; and whether she ever learned it, we are not aware.

LEEN JAMIE MURDIESTON.

WITH the exception of one unhappy failing, delicately hinted at in the title of this sketch, there was nothing really bad in the character of Jamie Murdieston. He was an honest, civil, inoffensive, and obliging body; but—we neither can nor will conceal the fact—a most determined fibber. Jamie's lies, however, had no malevolence in them. They were all of the vainglorious kind, and never bore reference to any man or woman's character or affairs. They were thus, on the whole, as defensible as lies can be—certainly, at any rate, as harmless. Jamie was, to profession, an enlightener of the world; not as a philosopher or teacher of science, but simply as a candle-maker. Jamie was a candle-maker to trade, but on a very humble scale—having only the wants of a very small village to supply with the produce of his manufacture.

With this preamble, we proceed to say, that it happened once upon a time that Jamie had to go to Glasgow, on some particular business—we believe it was to make a purchase of tallow. On this occasion, as on all others when his presence was necessary in the western metropolis, Jamie took the coach—an opportunity which he always prized highly, as affording him admirable scope for the exercise of his talent for romancing. At home, where his propensity was well known, he could get few listeners and still fewer believers; but, on the top of a coach, where he was not known, he was always sure of finding both; and he never failed to make an excellent use of his advantage. It was a great comfort and satisfaction to Jamie, when he stumbled on an unwincing believer. It was a perfect treat to him, since it was one which he rarely enjoyed.

On the occasion of which we are speaking—namely, Jamie's visit to Glasgow—he found himself, on ascending the coach, seated beside a very engaging young lady, who

had preferred the outside to the inside, on account of the extreme warmth of the weather, and also for the purpose, as she herself informed Jamie, of more fully enjoying the scenery through which they might pass.

"Quite richt, mem," replied Jamie, on his fair and frank fellow-traveller informing him of this last particular, as they rolled along. "Quite richt, mem; for the kintra hereawa is just uncommon beautifu—just uncommon. Do ye see, mem, that bit glisk o' the Clyde, there?—that's a spot I should mind weel, and I will mind it till the day o' my death."

"Indeed, sir!" said the young lady to whom these remarks were addressed. "Pray, what circumstance is it, may I ask, which so solemnly binds your recollections to that particular locality?"

"A melancholy eneuch ane, I assure ye, mem; that's to say, it micht hae been melancholy, an' it warna that Providence had sent me just in time to save the life o' a fellow-cratur."

On this communication being made to her, the young lady for whose edification it was intended, discovered a degree of agitation and surprise, for which the circumstance itself would hardly account. As it escaped Jamie's notice, however, and she was aware that it did so, she merely said—"Dear me, sir, what was the occurrence you allude to, and when did it happen?" But there was an eagerness and anxiety in her manner, when putting these queries, which she could not altogether conceal. Jamie observed it with inward satisfaction; hailing it as an assurance that whatever he might communicate, would be at once taken for gospel. Feeling thus encouraged, Jamie replied—

"I'll tell ye a' about it, mem. Ye see it was just about this time twalmonth, I think—yes, just exactly about this time—that, as I was ae day fishin in the Clyde, at the spot I pointed out to ye, I was suddenly startled by hearin an awful scream, and, immediately after, a tremendous splash in the water. 'Somebody fa'en in!' says I; and I instantly flang doon my rod, on which I had, at the moment, a saumont fifty pun wecht, if he was an unce—and ran roun the bit projectin bank that had keepit me frae actually seein what had happened. Aweel, on doin this, doesna I see a woman's bonnet floatin on the water—it was a' I could see—and gaun fast doon wi' the stream, which was geily swelled at the time. Soon becomin aware that the bonnet was on the head o' some unfortunate person, and that she maun perish in a few seconds if no attempt was made to rescue her, I, without a moment's thoct, threw aff my coat and shoon, and jumped in after her; and, as gude luck wad hae't, was the means o' savin her life; but it was a teuch job, for, by the time I reached her, she had sunk, and it wasna till I had dived three times that I got haud o' her. But I *did* get a grup o' her; and I assure ye I held it, and never let it go till I had her safely on the bank, puir thing; and a bit bonny young cratur she was."

Thus far had Jamie got in his interesting story, and much further he would have gone, had he not been suddenly interrupted by his fair auditor, who, seizing him by the hand, in a transport of joy and surprise, exclaimed—

"O my deliverer, my deliverer!—I was the person whom you saved; and delighted will my father, who's inside the coach, be, when he learns we have found you at last. But why, why," continued the grateful girl, looking all the gratitude she felt, in Jamie's face, "why did you so abruptly and suddenly withdraw yourself, after having done such a generous and noble deed? We could never find you out, nor obtain the smallest trace of you, although hardly a day has passed since then that we have not made some attempt to accomplish either the one or the other. It was cruel of you not to afford us an opportunity of evincing the deep and everlasting gratitude we felt towards you."

We leave the reader to conjecture what was Jamie's amazement on finding himself thus addressed by his fair companion; for we suppose we need hardly say, that every word of his story, about rescuing a young lady from drowning, was a lie—an unmitigated, and, so far as he knew, certainly, an utterly foundationless lie. Well may we then, we think, call on the reader to conceive, if he can, Jamie's surprise, when he found his narrative thus strangely converted into truth. He, by no means, liked it, for it threatened to lead to some awkward discoveries; and, under this impression, he endeavoured to back out, and to separate the two cases by some additional remarks.

"That's odd," he said, on the young lady's imposing on him the character of her deliverer—"verra odd," he repeated, but with considerable embarrassment in his manner; "but I dinna think ye're the young leddy I saved that day; she was a hantle stouter than you, and a guid deal aulder."

"The very same, the very same, I assure you, sir," rejoined his fair companion, laughingly. "There was no accident of the kind you mention, at the place you pointed out, during all last summer, but my own. This I know, from our having lived there from the month of March to October. So you must not attempt to baulk me of the happiness of believing I have found my deliverer."

Here, then, was a poser for Jamie. The young lady, it seems, was familiar with the place, and knew that no accident, excepting the one which, by so odd and unhappy a coincidence for Jamie's veracity, had befallen herself, had occurred there at the period he stated. He must, therefore, either confess to a lie, or quietly pocket the compliments that were thrust on him. On the latter he naturally enough determined; but he wanted no more acknowledgments, as he found them sit on him rather awkwardly. In truth, he now began to shew as great a reluctance to advert to the subject as he had before shewn forwardness, and was most evidently desirous of waving it altogether; but this his fair companion would by no means allow. She was by far too full of the extraordinary chance, and extraordinary good fortune, as she reckoned it, of having thus so strangely met with her deliverer, to allow the matter to drop.

Before going further, we may as well advert to a circumstance which may have a little startled the reader. This is, how it should have happened that Jamie's story of a rescue should have had a counterpart in fact. As to this matter, we can only vouch for its being perfectly true. It was a coincidence; certainly an odd one, but not more odd than many that have happened, and are daily occurring. The facts of the fact, as we may say, were these:—The young lady's father, who was a wealthy Glasgow merchant, possessed a very pretty little cottage, which he and his family occasionally occupied during the summer months, at a short distance from the banks of the Clyde, and near to the very spot which Jamie had so unfortunately chosen as the scene of his exploit; and, still more unluckily for Jamie, it happened that the young lady in question had actually met with such an accident as that which formed the groundwork of his romance. Moreover, she had, in the case alluded to, been rescued from a watery grave by a person who chanced to be angling near the spot at the time; but this person had no sooner brought her on shore, than he had suddenly and abruptly withdrawn, and was no more seen or heard of. These, then, were the facts of that case which so strangely tallied with Jamie's fiction. It is true that, had the fact and the fiction been carefully collated, a good many small discrepancies would have appeared, that would have at once stripped Jamie of

his self-assumed honours; but this not having been done, and the leading incident being the same in both, no such result took place.

To resume our story. On the arrival of the coach at Glasgow—an event to which Jamie had been looking forward with great impatience, as the only occurrence that could relieve him from his present awkward predicament—he bade his fair companion a hurried good-by, and, heedless of her remonstrances and entreaties, was hastening down the side of the coach, to make his escape, when the father of the young lady, to whom the latter had hastily communicated the discovery of her deliverer, by leaning over the top of the coach, and speaking through the upper part of the door-way, suddenly intercepted him.

"Too bad, sir, too bad," said the old gentleman, smilingly, "to try and escape us again. But we have you this time, and will take care that you do not." Saying this, Mr Alston held out his hand to Jamie, and, on grasping the latter's, shook it with the most cordial warmth, expressing, at the same time, the deepest sense of the mighty obligation under which he lay to him, for having so nobly saved his daughter from an untimely death—"An obligation," said the good old gentleman, "which I can never repay."

"Dinna speak o't, sir, dinna speak o't," said Jamie, in the greatest embarrassment, and wishing, the while, that his tongue had been blistered when he first opened his mouth on the ill-starred subject of the rescuing. "Dinna speak o't," he said—"it's just what ae fellow-cratur should do for anither." And, having said this, Jamie was about to make a sudden bolt, when the old gentleman, perceiving his intention, dexterously hooked his arm within Jamie's right; while his daughter, who had by this time joined them, did the same by his left, and thus secured him.

"Away from us you shall not get," said Mr Alston.

"Indeed you shall not," interposed his daughter.

"You must go home with us," resumed the former, "and receive the thanks of my poor wife, who will be delighted to see you, and those of Ellen's brothers and sisters. They are all, I assure you, as grateful to you as either I or Ellen herself can possibly be."

"Much obleeged, sir, much obleeged," stammered out Jamie, in great distress of mind; "but, ye see, it's impossible—a'thegither oot o' the question; for I hae some important business to do, that maun be done before I go onywhar." And he struggled to free himself from his captors; but in vain. They held on with a determined gripe.

"No, no, you must not leave us," exclaimed Mr Alston; "we must not lose sight of you, now that we have you. I should be sorry to be the cause of any interruption to your business; but we will not detain you an instant. I merely wish, in the meantime, to shew you the way to my house, that you may find it readily when you want it, which I expect will be the moment you get your business finished."

"Really, sir, really," exclaimed Jamie, despairingly, and holding back to repress the forward movements of Mr Alston and his daughter; "really, sir, really I canna gang. I canna, on no account. The business I hae on haun maun be instantly attended to, an' winna admit o' the sma'est delay."

"Well, in that case," said the pertinacious Mr Alston, "I'll accompany you, and wait your conveniency; and Ellen here will, in the meantime, go home and apprize her mother of our having met with you, and tell her that we shall be there in—in—in what time shall I say?"

"An hour, an hour, an hour," exclaimed the perplexed romancer, in great tribulation—"say an hour."

"Well, an hour, Ellen. Tell your mother we'll be home in an hour," said Mr Alston; "and let her have

a little supper prepared for us by that time, and let a bed be got in readiness for our dear friend, here. You'll take up your quarters with us, of course"—turning to Jamie.

"Oh, surely, surely—wi' great pleasure," exclaimed Jamie, hurriedly, and scarcely knowing what he said; "wi' great pleasure; but far owre much trouble."

"Trouble!" said Mr Alston, contemptuously; "you, the preserver of my dear daughter's life, talk of trouble! No, no; we shall be but too happy to have you, to shew you, as far as we can, the deep sense we all entertain of the unrequitable obligation we lie under to you."

"Don't lose sight of him, papa!" here exclaimed Miss Alston, in clear, soft tones, as she tripped away.

"No fear, my dear—I'll hold him fast," replied her father; and, while he did so, he clutched Jamie with a still surer gripe.

Jamie now saw that the old boy was determined not to part with him until he should have run the gauntlet of the whole family's gratitude; and, once more, did he devoutly wish that his tongue had been anywhere but in his mouth, when he first broached the unhappy story of the drowning adventure. He had never got into such a scrape before with any of his small *nouvelettes*, and he almost determined that he would never publish another—that he would henceforth deal in nothing but well-authenticated facts. The question, in the meantime, however, was how to escape the threatened consequences of the one with which he was now entangled, and this question was a poser. There was but one way—and on this Jamie finally determined. This way was, to bolt for it—to shew the old boy a pair of clean heels; and thus at once cut the connection. There was no other way of dealing with the dilemma. Having made up his mind to this proceeding, Jamie suddenly stopped at a certain close-mouth in the Trongate, and, intimating to his escort that he had a call to make there, requested him to wait an instant till he returned.

"I'll no keep ye a minnit," said Jamie, "no ae minnit." And, leaving the old boy to mount guard till his return, he proceeded up the close—at first leisurely; but, on gaining a turn, which concealed him from his Cerberus, he fairly took to his heels, and emerged in a distant street to which the close led. Here Jamie drew bridle and breath together, and thanked goodness for his escape; expressing, at the same time, a fervent hope, that he would never again meet with Mr Alston, or any of his family. Having thus got his head out of the noose, Jamie adjourned to the quarters which he usually occupied when he went to Glasgow; and, on the following day, sallied out to transact the business which had brought him to the city. It was not, however, with a mind perfectly at ease that Jamie went about this business—for he dreaded every moment encountering Mr Alston or his daughter; and, under this terror, he kept a sharp look-out as he went along, always cutting suddenly across the street when he got his eye on any person or persons of suspicious appearance—that is, on any old gentleman or young lady who bore a real or fancied resemblance to Mr Alston or his fair daughter; and the sequel will shew that his precaution was not an unnecessary, although, alas! a vain one.

Just as he turned the corner of a street, who should Jamie see coming towards him, and at the distance of about fifty or eighty yards, but the much dreaded Mr Alston, his daughter, and a brother, a young man of about four-and-twenty? On recognising them, Jamie instantly stopped short, and, after a moment's reflection, determined on having again recourse to his heels—no other way of escape, as in the former instance, appearing practicable. To this proceeding Jamie was further induced, by an impression that he had not been seen, or at least recognised; but in this, as will appear, he was mistaken. However, not aware of the fact, Jamie turned quickly round, and fairly

ran for it. But, as we have already hinted, he had been both seen and known by the Alstons; and they, believing his anxiety to avoid them proceeded from excessive modesty, and a timid nature that shrank from the noise of its own good deeds, resolved on compelling Jamie to submit to their acknowledgments; and, acting on this resolution, the young man, who, by the way, was provided with an admirable pair of legs for such purposes, was dispatched by his father and sister in pursuit. The effect of this proceeding on Jamie, who had become aware of it by happening to turn round for an instant during his flight, was to accelerate his speed. He flew like the wind; knocking about and overturning several people in his rapid and furious career. Thus the run continued for several minutes, when Jamie, feeling his wind failing him, and becoming thereby sensible that he could not hold out much longer, made a sudden dive up a close—those convenient retreats for "gentlemen in difficulties;" and, by this cleverly-executed movement, succeeded in fairly throwing out his pursuer, who, from the crowded state of the street, did not perceive the ruse, but held on his way vigorously, and afforded Jamie the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing him rush past the mouth of the entrance in which he was concealed. Feeling now in comparative safety, which, however, he further insured by going half-way up a stair, Jamie, who was a good deal blown by his exertion, took off his hat, and began wiping the perspiration from his face and forehead with his pocket-handkerchief, and doing all he could to recover his nearly-exhausted breath.

"Hech," said Jamie, on beginning to respire more freely, and still wiping his face assiduously, "this has been a'thegither a deevil o' a job. Such a rumpus to be kicked up a' out o' naething! Chaced as if I was a mad dog! It was the maist unlucky *ane* ever I tell't; but catch me again savin' ony body frae bein' drooned! I'll no touch that style again in a hurry, I warrant." And with such disjointed remarks as these on his unhappy essay in his peculiar art, Jamie beguiled the short time which he thought it necessary to remain in his concealment. This expired, or, in other words, thinking the coast now clear, Jamie stole cautiously down the stair, and, on arriving at the bottom, peered into the close before venturing out. The survey being satisfactory, Jamie emerged, and, stealing down the close like a cat, repeated at the foot of it the operation of peeping around him, before taking the bold measure of stepping into the street. No enemy was in sight. Jamie drew his breath for a desperate adventure. It was a rush; he meditated, which should at once carry him clear of the dangerous locality; and he accomplished it. From that hour, Jamie saw no more of the Alstons, and thus got out of the entangled web which he had woven for himself; but it was not long before he manufactured another, and a much more troublesome one.

The day on which the event in Jamie's life, which we have just recorded, took place, was one of great stir and excitement in Glasgow. It was the day of the execution of the Radical, Swan, whose death, on account of his crime, having been a political one, was to be attended with some of the appalling ceremonies and peculiar proceedings that usually mark the execution of traitors.

Following the general current of the population, which, as the hour appointed for the horrid exhibition was at hand, was drawing towards the jail, Jamie soon found himself at the place of execution. Here the general, and, in some things, the particular appearance of the preparations for the approaching tragedy, shewed that it was to be one of a very unusual kind. A strong party of foot-soldiers surrounded the gibbet, while the approaches at either end of the jail were occupied by dragoons, who, from the peremptory manner in which they performed their duty, in repelling all attempts at effecting a passage by the way:

which they guarded, sufficiently shewed that their orders had been unusually strict. The crowd and general excitement was immense.

Amongst the other objects that attracted Jamie's notice in this imposing scene, was a man holding a white horse, and standing a little way aloof from the crowd. The animal was an ordinary cart-horse, and the person who held it seemed to be a carter by profession. The situation of both seemed an odd and unsuitable one, considering attendant circumstances; and they, of course, attracted some notice, and excited some curiosity; the more so that the man looked as if he and his horse had some business there, and were waiting for something or other. Jamie, amongst the rest, was struck with these indications, and, making up to the man, bluntly, but civilly, said—

"What are ye gaun to be aboot wi' the horse here, friend?"

"A job I dinna like verra weel," replied the man, whose face was pale, and lips white, with some strong internal feeling.

"What sort o' a job may that be?" inquired Jamie—his curiosity still further excited by this answer.

"If ye wait a while, ye'll see," replied the person addressed, in a manner that intimated a desire to hold no further communication on the subject. Jamie took the hint, and walked off. In less than a quarter of an hour after, the dense mass of human beings that surrounded the gibbet seemed all at once struck with some new and strong feeling of excitement. A suppressed cry or exclamation rolled over that immense sea of heads; and the apathy which prevailed before, was exchanged for a feeling of intense eagerness, and restless curiosity. The first act of the tragedy had commenced; and it was the intelligence of this that was now working its way through the crowd, and producing the excitement alluded to. Conscious, with others, that the appalling proceedings of the occasion had opened, Jamie rushed towards the iron railings which enclosed a narrow paved way that ran round three sides of the jail, and there saw a scene more horrible than any thing that even his own fertile imagination could have conceived. This was a hurdle—a machine somewhat resembling a Kamschatkan sledge, raised slightly at either end, and to which was yoked the identical white horse, held by the head by the identical person who had attracted Jamie's notice a short while before. Within this hurdle was seated, at one end, the executioner, with a broad, bright, short-handled axe resting on his shoulder; and, opposite to him, in the other end, sat a quiet, composed-looking old man, of about sixty or sixty-five years of age. This was Swan, the unhappy man who was to suffer. In a second or two, the sledge moved on towards the scaffold; and, in a second or two more, Swan appeared upon the fatal platform. He was perfectly calm and collected throughout the whole of this trying scene, as was made sufficiently evident by his turning round to the executioner, and saying, with perfect composure, and an air of unconcerned simplicity—"Tammas, did ye ever see sic a crowd?" In a short time after, the miserable man was thrown off; and, when he had hung about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, three town officers were seen to mount the scaffold and approach the body, which they immediately proceeded to lower—a ghastly spectacle, as they had to shoulder, handle, and support the corpse, in the hideous operation. That operation performed, the body was placed in a position for decapitation, when suddenly another personage appeared on the scaffold. His step was quick and hurried. He wore a mask on his face, and was wrapped up in a loose black gown, which entirely concealed his person. On ascending the platform, this appalling personage, without looking to the right or left, quickly passed his hand round or over the neck of the dead

man, as if to ascertain the proper place to strike. This done, he, with the same expedition, raised the axe, and at one blow severed the head from the body, and instantly thereafter glided from the scaffold, as mysteriously and rapidly as he had ascended it; the whole being the work of not more, perhaps, than a minute.

All this, then, Jamie Murdieston saw, and it struck him with horror. But will the reader believe that it should have been the means of getting him into another of his lying predicaments? All will think, we dare say, that it should have had a very opposite effect, and have rather laid than aroused the fibbing spirit that was within him. But, verily, such was not the case.

On the evening of the same day, Jamie betook himself to a coffee-room, to spend an hour, which he found hanging heavy on his hands, in taking a peep of the papers, and listening to the varied and desultory conversations which are usually to be heard in such places of resort. Being of a social and communicative disposition, Jamie soon began to take a share in the general talk. This talk, for the most part, as might be expected, bore reference to the recent execution, and to the popular movements out of which it had arisen.

"I'll tell ye what it is," said Jamie, who was at this particular moment pretty considerably muzzed—"I'll tell ye what it is," he said, addressing two men who sat opposite him, and with whom he had got into familiar conversation—"the government had better no try ony mair o' thae tricks," (meaning executions for political offences,) "or they'll maybe get their kail through the reek. There's mair mischief brewin in the country than they're aware o'."

"Faith, it's just as ye say, frien," said one of the persons spoken to. "There is some wark gaun on that'll bother the big wigs at Lunnun, when the proper time comes. But *were* no just ripe yet. Onything doin among the *Friends* in your pairt o' the country?"

"We're gettin on cannily, but surely," replied Jamie, with a significant look to the querist. Then, with a wink, pregnant with mysterious intelligence—"I ken twa or three things about thae matters, that haena been cried at the cross."

On this, one of the men opposite Jamie stretched himself across the table, and whispered in his ear—

"Are ye headin ony movement in your quarter, noo?"

Jamie replied with an expressive nod, and a look of great importance; but did not think it necessary or, perhaps, safe to speak.

"Gie's yer haun, my freen," said the man who had whispered in Jamie's ear, with an air of high-wrought enthusiasm. "I honour you for your principles," he added, shaking, with great cordiality, the hand that was extended to him; and, at the same time, turning off the contents of his glass to Jamie's success.

"Thank ye, freen—thank ye," said Jamie, who, the reader will see, had all at once set up for a Radical leader. "I'll tell ye what," he continued, now leaning over the table towards his cronies, and speaking in a cautiously low tone—"as I see ye're freens o' the guid cause, I'll gie ye some intelligence that ye'll be glad aneuch to hear, I dare say. We're, ye see, a hunner strong in oor quarter, and as fine a set o' stout, resolute fallows as ye wad wish to see, and a' ready to turn oot at a moment's notice. I'm their captain, ye sec. They hae done me the honour o' makin me their captain—a very unworthy, but a very willin ane. But, ah! sirs, we had a sad fecht to get arms; an' they wad never hae been gotten an' I hadna advanced a hunner poun oot o' my ain pouch; takin bills frae the committee for the amount, payable oot o' the first and readiest whan a's settled."

"I'm sure *the* cause is much indebted to ye," here in-

errupted one of Jamie's new friends. "And hoo are ye armed noo, then?"

"Ou, pretty weel—pretty weel, replied Jamie—"maistly pikes; for, ye see, wi' oor sma funds, we couldna touch fire-arms, although there's a few o' thae among us too. But oor pikes 'll be found troublesome things, I'm thinkin. They're made after a fashion o' my ain invention. This is the shape, ye see." And here Jamie dipped his forefinger into his tumbler, and therewith proceeded to draw the figure of a very formidable-looking weapon on the table. "That, ye see, is for stabbin, and that's for cuttin, and that's for hookin, and that's for knockin doon," continued Jamie, pointing out the various properties of the complex instrument. "Winna that be a botherer?"

"My feth, in guid hauns, it'll be that," responded one of Jamie's friends; and added, "Are ye drillin hard?"

"Every nicht that we hae the least glint o' moonshine," replied Jamie, without a moment's hesitation. "I gie them twa hours o't every nicht, an' am teachin them a new sort o' pike exercise, that 'll be fand, if I'm no mistaen, particularly effectual in keeping off horse."

"Where learned ye the use o' that weapon, sir, if I may take the liberty of asking?" inquired the former querist.

Few questions found Jamie unprepared with an answer.

"I'll tell ye that, friend," he replied. "It was in the Lancers. I was nine years a sergeant in that corps, which I left after the battle of Waterloo, in consequence o' a severe wound I got in that engagement.—But what's come o yer freen?" here said Jamie, suddenly interrupting himself, and now advertin, for the first time, to the absence of the companion of the person whom he addressed, and who had slipped out, without saying anything, about a quarter of an hour before.

"He'll be here in a minute," was the reply; and the calculation was perfectly correct. In about a minute, the man appeared, but not alone. He was now accompanied by three most equivocal-looking persons.

"That's your man," he said, with an inclination of his head towards Jamie Murdieston.

"Friend," said one of the strangers, laying his hand on Jamie's shoulder, "you'll come along with us, if you please."

"Alang wi' you!" exclaimed Jamie, in the utmost amazement. "I wad like to ken what to and what for, first."

"We'll let you know all that by and by, friend," replied the spokesman of the party; "but, in the meantime, you *must* go with us; so there's no use in palaverin about it."

"I'll be hanged if I do, then," said Jamie, resolutely, "till I ken what for. 'Od, this is a pretty business! Do you tak me to be a robber or a murderer?"

"No, but we take you to be a traitor, a conspirer against the government, and a leaguer with its enemies; and as such I apprehend you," said the spokesman, at the same time collaring Jamie, and calling on his assistants to aid him in making a forcible capture of his person. The call was instantly obeyed. Jamie was seized on all sides, at one and the same instant of time, and, in despite of a loud and most earnest denial of all hostility to the government, or of ever having in any way or manner whatever aided in disturbing the peace of the realm, was dragged out of the apartment, and finally snugly deposited in an airy cell in the city jail.

On being left to himself, Jamie, in no very happy mood, seated himself on a bench that ran alongst the wall, threw one leg over the other, planted his elbow on his knee, and, supporting his head with his hand, began to entertain himself with some reflections on the very extraordinary predicament into which he had been thus so suddenly and unexpectedly thrown.

"Preserve us, this is awfu!" said Jamie. "Waur a great deal than the droonin business. What the deevil tempted me to speak such nonsense? But wha could hae

thocht this wad hae come o't? A bit harmless piece o' falderal. Yon twa maun hae been a pair o' infernal scoundrels—that's clear; and as clear is it that I'm in a most wickedly awkward situation. I maun, I suppose, either submit to be hanged peaceably, or confess that I hae been tellin a most unconscionable lee—no a very pleasant alternative; but the last's better than the first, I reckon."

Jamie's communings were at this time interrupted by the entrance o' the jailor, who came to see that all was right for the night.

"Man," said Jamie, addressing him, and trying to smile quaciously, in order to propitiate his good-will, "this is a queer business."

"I rather think you'll find it so," replied the jailor, coolly, and unaffected by Jamie's soothing advances.

"Both a queer business, and a serious one."

"It was a' a joke, man," said Jamie.

"Perhaps so," said the jailor; "but, like many other jokes, you may chance to find it attended with rather awkward consequences." And, without saying more, the man banged to the door with a violence that made the long passage on which it opened ring with an iron sound, and left Jamie to find what repose he might.

"The fallow 'll no believe me," he said, on being again left him to himself, "nae mair than if he kent me."

On the following morning, Jamie was conducted in procession, by three or four criminal officers, into the presence of the Procurator-Fiscal, when a precognition on his case immediately ensued.

"Well, sir," said the latter, at the same time referring to a paper which lay on his desk before him, "so you have taken up arms against the government."

"Naething o' the kind, my Lord, I assure you," said Jamie.

"What, sir!—do you mean to deny your spontaneous acknowledgment of the fact, made last night in the presence of two credible witnesses?"

"Indeed do I, my Lord."

"Why, you *may*," replied the Fiscal, emphatically; "but, I fear, it will do no good. Have you not mustered a body of armed men, or at least taken the command of such a body, with the intention of overthrowing the government of the country?—and have you not furnished them with funds to procure arms?—and are you not in the habit of training them nightly, as their captain, or leader, in military exercises?—and"—

"Its a' a lee, my Lord—a lee frae beginnin to end," here interposed Jamie, earnestly. "I just spoke a' that nonsense for a bit o' diversion. It's just a way I hae, you see," (thus delicately did Jamie allude to his failing,) "o' amusin mysel and my freens."

"Oh, then, you mean to deny *in toto*," said the Fiscal. "In that case, we must adopt other proceedings; and, in the meantime, you return to jail."

To his old quarters, accordingly, Jamie was forthwith carried, and there lay for three entire days, until the result of the inquiries which were set on foot established that he was indeed no traitor, but a most inveterate and incorrigible liar. It is said, however, that Jamie, after this, was a great deal more cautious as to the nature and character of his romances, and as to the when, where, and to whom they were promulgated.





THE RESCUE AT ENTERKIN.

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT

CHAP. V.—THE RESCUE AT ENTERKIN.

THE Pass of Enterkin is well known to us. How often have we passed through it in the joyous season of youth, when travelling to and from the College of Edinburgh! It is a deep and a steep ravine amongst the Lowther Hills, which separate Dumfries from Lanarkshire; through which a torrent pours its thousand and one cascades—

“Amidst the rocks around,
Devalling and falling into a pit profound.”

The road, which is a mere track, winds along the banks of the torrent, ever and anon covered and flanked by huge masses of rock, which have been shaken from the brow of the mountain, or been excavated, as it were, and brought into high relief, by the roaring flood. About the middle of this pass, as if it were for the express purpose of relieving the thirst of the weary traveller, in a wilderness “unknown to public view,” and at a distance from any human habitation, there sparkles out, from beneath a huge mass of grey-stone, a most plentiful and refreshing fount or well of spring-water. How often have we enjoyed the refreshment of this spring, in the society of the companions of our travel and of our early days! Here we reposed at noon, making use of refreshments, and indulging in all the wild and ungoverned hilarity of high spirits and bosoms void of care. Yet, even amidst our madness, we could not help viewing, or at least imagining that we viewed, a blood-spot on the very rock from which the water burst in such purity and abundance, and recollecting the sad narrative with which that stone was connected—for we were all Closeburn lads, and had heard the tale of the Pass of Enterkin repeated by our nearest and dearest relatives. Fletcher of Saltoun says—“Let me make the popular songs of a country, and any one who pleases may make the laws.” We would go a little farther, and say that, in youth, the character is decidedly formed by traditionary lore; and that thus mothers contribute, far more than they are aware of at the time, to the formation of the future character—to the happiness or misery, through life, of their children. At least, we know this, that we would not give what we learned from our mother, for all that we have ever attained either by private or public study. But to our story.

It was during a drifty night, in the month of February 168—, that a party of twelve individuals were travelling up this awful pass. The party consisted of six dragoons, who had dismounted from and were leading their horses, and four country people, three males and one female, whom they were driving before them, bound as prisoners, on their way to Edinburgh. The drift was choking, and they had ever and again to turn round to prevent suffocation. There were other and imminent dangers. At every turn, the road, from the eddies of the drift, became invisible; and they were in danger of losing footing, and of being precipitated many fathoms down into the bottom of the roaring linn beneath. The soldiers were loud in their curses against their commanding officer, Captain Douglas, who had sent them, under command of a sergeant, on this business, at such an unseasonable hour, in such a tempest, and along such a

difficult road; whilst the poor nonconformists—for such they were—employed their breath, in the intervals of the blast, in singing a part of the 121st Psalm:—

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid;
My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heav'n and earth hath made.”

This employment was matter of scoffing and merriment to the soldiers, who said they would prefer a good fire and a warm supper, with a kind landlady, to all the hills in Scotland. They continued, however, captive and guard, to advance, till they arrived at a spot somewhat sheltered by a rock, beneath which the snow had melted, and presented a black appearance amidst the surrounding whiteness. It was manifest that this was a well of spring-water; and the sergeant called a halt, that the soldiers might partake of some refreshment from a flask of brandy which he had wisely provided. The poor prisoners were not so well supplied, and were admonished, by the licentious and cruel-hearted soldiers, to refresh themselves with a stave. Amidst the prisoners, there was a young woman of great beauty, the daughter of the laird of Stennis or Stonehouse; whom, because she had refused to betray her own father, and had intercommunicated, as they termed it, with a young man in her neighbourhood, to whom she was promised in marriage, they were dragging onward to Edinburgh, to stand her trial along with her uncle Thomas Harkness, Peter M'Kechnie, and John Gibson. After the soldiers had made several applications to the flask, one of them, manifestly intoxicated; put his arms around the maiden's waist, and, using language improper to be mentioned, was in the act of compelling her to admit his unseemly and dishonourable addresses, when, all at once, a musket was fired, and the soldier fell down, gave one groan, and expired. This was clearly a signal which had been anticipated by the survivors, for, in an instant, they were out of sight, with the exception of poor John Gibson, who was shot through the head, as he was making for the linn beneath. There was an intended rescue; for several more shots were fired from behind the rock, and one of the surviving soldiers was severely wounded. However, the three remaining prisoners had escaped for the time, probably through their better knowledge of the road, which, at this point, leads to a fordable part of the torrent. This was the famous rescue of Enterkin, mentioned in Woodrow, in consequence of which the whole lower district of Dumfriesshire was laid under military law; and Grierson, and Douglas, and Dalryell of Binns, went about like roaring lions, devouring and murdering at their pleasure. The rescue had been planned and conducted by William M'Dougal, the young laird of Glenross, who, knowing the route the soldiers would take, and arranging the thing with Mary Maxwell, had resolved upon a rescue at this very spot. The impertinence, however, of the soldier had accelerated the catastrophe; for Robert M'Turk, one of his own servants—whom, along with a young band of seven or eight from Monihive, he had associated with himself in the plot—observing the indignity to which Miss Maxwell was exposed, could not wait orders, but killed the brute on the spot. Poor Robert suffered for his rashness; for a volley was immediately fired in the direction of the shot

which proved immediately fatal to him, and wounded, though slightly, one or two of his associates. William M'Dougal, immediately observing the affray, followed Mary, who, according to a preconcerted scheme, had fled into the linn; and, detaching themselves from the other two, for purposes of safety, they, with great difficulty, gained the summit of the Lowther Hills, from which the snow had drifted into the hollows; and, after various efforts to secure shelter, were compelled to sit down amidst the cold drift, and under the scoug of a peat-brow. Poor Mary was entirely overcome; but her lover was strong and resolute; and, having provided himself with sufficient refreshments, these two attached lovers felt themselves comparatively comfortable, even amidst the snow and the tempest. Burns talks of "a canny hour at een," and Goldsmith of "the hawthorn shade, for whispering lovers made;"—but here was the bare fell; the cold snow accumulating in drifted wreaths around their persons; and yet Will never kissed his Mary with greater good-will; nor did Mary, at any other time—not even in the snug "chamer ayont the closs"—cling so closely to the breast or to the lips of her faithful lover and the saviour of her life. But what was to be done? The tempest continued unabated. It was twelve o'clock, and the moon was up, though only visible at intervals. There was no house known to them nearer than the sheiling at Lowtherslacks, about two miles distant. The hollows were heaped up with drift, and it was scarcely possible to clear or to avoid them in directing their course towards Lowtherslacks. What was to be done? They might have kindled a fire with Will's musket; but where were the combustibles? In spite of French brandy, a chilliness was gradually coming over them; and they were upon the point of falling into that fatal state in such a situation—namely, into a sound sleep—when their attention was aroused by the barking, or rather howling of a dog in their immediate neighbourhood. At first, Will sprung to his gun; but, upon reflection, he began to divine the cause; and, whilst raising his voice to invite the approach of the dog, the animal was literally betwixt his shoulders. It was manifestly in a great state of alarm; and looked and pulled at his clothes, as if inviting him to follow it. This was immediately done; and the couple were led on, across the moss, into a ravine or hollow, on the further side of which, where the snow lay deep, the dog began to scrape and work most vigorously. In a little, the end or corner of a shepherd's plaid made its appearance, and, ultimately, the full-length figure of a man, who was still warm, and breathed as in a deep and refreshing sleep. With much difficulty, the reclining body was aroused into perception, and he was made aware of his danger, and help which had thus miraculously arrived. There being still some of the cordial remaining, it was immediately applied to the awakened sleeper's lips; and, after a few minutes of mutual inquiry, it was resolved to attempt the road to Lowtherslacks, whence the shepherd had come, in quest of, and to secure the safety of his master's flocks. This, however, would have been almost impossible, had not the shepherd's son, with a young and stout lad, been in the neighbourhood, and actually in quest of the perishing man. With much difficulty, however, and through some danger from scours and deep wreaths, the party at last reached the sheiling, where a half-distracted wife and a daughter, woman-grown, were thrown into an ecstasy by their safe arrival.

Such accommodation and refreshment as the house could afford was freely and kindly given; and Mary Maxwell slept soundly, after all her troubles and escapes, in the arms of the shepherd's daughter.

Next morning brought light, a keen frost, a clear sky, and many serious thoughts regarding the safety of all concerned. The shepherd was not ignorant of the risk which

he ran; and the guests were equally aware of the danger to which this hospitable family was exposed, in consequence of an act of humanity, or rather of gratitude. It was resolved, at last, that, till the weather mitigated, Mary Maxwell should remain in hiding, in the corner of a ewe bught, in the neighbourhood—having her food supplied from the house, and coming out occasionally, during the darkness of night in particular, to join the family party. This small erection had been made to shelter one or two ewes, which had felt the severities of a late spring, during lambing time. It was lined with rushes, built of turf, and scarcely visible even when you were close upon it, in consequence of a high wall, into a corner or angle of which it was fixed, like a limpet to a rock. William Macdougall bore away, by a distant glen which opened into the Clyde and, having promised to return for his beloved Mary when occasion should suit, he was seen no more for the present.

Leadhills was the nearest inhabited abode to this lonely sheiling; and any little necessaries which so humble a cottage required, were obtained from this village. In consequence of this intercourse, it was early known at the sheiling of Lowtherslacks, that the strictest search had been made, and was still making, for the prisoners, and for the rescuers at the Pass of Enterkin; that several had been taken, and marched off to Edinburgh; but whether William Macdougall was of the number or not, was not ascertained. In fact, it was more than dangerous to make any direct inquiry respecting any particular individual, as attention was thus drawn to his case; and informers were kept and paid all over the country, (under the superintendance of the Aberdeen Curates,) to give information to the military, even of the most casual surmise. It was during a dark night about a fortnight after Will M'Dougal's disappearance, that he reappeared at Lowtherslacks, and spent the whole evening in company with his beloved Mary and her kind entertainers. He had learned, he said, whilst in hiding at Crawfordjohn, that the soldiers had been called off to quell an apprehended insurrection at Glencairn, and had taken this opportunity of revisiting the spot which was so pleasantly associated in his mind. He had been observed, however, in crossing the hills, which had now escaped from a part of their covering, and information had been lodged with Grierson at Wanlockhead, of the fact. The truth was, that the report of the absence of the dragoons from the hill country was a mere device to bring forth the poor nonconformist from his hidingplace, and to expose him the more readily to surprise. The fireside of Lowtherslacks was never more cheerfully encircled than on this memorable evening. The peats burned brightly, and the sooty rafters looked down from their smoky recesses, with a placid gleam, on the happy group. About twelve o'clock, it was judged safe to separate—Mary to return to her straw bed in the sheepfold, and William to make the best of his way back to his retreat at Crawfordjohn. Next morning, an hour before daybreak, and under the dim light of a waning moon, saw this solitary cottage surrounded with armed men on horseback. The inmates were immediately summoned from their beds, and a strict and unceremonious search for William Macdougall commenced. The father, the son, the wife, the daughters, and the herd lad, were all turned out, half naked, to the croft before the door. Never, perhaps, was there a more fearful and melancholy gathering. That moon,

"Well known to hynd and matron old,"

in her last quarter, hung on the southern horizon, ready to shroud herself from such unhallowed doings in the mountain shadow. Above them was the famous burial-ground, where, time out of mind, the suicides of two counties had been enearthed. The earth was partially blackened by a thaw, which still continued; but vast wreaths lay in the

hollows, and looked out in cold and chilly brightness from their mountain recesses. Grierson insisted, in terms peculiar to himself, on the old shepherd and his family giving information of the retreat of Macdougall, who had been traced but last night to the neighbourhood. It was mentioned by one of the dragoons, that he even saw the herd lad forgather with a figure, which he took to be William Macdougall, on the hill top; but he was too distant, and without his horse, else he would have given chase.

The young man was interrogated, but refused to give any information on the subject. Grierson lost all patience, swore a round oath, and, presenting his pistol, shot him dead on the spot. The report of firearms brought up two figures, scarcely discernible in the dubious light, from the fold-dyke. The one was a female, the other a male. O God! they were those of Mary and William, who, being unable to withdraw himself from his beloved, had esconced himself, along with her, amongst the rushes of the little cot. They came rushing on in frenzy, exclaiming that they were there to suffer—to be shot—to be tortured; but entreating that their kind and innocent entertainers might not suffer on their account. "So ho!" exclaimed Grierson, "we have unkenneled the foxes at last; secure them, lambs, and let us march for the guid town of Biggar; we will reach it ere night; and then, ho, my jolly lovers, for Edinburgh—sweet Edinburgh! Can you sing, my sweet maiden—

'Now, wat ye wha I met yestreen?'

It's a pretty song, my neat one; and all about Edinburgh, and Arthur's Seat, and love, and sweet William. You will certainly give us a stanza or two by the way? It beats your covenanting psalm-singing, hollow"—and then he sang out, in a whining, covenanting tone—

"'Wo's me, that I in Meshech am
A sojourner so long,
Or that I in the tents do dwell
To Grierson that belong."

March march, devils and devil's dams; we have now picked up a goodly company of these heather-bleats—these whistling mire-snipes of the hills—no less than eight; we will march them, every clute, in at the West Port, to glorify God at the head of the Grassmarket. March! It is broad day, and we have a pretty long journey. As for you," (speaking to the shepherd,) "old sheep's head and moniplies, we will leave you and your good friends to do the duties of sepulchre to this bit of treason. There is good ground, I am told, hard by, where the weary rest. You can all cut your own throats, to save us the trouble, and your churchyard accommodation is secured to you. Good-by, old Lucky and young Chucky! I have no time at present to doff my bonnet, and do the polite; and your joe, there, is past speaking, I suspect, much more past kissing. Good-by! good-by!" said the monster, waving his sword, and laughing immoderately at his own savage wit.

The body of Sandy Laidlaw was indeed carefully interred, not where pointed out by Lag, but in the churchyard of Leadhills, over which a small headstone still retains the letters—"A. L., murdered 1687." Poor Leezy Lawson, who was indeed the betrothed of Sandy, never saw a day to thrive after this dreadful morning. She went out of one strong convulsion into another, for many hours; and then sank into a lethargic unconsciousness, which terminated in mental and bodily imbecility, which ended, in less than twelve months, in death. Her body lies alongside of that of her lover; but there is no intimation of this fact on the stone; and all marks of the presence on earth of these two once living and happy beings has passed away—*tiam periere ruinae*—their very dust has perished.

The court at Edinburgh was crowded on the trial of the state prisoners, particularly of those who had been concerned in the rescue at Enterkin. There Lauderdale sat, after an evening's debauch, with his long hair hanging uncombed

about his shoulders and over his brow; with his waistcoat unbuttoned towards the bottom; his face, round, swollen, red, and fiery; and his eyes swimming in every cruel and unhallowed imagining. Poor Mary Maxwell, trembling, weak, and worn out with travelling on foot, was placed at the bar; and M'Kenzie, the King's Advocate, proceeded against her. Her indictment was in the usual style. She was accused of harbouring nonconformists; of intercommuning with outlaws; of conspiring and aiding in the hellish rescue at Enterkin, where murder had been committed; and in continuing, after all due warning, to hold intercourse with the King's enemies. But the proof of all this was somewhat deficient; and, even in these awful times, such was the respect for public opinion, that the court durst not, in the absence of some direct evidence, pronounce sentence of death. She, as well as William M'Dougall, against whom there was still less evidence, were remitted to Dunottar Castle—of which march and unheard of misery we have already told the tale—and were to have been exported thence, in due time, to America; but mercy and King William intercepted the cruel sentence; and William M'Dougall and Mary Maxwell were permitted to return to their native glen in peace. The Macdougalls of Glenross are sprung from this root, and still continue a respected name in the valley.

CHAP. VI.—THE FATAL MISTAKE.

OLD Elspeth Wallace lived, at the time of which I am about to speak, in a sequestered spot in the parish of Dalry, in the district of Carrick, Ayrshire. She was a widow woman, but not in indigent circumstances. Through the kindness of the family of Cassilis, she had a cow's grass, a small croft, a pickle barley, which, in due time, and under the usual process, was converted into small drink, or tippenny, as it was called in those days.

"Wi' tippenny, [says Burns,] I fear nae evil."

She had, besides, a good large kailyard, from which she contrived to support her cow during the winter season. In fact, Elspeth's whole riches consisted in her cow and an only daughter, who, however, was out at service in a neighbouring farm town. This cow and Elspeth were constant companions, and it was difficult to say which was most essential to the other's happiness. The first thing Elspeth did, after her duty to her God, was to attend to Doddy; and the first look Doddy gave over her shoulder, was towards the door through which Elspeth was expected to enter. During the fine days of summer, Elspeth might be seen conversing with her cow as with a rational being, whilst Doddy was engaged in plucking, or in ruminating. If Elspeth went for a day from home, Doddy was quite disconsolate, and would roam about the house and park, as if in quest of her companion. In fact, these two sentient beings had become, as it were, essential to each other's happiness. The small circumstance of rationality had been overlooked, and the common instinct of kindly feeling had united them completely. There was just one other inmate of this sequestered apartment—a large, sonsy, gaucy cat. This animal partook in all Elspeth's meals and movements; ceased purring when Elspeth prayed, and went afield and returned at Elspeth's heels, like a colly-dog. To be sure, there was a little jealousy on Doddy's side, when Pussy seemed to occupy too much attention, for she (*videlicet*, Doddy) would come up and smell at Pussy as she sat on Elspeth's knee, and then, shaking her head and snorting, make off quick-step to a distance. Nevertheless, these three—we dare not say this triumvirate, for fear of the etymologists—got on exceedingly well, and with fewer disputations and quarrelings than generally occur amongst the same number of rationals. Elspeth had been married for one single year and fifteen days, as she

often mentioned. Her husband had been gardener at Collean, and had been killed on the spot, by the fall of a tree, which he was assisting in felling. Jenny, or, as she was familiarly called, Jessy Wallace, was born a few days after this mournful accident, and had been reared with much care and affection. Necessity, however, removed her, at the age of fifteen, from her mother's roof, but to no great distance; and she would frequently come to visit her mother of a Saturday evening, and return next day to her post of duty. Such was the state of things at Blairquhan, in the year of our Lord 1678, when the Highland Host was let loose upon the western district of Scotland, in particular. Bonds! bonds! bonds! were then the order of the day; the proprietor must give bond for his tenantry, the tenantry for their servants, the father and mother for their children, and the brother, even, for his sister. These bonds were certifications to prevent those who were, or were presumed to be, under your authority, from attending conventicles, hill-preachings, and prayer-meetings—in short, from committing any act which could be construed into a resistance to the most despotic and cruel executions that ever vexed an oppressed people. This Highland Host, as it was familiarly called, consisted of an army of half-naked and wholly savage Highlanders of the name and clan of Campbell, from the county of Argyle. Their only object was pillage, their only law the gratification of the lowest propensities, and their only restraint their officers' pleasure. "When the Highlanders went back," says Woodrow, "one would have thought that they had been at the sacking of some besieged town, by their baggage and luggage. They were loaded with spoil; they carried away a great many horses, cows, and no small quantity of goods out of merchant ships. You would have seen them with loads of bed-clothes, carpets, men and women's wearing apparel, pots and pans, gridirons, shoes, and other furniture," &c. Such was the nature and character of the Highland Host, which, at the date to which we have referred, overspread, and oppressed, and outraged from Greenock to Galloway, from Lanark to the town of Ayr.

Elspeth Wallace and her daughter were sitting, of a Saturday's night, by the side of a comfortable peat fire. It was a hard frost, moonlight, and in the month of February. Their supper consisted of boiled sowans, with a small accompaniment, on such occasions, as that of beer and bannock. Elspeth had just got her pipe lighted, and was beginning to weigh the propriety of her daughter accepting of a proposal of marriage, when the door opened, or rather gave way, and in burst "her nane sel," in all the glory of filth and nakedness. There were two figures on the floor, in Highland plaids; but with a very scanty appointment of nether garments. There was no commanding officer present; and these two helpless women were left to the mercy, or rather the merciless pleasure, of these two Highland savages. In vain did Elspeth expostulate, and represent the cruelty of their conduct. They but partially understood what she said, and replied in broken English. Their actions, however, were sufficiently demonstrative; for the one laid hold of the poor girl, who screamed and expostulated in vain; and the other unloosed the cow from the stake, and, tying the old helpless woman to the same stake from which they had unloosed the cow, they immediately began their march up the Glen of Blairquhan. Poor Jessy Wallace soon learned that she was destined for the closet of my Lord Airley, then commanding in the district, who had unfortunately seen her, marked her beauty, and destined her to ruin; and that the cow was the price at which the services of these two savages had been procured. It was difficult to say which of these brothers (for brethren they were, not only in iniquity, but by blood) had the more difficult task—he who dragged onwards the camstair and unwilling brute, or he who half-dragged, half-carried, the resisting and struggling maiden.

The Sabine rape was playwork to this. Donald swore, and Archibald cursed; but still the progress which they made was little, and the trouble and labour which they were subjected to, were immense. At last matters came to a dead stand: Doddy absolutely refused to march one inch further; and Donald proposed that, since "matters might no better be," they should "slay te prute" at once. So, having secured Jessie's ankles by means of her napkin, and placed her upon a rock in the midst of the mountain stream, with all suitable admonitions respecting the folly of even meditating an escape, Archibald and Donald set to work to carry their deadly purpose into execution on Doddy. But how was this to be effected? Doddy, very unaccountably, as it seemed to her nightly visitors, would neither lead nor drive, nor in any way be art and part in her own destruction. Having held a council of death, and having resolved to carry over the hill as much as they could of Doddy's flesh, they immediately set to work in compassing the means of destruction. But these were not so much at hand as might have been wished. They had neither nail nor hammer, else they would have given Doddy a Sisera exit; nor had they even an ordinary pocket knife. They were totally destitute of arms, by order of their officer, as their duty was not to kill, but to keep alive; not to conquer, but to spoil. What was to be done? "Deil tak them wha hae nae shifts!" says the old proverb; but then it unfortunately adds, "Deil tak them again that haeowremony!"—So, at the suggestion of Donald, a large water-worn stone was selected from the channel of the burn, and being tied up firmly into the corner or poke of the Highland plaid, it was judged an efficient instrument of death. Doddy, however, observed, and appeared, at least to Jessy, to understand what was going on, and had taken her measures accordingly. There they stood—Donald holding on by the horns, and Archy swinging and aiming, but hesitating, from the instability of the object to be struck, to inflict the fatal blow. Again and again the stone was swung, and the blow was meditated; but again and again did Doddy twist and twine herself almost out of Donald's hands. At last, losing all patience, Archy swung the great stone round his head, which, when in mid-air, took a different direction from that which was intended—or it might be that the error was owing to the sudden wresting of Doddy—but so it was, and of verity, that the stone came ultimately full swing, not upon the forehead of the cow, but upon the temples of Donald, and felled him to the ground.

"Wi' glowering een and lifted hands,"
says Burns,

"Poor Hughoe like a statue stands."

It would be impossible, by any similitude or quotation, to give an accurate picture of Archy Campbell, when he saw Doddy, free as air, taking the bent and crooning defiance, and his own brother lying a corpse at his feet, and all by his own hands. It is needless to say that, in all bosoms, there are sympathies and calls of affection. The trade upon which Donald and Archy were employed was a bad one; but they had great brotherly affection, and it was indeed, as has been repeated to us, an affecting sight to behold Archy's grief on this occasion. He leant over, he embraced, he kissed his brother; he raised up the dead body to the wind, he braided back the hair, he wiped the foam from the lips, he burst at last into tears, and fell down apparently lifeless on his brother's corpse. So deeply has God imprinted himself on our natures—nothing, not even Lauderdale-cruelty, could entirely erase his image.

Poor Jessy escaped, in the meantime, to her mother, and was married in the course of a month. The present member of parliament for the Ayr Burghs is her lineal descendant.

CHAP. VII.—BONNY MARY GIBSON.

THE summer of 168— was wet and ungenial; the little grain which Scotland at that time produced had never ripened, and men and women would shear all day, and carry home the greater part of the thin and scanty upland crop on their backs. The winter was issued in by strange and marvellous reports—men fighting in the air—showers of Highland bonnets—and eclipses of no ordinary occurrence. In fact, the northern lights, which for centuries had disappeared, had again returned, and were viewed by a superstitious people with much dread and amazement. The end of the world was anticipated and confidently predicted, and the soul of man sank within him under the pressure of an awakened conscience. Besides, political events were sufficiently distressing: the battle of Bothwell Brig had been fought and lost by the friends of Presbytery and religious freedom; and strong parties, under the command of demons, denominated Grierson, Johnstone, Douglas, and Clavers, scoured the west country, and Dumfriesshire in particular, making sad and fearful havoc amongst God's covenanted flock. It appeared to many, and to Walter Gibson of Auchincairn in particular, that, what betwixt the pestilence induced by want and bad provisions, and the devastations brought on the earth by the hand of man, life was not only precarious, but a burden. Men rose, went about their wonted employment, and retired again to rest, without a smile, and often without exchanging a word. Young men and young women were seen constantly perusing the Bible, and taking farewell of each other, with the feeling that they were never to meet again. The cattle were driven into the farmer's stores from the outfields, and there bled every three weeks. The blood thus obtained was mixed, and boiled with green kail from the yard, and this, with a mere sprinkling of meal, was all the subsistence which could be afforded to master and servant, to guest and beggar. A capacious pot, filled with this supply, stood from morn to night in the farmer's kitchen, with a large horn spoon stuck into the centre of it; and every one who entered helped himself to a heaped spoonful, and retired, making way for a successor. If the summer had been ungenial, the winter was unusually severe. Snow and frost had set in, long before Christmas, with awful severity. The sheep were starving, and dying by scores on the hills; and the farmer, with his servant band, were employed all day in digging out the half and wholly dead from the snow wreaths. The strength of man failed him; and the very dogs deserted their masters, and lived wild on the hills, feeding on the dead and dying. It was indeed an awful time, and a judgment-like season, unparalleled (unless perhaps by the year '40 of the last century) in the annals of Scotland. Five hundred human beings are said to have perished of hunger merely, within the limited district of Dumfriesshire, besides many hundreds whom the plague (for such it was deemed and called) cut off.

It was on a cold frosty night, with intervals of drifting and falling snow, that a strange apparition made its way into the kitchen of Auchincairn, in the hill district of the parish of Closeburn. It was naked, emaciated, and extremely feeble, and rolled itself into the langsettle with extreme difficulty. "In the name of God," said Mrs Gibson, "who and what art thou?" But the apparition only stretched out its hand, and, pointing to its mouth, signified that it was dumb. Food, such as has been described, was immediately administered; and a glass of French brandy seemed to revive the skeleton greatly. Walter Gibson, and his wife Janet Harkness, were not the persons to deny shelter on such a night and to such an object. Warm blankets and a great peat-fire were resorted to; and the next morning saw the stranger much recovered. But he was manifestly deaf and dumb, and could only converse by signs;—his features, now that they could be clearly

marked, were regular, and a superior air marked his movements. He was apparently young; but he refused to make known, by means of writing, his previous history. There he was, and there he seemed disposed to remain; and it was not possible to eject by force a being at once so dependent and so interesting. As he gained strength, he would walk out with an old musket, which hung suspended from the roofing of the kitchen, and return with valuable and acceptable provisions—hares, miresnipes, woodcocks, partridges, and even crows, were welcome visitors in the kitchen of Auchincairn. Without the aid of a dog, and with ammunition which nobody knew how he procured, he contrived to contribute largely to the alleviation of the winter's sufferings. The family, consisting of one daughter about eighteen years of age, a son about twenty-two, and four or five male and female servants, were deeply impressed with the notion that he possessed some unearthly powers, and was actually sent by heaven for the purpose of preserving them alive during the asperities and deprivations of the famine and the storm. The winter gradually and slowly passed away, and it was succeeded by a spring, and a summer, and a harvest of unusual beauty and productiveness. The stranger was a wanderer in the fields, and in the linn, and in the dark places of the mountains; and it was observed that he had read all the little library of Auchincairn—consisting of Knox's History, "The Holy War," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and a volume of sermons—again and again. He had clearly been well educated, and, as his frame resumed a healthy aspect, he looked every inch a gentleman. Mary Gibson was a kind-hearted, bonny lassie. There were no pretensions to ladyhood about her; but her sweet face beamed with benevolence, and her warm heart beat with goodness and affection. She had, all along, been most kind and attentive to the poor dumb gentleman, (as she called him,) for it early struck her that the stranger had been born such. But, all at once, the stranger disappeared; and, though search was made in all his haunts, not a trace of him could be found. It was feared that, in some of his reveries, he had stumbled over the Whiteside Linn; but his body was not to be found. Newspapers, in these days, there were none, at least in Dumfriesshire; and, in a month or two, the family of Auchincairn seemed to have made up their mind to regard their mysterious visitor in the light of a benevolent messenger of God—in short, of an angel. Into this opinion, however, Mary, it was observed, did not fully enter. But she *said* little, and *sung* much, and seemed but little affected by the stranger's departure.

It was in the month of November, of this destructive season, that, one morning, long ere daylight, the closs of Auchincairn was filled with dragoons. There were fearful oaths, and plunging of swords into bed-covers and wool-sacks, in quest of some one after whom they were searching. At length, Walter Gibson and his son were roused from their beds, and placed, half-naked, in the presence of Grierson of Lag, to be interrogated respecting a stranger whom they had sheltered for months past, and whom Grierson described as an enemy to the King and his government. Of this, both son and father declared, and truly, their ignorance; but they were disbelieved, and immediately marched off, under a guard, to Lag Castle, to Dumfries, and ultimately to Edinburgh, there to await a mock trial, for harbouring a traitor. In vain was all remonstrance on the part of the wife and daughter. Resistance was impossible, and tears were regarded as a subject of merriment.

"Ay, pipe away there," said the infamous Lag, "and scream and howl your belly-fulls; but it will be long ere such music will reach the ear, or soften the heart, of my Lord Lauderdale. There is a maiden in Edinburgh, my gentle wood-dove," familiarly grasping Mary Gibson's chin,

and squeezing it even to agony—"there is a maiden in Edinburgh, more loving, by far, than thou canst be; and to this lady of the sharp tongue and heavy hand shall thy dainty brother soon be wedded. As to the old cock, a new pair of boots and a touch of the thumbikins will probably awaken his recollections, and clear his judgment. But march, my lads!—we are wasting time." And the cavalcade rode off, having eaten and drunk all eatables and drinkables in the dwelling.

Mrs Gibson was a person of mild and submissive manners; but there was a strength in her character, which rose with the occasion. She immediately dried up her tears, spoke kindly, and in words of comforting, to her daughter; and, taking her plaid about her shoulders, retired to the barn, where she had long been in the habit of offering up her supplication and thanksgiving to the God of her fathers. When she came forth, after some hours of private communion with herself, she seemed cheered and resolved, and addressed herself to the arrangement of family matters, as if nothing particular had happened. In a few days, information was conveyed to her, that her husband and son had been marched off to Edinburgh, there to await their trial, for the state offence of harbouring a rebel, but really to gratify the resentment of the parish curate, who had taken mortal offence at their nonconformity. Helen Gibson had already resolved in what manner she was to act; and, leaving her daughter to superintend domestic affairs, she set out, like her successor Jeanie Deans, on foot, and unprotected, to Edinburgh, there to visit her husband and son in their confinement, and intercede, should opportunity occur, with the superior and ruling powers, for their life and freedom. As she wandered up the wild path which conducts to Leadhills, it began to snow, and it was with infinite difficulty that she reached the highest town in Scotland, then an insignificant village. Fever was the consequence of this exertion; but, after a few days' rest, she recovered, and, though still feeble, pursued her way. At Biggar, news reached her that four individuals had, a few days before, been executed at the Gallowlee; and she retired to rest with an alarmed and a dispirited mind. The snow having thawed, she pursued her way under the Pentlands next day, and had advanced as far as Brighouse, at the foot of these hills, when, overcome by fatigue, she was compelled to seek for shelter under the excavation of a rock, upon the banks of a mountain torrent, which works its way, through rock and over precipice, at this place. Being engaged in prayer, she did not observe, for some time, a figure which stood behind her; but what was her surprise, when, on looking around, she recognised at once the well-known countenance of the poor dumb lad! He was now no longer dumb, but immediately informed her that he lived in the neighbourhood; and entreated his former mistress to accompany him home to his habitation. Surprise and astonishment had their play in her bosom—but comfort and something like confidence succeeded; for Mrs Gibson could not help seeing the finger of her God in this matter.

She was conveyed by her guide, now a well-dressed and well-spoken gentleman, to his abode at Pentland Tower—a strongly-built edifice, well fitted for defence, and indicating the antiquity of the family by which it had been possessed. The place was to her a palace, and she looked with amazement on the looking-glasses and pictures which it contained; but, what was of more moment and interest than all other considerations, she learned that King James had fled, and King William had given "Liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were bound." Nay, more, her mysterious landlord informed her that, having himself just obtained his pardon, he had only returned from skulking about, from place to place, to his paternal inheritance, a few days ago, and that, having heard of her family's misfortunes, occasioned, in

some measure, by himself, he had immediately repaired to Edinburgh, had seen her husband and son, who were actually at that moment in another chamber of the same house, on their return home to Auchincairn. His encounter with her had undoubtedly been providential, as he had not the slightest idea that she could possibly be in his neighbourhood.

The interview which followed, with all its interesting and fond recognisances, I shall leave to the reader's imagination—only noticing the kindness of the young laird of Pentland Tower, in consequence of which the father and son were compelled to delay their return to Auchincairn for a few days, in the course of which a chaise one evening drove up to the door, from which alighted, dressed in her newest attire, and in all the pride of beauty and of a gentle nature, Mary Gibson.

The sequel can be easily anticipated. To all but Mary, the poor persecuted stranger had been dumb; but to her he had formerly confided the secret of his birth, and his subsequent history; and in places "whar warl sa na," they had again and again sworn truth and fealty to each other. But having learned that a search was going on in his neighbourhood, the young "Laird of Pentland Tower" had assumed a new disguise, and betaken himself to another locality, from which he was drawn by the blessed change of government already alluded to, as well as by his wish to dignify and adorn, with the name and the honour of wife, "a bonny, virtuous, kind-hearted lassie," who long continued to share and add to his happiness, and to secure the inheritance of Pentland Tower, with its domains, to the name of "Lindsay."

Among the claimants who, a few years ago, contended for the honours of the lordship of Lindsay, I observed a lineal descendant of BONNY MARY GIBSON.

CHAP. VIII.—THE ESKDALEMUIR STORY.

IN the rural retreats of Eskdalemuir, the following narrative still exists in tradition:—

A soldier belonging to Johnstone of Westerhall's company, had a fall from his horse, in consequence of which he was disabled for a time from service. He was committed to the charge of a poor but honest family in Eskdalemuir, near Yettbyres, where he was carefully nursed and well attended to. This family consisted of a mother, a daughter, and two sons, who were shepherds on the property of Yettbyres. The daughter's name was Jean Wilson; and the soldier's heart was lost to Jean, ere he was aware. In truth, Jean was a beauteous rose-bud, a flower of the wilderness, in her seventeenth year, and most kind and attentive to their guest. To own more truth, Jean was likewise in love with the brave and manly figure and bearing of her patient; but she never told him so, being greatly averse to his profession and his politics—for he was one of the persecutors of God's people, and Jean's father had been shot on Dumfries sands for his adherence to the Covenant. At last, however, and after many fruitless attempts, on Jean's part, to convert the soldier, and convince him of the evil of his profession, he was again summoned to his post—and the sheiling of Yettbyres assumed its wonted peaceful aspect.

In the midst of the Eskdale mountains, a scene was exhibited of no ordinary interest. A poor captive stood bound, and blinded; a party of five soldiers, under the command of a sergeant, was ordered out to shoot him. The poor man had asked for five minutes of indulgence, which was granted; during which time he had sung some verses of a psalm, and prayed. It was night, and full moon. It was in the midst of a mountain glen, and by the side of a mountain stream; all was still, and peaceful, and

lonely around—but the passions of men were awake. There was a voice—it was the voice of Johnstone of Westerhall—which commanded the men to do their duty, and to blow out the brains of the poor kneeling captive. “If I do, may I be hanged!” exclaimed the sergeant, standing out before his men, and looking defiance on his captain. “What!” exclaimed Johnstone, “do you dare to disobey my orders? Soldiers, seize Sergeant Watson, and bind him!” In the meantime, partly through the connivance of the men, and partly from the confusion which ensued, the captive had made his escape. To him the localities of this glen were all familiar; and, by ensconcing himself beneath and beyond a sheet of foaming water which was projected from an apron fall in the linn, John Wilson effected his escape for the time.

The sergeant was immediately carried to headquarters at Lockerby, and tried by a court-martial for disobedience of orders. The court consisted of Grierson of Lag, Winram of Wigton, Douglas of Drumlanrig, and Bruce of Bunyeon. The fact of disobedience was not denied—but the soldier pled the obligations which he had been under to the Wilson family, during his distress; and his consequent unwillingness to become the instrument of John Wilson's murder. Even Clavers was somewhat softened by the statement, and was half inclined to sustain the reason, when Johnston struck in, and urged strongly the necessity of preserving subordination at all times in the army—and particularly in these times, when instances of disobedience to orders were anything but uncommon. Douglas of Drumlanrig seemed likewise to be on the point of yielding to the better feelings of humanity, when Grierson, Winram, and Bruce decided, by a majority, that Sergeant Watson should be carried back to the ground where the act had been committed, and shot dead on the spot.

The poor sergeant's eyes were tied up, and the muskets of four soldiers levelled at his head, when a scream was heard—and a lovely girl, in the most frantic manner, threw herself into the arms of the victim.

“You shall not murder him!” she exclaimed; “or, if ye do, ye shall murder us both. What!—did he not save the life of my poor brother, and shall I scruple to lay down my life for him? Oh, no, no! Level your murderous weapons, and bury us both, when your wish is done, in one grave. Oh, you never knew what woman's love was till now.” He strained her to his bosom in reply.

“Keep off, keep off!” exclaimed a man's voice from behind. “Save, for Heaven and a Saviour's sake—oh, save innocent life! I am the victim you are in quest of—bind me, blindfold me, shoot me dead—but spare, oh, spare, in mercy and in justice, youth and innocence, the humane heart, and the warm young bosom. Is not she my sister, ye men of blood?—and have none of ye a sister? Is not he my saviour, ye messengers of evil?—and have none of ye gratitude for deeds of mercy done? Surely, surely”—addressing himself to Westerhall—“ye will not, ye cannot pronounce that fearful word which must prove fatal to three at once; for, as God is my hope, this day and on this spot will I die, if not to avert, at least to share the fate of these two.”

It was remarked that a tear stood in the eye of Clavers, who turned his horse's head about, and galloped off the field. The men looked to Westerhall for orders; but he had turned his head aside, to look after his superior officer. It was evidently a fearful moment of suspense. The muskets shook in the men's hands; and, without saying one word, Johnstone turned his horse's head around, and rode over the hill after his superior.

The case was tried at Dumfries, and, hardened as bosoms were in these awful times, many an eye, unwont to weep, was filled with tears, as the circumstances of this fearful case unfolded themselves. Jean Wilson never looked

so lovely as when, with a boldness altogether foreign to her general conduct, she confessed and exulted in her crime. The sergeant admitted the justice of his sentence, but pled his inability to avoid the guilt. John Wilson admitted his want of conformity, and urged his father's murder as sufficient ground for his rooted hatred of the murderers. The jury were not divided. They pronounced a sentence of acquittal, and the court rang with shouts of applause. From that day and hour, Johnstone of Westerhall resigned his commission, and, betaking himself to private life, is said to have exhibited marks of genuine repentance.

The woods around Closeburn Castle are indeed most beautiful; and that winding glen which leads to Gilchristland, is romantic in no ordinary degree. That is the land of the Watsons, the lineal descendants of this poor sergeant, who, immediately after the trial, married sweet Jeanie Wilson, and settled ultimately in the farm of Gilchristland, where they and theirs, many sons and daughters, have lived in respectability and independence ever since. That three-story house which overlooks the valley of the Nith, and is visible from Drumlanrig to the Stepends of Closeburn, is tenanted by Alexander Watson, one of the wealthiest farmers and cattle-dealers in the South of Scotland.

CHAP. IX.—THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY.

UPON the banks or shore of the Frith of Cree, at that point where it would be difficult to say whether the sea or the river prevailed, stood, in old times, a mud cottage, surrounded by a clump of trees. It was quite a nest of a thing; and beautifully did the blue smoke ascend, strongly relieved and brought out by the dark woodland. The ships, in passing and repassing, sailed close to the door of this lonely dwelling, and would often, in fine weather, exchange salutations with its inmates. These inmates were Janet Smith and Nanny Nivison—the one old, and almost bed-ridden—the other young, and beautiful, and kind-hearted. Nanny, who was an orphan, lived with her grandmother; and, whilst she discharged the duties of a nurse, she was extremely efficient in earning their mutual subsistence. In these days, spinning-jennies were not; and many a fireside was enlivened by the whirr of the “big” or the berr of the “wee” wheel. The check-reel, with its cheerful click or challenge at every sixtieth revolution, was there; and the kitchen rafters were ornamented by suspended hanks of sale yarn. There sat, by a good, warm, peat fire, the aged and sleepy cat, winking contentment in both eyes, and prognosticating rain, by carefully washing her face with her fore-paw. There, too, in close alliance and perfect peacefulness, lay a blind cur-dog, who had known other days, and had followed to the field, if not some warlike lord, at least one of the lords of the creation, in the shape of John Nivison, who had been shot on the south range of the Galloway Hills, for his adherence to the Covenant. His son Thomas, the brother of Nanny, had been long outlawed, and was supposed, even by his sister—his only sister—to have effected his escape to America. It was a beautiful and peaceful evening in the months of harvest—all was cheerfulness around. The mirthful band was employed, at no great distance, in cutting down and collecting into sheaves and stooks the abundant crop; and the husbandman, with his coat deposited in the hedge at the end of the field, was as busily employed as any of his band. The voice of man and woman, lad and lass, master and servant, was mixed in one continuous flow of rustic wit and rural jest. The surface of the Frith was smooth as glass, and the Galloway Hills looked down from heaven, and up from beneath, with brows of serenity and friendship. One or two vessels were tiding it up in the midst of

the stream, with a motion scarcely perceptible. They had all sails set, and looked as if suspended in a glassy network, half-way betwixt heaven and earth. The sun shone westward, near to his setting, and the white and softly-rolled clouds only served to make the blue of a clear sky still more deep and lovely. The lassie wi' the lint-white locks spread over an eye of bonny blue—

“The little halcyon's azure plume
Was never half so blue!”—

might well assimilate to this sunny sky. Nature seemed to say to man, from above and from beneath—from hill and from dale—from land and from sea—from a thousand portals of beauty and blessedness—“Thou stranger on earth, enjoy the happiness which thy God prepares for thee. For thee, he has hung the heavens in a drapery of light and love—for thee, he hath clothed the earth in fragrance and plenty—for thee, he hath spread out the waters of the great sea, and made them carriers of thy wealth and thy will from land to land, and from the broad sea to the city and the hamlet on the narrow Frith.” Thus spake, or seemed to speak, God to man, in the beautiful manifestations of his love. But what said “man to man?” Alas! true it is, and of verity, that

“Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

The whole of the south of Scotland was, at this peaceful hour, overrun with locusts and caterpillars—with all that can hurt and destroy—that can mar, mangle, and torture—with rage, persecution, and violence—profanity, bloodshed, and death. Oh, what a contrast!—Look, only look, on this picture, and on that:—Here all peace; there, Douglas Grierson, Johnston, Clavers: here, all mercy and love; there, the red dragoons, stained and besmeared with blood and with brains: here, the comforts, and fellowship, and affection of home and of kindred; there, the mountain solitude, the trembling refugee, the damp cave, and the bed of stone! Truly, God hath made man in innocence, but he hath found out many inventions, and, amongst others, the instruments of torture and of death—the bloody maiden—the accursed boots—and the thumbikin and torch, to twist and burn with anguish the writhing soul. And all this, for what? To *convert* the nation into a land of hypocrites—to stifle the dictates of conscience—to extinguish liberty, and establish despotism. But, *tempora mutantur*, thank God! it is otherwise now with the people of Scotland—and the sword of oppressive violence has been sheathed for ever.

It was night, it was twelve o'clock, and all was silence, save that, at intervals, the grating crave of the landrail or corncaik was heard, like some importunate creditor craving payment, from breath to breath, of his due. An image stood in the passage of the clay-built dwelling—it was not visible, but there was silence and a voice—it was a well-known voice. “Oh, my God, it is my brother!” Thus exclaimed Nancy Nivison, whilst she threw herself, naked as she was, into the arms of her long-lost and sore-lamented brother. The old woman was gradually aroused to a conception of what was going forward; but her spirit was troubled within her, and she groaned, whilst she articulated—“Beware, I pray ye!—beware what ye're doing!—Douglas is as near as Wigton with his band of murderers. They have shot the father—and they will not scruple to murder, by law or without law, the son. O sirs, I'm unco distressed to think o' the danger which this unexpected visit must occasion!” Thomas Nivison had, indeed, sailed for America; but he had been shipwrecked on the Isle of Arran, not far from the coast of Ireland, and had lived for months with the fishermen, by assisting them in their labour. But hame is hame—

“Oh, hame, hame, hame, fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame to my ain countrie!”

So breathes, in perfect nature and simplicity, the old song; and so feels, amidst the bare rocks and stormy inlets of Arran, poor Thomas Nivison. And, for the sake of this humble home, this poor outlaw, upon whose head a price had been set, (as he had wounded, almost to death, one of his father's murderers,) had run, and was now running, incalculable risks. Long ere daylight, Thomas Nivison had betaken himself to a hidingplace in the linns of Cree; but his visit had not escaped observation. A smuggler of brandy and tea from the Isle of Man, being engaged in what he denominated the free trade, chanced to mark his approach, and fled immediately with the news to Douglas at Wigton. The troop surrounded the house by break of day; but the bird was flown.

What a scene was exhibited, in a few days, on this peaceful shore! Two women—the one old and scarcely able to support her head, and the other young, beautiful, but stripped down to the waist, and tied to a stake within flood-mark on the Frith of Cree; a guard of dragoons surrounding the spot, and an officer of rank riding, ever and anon, to the saddlegirths, into the swelling flood, and questioning the poor sufferers very hard. But it was all in vain; Thomas Nivison was neither betrayed by sister nor by grandmother. In fact, they knew not, though they might have their suspicions, of his retreat. Can it be believed in the present times—and yet this is a fact attested by history as well as by tradition—that these two helpless and guiltless beings were permitted to perish, to be suffocated by inches and gulps amidst the tide! The poor old woman died first. Her stake was mercifully sunk farther into the stream. She died, however, speaking encouragement to her grandchild. “It will soon be over, Nanny—it will not last long—it will not be ill to bear—and there we shall be free”—looking up to heaven—“*there*, there is nothing to hurt or to destroy; and my father is there, Nanny; and my mother is there; and my son—oh, my poor, murdered boy!—is there! and you and I will be there, and he too will soon, soon follow; but his blood be on the guilty, Nanny, and not on us! We will not shed one drop of it for all that man can give—for all that man can do—

anything that man can do
not be afraid.”

These were the last words which she spoke, at least which were heard; for, in the beautiful language of Scripture, “she bowed her head, and gave up the ghost.” She was not drowned, but chilled to death. The case was different with youth, strength, and beauty. Again and again was the offer made to her, to spare her life, on condition of her betraying a brother. Nature pled hard for life and length of days; and one of the dragoons, more humane, or rather less brutal than the rest, was heard to exclaim—

“Oh, sir, she has said it—she has said it!”

“Said what?” responded Douglas, in a sharp voice. “Has she said where her renegade brother is to be found?”

Hearing this question thus fearfully put, she exclaimed, in an agony—

“Oh, no—no—no!—never—never! Let me go—let me go!”

“The waters wild
Came o'er the child!”



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SEA SKIRMISH.

"The boatswain, piping, loudly thunders—
To your quarters fore and aft!
The great guns sponge, prepare for wonders,
While, my lads, the winds abaft.
With grape we can nine-pounders rattle—
Naval heroes, fight and sing—
He that bravely falls in battle,
Nobly serves his prince or king."

Sea Song

The days of war are now gone by, and the events consequent upon them have now become but as "the tales of other years;" while those who were then the principal agents in carrying on hostile operations, have either gone the way of all the earth, or remain as the connecting links between the last race and the present. But the time will never come when the naval history of Great Britain shall not be that on which Britons look with the greatest interest; and certainly if there is one page in our history more than another calculated to afford pleasure, and, we may add, profit to the reader, it is that which records the matchless achievements of our daring tars during the last French war. How many are the accounts of storms and battles, of hardships and perils undergone, which, in the days of our boyhood, we were accustomed to hear from the mouths of old tars, now no more, and whose memories are preserved only in the recollections of a few of their old associates! There still stands on the east side of the village of T—, a white-washed house, at the door of which hangs a huge ship, indicating that this is the village ale-house. This house, in our early days, was the resort of some half-dozen old sailors, who had retired, after their best years had been spent in their country's service, to spend their days in their native village. At the door of "The Ship," as the ale-house was called, stood an immense ash-tree, the wide-spreading branches of which, covered with foliage, afforded, in summer, an agreeable shade from the heat of the sun. Under this tree, a long seat was placed, in front of which stood a white fir-table, upon which rested the jugs of foaming ale, with which those who chose were wont to regale themselves. That seat is still there, and we hope it will remain for ages. It was the constant resort of the old tars already mentioned; and there, with their jug of ale, and their never-failing pipe, were they wont to fight all their battles o'er again. Many of the yarns which we then heard, we have since forgotten; some of them, however, still survive in our recollection. One of these we shall communicate, if not in the very words in which it was delivered, yet in substance, to the reader.

If a spectator were to stand on almost any part of the sea-coast of Great Britain, and cast his eyes over the sea, he would behold numerous white specks upon the ocean, passing in every direction; these specks he knows to be vessels, freighted with stores of various descriptions, and destined to various ports, to supply the deficiency in certain articles existing in one place, from the superabundance of another. These vessels, in our day, creep along their respective ways, without fear of molestation. The case was different, however, at the time in which our story begins.

Then it was necessary for several vessels bound for the same port, to be armed for defence, and to sail in company, for the sake of mutual protection from the attacks of French privateers, who frequently attacked and captured our merchantmen, consigning their crews to the horrors of a French prison.

It was on a beautiful morning in June, that three of the smacks which ply between London and Berwick, were lying in the Thames, with the signal for sailing at their topmast heads. The sails were all loosed from the lashings which had bound them down whilst in harbour, whilst the sailors were all busily employed in preparations for hoisting them to the breeze. At the command of the masters, the mainsails rose slowly from the large folds into which they had been compressed; the gaffs were alternately elevated and depressed, as the strength of the seamen was applied to the peak or main haulyards, whilst the tars, employed in such operations, bellowed out, in guttural sounds, their favourite song of "O cheerly." At length, the command to "belay" was given, and the mainsails were stretched to their full dimensions; whilst the cry of "Clear away the gaff topsail there!" was responded to by the cheerful "Ay, ay, sir!" of the sailors. A couple of youngsters flew up the rigging of each smack, with the agility of monkeys, to execute the order.

"All clear!" shouted out a voice from the crosstrees.

"Then, hoist away, my lads!" cried the master. And the long, tapering sails rose up to their places.

"Sheet them home! and belay all!" bawled out the captain. And the topsailsheet was fastened to the belaying pins.

"Clap on the jib-out-haul!" was the next order, which was as speedily obeyed. And the ample jib was also extended to the breeze, whilst some of the sailors were, at the same time, employed in bousing down the bobstay, which secured the bowsprit from yielding too far to the influence of the jib.

All now seemed ready for starting; the ropes were coiled up out of the way, and the smacks held to the wharf by a single rope; the pilot was also on board; and the sailors were wondering what could be the reason why the word was not given to cast off. Minute after minute, however, rolled on, and still no order, whilst the sailors, leaning against the bulwarks, were whiling away the time in trying to divine the cause of the delay. At last, voices were heard from the two sternmost smacks, hailing the one a-head—"Tweed, ahoy!"

"Hillo!" sung out the master of the Tweed—a fine, hard-a-weather looking old seaman, who was pacing up and down his deck, and ever and anon casting an impatient glance at the corner of the wharf.

"Aren't your passengers coming yet, Mr Jones? We are losing this fine air of wind down the river."

"They promised to be down at half-past three," responded the old tar; "and you see it is scarcely that yet; but we must wait no longer. Tom," continued he, addressing his son, a fine young man of five-and-twenty, "run up, my boy, and see if they aren't coming yet."

Tom, obeying his father, sprung over the ship's side; and, in a few minutes, returned, accompanied by an old

gentleman dressed in black, on whose arm leaned a young lady, closely wrapped up in a cloak, which defended her from the morning air. The old man seemed worn down by years and infirmities; but, though over his head more than seventy winters had shed their snows, yet in his eye, at times, there shone a slight spark of animation, shewing the fire which had lightened up his face in other days. His daughter seemed to lean on his arm for support; but she, in reality, afforded him assistance. Under the guidance of old Jones, they proceeded to the cabin of the Tweed, which was fitted up in a style of neatness, and what, in those days, might be reckoned splendour. After seeing them seated, old Jones mounted the companion, and proceeded on deck, to get his vessel under way. On reaching the deck, he overheard two of the seamen and his son Tom, who was also his mate, in close conversation.

"I tell you what it is, Tom," said one of them, hitching up his trowsers—"I tell you what it is, the ledgy may be as bonny as Molly Jackson, but the old man is a priest; and there is never luck when a priest is on board."

"I have sailed the salt sea," said the other sailor—a fine-looking, upright figure—"for thirty years now, man and boy, and never yet sailed with a priest without some misfortune or other happening—I suppose, 'cause the ould fellow's so spiteful at sight of them holy men, that he tries to do all the mischief he can; but we, poor devils! are sure to bear it all."

"That's all in my eye and Betty Martin," replied Tom. "There was no later than the voyage before last, we took up half-a-dozen priests; and the only thing which happened was, that, when they came on board, a fresh hand was sent to the bellows, to blow more wind; but it was fair; so, instead of doing us ill, the ould fellow only cheated himself, as we made our passage in forty-eight hours. But what signifies talking? Didn't you see his pretty little daughter?"

"I couldn't get a right look at her," replied Bill Mossman, the seaman who spoke last; "but, as she was stepping over the hauser, I got a squint at a pretty little foot—that was all I could see."

"Oh, Bill," interrupted Tom, "had you seen her as I did, last night, when I went, with old dad, to call at their lodgings. My eye! what a beautiful run!—a pair of cheeks fit for the bow of a frigate—a waist as fine and tapering as the royal of a gun brig—and a quarter fit for a man-of-war. But her eyes!"

"Have burned a hole in your heart," interrupted Mossman.

"Well, it's of no use denying it," replied Tom. "I will defy any one, to see her and not fall in love with her; but what struck me more than her beauty, was her kindness and attention to her old father, who, poor man, seems to need it all. The tears trickled down the old man's face as he related all his sufferings and trials, and his daughter's affection; and, shiver my timbers, if I could help piping my eye to keep him company!"

"That's always the way with you," replied Jem Ward, the other sailor; "you're always taken in tow by some girl or other; but you can never be true to one. I had never but one sweetheart—Peggy Dawson, the prettiest girl in Berwick."

"Your Peggy Dawson," replied Tom, "is no more to be compared to Miss Keveley, than a keelman's barge is fit to be compared with the Royal George."

"Well, well," said Bill Mossman, "the girl is well enough; but I wish, as the priest is aboard, that the voyage were well over. But, let me see—this is Friday too—worse and worse!"

"Keep yourself easy," replied Tom. "As long as Miss Keveley's on board, you needn't fear. Such a kind creature as she is, will be in the place of 'the sweet little cherub which,' as the song says, 'sits up aloft, and takes care of the life of poor Jack.'"

"But," asked Bill Mossman, "do you know anything of their history?"

"Very little," answered Tom, "except what the old gentleman himself told us last night: That he has been a missionary abroad for many years, and that his wife has died in a foreign country, leaving him and his only daughter, who accompanies him; and that, worn out with the fatigues which he has undergone, and his constitution broken down by an unhealthy climate, he is returning to his native village, to lay his bones, as he expressed it, beside the ashes of his fathers."

Their conversation was here interrupted by old Jones, who gave the word to cast off the warp which held them to the quay—an order which was speedily obeyed by the seamen; and the vessel soon *paid off*, under the influence of the jib. The same orders were given on board of the Princess Charlotte and the Olive, the other two smacks; and, in a few minutes more, all the three vessels were holding their course, smoothly and peaceably, down the river. It was a beautiful morning. A slight breath of wind was stirring, just sufficient to fill the sails of the vessels: light, however, as it was, it was fresh and invigorating. The sun was just rising; and his upper limb only was as yet visible, peering above the cloud with which his body was enveloped, as if to take a peep at the ocean and the land before rising from his couch. Gradually, however, the king of day emerged from the cloud, and again his upper limb was concealed in another cloud higher up in the heavens, leaving a broad band of light alone visible. These alternations of light and shade continued for a short time, till the sun ascended higher in the sky, and then the middle of his body was covered by a dark vapour, which was passed round him like a ribbon. This also passed off; and the "father of ten thousand days" burst forth in a flood of glory—of bright, effulgent light—making the gentle undulations of the waves to glitter as if studded with millions of gems; whilst the dew-drops of the morning, hanging from the sails and cordage of the vessels, glistening in the sun, assumed various fantastic forms, as the head of the vessel dipped and rose at intervals, upon the gentle waves. Miss Keveley had left her father reclining upon a sofa in the cabin of the Tweed, and had come upon deck to enjoy the beauty of the scene; and, as she gazed upon the rising luminary and the silent waters of the Thames, the queen of rivers, she felt that elevation of spirits, and that devotion, which such a scene is calculated to inspire. Catherine Keveley had been peculiarly the child of misfortune. Her mother was of a noble family, and her alliance had been sought by many rich and noble youths. Preferring, however, the hand of a man, who, though much her inferior in birth, yet in high and lofty feeling was, at least, her equal, she chose Mr Keveley as her companion for life—a licensed minister of the Church of Scotland, and at that time appointed as superintendent of a missionary station in a distant country. Happy in each other's love, they lived in a foreign land till the birth of Catherine; which event was succeeded by her mother's death.

Catherine, though from childhood a delicate flower, and though deprived of the fostering care of a mother's love, yet, under the tender management of her doting father, rose up to be the prop and staff of his declining years. Her form was of the slightest kind; her eyes, of that light, heavenly blue which is the sure index of deep feeling, were protected by high, arched eyebrows; her forehead was broad rather than lofty, but of an alabaster whiteness; her clear brown hair was parted over her brow in graceful curls, whilst her long tresses hung in flowing ringlets down her shoulders. Her air was usually of that pensive cast which never fails to interest the beholder; but, of late, a shade of deeper melancholy had been seated on her features,

called up by anxiety for her father's declining health, and the sad prospect which then lay before her, an unprotected orphan.

It was impossible to look upon that lovely creature without emotion, as she stood leaning against the bulwark of the vessel, and beholding the glories of the rising sun, and the places upon the river, as the vessel passed them, one after another, in its course. Nor was she unobserved; for Tom Jones, seated upon the windlass, with his hands crossed upon his breast, was silently beholding her. She was here joined by her father, who had come upon deck, and, without speaking, took her hand. Catherine silently pointed to the sun—"This, indeed," said her father, breaking silence, "is a glorious spectacle. I have travelled in many lands, and beheld many splendid sights—I have seen the most gorgeous spectacles of eastern magnificence, where everything was combined that could please the eye or captivate the fancy—but all of these fall short, very far short, of this display. How many people," continued the old gentleman, "travel into other countries, for the sake of seeing fine sights, who are ignorant that they might behold, at home, a sight grander than the finest of these!"

"I don't wonder," said Catherine, "that the Persians, and many other Eastern nations, worship the sun—contributing, as he does, so much to our comfort and happiness; in so doing, they are thankful for the blessings conferred, and do not mistake the secondary, for the first cause of their enjoyment."

They continued thus talking to each other for some time, while Tom Jones was devouring every word which was uttered. After enjoying the coolness of the morning breeze, they again descended to the cabin, where they continued till breakfast-time, when they were joined by the old captain and his son Tom. The old tar was full of spirits—told them some of his best yarns—and, by his kindness, endeavoured to make his guests as comfortable as possible. Tom was engaged in the same labour of love; and, by several little acts of attention to the old gentleman, he gained what, to him, was the sweetest reward on earth—an approving smile from Catherine.

"Are we your only passengers?" asked Mr Keveley.

"Yes," replied Tom. "People, now-a-days, prefer going by land, to running the risk of being taken by the French privateers, which swarm along the coast."

"I hope there is no danger of being attacked," asked Catherine, turning pale with alarm.

"Why, as to that," replied old Bill, "one can't say for sartin—I have seed such sights as that before now; but never fear, my bonny Miss—if they were to attack three smacks armed as we are, they might mayhap catch a Tartar—that's all."

"I am not afraid for myself," said Catherine, casting an affectionate look at her father—"but my father"—

"Is now under that protecting Power which has preserved his life in the midst of so many perils by land."

When they again ascended to the deck, the vessels were going with a fine breeze, which was taking them quickly down the river. After passing the Nore, they stood out to the open sea; and, the wind continuing fair, they proceeded speedily on their voyage, which promised to be pleasant and expeditious. On the second morning after sailing, the Tweed was passing Yarmouth Roads. In the roadstead was lying a large vessel, whose taunt, raking masts, and square, lightly-rigged yards, proved her to be a man-of-war. The seamen of the Tweed were pointing out to each other the various fair properties of the vessel as they passed; and Tom, thinking that Miss Keveley would be pleased with the sight, went below, to ask her if she wished to see a man-of-war.

Catherine thanked him for his attention, and followed him upon deck.

"What a beautiful vessel!" exclaimed Catherine, unable to contain her delight—"what exquisite symmetry!—what neatness in the arrangements of the various ropes, which appear as complicated as the gossamer's web, and, at this distance, almost as fine! What an intricate maze do all these appear to an ignorant spectator!—and yet, I dare say," continued she, addressing Tom, "there is not one amongst the number which has not its use."

"Not one," said Tom; "and, however confused they may appear to your eye, yet there is not one which, at a moment's notice, may not be laid hold of by the seamen."

During this conversation, Tom asked the name of the village in which Miss Keveley was going to reside. She informed him that they proposed settling, for some time at least, in Norham.

"That's lucky," replied Tom; "my old aunt, Mrs Burton, lives there, who may be of service to you in settling, and who will be the most pleasant companion in the world. Her husband was the curate of the village, but he has been dead this many a day; she is, however, in most comfortable circumstances, and can afford you accommodation for a short time, till you get settled."

"You are very kind, indeed," said Catherine, with emotion, "and I trust that my father and I will both feel grateful for the offer. However, we shall be guided by circumstances."

Tom lost no time in informing his father of the destination of his passengers, and of the offer which he had made them.

"That's right, my boy," said the old tar—"it's our duty to assist our fellow-men as much as is in our power—and never have I seed two persons whom I would be inclined to assist so much as that old man and his daughter."

The wind, which had been favourable for them hitherto, now chopped about, by degrees, till at last it blew in a direction exactly opposite to their course.

"This is unfortunate," said old Bill, as he gave his reluctant orders to alter the vessel's course, and to take in the studding-sails, which were hanging flapping in wild disorder, as the wind headed them. These, however, were speedily taken in, and the other evolutions performed, so as to enable the vessel to ply to windward. On the morning of the third day, the Tweed was abreast of Boston Deep, with the wind still at north-east. To leeward of her, about five miles, were the Olive and the Princess Charlotte, the other two smacks. Tom had the watch on deck, and was steering the vessel—whilst the sailors were sitting forward on the windlass, with their hands across their breasts, and uttering, at intervals, a few words to each other. One man alone stood apart from the rest, upon the starboard quarter, who seemed, by his intense gaze, to be trying to make out some vessel at a distance. After gazing for a few moments, he took two or three hasty steps along the deck, and again came back to his place, and gave another look. At length, apparently not able to satisfy himself as to the object of his scrutiny, he came up to the companion, and took from thence the glass, which, having adjusted, he made a sweep across the horizon, till it bore upon the object of his search.

"What do you see there?" asked Tom, of the sailor.

"Something that I doesn't like," replied Bill Mossman; "I am much mistaken if there isn't a ship shaping a course to cut us off from the other smacks."

The other sailors, hearing the conversation, now came aft, and took part in it.

"Here," said Tom, "take the helm a moment, and give me the glass."

Tom accordingly, seizing the glass, took a look at the vessel, and continued, for a few moments, silently scanning her, in spite of the interrogatories which were poured in upon him by the sailors, as to the appearance of the stranger.

"Call up my father," were the first words of Tom; "I don't like the look of that vessel. Although she is at a great distance, yet I can make her out not to be a merchantman; and, besides, what does she mean by steering direct for us? Her movements are, at all events, suspicious."

At this moment, old Bill came upon deck, and, after a scrutinizing glance through the glass, he ascended the rigging. There he had not continued long, when he bawled down to the deck, in a voice of thunder—"That he might be blowed if he didn't think that she was one of the rascally French privateers."

This announcement threw the whole of the seamen into the utmost dismay, and then ensued a scene of confusion which would baffle all description. Half-a-dozen voices were heard at once, recommending different things, whilst each appeared too fond of delivering his own opinion, to listen to that of his neighbour. The voice of old Bill, however, who had again descended, soon restored order.

"This is most unlucky," said he. "This blackguard means to cut us off from our comrades; he has got the weather gage of them, and for us to run down to them would be to run ourselves into the lion's mouth. But never fear, my lads," continued the old tar, in a more cheerful tone; "we may contrive to give the Frenchman the slip, for all that."

"Had we not better make the signal for the other smacks to join as fast as possible?" asked Tom.

"That's right," said his father. "Bend the signal halyards, and send up the ensign, with the union down."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the men, in whose minds the assured tone of their captain had inspired confidence; and, in a minute, the British ensign was unfurled to the breeze; but, as the captain had ordered, with the union downwards, which had been the preconcerted signal for joining. The signal was immediately answered by the smacks; but they were too far astern to afford any reasonable hope of immediate assistance. Nevertheless, old Bill proceeded, with his accustomed coolness, to give his orders for clearing his ship for action.

The Tweed was a large, powerful smack; and although, of course, not fitted out for war, yet, on her deck were displayed half-a-dozen twelve-pound carronades, which, however unfitted for an engagement at a great distance, yet, in a running fight, and at a short stretch, were capable of doing, what brother Jonathan would call, "pretty considerable execution." They were also well provided with ammunition of all sorts; and, although not a match in the number of men for the Frenchman—which would, if a privateer, in all probability be crowded—yet old Bill, as he glanced his eye over his thirteen hardy fellows, who were looking to him for orders, felt assured that, if not victory, at least escape might be possible.

"Get the ship clear, my lads," shouted he; "take in the jibtopsail—it will do more harm than good—slue round the guns, and get the lashings off them."

These orders were speedily executed; and everything which was not absolutely necessary was removed off the deck. The ropes were all coiled out of the way, and the men took off their upper jackets, and remained in their trowsers and shirts. The ammunition was now handed upon deck, and the guns were soon loaded with a full dose of grape and cannister.

"Now, my lads, keep the ports closed, till I give you the word. I want to make the privateers think we are not armed, or that we have not made him out."

Two of the sailors, at this moment, came from below, bringing, each of them, a couple of muskets, which old Bill immediately ordered again to be taken below, adding, that they could only be useful in case of close quarters, in which they could never hope to cope with the French-

man, so that they would only be an encumbrance. Every arrangement seemed now made, which prudence could suggest. Two men were ordered forward, to work the headsails, and one to stand aft by the main sheet, to assist the vessel in stays; the rest he stationed at the guns; the steering he took upon himself. The excitement attendant upon the clearing of the vessel for action, had driven the remembrance of his passengers from old Bill's mind. The case, however, was different with Tom; for his anxiety for the safety of the sweet pensive girl who had been committed to their care, had completely banished from his mind all thoughts of himself. As soon as the arrangements for engaging had been made, Tom entered the cabin, and acquainted Mr Keveley and his daughter, as delicately as possible, how matters went. Catherine stood for some moments like one stupified; at last her grief found utterance in a flood of tears, and she sobbed convulsively on the bosom of her father.

"Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, "was it for this that you left the swamps of the Ganges? Better that you had died there in peace, than be made the captive of lawless and abandoned men, and be subjected to all the horrors of a French prison!"

Mr Keveley strove to comfort her.

"Be patient, my daughter!" he exclaimed; "the same Being who has protected us in times that are past, is still watching over us."

Tom also strove to comfort her with the hopes of escape.

"But are you sure it is a French vessel?" asked Mr Keveley.

"I am sorry to say," replied Tom, "there is not the least doubt of that, as she is approaching us rapidly, and we can plainly discern her colours."

"I will go upon deck," said Mr Keveley; "and do you, Catherine, remain here." But Catherine resolved to accompany him; and, in spite of Tom's solicitations to the contrary, they both ascended.

"I had completely forgot them," exclaimed old Bill to himself, when he saw them ascend. "Poor things! I wish they were well on shore." Mr Keveley cast his eyes on the hostile vessel. Her hull was fast rising, for the breeze was fresh, and the French tri-coloured flag was plainly distinguishable at her *fore-royal* mast-head. Tom endeavoured to persuade them to go again below, and he was joined in his entreaty by old Bill, who told him that they were only exposing themselves to needless danger—"Besides," added the tar, in his rough way, "you are only live lumber here. So you had better go below, and get the Bible under way as fast as possible." They allowed themselves to be prevailed upon—and Tom again took leave of them.

"Good-by!" said Catherine, stretching out her hand. "We may never meet again. May God bless you, for all your kindness to us! Take care and don't expose yourself to unnecessary danger."—Tom took her proffered hand; and, as he looked upon her mild, beautiful eyes, suffused with tears, he vowed that the last drop of his blood should be spilt before harm should come upon that lovely creature.

When Tom again came upon deck, the Frenchman was within half a mile's distance. She appeared to be a long, black brig; and her guns were pointing outward on each side, shewing, as the sailors term it, two beautiful rows of teeth. The seamen of the Tweed, as they stood looking at her, counted seven guns on each side; and, from their size, they appeared twelve-pounders.

"If we can only keep her off," said Bill to his son Tom, "we shall do capitally; but, if she once gets alongside of us, it's all up."

"Hadn't we better, sir," said Bill Mossman, coming aft, "cut away the boat from the davits? The vessel is too much by the stern already."

"That's a good idea," said old Bill; and the order was executed accordingly.

"Now, my lads," shouted the old tar, "be ready with your ports; and, when I give you the word, burst them open, and fire away; but keep out of sight, in the meantime, except one or two of you."

The deck of the Frenchman was now plainly visible to those on board the Tweed—a dense mass of men were seen—but they seemed clustered thickest near the fore-chains; from which place old Bill thought they intended to board.

"I'll cut you out of that, anyhow," exclaimed he, with glee. "I'll shew you that a smack can be fought as well as a cursed French privateer, any day." So saying, he gave orders to ease off the sheets; and, keeping the vessel *away*, he made it appear to the Frenchman as if he had discovered him for the first time to be an enemy, and was endeavouring to escape. The Frenchman took the bait, and, making more sail, pursued him, under a press of canvass; and, as old Bill expected, came rapidly up with him, and was now within pistol-shot, when Bill suddenly shifted his helm, and hauled his wind right across the privateer's bows.

"Now, my boys," shouted the old tar, "blaze away!" when the men, who were eager for the order, burst open the ports, and poured a rattling broadside into her. The smoke which ensued hid everything from the sight; but the horrid shriek which arose on board the Frenchman, and the crashing of wood splintered by the shot, gave indications how fearfully the "twelves" had told. The sailors on board the Tweed, were themselves, for a moment, awed by the sight of the work of destruction which they had made; but the voice of their old commander quickly recalled them to their duty; and they again, without a moment's delay, proceeded to load their instruments of death. The smoke had cleared away; but the distance was too great to allow them to perceive the extent of the Frenchman's loss. Escape now appeared possible; but old Bill's blood was up; and though, by carrying on a press of sail, he might have got off, he resolved to give the Frenchman another smell of his powder.

"Cheerily, my lads!" sung out the old man; "keep steady, and we'll give Mr Monseer a hearty breakfast, different from what he expected." So saying, he sung out a few lines of a fore-castle ditty, at the top of his voice:—

"They sailed from the Bay of St Peter,
Five hundred and fifty on board;
And we were all ready to meet her—
Conquer or die was the word."

The spirit of their captain seemed contagious; and the crew, one and all, took up the two last lines, and bellowed it out a second time, in full chorus.

"All ready, 'bout ship there?" sung out Bill.

"All ready sir," shouted the men.

"'Bout there, then!" And, in one moment, the helm was put hard a-starboard, and the vessel's head came round to the wind in fine style.

"All's about there, my boys!—let go the fore-bowline!" And this order being executed, the Tweed was bowling along on the other tack, standing towards the Frenchman, who, having now recovered from his confusion, was again coming up rapidly. The privateer again attempted to board, but was again defeated, by the skill and dexterity of old Bill in working his vessel. Again they passed each other, and the Frenchman's broadside of seven guns told heavily upon the Tweed's sides and rigging; but the men had so well obeyed Bill's orders of keeping out of sight till the fire of the Frenchman was received, that not one of them was hurt, save old Bill himself, who was severely wounded. The old tar, nothing daunted at the accident, again gave his orders to fire. A dense mass of smoke immediately rose up in huge columns to the sky as the order was obeyed, and the deadly instruments again belched forth their contents

into the hull of the Frenchman. When the smoke cleared away, the crew of the Tweed were dismayed to behold their gallant old commander standing at the helm, pale and bleeding, but still keeping his post. Tom rushed aft to support him, and asked him if he was much hurt.

"I fear," replied the old tar, "that your poor old father has received a shot between wind and water; but never mind, my boy; while I can stand I'll never flinch; it shall never be said that old Bill Jones flinched from his post in the hour of danger; and mind, my boy, Tom, if I fall, never surrender to a rascally Frenchman, but fight it out; be sure keep him off, and there is no fear. Never yield, Tom!"

The old tar, quite exhausted by his exertions and by loss of blood, dropped down upon the deck; but, notwithstanding the solicitations of his son and the crew, he persisted in not being carried below. They, therefore, wrapped a boat cloak around him, and laid him along the deck with his head supported against a coil of rope.

Tom now took the command, and it required all his exertions and skill to save him from the privateer; for the crew of the Tweed, regardless of everything else, had been looking at their commander like persons stupified, allowing the vessel to go as she pleased. The Frenchman had perceived their confusion, and was pressing on to take advantage of it; and the crew of the Tweed could perceive the men clustering along the yards as thick as bees. Tom, however, again passed him without allowing the Frenchman to board; but, unfortunately, the broadside which was poured into the Tweed shot away the jib-halyards, and the large sail came down into the water. Three cheers from the Frenchmen followed this accident, which promised them a certain victory; for not only was the smack deprived of the assistance of the jib in sailing, but the dragging of the sail through the water impeded materially her progress.

All now seemed lost, when Tom, resigning the helm to one of the men, sprung forward; and, seizing hold of the end of the halyards, mounted the rigging, and, in spite of the showers of shot fired at him from the Frenchman's tops, succeeded in again reeving it through the block; and, by the assistance of the wynch, the jib again rose to its former place.

The Frenchman, thus baffled in all his attempts, resolved to make a last effort; and, crowding all sail, came rapidly upon the weather or starboard quarter. "Ready about!" sung out Tom; and, as the smack shot up head to the wind, he gave the order to fire—which order was no sooner obeyed than a dreadful shriek rose from the privateer; and the first sight which greeted the eyes of the Tweed's crew after the smoke had cleared, was their enemy, standing away before the wind under a press of sail. Simultaneous cheers burst from the lips of the men, as they beheld this not less pleasing than unexpected sight, and they were joined by old Bill, who, weak and faint as he was, raised his hand, and cheered with his crew.

"We've given him a parting salute," said Bill Mossman, grinning with delight, through a face all begrimed with powder and smoke. "My eye, only look there!—he seems to be in as great a hurry as a dog with a kettle at his tail."

"Ay, we have peppered his cannister for him," said Jem Ward—"the lousy rascal that he is! I am only sorry that we did not take him."

The crew being now free from danger, crowded round old Bill, who was still lying on the deck, with Tom at his side; and, in their own hearty, honest, though blunt manner, inquired how he felt.

"Better than ever I did in my life," answered the old sailor. "No doubt, I have got a shot which may compel me to lay up in ordinary a sheer hulk for the rest of my

life, if it don't make me kick the bucket altogether; but haven't we beat a French privateer nearly three times our size, and with ten times our men? I tell you, my brave fellows, that this is the proudest and happiest day of my life. And you, Tom," said he, addressing his son, "have behaved like your father's son—and that's saying something."

The sailors now proceeded to remove Bill below; and Tom, whose eagerness to inform Catherine and her father of their success, had only been restrained by his filial affection, rushed down to the cabin to tell them the joyful news. When he entered, he found Mr Keveley and his daughter seated, with their hands locked together; and, as he entered, they clung closer to each other, as if preparing for the worst.

It would be impossible to describe the joy which animated Catherine's face when Tom told them the happy tidings—joy danced in her blue eyes, which were alternately fixed upon him or her father. Surprise at first prevented her speech, till her emotion found vent in a flood of tears. Mr Keveley bore the news more composedly than his daughter. He first embraced her, then came and shook Tom heartily by the hand.

"And has the Frenchman really run off?" asked Catherine, when she had recovered her speech. "You must have had warm work of it, if we may judge from your appearance," added she, with a playful smile. Tom turned his head for an instant to a mirror, which was hanging up on one side of the cabin, and in it beheld his countenance, so soiled with powder and perspiration that he scarcely recognised his own features.

After wiping away the drops of sweat, which were coursing each other down his cheeks, and ploughing up large furrows on the indented soot, Tom took his departure to attend to his father, whom he found pretty well, though much exhausted from loss of blood. After the old man's wound had been dressed, as well as circumstances would admit, a warm soothing potion, administered by Mr Keveley, who understood something of medicine, was given, which, having drunk, he fell into a comfortable sleep.

A consultation was now held upon deck, as to the course to be pursued. Some advised that they should proceed on their voyage, whilst some were for running back to Yarmouth Roads, to see if the frigate, which they had passed on the previous morning, still remained, in order that they might give intelligence as to the route of the Frenchman.

The last plan was adopted, and the vessel was put before the wind—only stopping, as she passed, to inform each of her consorts of the particulars of the engagement. The crews of the vessels cheered the Tweed, as she passed with her flag at her gaff, and with the union now upwards, instead of being inverted as formerly. The wind being fair, they soon reached the Roads, and to their great joy beheld the frigate still lying in the same situation as when they had passed her. Tom immediately bore down upon her; and the watch on board the frigate hailed—"What ship, ahoy?"—"The Tweed, from London to Leith and Berwick—have been engaged for two hours with a large French privateer, and have beaten him off."

"What direction did he steer?" was the next question asked.

"Direct S.E." was the answer, "and, if you look sharp, you may still catch her—she is a large black brig, low in the water, with her mainmast raking over her stern." The boatswain's whistle was now heard on board the frigate, calling all hands to weigh anchor; in an instant, the ship was all life and animation; and such is the effect of strict discipline, that, in a few minutes, the frigate was under way, with every inch of canvass set which could be crowded upon her spars, in pursuit of the privateer.

Tom, seeing that everything had been done as he wished, again made sail to the northward. After a short time, he arrived at Leith, where his consorts had already conveyed the news of the engagement. As the Tweed entered the harbour, crowds of people, attracted by the news of the victory, lined the shore, whilst the crews of every vessel cheered her as she passed. Old Bill, whose wound was not at all dangerous, was able to come upon deck; and the old man's gratification was complete, on observing the joy which their arrival diffused amongst all classes.

After the Tweed had been moored alongside of the wharf, a coach was provided, into which Old Bill, with Mr Keveley and his daughter, entered, and proceeded to the old man's house; but the populace, who observed what was going forward, took out the horses, and drew the coach along the streets, with the loudest acclamations.

During the whole time that the Tweed lay at Leith, her decks were never free from people, who, most of them, brought brandy and whisky to regale the sailors. In such abundance were these articles supplied, that they not only were sufficient for the Tweed's own crew, but served for a jollification to every sailor in the harbour; and such a scene of feasting, dancing, and merriment went on, as was never witnessed by Leith either before or since. The same reception awaited the Tweed on her arrival at London, where they found the privateer with whom they had been engaged, lying alongside of the frigate, who had taken her, after a long chase. On making inquiries, they learned that the Frenchman had lost twenty-five men, with nine wounded—their last broadside having killed the lieutenant.

Old Bill rapidly recovered from his wound, which was not dangerous; and he was soon enabled to take command of his vessel, which had made two or three voyages to London under the command of Tom.

Mr and Miss Keveley had retired to the village of Norham, beautifully situated on the banks of the Tweed, where they continued for some time with Tom's aunt, Mrs Burton. The old gentleman, finding that his native air was beneficial to his wasted constitution, resolved to settle there for the remainder of his days; and he accordingly rented a neat cottage at the extremity of the village.

Here Tom had frequent opportunities of becoming better acquainted with Catherine; and every time he beheld her, she improved in his regard. It was on the second voyage, after Old Bill had again taken possession of his vessel, that he and his son Tom were conversing together on deck. After a few preliminary hems, the old man began:—

"Tom, my boy, I have been thinking that it is now time you had a wife—a sailor is never comfortable till he gets married."

Tom replied, that he thought it time enough.

"What would you think of Miss Keveley for a wife?" asked Bill, without attending to his son's reply.

"The only fault I could find with her is, that she is too good for me. Do you think," continued he, "that Miss Keveley would ever marry a sailor?"

"As unlikely ships as that have come to land before now," replied Bill; "and wherefore should Miss Keveley not marry you? Haven't you seventy pounds a-year left you by your grandmother? and an't you my only son? And you know I've several shares in the company's vessels, besides something else that you know of; and when the old woman and myself are brought up in the next world, sha'n't you have it all?"

Tom assented to all this, but shook his head.

"Try her, my boy," said Bill—"faint heart never won fair lady, as they say at the fairs, when they wish you to try your luck at the 'rouly-pouly.' I was talking about it myself to the old gentleman not long ago; he highly

approves of the match, provided you and his daughter could agree; and Mr Keveley added, that he believed you would not meet a refusal, as his daughter seemed never tired of talking about your exploits, or of hearing of them; so that you see it all depends upon yourself."

Tom, encouraged by these words, resolved, when the vessel should reach Berwick, to set out for Norham; which design he put in execution, a few days after, setting out from Berwick about six in the evening.

After reaching the village, he quickly passed through it to where Mr Keveley's cottage stood. It was a sweet summer evening; and when Tom approached the house, the setting sun was illuminating the windows with his departing rays. A little garden fronted the cottage; and the honeysuckle and jessamine, which had crept up its front, were spreading their fragrance all around. The window of the little parlour looked to the west; it was opened, and Tom heard the sound of a musical instrument, accompanied by a low female voice. He listened for a moment to catch if possible the air, but it seemed a foreign song which the musician was playing. At last, he went up to the door and knocked, whilst his heart went pit-a-pat with emotion. Mr Keveley had gone out, and he found Catherine alone in the parlour. She received him with her usual sweet smile of welcome, and bade him be seated. Tom strove to appear at ease, but his anxiety prevented him, and his confusion was such as to attract the notice of Catherine, who asked him if he was unwell.

"Not exactly that," said Tom; "but"—Here he made a full pause.

"But what?" asked Catherine, unable to divine the cause of his uneasiness.

"Well," said Tom, at length taking courage, "I may as well out with it at once. The truth is, Miss Keveley, I love you dearly; but could never have had the courage to make this declaration, had your father not approved of it."

It was now Catherine's turn to blush, and be silent; at length, regaining the use of her tongue, she replied—"I would not only be affectation, but ingratitude in me, to affect indifference, where my heart is really interested; and, as you say my father sanctions your addresses, there is my hand;—if you think it worth your acceptance, it is at your service."

Tom, unable to contain himself, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. "I leave you to yourself," said he, "for a few minutes, to recover from your confusion"—so saying, he went out for a little; and met Mr Keveley, just returning from a visit to a friend at a little distance, to whom he communicated the pleasing intelligence of his happiness. Mr Keveley took Tom by the hand, and, having embraced him—

"I shall now leave this world," said he, "without wish unsatisfied. It was the only desire of my heart, before bidding a final adieu to all sublunary things, to see my daughter with a protector for life; and I am glad she has made choice of an honest man, and one every way so deserving of her." So saying, he led Tom back to the parlour, where Catherine still remained seated. After joining their hands, the old gentleman uttered a benediction over them, and embraced them both with much tenderness.

After a short time, Tom took his leave, but not before Catherine had promised that their marriage should take place on an early day.

About a fortnight after, on a fine forenoon, the village grocer at Norham was standing at his door, and gazing after a crowd which had passed; as he stood looking, a man dressed like a grazier came up, and, after the accustomed salutation of "How's a' wi' ye the day?" asked him what he was "glowrin" at.

"I have just been lookin at the weddin which has

passed," answered the grocer; "an' sic a braw sicht hasna been seen in the village for mony a day."

"Wha's weddin is it?" asked the grazier.

"It's the daughter of ane Mr Keveley, who has settled in this place for some time—and a bonny lassie she is; and they say, she's as guid as she's bonny. She's married to ane Jones, son o' auld Bill Jones, maister o' the smack which beat the Frenchman three or four weeks syne. Every one o' the smack's crew are at the weddin; an' sic a set o' merry, jovial blades were never tgether in this place afore. The folks are like to stifle them wi' kindness. But what's the queerest thing of a' is, that they a' cam oot here, this mornin, in a boat." (A fact.)

"In a boat!" exclaimed the grazier, in amazement;—"on dry land?"

"Ay, in a boat," replied the grocer—"a lang boat, mounted upon a lang cart; an' there were they a' seated in it, wi' ribbons flecin; an' wi' the Union, as they ca' the flag which hung at the ship's mast when they beat the Frenchman; an' the folks a' shoutin, an' the bairns skirlin. I declare, thae sailors are a wheen born deevils for fun and frolic; but they are sic canty chieles, that ane canna help likin them the better for a' their nonsense. They ca' the lang boat the Whim; an', faith, she's weel named—for it's a whimsical idea."

The grocer and the grazier stood talking thus to each other, till the cavalcade returned from the church—Tom and his bride in an open, four-wheeled carriage, whilst the rest all followed in the boat already mentioned. As they passed, shouts of joy rent the air, from the assembled crowds. The men were full of the praises of Catherine's beauty, whilst the women were as loud in praising the gallant bearing of Tom. Onwards they passed to Mr Keveley's house, where a splendid entertainment was provided, and the day was spent with the greatest joy and hilarity—the company being enlivened by the yarns of old Bill, and the choice songs of Bill Mossman.

Little of our story now remains to be told. After his marriage, Tom went to sea for a few years, in command of the Tweed; but, on the death of Mr Keveley, he retired to Norham, where he took the cottage which the old gentleman had inhabited. Here he lived for many years, enjoying the society of his lovely wife, and keeping an open house for all his old shipmates who came to visit him. Old Bill did not long survive the marriage of his son; but, after weathering many a tough gale, he was at last brought up in the churchyard of T—, leaving to his son all the property he possessed, which was considerable. Most of the crew of the Tweed are now dead; but some few of them still remain, amongst whom is honest Bill Mossman, who, though advanced in years, is still a hale and hearty old man.

Passing lately through the churchyard of T—, we went up to the grave of old Bill Jones. A neat, marble tombstone had been raised to his memory, by his son and daughter. At the bottom was the following epitaph:—

"Though Neptune's waves and Boreas' storms
Have tossed me to and fro,
In spite of all, by God's decree,
I anchor here below."

THE MINER OF LAHUN.

WE were, some time ago, storm-bound in a small village on the east coast of Scotland, where—save in our own parlour, when surrounded by the dense smoke of our pipe, and fairly resigned to mystic dreams—we passed a happier evening than we ever did anywhere else upon earth; for we had the pleasure to meet with an old man who had passed many years in the land of Odin, Sweden, and was so deeply imbued with the spirit of the *Sagas*, (a favourite study of

ours,) that he would have made as good a Saga-man himself, as ever was Frode or Snorre Sturleson. Amongst the many stories he told us, through the fitting medium of the smoke of his pipe, was one connected with the great copper mines of Falu-Juan, so remarkable, that we have retained it in our memory ever since; and, having probably carried it long enough, we are not ill-pleased with an opportunity of getting quit of it in so legitimate a mode as that of inserting it among the Border Tales. There lived (said he) in the suburbs of the town of Falun, in Sweden, a long time ago, a young woman, bearing the Swedish name of Fiona Glipping. The legend (perhaps to give interest to the story) says she was the prettiest of all the damsels of the district of Falun—describing her as having the blue eyes and the long yellow hair of the daughters of Odin—attributes, in the estimation of the north-men, of the greatest beauty that a minnesinger could describe. Out of many suitors, she chose for her lover Magnus Estrithson, the son of one of the tacksmen of the great copper mine which bears the name of the town; a young man, equal to Fiona in beauty, and far superior to her in worldly prospects, being the apparent heir of his father, reputed to be rich, and, besides, possessing the prospect of succeeding him as one of the tacksmen of the Falun works. The old man was not only agreeable to the match between Magnus and Fiona, but had promised that, on the day of their marriage, he would collect all his workmen about the mine, and give them, in honour of the young couple, one of the greatest merrymakings that had been witnessed in the district of Falun for many years. The place appointed for the joyous occasion was his own house, which was situated at some distance from the works, and where the men were appointed to assemble, some hours before the time when their labours generally ended. At the residence of Fiona, the preparations for the ceremony were, meanwhile, going on, and many a Swedish maiden envied the "sweet toil," in which the beauty of Lahun and her friends were engaged, with a view to a union which was deemed auspicious, as well from the well-known affection of the young couple, as the reputed riches of the father of the youth. The hour came, and the blushing Fiona became the wife of her lover. A party was made up to accompany the happy pair to the tacksmen's house, where there had already assembled more than a hundred miners, resolved to enjoy to the uttermost the opportunity presented to them of getting, once in their lives, as much of the great national beverage, brandy, as they could drink. Our legend limits the enjoyment of the miners to this indispensable item—probably because it is so much relished throughout Scandinavia, that it is taken to breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper; but we are entitled to presume, that other good things awaited the miners and their wives—who also attended—though, even to these latter guests, a more acceptable offering could not have been given, than that to which their husbands were so much attached, and the use of which was so liberally resorted to at weddings, that, as Pantoppidan asserts, the wives often took with them the shrouds of their husbands, wherein to roll the victims of unavoidable strife. The scene of enjoyment had already begun; the father, old Eric, sat at the head of the board, presenting a fair example to his miners, to make themselves as merry as men who wrought below the ground had a right to be when they feasted above it. At another board, Gyda, the mother of the youth, doled out tea, with the usual accompaniment of the red spirit, to the women. Minnesingers sung their old ballads; the hour approached when the young couple were expected, and a round of filled glasses were in the hands of the company, to drink to the health of young Magnus and fair Fiona, when a young man entered the room, with terror in his eye, and faltering

words on his white lips. "Magnus has fallen into the eastern shaft!" cried he, and fell down upon the ground. What more was required to tell his fate to those who knew that that shaft of the Lahun mine was six hundred feet deep? The father and mother fainted; and the whole host of miners sallied forth, in wild confusion, to the scene of the disaster. A dreadful sight there met their eyes. Standing on the brink of the frightful abyss, was the bride; her wedding garments torn, in her agony, to tatters, and her long yellow hair waving about her shoulders. The screams of her and her party rent the air, and reverberated among the deep hollows of the crater. Their cries were as vain as the efforts of the miners to procure the body of their young master.

Fifty long years passed away. Old Eric Estrithson and his wife Gyda were gathered to their Swedish fathers, in the kirkyard of Lahun. Other tacksmen had succeeded to the mines; and scarcely a miner who had been present on that occasion, was left to tell the tale of the fate of young Magnus. Fiona Glipping's yellow locks had waxed to grey; deep wrinkles were on her brow; and the cheeks that bore the blush of the rose, were pale as those of the corpse that has tasted of the grave. At the time of her marriage, she was the beauty of Lahun; but, now, she was amongst the oldest women of the town, walking on the crutch of age, and tottering on the brink of the dark valley of death; yet, old as she was, she retained upon her mind the image of the young, blooming Magnus, as fresh and vivid as she did on that day when she met him before the priest—at that moment when she saw him fall into the chasm. But, save herself, few now living remembered aught of the unfortunate youth; and even the story of his fate had become as an old legend, told by the Swedish mother to her children. At the end of this period, the miners of Lahun had opened part of the eastern shaft, and discovered, in the alkaline waters, the body of a young man. No one could tell who he was: he was fair, the tints of health and youth were on his cheeks, and it was manifest to all, that he must have fallen into the shaft only a few days before; yet no one could tell anything of him, no one could say he had seen him; he was not an ordinary workman, for he wore the gay dress of a bridegroom, and yet no marriage had been heard of in the neighbourhood of Lahun for weeks before. The circumstance spread, and reached the ears of Fiona, who, crutch in hand, and with weak, tottering steps, took her way to the mine of Lahun. The corpse still lay on the side of the shaft, and the sun, which shone on it, never brought out a brighter tint of complexion from the face of the living, than he did from that of the corpse. The old woman bent over the body, and saw, through the spectacles of age, the form of Magnus Estrithson, precisely as he appeared to her on that day fifty years before, when he met his death in the manner we have related. She was now old and decrepit—he still wore the features, the complexion of youth, and was dressed in the very marriage garb in which he was that day arrayed. The alkaline waters in which the youth had fallen, had, strange as it may appear, preserved the body, with the lineaments and tints of youth, for fifty years. The image which had kept possession of Fiona's mind, till she was thus an old woman, was realized once again; but, oh! *Niobes dolores*, under what circumstances!



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE YOUNG LAIRD.

IN one of the midland counties of Scotland, lies the estate of Sir Patrick Felspar. On this estate, and on the southern declivity of a moderately-high hill, stood, about thirty years ago, two old-fashioned farmsteads, called Nettlebank and Sunnybraes, of which, as we have a long story to tell, we can only say that the former—being the largest—was tenanted by Mr Black, and the latter by William Chrington; that the family of the one consisted of a boy and a girl, called *Gilbert* and *Nancy*; and that the other was the father of an only son, named *George*.

The harvest had been concluded, and preparations were making for lifting the potato crop, when Mrs Black was taken ill of a fever; and her husband, on discovering that she was seriously indisposed, after sending the servant girl to "tell Elspeth Roger that her mistress wished to speak with her," left the house, to which he did not return for several days. Elspeth, who was the wife of one of the farm servants, being thus sent for, hastened to her mistress's presence. On entering the room, and seeing the state of the sufferer, she saw at once that a sick nurse was indispensable; and, though she had herself a husband and two children to attend to, and, consequently, could be but ill spared from her own house, she readily offered her services, and was accepted.

By her advice, medical assistance was immediately procured; and the kind-hearted matron continued to attend the sick-bed of her mistress, night and day, for three weeks, during which period Mr Black was seldom at home. Hitherto, the doctor had entertained hopes of his patient's recovery; but, on the eighteenth day, to Elspeth's anxious inquiries, he only shook his head, and bade her "not be surprised whatever should happen." His words were deemed ominous: a messenger was despatched to bring Mr Black home; and, on the following day, his wife died. Upon this sad occasion, Nancy seemed to be the only real mourner; for, though her father and brother hung their heads, and looked demure for a day or two, even the semblance of sorrow vanished before the exciting potations which they swallowed at the *dregy*.* Nancy, however, did feel the loss of her mother, and mourned it as deeply as her young heart could. And, as she had been oftener than once rebuked, with great severity, by her remaining parent, for what he called her *blubbering*, when grief overcame her she frequently sought a hiding-place for her tears in the house of Elspeth, who, with the heart and the feelings of her sex, shared the sorrows of the poor girl while she strove to alleviate them. But she was soon deprived of this refuge; for, in a few days after the funeral, Elspeth, who had probably caught the infection while attending the deathbed of her mistress, found herself in the grasp of the same terrible disease which had carried her mistress off; and Nancy, to avoid the same fate, was debarred from entering the door of her humble friend and only comforter.

On such occasions, to have one who will listen patiently

to a recital of our sorrows, and respond to them with a sigh, a look of sympathy, a tear, or a word, in which the tone of the voice bespeaks a reciprocity of feeling, is comfort, and almost the only comfort of which the case admits; for the lengthened speech and the studied harangue, containing, as they are supposed to do, "the words of consolation," often fall upon the ear without reaching the heart. Such a comforter, Nancy Black found in George Chrington, or, as he was universally termed, *the laddie Geordie*. This boy, who was one of her schoolfellows, and nearly of her own age, attracted by her sorrowful looks, and the tears which sometimes stole down her cheeks, left the boisterous sports of the other boys, and devoted his hours of play to walking with her, or sitting in some retired corner, and listening to her little "tale of wo." Hitherto, the roads by which they came and went had been different; but he now discovered a new one, by following which he could accompany her till within a short distance of Nettlebank; and, at the place where they had separated in the evening, he always waited for her appearance on the next morning. Youthful friendships are soon formed. Ere disappointment has done its work, and experience taught its salutary, though painful lesson, there is little room for suspicion on either side, and the hearts of the parties amalgamate, like meeting waters. Thus, the two became *friends*, almost before they could understand the meaning of the word.

While Nancy Black and her boyish companion were thus forming an affection for each other, as pure, and certainly as deep, as any which ever subsisted between persons of their years, Elspeth Roger was lying dangerously ill. But her sickness was not "unto death:" and, after being confined for twenty-four days, during which her life had been several times despaired of by all who saw her, she began to recover. Scarcely, however, was she able to move about, and bestow some attention on their household concerns, when her husband began to complain; and, in a few hours, he was laid upon that bed from which she had arisen, with all the symptoms of a most malignant case of the same disease. Elspeth, who, in the midst of many struggles, and without the outward show of more than ordinary affection, was attached to her husband, now became fixed to his bedside. Forgetting the weakness consequent on her own imperfect recovery, and fearful of allowing hands less careful than her own to approach him, she attended him, night and day, with a solicitude which none save those who have all they value in the world at stake, can comprehend. Medical advice was promptly procured. But, in spite of medical skill, tender nursing, and tears shed apart, David Roger died. Of Elspeth's grief upon this occasion, it were superfluous to speak. Suffice it, that, after many years had passed by, the general expression of her countenance, and the tear which occasionally stole down her cheek at the mention of his name, shewed that she had not forgotten the husband of her youth.

Though this event must have been distressing to the widow, her distress was aggravated when, on the second day from that on which her husband had been interred, Mr Black told her that, "as he had engaged another servant, and required his house, she must remove at the term." The first week of November was now past; the term was on

* *Repast*, so called, to which, in some parts of the country, the friends of the deceased are invited after the funeral.

the 22d of that month; every house in the neighbourhood was either occupied, or already let for the coming year; and this information came to the heart of Elspeth like a thunder-shock. It was what she had never dreamed of, and never thought of providing for. For herself, she might have been careless; but, when she reflected on her children, the feelings of the mother awoke in her bosom, and made her, for the time, superior to despair. Day after day, she went in quest of a hovel to shelter them from the rigour of the coming winter, and night after night she returned without having found one. It seemed as if Heaven had determined to make her a houseless wanderer; for not a single untenanted habitation could she hear of. But we must leave her to pursue her fruitless search, and attend, for a little, to what was going on elsewhere.

One evening, after George Chrichton had returned from school, without taking time to snatch his accustomed morsel of bread from the *aumry*, he inquired for his father, and hurried off in quest of him. Having discovered the object of his search in the stack-yard—"Father," cried the boy, as soon as he was within ear-shot, "hae ye heard that Mr Black intends to mak Elspeth Røger flit at the term; an' she canna get a house for hersel an' her bairns in a' the country?"

"I did hear she was gaun to flit," said the old man, composedly; "but whatfor canna she get a house?"

"I dinna ken," was the boy's eager reply; "but she's been seekin ane this aught days, an' mair; an' Nan Black says, if somebody doesna help her, she maun take her twa bairns, an' gang an' beg.—Noo, faither, could we no do something? There's our auld barn: I would mak the clay-cats,* an' we might pit up a lum; an' I would help Jock to howk a hole i' the wa', an' it wouldna tak muckle to get a *windock*; an'—an'—I've forgotten what I was gaun to say; but I'm sure we can pit up the lum; an' the woman canna lie out by."

"I daresay ye're richt, laddie," said his father, after raising his hat, and scratching the hinder part of his head for a few seconds. "The auld barn might do. There's some bits o' sticks lyin at the end o' the byre, an' some auld nails i' the stable—as mony o' baith as would be required, I believe. Jock could bring a cartfu o' clay the nicht yet—he could mak the cats the morn; ye might bide at hame a day frae the school, an' carry them in; an' I could pit up the lum mysel."

"But it would need a hallan too, faither," rejoined George.

"Hoot ay," said his father, "it would need a hallan, an' a hantle things forby; an', after a' has been done that we can do, the place will be but little, an' unco inconvenient; but it'll aye be a hole to shelter her an' her bairnies frae the drift, afore they can get a better. An', e'en though the scheme had been less feasible than it is, it maks my heart glad to see that—laddie as ye are—ye hae a thought for ither folk's distress."

"Na," interrupted George, "na, faither; it wasna me—it was Nan Black spoke about it first, an' I only promised to tell ye."

"Weel, weel, laddie," rejoined the other, "I'm glad to hear that Nan Black, as ye ca' her, is likely to turn out a better *woman*, if she be spared, than ever her faither was a *man*—but, as he has a' his actions to account for, of him I would say naething." With these words, the worthy farmer was about to resume his labours, when his son, flushed with the success of his plan, exclaimed—

"But will we no tell her, faither? Her mind canna be at ease afore she ken about some place."

"That's weel minded too," said the father—"she's maybe gotten a house already; but, in case she hasna, gang ye owre to your mither, an' tell her I bade ye get a

piece; an', when ye've gotten it, ye can rin yont, some time afore it be dark, an' see a' about it. An' ye can tell her that, if she likes, she's welcome to our auld barn, for a year; an', if she taks it, we's no fa' oot about the rent."

Though George obeyed his father so far as to go the length of the house door, he could not find time to go in for his promised *piece*; and, without opening it, he turned, and set off at the top of his speed in the direction of Nettlebank.

Return we now to the widow's cottage. The poor woman was far from having recovered, when she was called upon to attend the deathbed of her husband. The fatigue, terror, anxiety, and want of rest, from which she had suffered during that period, might have been sufficient to break down even the strongest constitution. When to these are added weeks of wandering in quest of a habitation, the reader will hardly be surprised when he is told that her animal strength was gone—her spirits sunk, and despair seemed to be closing around her. With a frame completely worn-out, a head which ached, blistered feet, and, we might almost add, a "bleeding heart," she sat by her fire one evening—her head resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed upon her children, while sighs convulsed her bosom. She wished to commit her little ones to the care of their Maker; but such was the state of her mind, that she fancied she could not perform even this duty, and the thought called forth another and a deeper sigh. While she was thus employed, Nancy Black opened the door unperceived, and, standing at her side, awoke her from her dream of despondency by saying, in a half-whispering, half-faltering voice—"Elspeth, dinna break your heart. I think I ken where you'll get a house, noo. I was speaking about you, the day, to Geordie Chrichton, at the school, an' he says they could soon mak a house o' their auld barn; and that his faither will never hesitate"—

To this the widow was listening, and almost thinking the news too good for being true, when the speaker was interrupted by some one coming against the inner door of the apartment with such force as nearly to break it. On hearing the noise, the widow rose to give the stranger admittance; but he waited not for her services. Putting one hand to his nose—the part which had produced the noise—and the other to the latch, before another second had elapsed, George Chrichton stood in the middle of the floor, panting from the rapidity of his march; and, without taking time to recover breath, he began to deliver his message by saying—"Elspeth, my father sent me owre to tell ye that, if ye want a house, ye may get our auld barn. Jock's to bring a cartfu o' clay—he's to mak the cats the morn; I'm to bide at hame frae the school, an' carry them in; an' my faither's to put up the lum. An'—what is't I was gaun to say?—ou ay—tak it—tak it, Elspeth; an', if he'll no gie ye it for naething, I'll keep a' the bawbees I get, to help ye to pay for't." Here he paused, fairly out of breath. The substance of his message, however, was delivered, and he now stood silent, and almost fearful of hearing that she had already got a house.

The widow, bewildered by her own feelings, the excited manner of the boy, and the intelligence which he brought, was also silent. Nor was it till Nancy Black had whispered, "It's true enough—Geordie never tells lies," that she recollected it was her part to make a reply.

Hitherto the boy had not been aware of the presence of his schoolfellow; but no sooner had he heard her voice, than his eye brightened, and he turned as if to seek the reward of his labours from her; and—girl as she was—he found it in her approving smile. But that smile was of short duration; for, as soon as she had a full view of his face, it passed away, and, hurrying toward him, she exclaimed, in an anxious tone—"What ails you, Geordie? What's that on your upper lip, an' your chin?"

* The materials of which a mud-wall is constructed in many parts of Scotland.

"What is't?" repeated the youngster, drawing the back of his hand across the place alluded to, as if to ascertain if anything was wrong in that quarter; and then, examining the hand so employed, he continued—"What is't? It's bluid; but where it comes frae I canna tell." After a short pause, during which he recollected the opposition he had met from the door—"It's my nose—it's just my nose," he added, laughing as he spoke, to free the heart of Nancy from those apprehensions, the shade of which he saw gathering on her countenance. "I didna ken the door was steekit afore my nose played crack on the sneek—and noo it's bluidin."

Sure enough, his nose was bleeding, and had been so ever since he came in, though unobserved. The attention of the widow and Nancy was instantly directed to stanch the bleeding; the latter brought the key from the outer door, and the former placed it between his shoulders, bathing his temples at the same time with cold water. In a few minutes, the blood ceased to flow, and, after his face had been washed, Nancy's smile returned.

When they were about to depart, the widow, taking one in each hand, and drawing them close together, said—"May God bless ye baith, my bonny bairns! An', in his ain way an' time, He *will* bless ye; for, when men and women had forsaken me, an' my heart was sinking in despair, ye have provided a hame for the widow an' the faitherless. May His blessing rest on ye, an' may He be your friend when ither friends forsake you!"

The *clay-cats* were made, and carried in, in the manner proposed; the lum was constructed; and the old barn made as commodious as possible; and, in a few days after, Elspeth and her two children came to inhabit it. But, though it was only intended for a temporary residence, when a twelve-month had passed, she did not leave it. She had made herself useful, in many ways, to the farmer, by assisting him with his farm-work; and, as both felt loath to part, she became a sort of fixture on the farm of Sunnybraes.

There is still one circumstance connected with her removal, which must be noticed. Mr Black, in general, did little to deserve commendation; but he could not endure the idea of any one becoming more popular than himself; and, as William Chrichton was warmly praised for his conduct in this affair, he soon began to regard him with a feeling which was more akin to deep-rooted hatred than ill-will.

We now pass over a period of six years, during which nothing of importance occurred—save that those who, at the commencement of this period, had been mere infants, were now boys and girls; those who had been boys and girls, were now men and women; and of those who had then been men and women, many were now in their graves. Nor of those who remained, had a single individual escaped, without having undergone some change. In some, the gaiety of youth had been exchanged for the thoughtful expression of maturer years; upon the foreheads of others, grey hairs were seen, where glossy ringlets were wont to wave; the rosy hue which had once adorned the cheek, was now broken into streaks; and on brows formerly smooth, the handwriting of care was now visible.

About this time, Sir Patrick Felspar, after being absent for a number of years, paid a short visit to his tenants. On coming to Sunnybraes, and expressing himself highly satisfied with William Chrichton's manner of farming and general management, that individual thought it a favourable opportunity for introducing Elspeth and her two children to his notice. The story seemed to affect him, and he immediately proposed taking the boy into his own service. This proposal was agreed to; and, at his departure, Sandy Roger accompanied him to London, where we must leave him.

George Chrichton, though only a schoolboy when we

last noticed him, was now a stout-looking, well-built young man, rather above the middle size, and, for some time past, he had been his father's only assistant at Sunnybraes. Nor was the change which had been produced on Nancy Black less conspicuous. From being a mere girl, in the course of six years she had become a beautiful maiden, in the last of her teens, and with a natural modesty, which, though it added greatly to her other charms, almost unfitted her for the situation she occupied in her father's household. Of this youthful pair, it was generally surmised, in the neighbourhood, that the attachment which had begun in their school days, had "grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength," till it had ripened into love.

Such surmises have often been made before, upon occasions where there was not even the shadow of a foundation for them. But, in the present instance, the gossips and tattlers were not so far wrong; for the two were really lovers, though, from the implacable temper of Mr Black, they found it necessary to conceal their affection; and, for two years more, in as far as an open confession is concerned, they did conceal it. They were not, however, wholly without their "stolen interviews," which, though "few and far between," with the additional disadvantage of being *short*, were, in this case, sufficient to keep the flame alive. They also found means of occasionally exchanging notices of each other upon *paper*—that *dernier resort* of all unfortunate lovers.

Catherine Roger, who had hitherto been thought and spoken of as the *lassie Kate*, was now beginning to expand into the young woman, and—smitten with her charms, as wise people began to suppose—Andrew Sharp, one of Mr Black's farm-servants, had, of late, become rather a regular visitor at her mother's. At first, he came with a quantity of worsted, "to see if she would knit a pair of stockings for him;" next, he "came to see if she would darn the heels of a pair of stockings;" and, by and by, he sometimes ventured to "come owre, just to speer for her." While his business was thus, to all appearance, exclusively with the mother, he frequently found an opportunity of stealing a look at the daughter, or—more fortunate still—of exchanging a word with her, as if by the by. It is probable, however, that the former—

"Wi' a woman's wyles, could spy
What made the youth sae bashfu an' sae grave;"

and, whatever her fears might be, there is no reason to doubt that she was

"Weel pleased to see her bairn respected like the lave."

Andrew, though young, was by no means deficient in shrewdness; he was naturally of an obliging turn—a quiet, conscientious lad—a great favourite with his young mistress, and he was sometimes made the bearer of those paper messengers which went between the lovers.

The leases of both farms were now within a year of being out, and both the farmers had begun to use what interest they could to have them renewed. As to the success of William Chrichton, those who pretended to see farther than their neighbours, shook their heads, and seemed uncertain; but of Mr Black being successful, no one seemed to entertain the smallest doubt. Sir Patrick, of late, had left the management of those matters wholly to his factor, Mr Goosequill; and, in the esteem of this individual, Mr Black now stood *deservedly* high. Scarcely a month had been allowed to pass, for the last two years, without a present of poultry, eggs, butter, or cheese, being sent from Nettlebank to the factor. Upon these occasions, Gilbert was commonly the bearer, and he always stayed over night, and either drank toddy with the representative of the laird, or poured flatteries into the ear of Miss Grizzy, his daughter. At these doings, far-sighted people shook their heads again, and said that Mr Black's hens were never

sold in a rainy day, except to serve some purpose, and darkly hinted at the possibility of his taking both farms.

Shortly after these matters began to be agitated, the old knight died, and was succeeded by his son, who had always been spoken of on the estate as the *young laird*. It was further understood that the young Sir Patrick had been abroad for the last nine months; and, according to the accounts which were circulated, he was not expected home for several months to come. This circumstance afforded an excuse to Mr Goosequill for declining to renew the lease of Sunnybraes, as he alleged that he could not do so till he had positive instructions from the young laird to that effect. At the end of four months, a letter from Sandy Roger informed his mother that Sir Patrick had returned to London shortly after his father's death; and, since his return, that he had treated him with a degree of kindness such as he had never expected to experience from a master. The game was now up; and the factor, finding that it was so, dispatched the following letter to the laird:—

“SIR,—As you have been graciously pleased to continue that trust which your much-lamented father was pleased to repose in me—a trust which, from my knowledge of local affairs, I hope I shall be able to discharge with honour to myself and advantage to you—and as the leases of your farms of Nettlebank and Sunnybraes expire at Martinmas ensuing, I should hold myself wanting in that interest which I have ever felt for the prosperity of the family, if I did not acquaint you of the following particulars. William Chrington, the present tenant of Sunnybraes, has now made application to have the lease of that farm renewed; but, as he is a man of no substance, belongs to the old school, is incapable of conducting improvements upon an extensive scale, and merely struggles on from year to year, I have declined to give him any answer till I should know what was your pleasure thereant. I have also received an offer for the said farm from Mr Black, bearing an advance of rent. This gentleman is in a thriving way; he has a turn for business, and everything prospers with him; he has extensive connections, and, what is of more importance to the present purpose, he has a son of age to take the management of a farm, who is an excellent agriculturist. Mr Black proposes to take both farms—Nettlebank at the old rent, and the other at an advance; and, if his offers are accepted, I have no hesitation in saying that he will soon improve this portion of your estate to a great extent. I would therefore recommend him to your notice. Hoping that *that* knowledge of local affairs which I have acquired from long experience, may still be of some service to you, I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

“GAVIN GOOSEQUILL.”

To this communication, the factor, in due time, received the following laconic reply:—

“SIR,—I thank you for your friendly advice, and the attention to my concerns which you manifest; but, as it is my wish that the old tenants should remain, you may let Messrs Chrington and Henderson have their farms at the old rent, if they choose.—Yours,

“P. FELSPAR.”

This entirely disconcerted the schemes of these friends. Mr Henderson was the tenant who had been in Nettlebank before Mr Black; and the young laird, who had not been in Scotland since he was four years of age, as yet knew nothing of his having left it. Gavin Goosequill felt rather at a loss how to proceed; but, recollecting that, “in the multitude of counsellors there is safety,” he determined to consult Mr Black, and, for this purpose, paid a visit to Nettlebank. What was the result of this consultation is

not exactly known; but, as Mr Black shook hands with the factor, and was about to bid him “good-night,” Andrew Sharp, who stood waiting with the horse, heard the latter say—“Well, I think we have it after all. I shall delay matters as long as I can, and then write, recommending farther delay; this will give us time to do something, and, if I am not deceived, both will be yours in the end.”

The oracular words, “do something,” and “both will be yours,” made an impression on Andrew's mind. When he reflected on the expiration of the leases, the character of his master, and the surmises which he had heard, he felt convinced that the first part of the factor's speech had a reference to the farms, while the last part of it implied some plot, which was hatching, to forward their schemes. This conviction suggested the probability that William Chrington would not be allowed to remain in Sunnybraes; and, as his removal must be attended with the removal of Catherine Roger, to he knew not how great a distance, he felt somewhat spiritless and disconcerted. Time seemed to stand still; and, after ruminating for a season on the means of averting such a misfortune, he took a pair of stockings, and, having placed them on the hearthstone of his bothie—no one being present—he proceeded to pound that part of them called the *heels* with the head of the poker. By this means, he soon produced something very like a worn hole in each; and then, taking them under his arm, and putting a quantity of worsted into his pocket, he set off to Sunnybraes, to get them darned. When there, as his “dulness” did not leave him so quickly as he had anticipated, and as he was, moreover, loath to sit silent in the presence of one whose good opinion he was so anxious to procure, while Elspeth was darning the stockings, he told Catherine the whole story—what he had heard the factor say, and the conclusions and inferences which he had drawn therefrom—taking care, however, neither to mention his “dulness,” nor the manner in which he had produced the holes in the heels of his stockings.

“Weel, lassie,” said Elspeth, when he was gone, “frae what we ken aboot Mr Black, the thing's clear enough. He's lookin after Sunnybraes for his muckle gomeril o' a son; an', if Gavin Goosequill can get it for him, by hook or by crook, by lies or by true tales, he'll no want it lang. The hens, an' the jucks, an' the geese, an' the turkeys, that gaed frae Nettlebank, hae done their *errand* weel enough, I warrant them; an' noo we maun try to do oors—at least, we maun *try*—to help them that hae been helpers to baith you an' me.”

“But hoo can we help them, mither?” inquired Catherine, with a look of surprise—“what can we do?”

“I'll tell ye what we can do, lassie,” rejoined her mother; “the young laird will never hear a word o' truth aboot either his farmers or his farms. It's easy for Gavin Goosequill to stap his head as fu' o' lies as it can haud; an', when this is done, it's but sayin that the laird wants Mr Black to get baith the farms; an' syne, Mr Chrington, an' you an' me too, maun flit. Noo, as your brither, Sandy, is the young laird's servant, ye maun e'en try if ye can write a letter to him, an' tell him o' a' this ongaun. Though it's no very weel written, he'll maybe mak oot to read it; an', if he's no sair changed since he left his mother an' his hame, *he'll* tell the laird the truth.”

Catherine was ready to comply with her mother's proposal. A letter was accordingly written; and, after being closed with a piece of shoemakers' rosin, instead of wax, and supplied with an address by George Chrington, it was, on the following day, put in the post-office. In about three weeks from the date of this letter, though no answer was returned to it, Mr Goosequill received the following note from the laird, which appears to have been an answer to another communication of his:—

Dear Sir,—I have received yours of the 1st August ; and I am now convinced, that the affair requires delay and serious consideration. I shall endeavour to turn your advice to some account ; and, in the meantime, you need give yourself no farther trouble about the letting of the farms.—Yours,

P. FELSPAR.

“P. S.—You may assure the tenants that neither of them will suffer injustice at my hands.”

Things now appeared favourable ; but, as Mr Goosequill seldom trusted more to appearances than was necessary, he took an early opportunity of calling upon William Chrington, to say that “he believed any farther application on his part for the farm would be useless, and must only tend to irritate the laird.” He hinted, farther, that, if Sir Patrick should raise an action against him, he might get heavy damages for the bad repair in which the steading then was. After having expended a good deal of learning and law-Latin in illustrating this subject, Mr Goosequill concluded, by saying, that, so far as he could judge from his last communication, and as Sir Patrick was a proud man, and could not endure to be thwarted in his plans, the best course he could adopt was, simply, to pay his rent, and quit the farm at Martinmas.

To these proposals the old farmer demurred. “I have always paid my rent on rent-day,” said he ; “I have made many improvements upon the farm to enable me to pay that rent ; and for the steading, though I am not bound to keep it in repair, by building a new barn and cart-sheds, at my own expense, I have made it worth at least sixty pounds more than it was at the beginning of the tack. Now,” continued he, “I can see no reason the laird can have for being *irritated* at me for endeavouring to keep possession of the farm on which I was born, and on which I have lived till I am growing an old man.”

“You may do as you please,” said Mr Goosequill, gravely—“only I have warned you ; and, if you are determined to persist, you may save yourself the trouble of writing ; for I have Sir Patrick’s authority for saying that he is coming down to Scotland, to settle these matters himself.”

Having thus counselled, he adjourned to Nettlebank, where he no doubt counselled more ; but through this labyrinth we shall not follow him. Only Andrew Sharp, who again brought out his horse, heard him say, as he was about to depart, “Well, I think I have the old scrub for the new barn, and, in the meantime, Mr Gilbert, who is really a smart lad, must try to do a little.”

“Fear not for him,” rejoined the other ; “he knows what he is working for—Miss Grizzy’s fair face is worth wanting an hour’s sleep for any time.”

Many of our readers will still recollect the disastrous harvest of 1817 : October was begun before harvest-work commenced at all ; and, after it did commence, day after day the rain poured down as if the sky had been an ocean supported by a sieve. It was after an evening of storm and darkness had succeeded to one of these distressing days, that a stranger arrived at Nettlebank, and requested lodgings for the night. The servant girl, who opened the door, said, “She wouldna let him in, but she would tell her master.” Her master accordingly came, and, without ceremony, told him to begone, for he harboured no wandering vagabonds about his *town*.

The stranger attempted to plead his ignorance of the country, and the darkness of the night, as excuses for being allowed to remain ; but Mr Black cut him short, by telling him, in a tone which was distinctly heard at the farthest corner of the house, to march off, or he would instantly unchain the house-dog, and set loose the terriers, and let them make a supper of him. Oaths and abusive language followed ; but the stranger did not wait to hear more. He had proceeded as far as the corner of the gar-

den wall, where a wicket gate communicated with the front door, and was muttering vengeance to himself, when he was accosted by Nancy.

“I am sorry,” said she, “we cannot give you lodgings for the night—my father is so passionate ; but here is something to help you on your journey.” The stranger seemed unwilling to take the shilling, which she was attempting to put into his hand. “It is hardly worth your acceptance,” said she ; “but it is all I have at present. I cannot tell how much I feel on your account—exposed as you have been to the rain. But, as this is no night for a stranger to be abroad in, only come with me a few steps, till I can procure a guide to conduct you to the next farm, where you will find shelter.”

“The farmer of the next farm may perhaps treat me like the farmer of this—and what then?” inquired the stranger, whose wrath had not yet altogether subsided.

“God forbid !” was Nancy’s reply ; “but he will not—I know he will not.” She then led the way to a low door, through the seams of which light was visible, and, tapping gently, pronounced the word “Andrew.” As soon as the door was opened—“Here is a stranger,” said she, addressing the young man who acted as porter ; “and when I grow richer I will endeavour to reward you, if you would get your greatcoat, and shew him the road ; or rather go with him to Sunnybraes, and tell them he wants lodgings for the night”—then, lowering her voice almost to a whisper, and drawing closer as she spoke, she added—“and, if they seem to hesitate, draw George aside, and tell him I sent you.” The lad was hastening to obey his mistress’s orders, when she called after him, “Stay—I had forgot—bring a greatcoat for him also.”

The stranger, who had now caught a full view of her in the light which issued from the open door, thought he had seldom seen a fairer face or a finer form, and, wet as he was, he felt a wish to cultivate her acquaintance by farther conversation ; but she gave him no time ; for, almost before the last word was spoken, she disappeared.—“Tell George !” muttered he, as he listened to her retiring footsteps—“this is something, however.”

At Sunnybraes, Andrew found his young mistress’s provisional clause altogether unnecessary ; for, no sooner had he announced his errand, than the old farmer rose to make way for the stranger : “Get up, George,” said he to his son ; “an’ you, Meg,” turning to his wife, “lift out owre your wheel, an’ let the poor lad in by to the fire. An’, d’ye hear?—if ever whisky did mortal creature guid, it maun be on a night like this ; sae, though I drink nane mysel, gang ye and gie him a glass.”

The stranger was accordingly placed by the fire, and a glass was brought ; but still it was considered that, as he must be drenched to the skin, a shift of clothes would be necessary. On this proposal being made, Mrs Chrington cast a significant look, first at her son, and then at her husband.

“Hoot, woman,” cried the latter, interpreting her look, “bring the duds, an’, if ye hae ony fear about them, the lassie Kate can gie ye a help to wash them, some weety day. An’ weety days are like to be owre rife noo, for ony guid they’re doin.—Our guidwife,” he continued, addressing their guest, “has aye been tear’d for infectious diseases since a beggar-wife brought the fever to the town mair than fourteen years back. But, though ye had five-an’-twenty fevers—ay, fifty o’ them—that’s no enough to let you get your death o’ cauld wi’ thae weet claes on ; sae ye maun e’en consent to shift yoursel.”

The stranger’s language was a strange mixture of the best English and the broadest Scotch ; and this circumstance, after exciting a degree of surprise in the minds of all, induced the guidwife to make some indirect inquiries concerning his profession and station in society.

‘I’ve been thinkin ye’re no just a here-a-wa man, by your tongue,” said she; “an’, if I’m no mista’en, ye’ve seen better days; for, when I was bringin butt your wet claes to get them dried, though your bit jacket an’ your breeks were just corduroy, I couldna help noticin that there is no a bit bonnier linen inowre our door than the sark ye had on.”

To these observations it seemed as if the stranger scarce knew how to reply—he passed his hand across his brow, and was silent for some seconds. But, on recovering himself, he told them that his name was Duncan Cowpet—that he had been born in Scotland, but his parents had removed to England when he was very young—that he had lately been a traveller for a house in London, but his master being now dead, and himself out of employment, he had thought of visiting his native country; he added that, though his dress was rather plain, he was not destitute of money, and concluded by offering to pay them for the trouble they had already been at on his account, and also for his night’s lodging.

“Na, na,” said the old farmer, his eyes brightening as he spoke, “we never took payment for sheltering the head of a houseless stranger, nor will we noo. But ye were sayin that ye’re out o’ employment; as this is a backward season, an’ we have a hantle to do, an’ mair than a’, as I’m turned frail and feckless mysel, an’ unco sair fashed wi’ rheumatisms, I’ve been thinkin if ye could consent to stay an’ help us for a owk or twa, maybe ye would be nae waur, an’ we could gie you as guid wages as ony ither body.”

To this proposal Duncan offered no objection, only he wished to stipulate for a bed in the house, as, he said, he had never been accustomed to lie in barns; and, as a guarantee that he would neither injure their property, nor run off without giving them notice, he offered to place five guineas in the hands of the guidman—remarking, that it was all the ready money he had about him. “And as to wages,” he continued, “I *will* ask no more than what you *will* think I work for.” The five guineas were accepted, not as a guarantee for his good behaviour, but that they might be in safe keeping. He was given to understand that he might have them at any time; and, when the family retired to rest, he was accommodated with a bed in the house.

On the following morning, which happened to be fair, he was employed in the labours of the season; and, though he manifested an uncommon degree of awkwardness, George Chrichton, who was his fellow *bandster*, did everything in his power to instruct and assist him in his new profession; so that he succeeded in performing his part of the labour till breakfast time. After this meal had been despatched, as each youngster drew closer to his favourite lass, Duncan, following the example thus set before him, began to attach himself to Catherine Roger, who, though the youngest, and perhaps the fairest, seemed to have no sweetheart present. But Catherine, though thus left alone, was far from encouraging his attentions; and, with great dexterity, she contrived, during what remained of the breakfast hour, always to keep her mother’s person between her and him—thus defeating his strong inclination to imitate the conduct of some of his fellow-labourers, by placing his arm around her neck.

On rising to recommence the labours of the day, Duncan found that his hands were blistered, and that it would be extremely difficult for him to resume his work; but George again assisted him, by inquiring if any of the lasses would be so kind as come and dress the injured parts. Catherine, notwithstanding her former coyness, was the first to obey. Bounding, with a light step, to her small repository of bandages and thread, she was back in a moment; and, spreading a small quantity of a very healing ointment, which her

mother had previously prepared, upon a piece of linnen cloth, she applied it to the part where the skin was beginning to peel off, with the dexterity of an experienced surgeon, and, having fastened it with a bandage drawn sufficiently tight, she was at her work again before Duncan could move his lips to thank her. He was now offered a pair of gloves, and with them, and the soothing nature of the ointment, his labour was less painful than he had anticipated, till their operations were interrupted by the rain.

Frosty mornings and rainy days, with short intervals of fair weather, succeeded each other. When in the field, Duncan had always an opportunity of seeing Catherine; but, though he really did endeavour to ingratiate himself in her favour, she still dexterously contrived to eschew all his attentions. He was not in love with her; but he felt attached to her by the same sort of feeling with which one regards a beautiful picture, or any other object which delights the senses. The symmetry of her form, the brilliancy of her complexion, and the lustre of her eyes, excited his admiration; and, in the absence of other objects, drew his attention. In this state of mind, he frequently puzzled his brains to account for the strangeness of her manners; and, one evening, shortly after his arrival, he resolved to introduce himself to her mother; if, peradventure, his so doing might throw some light upon the subject. With this intention, he had passed the little window, and was approaching the door, when he heard a chair overturned, and a noise within, as if some one had fled to the farther end of the house in great confusion. This induced him to listen for a moment; and, while thus listening, he heard Elspeth exclaim—

“What i’ the warld’s come owre the lassie noo!—whaur hae ye run till, Kate? Na, I never saw the like o’ that! The sark ye was mendin at, lyin i’ the aise-hole, an’ a red cinder aboon’t!—if I hadna grippit it, it might hae been a’ in a low lang afore ye cam to look for’t; an’ Andrew would only gotten a pouchfu o’ aise to tak hame wi’ him on Saturday nicht, instead of a sark.” Duncan was no eavesdropper; but his curiosity was strongly excited by what he had heard, and he could neither go in nor drag himself with sufficient speed from the door.

As Elspeth was concluding her ejaculations, the frightened damsel returned, and was heard to say, in a suppressed tone—“O mither, dinna be angry—I thought I saw Duncan Cowpet come past the window, an’ I ran to be out o’ his gait. I canna bide him; his een’s never off me the hail day, an’ mony a time I dinna ken whar to look.”

“Hoot, lassie,” rejoined her mother; “ye aye mak bogles o’ windlestraes. Duncan is an honest lad, I’ll warrant him, an’ willin to work, too; though he’s no very guid o’t. But, for a’ that, dinna think that I want ye to draw up wi’ him; for I wouldna hae ye to gie ony encouragement to anither man on earth, as lang as Andrew Sharp pays mair respect to you than the lave. But only tak my advice—neither rin awa when ye see Duncan coming, nor seem to notice his attentions when he comes, and he’ll soon bestow them on some ither body.”

“I’ll rather cut my finger for an excuse to bide at hame, though, afore I gang to the field when he’s there,” was Catherine’s half-pettish reply.

“Confound ye if ye do any sic thing!” cried her mother: “though Sandy pays the house-rent noo, recollect the guidman can ill spare ony o’ his shearers when the weather is fair.”

Duncan stood to hear no more; if he had formerly admired Catherine for her beauty, he now respected her for the principles upon which she acted, and he wished for an opportunity to convince her that he too could act a disinterested part. On the following day, his conduct was such as to free her mind from most of those disagreeable feelings which hitherto she had entertained; and, when he repeated his

visit in the evening, though she again saw him pass the window, she did not run away. After he was seated, he spoke of Andrew Sharp, and gratefully adverted to his kindness in conducting him to Sunnybraes on an evening when few would have cared for venturing abroad. Catherine's fears were now gone; she felt as if she could have died to serve the man who spoke favourably of her lover; and the conversation was kept up with the greatest cordiality upon all sides. Local affairs came to be discussed; and, as Duncan seemed curious to gain information concerning the farms, and the character of the farmers in the neighbourhood, Elspeth, in her endeavours to satisfy his curiosity, told him all she knew of Mr Black, and Mr Goosequill; with their supposed schemes for the ejection of William Chrichton.

It was now the latter end of October, and still the harvest was far from being completed. The watch-dog had died, and the horses began to exhibit symptoms of lameness, which were the more distressing, that the securing of the crop depended entirely upon their ability to labour. Two of the cattle were brought home, by the boy who herded them, in a diseased state, and the same evening one of them died. On the following morning, one of the horses was found unable to rise; and, before noon, he was dead also. It seemed as if the fates had conspired to ruin the old farmer and his family; day after day, horses, cattle, and other live stock, sickened and died; and, in a short time, he found himself without the means of prosecuting the labours of so precarious a season, with any prospect of success. To add to his distress, a summons was now served against him, for fifty pounds, "which," as that document affirmed, "he still owed, and had refused to pay to the creditors of Mr Rickledyke, for the building of his barn, &c." Mr Rickledyke was the contractor who had been employed on this occasion; the whole of the money had not been paid, when he became bankrupt; and, though the old farmer was perfectly certain that he had paid it, when he recollected that the bankrupt was a friend of Mr Goosequill's, and that the money had been paid in his office, he felt convinced that the whole was a trick, intended to embarrass if not to ruin him. He recollected farther, that, as a *stamp* could not, at the time, be obtained, for giving him a discharge, he had left the place without any voucher for the payment of the debt, beyond the testimony of two witnesses, who were now dead; and thus he had no alternative, but to pay it again.

The appearance of the law officers, at Sunnybraes, gave rise to a report, which was industriously spread, that William Chrichton was either a bankrupt or about to become one; and every individual who had the slightest claim upon him, came hurrying in with distrains and summonses: and, to complete the catastrophe, on Saturday, about noon, Mr Goosequill made his appearance, with the proper assistants, and placed the whole of the crop, stocking, &c., on the farm of Sunnybraes, under sequestration for the rent.

All hope of continuing in the farm was now at an end; and it only remained to make the most of the wreck which was still left. On Sabbath morning, the sky had cleared; the wind shifted about to the north, and, on the afternoon of the same day, a strong frost set in. The frost, accompanied by a sharp breeze, continued throughout the evening, and, as soon as midnight was past, the old man and his son prepared to embrace so favourable an opportunity for securing a portion of the victual which was still exposed. While they were engaged in these preparations, Duncan was left to the care of Mrs Chrichton, who had been instructed to furnish him with some *warm meat*, and a great-coat. After these injunctions had been obeyed, as he sat by the fire, while she stood over him with anxiety and distress depicted in her countenance—"O Duncan," said she, "it's a terrible thing for honest folk to be sae sair harassed. If lairds would only look after their affairs them-

selves, instead of trusting them to factors, I'm sure it would be better for a' parties. But it's a' oovre with us, and there's naething noo but to tak some cot house, and the guidman man e'en work in a ditch, and I maun spin for the morsel that supports our lives. George, too, is so disgusted with the usage we have received, that he speaks of going off to America. And Nancy Black—poor lassie! my heart is aye sair when I think about her—they've had a likin for ane anither since they were bairns at the school, and, if things had gane richt, they might been happy, and we might been comfortable; but that, like the rest of our prospects, is at an end." Mrs Chrichton's disjointed observations—particularly what related to Nancy Black, were a mystery to Duncan; and, though he wished to have an explanation, as the cart was now ready and he was called, he was obliged to console himself with the expectation that time might enable him to discover their meaning.

When they reached the field, the moon was shining clear, the wind was blowing a stiff gale from the north, and the sheaves of corn, where any moisture had attached to them, were frozen as hard as iron. There was only one of the working horses now serviceable; to supply the place of another, a colt had been that morning pressed into the service; but, owing to the awkwardness of this animal, the cart was overturned and broken in such a manner as to render the assistance of the smith necessary before it could be again used. Duncan Cowpet, who, notwithstanding his unlucky name, had escaped unhurt, volunteered his services for this expedition, and went off, with the cart and one of the horses, to the smithy. When he reached Nettlebank, on his return from the smithy, he had nearly driven his cart over Nancy Black, who, whitened by the falling snow, was leaning against the garden wall, and appeared to have been shedding tears. On discovering him, she endeavoured to assume an air of cheerfulness, and asked if he would stop for a short time, as she would have a message for him. Being answered in the affirmative, she hurried into the house, and in a few minutes returned with a piece of folded paper, which she requested him to give to his master's son. "But stay," said she, as he was putting it into his pocket—"it is not closed—I had forgot;" and then, after a short pause, she added—"but perhaps you do not read *write*?"

"Na," said Duncan, speaking in an accent much broader than the provincial dialect—"na, my faither was oovre puir for giein me ony buke lear." This seemed to satisfy the damsel, and she intrusted him with the letter in its unclosed state, only enjoining him to shew it to nobody, and give it into the hands of George Chrichton.

After nightfall, George said, that "he must go to the smithy for some things which had been forgotten in the forenoon," and wished to see Duncan, to give him some orders about foddering the remaining horses. But Duncan was nowhere to be found; and, after performing the task himself—the evening being now well advanced—he took the road for the smithy. It seemed, however, that he had business elsewhere; for, on reaching Nettlebank, he climbed over the garden wall, and, tapping gently at a low window, he was answered by a sigh from within. The door was immediately opened without noise, and a female form stood by his side. He placed her arm in his, and they passed silently to the barn, where they both stood without speaking for some time, and both sighed deeply. At last—

"George," said Nancy Black—for it was she—"I have done wrong in requesting you to meet me to-night; but I have been so much agitated with what I have heard of late, that I could not do otherwise."

"What have you heard, my love?" inquired the other, in a tone of the deepest tenderness—"ony tell me, and, whatever your feelings may be, there is at least one heart ready to share them."

"I thought I could tell you all," said Nancy, "before

you were here; but now, when you are beside me, I cannot, and yet I must; for, though my father and brother are from home, they may soon be back, and I may be missed from the house. Did you ever hear," she continued, evidently placing her feelings under a strong restraint as she spoke—"did you ever hear that your dog was poisoned?"

"I was never told so," said George; "but, perhaps, I have suspected that the dog, and the horses and the cattle likewise, were poisoned; and, perhaps, I have suspected who did it. But, if that were the worst, we might get over it still; and you must not distress yourself, my love, for dogs and horses."

"But I have other causes of distress," said she, still keeping her feelings under the same control. "We had Mr Goosequill here last night and this forenoon; and, from parts of the conversation which passed when they were more than half drunk, I learned that Gilbert and Miss Goosequill are to be married, and Sunnybraes is to be their residence, which the factor says he is certain he can now get at my father's offer. Oh, how my heart burns to think a daughter must thus reveal a parent's disgrace!"

"Nay, my dearest, do not distress yourself for this," rejoined the other. "Though my father cannot resign Sunnybraes to you and me, as he had intended, to mourn over it will not mend the matter. Let Gilbert and Grizzy enjoy the farm; but, before they can establish themselves on it, I will be on my passage to America; and, in a few years, with the blessing of God, I may be able to return—a better man than the farmer of Sunnybraes; and then, Nancy—but, first, promise that you will love me till"—

Here he was interrupted by the sobs of her whom he addressed. It was long before she could speak; and, when she could speak, long and earnestly did she try to dissuade him from his purpose. But the youth, perceiving no prospect of their union, except by the plan which he proposed to adopt, was inflexible. Finding all his entreaties were vain—

"Then it is as my heart foreboded," said she. "To-day I heard from Andrew Sharp of your intention of going to America. I walked out to conceal my feelings; and, while leaning on the garden-wall, forgetful of everything else, your servant passed, and then the wish rose in my heart to see you once more. After I had made my foolish request, I had still another wish ungratified, and that was—in case my arguments should fail, as they have done—that you would carry along with you some remembrance of her whom you once professed to love. This is woman's weakness, but perhaps you will pardon it; and perhaps you will keep the gift, though no better than a child's bauble, for the sake of the giver."

"I will—I will!" interrupted George, eagerly, whilst he took her hand.

"I am half ashamed of it," she continued; "it is only a small sampler, on which, shortly after leaving school, I sewed your father and mother's names at full length, and yours, and—mine—I may tell you this now, when we are about to part, perhaps for ever. No one ever saw me put a stitch in it. Will you keep it for my sake?"

"While life remains," said the lover: "run, my love, and bring it, that I may place it in my bosom."

"It is here already," said she, "and that is the reason why I wished our meeting to be in this place. Fearing lest my father should come home, and prevent me getting it from the house, I brought it out and concealed it here."

With these words, she made a few steps aside; and, as she stooped down to bring her little keepsake from under the empty sacks which covered it, instead of returning with it, she started and screamed. George flew to her assistance. Something seemed stirring among the sacks, as if an animal had been attempting to rise; he laid hold of it, and dragged a heavy body after him to the door. The moon, which was now up, shewed his burden to be a man; and,

grasping him by the collar—"Scoundrel!" he said, "what business had you there?" then, turning him round, to have a better view of his face—"Duncan!" he added—his anger in some measure yielding to surprise—"I had nearly given you a thrashing; but you have been our guest, and assisted us in our difficulties, and I must hear from your own lips that you are guilty, before I pass sentence upon you." With these words he quitted his grasp.

The blood flushed Duncan's cheek, and for some seconds he seemed uncertain whether to offer resistance or sue for peace. At last, he said—holding out his hand, which the other as frankly took—"If you had thrashed me, it would have been no more than I deserved. But perhaps you shall have no reason afterwards to repent of having spared yourself this labour; for, though I had my own reasons for doing as I have done"—

These words were spoken in good English, with an accent and a dignity altogether different from the speaker's former mode of speaking; but, before he could proceed, he was saluted, by a rough voice from behind, with the words—"I shall thrash you, you skulking vagabond!" And, at the same moment, he was grasped roughly by the collar by Mr Black, who raised a heavy oaken cudgel to strike him on the head. Had that blow descended, the probability is that Duncan Cowpet would have slept with his fathers; but George Chrichton wrenched the stick from the hand of the infuriated man.

"Unchain the dog!" bawled Mr Black, in a voice of thunder.

"I'll s-et loose Ca-e-sar," hickuped his son. But, instead of doing as he said, he lay down beside the animal, and began, in good earnest, to that operation which the "dog" must perform before he can "turn to his vomit."

Mr Black still continued to keep a hold of Duncan with one hand, and to strike him with the other, till George, stepping behind him, threw him quietly down upon a quantity of straw; and he too began to discharge the contents of his over-loaded stomach. Nancy, who, up to this moment, had stood in speechless terror, now stepped from the barn.

"Fly, fly," she whispered. "My father is drunk. I know it. He has never seen me; and you may escape. I will find some means of sending it. Fly, I conjure you!" And she pushed him gently from her.

On the following morning, Duncan was amissing; and, like a fool, he had run off and left his five guineas behind him. But the mystery was about to be cleared up. A little after daybreak, letters were delivered to the whole of the parties concerned, summoning them to meet the laird at an inn in the neighbourhood; and the surprise of all may be easily imagined when they discovered that Sir Patrick Felspar was no other than Duncan Cowpet in a different dress. The result was such as might have been expected from a laird who had learned the truth from observation and experience. We have only room to add that, shortly thereafter, two marriages were celebrated—two individuals who had been accustomed to hold their heads high were effectually humbled; and, to this day, whenever any farmer, or other individual, is supposed to be dealing unfairly with his neighbours, it is a common saying in the district—"Send Duncan Cowpet, to see what he is about."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND

HARDEN'S REVENGE.

FROM a state of high civilization, it is curious to look back upon the manners and modes of life of our ancestors of barbarous times; and the contrast never can be presented in stronger hues than in the picture of the lives of the old Borderers, who so completely realized Hobbes theory of the beginning of society, (fighting and stealing for their daily bread,) and that of the quiet, sedate men of industry and peace of these days, whose blood never rises beyond the degree of the heat of a money-making ambition. A shiver comes over us, when we read of the son killed in a feud, carried in to his mother a corpse; of the father of a family, and the laird of many broad acres, laid before his weeping wife and children, the dead victim of a strife with his next neighbour; of families rendered houseless and homeless, often by a marauding kinsman; and of the never-ceasing turmoil, strife, cruelty, and revenge, of the whole inhabitants of that distracted part of our country. We read, pause, tremble, and hug ourselves in the happy thought that we have been born in more auspicious times, when the sword is turned into the plough-share, the castle into the granary, and the fire of enmity softened and changed into the fervour of love and friendship. Yet, alas! if we carry our thoughts farther, how little may we have to felicitate ourselves on in the pictured contrast! Rudeness has its evils—but is civilization without them? If the household of the Border chief was begirt with the dangers of rieving and spoliation, the domestic *lares* kept it free from the inebriated and demoralized son, whom the genius of civilization sends from the city haunts of pollution, to lift his hand against his parent. If the *ingenium perfervidum* of a roving life carried the husband from the arms of the wife, perhaps to be brought home a corpse, she seldom witnessed in him the victim of any of the thousand civilized crimes which render the common thief, the fraudulent bankrupt, the swindler, the gambler, the disloyal spouse, the drunkard, worse than dead to her. If a well-directed revenge might deprive the inmates of the turret of a rude home, the strength was, at least, free from the inroads of the messenger or poinder, whose warrant has a crueller edge than the falcion of an enemy. We advocate not the cause of robbery, though dignified by the name of war or revenge, or coloured by the hues of a chivalric spirit of daring; but, when we look around us, and see how much civilization has accomplished for our bodies and our intellects, and how little for our hearts or our morals, we hesitate to condemn our ancestors for crimes which they were taught to believe as virtues, to attribute to them an unhappiness which they viewed as the mere chance of war, and to laud the civilized doings of our own times, when the criminal has not the excuse of a want of proper education to palliate his offences against the laws of his country. We are led into these remarks by some rising reminiscences of the doings of old Wat Scott of Harden, the most gnarled, most crooked, and sturdiest stem of the tree of that old family. He lived in the fifteenth century, the hottest period of Border warfare, and occupied the old seat of the family, Harden Castle—a place of considerable

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strength, situated on the beetling brink of a dark and precipitous dell, not far from the river Borthwick, and facing a small rivulet which brawled past to meet the larger stream. The place was suitable to the castle and its possessor; for the stronghold contained in security the sturdy riever, and the glen was a species of *massy more* for the cattle which he *made* his own upon the good old legitimate principle of *might*, so much despised in these days of statutory legislation, when the acts of Parliament extend to twenty times the size of the Bible.

Many anecdotes and stories have been recorded of Walter Scott of Harden; and we ourselves, we believe, have, in prior parts of our work, noticed him favourably. There can be little doubt, indeed, that he was a perfect man—that is, according to the estimate of qualities in the times in which he lived, as gallant in love as he was bold in war; and surely, letting the latter rest on his undisputed fame, the former could not be better proved than by his having, when still a fine bold riever, wooed and won the “Flower of Yarrow,” Mary Scott, the daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope—a young maiden, whose poetical appellation, expressive as it is, would go small way in carrying to the minds of those curious in beauties the perfections she enjoyed from nature. Of the manner in which Harden conducted his operations on the heart of this famous beauty, it may be difficult now to speak with that certainty which is applicable to his seizures and appropriations of his neighbour's live stock generally; but, judging from the analogy of the boldness of his other exploits, and from the circumstance that his father-in-law stipulated in the marriage-contract that he was “to find Harden in horse meat and man's meat, at his tower of Dryhope, for a year and a day, but that (as five barons pledge) at the expiry of that period, his son-in-law should remove *without attempting to continue in possession by force*,”* it may be presumed that the riever was not, in this instance, lost or forgotten in the lover. Old Dryhope *knew* him from the early fame he had acquired; and, while he had no objection to give him the Flower of Yarrow for his wife, he saw the necessity of providing against the occurrence which would, in all likelihood, have taken place, of Walter taking up his residence at Dryhope Tower, and becoming laird, at the same time that he kept a firm hold of Harden and his other lands. The spirit of *appropriation*, in short, was so strong and overpowering in the heart of the bold chief, that, as was frequently alleged of him, it was dangerous to let him sit down on a creepy-stool, belonging to a *bona-fide* proprietor; for three minutes' occupancy seemed to produce in him all the effects of the long positive prescription; and he never looked at an article of man's making, or nature's production, without considering whether it were a movable or a fixture.

The only period of Harden's life in which his peculiar notions of *meum and tuum* were lost sight of, was during the sweet moon of his marriage with Mary Scott. For one lunation, the poor Border proprietors were safe; and, if the Harden motto, *Cornua reparabit Phæbe*, had any

* The contract is extant in the charter-hest of the present representative. Neither Harden nor the Flower of Yarrow could write their names.

meaning in it, it was the only moon of his life that did not light him forth to commit some depredation. His marriage, with the slight exception already stated, had no such effect in modifying his appropriating spirit, as marriages nowadays produce on reclaimed rogues or roués; for Mary Scott, although the fairest of all the fair women of her time, had the same relish for cooking other people's kye, that her husband Walter felt in bringing them home. There was not a wife in all the Borders that served up "the feast of spurs" to her lord with greater regularity, and more attention to the rules of proper hussyskep, than the Flower of Yarrow. If Walter came in crying for supper—

"Haste ye, my Dame—what cheer the night?
I look to see your table dight;
For I hæe been up since peep o' light,
Driving the dun deer merrilie!"

Her reply was just as spirited and ready:—

"Are ye sae keen set, Wat? 'Tis weel—
I' faith, ye'll find a dainty meal;
For it's a' o' the guid Rippon steel,
And ye maun digest it manfullie."

The spirit of the riever, inborn, and strengthened by education and example, became, in the case of Harden, as it did in that of many a one else of the Border lairds, a regular household duty; and perhaps a more peaceable husband than he might have felt a difficulty in resisting the authority of so fair a governess as Mary Scott.

In the course of a long period, occupied by Harden in his daily duty and pastime of overturning the rights of movable property—and sure he must have been a happy man whose hobby was his duty—his helpmate bore him no fewer than six sons, who inherited the spirit of their father and the beauty of their mother. They came all to man's estate; and there was not one of them who disgraced the principles of education which their father took so much care to instil into them, as well by precept as by the example daily laid before them, of levying black mail, and keeping the dark glen well filled with the cattle of their neighbours. It was the ambition of Harden that each of his sons should be an independent proprietor, who might rieve, in after times, on his own account; and, at the time when our story properly begins, he could count four fine properties which he intended for the inheritance of four of the six youths. Two remained to be provided for; and a point soon came to be mooted at the fireside of Harden Castle—how two fitting lairdships might be acquired for them, so that it might never come to be said, by posterity, that Wat of Harden was unable to steal, or win by power or purchase, a good domain for every one of the sons of the Flower of Yarrow. The great difficulty, of course, lay in the nature of the thing to be acquired, because, unhappily, an estate could not be carried away; and there had already begun to be introduced a practice on the Borders of regulating the rights of land by pieces of parchment skins, whereby the outside of a sheep—a creature itself easily conveyable—was made to vest a right in the land on which it grazed. No doubt, the charter chest might be carried away, and Walter had courage enough to enable him to accomplish that object; but still there remained many difficulties in the way: doubles of the charters were apt to make their appearance at a future day, and the best fire that could be produced at Harden Castle was not sufficient to burn out the vestiges of proprietorship which the sword of its master could so easily overturn.

As his years increased, the anxiety of the old laird waxed stronger and stronger on the subject which lay nearest to his heart. He had often cast his eye on the property of Gilmanscleugh, not far distant; and he had even counted the broad acres, to ascertain if they would make a suitable inheritance for one of his sons. It belonged, also, to a family of Scotts—a circumstance that increased its peculiar

fitness for the purpose he had so long cherished, as his son would still be a Scott of Gilmanscleugh, and the injustice of the appropriation would be diminished, by his being chief of the clan, and having a species of superiority over its proprietor. By an unfortunate agreement of tempers, the two families had long remained on a sort of friendly footing; and Harden had never been able to bring about such a feud as might give him a pretext for denouncing Gilmanscleugh at headquarters, when he might have got the envied property forfeited, and a grant of it to himself. No doubt, he had often taken from Gilmanscleugh his kye; but what neighbour had been fortunate enough to escape, and what victim of his cupidity dared to resent an injury where resentment would have brought upon his head an evil a thousand times greater than that attempted to be avenged? It was even a species of favour conferred on a small proprietor to have a theft committed upon him by old Harden, because he was generally sure to be protected against more unscrupulous aggressors by the old lion, who liked to preserve what he himself might come to require; and so Gilmanscleugh, like many others, had suffered meekly the contributions laid upon him—for the double object of retaining his old chief's friendship, and preserving the rest of his stock from the hands of the other marauders, who were continually roaming about to take whatever they could violently lay hands upon. The situation of Harden was, therefore, that of the wolf in the fable; but he had never yet been able to come to the resolution of asserting that the lamb had rendered the descending water muddy to him who drank farther up the stream. On this important subject he did not disdain to take the advice of Mary, who could see no reason, any more than Walter himself, why the chief of the Scotts should not be able to provide a landed portion for two of his sons, when the whole of Liddesdale and the debateable land contained so much good ground lying ready for the taking. She, moreover, was also partial to Gilmanscleugh, and only lamented that it was not large enough to form two good properties; though that, of course, was no reason why it should not be taken, *quantum et quale*, for one of her sons, leaving the other to be provided for by some other estate out of the many that lay around them.

"By my faith, Mary," said Walter, "if Gilmanscleugh had four legs to it, it should not be long the property of its present master."

"And if my Walter had the arms he used to have," replied she, "it should not be long ere it was Harden's. My power hath faded. Formerly, if the Flower of Yarrow had asked Harden to give her Gilmanscleugh for a jointure, it would have been hers ere next morn heard the cock crow in Harden glen; but years bring fears."

"Not to Harden, Mary, love. He knoweth not the meaning of the vile word. Your dished spurs make me as sharp-set now, as they did when the cook was the fairest maid in Yarrow.* It is these sheep-skin rights, lass, that prevent me from bestowing Gilmanscleugh on one of our sons."

"She who cooks Rippon steel, Wat, needeth a fire," replied she. "Charters will burn. I'll give ye the spurs, if ye'll give me the parchment. It will roast one of Gilmanscleugh's kye."

"But I have no cause of quarrel, Mary," said Harden.

"If I were to swear on the altar at Melrose," replied she, laughing, "that Harden, wishing cows, asked for a cause, there wouldn't a simpleton on the Borders believe my oath. Where be thy wits, Wat? What better cause of quarrel need ye now than you ever did—a good hanger?"

* Mary Scott is well-known to have been as famous for the cooking of spurs as for her beauty.

"You would not have me kill my kinsman, Mary, to get his lands for our son. By the moon of our armorials, I've slain enough. Nothing now will make me take a man's life but anger, unless he be an Englishman, and then I'll do it for love."

"There's no use for killing," rejoined she. "I'll give ye the steel feast in the morning, and set ye forth for Gilmanseleugh kine. Take them all, with the pet lamb that frisks before the door, on the green lee; and if this do not make Scott complain, I had no title to be called the Flower of Yarrow. If he complain, ye want no more. Ranshackle the house, bring me the parchment rights, and I'll have a fire 'bleezing bonnilie.' One who hath cooked spurs may cook parchment."

"But there may be copies, Mary—doubles o' the rights," said Watt.

"Awell, my fire's big enough," answered she. "I've seen ye take five score o' sheep in one night; and the deil's in't if ye cannot take two skins."

"Good faith, but thou'rt the flower o' the Yarrow rievvers, Mary. Now, tell me where I shall get a property for our remaining son?"

"Gilmanseleugh may serve them both," replied she.

These last words were spoken by Mary as she went out of the room; and Walter having no opportunity of asking what she meant, (though, indeed, she meant nothing more than that the property might be large enough to serve both,) continued to mutter the words for a time, with a view to ask her for an explanation.

"Gilmanseleugh may serve them both," he repeated; "the woman hath gone mad. It is not enough for one of them. Has she lost the spirit of our house, and brought down her ambition to a mailing? By my faith, Dryhope itself will make up the deficiency; and, if nothing else can be got, Dryhope shall be taken for my youngest." After this manner, old Walter ruminated on the unexplained statement of his wife; and, by repeating it again and again, roused the pride that lay at the bottom of his heart, and made him wax even angry with the wife of his bosom, and she the Flower of Yarrow, and the mother of his six sons. But, angry as he was, he was also weary, having been hunting in the forest during the day; and he went to sleep, muttering, as he struggled ineffectually with the drowsy god, some oaths peculiar to himself, and to the effect that, take Gilmanseleugh when he chose, it should not suffice for the portion of two sons.

In the morning he awoke, but did not forget the statement of Mary, that had given a momentary impulse to his bile; and, repairing to the breakfast room, he found there his six sons and his wife, who, from some fugitive indications of face and manner, appeared to be engaged in some plot, in which she was the exclusive actor. Her original beauty, which acquired for her the poetical soubriquet by which she was so well known, still vindicated a place among the ravages of advanced age; and her spirit, in place of falling with her bodily strength, had increased, and was continually breaking forth in expressions of vivacity and humour, which sustained the heart of the old chief, and made her the sun of the domestic circle which she had so long graced with her beauty. She was now in the very height of her most delightful occupation—serving up with her own hands the morning meal of her brave Wat, and her six gallant sons, the parallel of whom, for make and manhood, might not again be found in broad Scotland. So happy was she, and so full of the joyous and soul-cheering fire of a woman's humour, that the six youths sat and looked at her with mute expressions of sons whose filial eyes saw, in the Flower of Yarrow, more beauties of mind and person than even exuberant Nature had bestowed; and old Wat himself smiled, as he gazed upon her, and finally relinquished his *malice prepense*, which had been urging him forward to ask

her for an explanation of what she had said on the previous evening—that Gilmanseleugh would suffice for a portion to the two sons of proud Harden. The parties sat down to the morning meal; and, as the old chief took off the cover of the first dish, a loud laugh, in which he heartily joined, announced the fulfilment of the spirited dame's promise of the previous evening; for there was nothing beneath it but a pair of spurs, made of shining Rippon steel, and presenting, in their sharp rowels, little power of assuaging the hunger of the youths, who had been hunting in the neighbouring dells, and could have eat, as the saying goes, the horse behind the saddle. Harden knew the meaning of the manœuvre; for he recollected the statement of the dame, that she would present to him the feast of spurs, to send him to Gilmanseleugh for a portion to her sons; and, nothing loth to receive the sharp hint, he exhibited, through his rough growling laugh, the fire and keenness of his rieving spirit, which was now to be gratified by the luxury of an adventure.

"What game shall these Rippon rowels prick us to, Mary?" cried the chief, still laughing.

"A good portion for our youngest," replied she; "the broad acres of Gilmanseleugh, and all the kye thereon, and elce the kist that holds the parchment; which last is to be placed in my safe keeping."

"And why not for our *two* youngest?" rejoined Harden, recollecting, with a slight bitterness mixed with his good humour, her former statement. "May not Gilmanseleugh serve both of our unprovided sons? What right have the sons of the Flower of Yarrow to more than the half of what hath served one Scott of Gilmanseleugh? By my faith, Mary! if I had not so good a breakfast before me, I would quarrel with my Flower for her depreciation of the honour of Harden; and were it not for that contract thy father wheedled out of me, I'd seize Dryhope in revenge."

"And forfeit the five pledges," replied she, laughing. "But, Wat, had we not better measure Gilmanseleugh first, before we quarrel about its proportions?"

"I have driven too many of his cattle over it to Harden glen, not to know the breadth of it," said he, keeping up the humour. "But come, my boys, we shall take a better gage of its dimensions to-day. Harden never rieves by day; but the light of the sun tells us best what the moon may light us to."

And having breakfasted on something more substantial than the dish of spurs, the old laird and his sons were prepared to sally forth to take a survey of Gilmanseleugh's flock, with a view to those ulterior operations which might have the effect of precipitating its unlucky proprietor into such a quarrel with his sturdy superior as might afford the latter a pretext for carrying his object of ambition into effect. To cover their proceedings, they took with them their hunting graith, without forgetting the stirrup cup, or rather without being allowed, by the provident solicitude of the spirited dame, to forget that essential preparative to a Bórderer's forth-going, whether he was bent on hunting, rieving, or wooing. Mounted on their strong shaggy garrons, with bows slung over their shoulders, swords by their sides, and the accompaniment of two wolf dogs of great size and strength, and a number of stag-hounds, all yelling around, till their voices awakened the sleeping echoes of the glen, and formed a rugged harmony with the long shrill winding of the hunting horns, they presented, in the features of the group, that mixture of the war and the chace, sport and spoliation, which marked all the roving parties of that extraordinary period and still more extraordinary place. The mother of six such sons had presented to her a fair subject of exultation in the party that stood before her; and her eye, which still retained the blue light of that of the Flower of Yarrow, spoke the

pride which swelled her bosom, as it passed, in laughing intelligence, from one fair face and manly person to another.

"It was as a hunter I first saw you, Walter, from Dryhope Tower," said she; "and he who hunted for a wife, may well hunt for a portion to her children."

"If I bring down Gilmanscleugh," replied Wat, laughing, "it will be a higher quarry than the Flower of Yarrow."

"You thought not so then, Wat," rejoined she, in the same spirit; "but love giveth way to ambition. That day thou callest Gilmanscleugh thine own, I will busk me again, as I was once busked, thy bonny bride, and put thy once cherished Flower of Yarrow in fair competition with the broad acres of Gilmanscleugh. By my troth, thou wouldst be a bold man to prefer the new love to the old."

"I would not give thee, woman," rejoined he, "for all Branhholm's wide domains, with the whole of Ettrick Forest to boot; so hold thy peace, and apply thee to thy lussyskep; for, by my sword, we will come home hungry men."

And old Wat's horn sounded again among the hills. The signal for starting was well known; and away they dashed down the steep, with that speed which the Borderers always exhibited—a consequence, perhaps, of the habit of getting off with their booty in the fear of a rescue. They were soon out of the sight of the fond dame, who long afterwards sat at the small window on the east side of the tower, listening to the notes of the horn, as they reverberated among the heights, and died away like the parting notes of mountain spirits that seek their dark recesses in the opening morn. A true Borderer's wife, she never feared for the result of an expedition of either hunting or harrying; and, as yet, a prosperous fate, by saving her husband and her six sons from the dangers to which their mode of life exposed them, had visited her with no cause of a wife's sorrow or a mother's affliction. But such was her heroic spirit, that, much as she loved these objects of her affection, she could have acted the Spartan dame over the dead body of the dearest among them, and quelled the bursting heart with the thought that he had died nobly in the vocation to which his fate had called him. It was not that habit had worn out the ordinary solicitude of the female heart; for, if custom had recognised the actions of a rieving female, in the affair of movable property as well as of movable hearts, we dare to be bold enough to say that Mary Scott would have been as famous as an amazon scaumer, as she was as the Flower of Yarrow. Many an expedition she had planned; and it was often more easy for Harden to satisfy himself as to the number of good cattle he might lodge in the glen, than it was to come up to the expectations of his better half, who, as the ballad says, if he had brought her less than ten, would not have "roosed his braverie." Nor was Harden's wife singular in the possession of these unfeminine feelings of Border heroism; for, as women are generally seen to take on the hues and complexions of the minds of their lords, the Border dames were generally remarkable for the spirit with which they applauded the deeds of their husbands, and the fortitude with which they bore the consequences, often lamentably tragic, which resulted from the wild life they were habituated to lead. In her present situation, Mary Scott thought only of the fair property of Gilmanscleugh, which she conceived so well suited for the heir loom of her two sons that still wanted provisions; and she had already in her mind's eye the bickering flame that was to consume the parchment rights, and roast the oxen that would serve for the celebration of the new acquisition to the wealth and property of Harden.

Meanwhile, the hunting troop sped through the surrounding woods sounding their horns, but caring less for

the dun deer of the Scotch hills than for the black cattle of Gilmanscleugh. They had not proceeded far, being still within the limits of Harden's lands, when they heard the hunting-horn of some party in the distance; and the old chief immediately despatched one of his sons—whom he styled the Forester, from his love of the sports of wood-craft—to prick his garron forward, and ascertain who it was that had the hardihood to drive the dun deer so near to Harden's glen. The young man obeyed; and, as he proceeded, he found that the huntsman, whoever he was, had, probably from hearing the sounds of the approaching chief, retired to the westward, with a view to avoid the coming party. This construction on his conduct was the first thought that arose on the mind of young Harden, and it came with the suspicion, that the sound of the stranger's horn indicated no other a visiter to the Harden woods than that very Gilmanscleugh against whom his father and mother had been nourishing the schemes which might contribute to the gratification of their ambition. With these thoughts came another—viz., that he, the young Harden, who was one of the unprovided sons for whom Gilmanscleugh was intended, would contribute to the satisfaction of both his father and mother, if he made short work of the projected scheme, and, by urging the proprietor of the envied property to a quarrel and battle, get quit of him by a bilbo thrust, and thus settle in an instant an affair which apparently occupied a great deal more thought than it was entitled to. The idea brought a whole train of the most delightful cogitations that had ever yet fired his young fancy. He would anticipate the views of his father; set off by contrast the simplicity of his own act—a simple extension of the sword arm—with the intricate machinery of his parents' scheme of ambition; enjoy the surprise of his father, and the wonder of his mother, when he told them that he had, by an unlucky quarrel, killed Gilmanscleugh, and asked, with affected simplicity, what would become of the property; shew himself the best of the six sons of Harden, and worthy of the best smile of the Flower of Yarrow. The accumulation of rising thoughts and stirring feelings inflamed his mind; and, striking deep the rowels into his garron's side, he pricked forward at the rate of a quick gallop, with the wolf-dog Grim bounding before him, baying forth a deep yell, and his tongue hanging half-a-foot over his blood-thirsty jaws. He kept his pace for a considerable time, and was already far from his father's party, when he saw Gilmanscleugh's dog, also a wolf-hound, and known to him by the peculiarity of its colour, being almost white, bounding away to the left, in the tract, doubtless, of his master. The moment the dogs perceived each other in the breathless foaming condition into which their race had placed them, they closed in a fell struggle, and made the wood ring with the sounds of their wrath. Gilmanscleugh heard the affray, and returned to save his favourite hound from the jaws of Harden's, which was so famous throughout the forest, that no animal of its species, or indeed of any other in the wood, could stand before it. Coming up, he struck the fierce animal of his chief; and young Harden, coming from behind, upbraided him for assaulting his dog, in such terms of galling abuse that the insulted man turned and laid his hand on his sword. The act was followed by a similar movement on the part of the Forester—in another moment they were engaged in fight, and the period of a minute did not pass away before the young and beautiful son of Harden lay upon the ground, a bleeding corpse!

"Ho! for Gilmanscleugh!" cried the victor, as he sheathed his bloody sword, and saw all the danger of his situation. "Ho! for Gilmanscleugh!—and that without blast o' horn; for every tree of Harden woods will rise up to avenge the death o' the Flower of Yarrow's favourite son."

And he struck his horse's sides, and urged him forward, calling out for his dog Wolf, who was as anxious to get out of the clutches of Grim, as his master was to get out of the reach of Harden.

"Wolf, Wolf!" he cried, as he turned round. "For Gilmanscleugh—hame—hame—ho! I have killed a dun deer to-day, whose umbles will tell the seer a sad tale o' our house, and whose corbin bane will bring mony a Harden corbie to Gilmanscleugh."

But Wolf was too firmly in the fangs of Grim; and now Harden's horn was sounding in shrill tones in the hollows, announcing to the unfortunate victor the near approach of the fierce chief, but no longer awaking the ear of the victim, who lay already stiff among the green leaves of the forest. The dogs were still fast; and he must spend as much time in disengaging them as would bring the father of the slain youth to the scene of his sorrow and revenge, or he must braid on with the top-speed of his favourite Sorrel, and leave his dog an evidence of the deed that, if traced to him, would bring ruin on his home, his wife, and his children, and all the retainers of Gilmanscleugh. Springing off, and nerved with the force of despair, he flung himself on the wrestling dogs, and, laying hold of the throat of Harden's, he clutched it with such strength that the animal opened his jaws, gasping for breath, and, turning up his eye-balls beneath the lids, fell on his side; but his revengeful opponent, no sooner free from the gripe which had bound him, seized Grim in his turn; and Gilmanscleugh saw before him an alternation of a process of choking that would consume more than his hurrying moments. There was not an instant for deliberation: seizing his sword, he struck it into the heart of the dog, and, detaching Wolf, sprung to his saddle, and flew through the forest with the speed of light; while his faithful animal, seeing no longer any life in his enemy, forsook his prey and his revenge, and bounded away after his flying master. But too much time had, unfortunately for Gilmanscleugh, been already lost in disengaging the dogs; for the twang of a bow announced to him, as he hurried on, that a messenger more fleet than Sorrel was after him, and, looking round, he saw his faithful attendant fall to the ground, with a long shaft quivering in his smoking side.

"There is my king's evidence left behind me," muttered he, as he stuck the rowels deeper in the sides of his horse. "Wae to Gilmanscleugh when Harden has to avenge the death o' a son slain by his arm! Braid on, good Sorrel, to a flaming stable, and carry your master to what may be sune a lordless ha'!"

The speed of his horse soon took him out of the reach of Harden and his sons—but not before they had seen him in the act of flight, and brought down his dog by an arrow sent from the unerring hand of the old chief's namesake. On coming up to the place where his favourite lay extended dead on the ground, with his face upturned to heaven, and, though partly covered by his bonnet's plume, that had fallen down in the flight, displaying too evidently the rigid muscles of death, his father and his brothers uttered a loud cry of astonishment and grief, and ran to satisfy themselves of the terrible truth, that the beautiful youth was indeed dead. The satisfaction was easy and ready: enough of blood lay in a pool by his side to have carried in its stream two young lives; and a single glance at his pale face struck the mind with the palsy which death in the human countenance so strangely produces. His sword, firmly grasped in his hand, told also a part of the story, which was eked out by the body of the dead Grim and that of his lifeless antagonist, which one of the sons had brought to the place where the group stood and looked at each other in mute grief. But that was only for a moment. The heavy, tear-filled eye of sorrow of the father changed in an instant, and flashed forth the fire

of revenge; and, as every one of his five sons clutched their swords, loud cries rent the air—"Ho! for Gilmanscleugh with the sword and the fire-faggot!" so entirely were the fiery youths led away by the impulse of the new feeling, that they had all remounted their garrons, clanging their drawn swords, and uttering their deep-mouthed cries, without reflecting for a moment that the body of the dead youth had to be disposed of, and that all their party was not able to take Gilmanscleugh tower, and put its inmates to the sword.

"Hold! ho! my brave sons!" cried the father, as the fire of his revenge beamed through his tears. "Why this hurry? A hundred years would not cool our fire, and a sudden revenge lacketh the fulness of satisfaction. We must take home the body of my dead son to his mother. It will be her duty to swathe it and to lay it out. It is the first time she hath had this work to do; and, as she does it, she will recollect her words of yestreen when she said that Gilmanscleugh would serve for both of my sons. Too true, alas! Gilmanscleugh hath satisfied one; Gilmanscleugh shall satisfy the other."

The youths, burning as they were for satisfaction, saw the necessity of agreeing to the recommendation of their father; and, dismounting again, they lifted the stiff body from among the clotted grass, and, wrapping it in a mantle, laid it over the backs of two of their horses, and proceeded in mournful procession towards home, where Mary Scott as yet sat at the castle window indulging in the meditation to which the expedition of her husband and her sons had given rise. The sounds of the horn that had struck her ear, had long ceased, and she pictured to herself the bold party scouring over Gilmanscleugh, the intended inheritance of her son, the Forester, the best beloved of her, as he was of his father, for boldness, filial affection, and beauty. She did not expect them till the evening was far gone, and then it would be her duty and greatest delight to prepare for them the cheerful bickering fire, and the warm refreshing meal, and welcome them to their home and their pleasures with her accustomed looks of satisfaction, her well-chosen words of good-humour, and her questions of success, put in such form as might afford the opportunity of recounting their deeds of arms or woodcraft. Many a time had she enjoyed these highest pleasures of the dutiful wife, affectionate mother, and spirited companion; and there was yet time and opportunity in store for her to enjoy them again with undiminished relish. Casting her eyes over the side of the glen, she saw the procession of her husband and five sons, with the dead body of the sixth, coming slowly along the middle of the dell. This was not the way in which old Wat of Harden usually returned to his castle; there were no cattle driven before him, no winding of his horn among the hills, no whoop of triumph from his rough throat. The slow tread of the horses' feet, as they paced the sod, came upon her ear with a dead, hollow sound; and her heart became busy with its mystic divinations, before her eye could trace all the details of the unusual scene. But feature by feature of this first representation of a mother's bereavement, opened gradually on her view; she ran over the faces of her sons and that of her husband, and soon distinguished the beloved victim; the expressions of the countenances of the bearers told her the extent of the calamity, if the form of the extended body, where Death sat triumphant, and gave forth those indications of his presence which cannot be misunderstood, had left any doubt on her mind that her fair Forester was no more. But her griefs knew no feminine paroxysms, the strength of her nerves enabled her to contemplate even the scene of a dead son, with that strange calmness which the strongest feeling can draw from the depths of the mental constitution, as its cover and panoply in the hour of nature's greatest need. As the procession approached,

she saw Harden draw his hand over his eyes, and the sobs of the youths fell on her ear. Yet she descended with firmness to meet a sight which, contemplated by a mother, is perhaps the most harrowing that can be exhibited to mortal eye—a dead son—and that son her hope and pride. At the entrance, she met her husband, who took her hand, and, as he held it, waved to the conductors to pause in their progress.

"Let them come in, Wat," said she. "I know all—my Forester is dead. Come forward, my sons, and let me see him who was once my pride, and tell me what cruel cause hath reft me of my boy."

The sons came forward, and, taking the body by the head and feet, carried it into the tower, where, having placed it, they stood around, silently looking on what was, an hour before, their beloved brother, in the heyday of youth and beauty.

"Who hath done this deed?" inquired the mother, as she looked on the pale face of her son, with feelings too deep for tears.

"Gilmanscleugh," answered Walter.

The word operated like electricity on the minds of the sons, as they stood silently looking at the corpse. Revenge had for a moment been clouded by grief, and the talismanic influence of the name of the destroyer drew aside the vapours, and exposed again the fiery sun of their resentment. A simultaneous movement carried their hands to their swords, and every face was turned to the door; but the eye of old Walter, looking askance through a bush of shaggy grey brows, watched keenly every motion; and, as they rushed out to raise the cry of destruction to Gilmanscleugh and its master, he called them back, and hurried them into a side-room with grated windows and a strong door, where were contained, as in a stronghold, the title-deeds of Harden, and other valuable things which required security. "Let us consult, my bold youths, let us consult," he said, as he pushed the last one in; and the moment they were all fairly enclosed, he turned the key in the lock, and put it into his pocket.

"Give me the Forester's bloody doublet," he cried, to his wife, "with the hole made by Gilmanscleugh's sword in the right breast."

"What mean ye, Wat?" answered Mary, as, lifting her eyes from the face of the corpse, she noticed these extraordinary proceedings on the part of her husband. "Why do you lock up our five sons, when vengeance calls them to Gilmanscleugh? and why ask ye for the bloody vest, which should be the pennon to fly over the smoking ruins of the destroyer's tower? If you are to stop revenge, lock up the mother with her sons; for my heart beats with the pulsations of man's courage, and I will cease to feel as a woman till this blood be avenged. If thou wilt not lead on our sons to Gilmanscleugh, let me undertake the task; and mark well the issue of a woman's foray, when a son's bloody doublet hangs on the point of the spear."

"Recollect ye not your words, Mary?" answered Wat, hurriedly. "Said ye not that Gilmanscleugh would serve for both our sons? That one lying there is satisfied; by the powers of revenge, the other shall not be disappointed. The doublet! come, wife, the doublet!—and see that you give our sons meat enough, through the west hole of the strong-room, to keep their blood warm and their hearts glowing for three days. Let our dead Forester lie there for that time; but turn his head to Gilmanscleugh. The doublet! come, quick!"

Mary could not understand the meaning of these words; but she well knew that the resolutions of her husband, when determined, were founded on prudence and principle, and beyond the affecting capabilities of mortal man; so she proceeded to take, from the body of her son, the doublet, which was stained with blood, and perforated in

the right breast by the sword which had deprived him of life. Having removed it, she handed it to Walter, who, holding it up to the light, looked through the hole, and, with that strange mixture of a peculiar humour with the deepest seriousness of human nature, for which he was remarkable, declared, with a grim smile, that he saw through it the lands of Gilmanscleugh, and the Harden arms over the door of the old tower; then, wrapping up the vestment, he hurried to the outer court, and, binding it to the front of his saddle, mounted, and, clapping spurs to his horse, was, in a few moments, away at a hard gallop over the hills.

Confused by these abrupt and incomprehensible proceedings, Mary had not been able to make the necessary effort to get an explanation, though it is doubtful if all her entreaties would have been successful in wringing from the determined and cunning old chief what were his intentions. Returning to the apartment where the dead body lay, she found there a duty which would occupy the time till her husband returned—in watching the corpse of her beloved Forester, and tracing, in his rigid, pallid features, the traces of those expressions of his beautiful face which used to extend so much influence over the hearts of his father and mother, and bring love to him from all sides on the rapid wings of sympathetic attraction. On one side lay the corpse she had to watch; at the other were her five remaining sons, enclosed as prisoners, and prevented from executing the revenge with which she burned, or extending to her the comforting and assuasive assistance of their presence and conversation. As she looked on the face of the corpse, she heard the impatient murmurings of her sons, who, burning to get forth to satisfy the yearnings of their hearts, demanded of her, through a small opening in the door, what was the intention of their father in thus keeping them from so just and necessary an object as the vindication of the honour of Harden, and the taking of blood for blood.

"We shall not be balked of our revenge, mother," cried the youngest. "The Forester's blood cries more loudly than the voice of our father. Call the retainers, and break open the door, that we may get free. Haste, good mother!"

"Haste! haste!" added other voices.

"I cannot disobey Harden's commands," replied she, "though the face of this fair corpse seems to beckon me to the satisfaction of a mother's heart, at the price of a wife's rebellion. My Forester's glazed eyes are fixed on me, and say—'Open, and let my brothers free, that my blood may be avenged.' I cannot obey. Three days you must remain there—three days must the Forester lie in his shroud—then will Harden be back, and he will bring with him the bloody doublet to hang on the point of your spears."

"Whither is our father gone?" rejoined the impatient youths.

"I know not, but these were his words," replied she. "I am to watch my Forester's body, and feed you through the west hole, for three days."

"We cannot survive three days unrevenged, mother," said another. "We will take on ourselves the responsibility of release. Send us Wat's John, and he will break down this door. Bethink ye, good mother, that Gilmanscleugh may fly, and the Forester's ghost may wander for twenty moons in Harden's glen, upbraiding his five brothers for not avenging his death."

"I cannot disobey your father," again said she.

"Then we will force our freedom, mother," cried the third son.

"Disobedient boy, say not the word," answered she. "Wait the three days, and, if you will, nurse, during that time, your fire; for, if I am not deceived, your father will require of you as much avenging wrath as you have to bestow, when his horn sounds again his return to Harden."

With difficulty did Mary prevail on the impetuous youths to refrain from an effort to effect their freedom. For the three appointed days, she sat in the room by the side of her dead son; and at every meal hour she handed in the food necessary for the sustenance of her prisoners. Nor did she conceive that she had any title to rest from her watchful labour, or to cease her care of the dead body, even during the hours of night, till she saw his death avenged. The midnight lamp was regularly trimmed, and hung upon the wall, that its glimmering flame might fall on the pale face of the youth, as he lay rolled up in the shroud which his mother had prepared for him, while sitting by the bier. At the solemn hour of midnight, she sat silent and sad, looked now in the face of the dead, listened to hear if any sound of a horn without announced the approach of her husband, or of a messenger from him, and then inclined her ear to catch the broken words of revenge, muttered by her sons in their sleep, or the strains of mournful lamentations for the death of their brother, which the energy of their grief forced from them at those intervals when their revenge was overcome by the more intense feeling. Groans and sighs, muttered oaths, sobs, and expressions of impatience, mixed or separate, told continually the workings of their minds. The speech of the dreamer was often mixed with the conversations of those awake; but so well acquainted was the mother with the sounds of their voices, that she could distinguish the one from the other. The question was often put by one who slept—"Are the three days past yet?" and those awake gave him the answer he could not hear. Then some of them seemed to clutch his neighbour in his dreams, and call out, that he had now caught him, and would avenge on him the death of the Forester, accompanying his speech with a struggle, as if he were in the act of stabbing Gilmanscleugh. Another would call to the mother, to know the hour; and, when she told him that it was midnight, or an hour past midnight, he would sigh deeply, as if he felt the hours of the three days winged with lead. Then again, a victim of night-mare groaned with fear, at the vision of the Forester's ghost, and cried that it would not have long to walk the glen, for that the three days were fast on the wing. The shrill scream of a passing eagle or solitary owl, wakening those who slumbered in a half sleep, was mistaken for their father's horn, and an appeal to the mother was required to rectify the mistake. All these things passed in her hearing, and threw a gloom over her mind, which was not relieved by the look which she every moment stole at the dead face, as it shone white as the shroud in the light of the lamp: but she stood the trial, and continued her watch. The beam of a deadly revenge indicated the steadfastness with which she adhered to her resolution never to rest till she knew that Gilmanscleugh had expiated by his life the murder of her son.

Since the departure of Harden, no intelligence had come from him; and so strange had been his conduct when he went away, that his wife had often to combat the rising thought, that the fate of his favourite son had unsettled his intellects, and driven him away from the scene of his loss, in some wild dream of superstitious retribution. The locking up of his sons, was the very reverse of the conduct which his revengeful nature might have dictated; and the taking with him the bloody doublet, through the sword-hole in which he declared he saw the lands of Gilmanscleugh his own, was far more like the act of a madman, than that of one who had duties to perform to himself, to his wife and children, on that sorrowful occasion, more serious and difficult than he had ever yet been called upon to fulfil. These thoughts rising throughout the dark night, when her ears were pained by the strange noises proceeding from the excitement of her sons, and her eye had nothing to rest on but the dead body of her son,

stretched by her side, stung her with anguish, and filled her heart with boding anticipations of terror. The third night was on the wing; and, though twelve o'clock had passed, there was no appearance of her husband. Her sons had become more than ordinarily restless, and said that, if their father did not make his appearance in the morning, they would disregard all authority, and call to the retainers to break down the door with battle-axes, and set them at liberty. She heard them in silence, and trembled to communicate to them the thoughts that had been passing through her mind, as to the sanity and safety of their father. In a little, the restless prisoners began to fall over into their troubled sleep, and the moon, newly risen, sent in through the small windows a bright beam, that lay on the face of the corpse. She had wrought up her mind almost to a conviction that her husband had, in a fit of madness, thrown himself into the Borthwick, or otherwise committed suicide, and figured to her diseased fancy his body placed along-side of her son's, and with that same pale beam resting on it, and exhibiting to her the features which she had so long looked on with delight, made rigid by the grasp of death. Every sound was now hushed, with the exception of the occasional broken mutterings of her sons, and the notes of the winged inhabitants of the upper parts of the tower, who cawed their hoarse omens to the midnight wanderer in the forests. Every thought that rose in her mind was charged with a double portion of awe; and cold shivers, in opposition to her efforts to be firm, ran over her from head to heel, and precipitated her farther and farther into the depths of her fancied evils. Superstition might have borrowed a thousand aids from the circumstances in which she was placed; but, though she was beyond the influence of the direct operation of that power, the thoughts of evil which she had some reason for indulging, borrowed a part of their dark hue from the clouds in which the mystic goddess is generally enshrined: the individual would indeed have been more than woman who could have sat in the situation in which she was placed, and measured her evils with the gage of calm reason.

While sunk in these gloomy reflections, a shrill blast of a horn reverberated among the hills. "That is our father's horn!" cried the sons, who awoke with the sound; and Mary herself knew the signal of the approach of her husband. She rose from the side of the corpse, and, looking forth from the window, saw, by the moon's light, Harden himself hastening towards the tower. In a moment, he bounded from his horse, and in another he appeared before his wife.

"To horse, to horse, my sons!" he shouted, as he came forward. "Now for Gilmanscleugh, with the fire and the sword of Harden's revenge!"

A loud shout from the chamber where the sons lay announced the relief which this statement brought to their frenzied minds. The door was opened, and the prisoners were set at liberty. Without waiting for refreshment, the old chief, having cast a look on the dead body, hurried with his liberated sons to the court, where every retainer was summoned to attend his master. A large party was assembled in a very short time, and, with the moon as their guide, the cavalcade, making the castle ring with Harden's war-cry, issued with rapid steps out of the ballium, and took the road to Gilmanscleugh. They arrived at the place of their destination, while the moon shone still clear in the heavens; and Harden's sons observed that their father now took no precautions, as was usual in his night attacks, to prevent the assailed party from knowing his approach. He marched them silently, deliberately, and boldly, up in front of the tower of Gilmanscleugh, where Scott, who had fondly imagined that his act had not been traced to him, was residing in a security

that had been daily increasing, but was now so soon to be ended. The whole party were ranged in front of the devoted tower, and Harden's horn was sounded for entrance. Scott appeared at the window, and asked the pleasure of Harden, and the purpose of his visit at that unusual hour, though he well knew to what he owed the fearful visit.

"I have a paper, under the King's hand, to read to thee, Gilmanscleugh," replied Harden.

"We had better read it in the mornin'," replied Scott. "Our lights are out in the tower. I will wait ye at yer ain time; but let it be in the licht o' day."

"The moon is Harden's time," rejoined the chief. "If thou wilt not let us in to read it, here, in the light of this torch, brought for the occasion, thou shalt here the words of majesty. I am only the royal commissioner, and must do my duty."

The torch was held up, and Harden, calling forth one of his retainers, who had been a clerk in a convent, ordered him to read a royal charter which he put into his hands. The man obeyed; and read the document, which purported, in the few words of these old land rights, that the King, for the love and favour he bore to Walter Scott of Harden, had conveyed and settled upon him and his heirs the lands, tower, and appurtenances of Gilmanscleugh, which formerly belonged to William Scott, but had fallen to the crown by escheat, in consequence of the constructive rebellion of the said William Scott in killing the son of Harden, known by the name of the Forester, when engaged in hunting on his father's lands. The charter gave, in addition, full power to the said Walter Scott to take immediate possession of the property, and to take all necessary steps for ejecting the former proprietor and his family from the same.

"Thou hast heard read the King's writ," cried the chief. "What sayest thou to the royal authority? I come here peaceably, to demand the possession of Gilmanscleugh. If you will consent to depart, and give me up the key of the tower, I will pass my honour for the safety of thee and thine. If not, I will enforce the King's authority. Take a quarter of an hour to decide. I will wait the decision."

This announcement produced surprise on all hands, as well to the unhappy proprietor who was to be deprived of his lands that had come to him from his ancestors, as to the sons of Harden, who were to be deprived of that species of revenge they had burned for, and considered to be the only one suited to the occasion which called for it—the life of the slayer. While Gilmanscleugh retired to consider of the proposal, the sons of Harden crowded round him, and implored him to retract his condition of extending safety to the person of the murderer of their brother. The old chief—who had already counted all the advantages and disadvantages of the bargain, and saw how much better were the broad acres of Gilmanscleugh, which the King had given him for the loss of his son, than the life of its master, which, although he took, he could make nothing of, seeing that it would vanish in the act of capture—replied calmly to their warm entreaties, that the lands were his revenge, and a very good revenge too; but he promised them that, if Scott did not immediately comply with his request, they would have their pleasure of him and his whole household, to kill, or wound, or burn, or hang, as they chose. This addition roused the spirits and restored the hopes of the sons, who could not suppose that a man would give up his property in the easy manner anticipated by their father. Yet so it turned out; for, in a short time, Scott appeared again, and stated that, upon condition of him and his household being permitted to go forth safe and free, he would instantly deliver to him the key of the tower. The bargain was struck; and, in a short time, the extraordinary scene was witnessed of a whole family leaving the home of their fathers on a quarter of an hour's notice, and wander-

ing away to beg a habitation and a meal from those who were their dependents. Scott's wife had in her arms a sucking child, and three other children held by her garments, and cried bitterly as they passed on through the fierce troop, who looked the daggers of a disappointed revenge. A sister of his wife's tended a sickly son of Scott's, who was borne forth on a board carried by two of his retainers; and there was seen, hobbling along, with a long piked staff in her hand, the laird's mother, who had gone to Gilmanscleugh sixty years before, and borne in it seven sons and three daughters. Then came Scott himself, with the keys in his hand, at the sight of whom Harden's sons moved involuntarily forward, as the instinctive desire of revenge for a moment overcame the command of their father. The keys were handed forth in dead silence; and the servants of the ejected laird wiped their eyes as they beheld the melancholy scene. They wandered slowly and reluctantly away. Harden looked back as the last of them were disappearing in the wood. "Revenge enough," he muttered—"revenge enough, and to spare." He then entered and took possession of the tower, in which he left as many of his men as were sufficient to guard it. He then returned with his sons and a part of his troop to Harden, where he found Mary Scott still sitting by the side of her dead son, in conformity with a custom among the Borderers, derived from the land of Odin, that the corpse of a murdered relative should not be committed to the earth till his death was avenged. She looked up in the face of Harden as he entered, and the blue eye of the Flower of Yarrow searched wistfully for tokens of a deed of stern retribution. Such is the power of custom and education, that one of the fairest of women, who, if she had lived in the nineteenth century, might have been a Lady Fanny, and shrunk, according to fashion, from the sight of a murdered worm, deemed it necessary, from duty, and felt it as consonant to the feelings of her sex, to look her disappointment at not observing, on the clothes or arms of her husband and sons, the signs of a wrong righted by blood.

"Is it thus that Harden comes, with bright steel and unsullied clothes, from the house of the murderer of his fairest son?" cried she. "Look at that corpse, and blush deep as the crimson that dies the lily-lire of our boy. Is there no vengeance, Walter? Is there no satisfaction, my sons?"

"Whether, Mary," replied Harden, "would you accept a charter to the lands of Gilmanscleugh to Harden and his heirs for ever, or the life's blood of its master, as a satisfaction for the death of our boy who lies there, killed by his hand?"

"I would rather enjoy the lands," replied she, "and let the murderer enjoy, if he can, the life that is spared to him. Our revenge is double; for, while life may be painful to him, the lands will yield us pleasure in after years."

"Here, then," said he, "is a charter to the lands of Gilmanscleugh"—holding out the parchment. "I got it from the King as my satisfaction; and now we may, indeed, say, as you strangely predicted, that Gilmanscleugh hath served both of our sons."

On the following day, the unfortunate son of Harden was buried; and, long afterwards, the lands of Gilmanscleugh remained in the family under the name of Harden's Revenge.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE LAST OF THE PEDLERS.

"Atlas was so exceeding strong,
He bore the skies upon his back,
Just as a pedler does his pack."—SWIFT.

THE whole framework of society has been so much altered within these last sixty years, that a person who has been born within that period, unless from tradition, must remain entirely ignorant of the manners and habits of his immediate predecessors. Now, highroads, carriages by land and water, with all manner of facilities of intercourse, have brought every part of the country, even the most remote corners, into contact, as it were, with every other part. Any great or engrossing fact or feeling flies immediately, on wings of paper, and in characters of ink, from land's-end to land's-end. But, formerly, this was very far from being the case. The press, as a vehicle of public news, was altogether in its infancy. Roads were not, or they were all *but* impassable; and the one end of the island might be sunk into the sea, without the other extremity having any immediate perception of the loss. But we must not conclude, on this account, that our forefathers were without curiosity, or without the means of gratifying that passion for news which is deeply seated in our nature. Not at all; the very inconveniences of their position produced, in a great measure, the means of reciprocal intelligence.

There were the tailor and the trogger, but, above and beyond all, the pedler, the most respected and interesting of all walking and migrating gazettes, who, in the non-existence of woollen-drapers and haberdashers, nailed, like bad silver, to a locality, wandered from Dan to Beersheba—in other words, from Glasgow to Manchester, and *vice versa*—carrying all manner of fashionable clothing on their backs, and a vast assortment of fore-night gabble in their heads. As these itinerant merchants behoved to be young and strong, so they were generally unmarried, and kept up a kind of running fire with the lassies. Their opportunities of observing the characteristics of the farmer's fire-side were unbounded, as they not unfrequently remained stationary for two or three days in one place. After several years of laborious travel, and enormous profits, at little or no expense in point of diet, such individuals generally purchased a stout horse, to carry the increased load of goods. The horse, again, was ultimately attached to a waggon, and the waggon, at last, stuck in the midst of some flourishing village or town, and became a regular haberdashery shop. Thus, through industry all but dishonest, parsimony, prudence, and perseverance, a comfortable independence often crowned the old age of the packman; and he was not unfrequently found with a fishing-rod by the mountain-stream, or with a book in the corner of his snug little garden, towards the close of his varied and eventful history. It was but the other day that we attended the sale of an old bachelor of this description—the last, we believe, of the race—and that, amidst a parcel of old books and papers, which we purchased *en masse*, we discovered a well-written and somewhat extended manuscript, from which we intend to cull a few chapters, for the amusement of our readers.

CHAPTER I.

It is now upwards of sixty years (*loquitar* packman) since I first took yard-wand in hand, and pack on back, addicting myself to much pedestrian travel, with the view of supplying dames with needles and shears, maidens with shawls and Bibles, and servant lads with watch-chains and waistcoat pieces. Having, at last, and after many wanderings and much converse with men, women, and children—not to mention dogs, which, in the hill-country, are numerous and noisy—having, I say, at last reached, as it were, a port or haven of rest, I sit here in my arm chair, with old Ponto on one side, and my not less faithful friend, the schoolmaster, on the other, keeping a calm look out over the ocean upon which I have been tossed, and recalling, as well as endeavouring in the best way I can to narrate, the somewhat varied incidents of my past life.

It is quite true that I was never properly bred for any profession, but was simply educated in the reading of English, and in the keeping of accounts, and may, therefore, be supposed to be very unfit for anything like grand composition, or style of language; but in case this narrative should, by any accident, as they say, *see the light*, I must premise that I am possessed of advantages of which the reader, till I inform him, cannot possibly be apprised. I have the benefit of my friend the schoolmaster's strictures; of which, however, I shall only avail myself, in regard to the language, and that merely when I am fairly convinced that he is right and that I am wrong. With the wording of this very last sentence, Dominie Tawse finds fault, and insists upon it, that there is, I think he calls it, a "pleonasm" in it; but of this he has failed to convince me, and I therefore suffer the sentence to stand as it was originally written. In fact, I have a great regard for my good friend, the Dominie's opinions, on most occasions, but really, in regard to composition, his taste has been perverted by certain rules and regulations, to which he gives very hard names, and to which, in my opinion, he sacrifices both ease and sense.

I pass over the history of my early days. Were I to enter upon them, I should write a volume, and still have volumes to write; for I was born in a mountain glen, beside a mountain stream—my father being a shepherd—and where I grew insensibly into an affectionate friendship for everything around me: for my dear and indulgent mother; for my douce and sagacious father; for our two dogs, Help and Watch; for the old grey cat; for all manner of wooden trenchers, spoons, and ladles; for the stream that winded past the byre-end; for every fin that shot across the pool; for the sheep bleating upon the brae and glen; for the glen and brae themselves; for the mist, the clouds, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars—which all seemed made for and subservient to us, and us alone. I pass over the killing of my first trout, with a crooked pin, my novice in fishing, and my amazing progress and success in after years; but I cannot pass over a song, which, in these my days of youthful glee, I laboured into something like the tune, I think, of "Blue Bonnets over the Border:"—

"Oh, would you wish to gang to the fishing, lad—
Ye maun get up in the morning sae early,
Wi' step like the roe-deer, and blythe heart and glad,
And tackle in order, to start to it fairly.

Away! while the sleepers around ye are dreaming,
 Away! while the grey eye of morning is beaming,
 Ere the mist leaves the mountain,
 The wild duck the fountain,
 Or the pure light of day o'er the world is streaming.

"Gang down by the glen where the burnie rows gently,
 When the light western breeze the stream ripples over;
 By the deep eddied pools, where, silent and tently,
 The trout keeps his watch, 'neath the willowed bank's cover.
 And there, with the fly, where the water winds slowly,
 Neatly and clean throw it just out below you;
 Watch for him steadily,
 Strike at him readily,
 And run him till, faint, on the sward he lies lowly.

"With the well-seasoned bait in the streams that are fleetest,
 Fish the large yellow fellows, two pounders or more;
 You are sure of a tune to the fisher's ear sweetest,
 For the sound of the pirl is all music before.
 He comes with a boil, like a deep caldron gasping,
 So sudden and keenly the tempting bait grasping—
 Hark to him dashing!
 See to him splashing!
 Now he pants on the green, and your hand cannot clasp him."

I pass over, likewise, the mournful recollection of my worthy father's death. He was swept away in an avalanche, which, on the melting of the snow, detached itself from the mountain's brow. He and Help perished together. Oh, I remember, as it were but yesterday, Watch's look when he entered the house, and all but told us in words what had happened. But what avail such recollections? My father was dead, and, in a few hours, my mother followed him; she was seized prematurely with her pains, and, ere assistance could be procured, there was a dead mother and a still-born child. I wonder yet that I kept my senses; but I was stupefied. My uncle, a gruff and worldly-minded, but shrewd carle, arranged and managed everything, and took me home with him, the day after the double funeral.

My mother's brother—with whom I now lived, and by whom I was educated, in the town of Moffat, Dumfries-shire—had made a respectable independence as a packman; and, having only one son, and being a widower, he found no great inconvenience in accommodating me. His son was grown up; and, having a natural taste for a seafaring life, he was, soon after my arrival, placed as middy on board of an East Indiaman; so my uncle and I had the whole house to ourselves. But my uncle's temper was bad; and there was that in his manner to me, which seemed ever and anon to say—You are devilishly in my road, I wish I were quit of you. Accordingly, being now a pretty well-educated lad of seventeen, I cast about in my own mind for a profession, or some way or other of supporting myself, independent of my snarling relative. Jamaica, I remember, was thought of, and I even had some pairs of shoes made for the voyage; but the person died on whose patronage my uncle relied, and the scheme luckily blew up. I wrote a good hand, and was quite master of book-keeping, both by single and double entry; so I was put to a writer's desk in Dumfries, with many admonitions, and much wise instruction. But I had been accustomed to the hills and streams, and fishing, and all the varieties of an active life; and so, one fine evening, I went out to walk on the banks of the Nith, but forgot to return to my desk next morning. In fact, I had returned to Moffat, telling my uncle that I was tired of sitting, and would rather, like himself, carry a pack. At this he seemed at first somewhat startled; but, finding me resolute, he at last consented, and agreed to furnish me with credit to the amount of £20 sterling. A suitable box was accordingly purchased, and a somewhat limited assortment of penknives, watch-seals, scissors, thimbles, needles, pins, brooches, Bibles, and Psalm-books, with a small assortment of shawls, waistcoat-pieces, and Kilmarnock night-caps, &c., were selected and packed up; and the following morning was fixed upon for my departure, when my uncle requested my company for a little in his own small sitting-room, off the kitchen.

"You are about," said my uncle, "to enter upon a profession, the profits of which, if rated according to shop regulations, would be altogether inadequate to the recompense of your risk and trouble; you must, therefore, effect an 'assurance,' as it were, by disposing of every article at the highest price you can possibly obtain. Ask, if you mean to secure a reasonable and a remunerating profit, at least double the prime or original cost; and thus you can afford to be prigged, or beat down from penny to penny, till you all but swear that the purchaser has the article below prime cost. In all your travels, never lodge at an inn or public house. One single instance of this, well authenticated, would ruin your trade for ever; for every lad and lass, every guidman and guidwife, would infallibly conclude, that, if you could afford such expensive accommodation, it must undoubtedly be at their cost—it must be exacted from the ribbons, shawls, gown and waistcoat pieces, with which you supply them. You must, therefore, fix, as soon as may be, upon your points or stations of regulated half-yearly or yearly calls; and this is undoubtedly one of the nicest and most delicate points of your profession, and must be managed, not so much on any general principle, as by a reference to character and circumstance. There are, undoubtedly, many farm-houses, from which the sooner that you depart, and relieve the dogs of their clamour, the better. But this is not their universal or even general character. Whenever you find the guidwife couthy and heartsome, the guidman gruff, and frank, and honest, and the daughters young and buxom, there deposit your pack on Saturday night, and, if greatly pressed, do not lift it again till Tuesday or Wednesday morning. Monday and Tuesday, if you are up to your trade, can be advantageously employed in exhibiting, bit by bit, and at intervals, the wonders of the pack; in retailing, with a corresponding parsimony, your country and city news; and in disposing of as many articles on trust, (for you must never deal for ready money only,) as may entitle you to announce your return with new patterns and fashions that day six or twelve months. To the sheep or stock-farmer in particular, your periodical visits will be the welcomest; for, as he lies at a distance from shops or cities, his wants will be numerous, and his knowledge of the market price imperfect in proportion. To him, too, you can render yourself useful on various occasions. At speaning and smearing time, in particular, you can lend him a lift; for you must never grudge a little labour of this sort, to secure you a good market, and a welcome back again. There is a way, too, of gratifying your customers, and of benefiting at the same time yourself, which you would do well to observe: Whenever occasion may offer, your maxim is, to please them on the spot, and without delay; for delays in purchasers, like those in other matters, are dangerous. Your pack is exposed, and every eye is turned intently upon its many attractions. The farmer's daughter is mightily pleased with a particular pattern, but wishes it more of a superior quality. The only test, however, which your inexperienced customer has of quality, is *price*. You have asked, I shall suppose, five shillings, which may be about double its value, for this pattern; but it will not do—a finer article is wanted. You immediately recollect that you actually have such an article somewhere else, and bustle over your goods in great seeming confusion. At last, up the pattern turns; but the price is high—in fact, you did not mean to part with it, as it was in a manner bespoke by an old customer. Thus, the *very identical* shawl is disposed of at double the price, and your customer is obliged at the same time. The neat performance of this allowable imposition, requires, however, some previous practice, so that no suspicion may, in any case, attach to you.

"Never," continued my uncle, after inhaling his usual

large allowance of snuff—"never neglect golden opportunities, or favourable occasions. A death is one of those most propitious occurrences; and, if it take place suddenly, and in one of your 'starting families,' so much the better. Hasten forward, or backward, (as may suit your purpose, on such occasions,) with all possible dispatch. Night and day you must continue your travel towards the house of mourning, and, after suitable inquiries and condolences, which must never be overtaken, you may, as it were incidentally, mention that, by the most strange coincidence, your present stock of mourning articles is full and good. A whole black suit for the guidman, or a gown, at least, and ribbons for the mistress, will yield a profit more than equal to console your grief, and reconcile you to the behests of Providence.

"The lassie, again, who is thinking of marriage, will easily be recognised by her bashful look and embarrassed manner. You will soon learn to observe the great approaching event, in a laughing eye and an excited demeanour—

"Coming events cast their shadows before ;"

and, under the advanced shadow of this coming event, you will be able to spread out your pack to some purpose. Whatever of head-gear, ribbon, or lace, flutters in the wind, adorns the countenance, or borders a dress gown, you will be ready to afford, at prices greatly reduced, since last season. Bridegrooms, too, make presents; and for this purpose you must have neat-bound Bibles, gilt Psalm Books, and Boston's 'Fourfold State.' Marriages have a natural tendency towards and connection with christenings; and you will be a lame calculator if you cannot make it your business to be present on these occasions, with such dresses as infancy, thus circumstanced, is known to require.

"Fairs, too, and markets, are never beneath your notice; not that I would advise you to attend indiscriminately such public resorts. There is danger in this; for if, whilst selling, as you would be compelled to do, your goods at a fair market price, some of your muirland customers should observe it, your private and more lucrative trade would be endangered; but, in markets sufficiently remote from your ordinary route, no such consequences are to be apprehended, and there you may occasionally get rid of some old and rather unsaleable stock.

"One of the most important secrets of the trade is, the recovery of bad debts; for, however delighted your customers may be with their fine new fashionable articles when they are purchased, the day of payment is always an unwelcome day.

"So comes the reckoning, when the banquet's o'er,
The awful reckoning, and men smile no more."

"Servants, too, frequently change their service, and you will often have great difficulty in tracing them out. In every instance, almost, some particular procedure must be resorted to. In one case, you may succeed by threats, and by pretending to read a warrant of apprehension; in another, a little flattery may not be amiss, particularly with the fair sex. 'It is, indeed, a pity that the price is not forthcoming; for you never saw *her* look so handsome as she did in the still unpaid article. Could she only manage the one-half now, you would take her acknowledgment for the other half, next time you came about,' &c. &c. In desperate cases, desperate measures must be resorted to. For example," continued my knowing instructor, "I'll tell you how I once recovered thirty shillings, which I had fully given up as lost.

"There was a servant lass, in the parish of Penpont, who had the hardihood not only to refuse me payment, but actually to aver that she owed me not a farthing, that she had already paid me, and would not pay me twice over. True, she had no receipt for the money; but then

I was in the habit of receiving money without giving or being asked for any receipt whatever. What was to be done? There had been no witnesses of the transaction. Was I to sit quietly down, not only under the loss, but under the suspicion that I was capable of charging twice for the same purchase? I, at last, after much meditation, devised and carried into effect the following method of recovery. I shut myself up in a room, in the village of Penpont, for a day or two, and took care to have it noised abroad, by means of a boy whom I had bribed into the secret, first, that I had been taken suddenly and extremely ill, and, lastly, that I had died. This report I took particular care to have conveyed to the ears of my fair debtor. She resided about two miles from the village. In a day or two, my messenger repaired to the lady, averring that I had left him, being a near relative, my heir, and that he had found a debt due by her in my books, which debt he requested her to liquidate incontinent. To this proposal Tibby opposed words and actions of the most disdainful and reproachful character, calling my agent many bad names, and at last setting him to the door by actual violence. In the meantime, knowing what was likely to occur, I hove in sight, at the further extremity of a grass field, in full uniform, with my well-known pack on my back, and my yard-wand in my hand.

"'Aweel,' says Sandy, 'if ye winna pay, I canna help it; but there *he's* coming to speak to you *himsel*. So ye can e'en settle the business atwixt ye.'

"'The Lord forbid!' exclaimed Tibby, looking towards my approach, with staring eyes, and limbs trembling like an aspen leaf—'The Lord Almighty forbid, Sandy! Come here! come here! Wait a moment till I get the key of my trunk! Here, here! there's the money, every shilling, and see ye letna the awfu dead creature come ony nearer us.'

"And thus I recovered my just debt, and afforded a source of much good-humoured merriment to the neighbourhood for many days afterwards."

CHAPTER II.

It was on a fine morning in the latter end of the month of October, that I took yard-wand in hand, and pack on back, for the first time. The sun shone slanting and sweetly over wood, and vale, and hill-side; and the light and airy gossamer (at this season *only* visible) lay in gleaming and floating lines, over grass fields and ploughed lands. I bent my way to the mountains, well knowing that there, at a distance from shop or market, I should most likely meet with a sale for my goods, and should, at the same time, fix the prices, without fear of check or detection. By the time that I had reached Locherben, the sun had set, and the twilight was still lingering on the tops of the twin Queensberries. The herds were coming in from the hills; the guidman was steeking some yetts in the inclosure of the in-fields; and the guidwife, with some half-a-dozen servant lasses, were busily employed in domestic arrangements. Dogs were everywhere to be seen, meeting in unity, or snarling defiance over some contested pot from which they were extracting a rather scanty meal. I leaned my pack on a fail or turf dike, which enclosed a few ill-thriven cabbages, and waited patiently an invitation from some chance inmate to enter. At last, a canny lass came out, with a tub-full of sheep's entrails, which she proceeded to cleanse and scour in the passing stream. She took up her station near to where I leaned, and, blithely singing the while, proceeded, with kilted coats, and sleeves tucked up to the shoulders, to perform her work. Having cast a random glance around her, she immediately perceived that she was not alone—and, without any feeling or appear-

ance of embarrassment, immediately proceeded to address me—

“And what are *you*, sitting there, like a craw in the mist? and what’s that lying behind you, man?—Losh preserve us! hae ye gotten a coffin on yer back, or are ye just a kintra lad, gain hame wi’ yer sister’s kist on yer shoulders?—Speak, body, speak this minute, or I’ll come along yer chafts wi’ a nievefu o’ thairms!”—Thus saying, she actually left the pure water which she was so busy defiling, and, brandishing some score of yards of the tripe in her right hand, was in the act of accomplishing her threat, when I suddenly disengaged myself from the arm-strings of my pack, and, parrying the blow which was aimed at me, I closed at once with my fair adversary, and, ere she could raise a scream sufficient to alarm the whole town-land, I had taken as many favours from her as ever Apollo did from Daphne. To scream so loud and shrill as to bring down upon us half-a-dozen dogs, and nearly as many herds, was the work of an instant; but of an instant during which she was made distinctly to perceive that I was no lassie, but a young fellow of some spunk and mettle.

“What’s the matter wi’ Jenny?” said a stout figure, snugly wrapped up in the shepherd’s toga.

“Matter!” replied Jenny—“matter!”—adjusting her dress, and now red from ear to ear—“why, I believe, after a’, there is nae great matter—but that body frightened me sae with his kists and his coffins, I was amaist out o’ my wits.”

“Kists and coffins, ye gomeril woman!—why, that’s a packman; and I’ll warrant he has as mony shawls, and gown-pieces, and ribbons, and as muckle braw Brussels lace in his box, as wad set ye fleeing to kirk on Sabbath, like an Indian queen. Come in, lad—come ben—it’s getting dark, and ye’re far here frae ony neighbour town—come away, and ye shall hae yer supper in the spense, and yer bed in the chammer—and Jenny there into the bargain, if ye will only promise to mak us rid o’ her for guid and a’.”

“Jenny!—heh! that’s ane indeed!” responded the fair tripe-scourer.—“I’se warrant, guidman, ye wad soon be sending a’ owre the country, and sticking up bits o’ paper on the kirk doors, war I only four-and-twenty hours amissing; and, as for Wee Watty there—if there be a bauk low enough to hang him, ye wad be sure to find him, ere the first twal hours were owre, dangling frae’t, like a periwinkle candle hanging to a spit.”

Upon this sally of Nanny’s wit, all things were put to rights, and the packman was snugly lodged *versus* the guidman, the guidwife, and God only knows how many persons, in the spence, or small apartment adjoining to and looking in upon the kitchen. The chapman’s drouth is proverbial—and, to assuage it, I was immediately supplied with a cog o’ crap-why, bannocks, and a ram-horn spoon, just to put aff the time till supper was ready! In the meanwhile, the inmates of the farmer’s kitchen began and continued to congregate. Some half-score of acres of inland croft had just been reaped, and there had been the promise of a hett supper and a dance, to conclude the comparatively insignificant grain harvest. James Hogg, then a youth of twenty-four, acted as chief musician, and contrived to extract from the thairms of an old time-worn fiddle, some sounds, which, when assisted by a lively imagination and high animal spirits, passed for music. And the guidman led off the dance wi’ the guidwife—snapping his fingers, and springing three or four times over the kitchen fire. The guidwife enjoyed the fun exceedingly; and, though encumbered in more ways than one, spread her napkin over her breast—adjusted her pockets and nether garments, and presented herself every now and then to the guidman, with a sly look and a sidelong bob. I was lucky enough to get hold of Nanny, whom, in spite of Wee Watty, as he was termed, I drew at once into the

centre of the whirlpool, and there we went, hand in hand, round and round, with the velocity of planets whose orbits are limited—Wee Watty, for the time, having supplied himself with Nell Morrison, a tall, prepossessing wench, who seemed to rejoice in vexing my partner, Nanny, who was manifestly Wee Watty’s favourite. Shepherds—as Wilson would say, shepherdesses—sporting around, like giants dancing to Polyphemus; and boys, girls, and dogs caught the infection—screaming, barking, singing, leaping, and reeling, as God gave them instinct. Hogg seemed amazingly delighted, and, ever and anon, removed his hand from the strings of the fiddle, to flourish it aloft in the air, and then come down flap upon some sony cummer’s neck, as she demanded “Dainty Davie,” “Jenny Nettles,” or “The Highlandman kissed his Mother”—the triad which composed our fiddler’s whole stock of tunes!

At last, supper came, in the shape of boiled bloody puddings, haggis, king’s-hood, and a long *et-cetera* of inferior occupants of the interior of a sheep-skin. There was, besides, a sprinkling of whisky, administered in its natural purity, and, after a song or two from Nanny, and Hogg, who gave “Donald Macdonald” in his own style, sleep began to intimate his claims, and we all stepped off our several ways to bed.

I could easily perceive, as I imagined—for there is a masonry in all manner of love concerns—that I had made a favourable impression upon Nanny, and that she would have no great objection to spend an hour or two in my company when all the other inmates, and, amongst them, Watty Telfer, had gone to rest. I had learned all this by certain signs, and winks, and nods, and squeezes, which are Hebrew to all but the parties concerned; and I took my way across the closs to the cha’mer, under a firm conviction that I should meet Nanny behind the great peat stack whenever the last dog had ceased to bark. Accordingly, I was early at the place of rendezvous, and waited, with some impatience, the approach of my fair visitant. The night was dark and somewhat misty, and I could not distinctly see to any distance. At last, a figure began to move in the distance, closely wrapped up in a Scottish plaid, from foot to head, and stretching forward its head as if in the act of listening. “Is that you, Nanny?” was whispered, and responded to by a silent nod of assent; and, ere I could make any farther observation, Nanny was close by my side. To my surprise, however, she refused to permit me to unveil her face, and spoke so low that I was diffculted in getting at the import of her words.

“Is Watty Telfer to bed?” said I.

“Yes—oh, yes,” was the response; “and you and I will play him a trick, if you will only assist me.”

I promised immediately to be art and part—for I liked fun and frolic dearly, and I thought Watty was the only obstacle to my suit with fair Nanny.

“Watty sleeps by himsel in the stable aboon the naigs; and, if you will go up the ladder, which I will shew you, you will find his clothes lying upon an old chair just at the ladder-head. Now, just slip quietly one of your best waistcoat-pieces into his pocket, and we will swear, tomorrow morning, that Watty entered the auld cha’mer, when you were asleep, and stole the piece. I will be answerable to you for the money.”

The scheme pleased me exceedingly; so I ascended the ladder and deposited the goods as directed. But, when I turned about again to descend, I found the ladder, as well as my directress, absent without leave. What was to be done? I could not descend without risk to my neck from the stable loft; and yet I was afraid that, if Watty should awake, he would take me for a thief, and, perhaps, tumble me headlong from the dangerous position which I occupied. In feeling, therefore, about me, to ascertain if

there was no other method of escape, I was immediately seized by the neck, and grasped so closely that I had almost been choked ere I could ejaculate—"Help! murder!" &c. Not a word was said in reply; but I felt cords passing around my body in various directions, and myself tied down, like Gulliver, flat on the boards and beams beneath me. I expostulated—threatened—coaxed my tormentors—for I felt there were two—but all to no purpose. My destiny was fixed, and there I lay supine, whilst my mischievous jailors manifestly slept, and even snored aloud. At last, worn out with watching and vexation, I fell soundly asleep; and, when I awoke, it was broad daylight. I found my limbs unloosed, my tormentors gone, and the ladder by which I had ascended restored.

Next day, I learned that, instead of playing a trick upon any one, I had myself been imposed upon, to the immense amusement of Nanny and the whole household. It was not Nanny, but wee Watty Telfer, with whom I had conversed by the peat stack. It was *he*, set on by James Hogg, who had got me up the ladder, and then, entering himself by another passage, had assisted a fellow-servant in binding me, and in ultimately releasing me from limbo. Well, what, good reader, did I do on this occasion? Did I immediately take things in great dudgeon, and depart with my pack in great wrath? No such thing. I had listened to my uncle to little purpose had this been the result. On the contrary, I immediately displayed my tempting articles before the young couple, Watty and Nanny, who were actually bride and bridegroom, and sold to the whole family, the young folks included, not less than upwards of ten pounds of goods; not one farthing of which would I have pocketed had I been the fool to resent my somewhat disagreeable usage. Ever after this adventure, I was a welcome visitant at Locherben; and Nanny Telfer, who is now the mistress of a large family, and has servants of her own, patronises me to a very considerable extent. Wee Watty has become staid and industrious, and rents a sheep-farm from the Duke of Buccleuch, on which he seems to thrive amazingly. Indeed, all the Duke's tenantry are in a very thriving condition; for this simple reason—that they are not rack-rented.

CHAPTER III.

It was about dusk when I was caught in a mist on the Borders of Scotland. I had made my way from Manchester, by Kendal and Penrith, and was on a long stretch across the bleak muirs which separate England from Scotland, as you advance towards the village of Castletown on the Liddle. Not being familiar with the footpath which I was tracing, I fairly lost my way, and had some severe pulls, through mosses and ravines of no ordinary depth and extent. Still, I was young and strong, and not subject to superstitious fears. At last, however, I was enveloped in close and almost palpable darkness, or rather whiteness—for the ground-mist rose, and crawled, and trailed, white, and damp, and still, all around me. I even felt as if it entered my very nostrils, and made a portion of myself. I could scarcely see the two ends of my pack, as they peeped over my shoulders. My faithful dog Neptune, of the Newfoundland breed, went on, however, gaily and carelessly before me; and seemed to say, at every return, "Another effort, master—one pull more—and we shall be alongside of the flesh-pots of Mr Elliot, laird of Whithaugh." All at once, I came to the brow of a precipice, from which my faithful monitor warned me to retreat; and while in the act of so doing, I thought I heard human voices in the linn beneath. Neptune, too, gave loud note of the discovery; and in an instant was engaged in mortal warfare with a bull-dog of great power and fierceness. Whilst I

was endeavouring, with my yard-wand, to separate the combatants, a stout, tall, and somewhat ungainly figure came, with a long horsewhip, to my assistance. The combatants, seeing how matters stood, were content to adopt the growling, instead of the tearing system; and separated, as if by mutual agreement that matters should not long remain as they were. However, a leash of strong cord, with a neck-band, made fast Neptune's opponent, and rendered it safe for Neptune and me to accept of the stranger's invitation to join their camp.

The camp was, indeed, of a novel and somewhat strange description. Over a brawling current, which, as I was told, at this point separated England from Scotland, there were extended from rock to rock, poles and branches of dwarf-elder and saughs, which were growing, or rather decaying, on each side of the glen or linn. These branches and poles were again traversed by cords, which kept them in close order and regular position. Over all, were laid turf, and spret, and bog-hay, which formed a kind of isthmus betwixt the two kingdoms. When you stood in the middle of this erection, you were neither in England nor in Scotland, but *medio tutissimus*; and, should the civil power shew its miscreant front on the one side, you could immediately retreat to the other, and *vice versa* with regard to that of England. The gipsies were the famous Yetholm band, and had hived here for some time past, disposing, during the day-time, of their pots, pans, ram-horn spoons, and other kitchen conveniences; and spending the night under shelter of their tents, located, or rather suspended, as above-mentioned, in riot, uproar, revelment, and debauchery. There were about an equal number of men and women, but no children—these being left at Yetholm, where they remained stationary during the winter months. Their king or leader was at this time Cuthbert, or Cubby Elliot, who boasted of his long descent and connection with the laird of Whithaugh, on the skirts of whose property he was now encamped. The use which Cubby made of his relationship with Whithaugh, was to amerce him in a fat wedder every time he came round, together with a gallon of whisky, in consideration for which voluntary donation he protected his hen-roost and barn-yard from all manner of gipsy depredation. This was sheep-night, as it was called—the evening, namely, on which the Whithaugh wedder was to be discussed, and the whisky was to be drunk; and the whole company was in the middle of the wassail, when I stumbled upon their retreat.

Being not unknown to Cuthbert, whom I had even met at Whithaugh's fireside, I ran no risk either of insult or violence; but, on the contrary, was hailed with an uproarious welcome, which made the grey gled quit the cliff above. The small cask containing the laird's *due*, as they called it, (mountain dew was then a term unknown,) lay in the midst of the encampment, alongside of a blazing heap of brushwood, which seemed, ever and anon, to threaten with conflagration the whole erection; and the sheep, roasted, or rather broiled, in its own skin, betwixt two forked poles, was subjected every now and then to an incision from the large whangers or knives, which, like Hudibras' sword, "served more purposes than one." The mist sat close above; the flames roared in unison with the torrent beneath; the barrel gave out its glutting contents in horns and cups; the bare poles of the sheep began to appear in the shape of ribs; the song, the jest, the jeer, the howl, the tumble, the almost quarrel, were all in their height, when I thought I heard a distant but terrific sound. With difficulty I procured a temporary suspension of noise. It was manifestly distant thunder. No matter—on went the carousal. A young man who had lately joined the gang, made a conspicuous figure; he was evidently over head, ears, and shoulders, in love with Ellen Elliot, the king's fair and buxom daughter. The fellow was such a one as I have

never seen before nor since. He had the eye of a hawk or eagle; a nose corresponding; high cheek-bones; fair or yellowish hair, forking out like lightning in every direction; a red beard, fully a month old; and the limbs, and nerves, and muscles of a giant. He twisted a horse-shoe in two behind his back; held out a musket by the extremity of the muzzle, his arm at full stretch; and lifted up Ellen Elliot, tossing her up in the air, and catching her again, like a tennis ball. His name I have since learned, though I am not at liberty to divulge it, as he now occupies a chair in one of our most celebrated universities, which he adorns with as much vigour and originality as he did that night the tinklers' gathering. It is thus that men of genius study human nature to advantage, and not in the turning over of quarto volumes from one year's end to the other; and it was thus that the great and celebrated Christ—N—acquired that richness of illustration and vigour of conception which have raised him, in this respect, above every living name. Long may he live!—and often may the fresh and vigorous effusions of his pen recall to my recollection the astonishing gambols and revelment of this evening! At last, however, the eask gave out its last benediction—the utmost effort of man or woman could not extract a drop more; limbs became supple, and eyes misty, muddy, heavy, and shut. Men slid down in their garments, and snored aloud; women disappeared into the now closing obscurity, and huddled together under eaves and covering; the embers emitted, or were about to emit, their last gleam, when the young and extraordinary person I have described, made up to me. I had thought him drunk; but he was not—it was all assumed. We entered immediately into conversation, and he made me acquainted with his resolution of stealing away from the frolic whilst the company slept. In this he was joined by me, and we were upon the point of putting our resolution into execution, when a sudden gleam of lightning shone in upon us, and two or three large pieces of hail, or rather ice, came down with the force and velocity of shot. All at once, the waters of the linn began to tumble about in an unusual manner—the Gullet, or Gray Mare's Tail, immediately above us, presented, even through the shade of night, a fearful projection of flood; the gulleets roared and choked, and accumulated sticks, and turf, and heath, in their descent; and, ere a single individual could be aroused, the whole erection on which the whole gang were sound sleeping, was swept down the flood. Piteous was indeed the picture, and terrible the screams; but, after the obstruction behind which the waters had accumulated gave way, the stream narrowed in its course, and many were left on dry land, almost without any efforts of their own. The fearless stranger was everywhere—he seemed now to be amphibious; and Neptune, too, was of the greatest service. I myself was not wanting either in courage or enterprise; and so it came to pass, that, in a few seconds, all had mustered, save one, the buxom and frank-hearted Ellen Elliot. The father raved, and dashed anew into the gulleets. "Search Hell's Caldron!" was the almost universal cry. This was a terrible pool, some way down the stream. My young friend flew off; and I saw him leap some twenty or thirty feet into the black and boiling flood; he came up again exhausted, but exclaiming—"She is here! she is here!" Her father's plunge was simultaneous with the last words; down they both went together, and up they brought betwixt them poor Ellen Elliot. She was apparently dead; but, being laid on the brink of the pool, with her head downwards, much water escaped from her mouth. "She lives! she lives!" exclaimed parent and lover at once; "oh, kindle a fire!" It was done, I never knew how, as if by magic. Spirits from a small flask in her father's side-pocket were made use of first externally, and latterly internally. Ellen awoke in terrible

pain, she travelled fearfully into life; but at last she became sensible, and her first words were—"Bless me! what a terrible dream I have had!"

All is well that ends well. Ellen Elliot, the fair gipsy, is now Lady Whithaugh; the old man in his dotage having taken it into his head to marry again, though he was at the time a grandfather. She is one of my most steady customers, and I have no doubt that, when the old, kind-hearted, and easy-tempered laird shall have taken his leave, she may very soon after take her leave of widowhood—and why not? Then will be "a wedding," and there (perhaps) may be the writer and the reader of these *chapters!* Amen!

CHAPTER IV.

As I was wending my way from the hospitable mansion of Whithaugh, up Hermitage Water, I was decoyed, by the near appearance of the old castle, to deviate a little from the straight but steep and difficult road to Hawick, to visit the ruins of this old Border keep—where Queen Mary once lodged, and Bothwell once met her—where still sleeps the stern ghost of Soulis, and the tremendous bones of the Count of Baldar. As the stream abounded in fish, I undid my pack, and, from the upper corner, extracted a fishing-rod, which I had purchased at Kendal, and amused myself, for an hour or two, in this most fascinating amusement. Alas! I have lived to see other times and other circumstances!—rivers without fish, and fishers without spirit: the one spoiled of their finny inhabitants by every chemical abomination, and the other contented with a brace of parr or a triad of minnows. But to my narrative. I soon filled a bag which I carried for the purpose, and was at last compelled to give up the sport, from my inability to carry any additional weight. By this time, I had reached the old castle, and taken an eye measurement of its meaningless and monotonous architecture. Strength and security seem to have been the only objects pursued in its erection. But time had destroyed the one, and the other had ceased to be an object. I was on the point of leaving this keep—with many suitable reflections on the changes which time had wrought since Soulis roasted his foes, or cut them to pieces in the dungeon with the saw-mill—when I thought that I perceived a little thread of blue smoke escaping through the loose stones by which the interior of the ruined walls was occupied. This naturally excited my suspicion that there were more doings going on than I was aware of; so, depositing my trouts and my pack on the green bank of the Hermitage Water, I began to peer and poke about, with the end of my fishing-rod, amongst the stones. Neptune, too, had smelt a rat, and was busy, nose, and feet, and tongue, in assisting me in some mighty discovery. But all our efforts were in vain: the smoke ceased to issue, if indeed it had been smoke at all; and, although Neptune encompassed the old tower as often as Moses did the city of Jericho, yet still the immense walls stood true to their foundation; and, night coming on, we were compelled, though reluctantly, to leave the spot. Having determined to reach Hawick this night, I pushed on, there being good moonlight, though the evening was cold; and Neptune, as usual, kept on the advance, giving me timely intimation of whatever might, or might seem, to approach us. At or near the top of the ridge which separates the vale of the Hermitage from that of the Kitterick, there stood, and perhaps still stands, a small public-house, built for the accommodation of such travellers as pass this way, dreary and difficult as it is. Into this, Neptune and I thrust our noses, and found a large family of children gathered around a blazing peat fire. We took our position immediately by the fire, and

learned from the children that their mother was milking the cow—that their father had been killed in a quarry some months ago—and that there was a great number of fine-dressed gentlemen *ben* the house. The mother, a decent, melancholy-looking woman, soon entered, with the milk-stoup in her hand, and immediately proceeded to replenish the gill-stoup with a very different beverage, for the use of her *ben*-house customers.

“She didna ken weel what to mak o’ them,” she said; “but she thought, by their way o’ speaking, and their dress, and ither accoutrements, they were maybe limbs o’ the law—the Deil’s agents, excisemen—wha wadna let a pair body live, if they could prevent it.”

At this time, one, who seemed to be the commander of the party, entered the kitchen, manifestly flustered with drink; and, seeing my fish-bag lying on the dresser, immediately seized it, exclaiming, “By G—! what have we got here?” However, he was soon disabused, if he imagined it to contain any illicit commodity; and, slipping a half-crown into my hand, (which I willingly accepted,) he ordered the fish to be immediately prepared for his supper, and that of his companions. They were, indeed, a jolly company, and, after a little while, invited me to partake of the produce of my own sport, and of a due qualification of whisky. In the course of an hour or two, we got exceedingly well acquainted; and I found, at last, from several incidental observations, that they had received information of an illicit still being in the neighbourhood, and were about to surprise those engaged in it so soon as the moon should set, and their approach might be covered by the darkness.

Upon finding how the land lay, it immediately occurred to me that my uncle would have contrived to turn this incident to his professional advantage. It was manifest that, although their information extended to the whereabouts, they were ignorant of the exact spot where the illicit manufacture of whisky was, in all probability, going forward. In fact, they were led to believe that an old shieling, or shepherd’s hut, constructed out of a mountain cairn, was probably the place where the work was proceeding. I opened my mind to them somewhat cautiously, by proposing that they should deal with me in such goods as my pack, so recently replenished at Manchester, would supply. They were all very shy, and expressed their *contempt* indeed of any such preposterous proposal. But, when I hinted that I was in possession of such information as might lead to the accomplishment of their object, they took at once at the bait, and agreed that, not only they, but their wives and families, should be supplied from my stores. Fancy waistcoats, watch-chains, twelve-bladed knives, razors, snuff-boxes, and pocket-books, were immediately secured, and handsomely paid for; and Neptune and I (for I verily believe he understood the whole transaction) had the pleasure of making a very considerable profit, by gaining at least 100 per cent. upon the whole concern. About 11 o’clock—for they were now impatient to secure their prize—we advanced, seven strong (exclusive of Neptune) upon the old tower of Hermitage.

But our approach had been anticipated, and the bird was flown. Some friendly imp, one of the family where we had so recently been convened, had probably given the necessary intimation to the illicit distillers; and, after much searching, and some curious discoveries of dark passages, and dungeons half filled with rubbish, we found a cask or two of recently distilled spirit, with a few vats or tubs which had not been removed. It was manifest, however, from what we had discovered, that my information had been correct, and that, though flown, the bird would not be at any great distance. The whisky was removed to the public-house which we had just left; and, when we were in the act of returning upon our footsteps, we were met

by a bare and curly-headed callant, about twelve years of age, who seemed inclined, when too late, to avoid any encounter. This excited our suspicion; and he was immediately secured, and questioned hard, whether he knew anything about the distillery in the Auld Tower.

“Na,” said the urchin, “I ken naething about ’tilleries; but I ken weel there’s something no canny about the place.”

“What makes you think so, my man?”

“Ou, I dinna ken—I reckon it will be Auld Soulis’ ghost; for he was an awfu wicked man, my mither says, and canna get rest in his grave at nae rate. I hae seen lights about the auld place mysel.”

And hereupon the rascal looked about him, as if afraid to speak out, and, in a low voice, gave us to understand that he had just met an awesome sight: it rowed ower the body, and owre the body, and rumbled away down the linn into the miller’s house yonder. It was for a’ the war! like a whean corn-sacks, dyed black, and clinking ane against anither.”

“Why, man, corn sacks dinna clink.”

“Maybe no; but the Deil’s sacks are different. I reckon they wadna stand fire, unless they clinked.”

There was no resisting this logic; so our informant was desired to shew us the direction in which the apparition had gone. He pointed to a glen or linn on Hermitage Water, and to a light which flitted before us, appearing and disappearing at intervals. Down the glen we instantly rushed, through some brushwood, and along a narrow pass. When we had reached the mill-steading, the light had disappeared; and, on investigation, our informant likewise. We found the miller still at work, and not a little surprised at our untimely and really unwelcome visit. It was manifest now, that we had been imposed upon by the knowing urchin, who, to give time for escape to the illicit traders, had trumped up the ghost story, well knowing that a direct information might have been suspected. In a word, we were completely out; and, where the distillers betook themselves, whether across the Border, or into some of the almost inaccessible mountains of Eskdalemuir, remains to this day a secret. However, I had made my market, and earned additional patronage by a chance adventure, which was quite in my uncle’s way, and gave me assurance that, by pursuing a similar course in future, I should undoubtedly prosper.

My next advantageous hit was made at Moffat. To this favourite resort of the invalid, the idle, and the wealthy, there had been added this season a dinner, given by the advocates in Edinburgh to the future *author* of the poems of Ossian. Macpherson had just published some fragments of the Gaelic poetry, and had excited the attention of the learned world, by his announcing that, if he had the means, he would collect through the Highlands many larger and more valuable works of Ossian and other bards. I had been lucky enough to have purchased, when at Glasgow, a cheap remnant of the Macpherson tartan, having heard that it would take in England—but I was mistaken; and I could not prevail upon a single gentleman or lady of any note, betwixt Carlisle and Manchester, to patronise it.

Their patronage, in my trade, as in most others, is everything. Only get some celebrated country belle to sport a particular and uncommon pattern at a market or at church, and the fate of your napkin-web is fixed. Only get the laird’s eldest son to appear in the gallery, at church, in a waistcoat of a particular stripe and combination of colours, and every boor in the parish will purchase the like, at three or four prices. Only get a bride, on her wedding day, to sport the newest ribbon, and your box is immediately emptied. It is thus that pedler-profit is realized, and a certain degree of notoriety, if not popularity, is obtained. I had got a waistcoat made, for my own use,

out of this bit of unsaleable tartan—not, indeed, at the time anticipating any advantage, but the ordinary wear, from the garment. But, as Good Fortune would have it—and she has much to say in all professions—this very waistcoat was, in a sense, the making of me. I appeared in the town of Moffat in this tartan waistcoat, and had the good fortune, as I stood opposite to the inn-door where the company were to dine, adjusting my pack, and preparing to expose my goods to public view, to be observed from the window by M'Pherson himself. He immediately announced the fact of the nature of the tartan which I wore to the gentlemen around him. They immediately began to wonder if the pedler had any more of the same pattern in his pack; and, from one thing to another, it was agreed, at last, to address me on the subject. Down they came—for they had yet half-an-hour to wait for dinner; and, having made the necessary inquiries, were answered, somewhat shyly, by me, that I “didna ken, but I might hae a wee bit o’ the same web.” (In fact, I had upwards of two hundred yards deposited snugly in a friend’s house, as I passed to England, besides the remnant carried along with me!) So I opened out my supply, and, in a few seconds, I sold the whole of it.

Next day, my pack was exposed at the principal well; and, to my no small delight, I saw M'Pherson himself, with upwards of a score of advocates, all sporting the tartan. The thing took like wildfire; piece after piece, (always the last!) I produced and sold; and, had I been possessed of double, or even ten times the quantity, I verily believe I might have sold it, at any price. The very shepherd lads, from Queensberry and Errickstane, were down upon me, coaxing and urging me to let them have a waistcoat-piece, at any price. But the more fixed merchants of the place saw my advantage; and, by dismissing an express to Glasgow, in two or three days had their windows filled with the M'Pherson. The fever, however, was over. M'Pherson himself, waistcoat and all, had set out on his celebrated Highland search; the advocates had returned to their briefs; and the Moffat haberdashers had reason to regret their hasty proceedings in this matter. I had, however, realized a round sum of profit—not less than forty pounds—on this hit; and was content to limit my sale to the more ordinary commodities of my pack, for the rest of the time which I sojourned here.

From Moffat, I took the road, across the hills, to Durrissdeer. At this time, the famous M’Gill was minister of this parish. He was a man celebrated, in his day, for fervency in preaching; for marrying a Miss Goodfellow, (who had paid for his education, and was on the wrong side—I don’t say of fifty, but at least of seventeen;) and for his extensive powers and experience in *haggis*-eating. The “kirkton” of Durrissdeer—a small cluster of houses around the church—has been celebrated by Burns, in his “Tam o’ Shanter”—

“And at the Lord’s house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi’ Kirkton Jean till Monday.”

This parish is principally mountainous; and, consequently, pastoral; and the shepherds and sheep-farmers were, at the time of which I speak, in the habit of transacting their worldly affairs, after church time, on the Sabbath evenings. This traffic was carried on in small, thatched ale-houses, some of which still remain, kept, in general, by old women, (one of whom lived to see 114 years!) and, in one particular exception, by a jolly young lass, ycleped “Kirkton Jean.” Nobody knew Jean better than Burns; and though, in his admirable poem, he places her near the Doon, yet, in fact, she was a nymph of the Carron, and a parishioner of Durrissdeer. It grieves me sore to say it, but Jean, though a stanch and steady believer and kirk-goer, though a great favourite with the minister and with all the younger part of the plaided mountaineers, was

detested by many decent women, and, in particular, by Mrs M’Gill, who said she could not bear the sight of her. Her house, however, was much resorted to, and her company, as well as her ale, much sought after; and, when I reposed my pack on Jean’s chest-lid, she gave me a hearty welcome, and, telling the old, blind body, her grandmother, that here was the pedler, greeted me in the most kind and couthy manner possible. It was not my usual wont to put up in a public-house, where I had to pay for my food and bed; but I had my reasons in this case, as the reader will see anon. I arrived on the Tuesday of the sacrament, and attended sermon on Thursday and Saturday, as well as on Sunday.

Monday, however, came at last; and it was towards this Monday that I was looking during all the previous days; for this Monday was, in fact, the great market day of the parish. After M’Gill had preached in the open air to a vast multitude, (for he was the most popular preacher of the Presbytery,) man, wife, and wean, master, servant, merchant—all classes and denominations of Christians—were immediately up to the ears in drink and traffic, buying, selling, hiring, *niffering*, as if religion and its observances had been unknown amongst them. The mind of man is a *queer* concern—at least, the heart, on the best authority, is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” and, really, the “kirkton” of Durrissdeer, in the days of M’Gill, and on the Monday of the sacrament in particular but too manifestly exhibited the truth of this observation. I had placed my pack on a stand, by the kirk-stile; and, as the congregation dispersed, they had one and all an opportunity of seeing my goods in a state of full display. I had no rival, unless a very decent old woman might be considered as such. She sold a few articles of dress, such as stockings and plaids, all of her own and her daughter’s manufacture; but mine were Manchester and Glasgow goods, of the very newest fashion, and worn by every lady and gentleman of quality betwixt the two great marts. As the evening advanced, Jean’s house became more and more difficult of access. My station was what is termed the spence, or the mid-room or closet, betwixt the kitchen and the *ben*. There I stood, with my ellwand in my hand, measuring off waistcoat-pieces, displaying shawls, and exhibiting watch-chains and knives, till late in the evening. Some moorland farmers purchased largely on credit—a mode of dealing which I greatly relished, for two reasons: first, because it gave me an opportunity of visiting them in their mountain homes; and, secondly, because I could then, with a safe conscience, or, at least, without challenge, charge double the original price. I need not, and I shall not, proceed with the sequel of the evening’s events. From Jean, I learned that old Fingland, who was now a widower, had actually asked her in marriage; and that, in a few days, she should, in all probability, be Mrs Gibson. The poor, doited, drunken body had a good farm from the Duke of Buccleuch; and, having got rid of his family by his first spouse, thought himself entitled to enter anew into the hallowed and often-tried state. He lived to repent his precipitancy and indiscretion; for Jean ruined him in a few months, and, making a moonlight flitting, was afterwards found in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, mistress of the public-house called The Harrow. But here my narrative must conclude for the present.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE THREE RIVALS.

MR JAMES RAVELSTONE had realized a small independency by trade in Glasgow; and when he had done so, he retired to a small, but neat and comfortable residence in his native place, distant about fourteen miles from the city just named. He was a widower; and his whole household consisted of only himself, a daughter called Mary, and domestics. The daughter, enjoying considerable personal attractions, and the certainty of possessing a fortune of about five or six thousand pounds, had (as usual) many suitors. She had; but out of the whole number there were but two between whom the chance of ultimate success seemed to be divided. These two were, Robert Whitlaw and Henry Lauderdale. The first was the son of a neighbouring farmer; the second the son of an extensive bleacher, whose works and bleaching-field lay at the distance of about a mile from Mary's residence. These two young men were both sufficiently eligible matches for Miss Ravelstone. Their station in society, character, and circumstances, were unobjectionable; but there was some difference in their tempers and dispositions. Whitlaw was fiery in temper, and often exhibited himself in an unfavourable light; for he often said a great deal more than he meant, from having acquired an unhappy habit of speaking, when excited, in very violent and exaggerated language; and, though, naturally kind-hearted, generous, and humane, and that to a very remarkable degree, he was yet, certainly, hot-headed and furious, and capable—at least so thought all who knew him—of doing very outrageous and violent things, when his passions were roused. Whitlaw's rival, Lauderdale, again, possessed no very marked character of any kind. His temper, however, was equable, his dispositions inoffensive, and his manners extremely pleasing. Such, then, were the two most favoured candidates of all who sought to win the heart of Mary Ravelstone. By most favoured, however, we merely mean, when so speaking of them together, that they enjoyed a larger portion of her society and intimacy than any of the others—not that Mary had no preference for the one more than the other. This was a state of the affections which her warm and ardent nature could not entertain. She could love one, and one only. A preference, therefore, in the present case, she certainly had; and this preference was decidedly, although always involuntarily and unconsciously, exhibited in favour of Robert Whitlaw. She loved him for his open, generous, and frank nature; and, although not blind to his faults, deemed them but the venial errors of an over-sanguine temperament, which a few more years, and a little more experience of the world, would correct.

We need hardly say that these two young men—amongst all those who might be supposed to visit at Mr Ravelstone's, with the object of seeing and enjoying the society of his amiable and lovely daughter—were the most frequently to be found there, and had established the most intimate footing in the family. There was, however, a third person, to whom we have not yet alluded, who was not, perhaps, less favoured in this respect, although he was not understood to visit on the footing of a

lover. This person was a Mr Andrew Ferguson, who kept a small ironmongery shop in the adjoining village. Ferguson was a much older man than either Whitlaw or Lauderdale, and was, in all respects, an entirely different sort of person. He was a quiet, demure, little man—gentle and mild in speech—rarely speaking above his breath—and of a singular urbanity and suavity of manner; had always something pleasant to say, and never either listened to others, or spoke himself, but with a smile. In person, he was slender, and had altogether an insignificant look; but his many pleasing qualities amply compensated his physical deficiencies. Ferguson was, by some, thought wealthy; by others, quite the reverse. This was an odd state of public opinion on the subject, but it can be accounted for in some measure. With all his gentle, pleasing, and conciliating manners, his affability and social turn, he was secret as the grave regarding his own affairs, all of which he contrived to manage so as always to make the fewest possible number privy to their nature. To add to the mystery in which his circumstances were involved, he lived in a strange, mean way, in a little parlour behind the shop, where he cooked all his own victuals, and into which no domestic was allowed to enter. Once a-week, and once a-week only, an old woman was employed to cleanse out this secret and mysterious retreat. Thus, those who maintained that Andrew Ferguson had money, urged his mode of living and his grasping nature—a very prominent part of his disposition, by the way, which we omitted to notice; while those who insisted that he had not, alleged precisely the same reasons for their opposite belief. All, however, agreed in his being a quiet, inoffensive man, and allowed him to be most exemplary in his attention to his religious duties.

With such recommendations, Mr Ferguson was a frequent, and by no means unwelcome visitor at Mr Ravelstone's. Mary liked him for his gentle and pleasant manners, and her father for his shrewdness and good sense. Neither the former nor the latter, however, ever dreamt of him as a lover; yet, there were many little circumstances in his conduct, that might have excited some suspicions of his not being entirely free from such pretensions, although he knew and felt that he could have no chance, so long as either Whitlaw or Lauderdale was in the field. The circumstances above alluded to were far from being obvious; for Ferguson was so quiet and unobtrusive in his nature, that he never exhibited any marked feeling of any kind. Yet a look, a word, sometimes betrays much; and certain it is, that he had, in several instances, betrayed, so far as he was wont to betray any emotion, something that savoured of an ambition to appear agreeable in the eyes of Mary Ravelstone. These indications of a desire to please her, did not escape Mary; but, sharp-sighted as women are in these matters, she never once attributed them to love. If, then, Ferguson was not viewed by Mary herself in the light of a lover, still less was he so reckoned by her two all but avowed suitors, Whitlaw and Lauderdale. His years, his insignificant figure, and reserved and timid manner, rescued him from all suspicion of pretensions to this character, in the eyes of these young men. They viewed him as a mere acquaintance of the family's; an intimate

one, indeed, but still no more than an acquaintance, or, it might be, a friend. It was, therefore, with no feeling whatever of jealousy that they met him at Mr Ravelstone's—a circumstance of very frequent occurrence. Very different, but still very natural, were those which they entertained for each other. Standing in the position in which they did with regard to Mary Ravelstone, it could scarcely be otherwise than that Whitlaw and Lauderdale should view each other with dislike. They did so, certainly; but, on the part of the latter, this feeling was by no means very marked. Either he did not feel so keenly as his rival, or he had more control over his passions. But, he this as it may, his conduct towards Whitlaw, on all occasions when they chanced to meet, whether at Mr Ravelstone's, which was frequently the case, or elsewhere, was always distinguished by the utmost courtesy. It was calm, bland, and gentlemanlike, and never discovered the slightest irritation or angry feeling. This, however, was an example of propriety and decorum of conduct which was by no means followed by his more impetuous rival. Whitlaw could not conceal, even when in the presence of Lauderdale, the jealousy he felt; and, when absent, did not attempt it. On the contrary, he availed himself of every opportunity of speaking of him in the most violent language; often swearing that he would shoot him, that he would knock his brains out, that he would butcher him, &c. &c.; and using other equally outrageous expressions; and this on all occasions and in all places—amongst friends and strangers—in the private circle, and in the tavern—at home and abroad. There was, therefore, a sufficient number who knew of his dislike to Lauderdale—for Whitlaw kept no secrets—and who heard his denunciations of vengeance against him. Whitlaw was frequently reprov'd, by those present on such occasions, for his violent language, and by none more frequently than by Mr Ferguson, in whose hearing, as also in that of Miss Ravelstone herself, it was often indulged in, to the great annoyance and displeasure of the latter, who always joined in the just reproof which it elicited.

“For shame, Robert!” she would say. “You have a most unguarded tongue. I know you do not mean what you say; but, still, it is most unseemly; and I must really tell you, that you will seriously offend me, if you go on thus abusing Mr Lauderdale, and talking in this wild way. It is, besides, most ungenerous of you, Robert; for I never heard him speak a disrespectful word of you, either in your presence or behind your back.”

Such reproof as this never failed instantly to bring Whitlaw to a sense of his own intemperance. His better nature immediately prevailed, and presented the singular contrast of his violence closing with a laugh. He seemed, in truth, amused at his own excesses, and rather to enjoy the alarm they occasioned. It was a part of his somewhat inconsistent nature.

On a certain evening—it was some time in the month of October 1785—one of those scenes which we have just described in general terms, occurred at Mr Ravelstone's. It was, in this instance, however, of a somewhat more marked character than usual, inasmuch as Whitlaw exceeded himself in the violence of his manner towards Lauderdale, on whom he fastened a quarrel, and whom he would have struck, but for the interference of those present.

The excessive intemperance of Whitlaw on this occasion was, in part, attributable to the fact of his being under the influence of wine. He had been out dining previously to his calling at Mr Ravelstone's; and was, therefore, almost ungovernable.

At Mr Ravelstone's, he found, on his entrance, Lauderdale, Ferguson, and another gentleman, a stranger—at least to him. For some time matters went on smoothly and pleasantly enough, Ferguson making himself particularly

agreeable, by telling a number of quiet, humorous stories and smiling and smirking on all around him. This harmony amongst the party, of which, we need hardly say, Miss Ravelstone was one, was not, however, of very long duration. Whitlaw, who had for some time been eyeing his rival with no very friendly look, and apparently watching for some opportunity of quarreling with him, at length found what he deemed such, and he availed himself of it, to say some cutting things. Lauderdale reddened under the infliction; but, as usual, made no reply, at least not an angry one. This, however, so far from disarming Whitlaw, only enraged him to say some still more offensive things and to continue repeating them, till Lauderdale was so far provoked as to retort, when a very angry and bitter altercation ensued.

At this stage of the quarrel, Ferguson rose from his chair, and, approaching Whitlaw, laid his hand on his shoulder, and, with a smile of great blandness, said, in his own peculiar, gentle, and unobtrusive way:—

“Really now, Mr Whitlaw, this is very unbecoming conduct; and I'm sure your own good sense will, on a moment's reflection, shew you that it is so. You may be sure that it is very unpleasant to us, and must be particularly so to Miss Ravelstone, to see and hear these altercations between you and our mutual friend there”—pointing to Lauderdale—“altercations which, I am sorry to say, I have been too often a witness to in this house. It is, believe me, most ungentleman, nay, most unchristian like. We should bear and forbear, Mr Whitlaw, and view each other's actions and motives, when we discover them, in a spirit of charity and forgiveness. It is so amiable, so lovely, both in the sight of God and man. Come now, my good friends,” he continued, “let me be peace-maker between you. Let me join your hands in reconciliation and friendship.”

“With all my heart!” burst out the really good-natured Whitlaw, starting from his chair, and proceeding with extended hand towards his rival, who, not a whit behind him in generous feeling, rose to meet him. But, ere they had done so—that is, ere their hands joined—

“There, now, that is pleasant,” said Ferguson, in his usual quiet, mild tones. “Now, Mr Whitlaw, you must, at the same time, forgive Lauderdale by anticipation, if he should carry off the prize. You know what I mean.” And he smiled significantly.

“May I be hanged if I do, then!” exclaimed Whitlaw, with suddenly aroused passion, tossing from him the hand of Lauderdale, which he had already grasped, and returning doggedly to his seat.

Ferguson could not, surely, have made his last remark, with the intention of undoing his own work—of reanimating the evil spirit which he had been at such pains to lay? The supposition of such a thing, not more inexplicable than wicked, would surely be unjust to him. Perhaps it would; but it is certain that the remark he did make, and equally certain that it was attended with the consequences which we have in part described. We say, in part, because they by no means ended with the expressions of Whitlaw, which we have given above. Already exasperated by the insinuation of Ferguson, he was still more so by a series of bantering remarks of a similar tendency—spoken, however, in the gentlest and most good-humoured way imaginable—with which that person followed up the first offensive piece of badinage, and in which he was joined by Lauderdale. Whitlaw became furious, and, forgetting every consideration of propriety and decorum, was making towards his rival, with the view of doing him some personal violence, when Ferguson again interposed, and endeavoured to appease Whitlaw, by declaring that he had spoken but in jest, and had hoped thereby rather to allay than to inflame his anger.

finding that all present, including Miss Ravelstone, highly disapproved of and resented his atrocious conduct, Whitlaw abandoned his intention of assailing Lauderdale; and, instead, seized his hat, and rushed out of the house, muttering the most appalling threats against his rival. In a short time after, Lauderdale proposed also going, when Ferguson earnestly begged of him to delay a little, lest Whitlaw should be still in the way, and, in the excited state in which he was, be tempted, if they met, to do him a mischief, as he threatened, remarked Ferguson, with particular emphasis, on leaving the house. Lauderdale smiled, and said he knew Whitlaw, and did not think he had much to fear from him after all; that his bark was worse than his bite; and insisted on going, which he eventually did. He was soon after followed by Ferguson, who bade Miss Ravelstone good night, with one of his most composed and blandest smiles.

Next morning, the murdered body of Henry Lauderdale was found in a narrow, sequestered, green alley, which he usually took as a short cut home. There were two stabs in the left breast, and the throat of the unfortunate young man was cut from ear to ear. Here, then, was a dreadful, an astounding tragedy—the result, in some measure, of a fatal confidence, on the part of Lauderdale, in the harmless, though blustering nature of his rival, Whitlaw; for who could doubt that he had done the deed? No one doubted it; for he had been heard by many, a thousand times, to threaten him with the very fate which had now overtaken him. It was some little time, however, before the authorities could make up their minds to believe it possible that Whitlaw, who was much and generally liked, could be guilty of such a fearful atrocity; but the circumstantial evidence, to establish at least a well-founded suspicion that he was indeed the murderer, was too strong to be resisted, especially that of the quarrel at Mr Ravelstone's, on the very night on which the deed was perpetrated. But, if any doubt had remained of Whitlaw's capability of committing so enormous a crime, it was removed by this one singularly strong and fatal piece of evidence: this was the instrument with which the deed was perpetrated—a large clasp knife, stained with blood, which was found near the spot where Lauderdale's body lay, and which was recognised to be one which Whitlaw was in the habit of carrying in his pocket. Indeed, his initials were engraved on a small silver plate on the handle. On the discovery of this damning evidence, the authorities no longer hesitated. A warrant was instantly made out for Whitlaw's apprehension; and, armed with this tremendous document, a couple of criminal officers proceeded to its execution. They found the object of their pursuit superintending some reapers in a field, and were surprised at the perfect composure he exhibited on their approach. Instead of a look of fear and perplexity, he contemplated them with a gaze of curiosity and inquiry; and nothing could equal his well-feigned astonishment on being told that he was apprehended on suspicion of having murdered Henry Lauderdale. As a matter of course, he denied the charge, but with such an appearance of indignation and sincerity, that one of the officers was tempted to ask him, how then his knife, all stained with blood, came to be found near the body?

"My knife! my knife!" exclaimed Whitlaw, plunging his hand into one pocket after another, as if searching for the instrument, to contradict, on the spot, the assertion which had just been made. But it was not to be found. It was in none of his pockets. On ascertaining this—

"By heaven! I have it not, to be sure. I have lost it!" he exclaimed, with admirably affected sincerity. Nothing, in short, could have been better than Whitlaw's acting on this occasion; but from the officers who apprehended him, it elicited only an incredulous smile.

The prisoner was now handcuffed, and, immediately after, marched off to the county jail. A great part of this distance, he was compelled, by circumstances, to walk; and this threw him in the way, as he went along, of several persons by whom he was well known. These were disposed to look on him with pity and compassion, notwithstanding the heinousness of the crime with which he was charged; but one and all were struck, and very unpleasantly impressed, with the hardened look and bold effrontery of the offender, who did not seem at all to feel the dreadful situation in which he was placed. People marked with disgust these proofs of an evil and obdurate nature; and the more so, that they had not expected them in him who now exhibited them.

In a short time after, Robert Whitlaw was within the precincts of a jail, at the head of the worst class of its inmates, if ranked according to the enormity of their crimes.

Leaving Whitlaw thus disposed of for a time, we may see how Miss Ravelstone received the dreadful intelligence of her lover's guilt. It almost deprived the poor girl of reason. Yet, even while deploring the sad catastrophe, and admitting the irresistible force of the evidence against Whitlaw, she, with the inconsistency of fond affection, maintained his innocence, exclaiming, in her distraction, that her Robert could never be guilty of the dreadful crime laid to his charge.

"No, no, it is impossible," she said; "Robert was wild and unguarded in his talk, but, in his nature, humane and gentle as a lamb. He would not, wantonly, have injured the meanest thing that crawls, let alone imbruing his hands in the blood of a fellow-creature. As sure as there is virtue in heaven, will it be found that Robert Whitlaw is innocent of this crime, notwithstanding the strength of appearances against him."

Such was the language of poor Mary Ravelstone on this dreadful occasion; and it was perfectly natural, although sufficiently groundless; betraying much greater force of affection than reason. It was, in truth, merely the outpourings of a fond and confiding nature, that could not or rather would not, believe in the turpitude of a beloved object.

On Ferguson, the report of Whitlaw's crime had nearly as overwhelming an effect as on Miss Ravelstone, only that, with more judgment, he made much less difficulty in believing in his guilt; and, for this facility of credence, he had good reason, as the reader knows. On being first told of the murder—he was standing behind his counter at the moment—he held up his hands, and turned up his eyes in mute horror; and, when he spoke, it was to say—"He always feared it." He then entered into a detail, to his informant, of what passed at Mr Ravelstone's on the night of the murder, mentioning his own anxious, but vain, endeavours to make and keep peace between the two unfortunate young men.

Even more astounding, although not, perhaps, more atrocious things than the murder of Lauderdale, have been said, and found by experience to be, but a "nine days' wonder." It was so in the case in question. Speculation on, and expressions of amazement and horror at, the dreadful tale of Whitlaw's guilt, gradually gave way to a more dispassionate and less excited state of feeling in the public mind, and finally ceased almost entirely. That sort of calm, in short, began to prevail, which generally takes place between the commission of a great crime, and the trial and punishment of the criminal.

When matters had arrived at this state of quiescence, but not before, Ferguson began to renew his visits at Mr Ravelstone's, and, on his first call, thought it necessary to apologize to Miss Ravelstone for his long absence, by referring to the "late melancholy and tragical event," which, he said, he was sure would render calls disagreeable to her.

He then more specially and particularly alluded to the "tragic event," and repeated that he had long feared that some such result would take place.

"Oh, Miss Ravelstone," he said, and now taking the young lady by the hand, with what had the appearance of affectionate sympathy, "it is a dreadful thing when man gives way to the evil passions of his nature, and makes no effort, with the strong arms of reason and religion—those powerful weapons with which he has been furnished—to control and to lay them, and which, if timeously and vigorously employed, are perfectly adequate to that noble end. Oh, it is dreadful, dreadful, Miss Ravelstone." And he sighed, turned up his eyes, and looked unutterable things at his fair auditor.

These visits, and this language, were now frequently repeated; and, with each visit, Ferguson's manner became more and more familiar, and more and more tender, towards Miss Ravelstone, until she at length could no longer doubt that he was addressing himself to her affections, and that he desired to be viewed on the footing of a lover. This was a discovery by no means pleasing to her; for, besides that her affections were already irrevocably fixed on another, there was something about Ferguson—his years, his manner, his appearance—which rendered the idea of contemplating him in the light of a lover extremely revolting to her. Nor did the new warmth of his manner by any means tend to reconcile her to such change in his position in regard to her. It had a contrary effect. It appeared to her somehow unnatural, and tended rather to increase the dislike with which she now began to look on him.

Nothing deterred by the symptoms of aversion with which his advances were viewed, and which Miss Ravelstone's open and candid nature was unable either to conceal or to control, Ferguson persevered in his suit, although with a degree of caution that carefully avoided the presenting her with any opportunity of breaking with him at once. Hoping to succeed in the end, he gave her no vantage-ground from which to interrupt his proceedings.

In the meantime, the day of Whitlaw's trial, now fixed, was rapidly approaching; and the public prosecutor had accumulated such a mass of clear and connected evidence as left him in no doubt of obtaining a conviction; nor, indeed, did any one doubt of this result more than he. It is true that all this evidence was circumstantial, but it was of a nature fully equal to any positive testimony that could be adduced—perhaps better; for, in the last, there might be malice, or mistake as to identity. It is possible. Such things are on record. In this, there could be neither the one nor the other. There was the rivalry between Whitlaw and Lauderdale; there were the frequent and well-known threats of the former against the latter; there was the quarrel on the night of the murder, and the repetition of these threats on the part of the alleged murderer; and, lastly, and strongest of all, there was Whitlaw's knife found beside the body of Lauderdale, stained with blood, and fitting exactly, as was ascertained, to the stabs in the side of the deceased. To support all this testimony, there was a cloud of credible and highly respectable witnesses, who could swear to the threatening language of Whitlaw; and, amongst those who were to appear in this capacity on the day of trial, were Miss Ravelstone and Ferguson. They were both summoned.

In the meantime, Whitlaw steadily denied his being the murderer of Lauderdale, and affected to look forward to his trial with perfect composure—it might have been called indifference; declaring that no court on earth could possibly find him guilty, and that, therefore, he had no fear of, and was not in the least concerned about, the result.

Having attained this stage of our story, we advert to an incident of a rather remarkable nature, which occurred in

the dreadful interval between the commission of the murder of Lauderdale and the day appointed for the trial of the murderer.

On a certain evening of one of the days included in the period alluded to, a young lady presented herself at the jail door of ———, and asked if she could see the head jailor. The young lady was closely veiled, and, apparently, greatly agitated—so much so, indeed, as to be hardly able to make the inquiry which seemed to be the first purpose of her visit.

In reply to her question, she was told that she might have the interview she desired, and was requested to step into the passage which led into the interior of the building, and to be seated on a bench that ran along the wall, for the accommodation of those who came to visit prisoners, and who had yet a little time to wait for the appointed hour of admission.

In the meantime, the turnkey who had thus far admitted the young lady, went to call his principal. He appeared, and, approaching his visitor, who had by this time risen to receive him, demanded what she wanted with him. It was some time before the latter could make any reply. At length, dissolved in tears, and sobbing violently as she spoke—"Could I see Mr Whitlaw, sir?" she said.

"Impossible, ma'am," replied the jailor, "without an order from a magistrate."

"Just for one minute. Oh! for God's sake, sir, do!" said the lady, imploringly, and dreadfully agitated.

"Are you a friend of the prisoner, ma'am?" inquired the jailor, now considerably softened by the distress of the fair young creature before him.

"Yes—no—that is, I am no relation, sir—but I—I"—

"Oh! I see," here interposed the jailor, who at once guessed the true relationship between his visitor and his prisoner.

"Well," he said, after a pause of a second or two, "I will venture to give you a five minutes' interview, although it's against orders, and might cost me my situation. But, recollect, five minutes only, and in my presence."

Saying this, he led the way into the interior of the building; and, in the next minute, Mary Ravelstone—for it was indeed she—and Robert Whitlaw were locked in each other's arms. It was a most painful sight to witness. For several seconds neither spoke a word. They could not. At length—

"Robert," said Mary, her head now resting on her lover's shoulder, "you are not guilty of this dreadful crime. I know it;" and she burst again into tears.

"Before heaven, I am not, Mary," replied Whitlaw, firmly and earnestly. "I am not, and that will appear on the day of trial."

"It will! it will! I am sure it will!" exclaimed Mary, passionately. "Oh! how cruel of them to suspect you of so foul a crime! How cruel of them to throw you into this horrid dungeon, and to load you with these horrid chains!"

"They were warranted, my Mary, in doing so," replied Whitlaw, composedly. "Circumstances warranted them. Appearances are against me. But have no fear, Mary, for the result. There is One who will, in his own good time, vindicate the innocent."

A few words more of fond affection and of mutual consolation—another embrace of tender and hallowed love—and the lovers parted. The short time allotted them, and considerably more, had elapsed. The door of Whitlaw's cell was again shut on its lonely, but unawed captive; and Mary Ravelstone returned to her father's house, without its being known to any one on what mission she had been absent.

At this point in our tale, another circumstance of a still more singular nature than that just recorded—inasmuch as it is connected with its final denouement—presents itself.

Amongst those who were in the habit of visiting Ferguson's shop, partly as a customer, and partly as a mere caller or lounger, was one who had been an intimate friend of Whitlaw's, and who still entertained, notwithstanding what had happened, a very strong and sincere regard for that unfortunate young man. This person's name was Williamson. The dismal subject of Whitlaw's crime, and present melancholy situation, was naturally a very frequent theme of Williamson's conversations with Ferguson; and, as the day of trial approached, that event became the leading point of discussion between them; Ferguson constantly harping on it, and on the part which he was to bear in it, alluding to this latter with apparently great uneasiness of feeling, which seemed to increase as the event to which it bore reference came nearer. For some time, Williamson attributed, and very naturally, this uneasiness on the part of Ferguson, in some measure to the timidity of his character, and in some measure to the painfulness of his predicament in being called on to give such evidence as would, in all probability, greatly aid in bringing one who had been a familiar acquaintance to the scaffold. This, we say, was the construction which Williamson, for some time, put on the conduct of Ferguson, in reference to his capacity of witness on the impending trial. But he was at length struck with the extreme uneasiness which Ferguson began to betray on the subject, and, particularly, by his often and anxiously inquiring, if he was likely to be subjected to much cross-examination—if the pannel's counsel would "bother the witnesses much."

Williamson could not say what there was in all this to arouse his attention, if not his suspicions. But they were aroused, and ultimately strengthened by another circumstance which fell under his observation at the same time. The road on which the murdered body of Lauderdale had been found, was one by which Ferguson might also have come home, being as short as any other. But there were two besides, any one of which he might also have taken; their length to him being all about equal. Now, Ferguson had always stated to Williamson, that, on the night of the murder, he had come home by one of the two roads last alluded to, while a person to whom Williamson had one day casually mentioned the circumstance, declared that, on the night of the murder, he saw him emerge, and that, apparently, in unusual haste, from the road on which the body of Lauderdale had been found. This person added, that he had never thought of the circumstance as in any way tending to connect Ferguson with the murder; the latter never having been in the most remote degree associated by any one with the crime, and that, therefore, it had not occurred to him to mention it; nor had he ever thought anything of it himself.

Strongly impressed with these circumstances, Williamson lost no time in submitting them to Whitlaw's counsel; adding some suggestions as to the probable motives which might have induced Ferguson to commit such a crime as the murder of Lauderdale.

Forcibly struck with both the former and the latter, Whitlaw's counsel, after ascertaining two or three other circumstances, procured a warrant for the apprehension of Ferguson, much, however, against the will of his client, who maintained that it was absurd to suppose so quiet and gentle a creature as Ferguson could have been guilty of so foul and atrocious a crime.

His counsel, however, putting less faith in these qualities than Whitlaw, and more impressed than he was with the grounds of suspicion obtained against him, procured, as already said, a warrant for his apprehension.

The officers to whom the execution of this warrant was entrusted, having secured the person of Ferguson, proceeded to search the den in which he resided, when they found, stuffed in between a feather-bed and its mattress, a

waistcoat stained with blood, which it had been attempted to wash out, and torn on one side from the collar down to the pocket.

On the discovery of this startling piece of evidence, the wretched man, who had hitherto remained perfectly silent, although dreadfully agitated, suddenly fell on his knees before the officers, and avowed himself the murderer of Henry Lauderdale!

The puzzling circumstance of its having been Whitlaw's knife that perpetrated the deed, he subsequently explained; and the explanation was simple enough, although its use was most fiendishly ingenious. It had dropped out of Whitlaw's pocket, in Mr Ravelstone's, on the night of the murder; and Ferguson had picked it up unseen; and it was this incident, he said, that had suggested the perpetration of the atrocious deed.

The sequel of our story is soon told. Whitlaw was instantly liberated, and subsequently became the happy husband of Mary Ravelstone; while Ferguson, in due time paid the penalty of his crime on the scaffold.

A TALE OF GLENCO.

ON the first day of February 1692, the family of M'Kian M'Donald, laird of Glenco, received notice that a strong detachment of soldiers was approaching the glen. Alarmed by this intelligence, from the circumstance of M'Kian's having been engaged in the rebellion excited and led by Viscount Dundee, and therefore obnoxious to the government, John M'Donald, the elder of two sons of M'Kian, accompanied by about twenty men, went out to meet the approaching detachment, to ascertain for what purpose they came—whether hostile or friendly. This detachment they found to consist of one hundred and twenty men, of the Earl of Argyle's regiment, commanded by Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon, and a lieutenant and ensign, both of the name of Lindsay. On demanding the intention of their coming, they were assured, by Lieutenant Lindsay, that it was merely to quarter for a time, in consequence of the overcrowded state of the neighbouring garrison of Inverlochy, and that their intentions towards the inhabitants of the glen were perfectly harmless. Having received this assurance, young M'Donald and his men welcomed the officers and soldiers with the greatest cordiality, and returned with them to the glen, where the latter were distributed through the different houses, in numbers varying from three to five, as the accommodation would admit of.

On being settled in their quarters, a footing of perfect intimacy, familiarity, and kindness was established between the soldiers and the inhabitants, the latter doing everything in their power to make the situation of the former as agreeable and comfortable as possible—entertaining them daily with the best they could produce, and otherwise exerting themselves to gratify their guests. While the accommodation and wants of the private soldiers were thus cared for, those of their officers were looked to by Glenco, and his sons, John and Alexander. By these persons, Campbell, and his brother officers, the Lindsays, were hospitably entertained—the house of M'Kian being open to them at all times, and his table free to them, whenever they chose to avail themselves of the privilege.

In the house of M'Kian, however, Campbell was a more frequent and more familiar guest than either of the Lindsays, from the circumstance of his being uncle to the wife of the Laird of Glenco's youngest son, Alexander—a circumstance which frightfully aggravates the atrocity of the part which he subsequently acted. Owing to this connection, Campbell was constantly in M'Kian's house, where he was looked upon almost as one of the family—dining, drinking, and playing cards with the laird and his sons.

Before proceeding with our tale beyond this point, we will advert for a moment to the position in which M'Kian stood with the government at the period of the arrival of Campbell with his detachment at Glenco. The laird, as already said, had been engaged in the rebellion under Dundee, afterwards headed by Major-General Buchan. A proclamation, however, of King William's, at a period shortly subsequent, offered indemnity for this offence to all who would take oaths of allegiance to his government previously to the 1st of January 1692. Amongst those who were willing to avail themselves of this offer, was the laird of Glenco, who went, a day or two before the expiry of the time specified, with several of the most considerable men of his clan, to Fort-William, and requested that the governor, Colonel Hill, would administer to him and his people the necessary oaths. Colonel Hill received M'Donald kindly, but informed him that he had no power to administer the oaths—that duty belonging to sheriffs, bailiffs of regalties, and magistrates of burghs. On this, M'Kian instantly set out for Inverary, where he should find the sheriff of Argyleshire, Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinlass; and under such anxiety lest the time specified in the proclamation should elapse before he got there, that he did not call at his own house, although his road lay within half a mile of it. Notwithstanding all the haste he could make, however, it was the 2d or 3d of January before he reached Inverary, having been retarded by boisterous weather. The same cause detained the sheriff out of town three days more; so that it was the sixth day of January before they met, or a week after the last day allowed by the proclamation. On M'Donald's presenting himself before the sheriff to take the oaths, the latter declined administering them, saying the time had elapsed, and that Glenco's submission could now be of no use to him. With tears in his eyes, Glenco besought the sheriff to take his oaths; urging that he had done all he could to be in time, and that it was owing, in the first place, to a mere mistake on his part, in going to Colonel Hill, and latterly to the boisterousness of the weather, that he had been thrown late. Prevalled on by the old man's urgency, and extreme anxiety to make the submission required, Sir Colin administered the oaths, and transmitted the document attesting the circumstance to the privy council at Edinburgh, together with a detail of the facts of the case, and recommending that M'Donald's submission, though late, should be received.

Having gone through the forms required, before the sheriff, M'Donald returned to Glenco, called the principal persons of his clan around him, told them he had taken the oaths, and enjoined them all to live in peace under the government of King William. All this done, M'Kian set himself down peaceably at his residence, not doubting that his submission would be accepted, although rendered a little past the time appointed by the proclamation; and in this mistaken security was he reposing, when the military visit was made to the glen, of which we have already spoken. To return to the proceedings there:—The friendly intercourse between the soldiers, their officers, and the inhabitants of the glen, continued uninterrupted for twelve days, during all which time, there was no abatement in the kindness and hospitality shewn them, and no occurrence, of even the most trifling kind, to interrupt the good-will and harmony that prevailed between the people and their military guests. Campbell, who lodged at a place in the glen called Innerriggin, was still a frequent inmate of the laird's house, and the associate and companion of his sons; while his brother officers were also frequent sharers in the hospitality of the laird's table. Thus matters continued for twelve days, the twelfth day happening to be a Friday. On the evening of this day, Campbell dined with the laird, and played cards till six or seven in the evening, when he returned to his own lodgings—he, with his two brother

officers, the Lindsays, having been previously invited to dine with Glenco on the following day, Saturday. But a dreadful tragedy was to be enacted ere then. Campbell was now in possession—it is not known, however, whether before he left the laird's house or after—of the following letter from his superior in command, Major Duncanson, then quartered, with a large body of men, at Ballachulis, a place at some distance from Glenco. It is dated from the place just named, 12th February 1692, and ran thus:—

“SIR.—You are hereby ordered to fall upon the rebels, the M'Donalds of Glenco, and put all to the sword under seventy years of age. You are to have especial care, that the old fox (M'Kian) and his sons do upon no account escape your hands. You are to secure all the avenues, that no man escape. This you are to put in execution at five o'clock in the morning, (Saturday morning, 12th February,) precisely; and by that time, or very shortly after it, I'll strive to be at you with a stronger party. If I do not come to you at five, you are not to tarry for me, but to fall on. *This is by the King's special command*, for the good and safety of the country, that these miscreants may be cut off, root and branch. See that this be put in execution without fear or favour, else you may expect to be treated as not true to the King or Government, nor a man fit to carry a commission in the King's service. Expecting you will not fail in the fulfilling hereof as you love yourself, I subscribe these with my hand,

“ROBERT DUNCANSON.”

To the atrocious duty here assigned him, and which would only have cost him his commission to have refused, Campbell did not for a moment demur, but proposed to execute it in all points and to the letter. Having secretly communicated his orders to his men, he, and the party who were quartered in the same house with him, immediately commenced, and spent part of the evening in putting their arms in order for the butchery of the following morning.

Amongst the relatives and friends of the intended victims of this unparalleled treachery, however, there was one who, all along, suspected that mischief was intended, and who put no faith in Campbell's oft-repeated protestations of friendship, and as oft-repeated disavowals of all evil intentions. This was Eliza M'Donald, the only daughter of Campbell's landlord at Innerriggin—a young and beautiful girl of about nineteen; who, with all the gentleness and modesty that distinguish the most amiable of her sex, possessed a heroism of spirit, and presence of mind, that had only to be appealed to to be seen. John M'Donald, a person already referred to, the elder son of M'Kian of Glenco, had won her affections, and he was every way worthy of his fair namesake, for he was generous, brave, and warm-hearted. The desired consummation in such cases, was about to take place in this. At the period of the military visit to Glenco, their marriage day was fixed. It was to have taken place early in the week following that in which the events just related occurred. The old laird had already apportioned a piece of land to the young couple, had stocked it with cattle, and was himself at this moment busily employed in seeing to the proper fitting up of the house in which he intended the young people should live.

We have here mentioned that this young woman was not deceived by the fair, but, as it proved, false bearing of Campbell. She was not. Her strong good sense and shrewd penetration had enabled her to discover several suspicious circumstances in his manner and conduct; and having every opportunity, by residing in the same house with him, of watching his motions, she applied herself vigilantly to the task, and the result was, a conviction that he had some evil mission to execute, although she could not conceive what shape the intended mischief would as-

name. She had frequently mentioned, both to her father and lover, the suspicions she entertained of Campbell's intentions; but neither of them could be brought to entertain any doubt of the latter's good faith. Their refusal to do so, however, did not for a moment shake her faith in the correctness of the opinion she had formed, nor abate her vigilance in watching the motions of Campbell. In the uneasiness of mind which a constant dread of impending danger caused—

"John," she said to M'Donald, one day, "I wish I could inspire you and my father with sufficient alarm to induce you to be on your guard against Glenlyon. I don't like that dark, stern-looking man, John; neither do I like the expression with which he speaks what he desires to be taken as words of kindness."

"You were not wont to entertain an ill opinion of any one," replied M'Donald; "and why now, then, of so civil and soldier-like a fellow as Glenlyon?"

"I have reasons, John," said she. "I have marked a thousand little circumstances, in his conduct and general bearing, that I do not like, and that seem to me to indicate some latent design of a dark and dangerous character; but what it can be, I know not."

"Your fears deceive you, Eliza," said he. "You have taken an alarm, and you construe everything you mark in Campbell's conduct into a confirmation of the justness of your fears."

"Pray it may be so, John," said she, and dropping the conversation, in despair of prevailing on her lover to believe that danger was at hand.

Although, however, the young woman could not succeed in communicating to either her father or brother any share of her own feelings of doubt and alarm, this circumstance did not, as already said, weaken her belief that mischief was intended; neither did it lessen her vigilance in watching the motions of those at whose hands that mischief was expected. On the night previous to the dreadful tragedy so well known by the fearfully significant title of the Massacre of Glenco, some appearances, together with certain movements amongst the soldiery, so strongly confirmed her in her suspicions, that she resolved on going out and secretly marking what was passing in the guard-house of the detachment, they having established a temporary place of this kind.

It was now past midnight; yet, undeterred either by this circumstance, or by the danger to which her surveillance would expose her, she wrapped herself in her plaid, and stole, unperceived, out of the house. Her first direction was towards the guard-house, a small untenanted cottage, which had been apportioned to this purpose; and here she noted the alarming circumstance, that the main guard had been doubled. Struck with this discovery, she now cautiously approached what she knew to be the appointed post of a sentinel, without being seen; but what was her alarm to find the position occupied by eight or ten men instead of one only, as was usual. This circumstance, rendering her still more inquisitive, she crept nearer and nearer, until she came so close that she could distinctly overhear the conversation that passed between the men; and what of this conversation she did overhear, at once removed all doubt of what was intended. She heard one of the soldiers say to his comrades, that he did not like *this* work, and that, had he known of it, he would have been very unwilling to have come there; but that none, except their commanders, knew of it till within a quarter of an hour. The soldier added, that he was willing to fight against the men of the glen; but that it was base to murder them. On obtaining this dreadful confirmation of all her fears, the heroic girl, pale with horror, and trembling in every limb, but still resolute in spirit, withdrew, silently, but quickly, from her concealment,

and flew to the residence of her lover, for the purpose of giving him the alarm, and urging him to save his life by instant flight. Pale and breathless, she rushed into the house; and, having found Macdonald—

"Fly, John!—fly instantly, for your life! What I dreaded is about to come to pass. Campbell has played us false. Your guests are to be your murderers; and, from what I have seen and heard, the foul deed is to be done this night. Fly, fly, for God's sake, John, ere it be too late!"

"Fly, and leave you, Eliza!—never!" said M'Donald, taking her affectionately by the hand. "Let what may betide, I remain with you, Eliza."

"John, John," exclaimed she, with distracted earnestness, "I beseech of you—I entreat you, by the love you have often said you bear me, to fly and save yourself. The wretches will not surely war on women; and, if they do, you cannot protect me."

"But my father, Eliza?" said M'Donald.

"I will warn him," exclaimed she, eagerly; and again she implored M'Donald to make his escape.

Urged by her entreaties, he affected compliance, by quitting the house by a back door; but it was not his intention to go far. He meant to hover in the neighbourhood, determined, if he could not arrest, at least to share in the fate of those who were so dear to him. Faithful to her promise, the young woman hurried to the apartment in which M'Kian slept, and, awaking the old man, told him briefly of the threatened danger. This done, she left the house, and hastened to her father's at Innerriggin, in order to warn him also of the mischief that was preparing. In less than ten minutes after her departure, the house of the unfortunate laird of Glenco was surrounded by a party of soldiers, and, in the next instant, the rapid discharge of musketry announced that the dismal tragedy had commenced. A few minutes more, and the work of death was going on remorselessly throughout the whole extent of the glen—it having been arranged, amongst the murderers, that each party should assassinate the male persons in the houses in which they were quartered; and thus, many were butchered in their sleep, by the men from whom they had parted, but a few hours before, in terms of the greatest friendship, and on whom they had lavished every kindness in their power. The party, consisting of about twenty men with fixed bayonets, that surrounded the house of M'Kian, was commanded by Lieutenant Lindsay, who, calling, in a friendly way, for admittance, was at once allowed to enter, when, proceeding, with three or four men with loaded muskets, straight to M'Kian's bed-room, they fired on the latter while in the act of rising, and shot him dead—one bullet passing through his head, and another through his body. His wife, springing from the bed, was seized on by the ruffians, who tore the rings off her fingers with their teeth. On the following day, the unfortunate woman died from excessive terror and grief of heart. Having perpetrated this diabolical murder, the ruffians proceeded to search the house for his sons, and any other male persons who might be in it. They found three, two of whom they killed outright, and the third they left for dead. Such was the work Lindsay was putting through his hands on this dreadful morning. Campbell was equally busy at his own quarters. His first proceeding here, was to murder his own landlord, whom he caused to be dragged from his bed, and shot—an order which was instantly obeyed. Several other men who were in the house were treated precisely in the same way; being all roused from their sleep, and pulled violently to the ground, and there butchered with shot and bayonet. While these frightful murders were being perpetrated at Glenlyon's quarters, a miserable boy of twelve years of age, distracted with the horrors he saw around him, flew towards Campbell, flung himself on his knees, and grasping him round his legs, implored him to

save his life—saying that he would be his humble slave, and would go anywhere with him, if he would only spare his life. It is said that Campbell shewed some disposition to listen to the heart-rending appeal of the poor boy; but whether this was so or not, it was made in vain. While Campbell was hesitating, one Captain Drummond came up, and shot him through the head. Similar circumstances marked the fate of another young man of twenty years of age. At Innerriggin, Campbell's quarters, there were nine men altogether killed, several of whom were first bound hand and foot, and then deliberately shot one after the other. Another extensive butchery occurred at a place in the glen called Achnacon, where were the laird of Auchentriater—a gentleman remarkable for great good sense, and for the strength and soundness of his judgment—his brother, in whose house he was, and eight other men. These were all sitting peaceably round a fire, when a volley of shot was suddenly discharged upon them, whereby the laird and four other were killed outright, and the remainder severely wounded. The latter, with singular presence of mind, deceived their murderers by dropping down as if dead. While in this position, a sergeant of the name of Barber came in amongst the dead and wounded men; and, seizing by the arm Achtrichtan's brother, a person at whose hands he had met with much hospitality, asked him if he were still alive. The latter replied that he was, and that he had rather die without than within. Barber replied that, "for his meat he had eaten," he would do him that *favour!*—the favour of killing him without. He was accordingly led out, and a party of three or four men brought close up to him, to shoot him, when, just as they were going to fire, he dexterously flung his plaid, which he had previously lowered for the purpose, over their faces; and, in the momentary confusion created by this incident, made his escape—those who had feigned dead in the house also making theirs, in the meantime, by a back door.

To return to Eliza M'Donald. Having warned the inmates of M'Kian's house of their impending danger, although, with regard to some of them, as we have shewn, the warning came too late, she hastened to her father's house at Innerriggin; but here also she came too late. The work of butchery was already completed. She made an appeal to the soldiers.

"Peace, peace, ye whining idiot!" said a ferocious-looking fellow—coming up to her, and thrusting her rudely away with the butt-end of his musket. "It would be but right to serve you as the rest;" and the ruffian clubbed his firelock, seemingly with the intention of perpetrating the deed he alluded to, when he was suddenly struck to the earth by the blow of a broadsword, which nearly divided his head in twain. The stroke was inflicted by M'Donald, who, on felling the villain, threw himself between Eliza and the party to which he belonged, and, brandishing his claymore, stood prepared to defend her at the cost of his own life. Bootless gallantry!—vain devotion! A dozen muskets were instantly pointed at his breast. She, in turn, flew between her lover and the levelled weapons of the soldiers. In the next moment, the threatened volley was discharged. Both she and M'Donald fell side by side, stretched in death.

Such was one of the dismal incidents that marked one of the most extraordinary episodes that occur in Scottish story—the Massacre of Glenco.

The whole number of persons slain on this dreadful occasion, was thirty-eight; but this number was, by no means, the intended limits of the slaughter. It was meant to have been much more extensive, and to have included the entire male population of the glen, amounting to upwards of two hundred. This was to have been accomplished by the aid of four hundred additional soldiers, under Major Duncan-son who were to have arrived at Glenco (see Duncanson's

letter) at five o'clock in the morning, and to have secured the whole of the inhabitants, by guarding all the outlets. It providentially happened, however, that these additional troops, owing to the extreme boisterousness of the weather, could not leave their quarters at Ballachoolish, where they were stationed, till nine o'clock, and were thus too late to accomplish the wholesale butchery they meditated.

The cruel visitation with which the miserable inhabitants of Glenco had been afflicted, was not, however, confined to the murdering of its fathers, sons, and brothers. It was carried further. It was carried as far as human vengeance could be carried. When there remained none to kill, the murderers commenced setting fire to the houses, all of which were consumed. This done, they marched off, driving before them the entire bestial property of the unfortunate inhabitants of the glen, consisting of 900 cows, 200 horses, and an immense number of sheep and goats. These were driven to the neighbouring garrison of Inverlochy, and there divided amongst the captors, officers and men. Dreadful as was the scene of the morning, when the death-shots of the murderers were seen blazing, and heard rattling, in all quarters of the glen, it was scarcely more heart-rending than that which now presented itself. Wretched women and children—the former were widowed, the latter fatherless—houseless and naked, were seen cowering under the storm, which was at this moment raging wildly, with neither food to eat nor a place of shelter to fly to.

There was no human habitation within six miles of the glen, and the nearest could only be reached by traversing a savage mountain tract, covered with snow.

Many of these unfortunate women, however—some with infants at their breasts, others leading scarcely less helpless beings by the hand—attempted to take this wild path, and perished by the way, buried in the snow-wreaths of the hills.

Such, then, was the Massacre of Glenco, one of the most atrocious acts recorded in the annals of human turpitude. Keenly alive, even at this distance of time, to the atrocity of the enormous crime, the reader eagerly and indignantly inquires, who were the chief movers in the diabolical deed?—with whom did it originate? These are natural questions, but they are not easily answered. The whole affair, as to who were the devisers of the butchery, underwent, subsequently, a process of mystification that renders it impossible that this should ever be distinctly ascertained. Much, however, of the guilt unquestionably falls on the King himself, who certainly issued violent orders regarding M'Kian and his clan; although it is pled for him, and is, perhaps, true, that these orders were greatly exceeded by those to whom their execution was entrusted. Unfortunately for M'Kian, too, there were several of the men in power in Scotland, at that time, who held him in feud, and who had, either directly or indirectly, an influence in directing the engines of the royal displeasure, and of regulating their force; and between these two, the king and the personal enemies of Macdonald, rests the chief guilt of Glenco. To appease the universal indignation of the country, a Parliamentary inquiry was set on foot to trace out the really guilty in this frightful transaction; but it led to no result. Several were denounced, but none were punished.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF A SON OF THE HILLS.

I HAVE oftentimes thought, what, I dare say, has been thought again and again by thousands before I was born, and will be thought by as many millions after I have ceased both to think and speak—I have thought that, if any one were to give an exact transcript of his feelings and experience, in early life in particular—without any connecting link even, beyond that of time and place—such a written record could not fail to be exceedingly interesting. The novelty of the scene; the uncloyed character of the feelings; the harpy-clutching nature of the imagination; the variety of sources within and without, from which pleasure is derived and is derivable—all these form a mine of delightful insight, which has not, perhaps, ever yet been exhausted—a mine conducting to, and losing itself in, that far-away central darkness which precedes perception, recollection, existence. I remember—and it is an awful remembrance—the death of my grandmother when I was only four years old. There she lies in that bed. Alongside of that sheet, there are my mother and the minister kneeling in prayer. The whisper is conveyed to the minister's ear—"Sir, she has win to rest!" Oh, that sweet word rest!—rest negative, rest positive—rest from, rest in, rest amidst a sea of troubles—rest in an ocean of glorious happiness! "Sir, she has win to rest!" I can never forget the words, nor the look, nor the place, nor the all which then constituted *me*. The minister pauses in the middle of a sentence, he rises from his knees, and, taking my mother's hand in his, as well as mine in the other, he approaches the bed of death; but, O my soul, what an impression is made upon me! My grandmother—the figure with the short cloak over her shoulders, the check apron, the tobacco box, and the short cutty-pipe—the speaking, conversing, kind-hearted figure—what is *it now*? Asleep!—but the eyes are open, and frightfully unmeaning. Asleep!—but the mouth is somewhat awry, and there is an expression unknown, intolerable, terrible, all over the countenance. And this is death! I cannot stand it. I fly to the door—to the brae—to the hill. I dash my face, shoulders and all, into a bracken bush, and weep, weep, weep myself asleep. When I awake, it is a dream. I am amused with the white table-cloth, the bread and cheese, and wine bottle. I am amused with the plate, salt, and earth placed on the breast of the corpse. I am amused with the coffin; but, most of all—oh, delightful!—with the funeral—the well-dressed people—the numbers, the services of bun, shortbread, wine, and spirits; and, above all, with various little bits and drops which fall to my share. I firmly believe I got fuddled on the occasion. Such is man; for men are but children of a larger growth. Now, there is only *one* event, circumstance, incident, firmly and fairly told—and it is interesting exceedingly: how interesting, then, would all the incidents and events of early life be, were they only narrated with equal faithfulness! So one may say—but, in so saying, they will be mistled and misled. There are few things which I remember so vividly as this. Death! I have seen thee since! Thou hast torn from me mother, brother, friend, and, above

and beyond all, thou hast been betwixt these arms, murdering her whom my soul loved—the partner of my life—the mother of my babes—the balm of my soul—the glory, ornament, and boast of my existence—and yet, and yet my grandmother's death is more vividly imprinted on brain and heart than any other event of a similar nature. Proof impressions sell dear! and proof-feelings—oh, how deep are the lines, how indelible the engravings! They are cut on steel with a graving tool of adamant. The heart and the brain must be reduced to their elemental dust ere these impressions can wear out—and yet I was only four years and six months old!

I saw it—I saw it—ay, and I see it still—a poor innocent lamb. I had kissed it, and hung about its neck on the sunny brae. People said it was not thriving: I would not believe it. It was my companion. I often fed it with milk; put my finger into its little toothless mouth, and made it lap the invigorating and nourishing liquid. It had no parent, no friend, in a manner, but me, and I was only five years old, in petticoats; a very semblance of humanity; a thing to be strode over in his path by mankind of ordinary stature. But there came a blight, a curse, a dreadful change, over my dear and endearing pet. It was torn—ay, dreadfully torn, by some nightly dog. When I first found it, it was scarcely alive, lying bleeding, its white, and soft, and smooth skin dragged in the mud, torn, and untouchable. There was a knife applied; but not to cure, it was to kill, to put out of pain. I could not stand it; I went into convulsions, screamed, and almost tore myself to pieces. "My lamb! my wee lambie! my dear, dear sweetie!"—but it had passed, and I was alone in my existence. But, oh! it was a fearful lesson which I had learned—a dreadful truth which I had ascertained. Youth, as well as age, is subject to death: dreadful!

There she sits in loveliness—there, there, in the midst of that hazel bush, snug in her retreat, her yellow bill projecting over the brow of her nest: smooth, black, and guttering are her feathers, and her eye is the very balmy south of expression. Yet, there is a watchfulness and a timidity in her attitude and movement—she is not at ease, for that eye has caught mine, as they protrude upon her betwixt two separated branches; and, after two or three hesitating stirs, she is out—off—away; but perched on a neighbouring bough, to mark and watch my proceedings. And *he* too, is there; *he*, her companion and helpmate; he who was singing, or rather whistling, so loud on that tall and overtopping birch; he who was making the setting sunlight glad with his music—who was, doubtless, chanting of courtship, and love, and union, and progeny. Yes! *he* has left his branch and his sun; he has dropped down from his elevation, to inquire into the cause of that sudden chuckle, by which his lady bird has alarmed him. There are four eyes upon me now, and all my proceedings are registered in two beating bosoms. But the nest is full—it is full of life—of young life—of the gorling in its hair, and incipient tail—of yellow gaping bills, all thrust upwards, and crying, as loud as attitude and cheep can do, "Give, give, give!" Surely Solomon had never seen a blackbird's nest with young, else he had given it a place amongst his "gives!" This was my first nest. It was discovered

when I was only five years old; it was visited every day and every hour; the young ones grew apace; they feathered into blackness; they hopped from their abode; they flew, or were essaying to do so, when—O world! world! why, why, is it so with thee!—destruction came in a night, and the feathers of my young ones were strewed around their once happy and crowded abode. There had been other eyes upon them than mine. Yes! eyes to which the night is as noonday—vile, green, elongated eyes, and sharp, penetrating, and unsparing teeth, and claws, stretched, crooked, and clutching; and, in short, the cat had devoured the whole family!—not one was left to the distracted parents. I shall never, never forget their fluttering movements, their chirpings, their restlessness, their ruffled feathers, and all but human speech. There was revenge in my young bosom—mad and terrible revenge. I snatched up the murderer—all unconscious as she was of her fault. I ran with her, like a fury, to a deep pool in the burn. I dashed her headlong into the waters—from which, of course, she readily escaped, and, eyeing me with a look of extreme surprise from the further bank, immediately vanished into the house. Though we were great friends before this event—and I would gladly have renewed our intercourse afterwards, when my passion had subsided—yet Pussy never forgave me, at least I know that she never trusted me, for I could never catch her again.

That's the pool—the very bumbling pool, where we bathed, and stood beneath the cascade for a whole summer's day. There were more than one or two either—there were many of us; for we collected as the day advanced, and still those who were retreating, upon encountering those who were advancing, would turn with them again, and renew their immersions. It was summer—and such summer as youth (for I was only six) alone can experience—it was one long blaze of noontide radiance. The sun stationary, as in the valley of Jehosaphat; the trees, green, leafy, shady, rejoicing; the very cattle dancing in upon the cooling element; and the grasshopper still dumb. The heat was intense, yet not overpowering; for we were naked—naked as were Adam and Eve prior to sin and shame—naked as is Apollo Belyidere or the Venus de Medicis. We were Nature's children, and she was kind to us; she gave us air that was balm; sunbeams that wooed us from the pool; and water again that enticed us from the open air! What a day it was of fun and frolic, and splash, and squatter, and confusion! Now jumping from the brow into the deep; now standing beneath the Grey Mare's Tail, the flashing cascade; now laving—like Diana on Actæon—the water from the pool on each other's limbs and faces; now circling along the green bank, in sportive chase and mimic fray, and again couching neck deep in the pool. But the awful dinnle is on the breeze; the black south hath advanced rapidly upon meridian day; the white and swollen clouds have boiled up into spungy foam; and there runs a light blue vapour over the inky cloud beneath. Hist!—whisht!—it's *thunner!* and, ere many minutes have escaped, we are each quaking every limb at our own fire-sides.

Many recent winters have made me cry, What has become of winter? I wished Government would fit out an expedition to go in quest of him. He must have been couching somewhere, the funny old rogue, behind the Pole; he must have been coquetting with the beauties of Greenland or Nova Zembla. He has, last season, condescended to give us a glimpse of his icy beard and hoary temples. Oh, I like the old fellow dearly!—but it is the old fellow only. As to him of modern times, I know not what to make of him—a blustering, blubbering, braggadocio; making darkness his pavilion, for no other purpose than to throw pailfuls of water on the heads of women and children; letting out his colds and influenzas from his

Baltic bags, and terrifying our citizens with “auld wives,” broken slates, and shivered tiles. But my winter of 1794—what a delightful companion he was! He did his work genteelly; his drift was a matter of a few hours; but they were hours of vigorous and terrible exertion. Some ten score of sheep, and some twenty shepherds, perished within a limited range, in one wild and outrageous night. It was, indeed, sublime—even to me, a youth of eight years of age, is was fearfully sublime. Can anything be more beautiful than falling and newly fallen snow. *There* you see it above and to a great height, shaping into varied and convolving forms. It nears, it nears, it nears, and lights in your little hand, a feathery diamond, a crystallized vapour, an evanescent loveliness! But the tempest has sounded an assail, and the broadened flakes are comminuted into blinding drift—the earth beneath blows up to heaven, whilst the heaven thunders its vengeance upon the earth. The restless snow whirls, eddies, rises, disperses, accumulates. Man cannot breathe in the thick and toiling atmosphere. The wreaths swell into rounded and polished forms, and, on a sudden, disappear. The air has cleared, has stilled, and the sharp and consolidating frost has commenced. What a sea of celestial brightness! The earth wrapped in an alabaster mantle, the folds of which are the folds of beauty and enchantment. Days of glory, and nights of splendour. The moon, in her own blue heaven, contracted to a small circumference of clear, gaseous light; the hills, the hollows, the valleys, the muirs, the mosses, the woodlands, the rocky eminences, the houses, the churchyards, the gardens, the whole of external nature beneath her, giving up again into the biting and twinkling air an arrowy radiance of far-spread light. Here and there the course of a mountain torrent, or of a winding river, marked with a jagged and broken line of black. The bay of the house-dog heard far off—the sound of the curlers' sport, composed of a mixture of moanings—the “sweep,” the “guard,” the “stroke,” the home-bred and hearty shout and guffaw—the Babel mixture of noises, coming softened and attuned from the distant pond. It is the “how-dum-dead” of winter. Christmas has passed, with its happiness wished and enjoyed—it is the last night of the year; long and fondly-expected Hogmanay! We are abroad, amongst the farm-houses and cottars' huts—we pass nothing that emits smoke. Our disguises are fearful, even to ourselves, as we encounter each other unexpectedly at corners. Cakes, cheese, and all manner of eatables are ours, even to profusion. And who would not endure much of life, to have such exquisite fun renewed!

But my first trout!—killed—fairly landed out of the water—dancing about in all its speckled beauty on the green bank: this was indeed an event—this was an achievement of no ordinary interest. Fishing! to thee I owe more of exquisite enjoyment than to any other amusement whatever. I am a mountain child—born, and nursed, and trotted about from my cradle on the winding banks of a bonny burn, through whose waters there looked up eyes, and there waved fins and tails. I have taken, again and again, in after life, the wings of the morning, and have made my dwelling with the stunted thorn, the corbie nest, the croaking raven, the willie wagtail, and the plover, and the snipe, and the lapwing. I have seen mist—glorious mist!—in all its fantastic shapes, and openings and closings, from the dense crawling blanket of wet to the bright, sun-penetrated, rent, and dispersing tatterment of haze. I have studied all manner of cloud, from the swollen, puffed up, and rolling castellation, to the smooth, level, and wide-spread overshadowing. The breezes have been my companions all along. I could scan their merits and demerits with a fisher's eye, from the rough and sudden puff, urging the pool into ridges of ripple, to the steady, soft, and balmy breath that merely brought the surface into a slight commotion. Burns, too, I have studied, and streams, and gul-

lets, and wells, and clay-brows, and bumbling pools. I have fished in the Caple with Willie Herdman. (See Blackwood, volume sixth.) I have fished in the Turrit with Stoddart. (See his admirable book on Angling.) But the true happiness of a fisher is solitude. Oh, for a fine morning in April, fresh, breezy, and dark!—a mountain glen, through which the Dax or the Brawn threads its mazy descent; the bottom clear, and purified by a recent flood; the waters not yet completely subsided—something betwixt clear and muddy—a light blue, and a still lighter brown.

Not a shepherd, nor a sheep, nor a living creature within sight—nothing but the sound of the passing stream, and the splash of the hooked and landing trout. A whole immensity of unexhausted stream unfurled before me; the day yet in its nonage; my pockets stuffed with stomach store; my mind at ease; my tongue ever and anon repeating, audibly—“Now for it, this will do, there he has it, this way, sir, this way; nay, no tricks upon travellers—out, out you *must* come—so, so, my pretty fellow, take it gently, take it gently!” But I am forgetting my first trout in the thousand and tens of thousands which have succeeded it. I had a knife—I know not how I got it; perhaps I bought it at a Thornhill fair, with a sixpence which the guidman of Auchincain gave me as my fairing, or perhaps—but no matter; as Wordsworth would say, “I had a knife!” and this knife was my humble servant in all manner of duties; it was, in fact, my slave; it would cut bourtree, and fashion scout guns; it would make saugh whistles; it would fashion bows and arrows; it would pare cheese, and open hazel nuts; it was more generally useful than Hudibras’ sword—and I felt its value. In fact, what was I without my knife? A soldier without his gun, a fiddler without his fiddle, a tailor without his shears. And yet this very knife, dear and useful as it was to me, I parted with—I gave it away, I fairly bartered it for a bait-hook with a horse-hair line attached to it. But then I had seen, and seen it for the first time, a trout caught with this very hook and line. Having a hook and line, I cut myself, from an adjoining wood, a rowan-tree fishing-rod, which might serve a double purpose, protecting me from the witches, and aiding me in catching trout. Away I went, “owre muirs and mosses mony o’,” to the glorious Caple, of which I had heard much. I baited my hook with some difficulty; for worms, whatever boys may be, are not fond of *the sport*. I stood alongside of the deep black pool. I saw the deception alight in the water, and heard the plump; it sank, and sank, by a certain law, which philosophers have named gravitation; it became first pale-white, then yellow, then almost red, as it sank away into the dark profundity of mossy water. It lay still and motionless for a few instants. At last it moved; ye powers! it cuts the water like an edged instrument—it pulls—pulls strongly. The top of the rod touches the surface of the pool—something must be done—I am all trepidation. But, by mere strength of pulling and of tackle, a large yellow-wamed, black-backed fellow lies panting on the sand bank at the foot of the pool.

“And it’s hame, hame, hame,
Fain wad I be;
And it’s hame, hame, hame,
To my ain Mammie!”

I ran home with all possible rapidity; and displayed, on a very large pewter plate, my first trout, to my kind and affectionate parent. My happiness was completed.

The woods!—I was born in the woods; man lives originally in the primeval forests, with the exception, perhaps, of the Arab, the Babylonian, and Egyptian; wherever there was sufficient soil and suitable climate, there was wood, from Lapland to Capetown, from the Bay of Biscay to the Yellow Sea. The American forests still exist, where even the axe of European civilization has not reached

them. These woods are natural to man; he turns to them as to something, he cannot well tell how or why, congenial to his nature. At least so I have felt it, and feel it still in my recollections of early life. Plantations are stiff and artificial, generally consisting of a dense field of regular similarity; but natural wood, the offspring of our own soil, the indigenous plants of Scotland—the birch, for example, with its bending and elegant twigs, its white stem, and grateful fragrance; the eternal oak, with its leafy shade; the tough ash, with its pointed leaf; the lowly hazel, with its straight stems and fragrant nuts; the saugh, the willow, the thorn-sloe, the haw, the elder, the bourtree, the crabtree, the briar, and the bramble—all these consociate lovingly, and actually did consociate around, and almost over, the humble but snug cot where I first drew breath. There, my first herald of day was the song of the linnet thrush, or blackbird; there, my first efforts were made in gaining the top of some little ash or birch; there, my first riches consisted in a few pints of ripened and browned nuts, kept in the leg of a footless stocking, against the ensuing Halloween. But Halloween has now become a mere name—*et preterea nihil*, still *stat nominis umbra*, sufficient to make me recollect with delight the exquisite pleasure which I enjoyed in anticipating as well as in observing this festival. The crab-tree yielded its reddest and ripest fruit for the occasion; a casual apple was hooked over the hedge of the castle orchard for the same purpose; but, above and beyond all, nuts were gathered, dried and stored away into sly corners and out-of-the-way places. What amusement so delightful as nut-gathering! There they hang to the afternoon sun, brown and ready to escape from their husks or shells. There are twosome clusters, and threesome clusters; and, if you could reach without shaking that topmost branch, (but there is the difficulty and the danger,) you may even secure a twelvesome cluster—a glorious knot of lovely associates, that would crumble from their abodes into your hands like dried leaves! You pass on from bush to bush; but you have been anticipated. Will or Tam, or Jock or Jamie, or all four, have been there before you, and have left you nothing but a scanty gleanings. Here and there, you are enabled to extract from the centre of a leafy shade, an ill-ripened, because an unsound single nut, which serves no better purpose than to break your jaws with its emptiness, in cracking it. But you push away into the interior—the *terra incognita* of the woodland; and, standing out by itself, aired and sunned all over, you find a little branch of scroggs, stunted and ill-leaved, but really covered all over with the most exquisite fruitage. Long, large, are the nuts you have thus acquired; and you chuckle inwardly, as you contemplate a prize which has been reserved for your exclusive use. With what dispatch are cluster after cluster accumulated into handfulls, and then again into pocketfulls, and then, at last, into cap, hat, or bonnetfulls, till you become a kind of shellcoat, a walking *nuttery*, a thing of husks and kernels! The voice of your companions is loud and frequent, in the language of inquiry into the state of your success; but you preserve a deep silence, or answer prevaricatingly, by “you have got a few—not many—very bad place this,” &c. &c. At last you come upon them with the astonishment of display, and expose your treasure with ineffable feelings of triumph. You have distanced them all. Your Halloween fortune is made—you are a happy being.

But Halloween comes at last—Scotland’s Halloween—Burns’ Halloween—the Halloween of centuries upon centuries—of the Celt amidst his mountains, the Saxon in his valley, the Druid in his woods, King James the First in his palace—and old Janet Smith in her humble cottage. It was at Janet Smith’s that I held the first Halloween of which I have any distinct recollection. There was a kind couthiness about old Janet which made her hearth the resort of all

the young lads and lasses, boys and girls, around. On Halloween, Janet had on her best head-gear, her check apron, and clean neck napkin.

We had such burning of nuts, such pu'ing of stocks, such singing of songs, such gibing, laughing, cracking, tale-telling, and, to crown all, such a gallant bowl of punch, made from a sony grey-beard, which the young men had taken care to store previously with the needful, that I went home half crazy, and, my mother affirmed, continued so for several days to come.

Ye gods! what superstitious notions peopled my brain ever since! I recollect such fears about the invisible world becoming visible—I walked amidst a multitude of unseen terrors, ever ready to burst the casement of immateriality, and to stand, naked, confessed, in material semblance, before me. There was the fairy, the inhabitant of the green unploughed knowe, the green-coated imp, intent on child-stealing, or rather barter, and jingling her bridle through the high air on Halloween; there was the ghost, awful, solemn, and admonishing, pointing with the finger to buried treasure or murder glen; there was the wraith, little less terrible, and clothed in a well-known presence, prognosticating death or sore affliction; there was the death-watch, distinctly heard tick, ticking, all night long, in the bed-post; there were the blue lights seen in round spots on the bed-head, on the very night when three lads and three lasses perished in the boat; there was the muckle Deil himself, driving, in a post-chaise, over the "chaise-craig," or panting, like a bull-dog, at the nightly traveller's feet; and, over and above all these, was "Will o' the Wisp," skipping about from one side of the moss to the other, and always placing itself betwixt you and your home.

"D'ye see that?" said my cousin, Nelly Laurie, a girl of eighteen, to me, when my years could be reckoned by the number of the Muses.

"What! what is it!" I exclaimed; and my attention was directed towards a moss, or morass, through which our footpath lay, on our way home, about 10 o'clock of a dark, damp, and cloudy night.

"There! there it's again!"

There is something in the word "it" most indefinitely terrific. Had she said *he*, or *she*, or even that ghost, or that wraith, or that bogle, it would not have been half so startling; but "it"—do you see it?—see a thing without a name, a definition—a mere object, shorn of its accidents or qualities! This is indeed most awful. With fear and trembling, I lifted up mine eyes, and beheld—O mercy, mercy!—a light in the middle of the moss, where no light should have been; and it was floating and playing about, blue as indigo, and making the darkness around it visible. My joints relaxed, and I fell to the earth, incapable of motion. I was a mere bundle of loose and unconnected bones, sinews, and muscles. My cousin stood over me, incapable of deciding what would be done; at last, it was discovered that to advance homewards was better than to retrograde, as we were already more than half-way on our course. I was instructed to repeat, and to continue repeating, aloud, the Lord's Prayer; whilst she, on whose shoulders I lay like a dead sheep, continued to give audible note to the tune of the twenty-third Psalm. It was, indeed, an odd concert for the Devil, or his emissary, Mr William, yeleft "of the Wisp," to listen to; for, whilst I was roaring out, in perfect desperation, "Our Father which art in Heaven," she was articulating, in a clear and overpowering tone, "The Lord's my shepherd;" whilst I slipt into "Hallowed be thy name," she advanced with, "I'll not want—he makes me down to lie!"—and, sure enough, down *both of us lay*, with a vengeance, in the midst of a moss-hole, into which, from terror and the darkness of the night, we had inadvertently plunged. "What's the meaning of all this, sirs!" exclaimed a well-known voice. It

was my mother's, God bless her! I clung to her like grim death, and never quitted my hold till I was snugly lodged above the fire, near to the lamp, and with dog, cat, my cousin, and my mother, betwixt me and the dark door-way passage! I did not get a sound sleep for months and years afterwards! Such are thy miseries, unhallowed, unmanly Superstition! Disease may relax the body and enervate the whole frame; but thou art the disease of the soul, the fever of the brain. Misfortunes may be borne—pain must be endured till it is cured—but superstition, such as *this*, is neither endurable nor curable. I am not yet completely cured of it, now that I have entered my sixtieth year. Were you to send me into an empty, dark church, at midnight, and through a surrounding churchyard, peopled with the bodies of the dead, I durst not go, though you gave me large sums of money. And is my judgment or reason in fault? Not at all; it is my feelings, my moral nature; my very blood has got such a blue tinge that I verily believe it would look like the blue ink I am writing with, were it caught in a tea-cup! Sir Walter Scott was bit, too, and so are nine-tenths of the *living*, though they won't allow it. It has now become, like latent heat, an unseen agency; but it still acts, and powerfully, on civilized, and even learned man!

Seeking of birds' nests is a glorious amusement, and the knowledge of a large amount of these is a possession to be boasted of. I know of a linnet's nest, says one—and I of a robin's, says another—I of shilfa's, says a third; but a fourth party comes in with his maivis, and all competition is at an end. The maivis is indeed a Scottish nightingale; he sings so mellow, and so varied—his brown speckled breast turned up to the rising or the setting sun; he pours o'er the woodland a whole concert of harmony; and then he awakens into competition the blackbird, with his Æolian whistle; the green and grey linnet, with their sharp and sweet tweedle-twee; the goldfinch, with his scarlet hood and song of flame; and the lark on the far-off fell, with his minstrelsy of heaven's border. But what to a boy, a boy of eight or nine, is all this song and sunshine, in comparison with the fact—"I know of five birds' nests!" Why, this annunciation is enough to settle your doom—you may almost apprehend assassination, so much must you be envied. But true it is, and of verity; I once knew five birds' nests—all containing eggs or young. Oh, I remember them as it were only of yesterday. Time has only engraved, with a tool of adamant, the impression deeper and deeper. There was the snug and pendulous abode of the little kitty-wren. It was beneath the brow of the burn, covered over from winds and rains by the incumbent bank and brushwood. It was a plumpudding, with a hole made by your thumb, on one side; a stationary football, composed of all things soft and comfortable, covered on the outside with fog or moss, and in the inside lined with the down of feathers; and there were from sixteen to twenty little blue *peas* in it; and the little hen sat on them daily, and opposed her little bill vigorously to my intrusive finger. She was not afraid—not she! she fought manfully, "*pro aris et focis*;" if not, as the Romans say, "*manibus pedibusque*;" nor, as the savage Saxons say, "tooth and nail," nor, as the shepherd of Ettrick says, "knees, and elbows an a'"—still she fought with the instruments with which nature had endowed her, with her bill and her little claws, and she fought it most vigorously. O Nature! thou art a fearful mystery of wisdom—thou makest the meekest and most timid natures bold as lions, when their progeny are concerned. Look at the hen—poor chucky, that scrapes her pittance from the doorway or dunghill, whom the veriest whelp which can bark and tumble over will scare into wing and screech—put the hen on eggs, give her an infant brood, shew her danger from dog, man, bear, or lion—who's afraid? Not she at least; she will dance on the nose of the

mastiff, she will fly in the face of humanity, whether in the shape of man, woman, boy, or child. The warrior looks fierce in his regimentals and armour; but what cares she for guns, bayonets, swords, and pistols? Not a peppercorn! Her young ones are behind her, and she will meet the armed monster, with foot, bill, wing, and with a fearful intonation of terrifying sounds. No Highland regiment, even at Prestonpans, ever set up a more alarming battle shout. She is never conquered—like Achilles, she is “invincible;” but so soon as her progeny need no more her care or her protection—so soon as they have been pecked into estrangement, and sent to scrape and provide for themselves—she resumes all her mild and feminine qualities—she is plain “chucky” again! The linnet’s nest is covered with scales of a silky whiteness—the fine thin *laminæ* which cover the bark of the oak, of that very tree in the cleft of whose branches her nursery is fixed. Inside of this little nicely-proportioned cup, there are five beautifully-spotted eggs—a white ground with a grey spot, flung over the whole shell with a most charming regularity. And there is a nest in that stone wall which surrounds the plantation—it is that of the stone-chatter—filthy, unsouly bird, fit companion for the yellow yoldring, which conceals her treasure ’neath a tuft of grass on the bent, and is trodden under-foot. They are both deserving of all detestation; the one for drinking every May morning of the Devil’s blood, and the other for many an impertinent jest and chatter. Let them perish in one day—let their eggs be blown, and hung up as ornaments in strings along the brow of the household looking-glass, or smashed to atoms by the stroke of an urchin previously blinded.

“For he ne’er would be true she averred,
That would rob a poor bird” *

It was whilst engaged in robbery of this kind, that I was first checked by the tears and entreaties of Mary—of my dear cousin, Mary Morison. Alas! poor Mary! thou wast mild, beautiful, kind, merciful; yet thy days have been numbered, and thou art gone—

“Unde negant redire quenquam;”

and I, a lubber fiend in comparison with thy beauty and gentleness—I, a personification of cruelty and horror in comparison with thee—I am still alive, and thinking of thee—whilst thou art not even *dust*—“*etiam periere ruina.*” Forty-five years confound even dust, and reduce to a fearful nonentity all that smiled, and charmed, and inspired. But of this enough—this way madness lies.

That was a terrible conflagration at Miramichi. I think I hear it crashing, thundering, crackling on; before it, the wild beasts, the serpents, the cattle—man! poor, houseless, helpless, smoke-enveloped, and perishing man. The reason why I can conceive so vividly of this awful and comparatively recent visitation, is this—I was accustomed to “set muirburn” when a boy of nine or ten. The primeval heath of our mountains was strong, bushy; and, when dry in spring, exceedingly inflammable. I was a mountain child; for, on one side of my dwelling the heather withered and bloomed up to the door; and, when one thinks of the “bonny blooming heather,” it is quite refreshing; it blooms when all things around it are withering, during the later months of harvest; but then, oh, then, it puts on such a russet robe of beauty—a dark evening cloud tipped and tinged with red—a mantle of black velvet spangled with gold; and its fragrance is honey steeped in myrrh. Yet when withered in March and April, it is an object of aversion to the sheep farmer, who prefers green grass and tender sward; and he issues to impatient boyhood the sentence of destruction. Peat follows peat, kindled at one end, and held by the other; the hillside or the level muir swarm with matches; carefully is the ignition communicated to the dry and wide-spread heath; from spot to spot—in lines—and it circles—it extends and unites—the

wind is up, and one continuous blaze is the almost immediate consequence. It is night, dark night—the clouds above catch and reflect the uncertain gleam. The heath-fowl wing their terrified flight—through, above, and beneath the rolling and outspreading smoke. The flame gathers into a point; and, at the more advanced part of the curvature, the force and blaze is terrible. A thousand tongues of fire shoot up into the density, and immediately disappear. Who now so ventures as to dash headlong through the hottest flame, and to recover from beneath the choking night his former position? There goes—a hat—a cap—a bonnet! They have taken up their position in the pathway of the devouring flood of fire—and who so brave, so daring, as to extricate his own property from instant destruction? Hurrah! hurrah! from a score of throats mixes with the thunder, the crackle, the roll—all is power, novelty, ecstasy; bare heads and bare feet dance and shew conspicuously upon the still smoking turf. Here an adder is seen writhing and twisting in the agonies of death. There a half-burned hat evinces the fun and the folly of its owner. But, oh, horrible! what is that on the edge of vision, in the dim and hazy distance; it comes forward, bounding, turning, and bellowing, fearful and paralysing; it is the bull himself escaped from his fold, and maddened by the smoke and blazing atmosphere. He comes down upon the charge, tail erect, and head down, tossing all that is solid under his feet, and looking through the scattered earth with eyes glaring as well as reflecting fire. Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Wallace, Wellington never entered a field of battle with such a terrific presence. He seems as if he had just escaped from a Roman or Spanish arena. He is desperately infuriated; and, wo be to him who shall be overtaken by this muscular tornado in his weakness and his fears! We are off! *diffugimus!* We are nowhere to be found. One has made for a distant wall surrounding the heather park, and is in the act of climbing it. The bull is in full chase, armed with two short but powerful horns. The fugitive has just laid hold of an upper stone to assist his ascent; but the faithless help has given way; stone and he are lying alongside of the dike. The bull is in full scent. The noise has directed him. He nears—he nears—he nears! My God! the urchin’s life is not worth two minutes’ purchase.

“Now, do thy speedy, Arnot Wull—
’Twill take it all to clear the bull!”

Bravo! the summit is gained; the feet of the pursued are seen flying in mid air; he has sprung from the summit at least twenty feet; but the whole weight of the pursuing brute is upon the crazy structure; it gives way with a crash, and down rush stones over stones, and the poor maimed, bruised brute over all. What! Mr Bull! are you satisfied?—why not continue the sport? But the game is up; Will has regained his mother’s dwelling, and now lives to record this wonderful, this all but miraculous escape. Catch me setting muirburn again!

I was very unwilling, at the age of nine, to be sent to school—I had formed for myself a home society with which I was perfectly satisfied; but the decree had gone forth, and to school I must go, to learn Latin, conducted by a scholar of some standing. I had three miles to walk, but I would have wished them ten. Shakspeare shews the characters with whom time gallops, and, amongst others, with a thief who is to be hanged on a certain day—he might have mentioned a school-boy, with shiny morning face, going unwillingly to school. When I came within sight of the large, many-windowed building, my heart beat sorely with alarm. All was new to me, the boys, the masters, the house, the grounds around it—in fact, I was about to pass into a new state of being. I was bursting the shell and com-

ing forth into real life. Hitherto I had seen nobody but the herd-calls, the Gibson family, my mother and *her* aunts. I was exceeding smart and mischievous, no doubt; but my sphere of operations was confined; now it was about to be enlarged—I must face three hundred boys and girls in the park or school play-ground of Wallacehall. All eyes would be turned upon me; my very dress would undergo a scrutiny; nor would I easily escape the seasoning welcome, a hearty drubbing: all this I anticipated, and all this and more I soon experienced. When I set up my face in the play-ground about half-past eight, (nine being the school hour,) all was commotion. Alas! how many are now motionless who were then active—*still* who were then vociferous—*cold* whose hearts were then beating warm and buoyant! When the disk of my countenance appeared at the entrance into the park or play-ground, I was immediately smoked. One fellow came up with the most affected good-nature, and hoped my *miter* was with me. I would be in great danger, he said, without her. A second one bid me tie my shoe, and, whilst I was stooping, hauled me heels over head. I had not fairly recovered my natural position, when I was hit on the side of my head with a ball, till my eyes glanced fire; anon, the drive, the crowd, the scramble carried me along with it completely off my feet. I was pelted, bruised, buffeted, and even kicked. Human nature could stand it no longer—my spirit, even that of the Devil, was awakened within me—I struck out around me with all my might, and at random—somebody's nose happened to come in the way of my knuckles, and it bled; he struck back again, and the blood sprang from my lips. A ring was formed—to it we went—I, running in upon him head and shoulders, “knees, and elbows, an’ a,” laid him flat; unfair play was proclaimed—my antagonist was raised; but he was pale and breathless; he said he was *hearted*, and had almost fainted; so I got a cheap victory, and eternal glory! I took my place amongst the boys, unmolested and respected in future. I would twaddle through a pretty decent volume, about public and private education, and everybody but my bookseller would think I was speaking sense; but I will spare my reader and myself, and only add, in one sentence, that a public seminary, well-conducted, is the best of all schools *for the world*—preparation for the buffetings, kickings, and jostlings of life.

THE SUICIDE'S GRAVE.

THE suicide's grave—where is it? It is at the meeting or crossing of three public roads; the body has been thrust down, under the darkness of night, into a coffinless grave. The breast, formerly torn and lacerated by passions, has lately been mangled into horrid deformity by the pointed stake; and the traveller, as he walks, rides, or drives along, regards the spot with an eye of suspicion, and blesses his stars that he is a living man. The suicide's grave—where is it? On the bare and cold top of that mountain which divides Lanark from Dumfriesshire. There you may see congregated the hoody crav, and the grey gled, and the eagle—but they are not congregated in peace and in friendship; they are fearful rivals, and terrible notes do they utter as they contend over the body of her who was fair, and innocent, and happy! Alas, for Alice Lorimer! Her story is a sad one; and it would require the pen of a Sterne or a Wilson to do it justice. But the circumstances are of themselves so full of mournful interest, that, even though stated in the most simple language, they cannot fail, I should think, to interest—nay, I will say it at once, to excite sympathy and pity; for why should we not pity the unhappy and unfortunate? They are pitied in poverty, in obscurity, in sickness, in death? Why should not we even pity the guilty and abandoned? They are pitied

in prison, on the day of trial, and, most of all, in the hour of execution. There—even there—on that platform, the murderer himself obtains that sympathy which we refuse to the suicide. He who has only ruined, destroyed himself, is held in greater abhorrence than the man who has ruined innocence, and even murdered the unhappy mother and unborn babe. Away with such unjust and ungenerous distinctions! Away, and to the highway and to the mountain top, and to the raven, and the falcon, and the eagle, with the seducer and the murderer; and let the poor suicide's grave, in future, be in consecrated ground, where remembrance may soon overlook his woes and his very existence. Let him sleep unknowing and unknown in the churchyard of his fathers. Alice Lorimer I myself knew—I was intimately acquainted with her—I was a companion and a favourite. In frosty weather we have frequented the same slides, and, when Alice was in danger of falling, have caught her in my arms; we have hopped together for hours, playing at beds, and I even made Alice privy to all my birds' nests. Hers was indeed a playful but a gentle nature. Her heart was light, her voice clear and cheerful, and her whole affections were engrossed by an only surviving parent, a widowed father. Alice was his first born and his last. Her mother had given her life at the expense of her own; and her father, a shoemaker in the village of Croalchapel, devoted his whole spare time to the education of Alice. Often have I seen him, with the shoe on the last, and the elshun in his hand, pursuing his daily labours; but listening attentively all the while to Aly's readings. It was thus the child was taught to read the Bible, to say her prayers, and ultimately to make her father's dinner and her own. Their cottage stood at what was termed the “head of the town,” on a sunny eminence looking to the west; behind it were the shade and the shelter of many trees, of the wide spread oak, the tall ash, and the sweetly scented birch. On Sabbath afternoons, John Lorimer might be seen with his beloved child, clean and neatly dressed, ascending to the top of the Bormoors braes; and, from the green summit of the eminence, looking abroad over a landscape, certainly not surpassed by any which has yet come under the writer's observation. On his one hand lay the worn and silver-clasped Bible, from which portions of the gospels were occasionally read, and on the other reposed Poodle, a little wire-haired dog of uncommon natural parts, which had been greatly improved by education. Poodle could bark, and do all manner of things. His eyes would “glisten in friendship, or beam in reply.” His nose was a platform, from which many little pieces of bread had been tossed up into the air, and afterwards snapped. He was all obedience to little Alice in particular; and, at her bidding, would do anything but swim—he had, somehow or other contracted an aversion for the water, probably referable to some mischievous boys having one day thrown him into Closeburn Loch.

Alice and I went to school together. Her father's cottage lay directly in my way, and I called daily for the sweet girl. The other boys laughed at me, and made a fool of me, and asked me if I had seen Alice this morning. I could not stand this; for I revered the little innocent lamb—so I hit the Mr Impertinence a blow in the stomach, which sent him reeling over several benches. I was no more taunted about Alice Lorimer. There were a number of older and less feminine girls at the school at this time. At play-hours these congregated by themselves behind the school, whilst the boys occupied the play-ground in front. Alice was one day severely handled by a neighbour's daughter, who had fixed a quarrel on her, and then beat her severely, calling her all manner of names, and, amongst others, honouring her with my own. I found the poor child—for I was a few years older—in tears, as we met in the Castle-wood on our way home. It was with difficulty

that I drew, bit by bit, the whole truth from her; and I resolved to punish, in one way or other, the rude and ill-hearted aggressor in this matter. I could not think of punishing her myself; but I got Jean Watson, the servant-maid of the factor's clerk—a kind of haverel, who sometimes threw me an apple over the hedge in passing—I got her to catch the culprit after dark, and to chastise her in her own way. I know not how it was effected, but it produced loud screams, and much merriment to me; for I was lying all the while *perdu* on the other side of the hedge. Tibby Murdoch was a most revengeful person—quite the Antipodes to sweet Alice Lorimer. She was the daughter of a quarryman, who had come, only a few years before, to reside in the place, and work at the Laird of Closeburn's lime-works. How difficult it is for poor blind mortals to see the consequences of their actions! Had I then fully perceived what this act of retaliation was to lead to—what dismal consequences were to follow—I would rather have sunk at once into perdition than have been concerned in the affair. Tibby Murdoch's father was a brutal and a passionate man; and, understanding from his daughter how matters stood, and that poor Alice Lorimer had been the cause of his daughter's disaster, he left his work at mid-day, and, taking a horse-whip in his hand, entered the shoemaker's shop, and, not finding Alice, without more ado, he proceeded to apply it to John Lorimer's shoulders. John Lorimer was a little, but a strong and well-made man; and, though the other was tall, bull-headed, and extremely athletic, John immediately threw aside his instruments of labour, which he felt it was dangerous to use on the occasion, and closed at once with the enemy. The struggle was severe; but John Lorimer, having got a hold of Murdoch about the middle, fairly lifted him off his feet, and dashed him down on the floor. Murdoch's strength, however, was superior to John's; and he contrived to roll over upon his enemy, and at last to thrust his head immediately under a grate, which stood in a corner of the shop, containing live coals for melting some rosin, which was about to be used. The crucible, with the melted and boiling rosin, was upturned; and, unfortunately, the whole contents were spread over John Lorimer's face—he was dreadfully burned; but, what was worst of all, he lost the sight of one eye by the accident, and was very materially injured in the other. On an investigation by the proper authorities, Murdoch was convicted of the assault, and imprisoned for twelve calendar months. During his imprisonment, revenge upon poor Lorimer was his constant theme; and, when the time expired, he removed to the parish of Keir, and found employment in a lime-work belonging to Dr Hunter of Barjarg. He was still, unfortunately, within an hour's walk of Croalchapel, and lay, like a cat in a corner, watching his prey. In the meantime, John Lorimer, though greatly deformed in his countenance, recovered the use of one eye, and pursued his quiet and useful labour as formerly. As his daughter Alice advanced in years, she grew in loveliness and virtue. At twelve years of age, she became her father's housekeeper; and conducted herself in that capacity with surprising sense and prudence. It was at this time that I left school for college; and I spent the last night with Alice Lorimer. I was then a lad of sixteen, and she, as I have said, was twelve. What had I to do, in the Castle-wood, by moonlight, and late after her father had gone to rest, with Alice Lorimer! Gentle reader, have a little patience, and exercise a little Christian charity, and, upon my honour, I will tell you all! But, in the first place, I must know your sex, and whether or no you have ever been sixteen years old. If your sex corresponds with my own, and your information on the other subject is equal to my own, then you will understand the thing completely. I was then as innocent as it is possible for a youth of sixteen to be; nay, I was absolutely shy

and bashful to a great degree, and would have shrunk from any advances, even to innocent familiarity, with the other sex. But I was not in love with Alice Lorimer. True, she preferred my company to that of any other person, save her dearly beloved father; true, she sat on my knee, as she did on that of her parent, unconscious of any different feeling in the two positions; but we never talked of love; I would as soon have thought of talking of our being king and queen; and as to Alice, her friendship for me was as pure as is the love of angels. She could not think of parting with me—of perhaps (and she burst into tears) never seeing me again. I must write to her—and I must come back and see her, and talk funnily to her father, who liked a joke—and I must—I forget how many "musts" there were; but they lasted till half-past one o'clock. I parted with her at her father's door. I never saw her again!

I was coming down Enterkin late in a fine moonlight night in the spring of 1806. I was on my way to join a family in Galloway, where I long acted in the capacity of tutor. I had then attained my twenty-first year; and I chanced to be calculating—as I expected seeing Alice Lorimer on the following day—what her age must be. Let me see, said I, so audibly that I started at my own utterance, as did a little pony I rode; and what followed was the sum of my reflections. I calculated, by the common rule of proportion, that, if Alice was twelve when I was sixteen, she would be seventeen now that I was twenty-one. Seventeen! I repeated, just seventeen!—and I urged on the pony instinctively, as if hastening towards Croalchapel. But I had been five years at Edinburgh at College. What a change had come over the spirit of my dreams during that period! I had had to contend with fortune in many ways; had been often disappointed, and sometimes driven almost to despair; again I had prospered, got into lucrative employment, become a member of speaking societies, distinguished myself by talking sense and nonsense right and left. I had spent many merry evenings in Johnie Dowie's; and had seen Lady Charlotte Campbell and Tom Sheridan in a box at the Theatre. In fact, I was not now the same being I was when I left for College; and I felt that, however fair and faultless Alice Lorimer might be, she could never be mine—I could never be hers; our fortunes were separated by a barrier which, when I went to College, I did not clearly perceive. In fact, my ambition now taught me to aim at the bar or the church; and I knew that, for years to come, I must be contented with a single life, which, in Edinburgh in particular, I had learned to endure without murmuring. Yet, I thought of poor Alice with most kindly feelings, and had some secret doubts upon the propriety of my exposing myself in her presence to a revival of old times and former feelings. In this tone of mind, I was jogging on, with half a bottle of Mrs Otto's (of Leadhills) best port wine under my belt, and endeavouring to collect some rhymes to the word Lorimer; but either the muse was unpropitious, or the word, like that mentioned in Horace, refused to stand in verse; it so happened that I had given up the effort, and was about to dismiss the subject altogether, when I discovered, near the bottom of the pass, a number of figures advancing upon me in an opposite direction. As they came up the pass, under a meridian moon, I could discover that they carried something on a barrow, which, on nearer inspection, I found to be a coffin. I drew my pony to the side of the road, lifted my hat reverentially, and the party, consisting of upwards of twenty, passed in solemn silence. The incident was a little startling, and somewhat unnatural, not to say superhuman; for, why were these people carrying a coffin up the long and narrow pass which separates Lanark from Dumfriesshire, so late at night, and in such mysterious silence? A thought struck me, which contributed not a little to ease my mind in regard to supernaturals: were they a company of smugglers from Bowness, taking this method

of carrying forward their untaxed goods to Lanark and Glasgow? Ruminating on this subject, and laughing inwardly at my own ingenuity and discernment, I arrived at last at Thornhill, where I remained for the night. Next morning, I reached Croalchapel, on my way to my birth-place. I went up to that very door at which I had parted with Alice, some five years before, and endeavoured to open it; but it was shut and locked. I looked in at the end-window, above the fireplace; but there was neither fire nor inhabitant—all was silence. My heart sank within me; and a neighbour, who saw my ignorance and mistake, advertised me that both parent and child were no more; and that Alice Lorimer was *buried!*—here he hesitated, and seemed to retract the expression—"at least," said he, "committed to the earth, last night!"

"Was she not buried by her father, in the burial-ground of the Lorimers of Closeburn?" said I, hastily, and in an agitated tone. The man looked me in the face attentively, and, probably then for the first time recognising me, waved his hand, burst into tears, and left me. I hastened to the home of my fathers, half-distracted. My mother still lived and enjoyed good health—from her I learned the following particulars.

John Lorimer's sight, she said, served him for a time, during which he wrought as usual, and his daughter grew to be a tall and a handsome woman; but at last it began to fail, and he would put the elshun into a wrong place, or thrust it into his hand. Alice perceived this, and was most anxious to provide for her father, under this irremediable calamity. She took in linen and bleached it on the bonny knove among the gowans; she span yarn, and sold it at Thornhill fairs; in short, she did all she could to support herself and her father in an honest and honourable way. But it was a severe struggle to make ends meet. In the meantime, she had had several offers of marriage; but refused them all, as she could not think of leaving her poor blind parent alone and helpless, and none of her lovers were rich enough to present a home to a supernumerary inmate. One evening, whilst, after a severe day's labour, she was sitting with old Poodle (her constant companion, but now likewise blind) by the fire, Mr John Murdoch made his appearance. Her father had gone early to rest in the shop end of the house, and did not know of the man's visit. He came, he said, as a repentant sinner, to relieve her necessities. He had occasioned her father's blindness, and he was glad to be made the instrument of bringing some pecuniary relief. Thus saying, he put into her hands a five-pound note, and, without waiting for a reply, took his departure. This startled poor Alice not a little; she looked at the money, then thought of the man, and again listened to see if her father was sleeping—at last, she put the note into her chest, determined not to make use of it unless in case of necessity. The factor, who had hitherto been lenient, became urgent for the rent. There were two years due, and the five-pound note exactly covered the debt; away, therefore, it went into the factor's hands, and poor Alice returned thanks, on her knees, to Heaven, that had sent her the means of keeping from her father the knowledge of their situation.

In a few days, Murdoch found her at the washing green, and entered more particularly into the history of the money. He said it had been sent by one who had seen and admired her. He was on a visit at Barjarg, the proprietor being his uncle. He was the son and heir of a very rich man, not expected to live many months. He was determined to please himself in marrying, having observed great misery arise from adopting a contrary plan; and he wished, in fine, to cultivate a further acquaintance with Alice, to whom he had sent another five-pound note in the meantime. In short, after exhibiting great reluctance to agree to a secret interview, and after having again and again tried to get

words to communicate the whole matter to her father, a young gentleman of gaudy and genteel appearance made his way out of the adjoining wood, and was introduced by Murdoch, as young Johnstone of Westerhall. Few words passed—poor Alice was quite nonplussed—she felt that she was not equal to this awful trial, and yet there was something fearfully pleasant in it. A young man, handsome and rich—her father blind and helpless—her hand quite at her own disposal—and independence and comfort brought to the good man's house for life. Her lover, however, did not press the thing further that time; he took his departure along with Murdoch, and Alice was left once more to her own reflections. These, however, soon informed her that she was on the brink of perdition. She ran at once to her father, and, in a paroxysm of feeling, informed him of all that passed. He reproved her, but gently, for her having devoted the money to the purpose which she mentioned; informed her that he was richer than she supposed, for he had just five pounds, which her sainted mother had put into his hand on the marriage day; and that he was keeping and had kept it sacred against the expenses of his funeral. He would now willingly give it to recover their house, and to free her from all temptation to sin. Alice wept; but she felt comforted in the assurance that, by repaying the money, and breaking off all connection with Murdoch and Johnstone, she was doing the right and the safe thing. Accordingly, she went to bed with a satisfied mind, determined next day to find out Murdoch's dwelling, and have everything settled to her father's advice and her own wish. She dressed herself in her best; and set out, soon after breakfast, for Barjarg Castle, never to see her father again.

She was betrayed, by the revengeful Murdoch, to a dissipated, a heartless debauchee; was carried by force, betwixt Murdoch and him, in a chaise to Dumfries; and lodged by Johnstone in convenient quarters. Every art was used to reconcile her to her situation; but all in vain; she stood her trials nobly; detected the old game of a private marriage; and afterwards refused to be united to Johnstone upon any terms whatever. But, in the meantime, poor John Lorimer missed his daughter, and immediately guessed the cause of it. Tibby Murdoch, took care to inform him, for his comfort, that Alice had run away with the young Laird of Westerha', and, giggling and laughing all the while, that they were living very comfortably and lovingly in Dumfries. The blind man knew this to be all a lie; but he knew enough to kill him; he knew that his daughter was young and beautiful—that a villain had been endeavouring to inveigle her—that a still greater villain, Murdoch, had betrayed her—and that, in a word, she was now a poor dishonoured woman. He knew, or thought he knew all this, and was found dead next morning in his bed. The doctors said he died of apoplexy—if it was, it was a mental apoplexy! Tired with fruitless efforts to gain his purpose, Johnstone at last permitted Alice to depart. In a few hours, she was at her father's house; but it was desolate and silent.

A paper, which was put into my hands, was evidently written by Alice. She expressed her determination to follow her dear father into another and a better world, and hoped heaven would forgive her. It was her funeral I met at Enterkin. Hers was

"The poor suicide's grave."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. X.—THE DIVER AND THE BELL.

I HAVE, in former papers, exhibited various states of the mind and body of the wonderfully constructed creature, man; but I have chosen, for obvious causes, to limit myself to those cases where the two mutually operate upon each other, in such a manner as to bring out startling characteristics, which, by many, are scarcely believed to belong to our nature. I am now to exhibit a case of a different kind from any I have yet given to the public; one, where an extreme love of mental excitement by extraordinary sights and positions, produced a species of disease, which we have no name for in our nosology. The individual was a Mr Y——, a gentleman of fortune, who came to reside in the town where I practise. When I first visited him, I found him a poor emaciated skeleton, sick of the world, dying of *ennui*, thirsting after morbid excitements, yet shuddering at the recollection of what he had witnessed. I saw at once that he was a victim of some engrossing master passion, that had fed upon the natural feelings and sentiments, till his whole soul was under the power and operation of the presiding demon; and got him to give me an account of the manner in which he became enthralled.

“Even now, he began—and he trembled as the thoughts he was to evolve recurred to him, even now, though it is fully two years since I was placed in one of the most extraordinary situations in which man was ever doomed to be, I cannot call up again the ideas and sensations which then occupied my mind, without trembling, and endeavouring to fly, as it were, from myself, and, by seeking for natural thoughts among natural appearances and converse, rear up again the belief that I am a regularly organized being, capable of being again happy among the sons of men. But the thought still haunts me as a spectre, that I may be again, by some other cause, not less fortuitous than that which then took me out of the region of experience, precipitated, in spite of all my care, into some new position, where the feelings which we are led to consider as a part of nature, may be so entirely changed that no new world we are capable of conceiving any notion of, could possibly produce a more extraordinary disruption of all the old workings of the brain. It is a fearful thought, but one seldom entertained by the slaves of experience. Changes occur daily to all men; but, in the general case, every mere worldly position, of ever-changing circumstances, possesses so much of the form and character of some prior situation, that the mind is soon reconciled to the idea of a variety that is composed of a mere mutation of the mixture of old elements of thought and feeling. The mind, looked upon as a microcosm peopled by the representations of things that be—of the past and possible, of the future and probable—is held to be our own little world, with which, and all its inhabitants, we are or may be familiar; and we forget that there are recesses in it, or capabilities within it, that may contain or produce such things that are as new as striking, as horrible as if they were the creatures of an unknown power, out of elements

we never saw or heard of, and acting on some medullary conformation not belonging to man at all. A sane person may then, living and acting in the world, be for a time mad, but with the difference, that, while ordinary maniacs know not their condition, he may be conscious of a thinking identity, while all his thoughts seem to be imposed upon him by other powers than those that regulate this sphere, and he is himself, what he was, but placed in a new world, and acted on by new impulses at which he shudders, but which he is sternly bound to receive and feel. What a view does this open up to the state of man in this lower world!—and how much is there in it of a cause of humiliation and trembling. I am myself, from what I suffered, altogether a changed being; having no faith in the stability of things; conceiving myself placed among dangerous rocks and precipices, from which, in the next moment, I may fall, I know not where; and eyeing with doubt and dismay even the most composed and settled of all the circumstances of life. He is a happy man who is doomed to pass from the cradle to the grave, without having cause to *experience* the faithlessness of experience and who has only read of those dreadful disruptions of the mind and feelings, that scatter the old elements, in order that some new consolidating power may throw them into forms and combinations a thousand times more horrible than all the creation of dark brooding incubus.

Like most other men of an ardent and imaginative temperament, I was dissatisfied with the dull routine of ordinary experience. I used to feed my fancy with creatures of the possible, and, without the aid of artificial stimulants of the brain, I often conjured up imaginary beings and predicaments, which had a charm for me, I cannot very well explain or account for. I cared little for dreams, or the artificial combinations produced by narcotics; they had too little of reality for me; and I never was satisfied with a mere effort of the fancy, where the judgment was entirely in abeyance, or at least mocked by what it had no control over. In the world around me, I found food for my appetite; and whatever I saw or heard of the *real*, I wrought upon in my solitary moments, till I produced creations, that, being actually within the limits of the possible, I could survey with the satisfaction that I was contemplating what might or would be actually experienced in some future stage of the world. Yet it is a fact—and no one who knows anything of morbid indulgences of this kind can doubt it—that it is questionable, even to myself, whether, upon the whole, I ever derived any real pleasure from these moods of the mind. The imaginary positions I loved most, were generally of the painful kind; and the greater the sufferings of the personages concerned in my positions of combined circumstances, the more was my propensity gratified. From this morbid state of excitement, I was, of course, often precipitated, by the mere decay of the cerebral energy that fed it; and when I was forced again to contemplate and mix with the common affairs of life, I felt the contrast operate to the disadvantage of even the most stirring incidents that are daily befalling mankind. I was, indeed, much in the position of those who stimulate the fancy by extraneous applications; and all the boasted efforts of judgment, I tried to mix

up with and control the workings of my fancy I found were but a species of delusive energies, to take myself out of a class of dreamers I heartily despised. I was, in fact, just as complete a visionary as they—with this difference, that I thought I required to satisfy the condition of a waking judgment, that, after all, had very little to do in the matter.

There was, however, one peculiarity of my character that is not found among my class of visionaries. I was always anxious to throw myself into situations that, being new and wonderful, might supply my mind with a species of experience, from which, in my after moods, I might draw, as from a real source, all the *substrata* of my creations. I visited asylums, executions, and dissecting-rooms; accompanied Mr —, the aeronaut, in his ascent from Manchester; when on the Continent, I stood below the Falls of Terne, and descended into that hell upon earth, the mines of Presburg; yet I must avow that I was a coward; and the very experiences I courted, I often trembled at, not only at the time when the objects were busy with my senses, and sending their influences through my nerves to my brain, but afterwards, when I called up the images to my mind, and threw them into the forms that obeyed the creative power of my fancy. I was also, in some degree, peculiar in caring little for the works of fictioneers; and, if I were to try to account for this, I would trace the cause to the same disposition of mind that led me to despise all artificial modes of stimulus. The fancies of other men roused my scepticism; while my own, founded always on experience, and never going beyond the province of the possible, seemed to me to possess a reality sufficient to satisfy the conditions of my deluded judgment. It had been fortunate for me that I had been less exclusive in my resources of gratification of my propensity; and how dearly I paid for the foundations of my imaginative flights, may too soon be made apparent to those who follow me in my narrative, to be benefited, I trust, from my errors.

I had nearly exhausted all my stock of real perceptions, and was beginning to be forced to recombine my old thoughts, so as to produce new associations of the strange and wonderful, when I accidentally met with Mr W—, a gentleman well known in the world of experimental science by the improvements he made on the diving-bell, in addition to the contributions of Rennie and Spalding. I was then living at E—, and he was on his way to Portsmouth, to superintend the workings of a bell that had been sent thither for the purpose of recovering the specie contained in the ship A—, which had been sunk on her return from South America. He described to me the construction of the bell, the manner in which it was worked, and the many extraordinary sights that the divers saw in the course of their submarine operations. I told him that I had accompanied Mr —, the aeronaut, in his ascent from Manchester, and had often felt a strong desire to reverse my former flight, and descend into the great deep, to see its wonders, and compare my sensations with those I had already experienced in the air. He told me that my wish might easily be gratified; adding that, although he had never been beyond the top of a steeple, he could take it upon him to assure me, that the feeling of vastness and sublimity produced by an aerial ascent, was almost in direct contrast to the sensations of the diver—the one being comparable to the effects produced by the enlarged views of generalization, indulged in by speculative ontologists—and the other, to those that result from the inductive process of searching into the physical arcana of nature. He was not aware of the bent of my mind, or his comparison might have been made more suitable to the feelings of one who cared far less for science than the monstrous wonders of thaumatology; but he had said

enough, or rather the mere mention of the subject was sufficient to fire my fancy; and, after he left me, I brooded continually of the subject of the bed of the great deep—that world unexplored by man, where strange creatures obey laws unknown to us, and feed on the dead bodies of those who relentlessly pursue them; where the bones of the men of distant nations meet and cross each other—those of the sons of science and those of the unlettered negro, bound together by tangled sea-weed—orbless skulls, the receptacles of unclassified reptiles, and lying on the treasures that the living man sighed to bring home, as the reward of his toils in foreign lands; and where the very mystery of the unexplored recesses throws a green shadow over the strange inhabitants and things of the earth, buried there for countless ages, that makes the whole watery world like a vision of enchantment. I had found a new source of unthought-of reveries, that would supply my enraptured hours with aliment according to my wishes. The objects to be seen within the short space circumscribed by the bell, or comprehended within the range of its lights, could not be many; but there was the new mode, as it were, of existence—the breathing under water, the living in the element of the creatures of the deep, and all the multifarious sensations that would spring up in the mind and body, as if some new power of life and feeling penetrated to the very well-springs of existence.

A letter from Mr W— soon afterwards invited me to Portsmouth, from which I was then not far distant. The divers had been for some time busy; a great part of the wreck had been laid open, and some curious discoveries had been made, and treasures recovered, which inspired the workmen with ardour. On the following day, I was at the scene of operation. When I went on board of the lighter, from which the bell was suspended, I examined the apparatus. The bell was then down, and the men stood holding the crane, and listening attentively to hear the signals that were, every now and then, coming from the divers. At a little distance, was the apparatus of the air-pump, which several other workmen were busily engaged working. The whole scene was calculated to produce an extraordinary impression on a beholder. The sky was hazy; the air thick and oppressive, from the heat of the sun acting upon the dense medium of a mist that hung on the water; there was not a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the calm deep; and the only sound that was heard was the whizzing of the air-pump, and the clang of the apparatus by which it was worked. There was nothing seen of the bell; it was far down in the bosom of the deep. The chain, by which it was suspended, dipped into the sea and disappeared, carrying the mind with it down to the grim recesses where living, breathing men were buried. Clear as the waters were, the eye could not reach the depth to which the huge living cemetery had descended; and a recoiling feeling, which made the heart leap, followed the effort to trace the chain down, down through the translucent sea. The red sun, struggling through the mist, was reflected in a lurid glow from the surface of the deep. As the air-pump ceased for short intervals, and absolute silence reigned around, a clang, unlike any sounds of earth, came upon the ear—

“As if the ocean's heart were stirred
With inward life, a sound is heard.”

It was a signal from those in the bell; and it seemed as if the sea trembled, and old ocean spoke from the deeper recesses of his soul. The sound struck the ear as something unnatural, or what might be conceived to issue from a sepulchre when the spirits of the dead hold converse in the still night. The signal was answered; and, in a short time afterwards, there were heard three successive strokes quickly repeated—clang, clang, clang. The quickness of the strokes, and the strangeness of the sound coming

whence such sounds are never heard, seemed the doom-peal of these men.

"The sea around me, in that sickly light,
Shewed like the upturning of a mighty grave."

But the sound told other things to the workmen: the wheel began to revolve; and, after many revolutions, the waters began to boil as if moved by a ground swell, and the large black engine appeared rising up like a mighty monster of the deep.

When the bell was fairly suspended above the water, the crane was pulled round, and the heavy appendage was wheeled over the deck of the lighter. There were three individuals in it, seated high and dry upon the *vis-à-vis* seats. There were instruments of various kinds hung round the inside, the uses of which were explained to me. The men told me that a storm, a few days before, had so broken up and removed the wreck, that it would be necessary to pull the lighter a little farther to the eastward. It came out, too, with some indications of terror, which they attempted to conceal, that the dead bodies of those who had perished in the cabin were beginning to make their appearance, now that the hull was broken. Mr W— looked at me askance, as if to ascertain whether that circumstance would have any effect in making me forego my purpose in descending; and, doubtless, he observed me shudder. But he knew me not: the expedition possessed greater and, perhaps, grimmer charms to me on that account; and the horror that passed over me, as I heard the statement of the men, was only an indication that my zeal was stirred by the expectation of food for my depraved appetite.

"Dead men are not the most dangerous enemies of divers," said Mr W—, with a grim smile. "We have sometimes greater reason to be alarmed from inroads of the living inhabitants of the waters. It is not a week yet since the fearful *tenth* signal rung from the deep; and, upon the machine being raised in great alarm by the workers of the crane, it was ascertained that a shoal of finners (some of them fourteen feet long) had passed close by the mouth of the bell, with a noise like the rushing of a mighty army. But the alarm was greater on the side of the creatures themselves; on seeing the bell with the men in it, they lashed their tails with fearful fury, till the waters seemed to boil in the midst of them, and the whole host were enshrined in a thick muddy medium that prevented the divers from seeing an inch before them. The sound, meanwhile, was like that of thunder—snorting, lashing, and shrill cries, produced by some action of their breathing organs, were mixed together; and the confusion into which they were thrown, precipitated many of them on the sides of the bell, which being, at the time, suspended from within five feet of the ground, swung from side to side in such a manner as to rouse the fears of the workmen above before the signal reached their ears. In a short time afterwards, when the bell was raised, we saw the shoal making, with great speed, to the westward, blowing, as they careered onwards, with a loud noise. I never knew of a circumstance of the same kind before; and to-day you will not, I trust, be alarmed by such visitors."

This statement roused my fears, already excited by what I had heard of the dead bodies that lay on the wreck; but I adhered to my purpose. The lighter was moved about twenty feet eastward, and the bell was again swung round to be let down, it being resolved that I should accompany the divers in their next descent. I watched the operations with an interest derived from my expected position in the same circumstances with these fearless men. The huge mass hung in the air, dangling over the smooth surface of the sea; and, the signal being given, was plunged down. In a moment it had disappeared, and a heavy mass of waters rushed on, swelling and boiling in the abyss, that

seemed to have entombed the daring adventurers. The rolling off of the chain in a long succession of coils, and the disappearance of link after link, filled the mind with a shuddering impression of the depth to which they were attaining. The signal was again given; the air-pump began to play and whiz, and my thoughts, burdened with the superstitious fear produced by the narratives I had heard, took a new direction, picturing the men among the floating bodies of the dead mariners, which, among the green lights of the sea, would appear invested with additional horrors—the monsters of the deep playing round them, or feasting upon the decayed members—and numberless crabs, sea urchins, and centipedes, crawling on members once consecrated to beauty. The silence on board the lighter aided my fancy in its gloomy revels; and, when the clang of the hammer on the bell announced the wish of the divers to rise again, I started from a seat on a coil of ropes which I had, in my musings, taken possession of—having been oblivious of the intervening half hour, during which I had been shadowing forth the secrets of the green charnel-house, whose surface lay smiling before me in the lurid glare of the still enshrouded sun.

At last, I was called to take my seat in the bell. One of the men came out to make room for me; but, before I entered, the crane was swung round to the west side of the lighter, as the men reported that a more likely field of investigation lay in that direction, where they had observed a bright body which they took for a mass of glittering specie, probably rolled out of the packages, and lying there from its greater specific gravity. On mounting up into the bell, where the two remaining workmen were refreshing themselves with brandy to recover the play of the lungs, which, in the last descent, had suffered from a deficiency of oxygen, I felt a creeping sensation pass over me, which, in spite of my efforts to be calm and firm, made me tremble perceptibly. This I attributed to the already excited state of my fancy, from the long train of musings I had indulged in over the green deep. In my ascent with the aeronaut, I experienced a sensation in some degree similar to that feeling of lofty awe which accompanies the expectation of the grand impulse of sublimity—*τον σφοδρὸν καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος*; but now the action of the heart seemed tending towards a collapse rather than a swell, and I felt already the chilling effect of the cold element before I had descended into its womb. I looked round me with a nervous eye, that threw the colours of my fancy on even common objects. The dull yolks of glass placed round the sides to give light, pale and lustreless—the iron tools, wet and brown with rust—the black leather flasks of spirits—the big hammer used for signals of distress—were all strange and invested with new characters; and the two men, Jenkins, an Englishman, and Vanderhoek, a German, with sallow countenances, rendered paler than usual by the effects of the confined air, seemed rather to belong to the watery element from which they had emerged, than to the fair and smiling earth. I attempted to look unconcernedly; but the German, as he was lifting his flask to his head, scanned me with a ludicrous gaze, and, whether it was that the brandy had, in some degree, inclined him to a merriment that, in my eyes, seemed like the grin of a demon, or that he wished to let me hear the *ringing* sound of the bell when the human voice echoed within it, I know not; but he accompanied his potations with a stanza of Bürger's famous *Zechlied*:—

"Ich will einst, bei ja und nein
Vor dem Zapfen sterben
Alles, meinen Wein nur nicht
Lass' Ich frohen erben."

And, finishing the verse, he looked again at me, to notice the effect produced on me by the reverberation of the tones,

which, reflected from all sides, mixed as it were in the middle, and loaded the ear with a confused ringing noise, similar to what I once heard when nearly drowned in the Thames. If the man had had any intention to increase my alarm, he could not have taken a more effectual way of compassing his intention; for his language—the true and natural diction of spirits—responded to by the confused ringing echoes of the bell, and acting upon a mind already enervated by the weight of the genius of superstition, appeared to be all that was necessary to complete the alarm which I in vain attempted to conceal.

“All ready, Vanderhoek?” cried Mr W.—

“Ja, ja, herr,” responded Vanderhoek. “Pull away, Crane-meistern.”

And as the men began to work, he dashed carelessly into another stanza of his favourite ballad. I know not if you are acquainted with German; but I cannot resist the desire of gratifying my own ears with a repetition of the sounds of the thrilling consonants, which produced so great an effect upon me on that occasion. His voice was rough and guttural:—

“*Wann der wein in Himmelsclang,
Wandelt mein Geklimper,
Sind Homer, and Ossian,
Gegen mich nur Stumper.*”

I would have called out to the man to cease his singing, had I not been afraid of being set down for a coward. The continued sound within prevented me from observing the motion of the bell, as it gradually swung off the deck; but the increasing novelty of my situation, as I saw myself suspended over the calm sea into which I was immediately to be plunged, fixed my attention, while it increased my nervousness. I would now have retreated, had it been in my power. The calculated knowledge of the process of submersion, and of my absolute safety under the laws of hydraulics, lost so much of its power under the reigning influence of the natural instinctive horror of being plunged into the womb of the ocean, that I thought myself on the eve of being drowned; and the same feeling I had experienced when struggling half-dead with the waters of the Thames took firm hold of me by anticipation. Meanwhile, the German started broken snatches of his song; and the bell was gradually descending; the space of pure light between the rim and the green surface of the sea was growing every minute less and less. It was upon that decreasing circle of air that my eye was most intensely fixed; it grew brighter as the inside of the bell grew darker, till in a moment it appeared like a bright line of gold-coloured light.

“There,” said Jenkins to me, in a loud tone. “That is the last glimpse. This is the most trying moment for inexperienced divers, when the last beam of day is extinguished.”

I could not reply to him. The circle had disappeared; the water was below our feet, we were partially submerged. I looked up to the yolks of glass, but the light that struggled through them was so pale and sickly that I turned my eyes to the sea below me as a relief to my confined vision. We were now fast descending—one by one the glass lights were changed from their dim paleness to a green hue, the same as that of the sea below us, and, in an instant after, I heard a loud whizzing, which was produced by the displaced body of waters rushing impetuously into the void made by the descending bell. The sound made me instinctively turn my head upwards, as if I had been in the attitude of addressing the king of the heavens, whom I had left in the regions of upper air. I grew dizzy, and thought I would have fallen from the bench, down into the bottom of the sea. My nervousness made me grasp firmly the plank, as my only means of safety from what I conceived to be impending destruction. Whether that sound then

ceased, or that my hearing became more obtuse, I know not, but the first thing, after a few minutes, that I was conscious of, was the grasp of the hand of Jenkins, who held me firm by the arm, and the guttural sounds of the German, as he still carelessly sung detached lines of his ballad. On looking up, the green lights swam in my eyes, but the whizzing sound had greatly ceased, and I directed again my gaze to the apparently bottomless element below, which was as calm as glass, and through which I saw, flying past the mouth of the bell, innumerable fishes, and, as they darted off, reflecting a thousand varied hues, in the midst of the green medium through which they passed.

The continued descent was made apparent to the eye, by the progress of the run of the bell through the water, and indicated, in another form, by the creaking sound of the crane on the lighter, which, rendered indistinct by the medium of the water, seemed to come from miles distant. Though partially recovered from the first effects of the submersion, I had no proper idea of time, and there was no mode of measuring the depth. It seemed to me as if we had descended many furlongs, though we had not got beyond ten fathoms; and I could not get quit of the idea, though I arranged my thoughts in the process of calculation. Jenkins had now let go my arm, as he saw that I was able to sit without danger of falling; and the German was busy peering through his bushy eyebrows down into the deep, as if he expected soon “to see the land.” I almost instinctively gazed down for the same object, and it was not without an effort at discrimination by the power of my judgment, that I discovered that I was seeking a vision of the bottom of the sea, as if it had been a haven for a shipwrecked mariner in distress. While my eyes were thus fixed on the waters—in which I could see nothing but the swarms of fishes flying past, or reeling in the confusion of terror—I was startled, almost to falling off the bench, by a loud reverberating clang on the side of the bell. My first impression was, that the bell had struck on a rock; and I turned fearfully to seek the eye of Jenkins. He held the large hammer in his hand, with which he had given the stroke. He told me that he wanted more air, and that this was the signal to the workers of the air pump. His eye was fixed on the air holes, with which the pipes communicated. I thought he appeared alarmed; he exchanged a look with Vanderhoek, and the eye of the latter was soon also fixed on the same spot. We were yet still descending, and the German, turning round, pointed down. I followed his finger, and saw a thick, hazy-like appearance, as if the waters were troubled, and masses of long sea-weed brushed against the rim of the bell. Vanderhoek immediately seized the hammer, and rang two loud peels, and the motion downwards ceased. We hung suspended in the sea, I know not how many fathoms down, A loud hissing sound came from the air valves; but it was every moment interrupted, as if some part of the apparatus failed in its continuous energy. The eyes of both Jenkins and Vanderhoek were again intensely fixed upon the holes, and it was too manifest to me, that they both saw something wrong in the working of the air pumps, though they said nothing to me; and, indeed, I was so much affected by their ominous looks, that I could put no question to them.

“Is there not an under current here, Karl?” said Jenkins, attempting to appear composed.

“Ja,” replied Vanderhoek; “see, there is von gut sign. The meer-weeds are drifting to the east; and see, there is von piece of the wreck moving from the west.”

I looked down, and saw the edge of a piece of black timber making its appearance within the verge of the rim of the bell; but, in consequence of the small angle afforded by our pent-up position, we could not observe more than two inches of it. Large bushes of confusedly entangled

sea-weed were brushing past, and, as they stuck about the rim, darkened the interior so much that we could scarcely see each other. These, however, seemed of but small importance to Jenkins, who was evidently still unsatisfied with the working of the pumps, and got upon his feet to examine into the cause of their irregular and interrupted action. It struck me, at this time, that Jenkins' question about the current had more meaning in it than was made apparent to me; and I suspected that he entertained fears that the air tubes had got entangled in some way with the bell chain. His efforts did not seem to produce any greater regularity of action in the tubes: the whizzing noise continued every now and then to be interrupted; and, at one time, it stopped altogether for about a minute. The machinery was working reluctantly, and with a struggling difficulty that was apparent to the eye and ear; but other proofs of a more decided and fearful kind were awaiting us. I felt a painful load at my breast, as if I wanted air; my respiration became quick and unsatisfactory; a swimming of the head came over me, and I could scarcely see my companions without great effort to *ax* my wavering vision. The darkness at the mouth of the bell continued to increase; the piece of the wreck was moving slowly under us, and the weeds were increasing. I could perceive that Vanderhoek was also labouring for breath; and Jenkins, relinquishing his efforts at the air tube mouths, turned, looked wildly at his neighbour, and, staggering down upon the bench, struggled to get hold of the hammer, which, when he grasped it tremblingly, fell out of his hands down into the bottom of the sea.

"In the name of God! what is the meaning of all this, Jenkins?" I cried, in a voice that was choked for want of air.

He lay upon the bench, and gasped, apparently unable to speak; but he looked to Vanderhoek, and pointed to an instrument in the shape of a mattock—shaking his hand, and muttering, indistinctly, "Haste! haste!"

The sign and words were perfectly understood by Vanderhoek, as well as by myself. I looked on, with the intense agony of fear and impeded lungs, and added some irregular and confused signs (for my voice died in my choking throat) to the German to obey the request of his neighbour—but these were unnecessary: the man himself saw the fearful position in which we were placed, with as keen a perception of the danger, and as anxious a wish to remove it, as either of us. He was, however, struggling, for want of air, to a greater extent than either Jenkins or myself. His face was swollen and blue, his mouth open, his eyes protruding from his head, and his breast heaving like one under the weight of the angel of death. Yet he tried to combat the antagonist powers of cruel fate; and, raising his body from the bench, he bent forward to clutch the mattock, with which to give the two clangs that formed the signal to raise us from our water-bound prison. He had to reach over the body of Jenkins, who lay coiled up, almost lifeless from suffocation; and, in his efforts to get at the instrument, he fell down through the mouth of the bell, and stuck fast among the tangled weed. At this very instant, I heard again the sound of the air-pump whizzing in my ears: it came like the music of angels; and, while Vanderhoek hung fast by a rope that was attached to the bench, I felt the inspiring power of the oxygen that came through the air tubes: my breast rose—my lungs inhaled the sweet aliment—I felt strength infused into my blood and nerves—and, raising myself, I laid hold of Vanderhoek; but my energy failed in the effort that exceeded my powers; he fell from my grasp, and plunged over head among the waters and loose weeds by the side of the dark piece of the wreck, that still seemed to move, though almost imperceptibly, to the east. It was a little time before he came to the surface again which satisfied

me that we were still a considerable way from the bottom, notwithstanding of the accumulation of algæ that had deceived us into a contrary opinion. When his head again appeared within the bell, I was struck fearfully by the horrid expression of his face, which, pale before, now looked green and hideous, through the wreaths of weed that hung round his hair. The influx of atmospheric air partially revived his energies for self-preservation; and, laying hold of the rope, he got a clutch of the bench, and clambered up. He seemed shocked by some cause of terror, even greater than the danger to which we were yet exposed.

"Shrecken! shrecken!" he muttered, with difficulty. "There is von corpse of a woman there—there—down in the wreck!"

And he pointed to the black fragment of the broken ship that lay below us.

"That is nothing, man," said I. "Give the signal, if you can. See, the air-pump has stopped again. The men in the lighter know not our peril."

He attempted again to seize the mattock, and succeeded in grasping it; but the small supply of air that had been sent us by the temporary opening of the impeded tube, had been only sufficient to revive us slightly; and the suddenness with which his powers were again prostrated, by the recurring weakness that succeeded the cessation of the supply of the natural aliment of the lungs, prevented him from imparting strength to the signal. He gave one weak blow on the side of the bell, and the instrument fell out of his nerveless hands upon the bench. In a few moments more, he was stretched beside Jenkins. I myself now tried to lift my arms to seize the instrument. I succeeded only in placing my hands upon it—I was unable to grasp it, and fell, with my back on the side of the bell, powerless, and struggling, with open mouth and heaving sternum, for what came not—a breath of living air.

We must, at this time, have been fully twenty minutes under water; and, as it was our intention to have been an hour, there seemed to me no chance of our being drawn up until we had all expired. I saw plainly, by the noises that came from the tubes, that the men conceived they were working regularly; and, so long as no signal was heard, they would work on, ignorant of the dreadful situation in which we lay. I cast my eyes on my companions. They lay like dead men; and my only wonder, now that I can calmly think of the subject, is, that they still kept upon the seats, and did not tumble into the deep. I had scarcely any power of thinking. I sat, writhing under the spasmodic action of suffocation, my eyes fixed in the sockets, my brain swimming, and a burning sensation, like that which attends a paroxysm of brain fever, shooting through the recesses of thought. The recollection of the horrors of that moment is even yet madness. The bell was almost dark, and the green light that came through the yolks of glass, fell faintly on the blue swollen faces of my companions, who, I thought, were dead. I had still power to observe that there was a new feature rising in the horrors of that unprecedented situation of man's sufferings. Was it possible, it may fairly be asked, that fate had it in store to add to these sufferings?

While thus I sat fixed immovably by weakness and despair, I observed that the waters were rising visibly in the bell, probably from the absorption of the small quantity of oxygen that remained in the tainted air of the bell. It had risen up half way between the rim and the seats, and was gradually gaining upon me. A foot more would bring it to the level of where I sat. My feet were already immersed, and the coldness produced by the water, operated in combination with the spasms in my labouring chest to destroy vitality. The black fragment of the wreck rose with the waters, and raised obliquely the side of the bell,

which may have been an additional cause for the rising of the sea within. Through my glazed eye I saw, lying in a hollow of the broken raft, a white figure—probably that seen by Vanderhoek when he fell into the sea. By and by, it became more visible as the waters rose, and I saw that it was the body of a female, who had perished in the vessel. The image of the apparition has haunted me to this hour, and shall do till I die. A part of the dress which she had worn when she perished, still clung to her—about the half of the skirt of a silk gown that had been of some light colour, but had changed to a greenish hue. It was bound to the waist by a sash or belt of a darker shade. Her bosom was bare, and bore the same sickly hue of pale green; her face was placid; the eyes open; but one of the balls had been extracted by some reptile of the deep; her long hair flowed among the weeds, and, hanging from the lobe of the left ear, I saw a clear gem that shone with the brightness of the stone called *aqua marina*. One of the arms had been taken off a little above the elbow; the flesh at the end of the stump appeared bloodless, and bleached to the colour of the skin; and limpets and other kinds of small shell-fish lay or adhered to the cuticle. My feelings recoil from the recollection of the horrors of that apparition; and I fear I may incur the charge of endeavouring to produce an effect by the vulgar mode of harassing the mind with a minute description, too easily effected, of what, for the sake of humanity, should be concealed.

There the body lay in all its green horror. It was rising gradually to my side, within the bell, through the gloom of which the pale skin and light robes sent a sickly gleam. I had no power to move myself away from it. My body was bent so that my face was within a few inches of it; and a slight undulation in the waters that were rising into the bell inch by inch, imparted to the corpse a motion that made it dodge upwards and downwards, as if it made efforts to touch my countenance. All was as silent as death; for the slight agitation of the sea produced no noise. I was gasping for air; and a short period would have put an end to my sufferings, had not the air tubes again begun to send forth slight hissing sounds, and a small portion of the food of the lungs came to afford me sufficient power to contemplate, with greater distinctness and increased agony, all the horrors of my situation. I felt the small boon instinctively as a relief: my breast again opened; I was able to raise my head so as to be more beyond the touch of the floating corpse; and as I lifted it, my eye fell on the flask of spirits that hung within reach on the side of the bell. I now struggled to seize it, and succeeded; but it was with many painful efforts that I got a portion of the liquor poured into my mouth. The half-dead physical powers of my system were, by this application, stimulated into something like vitality, and I listened attentively, while my eye was still riveted on the corpse that lay at my side, to the sound of the tubes. A motion of the right limb of Vanderhoek attracted my attention, and raised a hope that, if the air still continued to be supplied, he would recover; and I knew, too, that, as the bell filled again with the atmospheric supply, the waters would recede. But all my hopes were again prostrated; the valve ceased; the entrance of the air was again stopped; I applied the flask hastily again to my lips before the spasms of suffocation came again upon me, but the power of the spirits seemed to have fled, having no more influence over my system than a draught of water.

Thus was I again precipitated into my former condition of weakness and helplessness—the choking symptoms of suffocation increased again in intensity, and I was under the necessity to lie down on the seat, with my head again on a level with the corpse of the female, that still kept moving and dodging by my side. I was now as powerless to push it away, as I was before to remove myself from it. I felt it touch my skin. Its face was close to mine, and

the pale cold cheek rubbed upon my chin and lips. The glazed eye seemed fixed upon me, and the stump of the torn arm struck upon me as the body moved. A higher undulation sometimes threw her flowing hair over my eyes, where it lay till another movement of the corpse took it off. I would have shut the lids of the protruding orbs that stood fixed in my head, if I had had any power; but I could not—my whole face being swollen, and the muscles as rigid as if fixed in death. I was thus compelled to receive the vision into my mind; and the horror of the touch seemed to cling to the decaying sensibilities, as if it formed a part of them. It is impossible that my sufferings could have lasted many minutes longer, if the air-tubes had been entirely closed; but, as if it had been determined by the stern fates, that I should be suspended for a length of time between life and death, there were kept up, at almost regular intervals, two or three whizzing sounds of the entangled and obstructed apparatus—an indication that small supplies of air were at these moments thrown in upon me. It was only these sounds, the dodging of the pale-green corpse, the touches of its cold skin, the light of its glazed eye, the dark figures of my two companions, and the general gloom of the bell, relieved slightly by the greenish-hued yolks of glass, that I was sensible of perceiving. The internal workings of my mind seemed to have ceased. I had scarcely any consciousness of a conception—the whole cerebral functions concerned in thought and feeling being limited to undefined sensation, that had only a partial connection with the power of external perception.

Even this partial state of consciousness had died gradually away, for, during a short period, I was totally beyond the reach of the power of any external object. There is a blank in my recollection of these touches and visions, that, though scarcely at the time coming within the province of mind, have since been the most vivid perceptions that were ever treasured up in my memory. Yet that period of all but total death was no relief to me. The dim hazy vision of all the horrors around me dawned upon me again, like the shadowy renovations of a fearful dream that has sunk in sleep, and risen again as the troubled fancy regained a portion of its activity. These indistinct shadows of consciousness, as they came in the wake of the physical power that felt the quickening influence of another draft of air, carried more insufferable horrors in their dark forms than had accompanied my more distinct perceptions. They were mere filmy traces, broken and unconnected—exhibiting to me sometimes only the darkness of the bell, sometimes the mere face; occasionally limited to the eye alone, the stump of the arm alone, the ear-ring alone; sometimes merely the two stretched-out forms of the men; and sometimes the green deep, and the tangled seaweed. Then the whole array of *all* the things around me would suddenly flash upon me with a unity and a vividness that produced one gleam of almost entire consciousness—in another moment extinguished—and succeeded by another period of all but death—to be again followed by a succession of the broken fragments of visions, when the living powers were in a slight degree revived. I leave it to physiologists and psychologists to account for these sudden exertions of the reluming powers of the mind in the very lowest state of the dying faculties. We see something of the same kind in the physical economy—moments of strength in the most exhausted weakness—bright glows of the taper of life in the socket of death—a collected unity of power in moments of dissolution, as if the spirit made a last struggle to assert its lost authority over the great archangel. I can speak at least to their horrors—a wretched boon of nature to miserable man, where he can say no more than that he feels—that the boasted energies of the soul seem to be all rolled up in one sensation of undescribable pain.

I was awakened from this state of stupor by a loud

clanking of chains upon the top of the bell; and I heard the sound at the very moment when I felt myself drawing a long breath. I had been unconscious of the working of the air-pump, which must have been going on for some time, though I cannot tell how long. The bell was replenished. I breathed again freely, and became sensible. I looked round me, and saw all things in the same position as formerly. The corpse was still by my side, and my newly awakened horror made me struggle to rise. I succeeded so far as to lean upon my arm, whereby I removed myself some space from the dead body. The rattling of the chains still continued, and I had the power of thinking so far, as to conjecture that efforts were being made to draw up the bell. But new incidents were now in progress. The air had revived Vanderhoek. I saw him stretching out his arms, as if to relieve his chest, which was heaving violently. He drew long inspirations, and struggled to turn himself on the seat. He succeeded, and I saw his face, which was dreadfully swollen, and of a dark livid colour. His eyes were wide open, and the light of life and returning vision seemed to be illumining them. The first perception he was conscious of was the vision of the corpse. His eye-balls turned, fixed upon it, and recoiled from it; and strange guttural sounds, with half articulated words—"shrecklich—shrecken"—were wrung from him. He looked wildly around him, shuddered, and grasped convulsively the bench. Meanwhile, the rattling of the chains on the bell continued, and a sudden jerk almost precipitated me into the sea. The bell had clearly moved; in another moment it shook violently, from another effort to raise it; it appeared to me to revolve; another sudden jerk followed; it rose perceptibly; the water rushed in to fill up the void; the corpse of the woman whirled round in the eddy; and I saw Jenkins' body fall from the bench into the sea, and disappear.

Vanderhoek, who had now recovered his consciousness, uttered a loud cry as he saw his companion sink. The continued fresh air seemed to strengthen him far more rapidly than it did me, and I perceived that he now made violent struggles to lay hold of the mattock. He succeeded beyond my expectation; despair nerved his arm; he clutched the instrument, and rung three successive clangs on the side of the bell. These were probably unnecessary, as it was manifest now that those on the lighter were doing everything in their power to rescue us from our perilous situation. The chains still clanked, and we had ascended perceptibly, though how far I had no means of ascertaining. There was, however, another stoppage, and the German sat with the instrument still in his hand, and his eye fixed on the body of the woman, which, from the continued whirling of the water, rolled round and round, as if it had been placed upon a pivot. After looking thus for a few moments, he started suddenly, and, reaching up his hand, seized wildly another flask that hung near him, drained it to the bottom, and flung away the empty vessel. Some time passed before I felt any further motion upwards; and the large quantity of strong liquor that Vanderhoek had thrown into his still weak body, operated upon him with a quickness that surprised me. He began to get furious, talked incoherently, swung the iron mattock backwards and forwards, and sung stanzas of the "Zechlied." This was a new source of terror to me. He looked wildly at me as if he did not know who I was; swore the oaths of his country, in which the words "teufel, donner, blitzen," rang pre-eminently; and used threats against me, as the cause of all that had occurred to him and his companion. Then he looked at the corpse, and, in a paroxysm of madness, stuck the mattock into its white bosom, accompanying his action with wild oaths. I expected every moment that the next stroke would be on my own head, and sat in readiness to seize the weapon, and, if possible, debili-

tated as I was, to wrench it from his hands. My efforts to calm and pacify him were unavailing. I pointed to the side of the bell, and, in broken accents, for I could yet scarcely speak, told him to ring again; but he did not seem to understand; giving me wild looks, showering broken oaths upon me, and holding up the mattock in a threatening attitude, as if he would cleave my head in twain.

During all this painful period, the air was regularly supplied; but the efforts of those on the lighter had not been able to raise us further. In the midst of Vanderhoek's ravings, I thought I heard a sound above, unlike that of the apparatus by which the bell was wrought. It was a creaking, crashing sound, as if the bell were forcing up some heavy piece of wood, with which it was encumbered. The thought struck me instantly that the cause of all our misfortunes lay in the drifting of some large piece of the wreck over the top of the bell, which had got entangled with the air-tubes and chain, and defied all the efforts of the workmen to raise us. The creaking sound continued, and, mixing with the whizzing of the air-tubes, the grating of the chain, and the roarings and yells of Vanderhoek, made the scene more dismal than it had yet been. I was in danger of my life, but momentarily redeemed, as it were, from the precincts of eternity, every minute, from the fierceness of the raving being beside me; and I could scarcely hope that all those protracted efforts of the workmen, would ever raise us from the immense depth at which we were thus fixed by some great cause. I looked in the placid face of the corpse, and wished that I were as far removed as her spirit was from these complicated evils of the lower deep, and the scarcely less remediable ills of the upper world. But I was soon roused from my dark reverie: a louder crash than I had yet heard sounded over the bell, and produced such an effect upon the excited mind of Vanderhoek, that he roused his body suddenly, and struck a fierce blow at me with the iron instrument he still held in his hand. He had over-calculated his partially recovered strength, and tumbled into the sea along-side of the corpse. I hesitated whether I should aid him in getting up. I saw him struggling and clinging by the garments of the body, which he tore—so tender was the material—into shreds. As his hold gave way, he clutched the body itself, which, sinking with his weight, disappeared, leaving him to clamber for support round the lower part of the benches. I could not see him drown, though I shuddered at the danger which awaited me when he might recover his position. At that very moment, I distinctly felt the bell ascending; and a fierce whirling and boiling of the waters rushing into the void, would in an instant have sucked him down to rise no more, if I had not seized him by the bushy hair of the head. In that position I held him as firmly as my impaired strength would permit. The bell still ascended, and the buoying power of the water kept him swimming, and made him obey my slightest impulse. The submersion and the contact into which he had come with the corpse had manifestly removed the effects of the liquor, and his imploring eye was eloquent in its appeal to me to continue my grasp. This I did while the bell continued to ascend; the light began to increase in the yolks of glass; and the voices of the men in the lighter greeted my ear. In a moment afterwards, I saw the light of the sun shining red through the windows; and in another moment the circle of bright effulgence between the bell and the sea met my enraptured eye. A loud cry of terror came from the workmen as they saw the body of Vanderhoek swimming in the sea. They ceased their process of raising, and swinging the bell to a side, some one got hold of the German, and I let go the grasp of his hair. Two or three more turns of the crane brought the bell on a level with the lighter. I sprung down upon the deck, and fell back in a swoon.

When I recovered, I saw several people standing round me, among whom there was an individual who claimed, for a time, my undivided gaze. He was a tall, handsome individual, dressed in deep mournings. He had a white pocket handkerchief in his hands, which he applied frequently to his eyes; and he looked at me anxiously as he saw me recovering from the effects of the syncope into which I had fallen. He was proceeding to put some questions to me, when Mr W—— interfered, and stated that I ought to be allowed time to collect my energies before my mind was led again into the subject of what I had suffered during the time we were in the deep. I was, accordingly, assisted on shore; and, having been put to bed, slept for several hours so soundly that I do not think a single image of what I had seen and heard during that dismal scene occurred to my fancy; but, when in the act of waking, a confused influx of ideas, all derived from the source of my sufferings, rushed into my mind, and for a few minutes I conceived that I was still in the bell, that I heard the sound of the air tubes, saw Jenkins fall, the corpse lying beside me, Vanderhoek hanging by my grasp of his hair, and all the minutæ of horrors that then encompassed me; a commotion which comes over me often yet, like a species of monomania, when I will start up, and cling to the bedposts, and scream for terror. It being known that I was awake, Mr W—— and the stranger came to me. It was their object to get an account of all that had occurred during my descent. I gave it as nearly as I could recollect, and, when I came to describe the appearance and figure of the corpse of the female, I saw the stranger change colour, his frame trembled, his lips turned pale, and he rose and walked through the room, as if afraid to listen to my narrative.

“What means this?” said I to Mr W——, in a low tone.

“The female, whose body you saw in the bell,” he replied, “was the wife of Mr G——. He stands before you. He was saved from the wreck, and she perished.”

“Good God! and I have already given a part of the shocking detail,” I responded.

The stranger heard me, as he paced the room, returned, and sat down by my bedside.

“I am not satisfied that it was my Agnes,” he exclaimed, in broken accents, while the tears flowed over his cheeks. “There was a waiting-maid along with us—describe her more particularly. *I can listen.*”

As he uttered these words, I could perceive that he contracted his nerves, his hands were clenched, and over his frame there passed a shiver that seemed to mock the resolution to confirm the mind by a mere physical action. I proceeded to give a fuller account of her dress and earrings, the character of her face and figure, so far as I could discover them. Every word seemed to enter his very soul. He turned round again. There was something he wished to say, but he hesitated, trembled, and stammered.

“Was that fair form mutilated?” he asked, at length. “O God! I picture my Agnes torn by monsters of the deep, and hideous urchins resting on her bosom. Yet, why do I ask knowledge that must sit for ever on my heart, and engender visions that in the hours of night must torture my soul, to the end of my pilgrimage in this dark world?”

I hesitated to say more; the orbless socket—the torn stump of the arm—the limpets that clung to her skin—the bosom pierced by Vanderhoek’s mattock, were all before me, and shook my soul. But why should I have added an artificial misery to wretchedness like his? I would not dwell on the subject. The stranger imputed my disinclination to satisfy his morbid desire for information to its true cause. A paroxysm of sorrow seized him. He rose suddenly took his hat, and, covering his face with his white

handkerchief, rushed out of the room. How often have I thought of that individual! I never saw him again; but his image is for ever associated with the vision of that corpse, shining in the sickly green hue of the medium in which it lay. The body was never found; he never saw it. And was it not well for him? What would have been his agony, to have seen the beloved of his bosom as I saw her, to have treasured up in his mind the lineaments of that face, the harrowing minutæ of her mutilated form?

I got an account from Mr W—— of what took place on board of the lighter while the bell was down. It was a long time, he said, before anything was suspected to be wrong, as the men often remain down for an hour without a single signal coming from them. The difficulty of working the air-pumps first roused their suspicions; and when they found that the bell would not respond to the action of the crane, they knew at once that it had got fixed among some part of the wreck. I need not detail their efforts to relieve us; they are possessed of no interest; the result is known; but who shall know, as I experienced, the horrors of that period?”

He put his hand over his eyes, and shuddered. I could do little for an individual thus situated; but I visited him often, more with a view to the benefit of science, than from any hope of rescuing him from the dominion of the power he had, like Frankenstein, created, to satisfy a diseased craving of the mind, and trembled at after it was formed, as he found himself helpless and weak in his energies to exorcise it. The continued brooding of his sick fancy over all the strange forms he had seen, produced, in a still greater degree, a weakness of the mind itself, that is, a weakness as regards the sane condition of the mind; for his imagination, drawing a morbid *pabulum* from his disease, grew stronger and stronger in its capacity to invest the images he gloated over with more fearful characteristics, till often, as I was informed, he started up in the middle of the night, and screamed out that he was in the present act of suffering again all he had already experienced. But what struck me as still more remarkable in this victim, was, that any change that took place upon him for the better, in respect of his physical economy, was, while accompanied by a partial release from the domination of his old fancies, generally attended by a kind of new-born desire for another and a new supply of his stimulant visions. This discovery I made one day, when, as I felicitated myself on having effected a confirmation of his nerves, by the application of a course of tonics, I told him that I myself was on the eve of encountering all the unpleasant feelings attendant upon the performance of a painful operation on a very beautiful patient, whose life might too likely fall a sacrifice to her desire to get quit of a mortal disease. His eye brightened, he held out his hands, and supplicated me to allow him to be present, under the assumed character of a surgeon. My refusal produced disappointment and chagrin; and he often afterwards harped on the cruelty of my resolution to discomfit him. He afterwards went to another part of the country to reside with his relations; and the last notice I had of him was, that he was seen bending his skeleton body over the blackened corpses of several individuals who had been burnt to death in the conflagration of a large dwelling-house in the town where he resided.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RIVAL NIGHTCAPS.

ONE little sentence gave rise to all the disputes of the old philosophers, from Parmenides down to Aristotle, and that was composed of three words, *de nihilo nihil*, (nothing can come out of nothing,) upon which were raised the doctrines of the atomists, incorporalists, epicureans, theists, and atheists, and all the other races of dreamers that have disturbed the common sense, lethargy, or comfort of the world for thousands of years; so that nothing could have better proved the absolute nothingness of their favourite maxim, that nothing could come from nothing, than the effects of that very dogma itself, than which nothing ever made such a stir in the moral world, since it deserved that appellation. But a more extraordinary circumstance is, that, though we every day see the most gigantic consequences result from what may be termed, paradoxically, *less than nothing*, there are certain metaphysical wisecracks who still stick to the old maxim, in spite of their own senses, (even that of feeling,) and declare it to be true gospel. Let them read the tale of real every-day life we are now to lay before them, and then say, if they dare, that it is impossible that anything can proceed from inanity; and, to proceed:—

In the neighbourhood of the suburban village of Bridgeton, near Glasgow, there lived, a good many years ago, a worthy man, and an excellent weaver, of the name of Thomas Callender, and his wife, a bustling, active woman, but, if anything, a little of what is called the randy. We have said that Thomas's occupation was the loom. It was so; but, be it known, that he was not a mere journeyman weaver—one who is obliged to toil for the subsistence of the day that is passing over him, and whose sole dependance is on the labour of his hands. By no means. Thomas had been all his days a careful, thrifty man, and had made his hay while the sun shone;—when wages were good, he had saved money—as much as could keep him in a small way, independent of labour, should sickness, or any other casualty, render it necessary for him to fall back on his secret resources. Being, at the time we speak of, however, suffering under no bodily affliction of any kind, but, on the contrary, being hale and hearty, and not much past the meridian of life, he continued at his loom, although, perhaps, not altogether with the perseverance and assiduity which had distinguished the earlier part of his brilliant career. The consciousness of independence, and, probably, some slight preliminary touches from approaching eild, had rather abated the energy of his exertions; yet Thomas still made a fair week's wage of it, as matters went. Now, with a portion of the honest wealth which he had acquired, Mr Callender had built himself a good substantial tenement—the first floor of which was occupied by looms, which were let on hire; the second was his own place of residence; and the third was divided into small domiciles, and let to various tenants. To the house was attached a small garden, a kail-yard, in which he was wont, occasionally, to recreate himself with certain botanical and horticultural pursuits, the latter being specially directed to the cultivation of greens, cabbages, leeks, and other savoury and useful pot herbs. Of his house and garden altogether, Mr Callender was, and

reasonably enough, not a little proud; for it was, certainly, a snug little property enough; and, moreover, it was entirely the creation of his own industry.

But Thomas's mansion stood not alone in its glory. A rival stood near. This was the dwelling of Mr John Anderson, in almost every respect the perfect counterpart of that of Mr Thomas Callender—a similarity which is in part accounted for by the facts, that John was also a weaver, that he too had made a little money by a life of industry and economy, and that the house was built by himself. By what we have just said, then, we have shewn, we presume, that Thomas and John were near neighbours; and, having done so, it follows, of course, that their wives were near neighbours also; but we beg to remark, regarding the latter, that it by no means, therefore, follows that they were friends, or that they had any liking for each other. The fact, indeed, was quite otherwise. They hated each other with great cordiality—a hatred in which a feeling of jealousy of each other's manifestations of wealth, whether in matters relating to their respective houses or persons, or those of their husbands, was the principal feature. Any new article of dress which the one was seen to display, was sure to be immediately repeated, or, if possible, surpassed by the other; and the same spirit of retaliation was carried throughout every department of their domestic economy.

Between the husbands, too, there was no great good will; for, besides being influenced, to a certain extent, in their feelings towards each other by their wives, they had had a serious difference on their own account. John Anderson, on evil purpose intent, had once stoned some ducks of Thomas Callender's out of a dūb, situated in the rear of, and midway between the two houses; claiming said dūb for the especial use of *his* ducks alone; and, on that occasion, had maimed and otherwise severely injured a very fine drake, the property of his neighbour, Thomas Callender. Now, Thomas very naturally resented this unneighbourly proceeding on the part of John; and, further, insisted that his ducks had as good a right to the dūb as Anderson's. Anderson denied the justice of this claim; Callender maintained it; and the consequence was a series of law proceedings, which mulcted each of them of somewhat about fifty pounds sterling money, and finally ended in the decision, that they should divide the dūb between them in equal portions, which was accordingly done.

The good-will, then, towards each other, between the husbands, was thus not much greater than between their wives; but, in their case, of course, it was not marked by any of those outbreaks and overt acts, which distinguished the enmity of their better halves. The dislike of the former was passive, that of the latter active—most indefatigably active; for Mrs Anderson was every bit as spirited a woman as her neighbour, Mrs Callender, and was a dead match for her in any way she might try.

Thus, then, stood matters between these two rival houses of York and Lancaster, when Mrs Callender, on looking from one of her windows one day, observed that the head of her rival's husband, who was at the moment recreating himself in his garden, was comfortably set off with a splendid new striped Kilmarnock nightcap. Now, when

Mrs Callender saw this, and recollected the very shabby, faded article of the same denomination—"mair like a dish-cloot," as she muttered to herself, "than onything else"—which her Thomas wore, she determined on instantly providing him with a new one; resolved, as she also remarked to herself, not to let the Andersons beat her, even in the matter of a nightcap. But Mrs Callender not only resolved on rivalling her neighbour, in the matter of having a new nightcap for her husband, but in surpassing her in the quality of the said nightcap. She determined that her "man's" should be a red one; "a far mair genteeler thing," as she said to herself, "than John Anderson's vulgar stripped Kilmarnock." Having settled this matter to her own satisfaction, and having dexterously prepared her husband for the vision of a new nightcap—which she did by urging sundry reasons, totally different from those under whose influence she really acted, as she knew that he would never give into such an absurdity as a rivalry with his neighbour in the matter of a nightcap: this matter settled then, we say, the following day saw Mrs Callender sailing into Glasgow, to purchase a red nightcap for her husband—a mission which, we need not say, she very easily accomplished. Her choice was one of the brightest hue she could find—a flaming article, that absolutely dazzled Thomas with the intensity of its glare, when it was triumphantly unrolled before him.

"Jenny," said the latter, in perfect simplicity of heart, and utter ignorance of the true cause of his wife's care of his comfort in the present instance—"Jenny, but that is a bonny thing," he said, looking admiringly at the gaudy commodity, into which he had now thrust his hand and part of his arm, in order to give it all possible extension, and thus holding it up before him as he spoke.

"Really it is a bonny thing," he replied, "and, I warrant, a comfortable."

"Isn't?" replied his wife, triumphantly. And she would have added, "How far prettier and mair genteeler a thing than John Anderson's!" But, as this would have betrayed secrets, she refrained, and merely added, "Now, my man, Tammas, ye'll just wear't when ye gang about the doors and the yard. It'll mak ye look decent and respectable—what ye wasna in that creesly cloot that ye're wearin, that made ye look mair like a tauty bogle than a Christian man."

Thomas merely smiled at these remarks; and made no reply in words.

Thus far, then, Mrs Callender's plot had gone on swimmingly. There only wanted now her husband's appearance in the garden in his new red nightcap, where the latter could not but be seen by her rival, to complete her triumph—and this satisfaction she was not long denied. Thomas, at her suggestion, warily and cautiously urged however, instantly took the field in his new nightcap; and the result was as complete and decisive as the heart of woman, in Mrs Callender's circumstances, could desire. Mrs Anderson saw the nightcap, guessed the cause of its appearance, and resolved to be avenged. In that moment, when her sight was blasted, her pride humbled, and her spirits roused, which they were all at one and the same time by the vision of Thomas Callender's new red nightcap, she resolved on getting her husband to strike the striped cap, and mount one of precisely the same description—better if possible, but she was not sure if this could be had.

Now, on prevailing on her husband to submit to the acquisition of another new nightcap, Mrs Anderson had a much more difficult task to perform than her rival; for the cap that John was already provided with, unlike Thomas's, was not a week out of the shop, and no earthly good reason, one would think, could therefore be urged, why he should so soon get another. But what will not woman's wit accomplish? Anything! As proof of this, if proof were wanted, we need only mention that Mrs Anderson did

succeed in this delicate and difficult negotiation, and prevailed upon John, first, to allow her to go into Glasgow to buy him a new red nightcap, and to promise to wear it when it should be bought. How she accomplished this—what sort of reasoning she employed—we know not; but certain it is that it was so. Thus fully warranted, eagerly and cleverly did Mrs Anderson, on the instant, prepare to execute the mission to which this warrant referred. In ten minutes, she was dressed, and, in one more, was on her way to Glasgow to make the desiderated purchase. Experiencing of course, as little difficulty in effecting this matter as her rival had done, Mrs Anderson soon found herself in possession of a red nightcap, as bright, every bit, as Mr Callender's; and this cap she had the happiness of drawing on the head of her unconscious husband, who, we need scarcely add, knew as little of the real cause of his being fitted out with this new piece of head-gear as his neighbour, Callender.

Thus far, then, with Mrs Anderson too, went the plot of the nightcaps smoothly; and all that she also now wanted to attain the end she aimed at, was her husband's appearance in his garden, with his new acquisition on.

This consummation she also quickly brought round. John sallied out with his red nightcap; and, oh, joy of joys! Mrs Callender saw it. Ay, Mrs Callender saw it—at once recognised in it the spirit which had dictated its display; and deep and deadly was the revenge that she vowed.

"Becky, Becky," she exclaimed, in a tone of lofty indignation—and thus summoning to her presence, from an adjoining apartment, her daughter, a little girl of about ten years of age—"rin owre dereckly to Lucky Anderson's, and tell her to gie me my jeely can immediately." And Mrs Callender stamped her foot, grew red in the face, and exhibited sundry other symptoms of towering passion. Becky instantly obeyed the order so peremptorily given; and, while she is doing so, we may throw in a digressive word or two, by the way of more fully enlightening the reader regarding the turn which matters seemed now about to take. Be it known to him, then, that the demand for the jelly pot, which was now about to be made on Mrs Anderson, was not a *bona fide* proceeding. It was not made in good faith; for Mrs Callender knew well, and had been told so fifty times, that the said jelly pot was no longer in existence as a jelly pot; and moreover, she had been, as often as she was told this, offered full compensation, which might be about three farthings sterling money of this realm, for the demolished commodity. Moreover, again, it was three years since it had been borrowed. From all this, the reader will at once perceive what was the fact—that the sending for the said jelly pot, on the present occasion, and in the way described, was a mere breaking of ground previous to the performance of some other contemplated operations. It was, in truth, entirely a tactical proceeding—a dexterously and ingeniously-laid pretext for a certain intended measure which could not decently have stood on its own simple merits. In proof of this, we need only state, that it is beyond all question that nothing could have disappointed Mrs Callender more than the return of the desiderated jelly pot. But this, she knew, she had not to fear, and the result shewed that she was right. The girl shortly came back with the usual reply—that the pot was broken; but that Mrs Anderson would cheerfully pay the value of it, if Mrs Callender would say what that was. To the inexpressible satisfaction of the latter, however, the message, on this occasion, was accompanied by some impertinences which no woman of spirit could tamely submit to. She was told, for instance, that "she made mair noise about her paltry, dirty jeely mug, a thousand times, than it was a' worth," and was ironically, and, we may add, insultingly entreated, "for ony sake to mak nae mair wark about it, and a dizen wad be sent her for't"

"My troth, and there's a stock o' impidence for ye!" said Mrs Callender, on her little daughter's having delivered herself of all the small provocatives with which she had been charged. "There's impudence for ye!" she said, planting her hands in her sides, and looking the very personification of injured innocence. "Was the like o't ever neard? First to borrow, and then to break my jeely mug, and noo to tell me, when I'm seekin my ain, that I'm makin mair noise about it than it's a' worth! My certy, but she *has* a brazen face. The auld wizzened, upsettin limmer that she is. Set *them* up, indeed, wi' red nicht-caps." Now, this was the last member of Mrs Callender's philippic, but it was by no means the least. In fact, it was the whole gist of the matter—the sum and substance, and, we need not add, the real and true cause of her present amiable feeling towards her worthy neighbours, John Anderson and his wife. Adjusting her *mulch* now on her head, and spreading her apron decorously before her, Mrs Callender intimated her intention of proceeding instantly to Mrs Anderson's, to demand her jelly pot in person, and to seek, at the same time, satisfaction for the insulting message *hat* had been sent her. Acting on this resolution, she forthwith commenced her march towards the domicile of John Anderson, nursing, the while, her wrath, to keep it warm. On reaching the door, she announced her presence by a series of sharp, open-the-door-instantly knocks, which were promptly attended to, and the visiter courteously admitted.

"Mrs Anderson," said Mrs Callender, on entering, and assuming a calmness and composure of demeanour that was sadly belied by the suppressed agitation, or rather fury, which she could not conceal, "I'm just come to ask ye if ye'll be sae guid, *Mem*, as gie me my jeely mug."

"Yer jeely mug, Mrs Callender!" exclaimed Mrs Anderson, raising herself to her utmost height, and already beginning to exhibit symptoms of incipient indignation. "Yer jeely mug, Mrs Callender!" she repeated, with a provokingly ironical emphasis. "Dear help me, woman, but ye *do* mak an awfu wark about that jeely mug o' yours. I'm sure it wasna sae muckle worth; and ye hae been often tell't that it was broken, but that we wad willingly pay ye for't."

"It's no payment I want, Mrs Anderson," replied Mrs Callender, with a high-spirited toss of the head. "I want my mug, and my mug I'll hae. Do ye hear that?" And here Mrs Callender struck her clenched fist on the open side of her left hand, in the impressive way peculiar to some ladies when under the influence of passion. "And, since ye come to that o't, let me tell ye ye're a very insultin, ill-bred woman, to tell me that it wasna muckle worth, after ye hae broken't."

"My word, lass," replied Mrs Anderson, bridling up, with flushed countenance, and head erect, to the calumniator, "but ye're no blate to ca' me thae names i' my ain house."

"Ay, I'll ca' ye thae names, and waur too, in yer ain house, or onywhar else," replied the other belligerent, clenching her teeth fiercely together, and thrusting her face with most intense ferocity into the countenance of her antagonist. "Ay, here or onywhar else," she replied, "I'll ca' ye a mean-spirited, impident woman—an upsettin impident woman! Set your man up, indeed, wi' a red nichtkep!"

"An' what for no?" replied Mrs Anderson with a look of triumphant inquiry. "He's as weel able to pay for't as you, and maybe, if a' was kent, a hantle better. A red nichtkep, indeed, ye impertinent hizzy!"

"'Od, an' ye hizzy me, I'll te-e-e-er the liver out o' ye!" exclaimed the now infuriated Mrs Callender, at the same instant seizing her antagonist by the hair of the head and *mulch* together, and, in a twinkling, tearing the latter into a thousand shreds. Active hostilities being now fairly com-

menced, a series of brilliant operations, both offensive and defensive, immediately ensued. The first act of aggression on the part of Mrs Callender—namely, demolishing her opponent's head-gear—was returned by the latter by a precisely similar proceeding; that is, by tearing *her* *mulch* into fragments.

This preliminary operation performed, the combatants resorted to certain various other demonstrative acts of love and friendship; but now with such accompaniments of screams and exclamations as quickly filled the apartment which was the scene of strife, with neighbours, who instantly began to attempt to effect a separation of the combatants. While they were thus employed, in came John Anderson, who had been out of the way when the tug of war began, and close upon his heels came Mr Callender, whose ears an alarming report of the contest in which his gallant spouse was engaged, had reached. Both gentlemen were, at the moment, in their red nightcaps, and might thus be considered as the standard bearers of the combatants.

"What's a' this o't?" exclaimed Mr Anderson, pushing into the centre of the crowd by which the two women were surrounded.

"Oh, the hizzy!" exclaimed his wife, who had, at the instant, about a yard of her antagonist's hair rolled about her hand. "It's a' about your nichtkep, John, and her curst jeely mug. A' about your nichtkep, and the jeely mug."

Now, this allusion to the jelly pot, John perfectly understood, but that to the nightcap he did not, nor did he attend to it; but, as became a dutiful and loving husband, to do in such circumstances, immediately took the part of his wife, and was in the act of thrusting her antagonist aside, which operation he was performing somewhat rudely when he was collared from behind by his neighbour, Thomas Callender, who, naturally enough, enrolled himself at once on the side of his better half.

"Hauns aff, John!" exclaimed Mr Callender—their old grudge fanning the flame of that hostility which was at this moment rapidly increasing in the bosoms of both the gentlemen, as he gave Mr Anderson sundry energetic tugs and twists, with a view of putting him *hors de combat*. "Hauns aff, neebor!" he said. "Hauns aff, if ye please, till we ken wha has the richt o' this bisness, and what it's a' about."

"Pu' doon their pride, Tam!—pu' doon their pride!" exclaimed Mrs Callender, who, although intently engaged at the moment in tearing out a handful of her opponent's hair, was yet aware of the reinforcement that had come to her aid. "Pu' doon their pride, Tam. Tak a claught o' John's nichtkep. The limmer says they're better able to afford ane than we are."

While Mrs Callender was thus expressing the particular sentiments which occupied her mind at the moment, John Anderson had turned round to resent the liberty which the former had taken of collaring him; and this resentment he expressed, by collaring his assailant in turn. The consequence of this proceeding was a violent struggle, which finally ended in a close stand-up fight between the male combatants, who both shewed great spirit, although, perhaps, not a great deal of science. John Anderson, in particular, struck out manfully, and, in a twinkling, tapped the claret of his antagonist, Tom Callender. Tom, in return, made some fair attempts at closing up the day-lights of John Anderson, but, truth compels us to say, without success. The fight now became general—the wives having quitted their holds of each other, and flown to the rescue of their respective husbands. They were thus all bundled together in one indiscriminate and unintelligible *melée*. One leading object or purpose, however, was discernible on the part of the female combatants. This was to get

hold of the red nightcaps—each that of her husband's antagonist; and, after a good deal of scrambling, and clutching, and pouncing, they both succeeded in tearing off the obnoxious head-dress, with each a handful of the unfortunate wearer's hair along with it. While this was going on, the conflicting, but firmly united mass of combatants, who were all bundled, or rather locked together in close and deadly strife, was rolling heavily, sometimes one way, and sometimes another, sometimes ending with a thud against a partition, that made the whole house shake, sometimes with a ponderous lodgement against a door, which, unable to resist the shock, flew open, and landed the belligerents at their full length on the floor, where they rolled over one another in a very edifying and picturesque manner.

But this could not continue very long, and neither did it. A consummation or catastrophe occurred, which suddenly, and at once, put an end to the affray. In one of those heavy lee-lurches which the closely united combatants made, they came thundering against the frail legs of a dresser, which was ingeniously contrived to support two or three tiers of shelves, which, again, were laden with stoneware, the pride of Mrs Anderson's heart, built up with nice and dexterous contrivance, so as to shew to the greatest advantage. Need we say what was the consequence of this rude assault on the legs of the aforementioned dresser, supporting, as it did, this huge superstructure of shelves and crockery? Scarcely. But we will. Down, then, came the dresser; and down, as a necessary corollary, came also the shelves, depositing their contents with an astounding crash upon the floor—not a jug out of some eight or ten, of various shapes and sizes, not a plate out of some scores, not a bowl out of a dozen, not a cup or saucer out of an entire set, escaping total demolition. The destruction was frightful—unprecedented in the annals of domestic mishaps.

On the combatants the effect of the thundering crash of the crockery, or smashables, as they have been sometimes characteristically designated, was somewhat like that which has been known to be produced in a sea-fight by the blowing up of a ship. Hostilities were instantly suspended; all looking with silent horror on the dreadful scene of ruin around them. Nor did any disposition to renew the contest return. On the contrary, there was an evident inclination, on the part of two of the combatants—namely, Mr Callender and his wife—to evacuate the premises. Appalled at the extent of the mischief done, and visited with an awkward feeling of probable responsibility, they gradually edged towards the door, and, finally, sneaked out of the house without saying a word.

"If there's law or justice in the land," exclaimed Mrs Anderson, in high excitation, as she swept together the fragments of her demolished crockery, "I'll hae't on Tam Callender and his wife. May I never see the morn, if I haena them afore the Shirra before a week gangs owre my head! I hae a set aff, noo, against her jeely mug, I think."

"It's been a bonny business," replied her husband, "but what on earth was't a' about?"

"What was't a' about!" repeated his wife, with some asperity of manner, but now possessed of presence of mind enough to shift the ground of quarrel, which, she felt, would compromise her with her husband. "Didna I tell ye that already? What should it be a' about, but her confounded jeely mug! But I'll mak her pay for this day's wark, or I'm sair cheated. It'll be as bad a job this for them as the duck dub, I'm thinkin'."

"We hadna muckle to brag o' there, oursels, gnidwife," interposed her husband, calmly.

"See, there," said Mrs Anderson, either not heeding, or not hearing John's remark. "See, there," she said, holding up a fragment of one of the broken vessels. "there's the

end o' my bonny cheeny jug, that I was sae vogie o', and that hadna its neebor in braid Scotland." And a tear glistened in the eye of the susceptible mourner, as she contemplated the melancholy remains, and recalled to memory the departed splendours of the ill-fated tankard. Quietly dashing, however, the tear of sorrow aside, both her person and spirit assumed the lofty attitude of determined vengeance; and, "*She'll rue this,*" she now went on, "if there be ony law or justice in the kingdom. It'll be a dear jug to *her*, or my name's no what it is."

Equally indignant with his wife at the assault and battery committed by the Callenders, but less talkative, John sat quietly ruminating on the events of the evening, and, anon, still continuing to raise his hand, at intervals, to his mangled countenance. With the same taciturnity, he subsequently assisted Mrs Anderson to throw the collected fragments of the broken dishes into a hamper, and to carry and deposit said hamper in an adjoining closet, where, it was determined, they should be carefully kept, as evidence of the extent of the damage which had been sustained.

In the meantime, neither Mrs Thomas Callender nor Mr Thomas Callender felt by any means at ease respecting the crockery catastrophe. Although feeling that it was a mere casualty of war, and an unforeseen and unpremeditated result of a fair and equal contest, they yet could not help entertaining some vague apprehension for the consequences. They felt, in short, that it might be made a question whether they were not liable for the damage done, seeing that they had intruded themselves into their neighbour's house, where they had no right to go. It was under some such awkward fear as this that Mr Callender, who had also obtained an evasive account of the cause of quarrel, said, with an unusually long and grave face, to his wife, on their gaining their own house, and holding, at the same time, a handkerchief to his still bleeding and now greatly swollen proboscis—

"Yon was a deevil o' a stramash, Mirran. I never heard the like o't. It was awfu. I think I hear the noise o' the crashin plates and bowls in my lugs yet."

"Diel may care! Let them tak it!" replied Mrs Callender, endeavouring to assume a disregard of consequences, which she was evidently very far from feeling. "She was aye owre vain o' her crockery; so that better couldna happen her."

"Ay," replied her husband; "but yon smashing o't was rather a serious business."

"It was just music to my lugs, then," said Mrs Callender, boldly.

"Maybe," rejoined her husband, "but I doot we'll hae to pay the piper. They'll try't, ony way, I'm jalousin'."

"Let them. There'll be nae law or justice in the country if they mak that oot," responded Mrs Callender, and exhibiting, in this sentiment, the very striking difference of opinion between the two ladies, of the law and justice of the land.

The fears, however, which Mr Callender openly expressed, as above recorded, and which his wife felt but concealed, were not groundless. On the evening of the very next day after the battle of the nightcaps, as Thomas Callender was sitting in his elbow-chair, by the fire, luxuriously enjoying its grateful warmth, and the ease and comfort of his slippers and red nightcap, which he had drawn well down over his ears, he was suddenly startled by a sharp, loud rap at the door. Mrs Callender hastened to open it, when two papers were thrust into her hands by an equivocal-looking personage, who, without saying a word, wheeled round on his heel the instant he had placed the mysterious documents in her possession, and hastened away.

With some misgivings as to the contents of these papers, Mrs Callender placed them before her husband.

"What's this?" said the latter, with a look of great

alarm, and placing his spectacles on his nose, preparatory to a deliberate perusal of the suspicious documents. His glasses wiped and adjusted, Thomas unfolded the papers, held them up close to the candle, and found them to be a couple of summonses, one for himself and one for his wife. These summonses, we need hardly say, were at the instance of their neighbour, John Anderson, and exhibited a charge of assault and battery, and claim for damages, to the extent of two pounds, fourteen shillings sterling, for demolition of certain articles of stone-ware, &c. &c. &c.

"Ay," said Thomas, laying down the fatal papers. "Faith, here it is, then! We're gaun to get it ruch an roun', noo, Mirran. I was dootin this. But we'll defen', we'll defen'," added Thomas, who was, or, we rather suspect, imagined himself to be, a bit of a lawyer, ever since the affair of the duck-dub, during which he had picked up some law terms, but without any accompanying knowledge whatever of their import or applicability. "We'll defen', we'll defen'," he said, with great confidence of manner, "and gie them a revised condescendence for't that they'll fin gayan teuch to chow. But we maun obey the ceetation, in the first place, to prevent decreet in absence, whilk wad gie the pursuer, in this case, everything his ain way."

"Defen'!" exclaimed Mrs Callender, with high indignation; "my faith, that we wull, I warrant them, and maybe a hantle mair. We'll maybe no be content wi defendin, but strike oot, and gar them staun aboot."

"Noo, there ye shew yer ignorance o' the law, Mirran," said her husband, with judicial gravity; "for ye see"—

"Tuts, law or no law," replied Mrs Callender, impatiently—"I ken what's justice and common sense; an' that's aneuch for me. An' justice I'll hae, Tam," she continued, with such an increase of excitement as brought on the usual climax in such cases, of striking one of her clenched hands on her open palm—"An' justice I will hae, Tam, on thae Andersons, if it's to be had for love or money."

"We'll try't, ony way," said her husband, folding up the summonses, and putting them carefully into his breeches pocket. "Since it has come to this, we'll gie them law for't."

In the spirit and temper of bold defiance expressed in the preceding colloquy, Mr Callender and his wife awaited the day and hour appointed for their appearance in the Sheriff Court at Glasgow. This day and hour in due time came, and, when it did, it found both parties, pursuers and defenders, in the awful presence of the judge. Both the ladies were decked out in their best and grandest attire, while each of their husbands rejoiced in his Sunday's suit. It was a great occasion for both parties. On first recognising each other, the ladies exchanged looks which were truly edifying to behold. Mrs Anderson's was that of calm, dignified triumph; and which, if translated into her own vernacular, would have said, "My word, lass, but ye'll fin whar ye are noo." Mrs Callender's, again, was that of bold defiance, and told of a spirit that was unconquerable—game to the last being the most strongly marked and leading expression, at this interesting moment, of her majestic countenance. Close beside where Mrs Anderson sat, and evidently under her charge, there stood an object which, from the oddness of its appearing in its present situation, attracted a good deal of notice, and excited some speculation amongst those present in the court, and which particularly interested Mrs Callender and her worthy spouse. This was a hamper—a very large one. People wondered what could be in it, and for what purpose it was there. They could solve neither of these problems; but the reader can, we dare say. He will at once conjecture—and, if he does so, he will conjecture rightly—that the hamper in question contained the remains of the smashables spoken of formerly at some length, and that it was to be produced in court, by the pursuers, as evidence of the nature and extent of the damage done.

The original idea of bringing forward this article, for the purpose mentioned, was Mrs Anderson's; and, having been approved of by her husband, it had been that morning carted to the court house, and thereafter carried to and deposited in its present situation by the united exertions of the pursuers, who relied greatly on the effect it would produce when its lid should be thrown open, and the melancholy spectacle of demolished crockery it concealed, exhibited.

The case of Mr and Mrs Anderson *versus* Mr and Mrs Callender being pretty far down in the roll, it was nearly two hours before it was called. This event, however, at length took place. The names of the pursuers and defenders resounded through the court room, in the slow, drawling, nasal-toned voice of the crier. Mrs Anderson, escorted by her loving spouse, sailed up the middle of the apartment, and placed herself before the judge. With no less dignity of manner, and with, at least, an equal stateliness of step, Mrs Callender, accompanied by her lord and master, sailed up after her, and took her place a little to one side. The parties being thus arranged, proceedings commenced. Mrs Anderson was asked to state her case; Mrs Anderson was not slow to accept the invitation. She at once began:—

"Ye see, my Lord, sir, the matter was just this—and I daur her there" (a look of intense defiance at Mrs Callender) "to deny a word, my Lord, sir, o' what I'm gaun to say; although I daur say she wad do't if she could."

"My good woman," here interposed the judge, who had a nervous apprehension of the forensic eloquence of such female pleaders as the one now before him, "will you have the goodness to confine yourself strictly to a simple statement of your case?"

"Weel, my Lord, sir, I will. Ye see, then, the matter is just this."

And Mrs Anderson forthwith proceeded to detail the particulars of the quarrel and subsequent encounter, with a minuteness and circumstantiality which, we fear, the reader would think rather tedious were we here to repeat. In this statement of her case, Mrs Anderson, having the fear of her husband's presence before her eyes, made no allusion whatever to the nightcaps, but rested the whole quarrel on the jelly pot. Now, this was a circumstance which Mrs Callender noted, and of which she, on the instant, determined to take a desperate advantage. Regardless of all consequences, and, amongst the rest, of discovering to her husband the underhand part she had been playing in regard to the affair of the nightcap, she resolved on publicly exposing, as she imagined, the falsehood and pride of her hated rival, by stating the facts of the case as to the celebrated nightcaps. To this revenge she determined on sacrificing every other consideration. To return, however, in the meantime, to the proceedings in court.

The statements of the pursuers being now exhausted the defenders were called upon to give their version of the story. On this summons, both Mrs Callender and her husband pressed themselves into a central position, with the apparent intention of both entering on the defences at the same time. And this proved to be the fact. On being specially and directly invited by the judge to open the case—

"Ye see, my Lord," began Mr Thomas Callender; and—

"My Lord, sir, ye see," began, at the same instant, Mrs Thomas Callender.

"Now, now," here interposed the judge, waving his hand, impatiently, "one at a time, if you please. One at a time."

"Surely," replied Mr Callender. "Staun aside, guid-wife, staun aside," he said; at the same time gently pushing his wife back with his left hand as he spoke. "I'll lay doon the case to his Lordship."

"Ye'll do nae sic a thing, Tammas, I'll do't," exclaimed

Mrs Callender, not only resisting her husband's attempt to thrust her into the rear, but forcibly placing *him* in that relative position; while she herself advanced a pace or two nearer to the bench. On gaining this vantage ground, Mrs Callender at once began, and with great emphasis and circumstantiality detailed the whole story of the night-caps; carefully modelling it so, however, as to shew that her own part in the transaction was a *bona fide* proceeding; on the part of her rival, the reverse; and that the whole quarrel, with its consequent demolition of crockery, was entirely the result of Mrs Anderson's "upsettin pride and vanity, and jealousy." During the delivery of these details, the court was convulsed with laughter, in which the Sheriff himself had much difficulty to refrain from joining.

On the husbands of the two women, however, they had a very different effect. Amazed, confounded, and grievously affronted at this unexpected disclosure of the ridiculous part they had been made to perform by their respective wives, they both sneaked out of court, amidst renewed peals of laughter, leaving the latter to finish the case the best way they could. How this was effected we know not, as, at this point, ends our story of the rival nightcaps.

WANDERINGS IN THE WEST.

ADAMS, in his antiquities, says, very properly, and in right feeling, that, after the Tribunes of the People had opened a passage for merit, from the lowest grade to the highest in the state, Rome flourished in a manner unknown before. It is only by a free circulation from the heart to the extremities, and thence back again, that a healthy bodily condition can be kept up; and it is only when a cottager, looking into the face of his new-born babe, can say, "Perhaps this boy may yet wag his head in a pulpit, or occupy the woolsack," that a Briton's privileges are fully and fairly enunciated. When we look up to the official high places in our happy land, in how many instances do we not find them occupied by individuals who, by their meritorious exertions and original talents, have elevated themselves from the very lowest position! In Scotland, in particular, this is the case; and this is avowedly owing to her superior opportunities of education—to her parochial schools and ministerial examinations in particular; but, then, in Scotland probably, above all other countries, there exists a false and a discreditable feeling of shame, that any one should think that, however elevated your position now, you were ever less so. A thousand ridiculous and contemptible evasions are every day made use of, to exalt into importance your immediate or more remote ancestry, in order to prove what had far better not be proven—that you are only in the situation to which, in a manner, you were destined by your birth; and that you belong, in fact, not to the recently elevated, but to the ancient and dignified stock of the land. How amusing such conduct is, would on all occasions be visible, were it not at the same time mournful and contemptible. It arises out of that aristocratic or feudal pride, which at one time regarded the whole mass of the population as serfs—fixed and doomed to everlasting slavery. This, however, has long passed away in our sister kingdom; and an English gentleman, such as Sir Robert Peel, will have no hesitation in telling you that his grandfather was nobody, and that his own father made his immense fortune by industry and a right application of talent. Away, then, with such petty distinctions as we every day hear of! "My dear, why *did* you tell that low story about your mother, and your aunts, and your filthy porridge in the mornings, and your wooden shoes, and all your abominations? I saw Mrs L. looking knowingly into her sister's face, and then into mine, to see how I would take it. You are so low and vulgar when you get upon your old stories." And yet

this very woman herself, the pink of gentility, was the daughter of an industrious shopkeeper, who made some money by selling everything, and acquired thereby the familiar nickname of "Robby A'thing." I hate all such affectations, (as Shakspeare has it.) I delight in the incidents and stories of my youth, and never think that I am paying myself a higher compliment than when I am mentioning some anecdote which recalls the humbleness of my original, as the scanty and inadequate means by which my infancy and boyhood were reared, and my school and college education obtained. True, I now occupy a situation at once of honour and independence. To obtain it, I have flattered no great man, I have traduced no poor one; for fifty years, I have strained and laboured, inching my way upwards; and, when I have at last gained possession of the tower, I rejoice in looking down upon the less elevated fields beneath, and upon that class of people with whom my earliest feelings and perceptions are associated. If this be vulgarity, I am radically and essentially vulgar; but, if it be, on the other hand, a proud consciousness of having done something to elevate myself and my children, then I claim all the credit which such a consciousness implies.

It is under such views as these that I make no difficulty in informing you of some difficulties, which, partly from a want of money, I encountered in a trip which I made, whilst yet a young man of about eighteen, to the Isle of Arran, about the year 1798. But what a glorious time of life is strong, vigorous, and elastic eighteen! Oh! it is the *summum bonum* of animal being—the very paradise of breathing, moving, sleeping, dreaming, flying. 'Tis then one bounds instead of walking, exults instead of merely breathing, and riots in realities instead of dreaming. My impression is, that, when I was eighteen, I could have carried Queensberry on my back, with Criffel in one hand, and Corsoneon in the other; but then I had *no money*—I was exceedingly poor—only what I had earned by my first year's labours as an assistant teacher. No matter—I was determined to see the world; and, with thirty shillings in my pocket, I set out on a journey which would have required nearly as many pounds to do it in style. No matter—I was sound in lith and limb, had a good hazel rung in my hand, a linsey-woolsey jacket on my back, and a spirit buoyant with life and free from care. Away I sprang, by Sanquhar and New Cumnock, and was in the auld town of Ayr in less than no time. I was always fond of books, and a stall covered with old books was my perfect delight; in fact, up to this hour, I know of no pleasure superior to that of examining a collection of old, worn, dusty volumes, of all sizes and shapes, from the torn pamphlet up to the folio without the title-page; from the little smart duodecimo, up to the long square quarto, thumbed all over by generations now sleeping in death. There is not a corner in Auld Reekie (as it formerly was, which I have not frequented, of a Saturday forenoon in particular, in quest of queer, rare, and illegible books. The head of the Canongate used to present a stall, somewhere opposite to Oliver and Boyd's, which was precious. He was a queer little body who kept it—sat upon a round stool, and seemed to say, by his looks—"Put it down, you seem rather inclined to steal than to buy;"—from him I bought the "Holy War," and the "Gospel Sonnets." The cross entrance from the Canongate to the Cowgate was a perfect mine of wonders. I always looked behind me when I entered it, to see if anybody was about to share the pleasure with me. Like a cat with a bit of cheese, I wished no companionship or rivalry. Here I got "The War with Devils," and "Satan's Invisible World Discovered." At the north entrance, too, from the Grassmarket to the Cowgate, there was a noble old fellow; he had but one leg and one eye, but they were as good as many a one's two of each. He had the art of finding out at once what you were after, and

could always accommodate you to your taste. Divinity, medicine, drama, history, language, scandal, in various shapes and proportions, were all at his finger ends, either in the front or back shop. I saw him one day accost a servant girl, with rosy cheeks and well-formed arms—"Weel, my lassie, what do you want the day?"—"Oh! I dinna ken—what lae ye to gie me?"—"Oh! come in *by* here, my bonny woman, and I'll suit you to a hair." The girl blushed, but entered the back shop, and soon after came out with a round thick volume, which I took to be the Bible, as it was bound very much in Bible style. This, however, he told me afterwards was not the case. "It was only 'The Religious Courtship,' of which," he said, "he sold far more copies to servant girls than of the Scriptures." An old-looking, sour-faced woman approached—she might be upwards of fifty:—"Weel, my guid dame, can you, and I bargain to-day?"—"Oh! your books are all too gay and foolish for me. I want something serious and substantial." He fitted her off with the "Louping-on Stane to Heavy Bottomed Believers." It was here I purchased Wellwood's Glimpse of Glory. The whole Netherbow, particularly towards the bottom, swarmed with stalls. There was an old woman, with an enormous accompaniment of pockets and petticoats, and a bunch of keys hung to her side, enough to upset a seventy-four gun ship. She kept the crown of the causeway, and sold all manner of queer pamphlets, from "Lag's Elegy" to "The Wife o' Bath"—from "January and May" to "the Seven Wise Masters and Mistresses of Rome." I have still in my possession the "Elegy" and the "Wise Masters;" and I believe my copies are almost unique. I never could bear going into a regular shop to get books. My great delight was to pick them up in by-places, and in an old and decayed state; and, if they were scrolled all over, so much the better. I could make an amusing book out of the funny things I have seen written on stall volumes. I wonder no body in this writing age has ever taken it up;—it might be titled "Pencilings on books of the Stall"—it would sell amazingly. I have a good mind to try Sutherland with it, at an early convenience. But I have left myself so long standing at the Ayr book-stall, that I had almost forgot where I was. Well, there certainly I was—lifting, opening, reading, replacing, from morn to night; in fact, I did everything but buy;—now, as the owner of the stall had placed his books there for the express purpose of being bought, he became tired of my daily and fruitless visits; and, one day when I was in the middle of the "School for Scandal" I was tipped on the shoulder by a man with a red coat-neck, and carried incontinent before a magistrate as a French spy. It was with some difficulty that I persuaded the bailie and the constable that I was merely a "puir teacher," and had no connection with the French or with "the Friends of the People" whatever. I was on board of a small boat for Lamash Bay, in the Isle of Arran, before four o'clock of the same afternoon. Here I landed on the same evening after dusk, and was left to make the best of my way to the inn without a guide. I lost my way—if I could, indeed, be said to lose that which I never had—and found myself by the banks of a small stream, over which I behoved to make my way by means of steps, or large stones, which were scarcely visible. I had not advanced above half way, when I found the stones were at too great a distance from each other, and I wished to return; but to return was now equally difficult with advancing, so I remained very much in the situation of Lot's wife, or Gilpin's hat, quite stationary. What was to be done?—an unknown land—a dark night—a rapid stream—and very insecure footing; for I could feel the stone move backwards and forwards under me. At length, a boy approached, hatless, and very indifferently attired—at least so he appeared; for no sooner had I accosted him, calling for his assistance, than he scampered off, yelling

fearfully in Gaelic, and taking me, I have no doubt, for the water-kelpy, or Shelly-coat himself! At length, when I was bethinking me of dashing into the stream, with whose depth, however, and strength, I was unacquainted, a young woman came up, with her coats kilted and her legs bare. She was evidently prepared for the worst. Her I likewise accosted; but she stood fire firmly, and responded to my questions. She was, in fact, a "bonny lassie"* from the good town of Ayr. She was over on the occasion of a cousin's marriage, which she meant to attend. Indeed, she had passed with me in the same boat; but was so sea-sick that she was invisible all the way, and for some time after I landed. By the assistance of this fair dame, I soon arrived in company with her at the opposite bank. Being at a distance from any inn, and, indeed, being totally ignorant whether the place could afford an inn or not, and, at the same time, feeling all the pressure of the *res angusta*, which had been, in fact, the reason of my seeking refuge in the island at all, I consented, at the request of my fair guide, to accompany her to the bridegroom's abode, and to partake of the festivities of the evening. I fell deeply in love with my sweet Nanny by the way; but, in these days, to love and to exhibit a certain species of awkward shyness, were the same thing. Instead of using any familiarities with my conductor in the dark, I followed her at a proper distance, only calling aloud, occasionally, to inquire whether we were yet near to the termination of our travel. At last we arrived, about nine o'clock, at a cluster of houses, built upon a bare ridge covered with heath, and surrounded, as I could see, on all sides with Highland stots, and shaggy-maned ponies. These preoccupants crowded in upon our advance, and seemed to question the propriety of our disturbing their nocturnal pasturing, by bellowing, and frisking, and galloping around in circles; now standing to gaze, and then whisking away in seeming scorn and derision. When we entered the house—which we did by stooping at the door-way—we found the company assembled around a large turf or peat fire—some sitting on turf seats, some on benches, and not a few of the younger class, squat down on the floor, with their bare legs to the flame, and their backs to the enclosing company. There were two or three small candles, and one large flambeau, (used on smearing occasions,) stuck all round into the inside of the roofing, which came down to within a few feet of the floor. The marriage ceremony had been performed, by agreement with the parish minister, at the manse, and there remained nothing now to obstruct the enjoyment of hilarity and good fare for the rest of the evening. I was soon introduced, by my fair guide, to her kinsfolk, the bridegroom's parents, who sat above the fire in state, occupying the only timber chair in the dwelling. My welcome—all things being told and considered—was hearty, and I was immediately shewn to a seat in the centre of the transverse bench; and my considerate conductor took her seat, by way of company and encouragement, close beside me. The young guidman was a tall, raw-boned fellow, about twenty years of age, with a florid complexion, and a determined squint; whilst his bride was a little, round, dumpy person, deeply pitted with the small pox, and probably double his age. There was something exceedingly incongruous in the match; but the bridegroom's father whispered me, that stirks were stirks, and ponies ponies, and that this same pock-marked woman had enabled his son to rent and stock a farm on the west side of the island, to which, after supper and a hot pint, they were about to retire. He had long wished, I was told, on the same authority, to marry bonny Nanny, my sweet conductress; but she was stirkless and penniless, and so the thing had, with great diffi-

* "Auld Ayr, wham not a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses."

culty, been brought about by the bridegroom's father. I was exceedingly mortified to find that the same spirit which mars the connubial bliss of the rich, likewise operates against that of the peasant; and that people whose manners were so simple, and whose wants were so few, should yet run the risk of making sacrifice of happiness for the means of a very ordinary competency. I did not recollect or reflect, that to an Arran farmer, the stocking of his farm is an object of as much real importance and value, as the purchase of a property, or the acquisition of so much three per cent. consol, is to the dashing beau in high life. The festivities of the evening commenced, by a distribution of Irish stew all round, reeking, as it was, from the fire, and redolent of savoury onions, and not a few leeks. To this succeeded Mashlom scones and Ayrshire cheese, with as much milk as ram-horn spoon and wooden ladle could contrive to dispose of. The eating prelude being past, a glass of cold Arran whisky, of the very best quality, was served all round; nor did the most delicate female, or the youngest child in the dwelling, shrink from the offered beverage. The heart of the piper being in a manner fortified by this commencement, his pipes began to speak, as it were, of themselves; and it was not till the auld guidman had laid an interdict upon them, that they ceased to groan forth their impatience.

As the cattle, at least the milch-cows, actually cribbed it in one end of this clay-built and heath-covered dwelling, and we kept it up with much spirit and great noise in the other—and as even the dumb brutes, in which the bestial, as well as many dogs, were included, seemed to join us in everything but in the frequent use of the quaich or bicker—the scene was one well suited to call forth the talents of a Teniers or a Wilkie. But when the piper, unable any longer to command the winds which, like Ulysses, he had pent up in bags, and the first tremendous “blarc” made roof and rafters dirl, a young cow, or quey, less inured to human folly than her elders, immediately took fright, and, snapping at once the band by which she was fastened to the stake, she was, horns, feet, head, and shoulders, in the midst of us. The cocks and hens, which tenanted the bauks above the cattle, joined in the alarm, and ran over us, not quite “like the sweet south,” but very much in the shape of harpies and furies, covered in a veil of soot, and penetrating through an envelopement of smoke, enough to have suffocated the longest-winded songster—even the piper himself. The guidman, guidwife, bride, bridegroom, with a long enumeration of lesser constellations, immediately dropped from their orbits, as on doomsday—

“When the stars shall fall in clusters,”

The quey, if not “the Bull” was in the ascendant—up-turned everything that would be moved from its place—glasses, bottles, pots, punch, beer, cheese, bread, butter, all went smash in one wide-spread devastation, and chaos reigned anew—“*Discordia semina verum, non bene-junctarum*”—were to be seen under the tread of the wild and demented brute. As for my single self, I was rather lucky in having laid hold, at an early period of the fray, of a dusty rafter, by means of which,

“Like a nice little cherub, I sat up aloft,”

to watch the progress of the movements below, and to congratulate myself that I was neither exposed to a charge of horning, nor to be trod into the hearth-ashes by one that divides the hoof. The cock, and two of the more considerate or more attached of his seraglio, snugged it beside me; and a large cat kept a sharp look-down from the extremity of the perch. At last, the consternation somewhat subsided. The piper gathered up his limbs and his bags; through which, however, one flat and two sharps (I mean, a hoof and two horns) had passed, and set immediately to navigating the hairy stranger's nose and horns in the direction of the door. The guidwife, whose half-dozen petticoats had suf-

fered some damage in the scattered fire, found her perpendicular position. The guidman resumed the command of a bit of tight shillelah, which he applied prettily freely to Crombie's rump; and the bridegroom was able to ascertain, with much satisfaction, that his fair partner was mair *fleyed* than hurt. The door stood ajar, and so Crombie, by way of saving time, took it fairly off the *tyers* on her shoulders, and betook herself to the hill with as much guid-will as the Devil did when he escaped from Pandy. But the harmony of the evening (if such it could be called) was broken *in* upon—the music had escaped into thin air—the whisky and the viands had disappeared, or rather re-appeared in strange forms and positions—and, in short, the bridegroom insisted upon immediately retiring homewards with his bride.

What was my astonishment, next morning, to find myself in the hands of justice. Paisley jail had been broken, some nights before, by a young man of my size and appearance. The story of my book-buying habits had got abroad in Ayr; and when the magistrates saw the hand-bill, they immediately concluded that I was the man whom they had so stupidly let slip through their fingers. In this opinion they were the more confirmed, upon finding that I had sailed, immediately upon my liberation, for Arran; and so they had dispatched three red necks to reconduct me to the shores of Uoila. It was in vain to protest. The very cattle seemed now to look upon me with a suspicious eye. Even the cock, my former companion in the evil hour, forgot our acquaintanceship, and scraped and crawled accusation. The guidman was dumb with consternation—but the guidwife was loud with protestations of her former suspicions; and all except Nanny (who agreed to accompany me back to Ayr) forsook me, or rather rejoiced in seeing my back turned, and the island rid of a noted thief, who had hitherto escaped justice. Since no better might be, and trusting to my innocence, I went on board the boat, in which (no little consideration, in my pecuniary circumstances!) I got a free passage to Ayr, when I was immediately conducted before the Lord Provost and a person who had come ali the way express from Paisley to identify my person. No sooner, however, was I confronted with this person, than he declared at once that they had mistaken their man; and, with many apologies for the trouble and obloquy to which I had been exposed, I was once more set at liberty. Nanny was waiting for me at the door of the court when I came down the stair, and immediately carried me home with her to her mother's fireside, where I received every mark of kindness, and even affection, both from parent and child. I staid as long as my other avocations would permit in this honest and kind-hearted family; nor would they accept of the smallest remuneration. I was in great danger of marrying poor Nancy, and of thus ruining my prospects for life; but, luckily for me, the death of a near relation called me off, at an hour's warning; and I have since heard that this good girl has been very happily married to an Ayrshire farmer. Indeed, I have had recent proof of this fact, in a fine Dunlop cheese, which was forwarded to me by the Ayrshire carrier last week, with Nanny's compliments, and a pressing request that I would look after her youngest son, who is to be bound apprentice to a writer in Edinburgh.



WILSON'S
Historical, Tradictionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PHYSIOGNOMIST'S TALE.

HILL and valley were clad in the cold and glistening mantle of winter, and the snow floated softly, though chillingly, against the cheek of a young and apparently weary traveller, who was plodding his way along the high-road towards Annan. He was a youth of about nineteen, tall and good-looking, apparently of the labouring class, and carried a small bundle on a stick over his shoulder. I happened to be walking homewards in the same direction, and had been for some time watching him with great interest—my attention having been excited by his handsome and intelligent countenance, and by the expression of deep and settled sorrow which clouded it. Absorbed in the gloom of his own thoughts, he seemed not to heed the cold, and bleak, and desolate scene around him; or perhaps, it might be more congenial to his feelings than the brightest landscape of summer; for, who has not felt, in the first hours of grief and deprivation, a morbid seeking after, and clinging to, objects which serve to cherish and keep alive our feelings of gloom and depression? He started, as it awakened from a dream, when I addressed him with some trifling remark upon the weather; but there was something in the tone of his voice when he answered me, which increased my prepossession in his favour. After some trifling conversation, I took an opportunity to remark and to express my sympathy for his evident dejection, at the same time hinting my wish to know the cause of it, and, if possible, to remove it. Many of my readers will no doubt think this sudden and uncalled for interest in a perfect stranger, romantic and injudicious; but I have rather Quixotic opinions on many subjects, and, among others, is a love of judging of character by countenance; and, if I choose to run the risk of "paying for my whistle," I do but follow in the footsteps of wiser and better men. Events proved, as the reader will learn in the course of this story, that in this instance at least my judgment had not deceived me. The young man was evidently affected by the interest which I seemed to feel in him; and, after some little hesitation, said, with a strong Roxburghshire accent, "I feel grateful for your kindness, sir; yours is the first friendly voice I have heard since I left home, and the accents of sympathy fall as soft upon the wounded spirit as the snow-flakes on the warm ground—melting as they fall."

We were now close to my gate, and I invited the lad to enter and refresh himself. This offer he accepted with the warmest thanks; and, when seated by the comfortable fire in the kitchen, from which I dismissed for a short time my only servant, he told me the simple tale of his sorrows. I am not enough of a Scotchman to attempt to do justice to his national dialect; so much the better, perhaps, for my English readers; but I fear that what I gain in fluency I shall lose in expression. His name, he said, was Dalzell; he was the son of a respectable and thriving merchant in Kelso, who had given him, in his early years, the best education the place afforded, with the view of preparing him, at a future day, for the ministry; but, before he was fifteen years old, his father, who was commonly reputed wealthy, died insolvent, and his mother and he were left in a state

of utter destitution. Grief for the loss of her husband, combined with anxiety of mind, occasioned by the unexpected change in her circumstances, shortened the days of his beloved mother, and he was left in the world alone. A neighbouring farmer, pitying his distress, took him into his service, and treated him with the greatest kindness and consideration. In this place he had remained nearly four years, and had every reason to think that his master looked upon him more in the light of a friend than a servant. He had done his duty faithfully and conscientiously, because it *was* his duty—but he was not happy; his thoughts were constantly reverting to former days, and to his blighted prospects, and he began to feel thoroughly discontented and disgusted with his menial situation, when, all at once, a powerful and absorbing feeling, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed all the rest. He loved! In the moments when his impatient spirit most winced beneath the yoke of servitude, light as it was, one glance at the bright blue eye and winning smile of Grace Douglas, was sufficient to chase the cloud from his brow, and to cheer his heart with the thought that he had still something worth living for. She was his master's only daughter, just seventeen, and as bright and beautiful a creature as ever the eye of a lover rested upon. Even her beauty, however, would have failed in making any impression on the senses of the gloomy and discontented youth, had not the better feelings of his heart been excited by her tender sympathy. She knew his story; and, by her silent and unobtrusive attentions, shewed her pity for his misfortunes. Her tones of kindness invested her, in his opinion, with a charm beyond mere beauty; his proud heart was melted, and his long-pent-up affections were lavished upon this new object, with a violence that alarmed himself. It was not long before he was awakened to the consciousness that his love was returned; but that consciousness, blissful as it seemed at first, only gave additional bitterness to his reflections, when he thought of the difference in their respective situations. Poor, friendless, and dependent—a labourer working for his daily bread—how could he hope to gain the wealthy farmer's consent to a union with his daughter? and without *that* consent, she had said that, much as she loved him, she never would be his. Prompt and impetuous, his resolution was soon adopted; he could not bear suspense, and was determined to put an end to it at once; he told his master all; told him that he could not bear to deceive him; that he loved his daughter, but that he was well aware it would be madness and presumption in him, situated as he was at present, to hope for his approval of his passion; that he could not live in the presence of the object of his hopeless affection; but that he meant to depart, and to endeavour, by his own exertions in some other sphere of life, to remove what he hoped was the only bar to his wishes—his poverty; his birth and education, he said, were equal to her own, and he trusted that his master had never had occasion to think otherwise than well of his private character. The good farmer was much surprised and affected by this disclosure, and, in reply, spoke in the warmest terms of commendation of his young friend; but said that, as a prudent father, he could not think of giving his consent to a union, which the want of means might render an unhappy one to both

parties; and that, much as he esteemed him, and grieved as he would be to part with him, he perfectly agreed as to the propriety and necessity of his departure. Next day, followed by the tears and good wishes of all the inmates of the farm, he left the house, a sorrowful but a sanguine wanderer. He had met his mistress before his departure; their parting was sad and tender; he vowed unwavering constancy and attachment; but would not accept an offered pledge of the same kind from her; leaving her free, he said, to think of or forget him. He told her he felt he was meant for better things; that brighter days would come; and that then he would return to prove that he was worthy of her. His intention, he said, was to go to sea; he had always a secret liking for it, and in the war which was now raging, he had no doubt that opportunities of distinguishing himself would present themselves. He was determined to do his duty steadily and perseveringly; her image would be ever present with him, to cheer him in the hour of danger, and to nerve him to exertion. With such a prize in view, he said, he felt confident in his own resolution, and was sanguine in his hope that fortune would eventually smile upon him.

Such was the simple and affecting tale of the wayfarer. I was as much pleased with the modest, yet firm and determined manner in which he expressed himself, as with the narrative itself. I did not attempt to dissuade him from his purpose, but, on the contrary, urged him to persevere—I told him of the many gallant commanders who had distinguished themselves in the naval annals of their country, and who had risen to rank and fame, from as humble a condition as his own. It was with the greatest difficulty I persuaded him to accept of pecuniary assistance to help him on his journey, and then only on the score of its being a loan, which, if he lived, he could at some future time repay.

"I shall never forget your kindness to a friendless stranger, sir," said he, as he grasped my hand at parting. "To have met with such unexpected friendship at my first outset, I may well consider a favourable omen; and I trust that the recollection of it will act as an additional incentive to prove myself worthy of it."

Years passed on, and I heard nothing further of my interesting acquaintance. In the meantime, I had become a husband and father; and my wife, to whom I had related the story of the young adventurer, felt equally interested with myself in his welfare, and we used often to speculate as to his probable fate. Ten years after the rencontre with which my story commences, I was sitting reading to my wife in the drawing-room, after breakfast, when we were startled by a knock at the front door, followed by the servant's announcement that a gentleman wished to speak to me. I desired that he might be shewn up stairs, and hastened to meet him, thinking it was one of my neighbours, from whom I expected a visit; but what was my surprise when a tall, handsome man, with dark, sun-burnt features, and whose person was quite strange to me, grasped my hand, and shook it most cordially; at the same time smiling as he watched the doubting scrutiny of my gaze, as a faint recollection of his features crossed my mind.

"I see you are puzzled, my dear sir," said he; "you do not remember me."

"I have a confused idea of having seen features like yours before," said I; "but where or when I cannot at this moment recall to my recollection."

"I do not wonder at your not remembering me," replied he; "but your disinterested kindness made an impression on a grateful heart, which neither time nor change have weakened. I am, or rather was, the boy Dalzell—the poor, friendless, desolate wanderer, whom you cheered with your benevolence, and animated by your advice. Do you remember me now?"

"I do I do," said I, returning his warm grasp, "and most happy am I to see you again, and to see you thus, for I perceive that your sanguine hopes have not been disappointed, and that you have risen from your humble station to one more worthy of you."

"Fortune has indeed favoured me beyond my deserts," answered he. "I told you that my having met so kind a friend at my outset, was a fortunate omen; it proved so: I entered the service as a boy before the mast; I am now lieutenant in his Majesty's navy."

"I congratulate you with all my heart; but your modesty must not attribute your success to good fortune alone, there must have been merit likewise to deserve it. But I forget: I have a new acquaintance to introduce you to—my wife; a new acquaintance, but an old friend, I can assure you; for she has long been acquainted with and felt interested in your story."

My wife cordially welcomed him, and expressed her gratification at his return home in health and happiness.

"Alas! madam," said he, "happiness, I fear, is as far from me as ever. I told my kind friend, there, that I felt confident Fortune would smile upon me; I was then a sanguine boy: Fortune *has* smiled upon me; I have risen from the humble station in which I commenced my career; I have gained for myself rank and competency—and I am now a disappointed man; the hope that cheered me on in my career, is blighted. I returned to the home in which I had left all that was most dear to me in life: I found it deserted; my old master was dead—died in poverty; and Grace, my Grace, was gone, no one knew whither."

We were both too much shocked at first by this announcement, to be able to express our sympathy; but, on reflection, I expressed my conviction that there was no cause for serious alarm; that, while there was life, there was hope; and that no doubt he would, ere long, succeed in gaining some intelligence which would lead to the discovery of the orphan's retreat. I told him I would write to some friends in the neighbourhood of Kelso, who would, I was sure, be happy to exert themselves in making the necessary inquiries; and that I was able and willing to accompany him as soon as he thought proper, to assist him in his search. He was much gratified by the offer of my services, which he seemed inclined to avail himself of immediately.

"No, no, my friend!" said I; "we have too lately found you, to part with you so easily; you must stay with us a few days at least, until I receive answers from Kelso, and afterwards, when we have succeeded in the object of our search, make this house your home till you have one of your own."

At first he seemed rather impatient at the delay; but gradually became more tranquillized and cheerful. He gratefully accepted my offer of extended hospitality, and pleased us by the frankness with which he seemed immediately to take us at our word, and to feel himself at home. We were both delighted with him; his manners were as pleasing as his conversation was entertaining. On my requesting him to favour us with an account of his adventures since we parted, he replied—"No one has a better claim than yourself, my dear sir, to be informed of the progress of an adventure of which you witnessed and cheered the commencement; but I feel an unwillingness to commence a story, the hero of which is the narrator—who, to do justice to it, must speak more of himself than is either seemly or agreeable."

"Oh," said I, "do not allow your modesty to stand in the way of our enjoyment. Speak fully and freely, in the consciousness that you are talking to friends, who will be pleased with the narration of the most trifling incidents connected with one in whose fate they have always felt the warmest interest."

He bowed, and, without further preface, commenced as follows:—"After I left you, I made the best of my way to London, and from thence to Portsmouth, where I volunteered on board the Dareall frigate, fitting out for the Cape station. I was asked if I wanted to ship as able or ordinary seaman, and replied, that I had never been at sea, but that I was active and willing. The lieutenant seemed pleased with my appearance and with my answer; 'You're just the lad for us then,' said he; 'if you're active and willing, we'll soon make you *able*. I like the cut of your jib, my lad; and, if you perform as well as you promise, I've no doubt you'll make a smart fellow yet. 'Here, Telford!' said he to a boatswain's mate, standing near, 'I give this youngster into your charge; make a man of him.'

'Ay, ay, sir. Come along, young blowhard,' said he; 'as the first lieutenant has trusted your edicashun to me, we must saw wood at once, and see what we can make of that block of your'n. Can you handle a marlinspike?'

'No.'

'Can you reef or steer, or heave the lead?'

'No.'

'Then what the devil *can* you do?'

'I can read and write, and keep accounts.'

'Oh, ho!—a reg'lar long shore gemman!—the makings of a sea lawyer! And so you can't do nothin but read and write?'

'Yes, there's one thing I can do, and am determined to do—to learn everything you will take the trouble to teach me;—*you* knew nothing before you were taught—how can you expect *me* to do so?'

'Well, there's reason in that, any how,' said he; and if so be *you* pays attention, why there's no saying but we may see *you* a bosun's mate, some o' these days. But I say youngun, make your number—the poor gulpin doesn't understand me'—(this was said half aside). 'What's your name?'

'Dalzell.'

'Dalzell! Dalzell!' said he; 'blow'd if that isn't a Kelso name!—where do you hail from?—Eh! where d'ye come from?'

'Scotland.'

'Ay, that's as plain as the nose on your face, whenever you open your mouth. Now, nobody would never go for to doubt me to be an Englishman, by my lingo;—but I'll tell you a bit of a secret—I'm a Scotchman born and bred.'

'Well, I can tell you a secret too, if you'll promise not to tell it.'

'Speak on, youngster; I'll never blab till you give me leave; I'm as silent as the ship's bell, as never speaks till it's toll'd.'

'Well, then, *Telford's* a Kelso name, as well as Dalzell; many a penny bap have I bought, when I was at school, at old Jamie Telford's; and, if I'm not mistaken, I'm speaking to his son.'

'Did you know the old boy? Bless his old heart! Well you're right for once in your life, my boy; but how the devil did you find me out?'

'I've often heard the old man talk of his son Tom, the boatswain's mate; and your name and your talking of Kelso, together, made me fancy you must be the man.'

'Well, that beats cock-fighting!—Give us your hand, my hearty! I'll stick to you through thick and thin, for the sake of the old town and them as lives in it, and if I don't, call me a liar, that's all, and see what I'll give you. But who are *your* people?—I suppose that's part o' the secret you were going to tell me?'

'It was; and you will keep it?'

'In coorse; didn't I tell you so afore?'

I then told him my story, which he heard with great

attention, and which evidently increased his respect for me. 'I have often heard tell of your father,' said he, 'and for his sake I'll do all I can for his son. I liked the looks of you before—I like you ten times better now; it shan't be my fault if you don't larn your duty. I'll live to see you an *admiral* yet—who knows? You're right, however, to keep your story secret, for some o' these devil's limbs would be jeering about your being a gemman in a cog, as they calls it, come to sea to wear out his old toggery.'

The good-hearted fellow kept his promise; never had scholar a more zealous and indefatigable teacher, and never had teacher a pupil more anxious to avail himself of his advantages. We were detained for nearly three weeks, and I made the most of my opportunities. During the day, my friend Telford employed all his leisure time in initiating me into the mysteries of knotting and splicing, and in teaching me the names and uses of the various ropes; and at night, when there were none to laugh at my awkward exhibitions, he encouraged me to go aloft, and to learn to make active use of my hands and feet. When we went on shore on liberty, he used to hire a boat, and teach me how to handle the oar;—in fact, my kind instructor neglected no means of teaching me how to make myself useful. My whole heart and soul were in the matter, and my progress was proportionably rapid, and I was cheered on to redoubled exertion by the kind encouragement of the first lieutenant, who complimented Telford highly on his success. Before the ship sailed, I was on a par, as to qualifications, with many who, without a similar stimulus to exertion, had been some time at sea. I could hand, reef, and—no, I couldn't steer—but I knew all the marks on the lead-line, and had often taken a sly cast. I was constantly on the watch for instruction, always on the alert to start forward when any particular duty was required, and, by evincing a habitual desire to do my duty actively and well, I soon gained ground in the opinion of my superiors. The caterer of the midshipman's mess had been disappointed in his servant, and wished to promote me to that *high* honour. I thanked him heartily for his kind intentions, but declined his offer; as I wished, I said, to learn my duty as *seaman*. This coming to the ears of the first lieutenant, increased his goodwill towards me. 'We shall make something of that young man yet, said he. A circumstance occurred a few days before we sailed, fortunate in its results as far as concerned me; but which might have terminated fatally. The captain's son, one of our midshipmen, a fine boy of thirteen, had been forward on the forecabin, with some orders, and, in returning aft again, stopped to look over the gangway. How the accident happened, I know not, but he lost his balance, and toppled over into the water. The men were below at supper at the time, but I happened to have just come on deck, and had passed him to go forward, when I heard the plunge, and, turning round, missed him from the deck. I instantly surmised what had happened, and, raising the cry of 'A man overboard!' I dashed over after him. There was a strong tide running, and objects were indistinct in the dusk of the evening, but I fortunately caught sight of him, and reached him just in time, for he was sinking. By dint of great exertion, I contrived to support him while I edged down to a buoy, some distance astern, to which we clung till taken off by a boat from the frigate. The captain, who was on board at the time, thanked and praised me, before the whole ship's company, for my gallantry, as he was pleased to call it, in saving the life of his son; and the boy, after whispering to his father, came up to me, and, presenting me with his watch, begged that I would accept it as a mark of his gratitude. I have it still. From that day, both father and son behaved with the most marked kindness to me and took every opportunity of shewing

their goodwill. For some weeks after we sailed for the Cape, nothing particular occurred, beyond the regular routine of duty; but, at the end of that time, the captain wanted some one to assist his secretary, and the word was passed round the decks by the master-at-arms, for those who were good writers among the crew, to send in specimens of their penmanship. I was one of the candidates. Our specimens were sent to the captain, and all the writers were ordered aft. 'Who is the writer of this specimen?' said the captain, pointing to mine.

'I am, sir.'

'And is the motto your own?' (It was, 'When a man's foot is on the first step of the ladder, he should never rest till he reach the top.')

'Yes, sir.'

'Indeed!—you seem to try to act on that principle. Go on as well as you have begun, and there is no telling where you may stop. In the meantime, you may act as assistant to my secretary.' He then called the first lieutenant, Mr Barlow, and walked up and down the deck with him some time; after which Mr Barlow beckoned to me to come to him:—'Dalzell,' said he, 'Captain Edwards and myself have both had reason to be satisfied with you since you joined the ship, and, as you have proved yourself to be qualified to assist his clerk, we wish to keep you separate from the ship's company, and to allow you to mess with the midshipmen, if they have no objection.'

I felt a flushing of the cheek, and a fluttering of the heart. I felt that the *first step of the ladder* was under my foot.

'I hope they can make no objection to me on account of character, sir; and my birth and education place me nearly on an equality with them.'

'Ah!—how came you to be here then?—You took to bad courses, I suppose, and so your friends sent you to sea, to reclaim you: was that it?'

'No, sir!—misfortune and necessity brought me here, united with a love of the profession of a sailor. It is a duty, however, which I owe to you, as well as myself, on the present occasion, to appear in my true colours; and to tell you a tale which I would otherwise have kept secret, and which is only known to myself and my kind friend and townsman, Telford, the boatswain's mate.' I then proceeded to relate to him what I have already told you. Both the captain and Mr Barlow appeared to be much interested in my narrative, and were pleased to compliment me upon my independence of spirit, and the clear and distinct manner in which I expressed myself. 'After this,' said Captain Edwards, 'there can be no bar to your messing with the young gentlemen, as I suppose you have no objection to their hearing your story?'

'None whatever, sir.'

'Begging your pardon, Captain Frederick,' said Mr Barlow, 'I know a midshipman's berth too well, and he may tell of his birth and his misfortunes; but let him know the love, sir, or he'll never hear the end of it.'

'I daresay you're quite right, Mr Barlow. Dalzell, I have no doubt you will be discreet in your communications, for your own sake.'

That same day I was admitted into the midshipmen's mess, and was treated by them with the greatest kindness and consideration. My life was now a comparatively easy one, as I had hardly any duty to perform, except that of writing; but I determined in my own mind, if possible, to prove myself as quick as a clerk, as I had endeavoured to do as a sailor. I was fortunate enough, in my new capacity, not only to please my immediate superior, but to add to the captain's good opinion of me. One stormy night, as we were nearing the Cape, I was letting go some rope on the poop, the hands having been called out to reef topsails, when something fell heavily upon

the deck almost close to my feet. The night was so dark that I could not distinguish what it was; but I thought that a coil of rope, or something of that kind, had been thrown out of the top by the motion of the ship, and I began to feel about to discover what it might be. My hand touched something soft and warm, and at the same time, I heard a faint groan. I immediately gave the alarm, and a quartermaster brought up a lantern, by the light of which we discovered the lifeless body of young Hawkins, one of our midshipmen. He had been up furling the mizzen-royal, had lost his footing, and been precipitated to the deck. Poor fellow! he never spoke again—that groan had been his last. A few days after his death, the captain called the hands out, and told me, before them all, that he had entered me on the ship's books as midshipman, as a reward for my good behaviour; and he had no doubt that the same high sense of duty which had been the means of raising me to the quarter-deck, would incite me to do credit to the appointment. He then told the ship's company to obey my orders for the future as their officer, and then dismissed them. I was immediately surrounded by the midshipmen, all of whom cordially congratulated me upon my appointment, and resolved to have a jollification on the occasion. I was much amused with my old friend, Telford, who took the earliest opportunity of touching his hat to me, and calling me Mr Dalzell.

'Why, Telford! what makes you so distant?' said I, offering my hand at the same time.

'No, Sir, thank ye,' said he; 'I knows my place better nor that. If so be, you likes to give us your flipper down in your cabin, well and good; but not here, sir—not afore the people, 'twould look too free and easy like. I'm plain Tom Telford still; but you've got a handle to your name, now, Mr Dalzell.'

My messmates laughed heartily, and Tom was desired to come down to the berth, where he shook me heartily by the hand, and wished me all manner of success, and then tossed off a tumbler of strong grog in the most approved fashion: nose invisible—eyes raised heavenward—outstretched little-finger—gurgling noise in the throat, ending with a suffocating gasp of enjoyment, and a sweeping over his mouth with the cuff of his jacket.

I pass over a number of trifling incidents in my naval career, and shall proceed at once to the sad catastrophe by which I was deprived of my kind friend and benefactor, the captain, and of most of those with whom I had passed so many happy days. We were lying at anchor in Table Bay, one fine afternoon in November, the 4th of the month. The weather was perfectly calm, but there was a heavy swell, and clouds had been for some time gathering to the northward, and many of our weather-Solomons predicted a storm. In the midshipmen's berth, however, there were no croakers. It was the eve of the 'Gunpowder Plot,' and many a tale was told of boyish pranks, and of the bonfires and fireworks of schoolboy days. There was no care for the future, no anticipation of evil—all was life, and thoughtlessness, and mirth. Alas, alas! how little did we think what one day might bring forth! At daylight of the 5th, it was blowing a heavy gale from the northward, a quarter from which there is no shelter in Table Bay; the sea came tumbling in, in long and heavy surges, and the ship plunged deeply and violently. The hands were called out at ten o'clock—'Down yards and masts!' The fore and main yards were lowered, and the topmasts were struck, and the ship, relieved by the removal of so much top weight, rode more easily. At noon, so little apprehension was felt for the effects of the storm, that a salute was fired, in commemoration of the day. The gale gradually increased in violence, and, at half-past twelve, after a heavy pitch, the cry was heard, 'The small bowen has parted!' 'Let go the sheet!' was the order in reply,

followed by the heavy plunge of the anchor. Such a mountainous sea was running at this time, that every soul on board seemed to anticipate the fatal result that followed. The ship was pitching bows under, shipping green seas over all—the sky was murky black—vivid flashes of lightning burst from it almost incessantly—and the loud rattling of the thunder, every now and then, was heard far above the howling of the gale and the roaring of the sea. Every eye was fixed in eager anxiety on the cables, which every now and then were buried in the sea, and then, as the ship rose to the swell, were seen far a-head of her, high above the surface of the water, stiff and rigid as bars of iron.

I know not how it happened, but, amid all the uproar around me, surrounded by faces which spoke but too plainly fears for the result, and conscious that our danger was imminent, I felt a kind of unnatural buoyancy of spirits, a secret conviction that, whatever might happen, I should escape unhurt. Telford stared at me, and muttered, 'The lad's fey, as they used to say in the north.' At two o'clock, the best bower cable parted, and the spare anchor was let go, but the cable went almost immediately. Our danger was now most imminent; our sole dependence was on our sheet cable; and it was evident to all on board that that could not long resist the heavy strain. Our ensign was now hoisted, union downward, that well-known signal of extreme distress; and the mournful booming of our guns seemed to our excited imaginations to be the knell of our passing minutes. At seven o'clock, a cry was heard, which, like an electric shock, was passed from one end of the ship to the other in a moment, stunning the most daring spirits with its dreaded import. The sheet cable had parted, and the ship was at the mercy of the wind and sea. An order was now given for every man to provide for his own safety, and a scene of the greatest confusion ensued. For about ten minutes, the ship continued to drive before the wind, and then struck, with a dreadful crash, upon a reef of rocks, broadside to the shore. The main and mizzen masts were immediately cut away, and the foremast soon after went by the board. To add to our horrors, the gun-room was discovered to be on fire, and in a short time the smoke came eddying up from the different hatchways in such volumes as to prevent any communication with the lower deck. Feeble would have been the efforts of man in opposing the devouring flame; but here, element was fighting against element, and the sea claimed the mastery; the vast bodies of water which were constantly dashing over the ship, effected, in about ten minutes, what no human exertion could have performed, and we were saved from a fiery, to anticipate a watery death. The scene on board the wreck was now awful in the extreme; every sea that broke over her swept away new victims; and those who were left clinging to life with the energy of despair, shuddered as they missed their companions, in the anticipation of their own approaching doom. Several of the crew, maddened by the horror of a slow and lingering death, plunged desperately into the jaws of their watery tomb, to put an end at once to their suspense; and others, in a vain attempt to reach the shore, were carried out to sea by the eddy, and perished miserably, crying in vain for help from their helpless shipmates. About half-past nine, the poop was washed away, and, forming a large raft, afforded a flattering prospect of deliverance. Seventy or eighty of the crew jumped overboard, and, by great exertion, contrived to reach it. We who remained on board, watched their motions with intense anxiety, and, for the moment, forgot our own danger in the contemplation of theirs. An involuntary shout burst from us, when we saw them reaching the raft in safety, and borne onwards towards the shore; but, alas! a heavy sea struck the floating wreck when only a short distance from the beach, and, turning it over and over, engulfed all its wretched occupants.

'Poor fellows,' said Telford, who was clinging to the ring-bolts by my side, 'their cruise is up! They've reached their anchorage, and we may get our ground-tackle ready as soon as we like!'

'Oh, no!' replied I; 'while there's life, there's hope,' Telford. 'Keep up your heart, man—we shall weather this bout yet.'

'Heaven in its mercy grant that *you* may, Mr Dalzell!—but there is a weight on *my* heart, a dark feeling that my hour has come. I shall never see the bonny banks of Tweed again—never, never! If you should live, sir, to get back to Kelso, tell my good old father'—

'Hold on for your life!' shouted I, as a giant sea came rushing and roaring towards the wreck.

It burst over us; and when, gasping and half-suffocated, I was able to open my eyes, I looked round—my poor companion was gone. A dark body was visible, for a moment, on the surface of the sea, some forty yards distant, and that was the last I saw of my kind friend Telford. Soon after this, the wreck gave a heavy lurch towards the shore, and then, as the sea receded, rolled back again, and separated into three parts. I caught hold of some part of the floating wreck, and, after being repeatedly washed off and recovering my station, I contrived to lash myself securely to it, and then exhausted Nature found relief in insensibility. When I recovered, I found myself lying on the beach, surrounded by the bodies of my unfortunate shipmates, and, raising myself on my knees, I breathed a silent thanksgiving to Heaven for my almost miraculous escape. Hearing a faint groan near me, I groped my way towards the spot whence the sound proceeded—the night was very dark, but a flash of lightning revealed to me the object of my search. It was the body of a seaman stretched upon his back—the right arm extended on the sand, and the left covering the face. At first I thought it was a corpse that lay before me, so stiff, so cold, so motionless did it seem to be; but, on putting my hand on the breast, I felt the pulsation of the heart, and, in a few moments, low stifled moanings were heard, like those of a person labouring under the influence of nightmare. I spoke to the sleeper, but without receiving any answer; but, the muttering still continuing, I shook him gently.

'Hollo!' shouted he, as he started to his feet.

What was my surprise and delight, when I recognised the voice of Telford, whom I thought I had seen swallowed up by the waves.

'Telford!' said I, 'is that you?'

'Why, who else should it be?' replied he; 'eh, old boy, who else should it be?'

To my great surprise I now perceived that my poor shipmate was half-seas-over, as we call it.

'Telford,' said I, 'do you not know me?'

'Oh, Mr Dalzell! I ax your pardon; I didn't know it was you, seeing that all cats are grey alike in the dark. I've had a reg'lar snooze; but I hope I may never snooze again, if I'm to have such another dream.'

'What have you been dreaming about?'

'Why, sir, I dreamt I was adrowning, and that I was going down, down, down, when I heard your voice calling out, 'Come, Telford, I'm not an admiral yet;' and with that you took me by the scuff of the neck, and then I opened my eyes, and you had a hold o' me, sure enough. But d—n—ax your pardon, sir,' said he, fumbling about; 'but it's enough to make a parson swear.'

'Why, what's the matter?'

'Why, sir, I've lost my call;* no wonder my pipe's put out.'

'Is that all? You may thank heaven you did not lose your life. You had little hope of saving it when we last parted'

* Silver whistle, used by the boatswain and his mates.

‘Indeed! why, then, it can’t have been a dream after all. Blowed if I don’t think I’m a little crazy in my upper works; my head is all in a whirl, and there’s fifty thousand sparks dancing before my eyes. I say, Mr Dalzell, what was that you said about losing life, and all that gammon? Ax your pardon, sir—hopes no defence,’ continued he, laying his hand with drunken familiarity upon my shoulder. ‘Hollo! why, you’re as wet as a half-wrung swab, and I’m not much better myself! What’s the meaning of that?’

‘Why, the meaning of it is, that we have both had a most providential escape from drowning. You must be crazy, indeed, if you have already forgot the sad events of the last few hours. When you were swept off the wreck of the poor old Dareall, I little expected to see you again. I could almost have sworn that I saw you go down.’

‘The wreck!—ay, I remember it all now! Providential escape, *indeed*. Only think of a man, as my old father used to say, putting an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains! I had clean forgotten all about it. Howsoever, I’ll take my ‘davy I was so full of water, that, afore I knowed what I was about, I took rum enough in to make me a tumbler—ha, ha!’

‘You seem to treat the matter very lightly, Telford; I see nothing laughable in it.’

‘Why, Lord love your Honour, when the grog’s in, the wit’s out, you know, as the old song says.’

‘But where did you get the grog? You were sober enough, and sad enough, goodness knows, when we parted; and how did you escape?’

‘Why, your Honour, I rode ashore on the back of a breaker,* and, as soon as I landed, I knocked my horse on the head, and found a drop of capital rum inside, and, as I was devilish cold and wet, I made a little too free with it mayhap.’

‘Well, well, it’s fortunate it’s no worse. Can you walk, do you think? We had better make the best of our way to the town?’

‘Walk!—to be sure I can, your Honour, though perhaps I may steer a little wild or so; but, if you’ll heave ahead, I’ll follow in your wake, and then you won’t be so apt to notice me if I give a yaw now and then.’

We soon fell in with a party of Light Dragoons, by whom we were most kindly welcomed, and who assisted us in making our way to Cape Town. We afterwards heard that these gallant fellows had greatly distinguished themselves during that awful night by their humane daring; forcing their horses into the surf, to rescue the struggling survivors of the crew, many of whom would have perished, but for their timely aid. In the town, we met with several of our unfortunate shipmates, to whom and to ourselves the inhabitants behaved with the greatest kindness and attention. At daylight next morning, a mournful sight presented itself; and we then ascertained the full extent of our sad loss. The whole line of beach was thickly strewn with dead bodies, and fragments of the wreck. There were only four officers and about fifty men saved—three of the lieutenants, the purser, surgeon, and two midshipmen, were fortunately on shore at the time of the accident; all the rest of the officers, and about three hundred and fifty seamen, perished. Three waggon loads of corpses were taken to a place near the hospital, and interred; and about one hundred bodies, dreadfully mangled, were buried in one large pit on the beach, near where they were found. The body of my kind friend, the captain, was never recovered, but those of the other officers were interred, the Sunday following, with military honours. So ended my unfortunate outset in the Dareall. The survivors of her crew were drafted into other ships, and the officers were sent home by the first opportunity. I afterwards joined

the Sunbeam frigate, and, in due course of time, got my promotion in her. As soon as she was paid off, I hastened to Kelso, fondly hoping there to find the prize, the hopes of obtaining which had for years cheered me onwards. You know how I have been disappointed. And now, my kind friend, the story of my adventures is ended.”

‘Oh,’ said I, ‘you have told us the *story*, but not the *whole* story; you have still an account to give of your cruise in the Sunbeam; do not flatter yourself you are going to escape so easily.’

‘You must excuse me, my dear sir; I am not accustomed to act as my own trumpeter; when Telford comes, he may take the office upon himself.’

‘What became of that poor fellow? He must be a rough diamond.’

‘Rough enough; but as good-hearted a fellow, and as fine a specimen of his class, as ever lived. I wonder he has not been here before this time, for I told him I meant to come here, and he said he would give you ‘a hail’ as he went past, to let you know I was coming. I suppose he has ‘hove to,’ as he would call it, by the way.”

‘But how does he know the place?’

‘Oh, he knew the neighbourhood from my description of it immediately, and, said he, ‘if I make his number when I get there, some one will tell me where he hangs out.’”

‘Well, I shall be glad to see him whenever he comes. Anna, my love,’ said I to my wife, ‘Mr Dalzell will be ready, I dare say, to do justice to your luncheon whenever it makes its appearance.’

We were comfortably seated at the table, discussing our strawberries and cream, when the sound of a loud shrill whistle thrilled through our ears, followed by a rough hoarse voice, bellowing words which my wife and I could not understand. We both started from our seats, and ran to the window, which was open to admit the cool air, though the blind was down to exclude the sun. Dalzell sat still, and burst out laughing. On drawing up the blind, we saw a stout, dark-looking man, with an open and cheerful countenance, dressed like a sailor. His little, shining, tarpaulin hat was *flapped* down upon the back of his head, and his long black hair hung in curls about his forehead and ears. His left arm was ‘absent without leave’ from his empty sleeve, and in his right hand he held the little silver pipe which had caused all the commotion.

‘Ax your pardon, sir,’ said he, touching his hat, when he saw me; ‘I made bold to call the hands out to muster, to see if one Luftenant Dalzell would answer to his name. Hopes no defence, sir.’

‘Ah, Telford, my fine fellow, how are you?’ said Dalzell, peeping over our shoulders.

‘God bless your Honour!’ said he, respectfully raising his hat; ‘I’m as pleased to hear the sound of your voice as if it were the pipe to grog.’

‘That’s saying a great deal, Tom; why, you sway about *now* as if you were a little top-heavy.’

‘Oh, no, your Honour; I’ve only been freshening the nip* once or twice, and my bread-basket’s a little empty.’

‘Well, come in, Tom,’ said I, ‘and we’ll try to fill it for you.’

Tom was soon established in a comfortable berth in the kitchen, and did ample justice to the good cheer which was placed in abundance before him. As soon as he had had good time to shake his cargo into its place, he was summoned into the parlour. At first he demurred a little to change his quarters, saying that he was more in his own place in the galley† than in the cabin; but his reluctance was overcome when he saw spirits and water precede him. When he came in, he stood in the doorway, making sundry

* Breaker—a small cask.

term for taking a dram.

† Kitchen.

hobbing attempts at a bow, twirling his hat round and round, and looking as bashful as a young maiden.

"Come in, Tom," said I; "sit down and tell us all your adventures."

Tom, however, was too polite a man, in his own way, to sit down in the presence of his officer, till the lieutenant said—

"Come, come, Tom, bring yourself to an anchor at once."

Thus authorized, he plumped into a chair, and, putting his hat under it, carefully deposited there a large quid of tobacco, which he dislodged from its snug quarters in his left cheek.

"Now, Tom, carry on," said Mr Dalzell.

"Why, your Honour," said Tom, slyly glancing at the table, "I'm in no spirits for spinning a yarn just now."

I laughed, and filled a tumbler with whisky and water, to which Tom paid his respects with evident satisfaction.

"Mr Dalzell has told us," said I, "of your escape from the wreck of the Dareall—and a wonderful one it was."

"You may say that," replied he; "I never had such a narrow squeak in my life."

"But tell us something about yourself, and Mr Dalzell; I suppose you have been in action together?"

"Action! Lord love ye, sir, we were hardly ever out of it. If I were to tell you all, I'd have nothing else to do for the next week. I always said I'd live to see him an admiral, and I say so still, and if ever man deserved a flag, there sits the man; for a braver officer and a better seaman never trod a plank, though I says it as shouldn't say it, seeing as how I first taught him to reef and steer."

"Come, come, Tom," interrupted Dalzell, "if you are going to spin such a yarn as that, the sooner you cut it the better."

"Ax your Honour's pardon, but I must speak. Didn't you save my life in that 'ere action with the Flower-de-louce? Haven't you been the best friend to me I ever had? Haven't you often saved me from the gangway when I've dipt my whiskers too deep into the grog-kid. And can I sit quiet with such a glass as this before me?" emptying the tumbler as he spoke.

"Well, that's enough, Tom; if you're so fond of your grog, you had better get on with your story as fast as you can; for not a drop more shall you taste till you have finished."

"But bless your heart, sir, how am I to begin? I'm like a marine adrift on a grating, or an ass in a hay field; I've got lots o' yarns to tell, but I don't know which way to turn myself among them."

"Well," said Dalzell, "I'll go and take a walk, and leave you to your own devices," and he left the room.

"Now, your Honour," said Tom, addressing me, "I'll tell you a famous trick our captain sarved the Johnny Croppōs.* He was a dashing fellow that, and never stuck at nuffen; a reg'lar fire-eater; 'ud face the devil himself. We was a-cruising off the coast of France, when the look-out hails the deck, 'A strange sail a-head!' Well there was crack on everything below and aloft, clear ship for action—beat to quarters, and all that; and we were soon near enough to see a snug business-looking craft, brig-rigged, standing to the westward under easy sail. So we fired a gun to leeward, and hoisted English colours, and she did the same, and hauled her wind to join us. When she came within hail, we found she was an English privateer, and the captain of her said he had something of consequence to tell our commander, and he was ordered to come on board. Well, the news soon spread over the ship, that the privateer had seen two French merchantmen at anchor, under the guns of a small battery; that he was not strong enough to cut them out himself, and that he had hailed a King's ship the day before to tell her so, but he was not believed.

'Well,' says our captain, says he, 'I'll have a slap at them at all events.'

'I'll lead the way, sir, if you'll allow me.'

'But'—and here they went into the cabin with the first luff; and, after staying there for some time, out they comes, and the captain of the privateer jumps into his boat, and shoves off.

'You understand?' shouted the skipper to him.

'Perfectly, sir.'

Our captain looked as pleased as Punch, and we all saw there was something in the wind. The privateer stood to the French coast under easy sail, and we followed in her wake. Word was passed for volunteers for a cutting out job, and there wasn't a man o' the ship's company as didn't come forward; but they couldn't all go—that was sartain, and there was many a long face amongst those that were not chosen; but the others, you'd a-thought they were going to a *hop* at the point, they were so pleased at the thoughts o' the fun. Well, when we'd got well in sight o' the land, the privateer made all sail, and shaped a course along the coast, and we cracked on in chase, but then we put a drag over the bows to keep us astarn, and, though we made a great show, we didn't gain upon her. We all wondered at this strange move, but we wondered still more when we saw French colours flying from our peak, and heard the orders given to fire the bow-chasers, but to aim wide o' the mark. We saw the shot drop into the water, first on the one quarter, then on the other, of the privateer, but devil a one struck her; and she, with her English colours flying, kept peppering away at us, with her starn-chasers; but her shot, like ours, all fell wide of the mark. By this time we were well in with the shore, and could see two fine large merchant ships lying at anchor close under the guns of a small battery, near the town, which lined the beach of a snug bay. The privateer immediately hauled her wind off the coast as if afeared o' the guns o' the battery, and we did the same. We could see the beach crowded with people hurrying to look at the running fight, between the French frigate, as they thought (she had been one once) and the English privateer. Well, this game lasted for some time; lots o' smoke and noise, for we yawed two or three times to give her a broadside, and to let her get away from us, till at last we gave it up for a bad job, and bore up under easy sail for the bay we had before seen. We stood in, clued all up, and came to an anchor with a very short scope of cable, and brought to, all ready for weighing again. The boats were lowered and manned, and a few jollies* were stowed away in the starn sheets out o' sight. The beach was crowded with people anxious to hear the news; even the swaddies,† except two or three sentries, deserted the battery, now that all danger was past, as they thought. Well, the gig pulled towards the shore, just to amuse the Frenchmen, while another boat pulled directly to the battery, and, in quarter less no time, the sentries were knocked down, and the guns were tumbled off their carriages—there were lots o' crowbars and handspikes in the boat. Meantime, two other boats boarded the merchantmen, and, afore you could say Jack Robinson, their crews, never dreaming of the English, were secured,—their cables cut, and the boats towing them out, without a single shot being fired, or a man hurt. By this time, the topsails were at the masthead aboard the frigate, and the anchor weighed, and she stood quietly out of the bay, and hove to. The French ensign was then hauled down, and, with three roaring cheers from our ship's company, the red flag of Old England was run up in its stead. In a short time, crews were put on board the prizes, the boats were hoisted in, and we shaped our course for the Channel. What do you think o' that now, sir, for a clever move?"

* Nautical for "Crapaud"—nickname for the French.

* Marines.

† Soldiers.

"Capital, capital! I never heard a better. But what part of the play did Mr Dalzell and you act?"

"Oh, I says nuthen. I knows you was the first officer to mount the battery, and who was the man as trod upon his heels; but that is neither here nor there. Kelso for ever, says I!—I says nuthen!"

I could not help laughing at Tom's expressive "nuthens." "Kelso for ever, indeed!" said I. "Then the two Kelso men were foremost, eh?"

"It's of no use denying it, sir, or making a secret of what's no secret at all. I believe that job was the 'casion of Mr Dalzell's having a swab tacked to his shoulder."

"A swab!—what's a swab?"

"It's what you long-shore gemmen calls an appleeat,* I believe, sir; a bunch o' gold yarns a leeftenant wears on his shoulder."

"Oh, ay, I understand."

"Oh, how pleased he was when he got his commission some time after; and pleased was I to see his happy face, for I knowed he was a-thinking of the bonny lass he left behind him at Kelso. I hope he'll soon take her in tow now, for life."

Great was the sorrow the good-hearted fellow expressed, when I told him of Dalzell's disappointment. He swore he would find Grace Douglas, if she were above ground; and that he would leave no means untried, as long as he had health and strength to persevere.

"Well, but how did you lose your arm, Tom?"

"Oh, your Honour, it was in that 'ere action with the Flour-de-Louce. We were blazing away at each other as hard as we could lather, and I had jump'd into the main chains to do something I was ordered, when—crack a musket ball strikes me on the arm, and I fell overboard, as helpless as a sucking pig; and I'd have gone down like a pig of lead, if Leeftenant Dalzell hadn't banged overboard after me, and supported me to the rudder chains, where we hung till they gave us a rope. Long life to him, says I!—I lost my arm, but I got a pension, and we both on us got lots o' prize money."

At this point of Tom's yarn, Mr Dalzell called to me through the window—

"Here are some young visiters coming, Mr Thompson."

I looked out, and replied—

"Oh, they are my two boys. I forgot to tell you that I am a father, as well as a husband. The little fellows have been, with their nurse, spending the forenoon at my sister's—the house you see there, through the trees. Let us go and meet them." And out we all sallied, Tom bringing up the rear. As we approached them, the nurse, who was talking and playing with the children, looked up, and, seeing Dalzell, uttered a faint scream, and turned deadly pale—"Hollo!" said I, hurrying towards her; "what is the matter with the girl?"

My companion, however, was beforehand with me. He rushed past me, caught her in his arms; and, calling her his "dear, dear Grace," kissed her pale cheek till the blood mantled rosy red upon it again, while she murmured—"Dear Edward, then you have not forgot your Grace?"

It was quite a romantic scene altogether, with a slight touch of the ludicrous. There was the girl hanging on Dalzell's arm, half-fainting; her head hanging back; her bonnet off; and her long, fair hair floating in the breeze; while hysterical sobs of joy burst from her every now and then; my little George roaring might and main, and sobbing out—"Naughty man! bite Nelly;" Dalzell, pale and agitated, alternately kissing her cheek and hugging her to his bosom; my wife crying; Tom Telford whirling round and round, waving his hat over his head, and flourishing his empty sleeve in the air; and I, the most sensible

person in the group, standing staring in delighted astonishment at this pleasing and unexpected denouement. After the first excitement occasioned by this unlooked-for meeting was over, we all returned to the house, eager to hear Grace Douglas's account of her adventures. Before she begins, however, I must beg the reader's patience till I relate how she happened to be in my service. About a twelvemonth before, my wife was obliged to part with her nurserymaid, in consequence of her repeated acts of misconduct; and, not being able to replace her in the neighbourhood, she begged me to advertise for one in the public prints. In answer to this advertisement, a young and very lovely woman presented herself, whose appearance immediately prepossessed us in her favour. Her manners were mild and gentle, and such as were little to be expected in one in her rank of life. When asked for a character, she replied that she had never been in service; that she was an orphan, and had none to recommend her; that, if we liked to try her, she hoped and trusted she would give us satisfaction; at least no endeavour should be wanting on her part. She declined giving any account of her family, merely saying that adverse circumstances had obliged her to resort to this means of seeking a subsistence. *She* did not care about wages; all that she wished for was protection and a comfortable home. My wife, much as she was pleased with her appearance and manner, was unwilling to make what she considered the dangerous experiment of engaging an unknown character; but I overruled her objections, in which I was materially assisted by mamma's darling, little George, who, attracted by the mild countenance and sweet voice of the stranger, clung to her side, and cried for her to remain. My wife could not resist the appeal; and Ellen Stewart, as she wished to be called, became one of our family, and soon proved herself worthy of our confidence. The substance of her previous history, as she related it to Dalzell, was as follows:—

A succession of bad crops, and of unfortunate farming speculations, had obliged her father to give up the farm in which they had so long lived happily together. His health had been long declining; and, when he died, she was left almost destitute. She had a maternal aunt, who was willing and anxious to share with her her trilling pittance; but she was determined not to be a burden on one who was hardly able to support herself. At this time, our advertisement met her eye, and she immediately hastened to answer it, resolved, under an assumed name, to submit to the duties of a menial station, which, she was sure, if her poor, but proud aunt were let into the secret, she would indignantly oppose. She had written to her aunt, to assure her of her welfare, but without disclosing the name of her place of abode. She had had, before her father died, two very eligible offers of marriage, which she rejected; for she felt sure, she said, that her own Edward would return. Three weeks afterwards, the long-tried constancy of the lovers was rewarded—mutually rewarded; for they were worthy of each other. I had the pleasure of giving away the bride; and honest Tom enjoyed an extra glass of his favourite grog on the occasion, by way of "wetting his commission," as he called it—Dalzell having installed him as a kind of Jack of all trades in his new establishment. The only drawback to his perfect happiness was, that he never lived to see his master an admiral.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

HENRY HAMILTON.

FEW of our readers, we dare say, ever heard of, and fewer still, we presume, had any personal acquaintance with, Abdel Calec, the rich merchant of Bagdad. But it may be said we are proceeding too fast—what has Abdel Calec to do with *Wilson's Tales of the Borders and of Scotland*? We know the pertinency of the question; but we do not choose, at present, to answer it; preferring, in our own self-willed way, to give, in the meantime, some account of the Eastern worthy we have named; wherein we will exhibit, we think, as curious an instance of the strange destinies to which men are sometimes born, as may be often met with: perhaps the reader's question may be answered by the history we are to unfold. Close by the banks of the Tigris, and at the west end of the new town of Bagdad—that city so celebrated in Eastern story—there stands, or did stand, some sixty or seventy years since, a mansion of large size and singularly handsome structure. Nor was its interior unworthy of the promise held out by its external appearance. Its chambers were spacious and lofty, and, in their furniture, exhibited all the magnificence of Oriental taste. Large gardens, filled with the most beautiful flowers and the rarest vegetable productions of all kinds, occupied the space between the house and the river; while, immediately behind the former, descending terraces, skirted with splendid flowering shrubs, led, by short, but broad flights of steps, whose balustrades were of polished white marble, to the garden below.

In the interior of the building, or rather forming, as it were, an outwork to it, was a large open area, whose floor was of variegated marble. In the centre of this court, there bubbled up a beautiful fountain of the purest water; while the whole was deliciously shaded by a row of trees, of close and thick foliage, that skirted the area, and whose branches, meeting and intermingling above, formed a canopy of the richest green, that effectually excluded the scorching rays of the sun.

On the polished floor of this luxurious retreat, lay scattered about several small square pieces of thick and beautifully-wrought Turkey or Persian carpet, for the accommodation of its visitors; who, we need not inform those acquainted with Eastern customs, sat on them in the cross-legged position peculiar to that country.

Such is a brief sketch of the particular mansion in the celebrated city of Bagdad, to which we have called the attention of the reader. It was the residence of Abdel Calec.

It was some time in the month of July, in the year 1783, that the owner of this magnificent house was informed, as he sat squatting on one of those pieces of carpeting, close by the fountain which we have described, and busily employed in smoking through a long Turkish pipe, of the most costly material and splendid workmanship, that a party of strangers had arrived in the city, and that a person waited to be admitted to him with a message from them.

"Admit him, Hassan," said Abdel Calec to the domestic who brought the intelligence; "admit him," he said, briefly and sententially, withdrawing his pipe an instant

from his mouth, and immediately resuming it again. The attendant, having made a profound salaam, retired; and, in a minute after, the person who sought admission entered. He was dressed in the Turkish fashion—turban, sash, and wide trowsers. On approaching within two or three yards of Abdel Calec, the visiter stopped, performed a reverential salaam, and pronounced, in a deferential tone, the usual greeting, "Salem alikem!" then muttering, "Praise be to God alone, and Mahommed great is his glory!" he proceeded to inform Abdel Calec, which he did with much Eastern hyperbole, that the strangers who had come to the city desired an interview with him.

"Know ye what they want, Hamam?" said Abdel Calec, to whom the other was known, he being a resident in Bagdad, and frequently employed as dragoman or interpreter by foreigners with whom Abdel had to deal; and it was in this capacity he was now acting to the strangers who had arrived in the city.

"Know ye what they want, Hamam?" said Abdel, after an interval of some seconds, during which he had continued smoking with undisturbed serenity.

"Great is the glory of Mahommed," replied the dragoman, "and unbounded his beneficence. I believe the desire of the strangers to visit the mighty Abdel Calec, the glory of Bagdad, the sun of Persia, toucheth a supply of monies, of which the strangers have run short; the merchant, Haji Belal, whom heaven long preserve, on whom they had credit for unlimited sums, being now at Aleppo with merchandise."

"Humph," ejaculated Abdel Calec, still plying his pipe, and for some minutes vouchsafing no other remark on the communication just made to him.

At length—"Hast seen their letter of credit on brother Haji Belal, Hamam?" said the merchant. "We may not do these things without much caution; nor without good assurance of our safety therein."

"Nay, then, as the prophet is all truth, I may not say that I have seen the document the mighty of Bagdad speakest of," replied the dragoman; "but have no doubt of the honour and faith of the strangers."

"Humph," again ejaculated Abdel Calec. "What country people are they, Hamam?"

"Three English, and two Scotch; one of the latter of whom is a lady, beautiful as a sultana, and precious as perfume, scented with ambergris and odours," replied the magniloquent Hamam.

"Scotch!" exclaimed Abdel Calec, with a degree of excitation in his manner which strikingly contrasted with his usual gravity and taciturnity; but, instantly checking himself, as if unwilling that his emotion should be marked by Hamam, he again repeated the word—but in a studiously lower and less excited tone—"Ah, Scotch, humph; and English, three English," he said, with an air of indifference. "Well, be it so. They are a respectable people these English, and a wealthy, Hamam—wealthy and powerful. Send them to me Hamam, in an hour hence. Tell them I wish them all to come; I desire to entertain them." Pleased with the success of his negotiation, which he hoped would terminate in something handsome to himself, Hamam, after repeating some of his complimentary

flourishes, to "the glory of Bagdad, the sun of Persia"—which, however, seemed to have very little effect on him to whom they were addressed—made another profound reverence to the wealthy merchant, and withdrew to inform his employers of the result of his mission.

While he is doing this, let us mark the proceedings of Abdel Calec, and see what reference they bear to the impending visitation; for a reference they will be found to possess, and a character too, bespeaking an unusual interest in the approaching occurrence.

On the departure of Hamam, Abdel Calec called his favourite and confidential domestic, Hassan—

"Hassan," he said, on the entrance of that official, to whom he always spoke with the utmost familiarity. "Knowest thou what was Hamam's business with me? Did he inform thee?"

Hassan answered in the negative, at the same time looking inquiringly at his master, as if feeling that the questions put to him were preparative to his being put in possession of the information to which they alluded.

"Hamam's business with me," continued Abdel Calec, "was on behalf of some strangers who have arrived in the city." Here Abdel Calec paused, and drew and discharged two or three whiffs from his pipe. "They have run short of money," he resumed. Hassan smiled and shook his head, as much as to say, No uncommon case that.

"Yes, but they have a good letter of credit on my friend Haji Belal," replied Abdel Calec, who understood his major domo's silent insinuation. "They have an unquestionable letter of credit on my friend Haji Belal," said the merchant, after another grave pause, "and thou well knowest that the Haji's name, as to wealth and credit, is the first among our Persian merchants."

"The second, an' please you," replied Hassan, deferentially. "Abdel Calec's is the first, allowed by all men."

"Nay, nay, it is not so, Hassan," said Abdel Calec; "but that matters not for the present. But Haji Belal is not at home. He has gone to Aleppo, with some silks of Hindoostan. 'Twill prove a bad speculation though, I fear," said Abdel Calec, his habits of traffic at once leading him away, on the mention of his friend's adventure, from the principal subject of his discussion. "'Twill prove a bad speculation, I fear," he said; "for, by my last advices from Aleppo, silks had fallen there twenty per cent. Now, I know that these Haji Belal is now carrying to market stood him in—let me see. No, I cannot tell exactly what they stood him, without looking over my correspondence; but I know it was the highest rate going. Now, here must be a loss—a dead loss, Hassan. But what I was going to say, Hassan, was this—I mean—that is, if the letter of credit which Hamam assured me these strangers had, prove a trust-worthy document—I mean, I say, to let them have the monies they want, to oblige my friend Haji, who, I know, would readily do the same for me. But this is not all yet, Hassan, I would tell thee. I have invited these strangers to my house. I wish to shew them some civility. It is a long time now, Hassan, since I gave an entertainment," said the merchant, with a sigh. "I have lost the relish for these things now. I have had no feasting nor merrymaking in my house since—since"—here a sudden emotion prevented Abdel Calec finishing the sentence he meditated—"since," he at length said, "my poor Zobeide died—since the star of my hopes set in the ocean of eternity—since the light of mine eyes passed away, and left me in darkness and solitude—left me friendless and childless. She was a kind mistress to thee, Hassan," added the old man, in a voice tremulous with emotion.

"She was—she was," eagerly exclaimed the faithful domestic, but in a voice choking with the violence of suppressed feeling; for it was with averted head and silent

weeping that he had listened to the latter part of his master's discourse.

"God's will be done," said the Persian merchant, after a pause. "Now, Hassan," he continued, after another short interval of silence, "I have invited these people to my house, as I have told thee, and I wish to be particular in my attentions to them."

Having said this, he concluded by desiring Hassan to put the largest and handsomest apartment in the house in its best order, and to prepare suitable refreshment for the party he expected.

"Let your preparations, Hassan," said his master, "be such as will do honour at once to my guests and to me."

At the expiry of the time named by Abdel Calec, the party of strangers whom he had invited, arrived. They were received, at the entrance of the noble mansion, by a number of slaves, splendidly attired, who strove which should do them most honour. Having entered the vestibule of the building, they were taken charge of by Hassan himself, who was also bedizened in his best, and, after being conducted through various courts and galleries, all lined with magnificently-dressed attendants, were ushered into an apartment of the noblest dimensions; its windows shaded with rich silk curtains, its cornices glittering with gold, its walls hung with the most splendid mirrors, and around the whole apartment a rich display of sofas, to the number of eight or ten, covered with crimson cloth of gold, and whose feet were of pure and highly-polished ivory. In the midst of all this magnificence, and seated on one of these gorgeous sofas, the party found, when they entered, an old man of pleasant countenance, but of exceedingly grave and staid demeanour. On his head he wore a rich turban, covered with brilliants; and around his middle a girdle of crimson silk, similarly adorned. In his girdle was stuck a dagger, whose hilt was richly studded with precious stones, of singular size and beauty. Red morocco slippers, and a beard of venerable length, completed the external decorations of the personage to whom the British travellers were now introduced.

This personage, we need hardly say, was no other than Abdel Calec. He had chosen to receive his visitors in state, and he was now doing so.

After the first salutations were over, which each performed after the fashion of their respective countries, the visitors, obeying an invitation made by signal by their host, seated themselves on sofas; while Hamam, the dragoman or interpreter, who accompanied the party as their medium of communication, took up a position close by Abdel Calec, as the most suitable for the due discharge of his duties as translator.

Sherbet, and coffee, and sweetmeats of various kinds, presented in elegant cut crystal dishes, by slaves, having made their rounds, the business part of the interview commenced through the medium of Hamam. This business the strangers prefaced, by giving a short account of themselves: which account bore, that they had come last from Smyrna; that the Scotch gentleman, whose name was Lamington, had settled there about a year previously, as a commercial agent; that the lady was his wife; that the three English gentlemen were persons with whom they had got acquainted since they came to Smyrna—they being also commercial agents or merchants there, and of the highest respectability; that their visit to Bagdad, on the present occasion, was one of mere curiosity—a mere jaunt of pleasure, which their intimacy and friendly footing had suggested; that they meant to remain a few days in Bagdad, and then to proceed to Aleppo and thence back again, by sea, to Smyrna.

Having given this account of himself and party, Mr Lamington, who acted as spokesman on the occasion, next

stated the unexpected difficulty in which they found themselves placed with regard to pecuniary matters, in consequence of the absence of Haji Belal, on whom he had an order for money from a banker in Smyrna. This order he now produced and handed to his host, who, after glancing it over, and looking at the signature for an instant, returned it with a smile and a nod, adding two or three words, which Hamam translated into "All right, all right." He then desired the interpreter to inform Mr Lamington and his party, that he would very readily advance them, in the absence of his friend Haji Belal, any sum of money they might require. This important point settled, the conversation became desultory; and in this conversation, Mrs Lamington, who was a very young woman, and of exceeding beauty, frequently joined, at least in so far as to put a number of questions, which, from their simplicity and feminine character, seemed greatly to amuse the old merchant, to whom they were all faithfully rendered into vernacular Persian, by Hamam. But a close observer might have detected, in the expression of the old man's countenance, every time the dulcet tones of the fair Scotchwoman—for she too, as well as her husband, was a native of that country—fell on his ear, a feeling of a graver character and deeper origin than that of amusement. Such observer might have discovered symptoms of strong internal emotion, whenever the Scottish accent was made manifest in the gentle speech of his fair visiter. It might have been observed too, and it did not altogether escape those present, that the old man's eye was constantly fixed, with a look of perplexed and intense, but melancholy interest, on his fair guest. It was evident, in short, that some strong feeling was working within him, which bore reference to that lady; but none could form the most distant conjecture whence it arose, or in what it originated. Not being, however, a subject for notice, or one that could be at all alluded to in any way, or rather being one which all thought it due, in courtesy to their host, not to see, the conversation went on without interruption, although the manner of Abdel Calec was now certainly calculated rather to discompose a little those in his presence, and to throw them into some perplexity.

At this juncture, the repast to which the travellers had been invited was served up. It consisted of an immense variety of dishes, each of which was brought in by a different attendant, and dispersed over a number of small low round tables of beautiful workmanship; all being elegantly inlaid with silver. The repast itself was composed of the most choice delicacies of the East, and of its rarest vegetable productions.

On its being announced that the tables were spread, the party took their seats before them; and, under the encouraging nods and smiles of their kind host, did every justice to the good things provided for the occasion. In this agreeable employment, however, it was observed that the latter did not join them. He took up, indeed, some trifle; but he did so, apparently, only out of courtesy to his guests—both his moral and physical senses seeming absorbed in the contemplation of his fair guest. Yet was it evident that it was not the beauty of that lady, remarkable as this was, that excited so strong an interest in, and so riveted the attention of the old man; for, besides the consideration of his years, which rendered such adulation unlikely, there was a melancholy and intensity of feeling in his gaze which does not belong to the sentiment to which we have alluded. The repast concluded, and the dishes removed by a new set of attendants, and coffee and pipes having been substituted in their stead, the conversation, which the necessary business of eating had partially interrupted, was resumed. After this conversation had again continued for some time, Abdel Calec rather surprised his guests, by first suddenly ordering all his own attendants to withdraw and lastly

desiring the interpreter to leave the apartment, and to await his call—himself following the latter to the door, apparently to see that he went fairly out of hearing. Having assured himself of this, he carefully shut the door, returned to his guests, and seated himself, with a smile of peculiar meaning, on the sofa which he had before occupied. Being now without an interpreter, the visitors of the Persian merchant felt themselves in an awkward predicament. This all felt; but Mrs Lamington was the first to express it.

"Dear me, James," she said, smilingly, and addressing her husband, "what on earth are we to do with the old gentleman now? He speaks no English; and we speak nothing else. What could he mean by sending our interpreter out of the room?"

"He'll explain that to you himself, presently, my dear," replied—who? Her husband? No. Some other of her party, then? No. Who, then, in the name of all that's puzzling? Why, no other, good reader, than Abdel Calec himself!—no other than the sun of Persia, the glory of Bagdad himself!—and that, too, in plain, unchallengeable English!

This was the case, then; and we leave it to the reader to judge of the utter amazement which a circumstance so extraordinary, and so well-calculated to excite such a feeling, was likely to create amongst those who were made witnesses of it. Mrs Lamington's astonishment expressed itself in an actual *bona fide* scream, in which there was mingled no small degree of terror, although there was certainly nothing in the circumstance, however odd it might be, to excite any such feeling. The gentlemen, again, one and all, started back, in the extremity of their amazement, and gazed, for a second, in speechless surprise, on the gifted Abdel Calec, who seemed not a little to enjoy the confusion he had created. He laughed heartily. At length—

"My fair *countrywoman*," he said, addressing Mrs Lamington—"and you, gentlemen, I see that you have not been prepared to find, in the turbaned and bearded merchant of Bagdad, a native of the same country to which you yourselves belong. Yet is this true. I am a Scotchman, fair lady and gentlemen. I was born in the town of Paisley, in Renfrewshire."

"How strange!" here interposed Mrs Lamington. "My husband and I are natives of the same place."

"Indeed!" said Abdel Calec; for we will still call him by his assumed name—"indeed!" he said; and he again gazed for an instant on the fair speaker, with that look of intense interest and perplexity which had so strikingly marked the preceding part of his conduct.

"How like my father!" whispered Mrs Lamington to her husband. "Did you ever see so striking a likeness?"

"Very striking, indeed," replied the latter.

"Like your father, my fair *countrywoman*, did you say?—like your father?" said Abdel Calec, who overheard the remark, now approaching Mrs Lamington, and taking her affectionately by the hand—his voice trembling with emotion as he spoke—"Your name, lady?—for God's sake, your name?—your maiden name, I mean?"

"Elizabeth Hamilton," replied the lady, in great surprise, both at the question itself and at the agitation of the questioner.

"Your father's name?" now inquired Abdel Calec, with increasing emotion.

"James Hamilton, sir."

"His business?"

"A manufacturer."

"Your mother's name?—*her* maiden name, too, I mean? Excuse the seeming impertinence of these inquiries—I have a purpose in it," continued Abdel Calec, with trembling eagerness.

"Marion Henderson."

"One question more, and I have done. Had you a paternal uncle? Did you ever hear your father speak of such a relative?"

"I have; but he has been long dead. He parted from my father in anger—this was before I was born—left Paisley—went out to the East Indies—and was wrecked, as my father was informed, in the Persian Gulf—and there perished, together with the whole of the crew and passengers of the unfortunate vessel on board of which he was. This is all I know, or ever heard of my uncle."

"Heard you—heard you nothing," said Abdel Calec, in great agitation, "of the cause of his displeasure with his brother, and of the disgust which drove him from his native place?"

"Not directly nor fully," replied Mrs Lamington, blushing. "But I have gathered, from some broken hints that have fallen, from time to time, from my mother, that it was her preference for my father that was the principal cause of their difference."

"My niece! my niece!" here exclaimed Abdel Calec, in a paroxysm of affectionate excitation, and flinging his arms around the neck of his astonished relative. "Yes, the daughter of my beloved, but much injured brother," he went on, when his emotion would allow him to speak; "and of her who was once dearer to me than existence. I traced the resemblance of both in thy fair face. Oh, what a crowd of recollections—long strangers to my bosom—does this strange meeting revive! My country! my friends! the days of my youth!—all crowd on my memory, in long and sad array, and unman me." Here the Persian merchant, unrestrained by the presence of those around him, burst into tears, still hanging on the neck of his niece. The scene was strikingly affecting; and all present acknowledged its influence. A tear glistened in every eye, in despite of the overwhelming surprise which so singular an incident was calculated to excite, and which might have been supposed to have absorbed every other feeling. "I am that uncle, Elizabeth; for I prefer calling you by the name by which you were baptized," continued the merchant of Bagdad—"I am the Henry Hamilton of whom you have heard your father speak. Strange, strange, indeed, are the passages which sometimes mark the wayward path of human life. The tones of your voice, Elizabeth, fell on my ear like some long-cherished, but half-forgotten strain. They told me of my country, and called again into existence the first and dearest feelings of my heart."

Abdel Calec now inquired about his brother and sister-in-law—the latter his first, his earliest love. He was told they were both dead. On receiving this information, the old man paused, shaded his eyes with his hands, and seemed lost, for a moment, in thought. At length—

"Both dead!" he said, in a melancholy voice—"both dead! That is sad intelligence, indeed. But God's will be done. I may still, through you, my niece, compensate, in some measure, for my unnatural conduct towards your father, whose friendship I ought to have sought again, and whom I should have assisted with part of the ample means with which a kind Providence has enriched me. To make this compensation, however, shall be now my care."

To attempt to describe the surprise of those who witnessed this extraordinary scene, or to record the remarks and exclamations which it elicited, would only encumber our narrative by unnecessary digression. All this, therefore, we shall leave to the imagination of the reader, and proceed at once to the sequel of our tale. On the general excitement, which the singular circumstance just recorded had created, having subsided, Mr Lamington requested that their host would favour them with a brief account of his history—which, he said, could not be otherwise than highly interesting.

"Very willingly, sir," said Abdel Calec, smiling;

"yet I have not, after all, very much to tell; nor do I know that it is either very curious or very interesting, although it certainly does contain some rather singular passages. Such as it is, however, you shall have it.

"My niece has already told you, my friends," began Abdel Calec, "of the principal cause of my quarrel with my brother, and reason for my leaving my native country. It is now, I think, somewhere about forty years since. What she said, with regard to that circumstance, is true. I had conceived a violent attachment for the lady who subsequently became my brother's wife; and this attachment I maintained—for we have no control over such feelings—in the face of many circumstances which clearly enough pointed out to me that her affections were bestowed on my brother. Indeed, this the gentle creature took every opportunity of hinting to myself, in order to induce me to forego those attentions which I was ungenerously forcing upon her; but to no purpose. At length, my brother spoke to me on the subject—told me of the impropriety, and even indelicacy, of my persevering in my suit. He added what I then thought some taunting words. I felled him to the ground. Yes! this unnatural hand struck to the earth the son of my father—my elder brother. When he was down, I trampled on him, in the blindness of my unholy rage; and, cursing him, and her who was the innocent cause of our difference, hurried into the street. On the following morning, I left my native town, vowing that none should ever hear of me again; went down to Greenock; engaged with a vessel going to Bombay, to work my passage out; and, on the following day, sailed for the eastern hemisphere. Our voyage was a prosperous one—at least so far. We reached the Arabian Sea in safety, and without encountering either storm or accident worth alluding to.

Having arrived in this quarter of the world, our ship now steered her course for the Persian Gulf, instead of proceeding direct to Bombay—the vessel having been freighted with some goods for Bussora, situated at the head of the Gulf just named. Still were we favoured by moderate weather, and by light and fair winds. Under these pleasant circumstances, we entered the Gulf. But, alas! who may reckon on the good faith of the elements? who may calculate on their fidelity? We had scarcely entered the Gulf, when a dreadful storm arose, and drove our vessel on the Arabian coast. In a few minutes after she struck, the unfortunate ship went to pieces; and every living thing on board of her, excepting he who now speaks to you, perished. A large spar, which I accidentally caught hold of, while struggling amidst the waves, was the means of saving my life. On this I was borne to the shore, in a state of insensibility; and, when my recollection returned, I found myself surrounded by a crowd of wandering Arabs, whom the hope of plunder had brought to the scene of disaster.

By these people I was soon after conducted into the interior, and assigned as a slave to one of their leaders, whose name was Hassan Abou Caffi. For some time I was employed merely in tending the horses of my master, and in taking charge of his cattle, and in other similar peaceful occupations. During this time, I was well treated, and returned the kindness shewn me by a diligent discharge of the duties assigned me. This life I led for upwards, I think, of about a year and a half, in which time I acquired a considerable colloquial knowledge of Arabic, and could speak it with tolerable fluency.

At the end of the time I have named, I had, by the regularity of my conduct and the fidelity of my services, succeeded in winning the entire confidence of my master, who bestowed on me the name which I still bear, and by which I am now known pretty far and wide throughout both Persia and Arabia, Turkey and Egypt—Abdel Calec.

Having thus established my reputation as a faithful, and, I may add, an efficient servant, I was shortly to receive a proof from Hassan Abou Caffi of the confidence in me which these qualities had inspired. It was one, however, for which I was by no means prepared, and which I by no means relished.

Coming to me one evening as I was rubbing down and dressing his favourite charger—'Abdel Calec,' said my master, 'though a Christian and an infidel, and one whom, as such, every true believer is bound to contemn and despise—glory be to Mahommed!—yet have I ever found thee a discreet and obliging youth, and one whom, but for thy accursed religion, I would be content to take even into my bosom; and on this account will I shew thee how much thou art the approven of Hassan Abou Caffi.

'Some days since, as we have heard, a rich caravan, consisting of twenty camels, all loaded with valuable silks, and other priceless merchandise, left Bussora for Ispahan. Now, praise be to God, and to Mahomet, his prophet, this promises well; and, if we can overtake them in the desert, they are ours—every yard of their silks, every ounce of their spices, every coin in their purses. Now, hearken to me, Abdel Calec: for the love I bear thee, infidel as thou art—glory to Mahommed!—I will enrol thee in my troop for this adventure. I will furnish thee with suitable arms, and with a courser fleetier than the simoom; and thou shalt be made a partaker in our spoil as I have no doubt thou wilt prove thyself as valiant as thou art good, and wilt do thy duty manfully on the approaching occasion.'

The reward, then, of my faithful services, was to have myself converted into a robber, and to be promoted to the honour of serving in a corps of banditti! I was sufficiently shocked at the idea, as you may believe; but a moment's reflection shewed me that the new line of life proposed to me was likely to offer many opportunities of escape, while not the most distant chance remained to me of accomplishing this desirable end in my present circumstances and situation.

Concealing, therefore, the disgust and repugnance with which my master's proposal had inspired me, I salaamed him to the ground, and thanked him for the proof of his favour which he had just shewn me, and assured him that he would not find me wanting in courage when the hour of trial came.

'I doubt it not,' replied my master. 'Neither do I doubt that thou wilt see in this matter—for I take it that, in thine own way, thou art a pious youth, Abdel Calec)—I say neither do I doubt that thou wilt see in this matter—I mean in the matter of the caravan—the goodness of God, who giveth up these things to be a prey and a comfort to the children of the desert. Nay, my child,' went on Hassan Abou Caffi, 'I would have thee see in this present matter even more than I have stated unto thee. I would have thee see in it a special instance of the interference of our holy Prophet in thy behalf; and it consisteth in this, that, though an infidel and unbeliever, he yet permitteth thee to become a sharer in the spoils of the faithful—to be a partaker in the good things with which he rewardeth the piety of the race of Ismael. Glory be to God, and Mahommed is his prophet!'

Not seeing very clearly the morality of Hassan Abou Caffi's code of ethics, I made no direct reply to the pious discourse he had addressed to me, further than by looking very grave, and bowing my head occasionally, in token of the deep impression which his reasoning had made upon me.

Satisfied that he had placed the intended robbery in its proper light before me—that is, as a boon from heaven—my master left me, repeating that he would presently furnish me with arms and a charger for the proposed expedition.

On that same evening, Hassan Abou Caffi supplied me with a carabine, twelve rounds of ball-cartridge, a sabre, a pair of pistols, and a dagger. He then named the horse—one of his own—which he intended to appropriate to my service. It was a noble steed, and, I believe, ran no great risk of having an unworthy rider in me; for my stay amongst the Arabs had afforded me much practice in horsemanship—an exercise in which I took much delight, and in which I was allowed, even by those who spent at least one half of their lives in the saddle, to excel.

By the early dawn of the following day, the troop, of which I was one, of Hassan Abou Caffi, about fifty-five in number, was mustered in a hollow at a little distance from the residence of the former. Here a careful inspection of our arms and appointments took place; when all being found satisfactory, the word was given to march, and off we started with the speed of the wind, and were soon traversing the burning barren sands of the desert. For several days we held on our way in a north-easterly direction, without meeting with the object of our search; or, indeed, with any living thing. At the end of this time, whoever, and just as my associates had begun to despair of the success of their adventure, Hassan Abou Caffi, by whose side I rode, a little way apart from the troop, suddenly seized me by the arm, and, looking intently towards the distant horizon, exclaimed—

'Seest thou aught there, Abdel Calec?' And he pointed in the particular direction to which he alluded. I could see nothing, and told him so.

'Thy eye is not practised enough in discerning distant objects in the desert, Abdel Calec,' said Hassan Abou Caffi, 'else thou wouldst distinctly trace, as I do, in yonder small black speck that appears on the horizon, a line of camels.' At this instant, a simultaneous shout from the troop gave notice that they also had made the discovery which was the subject of our conversation.

'You hear that, Abdel,' said my master, putting spurs to his horse. 'The fellows have caught sight of the prize, although I was the first. Come, follow me.'

In an instant, we were among the troop, who were now all alive with the prospect of an immediate booty. Every one was in the highest spirits, and joke and laugh went merrily through the ruffian crew. The whole body now halted, and dismounted, and a scene of the utmost confusion and clamour ensued. There was a sorting of arms, a tightening of saddle-girths, snapping of muskets and pistols, to see that they were in serviceable condition—all of which proceedings were accompanied by noises of all kinds, shouting, singing, and laughing. By and by, however, order was restored. Arms were put in available order or found so; saddles were tightened; and the laugh and the joke was hushed. In the next instant, the troop was again mounted. A short consultation on horseback followed as to the course to be pursued in attacking the caravan, and now the whole moved forward in the most profound silence.

In this silence we continued our progress for several hours, in the direction of the caravan, which gradually became more and more distinctly visible, until we could at length plainly discern the individual objects and persons of which it was composed. On arriving thus near our intended prey, we again halted. It was now to reconnoitre, and to make a final arrangement as to our plan of attack. From the commotion we observed amongst the people of the caravan, it was evident that we, in our turn, had not only been perceived by them, but that our purpose was guessed; and they were now busy in making preparations to resist us. They were placing their camels in a circle, and forming themselves around them; we had, therefore, to calculate on being compelled to fight for whatever we might win. For myself I had determined, in the first place, to take no

further share in the approaching combat than might be necessary to save appearances in the eyes of my associates ; and, in the next, to throw myself into the hands of the people of the caravan, should they prove victorious, as I fervently hoped and prayed they would.

In the meantime, the impending crisis was rapidly approaching. The Arabs had resolved on their mode of attack, which was the usual one—to form themselves into a semi-circle, and in this order to stoop on their prey at full speed ; after having previously discharged a volley from their fire-arms.

This arrangement made, we advanced in the form above described, at a slow pace, until we were within about a hundred yards of the caravan. When this distance had been attained, we halted, and poured a volley into it ; but I am pretty sure that it sustained very little injury at my hands on the occasion ; for, I took very good care to point my piece high enough to ensure the ball's passing harmlessly over their heads. Having discharged their volley, the Arabs drew their sabres, struck their spurs into their horses' sides, and, with the most tremendous shouts and yells, intermingled with cries of "Allah ill ullah !" went down like a whirlwind on the caravan. In a moment after, both parties were blended together in close and deadly combat. Sabres flashed in all directions, and pistol-shots rattled off in thick and rapid succession ; the whole being rendered still more appalling by the cries and screams of the women and children who belonged to the caravan, and of whom there were great numbers.

The fight was too severe and desperate to last long. In less than fifteen minutes, it was all over, and the banditti were victorious, although at the cost of many lives ; for the defence made was gallant, and skilfully as well as valorously conducted ; but numbers prevailed, and the caravan was lost. The obstinacy of the defence, together with the loss of their associates, had excited the Arabs to madness, who now employed themselves in galloping about and cutting down, without regard to sex or age, every one belonging to the caravan whom they encountered, or who was within their reach. It was at this dreadful moment that I, for the first time, perceived a young woman, splendidly attired, seated on a camel, whose trappings were of the most magnificent description. At the instant I perceived her, she was uttering the most piercing cries of distress, and struggling with an Arab, who was endeavouring to pull her from her seat ; and from whom her attendants, as they appeared to be, were vainly attempting to protect her, not by force, which would now have been worse than useless, but by prayer and entreaty. Struck by the appearance of the damsel, whom I found beautiful as the star of the morning, and deeply sympathising in her misery, I instantly galloped up to her, and, as I did so, the daring proceeding, which subsequently conducted me to fortune and happiness, suggested itself to me, and was adopted. On coming within sabre length of the ruffian Arab who was struggling with the hapless young lady of whom I have spoken, I struck him to the earth with a blow, from which I should suppose he never could recover. In the next moment, I had the young lady seated behind me on my horse, she readily obeying my invitation to her to do so, and, in an instant after, we were off at full speed across the desert ; my fair companion holding fast by me, by my directions, to prevent her losing her seat in the rapidity of our motion. The whole was the work of a moment ; so quickly indeed was it all done, that we were several hundred yards off before our flight was discovered by the Arabs—a circumstance for which, however, we were in part indebted to the eagerness and intensity with which they busied themselves about their plunder ; and to the same cause had we to attribute the good fortune of our not being pursued. Several shots, however, were fired after us, but with no effect.

For several hours, I continued to keep my horse at the top of his speed, in order to place the greatest possible distance between us and my late associates, although I felt pretty confident that a due regard to the security of their plunder would prevent them thinking of pursuing us.

Here, then, was I in the midst of an apparently boundless desert, and utterly ignorant of my position, and of the route I ought to pursue, and voluntarily in charge of a young and helpless female, to whom it was doubtful, considering these circumstances, whether I had, after all, done a service in rescuing her from the marauding Arabs ; it being more than likely that I had saved her from one death but to expose her to another, and that the more miserable of the two—to die of hunger and fatigue in the depths of the dreary desert. Such were the reflections that began to flit across my mind, so soon as the excitement caused by the circumstance that gave rise to them had somewhat subsided. I, however, still hoped for the best, and thought it not impossible that we might fall in with some friendly tribe, or some caravan going to Ispahan or Bagdad. I also thought it, failing these, by no means beyond the bounds of probability, that we might reach some town or village on the skirts of the desert, by holding on our course for a day or two, which, so far as subsistence went, we should be enabled to do, by my fortunately having with me a small store of rice and dates, part of the provision with which I had been furnished for the marauding expedition of Hassan Abou Caffi.

Such, then, were the hopes and fears with which my situation inspired me. Neither of these, however, had I yet communicated to my fair companion—nor, indeed, had we exchanged words—not a syllable ; flight, flight, flight, being the all engrossing object of the first two hours of our companionship.

When somewhere about this time had expired, however, and when my noble steed began to exhibit symptoms of exhaustion, from the unwonted burden he bore, I drew bridle, and now, for the first time, entered into conversation with the fair companion of my flight. I now learned that her name was Zobeide, and, to my great surprise, that her father was no less a personage than Caliph of Bagdad !—a circumstance at which I was equally surprised and delighted ; for I saw that it was one which, if my adventure ended happily, by my fair charge reaching her home in safety, would be of infinite advantage to me.

In the conversation which followed our mutual disclosures as to matters of personal history, I found my beloved Zobeide—for our subsequent relationship entitles me to speak of her in these terms, and her excellent qualities demand it—all that man delights to meet with in the chosen object of his affections. Gentle, modest, and intelligent, ten minutes had we not talked together, when the desert whose arid sands we were traversing appeared to me a second Elysium. I missed not the green fields of happier lands, and cared not for the water-falls of more favoured regions, nor for the music of their shady groves. With all these, and with much more that is beautiful and fair to see, did the presence, the companionship of my adored Zobeide, enrich the sterile waste that lay around us.

Need I be more particular ? Need I further enlarge on this subject ?—I need not—we loved—ardently and tenderly loved. I, with a temerity on which I yet look back with amazement and some degree of shame, seeing the appalling distance that was between us, spoke broadly of the feeling with which my fair companion had inspired me, and she did not reprove me.

In the meantime, we continued our onward journey, although now at a slow pace ; for our poor steed was sadly exhausted by the efforts he had been compelled to make to carry us out of the reach of our enemies. Onward, however, at such speed as we could make, we continued to go ; but we were journeying blindly ; for we knew not whether we

were lessening or increasing our distance from the habitations of man. All the night succeeding that of our flight, we travelled on, and with short intervals of rest, yielded to the exhaustion of the wearied animal we rode—all the next day we held on our uncertain way till towards the evening, when we perceived a large moving body at a great distance in advance of us. Doubts as to what it might be—whether a troop of marauding Arabs, or a caravan, made me hesitate for some time about approaching it nearer. At length, however, I determined on running this risk, and continued cautiously advancing until I had lessened the distance so much as to enable me to distinguish the figures of a long line of camels. This discovery instantly dissipated my fears, by giving me assurance that it was a caravan we had encountered, and not a band of robbers. Satisfied of this, I put spurs to our poor jaded steed, who instantly mended his pace, and in less than an hour placed us in comparative safety in the midst of a well-appointed and well-guarded caravan. It was composed of merchants from various quarters of the east, but chiefly of Aleppo and Bagdad. To several of the latter, Zobeide was personally known, and the courteous kindness with which they received her, and eager, yet respectful anxiety with which they busied themselves in providing for her accommodation and comfort, sufficiently shewed how highly they esteemed her. Nor were the other merchants, when it was made known to them that the lady who had just joined them was the daughter of the Caliph of Bagdad, less anxious or respectful in their attentions. It is true that all this civility might have proceeded from deference to Zobeide's rank, and not from personal esteem. It might, certainly; but it was perfectly evident, from the manner in which these services were offered and rendered, from the extremely kind and tender air with which they were characterised, that the latter was, if not the only, at least the principal motive for the attentions shewn to Zobeide; and so deep already was my interest in everything that related to that adored being, that this circumstance afforded me a satisfaction which I found it difficult to conceal. Zobeide lost no time in informing the merchants of the caravan, of the service I had rendered her. This, however, she always communicated when I was at a little distance, that she might speak the more freely; but I knew when it was the subject of her conversation, by the looks of tenderness which she from time to time threw on me as she spoke, and by the blush which suffused her lovely countenance, when our eyes chanced, on these occasions, to meet. Oh, these looks! They thrilled my very soul. They gave me assurance that I was far from being indifferent to her by whom they were bestowed—that I had found a place in the heart of Zobeide.

The information which the latter gave the merchants of the caravan regarding the part I had acted in her rescue, procured me also an unusual share of attention and many compliments on my bravery. By several I was told, too, that I might count with certainty, on receiving a handsome reward from the Caliph, Zobeide's father, whom they represented as a good and generous man. Little did they dream of the exorbitance of the reward to which I daringly looked forward—a reward to which all the wealth of the Indies was no more to me than the sand of the desert.

In two days afterwards, during all of which time I was never ten minutes together from the side of Zobeide, we reached in safety the city of Ispahan. Here we remained for about a week, and here I proposed to settle; but to this arrangement Zobeide, who resided during the time with a wealthy merchant of the city, a relation of her father, would by no means listen. She insisted on my going to Bagdad, to receive the thanks, and some token of the gratitude, of her father, for the service I had rendered her.

'You must go, Abdel Calec—you must indeed,' she said, with a smile of gentleness, and in a tone of tender meaning, that was more powerful to command than the voice of a leader in the day of battle. 'You must go indeed, Abdel Calec,' she said, at the same time taking a diamond ring of great value from her finger, and placing it on one of mine. It was one she had purchased since she came to Ispahan, for the express purpose to which she had now applied it. The ring placed on my finger—'Now,' she said, laughing, 'you are by that token bound to me, Abdel Calec; you dare not refuse obedience to my commands—you are my bounden slave.'

'I acknowledge it, fair Zobeide,' said I, 'your slave, indeed!—I have been so from the first moment I saw you.' Zobeide blushed—she understood my meaning, and shewed but little symptoms of being displeased with it.

'Go to, go to, young man,' she said, smiling in pleasing confusion. 'Thou art over bold. I did not mean that thou wert, neither do I believe that thou art, my bondsman in the sense thou alludest to. Thou art a flatterer, Abdel Calec, like all the rest of thy faithless sex.'

'Zobeide, Zobeide,' exclaimed I, earnestly, 'listen to me.' And, hurried away by the passion of the moment, I flung myself on one knee before her, eagerly seized her hand, and, in this attitude, sought to convince her, and not unsuccessfully, of the ardency and sincerity of my love.

When I had done—'Well, then, I suppose, I must believe you, Abdel Calec,' she said, with a sweet smile, and in the tenderest tones, while a tear stood in her soft yet bright dark eye. 'I must and will believe you. But no more of this for the present. Rise, young man, and hold thyself in readiness to accompany us on the morrow on our journey to Bagdad. My father, I promise you, will be delighted to see thee, and will lose little time in giving thee proofs of his gratitude, worthy at once of himself, and of the service thou hast done us; for my father is generous, Abdel Calec, and loves his daughter well.'

On the following day, we set out, by the same caravan with which we had entered Ispahan, for Bagdad; but my Zobeide was now surrounded by an especial guard, which had been furnished for her protection by her relative. This additional escort, however, did not hinder me from maintaining my usual place by her side, and there I remained until we arrived at Bagdad, which we did in safety, in about ten days.

Next day, by an arrangement previously made with Zobeide, I called at the palace of the Caliph, and was ushered into a splendid apartment. In a moment afterwards, Zobeide rushed into the room, with joy beaming in her eye, seized me by the hand, and conducted me into the presence of her father, who was in an inner apartment. He was a stately-looking old man, with an expression of great intelligence and benevolence in his finely-formed countenance. He was dressed in a superb Eastern costume, and, at the moment I entered, was seated, cross-legged, on a kind of raised dais, laid over with a rich Turkey carpet, which occupied a portion of the farther extremity of the chamber.

'Father, father,' exclaimed Zobeide, joyously, 'here is the young man to whom we owe such obligations.'

The Caliph withdrew his pipe from his mouth—for he was busily engaged in smoking when I entered—and, after eyeing me scrutinizingly for a moment, beckoned me with a smile to approach him. I did so.

'Be seated, young man,' he now said, pointing, at the same time, to a cushion which lay close by; 'I would speak with thee at leisure. My daughter,' resumed the Caliph, after a moment's pause, 'has told me of thy gallant conduct: how thou didst rescue her, at the peril of thine own life, from a band of marauding Arabs; and how thou didst conduct her, with all care and safety, through all the

dangers of the desert. All this she has told me, young man. Hast thou not, Zobeide?' he added, suddenly turning to his daughter. 'Yes, truly thou hast,' he went on, without waiting for an answer to his query; 'and a most faithful chronicler of the young man's bravery hast thou been, Zobeide; for no detail, no word or act, however trifling, which might reflect honour on thy protector, didst thou omit.'

Zobeide blushed.

'Nay, thou needest not blush, my child. I approve thy generous and grateful feeling. 'Tis creditable to thee.'

Then, turning again to me—

'Young man,' he said, 'thou hast bound me eternally to thee by the part thou hast acted towards my beloved daughter. To thee I owe the continuance of the greatest blessing of my existence—the preservation of the life and honour of my dear Zobeide, who is, in my sight, infinitely more precious than all the treasures of the East. A priceless pearl! This thou hast done, young man, and it shall be my care to see that it be acknowledged as it ought. The Caliph of Bagdad is, henceforth, thy friend.'

The Caliph now inquired into my history, and, after being fully informed on this subject, proceeded to take my interests into consideration, and to reflect on the best manner of providing for me—a question into which Zobeide warmly entered, and regarding which she ventured many suggestions.

'Dost incline to a military life, young man?' inquired the Caliph. 'If so, I might do thee good service in that way. I have some interest at the Ottoman court, and could easily procure thee, I believe, a command in the Janissaries, where thou mightest in time attain unto rank and power through thine own courage and good conduct, and my influence, which should not be wanting.'

'More honour than profit there, father, I think,' here interposed Zobeide, smilingly. 'Tis but a poor life. What wouldst think of the young man turning merchant, father? See how rich Haji Belal is becoming, and many others of the merchants of this city.'

The Caliph smoked away in silence for some moments. At length, withdrawing his pipe—

'Why, I dare say, thou art right, after all, child. It will be better. As thou hast said, Zobeide, there is more honour than profit in the military life; but young men love the glitter of the sabre and the flash of the carbine better even than the lustre and the chink of the fine gold of Kofin. It is not wise, but it is valiant, and valour is a noble quality. Nevertheless, it were better that our young friend took him to traffic; and it shall be so.'

The proposal, then, that I should become a merchant was finally agreed upon; and the Caliph on the instant named a handsome capital to begin with, with which he promised to furnish me, adding that I might, moreover, always reckon on his especial patronage and protection, and that I might, at all times, command his resources to any extent which the opportunity of an advantageous purchase might demand. He then presented me with a purse of gold for my immediate wants, and several trinkets of great value.

All this was gratifying enough; and, if the acquisition of wealth had been the only engrossing desire of my soul, it would have been all that I could wish; but another and holier passion had seized me. Without Zobeide all the treasures of the Caliph were to me as dross. Yet had I prudence enough not to condemn out of measure the worldly advantages thus so oddly and unexpectedly presented to me. I began to think that the acquisition of riches might be a means of procuring me the hand of Zobeide; and, with this value attached to them, I determined to make every exertion to procure them.

The capital with which the Caliph had promised to furnish me was placed at my disposal on the following day, together with ample instructions, drawn up for me by the Caliph himself, as to the best mode of proceeding in my mercantile speculations.

Thus placed on the fair way to fortune, I devoted my whole energies to the furtherance of my interests, and, by the blessing of God, most fully succeeded. In less than twelve months, my name was favourably known throughout the surrounding kingdoms, and my merchandise was to be found in the principal towns of Syria, Armenia, and Turkey.

Gaining confidence with the increase of my wealth, and feeling that I had secured, on the part of the Caliph himself, the highest opinion which one man, perhaps, could form of another, I at length ventured, with the consent of Zobeide, to mention to him the secret of my love for his daughter. The old man listened to me with a smile; and, to my astonishment, and no small confusion, told me, when I had done speaking, that he had been long aware of my attachment to Zobeide, and had for some time been daily looking for the communication which I now made to him.

'And what think you of it, my Lord, now that it is made?' said I, with trembling eagerness.

'I think well of it, Abdel Calec,' replied the Caliph. 'Zobeide, I know, will listen to the suit of no other. Take her, then, my friend—and the blessing of God and our holy Prophet be with you both!'

"On this part of my story, my friends," said Abdel Calec, while a tear stood in his eye and his voice became choked with emotion, "I need not dwell. Zobeide and I were married; and for twenty happy succeeding years, during which my fortune continued rapidly increasing, we led a life of unmingled felicity. At the end of this period"—here the old man again paused. His feelings overcame him, and he could not proceed. At length, in a broken voice, he resumed—"At the end of this period, my adored Zobeide died, and left me a desolate and childless man—for our only child died in infancy. Such, then, my friends," continued the Persian merchant, "is the history of my progress through life, and, if it does nothing more, it will at least account to you for the circumstances in which you find me. I assumed, as you see, both the costume and the customs of my adopted country, to which a long residence has naturalized me. As to the difficulty I make in regard to acknowledging my foreign origin, which you must also have observed, it proceeds from my having found that it would be both inconvenient and disadvantageous to me, in my dealings here; and, although my wealth renders me independent of this influence, yet long custom has fastened it on me like a second nature, and, unless particular circumstances call for it, I never think of voluntarily avowing myself a foreigner."

Such, then, good reader, is the story of the merchant of Bagdad; and we have only to add to his own narrative, that he prevailed on Mr and Mrs Lamington to settle in the city just named; and that, at his death, he left them his entire fortune, which was immense; and that, on that event taking place, which it did in a few years afterwards, they returned to their native country, bought a splendid estate, and established a family of hereditary dignity and importance in the west of Scotland.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

LORD DURIE AND CHRISTIE'S WILL.

Who can journey, nowadays, along the high parts of Selkirkshire, and hear the mire-snipe whistle in the morass, proclaiming itself, in the silence around, the unmolested occupant of the waste, or descend into the green valley, and see the lazy shepherd lying folded up in his plaid, while his flocks graze in peace around him and in the distance, and not think of the bold spirits that, in the times of Border warfare, sounded the war-horn till it rang in reverberating echoes from hill to hill? The land of the Armstrongs knows no longer their kindred. The hills, ravines, mosses, and muirs that, only a few centuries ago, were animated by the boldest spirits that ever sounded a war-cry, and defended to the death by men whose swords were their only charters of right, have passed into other hands, and the names of the warlike holders serve now only to give a grim charm to a Border ballad. An extraordinary lesson may be read on the banks of the Liddel and the Esk—there is a strange eloquence in the silence of these quiet dales. Stand for a while among the graves of the chief of Gilnockie and his fifty followers, in the lonely churchyard of Carlenrig, cast a contemplative eye on the roofless tower of that brave riever, then glance at the gorgeous policies of Bowhill, and resist, if you can, the deep sigh that rises as a tribute to the memories of men who, having, by their sleepless spirits, kept a kingdom in commotion, died on the gallows, and left no generation to claim their lands from those who, with less bravery and no better sense of right, had the subtle policy to rise on their ruins. Poorly, indeed, now sound the names of Johnny Armstrong, Sim of Whittram, Sim of the Cathill, Kinmont Willie, or Christie's Will, beside those of Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburgh, Scott of Harden, and Elliot of Stobs and Wells; and yet, without wishing to take away the *merit* or the *extent* of their ancestors' own "reif and felonie," how much do they owe to their succession to the ill-got gear of those hardy Borderers whose names and scarcely credible achievements are all that have escaped the rapacity that, not satisfied with their lands, took also their lives. For smaller depredations, the old laws of the Border—and it would not be fair to exclude those of the present day, not confined to that locality—awarded a halter; for thefts of a larger kind, they gave a title. Old Wat of Buccleuch deserved the honour of "the neck garter" just as much as poor Johnny Armstrong; yet all he got was a reproof and a dukedom.

"Then up and spake the noble king—
And a angry man, I trow, was he—
'It ill becomes ye, bauld Bucclew,
To talk o' reif or felonie;
For, if every man had his ain cow,
A right puir clan yer name would be.'"

There is a change now. The bones of the bold Armstrongs lie in Carlenrig, and the descendants of their brother-rieverers who got their lands, sit in high places, and speak words of legislative command. But these things will be as they have ever been. We cannot change the world, far less remake it; but we can resuscitate a part of its moral wonders; and, while the property of Christie's Will,

the last of the bold Armstrongs, is now possessed by another family, under a written title, we will do well to commit to record a part of his fame.

It is well known that the chief of his family of Armstrongs had his residence* at Mangerton in Liddesdale. There is scarcely now any trace of his tower, though time has not exerted so cruel a hand against his brother, Johnny Armstrong's residence, which lies in the Hollows near Langholme. We know no tumult of the emotions of what may be called antiquarian sentiment so engrossing and curious as that produced by the headless skeleton of "auld Gilnockie's Tower," as it is seen in the grey gloaming, with a breeze brattling through its dry ribs, and a stray owl sitting on the top, and sending his eldritch screech through the deserted hollows. The mind becomes busy on the instant with the former scenes of festivity, when "their stolen gear," "baith nolt and sheep," and "flesh, and bread, and ale," as Maitland says, were eaten and drunk with the *kitchen* of a Cheviot hunger, and the sweetness of stolen things; and when the wild spirit of the daring outlaws, with Johnny at their head, made the old tower of the Armstrongs ring with their wassail shouts. This Border turret came—after the execution of Johnny Armstrong, and when the clan had become what was called a broken clan—into the possession of William Armstrong, who figured in the times of Charles I. He was called Christie's Will, though from what reason does not now seem very clear; neither is it at all evident why, after the execution of his forebear, Johnny, and his fifty followers, at Carlenrig, the Tower of Gilnockie was not forfeited to the crown, and taken from the rebellious clan altogether; but, to be sure, it was, in those days, more easy to take a man's life than his property, inasmuch as the former needed no guard, while the other would have required a small standing army to keep it and the new proprietor together. Certain, however, it is, that Christie's Will did get possession of the Tower of Gilnockie, where, according to the practice of the family, he lived "on Scottish ground and English kye;" and, when the latter could not easily be had, on the poorer cattle of his neighbours of Scotland.

This descendant of the Armstrongs was not unlike Johnny; and, indeed, it has been observed that, throughout the whole branches of the family there was an extraordinary union of boldness and humour—two qualities which have more connection than may, at first view, be apparent. Law-breakers, among themselves, are seldom serious; a lightness of heart and a turn for wit being necessary for the sustenance of their outlawed spirits, as well as for a quaint justification—resorted to by all the tribe—of their calling, against the laws of the land. In the possession of these qualities, Will was not behind the most illustrious of his race; but he, perhaps, excelled them all in the art of "*conveying*"—a polite term then used for that change of ownership which the affected laws of the time denominated *theft*. This art was not confined to cattle or plenishing, though

"They left not spindell, spoone, nor speit,
Bed, boster, blanket, sark, nor sheet:

* In a MS. we have seen, as old as the end of the 15th century, "the laird of Mangerton" is placed at the head of the Liddesdale chiefs—Harden, Buccleuch, and others coming after him in respectful order.

John of the Park ryps kist and ark—
To all sic wark he is sac meet.”*

It extended to abduction, and this was far seldomer exercised on damsels than on men, who would be well ransomed, especially of those classes, duke, earl, or baron, any of whom Johnny offered (for his life) to bring, “within a certain day, to his Majesty, James V., either quick or dead.” This latter part of their art was the highest to which the Borderers aspired; and there never was a riever among them all that excelled in it so much as Christie’s Will. “To steal a stirk, or wear a score o’ sheep *hamewards*,” he used to say, “was naething; but to steal a *lord* was the highest flicht o’ a man’s genius, and ought never to be lippeden to a hand less than an Armstrong’s,” and, certainly, if the success with which he executed one scheme of that high kind will guarantee Will’s boasted abilities, he did not transcend the truth in limiting lord-stealing to the Armstrongs.

Will married a distant relation of the true Border breed, named Margaret Elliot—a lass whose ideas of hussyskep were so peculiar that she thought Gilnockie and its laird were going to ruin, when she saw in the kail-pot a “heugh bane” of their *own* cattle, a symptom of waste, extravagance, and laziness, on the part of her husband, that boded less good than the offer made by “the Laird’s Jock,” (Johnny Armstrong’s henchman,) to give “Dick o’ the Cow” a piece of his own ox, which he came to ask reparation for, and, not having got it, tied with St Mary’s knot (hamstringed) thirty good horses. To this good housewife, in fact, might be traced, if antiquaries would renounce for it less important investigations, the old saying, that stolen joys (qu. *queys*?) are sweetest, undoubtedly a Border aphorism, and now received into the society of legitimate moral sayings. When lazy and not inclined for “felonie,” Will would not subscribe to the truth of the dictum, and often got for grace to the dinner he had not taken from the English, and yet relished, the wish of the good dame, that, for his want of spirit, it might choke him. That effect, however, was more likely to be produced by the beef got in the regular Border way; for the laws were beginning now to be more vigorously executed, and many a riever was astonished and offended by the proceedings of the Justice-Ayr, at Jedburgh, where they were actually going the length of *hanging*, for the crime of *conveying* cattle from one property to another.

It was in vain that Will told his wife these proceedings of the Jedburgh court; she knew very well that many of the Armstrongs, and the famous Johnny among the rest, had been strung up, by the command of their King, for rebellion against his authority; but it was out of all question, beyond the reach of common sense, and, indeed, utterly barbarous and unjust to hang a man, as Gilderoy’s lover said, “for gear,” a thing that never yet was known to be stationary, but, even from the times of the Old Testament, given to taking to itself wings and flying away. It was, besides, against the oldest constitutions of things, the old possessors being the *Tories*, who acted upon the comely principle, that right was might—the new lairds, again, being the Whigs, who wished to take from the Tories, (the freebooters) the good old law of nature and possession, and regulate property by the mere conceits of men’s brains. To some such purpose, did Margaret argue against Will’s allusions to the doings at Jedburgh; but, secretly, Will cared no more for the threat of a rope, than he did for the empty bravado of a neighbour whom he had eased of a score of cattle. He merely brought in the doings of the Justice-Ayr at Jedburgh, to screen his fits of laziness; those states of the mind common to rievers, thieves, writers, and poets, and generally all people who live upon their

wits, which at times incapacitate them for using sword or pen for their honest livelihood. But all Margaret’s arguments and Will’s courage were, on one occasion, overturned, by the riever’s apprehension for stealing a cow, belonging to a farmer at Stobbs, of the name of Grant. He was carried to Jedburgh jail, and indicted to stand his trial before the Lord Justice-General, at the next circuit. There was a determination, on the part of the crown authorities, to make an example of the most inveterate riever of the time, and Will stood a very fair chance of being hanged.

The apprehension of Will Armstrong made a great noise throughout all Liddesdale, producing, to the class of victims, joy, and to the class of spoilers, great dismay; but none wondered more at the impertinence and presumption of the government authorities in attempting thus to dislocate the old Tory principle of “might makes right,” than Margaret Elliot; who, as she sat in her turret of Gilnockie, alternately wept and cursed for the fate of her “winsome Will;” and, no doubt, there was in the projected condemnation and execution of a man six feet five inches high, with a face like an Adonis, shoulders like a Milo, the speed of Mercury, the boidness of a lion, and more than the generosity of that noble animal, for the crime of stealing a stirk, something that was very apt to rouse, even in those who loved him not so well as did Margaret, feelings of sympathy for his fate, and indignation against his oppressors. There was no keeping, as the artists say, in the picture, no proper causality in a stolen cow, for the production of such an effect as a hanged Phaon or strangled Hercules; and, though we have used some classic names to grace our idea, the very same thought, at least as good a one, though perhaps not so gaudily clothed, occupied the mind of Margaret Elliot. She sobbed and cried bitterly, till the Gilnockie ravens and owls, kindred spirits, were terrified from the riever’s tower.

“What is this o’t?” she exclaimed, in the midst of her tears. “Shall Christie’s Will, the bravest man o’ the Borders, be hanged because a cow, that kenned nae better, followed him frae Stobbs to the Hollows; and shall it be said, that Margaret Elliot was the death o’ her braw riever? I had meat enough in Gilnockie larder that day I scorned him wi’ his laziness, and forced him to do the deed that has brought him to Jedburgh jail. But I’ll awa to the warden, James Stewart o’ Traquair, and see if it be the King’s high will that a man’s life should be ta’en for a cow’s.”

Making good her resolution, Margaret threw her plaid about her shoulders, and hied her away to Traquair House, the same that still stands on the margin of the Tweed, and raises its high white walls, perforated by numerous Flemish shaped windows, among the dark woods of Traquair. When she came to the front of the house, and saw the two stone figures stationed at the old gate, she paused and wondered at the weakness and effeminacy of the Lord High Steward in endeavouring to defend his castle by fearful representations of animals.

“My faith,” muttered she to herself, as she approached to request entrance, “the warden was right in no makin choice o’ the figure o’ a *quey* to defend his castle.” And she could scarcely resist a chuckle in the midst of her tears, at her reference to the cause of her visit.

“Is my Lord Steward at hame?” said she to the servant who answered her call.

“Yes,” answered the man, “who is it that wishes to see him?”

“The mistress o’ Gilnockie,” rejoined Margaret, “has come to seek a guid word for Christie’s Will, who now lies in Jedburgh jail for stealing a tether, and I fear may hang for’t.”

The servant heard this extraordinary message as servants who presume to judge of the sense of their messages ever do, with critical attention, and, after serious consideration, declared that he could not deliver such a message to his lord.

* See Maitland’s curious satire on the Border robberies.

"I dinna want ye to deliver my message, man," said Margaret. "I merely wished to be polite to ye, and shew ye a little attention. God be thankit, the mistress o' Gilnockie can deliver her ain errand."

And, pushing the waiting man aside by a sudden jerk of her brawnie arm, she proceeded calmly forward to a door, which she intended to open; but the servant was at her heels, and, laying hold of her plaid, was in the act of hauling her back, when the Warden himself came out, and asked the cause of the affray.

"Is the house yours, my Lord, or this man's?" said Margaret. "Take my advice, my Lord, (whispering in his ear,) "turn him aff—he's a traitor; would you believe it, my Lord, that, though placed there for the purpose o' lettin folk in to yer Lordship, he actually—ay, as sure as death—tried to keep me out! Can ye deny it, sir? Look i' my face, and deny it if ye daur!"

The man smiled, and his Lordship laughed; and Margaret wondered at the easy good-nature of a Lord in forgiving such a heinous offence on the part of a servitor.

"If ye're as kind to me as ye are to that rebel," continued Margaret, as she followed his Lordship into his sitting chamber, "Christie's Will winna hang yet."

"What mean you, good woman?" said the Warden. "What is it that you want?"

"As if your Lordship didna ken," answered Margaret, with a knowing look. "Is it likely that a Liddesdale woman, frae the Hollows, should ca' upon the great Warden for aught short o' the life and safety o' the man wha's in Jedburgh jail?" (Another Scotch wink.)

"I am still at a loss, good woman," said the Warden.

"At a loss!" rejoined Margaret. "What!—doesna a' the Forest,* and Teviotdale and Tweeddale to boot, ken that Christie's Will is in Jedburgh jail?"

"I know, I know, good dame," replied the Warden, "that that brave riever is in prison; but I thought his crime was the stealing of a cow, and not a tether, as I heard you say to my servant."

"Weel, weel—the cow may have been at the end o' the tether," replied Margaret, with a significant look.

"She is a wise woman who concealeth the extremity of her husband's crime," replied Lord Traquair, with a smile. "But what wouldst thou have me to do?"

"Just to save Christie's Will frae the gallows, my Lord," answered Margaret. And, going up close to his Lordship, and whispering in his ear—"And sometimes a Lord needs a lift as weel as other folk. If there's nae buck on Traquair, when your Lordship has company at the castle, you hae only to gie Christie's Will a nod, and there will be nae want of venison here for a month. There's no a stouthriever in a' Liddesdale, be he baron or bondsman, knight or knave, but Christie's Will will bring to you at your Lordship's bidding, and a week's biding; and, if there's ony want o' a braw leddie," (speaking low,) "to keep the bonny house o' Traquair in order, an' she canna be got for a carlin keeper, a wink to Christie's Will will bring her here, unscathed by sun or wind, in suner time than a priest could tie the knot, or a lawyer loose it. Is sic a man a meet burden for a fir wuddy, my Lord?"

"By my faith, your husband hath good properties about him," replied Traquair. "There is not one in these parts that knoweth not Christie's Will; but I fear it is to that fame he oweth his danger. He is the last of the old Armstrongs; and there is a saying hereaway, that

'Comes Liddesdale's peace
When Armstrongs cease.'

And since, good dame, it would ill become the King's Warden to let slip the noose that is to catch peace and order for our march territories, yet Will is too noble a

* Selkirkshire.

fellow for hanging. Go thy ways. I'll see him—I'll see him."

"Hech na, my Lord," answered Margaret; "I'll no budge frae this house till ye say ye'll save him this ance. I'll be caution and surety for him mysel, that he'll never again dine in Gilnockie on another man's surloin. His clan has been lang a broken ane; but I am now the head o't, and it has aye been the practice in our country to make the head answer for the rest o' the body."

"Well, that is the practice of the hangman at Jedburgh," replied Traquair, laughing. "But go thy ways. Will shall not hang yet. He hath a job to do for me. There's a "lurdon"* of the north he must steal for me. I'll take thy bond."

"Gie me your hand then, my Lord," said the determined dame; "and the richest lurdon o' the land he'll bring to your Lordship, as surely as he ever took a Cumberland cow—whilk, as your Lordship kens, is nae rieving."

Traquair gave the good dame his hand, and she departed, wondering, as she went, what the Lord Warden was to do with a stolen lurdon. A young damsel might have been a fair prize for the handsome baron; but an "auld wife," as she muttered to herself, was the most extraordinary object of rieving she had ever heard of, amidst all the varieties of a Borderer's prey. Next day Traquair mounted his horse, and—

"Traquair has riden up Chaplehope,
An' sae has he don by the Grey-Mare's-Tail;
He never stinted the light gallop,
Until he speered for Christie's Will."

Having arrived at Jedburgh, he repaired direct to the jail, where Margaret had been before him, to inform her husband that the great Lord Warden was to visit him, and get him released; but upon the condition of stealing away a lurdon in the north—a performance whose singularity was much greater than the apparent difficulty, unless, indeed, as Will said, she was a bedridden "lurdon," in which case, it would be no easy matter to get her conveyed, as horses were the only carriers of stolen goods in those days. But the wonder why Traquair should wish to steal away an old woman had perplexed the wits of Will and his wife to such an extent that they had recourse to the most extraordinary hypotheses; supposing, at one time, that she was some coy heiress of seventy summers, who had determined to be carried off after the form of young damsels in the times of chivalry; at another, that she was the parent of some lord, who could only be brought to concede something to the Warden, by the force of the impledgement of his mother; and, again, that she was the duenna of an heiress, who could only be got through the confinement of the old hag. Be who she might, however, Christie's Will declared, upon the faith of the long shablas of Johnny Armstrong, that he would carry her off through fire and water, as sure as ever Kinmont Willie was carried away by old Wat of Buccleuch from the castle of Carlisle.

"Oh, was it war-wolf in the wood,
Or was it mermaid in the sea,
Or was it maid or lurdon auld,
He'd carry an' bring her bodilie."

Such was the heroic determination to which Christie's Will had come, when the jailor came and whispered in his ear, that the Lord Warden was in the passage on the way to see him. Starting to his feet, the riever was prepared to meet the baron, of whom he generally stood in so much awe in his old tower of Gilnockie; but who came to him now on a visit of peace.

* It has been attempted to derive this word from "Lord," (paper lord;) but we have no faith in the etymology; it was, however, often applied to the wiggid and gowned judges, as being, in their appearance, more like women than men—for "lurdon," though applied to a male, is generally used for a lazy woman.

"Thou'lt hang, Will, this time," said the Warden, with an affectation of gruffness, as he stepped forward. "It is not in the power of man to save ye!"

"Begging yer Lordship's pardon," replied Will, "I believe it, however, to be in the power o' a woman. The auld lurdon will be in Gilnockie Tower at yer Lordship's ain time."

"And who is the 'auld lurdon?'" replied the Warden, trying to repress a laugh, which forced its way in spite of his efforts.

"Margaret couldna tell me that," said Will; "but many a speculation we had on the question yer Lordship has now put to me. 'Wha can she be?' said Peggy; and 'Wha can she be?' replied I; but it's for yer Lordship to say wha she is, and for me to steal the auld limmer awa, as sure as ever I conveyed an auld milker frae the land o' the Nevills. I'm nae sooner free than she's a prisoner."

The familiarity with which Will spoke of the female personage thus destined to durance vile, produced another laugh on the part of the Warden, not altogether consistent, as Will thought, with the serious nature of the subject in hand.

"Where is she, my Lord?" continued Will; "in what fortress?—wha is her keeper?—whar will I tak her, and how lang retain her a prisoner?"

"I fear, Will, she is beyond the power of mortal," said his Lordship, in a serious voice; "but on condition of thy making a fair trial, I will make intercession for thy life, and take the chance of thy success. Much hangeth by the enterprise—ay, even all my barony of Coberston dependeth upon that 'lurdon' being retained three months in a quiet corner of Græme's Tower. Thou knowest the place?"

"Ay, weel, weel," replied Will, who began to see the great importance of the enterprise, while his curiosity to know who the object was had considerably increased. "That tower has its 'redcap sly.' E'en Lord Soulis' Hermitage is no better guarded. Ance there, and awa wi' care, as we say o' Gilnockie as a rendezvous for *strayed* steers. But wha is she, my Lord?"

"Thou hast thyself said she is a woman," replied the Warden, smiling, "and I correct thee not. Hast thou ever heard, Will, of fifteen old women—'lurdons,' as the good people call them—that reside in a large house in the Parliament Close of Edinburgh?"

"Brawly, brawly," answered Will, with a particular leer of fun and intelligence; "and weel may I ken the limmers—real lurdons, wi' lang gowns and curches. Ken them! Wha that has a character to lose, or a property to keep against the claims o' auld parchment, doesna ken thae fifteen auld runts? They keep the hail country side in a steer wi' their scandal. Nae man's character is safe in their keeping; and they're sae fu' o' mischief that they hae even blawn into the King's lug that my tower o' Gilnockie was escheat to the King by the death o' my ancestor, who was hanged at Carlenrig. They say a' the mischief that has come on the Borders sin' the guid auld times, has its beginning in that coterie o' weakened gimmers. Dootless, they're at the root o' the danger o' yer bonnie barony o' Coberston. By the rood! I wish I had a dash at their big curches."

"Ay, Will," responded Traquair; "but they're securely lodged in their strong Parliament House, and the difficulty is how to get at them."

"But I fancy ane o' the lurdons will satisfy yer Lordship," said Will, "or do ye want them a' lodged in Græme's Tower. They wad mak a bonny nest o' screighing hoodies, if we had them safely under the care o' the sly Redcap o' that auld keep: they wad hatch something else than scandal, and leasin-makin, and reports o' the instability o' Border rights, the auld jauds."

"I will be content with one of them," rejoined the Warden.

"Ha! ha! I see, I see," replied Will. "Ane o' the limmers has been sapping and undermining Coberston wi' her hellish scandal. What's the lurdon's name, my Lord?"

"Gibson of Durie," rejoined Traquair.

"Ah! a weel-kenned scandalous runt that," replied Will. "She's the auldest o' the hail fifteen, if I'm no cheated—Leddie President o' the coterie. She spak sair against me when the King's advocate claimed for his Majesty my auld turret o' Gilnockie. I owe that quean an auld score. How lang do you want her lodged in Græme's Tower?"

"Three months would maybe change her tongue," replied the Warden; "but the enterprise seems desperate, Will."

"Desperate! my Lord," replied the other—"that word's no kenned on the Borders. Is it the doing o't, or the dool for the doing o't, that has the desperation in't?"

"The consequences to you would be great, Will," said Traquair. "You are confined here for stealing a cow, and would be hanged for it if I did not save ye. Our laws are equal and humane. For stealing a cow one may be hanged; but there's no such law against stealing a paper-lord."

"That shews the guid sense o' our lawgivers," replied Will, with a leer on his face. "The legislator has wisely weighed the merits o' the twa craters; yet, were it no for your case, my Lord, I could wish the law reversed. I wad be in nae hurry stealing ane o' thae cummers, at least for my ain use; and, as for Peggy, she would rather see a cow at Gilnockie ony day."

"Well, Will," said his Lordship, "I do not ask thee to steal for me old Leddie Gibson. I dare not. You understand me; but I am to save your life; and I tell thee that, if that big-wigged personage be not, within ten days, safely lodged in Græme's Tower, my lands of Coberston will find a new proprietor, and your benefactor will be made a lordly beggar."

"Fear not, my Lord," replied Will. "I'm nae suner out than she's in. She'll no say a word against Coberston, for the next three months, I warrant ye. But, by my faith, it's as teuch a job as boilin auld Soulis in the cauldron at the Skelfhill; and I hae nae black spae-book like Thomas to help my spell. Yet, after a', my Lord, what spell is like the wit o' man, when he has courage to act up to't!"

The Warden acknowledged the truth of Will's heroic sentiment; and, having satisfied himself that the bold riever would perform his promise, he departed, and in two days afterwards the prisoner was liberated, and on his way to his residence at the Hollows. It was apparent, from Will's part of the dialogue, that he had some knowledge of the object the Lord Warden had in view, in carrying off a Lord of Session from the middle of the capital; yet it is doubtful if he troubled himself with more than the fact of its being the wish of his benefactor, that the learned judge should be for a time confined in Græme's Tower; and, conforming to a private hint of his Lordship before he departed from the jail, he kept up in his wife Margaret's mind the delusion that it was truly "an auld lurdon" whom he was to steal, as a condition for getting out of prison. On the morning after his arrival at Gilnockie, Will held a consultation with two tried friends, whose assistance he required in this most extraordinary of all the rieving expeditions he had ever yet been engaged in; and the result of their long sederunt was, that, within two hours after, the three were mounted on as many prancing Galloways, and with a fourth led by a bridle, and carrying their provisions, a large cloak, and some other articles. They took the least frequented road to the metropolis of Scotland. Having arrived there, they put up their horses at a small hostelry in the Grassmarket; and, next day, Will, leaving his friends at the inn, repaired to that seat of the law and learning of

Scotland, where the "hail fifteen" sat in grim array, munching, with their toothless jaws, the thousand scraps of Latin law-maxims (borrowed from the Roman and feudal systems) which then ruled the principles of judicial proceedings in Scotland.

Planting himself in one of the litigants' benches—a line of seats in front of the semicircle where the fifteen Lords sat—the Liddesdale riever took a careful survey of all the wonders of that old laboratory of law. The first objects that attracted his attention, were, of course, the imposing semicircular line of judges, no fewer than fifteen, (almost sufficient for a small standing army for puny Scotland in those days,) who, wigged and robed, sat and nodded and grinned, and munched their chops in each other's faces, with a most extraordinary regularity of mummery, which yielded great amusement to the stalwarth riever of the Borders. Their appearance in the long gowns, with sleeves down to the hands, wigs whose lappets fell on their breasts, displaying many a line of crucified curl, and white cambric cravats falling from below their gaucy double-chins on their bosoms, suggested at once the appellation of lurdons, often applied to them in those days, and now vivid in the fancy of the staring Borderer, whose wild and lawless life was so strangely contrasted with that of the drowsy, effeminate-looking individuals who sat before him. He understood very little of their movements, which had all the regularity and ceremony of a raree show. One individual (the macer) cried out, at intervals, with a cracked voice, some words he could not understand; but the moment the sound had rung through the raftered hall, another species of wigged and robed individuals (advocates) came forward, and spoke a strange mixture of English and Latin, which Will could not follow; and, when they had finished, the whole fifteen looked at each other, and then began, one after another, but often two or three at a time, to speak, and nod, and shake their wigs, as if they had been set agoing by some winding-up process on the part of the advocates. Not one word of all this did Will understand; and, indeed, he cared nothing for such mummery, but ever and anon fixed his keen eye on the face of the middle senator, with an expression that certainly never could have conveyed the intelligence that that rough country-looking individual meditated such a thing as an abduction of the huge incorporation of law that sat there in so much state and solidity.

"Ha! ha! my old lass," said Will to himself; "ye little ken that the Laird o' Gilnockie, wham ye tried to deprive of his birthright, sits afore ye; and will a' the lear 'neath that big wig tell ye that that same Laird o' Gilnockie sits here contriving a plan to rin awa' ye. Faith, an' its a bauld project; but the baulder the bonnier, as we say in Liddesdale. I only wish I could tak her wig and gown wi' her—for, if the lurdon were seen looking out o' Græme's Tower, wi' that lang lappet head-gear, there would be nae need o' watch or ward to keep her there."

Will had scarcely finished his monologue, when he heard the macer cry out, "Maxwell against Lord Traquair;" then came forward the advocates, and shook their wigs over the bar, and at length old Durie, the President, said, in words that did not escape Will's vigilant ear—

"This case, I believe, involves the right to the large barony of Coberston: Seven of my brethren, you are aware, have given their opinions in favour of the defendant, Lord Traquair, and seven have declared for the pursuer, Maxwell. My casting vote must therefore decide the case, and I have been very anxious to bring my mind to a conclusion on the subject, with as little delay as possible; but there are difficulties which I have not yet been able to surmount."

"Ay, and there's a new ane here, sittin afore ye," muttered Will, "maybe the warst o' them a'")

"I still require some new lights," continued the judge. "I have already, as the case proceeded, partially announced an opinion against Lord Traquair; but I wish confirmation before I pronounce a judgment that is to have the effect of turning one out of possession of a large barony. I am sorry that my learned friends at the bar have not been able to relieve me of my scruples."

"Stupid fules," muttered Will; "but I'll relieve ye, my Lord Durie. It'll ne'er be said that a Lord o' Session stood in need o' relief, and a Border riever in the court, wha has a hundred times made the doubtin stirk tak ae road (maybe Gilnockie-ways) in preference to anither."

The Traquair case being the last called that day, the court broke up, and the judges, followed still by the eye of Christie's Will, retired into the robing room to take off their wigs and gowns. The Borderer now inquired, in a very simple manner, at a macer, at what door the judges came out of the court, as he was a countryman and was curious to see their Lordships dressed in their usual everyday clothes. The request was complied with; and Will, as a stupid gazing man from the Highlands, who wished to get an inane curiosity gratified by what had nothing curious in it, was placed in a convenient place to see the Solomons pass forth on their way to their respective dwellings. They soon came; and Will's lynx eye caught, in a moment, the face of the President, whom, to his great satisfaction, he now found to be a thin, spare, portable individual, and very far from the unwieldy personage which his judges' dress made him appear to be when sitting on the bench—a reversing of the riever's thoughts, in reference to the spareness and fatness of his object of seizure, that brought a twinkle to his eye in spite of the serious task in which he was engaged. Forth went the President with great dignity, and Christie's Will behind him, dogging him with the keen scent of a sleuth-hound. To his house in the Canongate, he slowly bent his steps ruminating as he went, in all likelihood, upon the difficulties of the Traquair case, from which his followers were so anxious to relieve him. Will saw him ascend the steps and enter, and his next object was to ascertain at what time he took his walk, and to what quarter of the suburbs he generally resorted; but on this point he could not get much satisfaction, the good judge being in his motions somewhat irregular, though (as Will learned) seldom a day passed without his having recourse to the country, in some direction or other. Will, therefore, set a watch upon the house. Another of his friends held the horses at the foot of Leith Wynd, while he himself paced between the watchman and the top of the passage, so that he might have both ends of the line always in his eye. A concerted whistle was to regulate their movements.

The first day passed without a single glimpse being had of the grave senator, who was probably occupied in the consultation of legal authorities, little conscious of the care that was taken about his precious person by so important an individual as the far-famed Christie's Will of Gilnockie. On the second day, about three of the afternoon, and two hours after he had left the Parliament House, a whistle from Will's friend indicated that the grave judge was on the steps of his stair. Will recognised him in an instant, and, dispatching his friend to him who held the horses at the foot of the Wynd, with instructions to keep behind him at a distance, he began to follow his victim slowly, and soon saw with delight that he was wending his senatorial steps down towards Leith. The unconscious judge seemed drowned in study: his eyes were fixed on the ground; his hands placed behind his back; and, ever and anon, he twirled a gold-headed cane that hung suspended by a silken string from one of his fingers. Will was certain that he was meditating the fall of Coberston, and the ruin of his benefactor, Traquair—and, as the thought rose

in his mind, the fire of his eye burned brighter, and his resolution mounted higher and higher, till he could even have seized his prey in Leith lone, and carried him off amidst the cries of the populace. But his opportunity was coming quicker than he supposed. To enable him to get deeper and deeper into his brown study, Durie was clearly bent upon avoiding the common road where passengers put to flight his ideas; and, turning to the right, went up a narrow lane, and continued to saunter on till he came to that place commonly known by the name of the Figgate Whins. In that sequestered place, where scarcely an individual was seen to pass in an hour, the deep thinking of the cogitative senator might trench the soil of the law of prescription, turn up the principle which regulated tailzies under the second part of the act 1617, and bury Traquair's right to Coberston. No sound but the flutter of a bird, or the moan of the breaking waves of the Frith of Forth could there interfere with his train of thought. Away he sauntered, ever turning his gold-headed cane, and driving his head farther and farther into the deep hole where, like the ancient philosopher, he expected to find truth. Sometimes he struck his foot against a stone, and started and looked up, as if awakened from a dream; but he was too intent on his study to take the pains to make a complete turn of his wise head, to see if there was any one behind him. During all this time, a regular course of signals was in progress among Will and his friends who were coming up behind him, the horses being kept far back, in case the sound of their hoofs might reach the ear of the day-dreamer. He had now reached the most retired and lonely part of the common, where, at that time, there stood a small clump of trees at a little distance from the whin-road that gave the place its singular name. His study still continued, for his head was still bent, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left. In a single instant, he was muffled up in a large cloak, a hood thrown over his face, and his hands firmly bound by a cord. The operation was that of a moment—finished before the prisoner's astonishment had left him power to open his mouth. A whistle brought up the horses; he was placed on one of them with the same rapidity; a cord was passed round his loins and bound to the saddle; and, in a few minutes, the party was in rapid motion to get to the back part of the city.*

During all this extraordinary operation, not a single word passed between the three rieurs, to whom the proceeding was, in a great degree, perfectly familiar. Through the folds of the hood of the cloak in which the President's head was much more snugly lodged than it ever was in his senatorial wig, he contrived to send forth some muffled sounds, indicating, not unnaturally, a wish to know what was the meaning and object of so extraordinary a manœuvre. At that time, be it understood, the belief in the power of witches was general, and Durie himself had been accessory to the condemnation of many a wise woman who was committed to the flames; but, though he had, to a great extent, emancipated his strong mind from the thralldom of the prevailing prejudice, the mode in which he was now seized—in broad day, in the midst of a legal study, without seeing a single individual, (his head being covered first,) and without hearing the sound of man's voice—would have been sufficient to bring him back to the general belief, and force the conviction that he was now in the hands of the agents of the Devil. It is, indeed, a fact, (afterwards ascertained,) that the learned judge did actually conceive that he was now in the power of those he had helped to persecute; and his fears—bringing up before him the burning tar-barrels, the paid prickers, the roaring crowds, and the expiring victim—completed the delusion, and bound up

* This famous abduction was reported by Lord Fountainhall. Every circumstance is literally true.

his energies till he was speechless and motionless. There was, therefore, no cause of apprehension from the terror-struck prisoner himself; and, as the party scoured along, they told every inquiring passenger on the way (for they were obliged, in some places, to ask the road) that they were carrying an auld lurdon to Dumfries, to be burnt for exercising the power of her art on the innocent inhabitants of that district. It was, therefore, no uncommon thing for Durie to hear himself saluted by all the appellations generally applied to the poor persecuted class to which he was supposed to belong.

"Ay, awa wi' the auld limmer," cried one, "and see that the barrels are fresh frae Norraway, and weel-lined wi' the bleezing tar."

"Be sure and prick her weel," cried another; "the foul witch may be fire-proof. If she winna burn, boil her like Meg Davy at Smithfield, or Shirra Melville on the hill o' Garvock."

These cries coming on the ear of the astonished judge, did not altogether agree with his preconceived notions of being committed to the power of the Evil One; but they tended still farther to confuse him, and he even fancied at times that the vengeance of the populace, which thus rung in his ears, was in the act of being realized, and that he was actually to suffer the punishment he had so often awarded to others. Some expressions wrung from him by his fear, and overheard by the quick ear of Will, gave the latter a clue to the workings of his mind, and he did not fail to see how he might take advantage of it. As night began to fall, they had got far on their way towards Moffat, and, consequently, far out of danger of a pursuit and a rescue. Durie's horse was pricked forward at a speed not inconsistent with his power of keeping the saddle. They stopped at no baiting place, but kept pushing forward, while the silence was still maintained, or, if it ever was broken, it was to introduce, by interlocutory snatches of conversation, some reference to the doom which awaited the unhappy judge. The darkness in which he was muffled, the speed of his journey, the sounds and menaces that had met his ear, all co-operating with the original sensations produced by his mysterious seizure, continued to keep alive the terrors he at first felt, to overturn all the ordinary ideas and feelings of the living world, and to sink him deeper and deeper in the confusion that had overtaken his mind in the midst of his legal reverie at the Figgate Whins.

The cavalcade kept its course all next day, and, towards the evening, they approached Grame's Tower, a dark, melancholy-looking erection, situated on Dryfe Water, not very distant from the village of Moffat. In a deep cell of this old castle the President of the Court of Session was safely lodged, with no more light than was supplied by a small grating, and with a small supply of meat, only sufficient to allay at first the pangs of hunger. Will having thus executed his commission, sat down and wrote on a scrap of paper these expressive words—"The brock's in the pock!" and sent it with one of his friends to Traquair House. The moment the Earl read the scrawl, he knew that Will had performed his promise, and took a hearty laugh at the extraordinary scheme he had resorted to for gaining his plea. It was not yet, however, his time to commence his proceedings; but, in a short time after the imprisonment of the President, he set off for Edinburgh, which town he found in a state of wonder and ferment at the mysterious disappearance of the illustrious Durie. Every individual he met had something to say on the subject; but the prevailing opinion was, that the unhappy President had ventured upon that part of the sands near Leith where the incoming tide usually incloses, with great rapidity, large sand-banks, and often overwhelms helpless strangers who are unacquainted with the manner in which

the tide there flows. Numbers of people had exerted themselves in searching all the surrounding parts, and some had traversed the whole coast from Musselburgh to Cramond, in the expectation of finding the body upon the sea-shore. But all was in vain: no President was found; and a month of vain search and expectation having passed, the original opinion settled down into a conviction that he had been drowned. His wife, Lady Durie, after the first emotions of intense grief, went, with her whole family, into mourning; and young and old lamented the fate of one of the most learned judges and best men that ever sat on the judgment seat of Scotland.

There was nothing now to prevent Traquair from reaping the fruits of his enterprise. He pressed hard for a judgment in his case; and pled that the fourteen judges having been equally divided, he was entitled to a decision in his favour, as *defender*. This plea was not at that time sustained; but a new President having been appointed, who was favourable to his side of the question, the case was again to be brought before the Court, and the Earl expected to carry his point and reap all the benefit of Will's courage and ingenuity.

Meantime, the dead-alive President was closely confined in the old tower of Græme, and had never recovered from the feelings of superstition which held the sovereign power of his mind, at the time of his confinement. He never saw the face of man; his food being handed into him by an unseen hand, through a small hole at the foot of the door. The small grating was not situated so as to yield him any prospect; and the only sounds that greeted his ears, were the calls of the shepherds who tended their sheep in the neighbouring moor. Sometimes he heard men's voices calling out "Batty!" and anon a female crying "Maudge!" The former was the name of a shepherd's dog, and the latter was the name of the cat belonging to an old woman who occupied a small cottage adjoining to the tower. Both the names sounded strangely and ominously in the ears of the President, and sorely did he tax his wits as to what they implied. Every day he heard them, and, every time he heard them, he meditated more and more as to the species of beings they denominated. Still remaining in the belief that he was in the hands of evil powers, he imagined that these strange names, Batty and Maudge, were the earthly titles of the two demons that held the important authority of watching and tormenting the President of the Court of Session. He had heard these often, "and suffered so much from their cruel tyranny, that he became nervous when the ominous sounds struck on his ear, and often (as he himself subsequently admitted) he adjoined heaven, in his prayers, to take away Maudge and Batty, and torment him no longer by their infernal agency. "Relieve me, relieve me, from these conjunct and confident spirits, cruel Maudge and inexorable Batty," (he prayed,) "and any other punishment due to my crimes I will willingly bear." Exorcisms in abundance he applied to them, and used many fanciful tricks of demon-expelling agency, to free him from their tyranny; but all to no purpose. The names still struck his ear in the silence of his cell, and kept alive the superstitious terror with which he was enslaved.

Traquair, meanwhile, pushed hard for a decision, and, at last, after a period of about three months, the famous cause was brought before the court, and the successor of the dead-alive President having given his vote for the defender, the wily Warden carried his point, and secured to him and his heirs, in time coming, the fine barony in dispute, which, for aught we know to the contrary, is in the family to this day.

It now remained for the actors in this strange drama to let free the unhappy Durie, and relieve him from the power of his enemies. The Warden accordingly dispatched a messenger to Christie's Will, with the laconic and emphatic de-

mand—"Let the brock out o' the pock"—a return of Will's own humorous message, which he well understood. Will and his associates accordingly went about the important deliverance, in a manner worthy of the dexterity by which the imprisonment had been effected. Having opened the door of his cell, they muffled him up in the same black cloak in which he was enveloped at the Figgate Whins, and leading him to the door, they placed him on the back of a swift steed, while they mounted others, with a view to accompany him. Setting off at a swift pace, they made a circuit of the tower in which he had been confined, and, continuing the same circuitous route round and round the castle, for a period of two or three hours, they stopped at the very door of his cell from which they had started. They then set him down upon the ground, and, again mounting their horses, took to their heels, and never halted till they arrived at Gilnockie.

On being left alone, Durie proceeded to undo the cords by which the cloak was fastened about his head; and, for the first time after three months, breathed the fresh air, and saw the light of heaven. He had ridden, according to his own calculation, about twenty miles; and, looking round him, he saw alongside of him the tower of Græme, an old castle he had seen many years before, and recollected as being famous in antiquarian reminiscence. The place he had been confined in must have been some castle twenty miles distant from Græme Tower—a circumstance that would lead him, he thought, to discover the place of his confinement, though he was free to confess that he was utterly ignorant of the direction in which he had travelled. Thankful for his deliverance, he fell on his knees, and poured out a long prayer of gratitude, for being thus freed from his enemies, Batty and Maudge. The distance he had travelled must have taken him far away from the regions of their influence—the most grateful of all the thoughts that now rose in his wondering mind. No more would these hated names strike his ear with terror and dismay, and no more would he feel the tyranny of their demoniac sway. As these thoughts were passing through his mind, a sound struck his ear.

"Hey, Batty, lad!—far vaud, far vaud!" cried a voice by his side.

"God have mercy on me!" here again ejaculated the President.

"Maudge, ye jaud!" cried another voice, from the door of a poor woman's cottage.

The terrified President lifted his eyes, and saw a goodly shepherd, with a long staff in his hand, crying to his dog, Batty, to drive his sheep to a distance; and, a little beyond, a poor woman sat at her door, looking for her black cat, that sat on the roof of the cottage, and would not come down for all the energies of her squeaking voice.

"What could all this mean?" now ejaculated Durie. "Have I not been for three months tortured with these sounds, which I attributed to evil spirits? I have ridden from them twenty miles, and here they are again, in the form of fair honest denominations of living animals. I am in greater perplexity than ever. While I thought them evil spirits, I feared them as such; but now, God help me, they have taken on the forms of a dog and cat, and this shepherd and this old woman are kindred devils, under whose command they are. What shall I do, whither run to avoid them, since twenty miles have been to them as a flight in the air?"

"It's a braw morning, sir," said the shepherd. "How far hae ye come this past night?—for I ken nae habitation near whar ye may hae rested."

"It's seldom we see strangers hereawa," said the old woman, "at this early hour—will ye come in, sir, and rest ye?"

Durie looked first at the one and then at the other, be-

wildered and speechless. The fair face of nature before him, with the forms of God's creatures, and the sounds of human voices in his ears, were as nothing to recollections and sensations which he could not shake from his mind. He had, for certain, heard these dreadful sounds for three months; he had ridden twenty miles, and now he heard them again, mixed up with the delusive accompaniments of the enticing speeches of a man and a woman. He would fly, but felt himself unable; and, standing under the influence of the charm of his own terrors, he continued to look, first at the shepherd, and then at the old woman, in wonder and dismay. The people knew as little what to think of him, as he did in regard to them. He looked wild and haggard, his eyes rolled about in his head, his voice was mute; and the cloak which he had partially unloosed from his head, hung in strange guise down his back, and flapped in the wind. The old castle had its "red cap," a fact known to both the shepherd and the old woman, who had latterly heard strange sounds coming from it. Might not Durie be the spirit in another form? The question was reasonable, and was well answered by the wildly staring President, who was still under the spell of his terrors.

"Avaunt ye!—avaunt! in the name o' the haly rude o' St Andrews!" cried the woman, now roused to a state of terror.

The same words were repeated by the simple-minded shepherd, and poor Durie's fears were, if possible, increased; for it seemed that they were now performing some new incantation, whereby he would be again reduced to their power; but he was now in the open air—and why not take advantage of the opportunity of escaping from their thralldom? The moment the idea started in his mind, he threw from him the accursed cloak, and flew away over the moor as fast as his decayed limbs, inspired by terror, would carry him. As he ran, he heard the old woman clapping her hands, and crying, "Shoo, shoo!" as if she had been exorcising a winged demon. After running till he was fairly out of the sights and sounds that had produced in him so much terror, he sat down, and took a retrospect of what had occurred to him during the preceding three months; but he could come to no conclusion that could reconcile all the strange things he had experienced, with any supposition based on natural powers. It was certain, however, that he was still upon the earth, and it was probable he was now beyond the power of his evil genius. His best plan, therefore, under all the circumstances, was to seek home, and Lady Durie, and his loving family, who would doubtless be in a terrible condition on account of his long absence; and even this idea, pleasant as it was, was qualified by the fear that he might, for aught he knew, have been away, like the laird of Comrie, for many, perhaps a hundred years, and neither Lady Durie, nor friend or acquaintance, would be alive to greet him on his return. Of all this, however, he must now take his chance; and, rising, and journeying forward, he came to a house where he asked for some refreshment by way of charity; for he had nothing in the world to pay for what he required. He was fortunate in getting some relief from the kind woman to whom he had applied, and proceeded to speak to her on various topics with great sense and propriety, as became the ex-President of the Court of Session; but when, to satisfy his scruples, he asked her the day of the month, then the month of the year, and then the year of the Lord, the good woman was satisfied he was mad; and, with a look of pity, recommended him to proceed on his way, and get home as fast as he could.

So on the President went, begging his way from hamlet to hamlet, getting alms from one and news from another, but never gratified with the year of the Lord in which he lived; for, when he put that question, he was uniformly pitied, and allowed to proceed on his way for a madman

He heard, however, several times that President Durie had been drowned in the Frith of Forth, and that a new President of the Court of Session had been appointed in his place. Whether his wife was married again or not, he could not learn, and was obliged to wrestle with this and other fears as he still continued his way to the metropolis. At last, Edinburgh came in view, and glad was he to see again the cat's head of old St Arthur's, and the diadem of St Giles rearing their heights in the distance. Nearer and nearer he approached the place of his home, happiness, and dignity; but, as he came nearer still, he began to feel all the effects of his supposed demise. Several of his old acquaintances stared wildly at him as they passed, and, though he beckoned to them to stand and speak, they hurried on, and seemed either not to recognise him, or to be terrified at him. At last, he met Lord F——, the judge who had sat for many years next to him on the bench; and, running up to him, he held out his hand in kindly salutation, grinning, with his long thin jaws and pallid cheeks, a greeting which he scarcely understood himself. By this time it was about the gloaming, and, such was the extraordinary effect produced by his sudden appearance, and changed, cadaverous look, that his old brother of the bench got alarmed, and fairly took to his heels, as if he had seen a spectre. Undaunted, however, he pushed on, and, by the time he reached the Canongate, it was almost dark. He went direct to his own house, and, peeping through the window, saw Lady Durie sitting by the fire, dressed in weeds, and several of his children around, dressed in the same style. The sight brought the tears of joy to his eyes, and, forgetting entirely the effect his appearance would produce, he threw open the door, and rushed into the room. A loud scream from the throats of the lady and the children rang through the whole house, and brought up the servants, who screamed in their turn, and some of them fainted, while others ran away; and no one had any other idea that the emaciated haggard being before them was other than the grim ghost of Lord President Durie, come from the other world to terrify the good people of this. The confusion, however, soon ceased; for Durie began to speak softly to them, and, taking his dear lady in his arms, pressed her to his bosom in a way that satisfied her that he was no ghost, but her own lord, who, by some mischance, had been spirited away by some bad angels. The children gradually recovered their confidence; and, in a short time, joy took the place of fear, and all the neighbourhood was filled with the news that Lord Durie had come alive again, and was in the living body in his own house. Shortly after, the good lord sat down by the fire, and got his supper, and, by the quantity he ate, satisfied his lady and family still more that he carried a good body, with as fair a capability of reception as he ever exhibited after a walk at the Figgate Whins. He told them all he had undergone since first he was carried away, not forgetting the two spirits, Batty and Maudge, that had tormented him so cruelly during the period of his enchantment. The lady and family stared with open mouths, as they heard the dreadful recital; but a goodly potation of warm spiced wine drove off the vapour produced by the dismal story, and, by and by, Lord Durie and his wife retired to bed; the one weary and exhausted with his trials, and the other with her terrors and her joys.



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TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE AMATEUR LAWYERS.

THE profession of the law is, unquestionably, one of the very highest respectability, and the study itself a sufficiently interesting one, nevertheless of its having been called dry by those whose genius it does not suit, or by those whose pockets have been made lighter by some of its technical behests; yet we cannot conceive what there is, either in its language, its technicalities, or its general practical operation and application, that should captivate the fancy of any one who is not connected with it professionally. But, of a surety, the science has had many amateur attachés—men whose whole souls were wrapped up in multiple soundings, rejoinders, and condescendences. Strange customers they have been for the most part—original geniuses in some of the queerest senses of the word. Born with a natural propensity for litigation, and possessing a most unaccountable aptitude for everything that is complicated and involved, the law becomes, with these persons, not only a favourite, but engrossing study—engrossing, almost to the exclusion of everything else. Law, in short, becomes their hobby. Of law they constantly speak; of law they constantly think; and of law, we have no doubt, they constantly dream. The victims of this curious disease—for a disease it certainly is—are generally to be found amongst the lower and uneducated classes, and are, for the most part, men of confused intellect and large conceit, all of them, without any exception, imagining themselves astonishingly shrewd and clever fellows—sharp chaps, who know much more than the world is aware of, or will give them credit for—dungeons of wit and wisdom. For these persons the jargon of the law has charms superior to the sweetest strains that music ever poured forth. They delight in its uncouthness and unintelligibility, and employ it with a gravity, composure, and confidence which, when contrasted with their utter ignorance, or, at best, confused notions of its meaning, is at once highly edifying and impressive. Notwithstanding, however, of the natural tendencies of such persons as we speak of, to legal pursuits and studies, they do not, generally, betake themselves to them spontaneously, or without some original influencing cause. They will be found, for the most part, to have been started in their legal career by some small lawsuit of their own. This, they being previously predisposed, at once inoculates them with the disease. From that moment to the end of their natural lives, they are confirmed, incorrigible lawyers. They have imbibed a love for the science, a taste for litigation, which quits them only with life. These remarks we have made with the view of introducing to the world, with the fullest effect possible, our very good friend, Mr John Goodale, or, as the name was more generally and more euphoniously pronounced, by his acquaintances, Guidyill, who was precisely such a person and character as we have endeavoured to picture forth in this preliminary sketch with which our story opens.

Guidyill was a small laird or landed proprietor in the shire of Renfrew, or, as it was anciently spelt, Arran-through. He was a man of grave, solemn demeanour,

with a look of intense wisdom, which was hardly made good by either his speech or his actions. It was evident, however, that he was desirous of palming himself on a simple world for a man of shining parts, of great penetration and discernment, and profound knowledge. All this he himself firmly believed he was, and this belief imparted to his somewhat saturnine countenance a degree of calm repose, confidence, and self-reliance that was particularly striking. In person, he was tall and thin, or rather gaunt, with that peculiar conformation of face which has obtained the fancy name of lantern-jawed. His age was about fifty-five. The laird *always* wore knee-breeches, and *never* wore braces; so that the natural tendency of the former downwards being thus unchecked, gave free egress to a quantity of shirt, which, taking advantage of the liberty, always displayed itself in a voluminous semicircle of white across his midriff. A small, unnecessary exhibition of snuff about the nose completed the *tout ensemble* of the laird of Scouthercakes—for such was the territorial designation in which he rejoiced.

We have described Mr Guidyill (we prefer the colloquial to the classical pronunciation of his name) as a small laird, and such he was at the period we take up his history; but it had not been always so with him. He was at one time owner of a very extensive property; but lawsuit after lawsuit had gradually circumscribed its dimensions, until he found no difficulty in accomplishing that in ten minutes which used to take him a good hour—that is, in walking round his possessions. The laird, however, had still a little left, as much as would carry him through two or three other suits of moderate cost—and this happiness he hoped to enjoy before he died; for, like a spaniel with its master, the more the law flogged him, the more attached to it he became.

At the particular moment, however, at which we introduce Mr Guidyill to the notice of the reader, he had no legal business whatever on hand—not a single case in any one even of the petty local courts of the district, to say nothing of his great field of action, the Court of Session. It was a predicament he had not been in for twenty years before, and he found it exceedingly irksome and disagreeable; for a dispute with some one or other was necessary, if not to his existence absolutely, at least, most certainly, to his happiness. The laird's last lawsuit, which was with a neighbouring proprietor regarding the site of a dungstead, and which, as usual, had gone against him, to the tune of some hundred and eighty pounds, had been brought to a conclusion about a year and a half before the period we allude to; and, during all that time, the laird had lived, contrived to live we should have said, without a single quarrel with any one, on which any pretext for a law-plea could be grounded. Moreover, and what was still more distressing, he was not only without a case at the moment, but without the prospect of one; for he had exhausted all the pugnacity that was in his vicinity. There was not now one left who would "take him up." But better days were in store for the laird—better than he had dared to hope for. One thumping plea, a thorough cleaner out before he died, was the secret wish of his heart, though unavowed even to himself; and, in this wish

it was permitted him to be gratified. But let us get on with our story.

About the period to which we refer, there came a new tenant to the farm of Skimclean, which farm marched with the remnant of Mr Guidyill's property. Now, for some days after this person, whose name was Drumwhussle, had taken possession of his new farm, the laird kept a sharp look-out on his proceedings, in the hope that he would commit some trespass or other, or perpetrate some encroachment, which would afford standing room for a quarrel; but, to the great disappointment of our amateur lawyer, no such occurrence took place. In no single thing, did, or would, the new tenant of Skimclean offend. He would not throw even a stick on his neighbour's grounds, of whose exact lines of demarcation he seemed to have a most provokingly accurate knowledge. Losing all hope of his new neighbour's giving any offence spontaneously—that is, through ignorance, or involuntarily, or purposely, or in any way—the laird determined on visiting him, in the desperate expectation that an acquaintanceship might throw up something to quarrel with—that familiarity might breed, not contempt, but dislike—that friendship might give rise to enmity. Now, this conduct of the laird's certainly seems at first sight paradoxical; but a little reflection, especially if accompanied, also, by a little experience of the world, will shew that it was not quite so absurd or so contradictory as it seems. On the contrary, such reflections and experience would discover, in the laird's intended proceeding, a good deal of philosophy, and a very considerable knowledge of human nature. Be this as it may, however, Mr Guidyill determined on paying his new neighbour, Skimclean, a visit; and this determination he forthwith executed. The latter, whom he had never had the pleasure of seeing before, he found to be a little, lively, volatile person, of great volubility of speech; like himself, a prodigious snuffer; and like himself, too, possessed of a very comfortable opinion of his own knowledge and abilities. In another and still more remarkable point in character, they resembled each other closely. This last resemblance involved a rather singular and certainly curious coincidence between the dispositions of the two worthies of whom we speak, and was one which the laird, when he discovered it, viewed with a very strange mixture of feelings. What these were, however, and what was their cause, will be best left to appear in the progress of our narrative.

On Mr Guidyill's having introduced himself to his new neighbour, and after a little desultory conversation on various subjects had taken place, but chiefly on the merits and demerits of the lands of Skimclean—

"Mr Drumwhussle," said the laird, planting his stick in the ground before him, and looking with deep interest on some trees that grew in front of Skimclean's house, "it's my opinion that ye ocht to cut doon thae sticks. They shut oot yer licht terribly, and tak up a great deal o' valuable grun."

"Ah, ha, laird, catch me there," replied Drumwhussle, with a knowing laugh. "The trees do a' the mischief ye say; but, do ye no ken, that, being but a tenant, I hae nae richt to cut them, my poer being only owre the surface, '*tankam bonny fir*,'* (that's Latin,) and that, if I did cut them, I wad be liable to an action o' damages by the laird, wha wad inevitably recover accordin to law. A' tacks, ye ken, are granted, '*propter kooram et kulloorum*,'† (that's mair Latin,) of which the fellin o' trees, without consent o' the proprietor, wad be a direck violation. Na, na, I ken better hoo to keep my feet oot o' thae law traps than that, laird."

We wish we could describe the look of amazement with which the laird listened to this extraordinary outpouring

of law and Latin—this flourishing of his own weapons in his face. He was perfectly confounded with it. It was a thing so wholly unexpected and unlooked for, to meet with so accomplished a lawyer as Drumwhussle seemed to be in one of his own class and standing, that it was some time before he could say another word on any subject whatever. He was evidently struck with a feeling of mingled respect and awe for his learned neighbour, who, he perceived, had decidedly the advantage of him in the article, Latin—this being a language with which the laird was not at all conversant. Another consideration occurred to the laird, even in the moment of his first surprise. This was, that, should a difference arise between them, he had found in his new neighbour a foeman worthy of his steel; and that, should they remain friends, they might be of service to each other as legal advisers.

In the meantime, the "interlockytor," as the laird would have called the series of legal sentiments which Drumwhussle had just delivered, was far beyond the reach of his comprehension. He did not understand a word of it, and neither could anybody else, we suspect; but, careful of exposing his ignorance—

"Aweel, Skimclean," he said, looking very gravely, "I'm no sure but ye're richt; and it may be as weel, after a'; to let the trees stann whar they are; but there's a bit land there," pointing to a patch of about an acre and a half, which lay low on the side of a small stream, "that I wadli advise ye to crap; for there's no a year that it's no three months under water."

"Ah ha, laird, but that's a *pluskum tolerable*,"* replied the vivacious and acute Skimclean; "a case whar the owner o' the land is liable to the extent, at ony rate, o' remittin a year's rent. It's a *pluskum tolerable*, laird—that's Latin," added Skimclean, who always gave such intimation to his auditors when he employed that language; from a shrewd suspicion, probably, that it would not otherwise be readily recognised in the very peculiar shape in which he presented it.

"Aweel, I daur say ye're no far wrang there either," replied the laird, now perfectly overwhelmed with the legal knowledge of his new neighbour. "I daur say ye're no far wrang there either, but it's best to be cowshous;" and, having delivered himself of this safe and general sentiment, the laird looked wiser than ever, and shook his head with an air of great intelligence. Hitherto, Mr Guidyill, as the reader will have observed, had made no display of his legal acquirements. He had been too much taken aback by the sudden and unexpected effulgence of those of Skimclean; but it was by no means his intention to allow the latter to remain in ignorance of them. Availing himself, therefore, of an early opportunity, he discharged a volley of law terms at Skimclean, in which the words Rejoinder, Multiplepoinding, Reclaim, and, above all, the phrase, "Revise the Condescendence," sounded most audibly; the latter being an especial favourite of the laird's, who used it on all occasions and on all matters indifferently, and, as everybody but himself thought, almost always in the most absurdly inappropriate cases and circumstances.

The effect on Skimclean, again, of the discovery of the laird's legal knowledge was pretty similar to that which the latter had experienced in similar circumstances, only that there was in the case of Drumwhussle a secret feeling of superiority over the laird, in the matter of intimacy with the science of the law. He, in short, considered the laird's knowledge respectable, but his own considerably more so. Now, the laird also, after his first surprise at his neighbour's acquirements had worn off a little, began to think Skimclean fully more apt and ready than profound. He considered his own depth, on the whole, rather

* *Tanquam bonus vir.* † *Propter eorum et cultura.*

* *Plusquam tolerabile.*

greater. Each, thus, while he certainly honoured the legal knowledge of his neighbour, enjoyed, at the same time, the comfortable conviction that he was the superior man.

Having thus come to an understanding regarding each other's character, and this having given rise to a friendly feeling on both sides, their interview terminated in Drumwhussle inviting his new acquaintance into the house, to partake of a little refreshment—an invitation which the latter graciously accepted; looking forward to a feast of quiet, deliberate legal discussion with his learned friend.

On entering the house—indeed, previous to entering it—Mr Guidyill was struck with the singular neatness and good order which everywhere prevailed—(this being a point on which his inviter prided himself;) and so much pleased was he with it, that he could not refrain from openly expressing his approbation.

"A' accordin' to law, Skimclean," he said, looking around him, with a complimentary air of satisfaction; "a' accordin' to law, I see."

"Ay, ay," replied his host, perfectly understanding the laird's metaphorical laudation, and smiling complacently, "we ayë try to keep things in as guid order as possible. I look after everything mysel, and see that a's done as it should be. That's the true way, laird."

"Nae doot o't, nae doot o't," said the latter. "Naething like revisin the condescendence, Skimclean—eh!" he added with an intelligent look.

"Right there, laird," replied Drumwhussle, "as honest Donald Quirkum, the writer, ance said to me when I consulted him anent a point o' law, in the case o' Drumwhussle *versus* Camlachie. 'Drumwhussle,' said he, 'Drumwhussle'—But I'll tell ye a' about it presently, laird," said Skimclean, suddenly interrupting himself to perform the duties of hospitality towards his guest—"step ben, step ben." And he ushered the laird into a little sitting-room in the back part of the house.

"Now, laird, what wull ye drink?" inquired Drumwhussle. "Wull ye tak a drap o' cauld straik, or wad ye hae any objection to a wee bit browst o' toddy?"

"Weel, if equally convenient, I'll vote for the toddy," replied the laird.

"I second the motion," said Skimclean, now proceeding to a closet in a corner of the rooin, from which he shortly emerged with his arms and hands loaded with bottles, glasses, jugs, and decanters, and all the other paraphernalia requisite for the occasion. These arranged on the table, flanked by an enormous cheese, and hot water supplied from the kitchen, Drumwhussle commenced brewing *secundum artem*; and having produced the desiderated beverage, handed over half a glass to the laird, for his opinion as to its merits. The laird tasted, gave a short-suffocating cough, and, speaking at such intervals as the stifling affection afforded—

"Re-revise the—the con-descendence, Skimclean. Revise the—the condescendence. It's far owre strong."

"It might hae a waur faut, laird," replied Drumwhussle, "and it's ane that's easy mended," he added, filling up the jug with hot water. "Tastè him now, laird."

"According to law," replied the latter, emphatically, after smacking off the half-glass submitted to him. "Accordin' to law at a' points. It's just the thing now, Skimclean."

The liquor thus approved of, was immediately subjected to the process of consumption; which its merits were so well calculated to insure for it, and this at such a rate that the consumers very soon began to exhibit, in their own persons, rather curious specimens of the effect of strong drink on the animal economy. They began to speak thick and fast, and both at the same time; their conversation chiefly turning on the various actions and law proceedings in which they had been from time to time engaged.

It was during this confabulation, that Skimclean informed his guest of a certain law-plea in which he was at the moment involved, and in which he was ably supported by the astute Donald Quirkum, already alluded to.

"The case, ye see," said Skimclean, "the case, ye see, my friend, is just this:—In the place whar I was last, Craignockan, ane o' my laddies had a bit gemm cock, a bit steeve fechtin wee beastie. Aweel, ye see, it happened that our neebor the schulemaster had anither, o' whilk he was sae proud that he seemed to think mair o't than o' his wife. It was beyond a' doot a wonderfu creature. His son brought it (so at least he said) frae Sumatra, in the East Indies—something o' the jungle-cock, or Jago-cock species, *gallus giganteus**—ye'll maybe no understand the Latin."

"Deil an' it may choke ye, as the *gallus* has dunè mony a better man!" interrupted the laird. "Purge the record o' a' bad Latin! Ha! ha! Drumwhussle, I ken guid Latin frae dog-Latin; or cock-Latin, just as weel as ye do. Purgè the record, man; I say."

"Let me alane, man," replied Drumwhussle, impatiently; "ye interrupt my story wi' your scraps o' misapplied learning. Do ye no ken lawyers never use the words 'bad intention' in designating vice: they veil a' enormities in Latin—for the creatures are sae pure and delicate-minded that they couldna bear the expression o' man's frailties in the vulgar tongue; *maelice prepense*—*maelice prepense* is the term you should hae used, man. But letten that slip gang—for I excuse ignorance where knowledge is so difficult o' attainment—the cocks were brought face to face, and, like true lawyers, they closed—no the record, for the creatures despised a' condescendence o' grievances; they fought upon the mere libel and defences; a craw on each side *vivy vocey*; and till't they gaed wi' a spirit that's seldom witnessed out o' the Parliament House. The upshot may be easily predicted: weight, substance prevailed just as in the courts o' justice—the 'midden,' a pound heavier than the Sumatra jungle cock, killed his opponent in five minutes; and Jock, lifting up the victor, that crew a noble triumph in his arms, hurried awa, and left the dominie's cock lying; a mere *kappit mortuum*—like an interlocutor that's allowed to become *final* because nae man can mak eithèr head or tail o't—on the ground, a corp, or, as Quirkum ca'ed it, a *corpus delictifu*."†

"Capital, capital," cried the laird. "We'll hae a plea, I hope, on the ground o' damage. A better case for 'plucking' never came before the fifteen."

"Ay, and that wi' a vengeance," resumed Drumwhussle. "Though the cock's plea was final, a *sleeping or dead case*, as lawyers ken, may produce twenty living anes. The dominie valued his cock at the price o' twenty guineas; he was to have been the *pater* o' a new breed (he said) that he intended to produce in Scotland; and the expense o' bringing him frae Sumatra alane was at least the half o' that sum. Like a sturdy litigant—game to the heels—I resisted the demand o' damage, and took my ground on the instant—alleging, *primo*, that the cocks fought *sonie sponty*;‡ and, *secundo*, that the slaughtered cock was a mere 'blue ginger'; and thus throwing the *onus* o' proving the contrary on the back o' the dominie."

"A noble device," shouted the laird; "famous pleas in law. Nae Corporal Jooris on earth could hae ta'en his position better. But proceed, proceed. I'm deein to hear the issue. Oh, that that plea had been mine! The chancellor's wig wad hae bobbit our'e't; for they say there's nae stoure in it, as in the mealy, muddy *scratches* in our Parliament House. Come awa wi' the soul-stirring intelligence."

"Ay, and *pouch*-stirring too," rejoined Drumwhussle.

* *Gallus giganteus*. † *Corpus delicti*. ‡ *Sua sponte*.

"Weel, the dominie was as guid gemm as his cock, and awa he hied to Paisley, and put the case into the hands o' that clever deevil o' a creature Jobbit, who, *instantier*, sent me a summons, containing a preamble of nineteen pages, and a conclusion of three—seventy-five words a page, according to my calculation. I declare the screed made my very een reel, it was sae masterfully latineezed, turned, interwoven, and crammed wi' 'sai'ds' and 'fore-sai'ds.' It set forth the said dominie as 'greeting' to the sheriff for the loss of his cock—a maist cunning and loyal device o' Jobbit's, wha, dootless had an ee to the case going before the depute, and then it went on to narrate" (Drumwhussle drew out a copy of the summons) "that 'the complainer had commissioned the said bird or cock, (along with a female,) whilk was of the species *gallows giganteus*, from the island of Sumatra, where it is known by the natives of that island by the scientific, or vulgar, or common appellation of *ayam bankiva*, (all as appeareth from Temmink's History of Cocks,) and that the complainer's intention or object, in so commissioning the said birds from that distant region, was, that he might introduce into our country the breed, whilk was supposed to be mair full of blood and spirit than our ain breed of poultry, and had, moreover, the advantage of producing more eggs—insomuch as the female laid all the year through, while the flesh was whiter and more highly flavoured, approaching, in this respect, to that of the pheasant; that the expense of bringing the said birds from Sumatra, was ten guineas sterling; that the complainer had, by dint of great ingenuity and perseverance, got the said birds naturalized, as completely as if they had been natural-born subjects of this realm, and was on the very eve of reaping the fruits of his patriotic labours—the fame of a breeder of a new species of poultry, and the emoluments of a vender or seller of the same to the farmers and bird-fanciers of the kingdom—when David Drumwhussle, tenant of Quarry-holes, actuated by *malice prepense*, or by envy, or by fear that his ain breed of poultry (of the common or dunghill species) would be displaced and superseded by the other and superior kind, or by some other motive or feeling, implying *dolus*, did stir up and excite his son, John Drumwhussle, for whose acts and deeds (being a minor, and not *forisfamiliated*) he was liable, to bring (*vi aut clam*) his said David Drumwhussle's cock, and his the said complainer's, into a pugnacious attitude and position, and to instigate the same to mortal combat, whereby the said cocks having engaged *secundum suam naturam* in a lethal *duellum*, did fight till his the complainer's was left in the field dead; that the primary consequence of this premeditated act was, that the female was rendered mateless, unproductive, and useless, insomuch as her cohabitation and society with cocks of this country would never be the means of producing the species of *gallus giganteus*; the secondary, that the complainer was deprived of a source of legitimate gain; and the tertiary, that the country of Great Britain lost the superlative advantage of an improved breed of poultry.' Thae are the premises."

"An' fine premises they are," replied Guidyill. "Jobbit never laid an egg mair certain o' producing a weel feathered bird for the lawyers."

"Ye're right, laird, sae far," replied Drumwhussle; "but ye've yet to learn that it had twa yolks—twa law-pleas came out o't. But ye'll hear. I needna read the conclusion—a' in the ordinary form, ye ken:—therefore it ought and should be found and declared, and so forth; and that I should be decreed to pay twenty guineas as the value of the cock, and damages sustained for the loss of his expected progeny."

"Well, well, the defences, the defences," cried the laird, in eager expectation. "Ye wad state the defence on the merits first, I fancy, and then the preliminary ane."

"The cart afore the horse, ye fule!" answered Drumwhussle, chuckling. "I despised a' dilatory pleas, man: I came to the marrow at ance, and instructed my agent Mr Kirkham, or Quirkum, as he is generally styled, for his exquisite adroitness and cleverness, to use the very highest flicht o' his inventive fancy—to consult Corporal Jooris himself—to dive into the Roman pancakes*—the digest—the discreets—every authority, in fact, he could think of—no forgetting Cock on Littleton; and send me a draft o' the defences *siny mory*.† He did so, and such a beautiful invention never poet Lawrie of England himself produced, on the accession of a king. They set forth, as a kind o' flourish before the real tug o' the tournay, that the libel was a lee frae beginning to end; that the pursuer's cock was, even in his ain shewing, an alien, and no entitled to the rights of natural-born subjects; that he interfered with the queens of the seraglio of my winged potentate—making love to them, crawling to them, and displaying his gaudy wings to them, as if he were lord of a' the feathered creation; that the defender's cock, acting upon the weel-ascertained right of defending conjugal property, slew him in the strength of the English case, Jenkins *versus* Lovelace, where a husband was found justified in taking the life of one who made love to his wife. In the second place, it was denied *simplepeter*,‡ that the cock was of the species *gallows giganteus*, being a mere 'blue ginger' (worth five shillings) of the auld breed of Scotland, whilk came frae the stock named by the Greek play-writer, Mr Arrantstuffanes, 'the Persian bird.' We thus threw the hail *onus proovandy* on the back o' the dominie—and, by my faith, he fand the weight o't!"

"A noble defence—just exactly what I wad hae written," ejaculated Guidyill, in ecstasy. "Weel, ye wad revise the condescendence after that, I fancy."

"Before it was written, man?" responded Drumwhussle. "Na, na; ye ken little about thae things. The dominie was ordered to condescend on what he undertook and offered to prove in support o' his libel—then we answered, then he revised, then we revised, then he re-revised, then we re-revised, then he made an addition, which we answered by a corresponding addition, equal to a re-re-revision; then the record was purged, then closed, and then we set to proving (for the proof was conjunk and confident) wi' a' the spirit o' the cocks themselves. Oh, it was grand sport! The dominie brought twa witnesses frae Lunnon, to swear to the cock having been brought from Sumatra; and I brought frae Dumbarton, where the best cock mains in a' Scotland are fought, twa fanciers wha had seen the dominie's bird, to swear that it was a 'blue ginger'; then there was sic proving, and counter-proving, witness against witness; the dominie's servant swearing to the instigation practised by Jock, my bothic men swearing an *alibi*; valuator by me fixing the dominie fixing ae value, and valuator by me fixing anither, till I fancy there were nae fewer than fifteen witnesses a-side."

"Famous, famous!" cried the laird—"what a glorious main! There never was sic a cocking sin' the match in 1684, between Forfarshire and the Loudons. You would be decreetit favourably, beyond a' doubt."

"Mr Guidyill," answered Drumwhussle, taking up his glass, "I was cast in fifteen guineas, and a' expenses."

"Gran!" exclaimed the laird—"gran! Just as bonny a plea as a man could wish. Ye protested an' appealed."

"I gaed straight to my agent, Quirkum," continued Skimclean, "and stated the case to him, expressin, at the same time, my determination no to submit to the iniquitous decision o' the sheriff. Aweel, what did Mr Quirkum say or do, think ye, on my expressin mysel' this way? He never spak, but, gruppinn me by the haun, looked in my face,

and, after a minnit, said—'Drumwhussle, ye're a man o' spirit, an' I honour ye for't. Ye've just now come oot wi' sentiments that do ye the highest credit. I'll manage your case for ye, Drumwhussle. I'll let the dominie hear such a cock crawin as he never heard in his life before.' Aweel, ye see, we had the cock flappin his wings in the Court of Session, in a jiffy. And as bonny a case it was, as Mr Quirkum said, as ever he had the haunlin o' in his life. Seemly in a' its bearins, he said, and as clean's a leek on our side, a' as ticht and richt as legal thack and rape could mak it. But deil may care—wad ye believe it?—it was gien against us here, too; cast wi' a' expenses. There was a dish o' cockylecky for ye, laird—cast wi' a' expenses!—an' they war nae trifle, as ye may weel believe; for yon lawyer folk dinna live on muslin kail."

The laird shook his head with a concurring emphasis, whose force of expression was greatly increased by certain pungent reminiscences of his own disbursements in this way.

"Aweel, there we are, ye see," continued Drumwhussle; "but we're no beat yet. I'll hae't to the Hoose o' Lords, laird, if I should pawn my coat for't." And he struck the table with his fist, in token of his high determination, till jugs and glasses rang again.

Delighted with his host's beautiful spirit of litigation, the laird, in a corresponding fit of enthusiasm, got up from his seat with a full bumper in one hand, and, extending the other across the table towards Skimclean—

"Your haun, Drumwhussle," he said, briefly, but with great emphasis. "Your haun, my friend. I honour ye—I respeck ye for thae sentiments." Saying this, he grasped the extended hand of his host, who had risen to meet his advances, shook it cordially, tossed off the contents of his uplifted glass to his success in his law-plea, and concluded with a piece of advice.

"Stick till't, Skimclean," he said, "stick till't as lang's there's a button on your coat. That's my way. Kittle them up wi' duplies, and triplies, and monyplices, and a' the plies that's o' them, (if thae papers are allowed in the Hoose o' Lords,) and, if they stir a fit, nail them wi' a rejoinder. Gie them't het, Skimclean. Gie them't het."

"Just my ain notion o' things preceesely, laird," replied Drumwhussle. "Although I say't that shouldna say't, I maybe ken law as weel as some that hae mair pretension. A' the law in the country, laird's, no to be fan' under puthered weegs." (This with a look of great complacency.) "My lair's maybe nae great things, but my law's guid. I'll haud up my face to that ony day. And I'm thinkin, laird, ye ken twa or three things in that way yersel."

"I should," replied the laird, with a knowing smile.

"But ye'll never hae been in the Court o' Session maybe," said Skimclean.

"Revise the condescendence there, Drumwhussle," replied the laird. "A score o' times at the least. It wad hae been a bonny business, indeed, if I had never had a case in the Court o' Session. A man wad hae but sma' pretension to respeck, in my opinion, that hadna been there wi' half a dizen."

We here take the liberty of interrupting, for a time, the colloquy of Skimclean and his guest, for the purpose of saying that, although we have given, as we imagine, a pretty correct account of their conversation on the occasion to which our story refers, we have by no means done equal justice to the subject of their potations. On this point we have said little or nothing, an omission which we beg now to supply by stating most explicitly that, during the whole time they were engaged in exchanging the sentiments which we have just recorded, they had been also unremitting in their attention to the toddy jug, which had three

several times sank to the dregs under their persevering devotions. It is not necessary to add, we should suppose, that this feat was not performed with impunity, nor that it had the effect of considerably deranging the faculties of the two lawyers. All this will be presumed—and, if it be not presumed, let it be so immediately; for it was the fact.

Both Skimclean and the laird were now in a state of great felicity and personal comfort. They swore eternal friendship to each other at least fifty times over, and, on each occasion sealed their amiable protestations by a cordial shaking of hands. But it was not love alone they expressed for each other. There was respect too, the most profound respect for each other's abilities and legal knowledge, declared in no very measured terms. In truth, if their own statements on this subject could have been credited, no two lawyers had ever got together who made so near an approach to Coke and Lyttleton. At an advanced period of the evening, and just after the fourth jug had been put upon active service, Skimclean again adverted to his famous game-cock case, and, having mentioned that he was going to Paisley on the following day, to call on Quirkum, on the subject of carrying the said case to the House of Lords, asked the laird if he would have any objection to go along with him and assist in the consultation which would then and there take place.

"It wad be a great favour, laird," said Skimclean; "for ye ken twa heads are better than ane, and three than twa, and, moreover, laird, to tell a truth, there's twa or three points o' law that I'm no just sure that Mr Quirkum's clean up to, and I wad like a man o' your knowledge to be present. I dinna ken but you and me, laird, would bother the best o' them."

The laird smiled slightly but complacently at this conjunct compliment, and modestly said that he had never seen the "*law-nir* yet that he couldna bambouze. An' as to gaun in wi' ye the morn to Paisley, Skimclean," he added, "that I'll do wi' great pleasure." This was said, most assuredly, in all sincerity; for, next to the happiness of having a plea of his own, was that of being allowed to have what may be called a handling of the pleas of others; especially if they had a dash of the spirit of litigation in them, and gave promise of a protracted and obstinate fight; and this the laird saw, with intuitive tact, was the character of Skimclean's.

This matter then settled, the two worthies proceeded to the discussion of various other subjects, until the laird, finding that he could hold out no longer, suggested, in the midst of a series of violent hiccups, that they should "close the record, and re-re-revise the condescendence." Saying this, the laird got up to his feet, leaned his hands upon the table, and as he swung backwards and forwards in this attitude, gazed on his friend opposite with a look of drunken gravity. "We maun clo-clo-close the record," he repeated, "and re-re-revise the condescendence."

"That's no accordin to the form o' process, laird," replied Skimclean, making an effort, but an unavailing one, to get up also to his feet. "That's no accordin to form, laird," he said; and now making a virtue of necessity, by throwing himself back in the chair which he found he could not conveniently leave."

"Revise the condescendence there, Skimclean," rejoined the laird, after a pause, during which he had been employed in an attempt to collect his scattered senses; an operation which was accompanied by sundry odd contortions of countenance, especially a strange working of the lips. "Revise the condescendence there, Skimclean. It's baith accordin to law an' to form. Ye're no gaun to instruct me, I houp, in a law process."

"Instruck or no instruck," replied Drumwhussle, with great confidence of manner "ye're as far wrang as ever

Maggy Low was, when you speak first o' closin the record and then o' revisin the condescendence. Onybody that has ony law in them at a' kens that the revisin o' a condescendence taks place *before* the closin o' the record and no after't."

"Before or after't, it's guid law," said the laird, doggedly; and still rocking to and fro, as he leant on the table and continued gazing with lack-lustre eye in the face of his learned brother opposite. "It's guid law, I'll uphaid; and it's my opinion, Skimclean—and I'll just tell ye't to your face—that for a' your blatter o' Laetin, I dinna think ye hae a' the law ye pretend to. The thorough knowledge is no in ye. That's my opinion."

The reply to this sneer at Skimclean's legal acquirements was of as summary and expressive a nature as can well be imagined. It was the contents of a jug—said contents being somewhere about a quart of boiling hot water—discharged with great force and dexterity full in the face of the "soothless insulter," accompanied by the appropriate injunction—"Tak that, ye auld guse; an' if that's no law, it's justice."

"Revise *that* condescendence," replied the laird; making a tremendous effort to seize his antagonist across the table, in which effort the said table instantly went over with a tremendous crash, sending every individual article that it had supported into a thousand pieces. In the midst of the wreck and ruin thus occasioned lay the prostrate person of the laird, who had naturally gone down with the table, and who now, as we have said, lay floundering amongst the debris, composed of broken bottles, jugs, and glasses, with which the floor was covered.

"A clear case o' damages," shouted Skimclean.

"Revise the condescendence there," said the laird, rising to his feet, and exhibiting sundry bleeding scars on his lugubrious countenance. "That cock 'll no fecht, Drumwhussle. The case is no guid in law. It wadna staun a hoast in the Court o' Session."

"Wull *that* staun, then?" exclaimed Skimclean, making a lunge at the laird's face with his closed fist, which took full effect upon the enemy's left eye.

"I maun make a rejoinder to *that*," said the laird, now attacking his host in turn, and with such effect as finally to floor him; being, although the older, by much the stronger man—"I maun mak a rejoinder to *that*," he said, first striking at, and then grappling his antagonist, when a deadly struggle ensued, which ended in both coming to the floor with an appalling thud.

The laird, however, although taken from his feet, still maintained his physical superiority by keeping the foe under him. He was uppermost, and uppermost he determined to remain; and this triumphant position he further secured himself in by seizing Skimclean by the neckcloth, and, by the vigour of his hold, subjecting him to a facsimile of the process of strangulation.

"What think ye o' my law, noo, ye puir empty pretender?" said the laird, as he gave the other twist to Drumwhussle's neckcloth—"you and yer trash o' Latin, that ye ken nae mair aboot, I believe, than a cow kens aboot a steam-engine."

"That's aboot yer ain knowledge o' law, I'm thinkin'," replied Skimclean, chokingly, but boldly; and in gallant defiance of his present adverse circumstances. "I wad match ony coo I hae in my byre against ye at a defeck-walt point o' law."

"Do ye fin' *that*?" said the laird, twisting Drumwhussle's neckcloth with increasing ferocity. "There's law for ye. There's the strong arm o' the law for ye. Doin summary justice on an ignorant, pretendin idowit."

How or in what way this fierce struggle between the two lawyers would have terminated, we cannot tell, as it was not permitted to attain its own natural conclusion.

It was interrupted. At the moment that the laird had renewed his efforts on Skimclean's neckcloth, which the reader will observe was doing the duty of a bow-string, the wife of the latter rushed into the apartment, exclaiming—

"The Lord hae a care o' me! what's this o't—what's this o't? What are ye fechtin aboot, ye auld fules?"

"A case o' hamesookin, Jenny—a decided case o' hamesookin," shouted Skimclean. "A man attacked and abused in his ain hoose. That's hamesookin, and severely punishable by law."

"Tuts, confound yer law!—mind reason and common sense," said Skimclean's wife, seizing the laird by the coat tails, and dragging him off her prostrate husband, of whose *penchant* for law she had long been perfectly sick. "Mind reason and common sense, and let alane law to them it belongs to."

Whether it was that the combatants had expended all the present pugnacity of their natures in the contest which had just been brought to a close, or that the soft tones of Mrs Drumwhussle's voice had suddenly allayed their ire, we know not; but certain it is, that the faces of both the lawyers exhibited, all at once, and at the same instant, a trait of amiable relaxation, indicative of a return of friendly feeling, together with something like a sense of regret, and perhaps shame, for what had passed. It was, then, under this change of sentiment, that Skimclean replied, laughingly, to his wife—

"Weel, weel, guidwife, if the laird here's willin, we'll close the record, and let byganes be byganes."

"Wi' a' my heart," said the former; "for it's a case that'll no staun law. Sae we'll just revise the condescendence, and tak better care for time to come. This wark's no accordin to law."

"Neither law, nor reason, nor sense," said Mrs Drumwhussle, who was a rattling, but good-natured, motherly sort of woman. "Ye're juist a pair o' auld fules—that's what ye are. Noo, laird," she continued, turning round to that worthy, (who presented rather an odd spectacle; his person exhibiting, at this moment, a strange combination of ludicrous points—extreme tallness, extreme thinness, extreme drunkenness, extreme snuffiness, if we may use the expression, and a countenance marked and mangled in a manner that was absolutely hideous to look upon, although the application of a little simple water would have shewn that the said countenance was not, after all, very seriously damaged)—"Noo, laird," said Mrs Drumwhussle, laying her hand kindly on the shoulder of her husband's guest, "ye'll juist stap awa hame, like a guid honest man as ye are, an' ye an' the guidman 'll meet the morn, whan ye're baith yersels, an' ye'll baith be as guid freens as ever—maybe a hantle better; for I've kent folk that never could understand ane anither till they had a guid fecht."

To the general tone of this mediatory interference, neither Skimclean nor the laird offered any objection. Nay, as we have already shewn, it met with their decided approbation; but there was one clause in it, as they themselves would have called it, which both peremptorily resented. This was the insinuation that they were tipsy.

"Revise that part of the condescendence, Mrs Drumwhussle," said the laird, in allusion to the said insinuation. "I could discuss a point o' law as weel as ever I did in my life. I'm as soun's a bell, woman."

"A' ticht an' richt, laird. We're baith that," said Skimclean, staggering towards his guest. "For my part, I never was better in my life. Never mair correck or compost-mend-us. Jenny, ye're wrang—clean wrang."

"Aweel, it's perfectly possible," replied the latter, laughing; "but I canna be far wrang in advising the laird here

to stap his wa's hame, an you, Davie, to slip to yer bed."

"Ou, no, no, ye're no wrang there," said both the lawyers together; and in evident satisfaction with the circumstance of Mrs Drumwhussle's having deserted the charge of inebriety, and founding upon other grounds. "Ye're no wrang there," repeated the laird; "for it's gettin late, an' my road's nane o' the straughtest."

Having been provided with his hat and stick, and an old tartan cloak, which was his constant companion in all his wanderings, the laird now commenced his retreat out of the house, and had gained the outer door, when his host shouted after him—

"Mind the consultation, laird—mind yer promise o' gaun to Paisley wi' me the morn."

"I'll revise that condescendence, and decern as accords," replied the laird, turning half round, to deliver himself of this mystical response. Then, resuming his progress, he was soon quit of the house, but not of the premises altogether, as was made manifest by a certain awkward interruption he met with before he had gone fifty yards. This was by a huge watch-dog, within the reach of whose chain one of the laird's lee lurches had brought him. Availing himself of the tempting advantage, the dog bolted, with a growl like that of a tiger, out of his wooden tenement, and, in a twinkling, had the laird fast by the cloak, at which he commenced tugging with a violence which all its owner's efforts to counteract, by dragging himself in an opposite direction, could not overcome. Finding his exertions this way vain, and that a continuance of them would only insure the dissolution of his favourite outer garment, the laird turned upon his enemy, and, making some hits at him with his stick—"Desert the diet, ye brute; an' bring yer action in a regular form, an' accordin to law," he exclaimed, abruptly; and, by a dexterous movement, avoiding a snap at his leg, which the dog at this moment made—"Tak yer mittimus," he said; discharging another violent blow at the animal, which, however, had only the effect of increasing the latter's ferocity; for the dog now fairly leaped on his back, and seizing him by the neck of the coat, behind, laid him, in an instant, prostrate in the mud. Having thus got the laird down, the dog, without offering him further injury, planted a fore-leg on either side of him, and, with his muzzle within half an inch of his face, commenced a series of growls, "not loud, but deep," that indicated anything but a friendly feeling towards his victim.

Even in these circumstances, however, the laird's deep sense of the propriety of proceeding strictly "according to law," in all cases, did not desert him. Looking steadily at the dog, he thus addressed him, in a clear, loud voice, imitating, as nearly as he could, the tones of a court crier:—

"I, John Guidyill, Laird o' Ratbraes, summon, warn, and charge you, Skimclean's dug, to compear before his Majesty's justices o' the peace for the shire o' Renfrew, within their ordinary court place, in Paisley, upon the 12th day o' October 1817, at eleven o'clock forenoon, to answer, at the instance o' the above-designed Laird o' Ratbraes, for an illegal assault made on the said laird's person, on the night o' the 2d day o' October, in the aforesaid year, or in the month o' September precedin, or the month o' November followin. This I do on the second day o' October, one thoosan acht hunner an' seventeen years, with certification as effeirs. John Guidyill.—There, noo, ye're regularly ceeted," added the laird; "sae desert the diet, for the present; an' see that ye mak punctual compearance in the hoor o' cause."

Having thus delivered himself, the laird made another violent effort to free himself from his captor, and to regain his feet. But, finding this vain, he commenced a series of shouts for assistance, that had the effect of bringing Mrs

Drumwhussle and a formidable body of her retainers to the rescue. By the aid of this friendly detachment, the laird was immediately relieved from his perilous situation. On regaining his feet—

"I tak ye a' witnesses," said the laird, "hoo I hae been abused wi' that infernal brute o' yours; an' it's my opinion that I hae a guid case baith again' Skimclean an' his dog. If rightly argued, an' action o' damages wad lie, in my opinion, against them baith; an' decret wad follow accordin to law, decernin the tane to be hanged, an' the ither to be mulcted o' a soum not exceedin fifty puns sterlin, as law direct's—that's my opinion o' the case. But I'll revise the condescendence, an' let Skimclean ken the result the morn."

Saying this, the laird gathered his cloak, in which there were now three or four tremendous rents, around him, and stalked, or rather staggered away, on his progress home—which he reached in safety, and without meeting with any further interruption. Faithful to his promise, and oblivious of all causes of difference with his host of the preceding night—an obliviousness for which a night's sleep and a return to sobriety, co-operating with the irresistible temptation of being permitted to interfere in the latter's law-plea, will sufficiently account—the laird waited, on the following day, on Skimclean, and announced his readiness to accompany him to Paisley, as had been previously arranged between them. Skimclean having, in turn, expressed his sense of the obligation, the two lawyers shortly after set out for the town just named—a distance of from five to six miles, which they beguiled with learned discussions on the various points of law that had come within the range of their respective experiences. On reaching Paisley, our two worthies directed their steps to the residence of Mr Quirkum, whom they luckily found at home. This worthy limb of the law was a stout, burly personage, with a loud voice, and tolerably-confident manner, although it was pretty generally alleged that his skill in his profession was by no means very profound. This lack of legal knowledge, however, was compensated by a bold bearing; an unhesitating promptitude of decision; an utter fearlessness in delivering an opinion, whether right or wrong. Such, then, was the gentleman to whom Skimclean introduced the laird, as "an intimate frien, wha kent twa or three things in the law line—an' whom he had just brocht in to gie him an inklin o' what was gaun on in the game-cock case, in the whilk, he bein a near neebor, he took a freenly interest."

"Glad to see your *learned* friend, Skimclean," said Quirkum, who affected the being a bit of a wag in his own way. "He'll perhaps help us with a little useful advice, which, you know, is always welcome."

And Quirkum rubbed his hands with a sort of professional glee, and chuckled facetiously at his own banter. Not perceiving the irony of the lawyer's remarks, the laird smiled complacently, and said—

"That he didna pretend to ony very great skeel in law matters, although he had had some experience in that way too. But that he wad be very glad to gie ony hints that might appear to him, on revising the condescendence in his freen', Skimclean's case, to be likely to be of service."

"Muckle obliged, I'm sure, laird," said Drumwhussle, "and sae is my freen Quirkum here, I dare say." Then addressing himself to the latter—"Wad ye be sae guid, noo, as gie oor freen here an inklin o' oor case. I hae explained to him the gruns o' oor action; but ye can let him mair fully into the merits o' the case."

Now, Quirkum, although, as already said, no great lawyer, was by no means destitute of common sense. In fact, he was rather clever in a general sort of way, an' this cleverness enabled him to see at once what kind of

a character the laird was. Skimclean he knew well before, and, according to this knowledge, he acted on the present occasion. He rattled over a given quantity of law terms, galloped through two or three varieties of legal processes, and concluded by asking the laird's opinion of what they had done, what they were doing, and what they should do. Confounded with the volubility of Quirkum, of whose oration he did not comprehend one word, and yet unwilling to acknowledge his difficulty, the laird adopted the safe course of merely shaking his head, and looking wise. For some seconds he uttered not a word. At length—

"It seems to me a gey steeve case," he said. "There's twa or three points in't that wad require consideration, and on the whilk I wadna consider mysel just free to gie an aff-haun opinion. Noo, this being the case, I'll just revise the condescendence in my ain mind, and gie my freen, Skimclean here, the benefit o' the process at anither meetin'."

This Quirkum thought pretty well from a man whom he perfectly knew did not understand a word of what he had said; and he knew this, because he had not understood a word of it himself. Not being possessed of this important secret, however, Skimclean thought the laird's remarks highly creditable to his prudence; and, having expressed himself to this effect, concluded by inviting Quirkum and his brother lawyer to adjourn with him to the Brown Cow Inn, to "tak a bit chack o' dinner," adding facetiously, "that, though law was a very guid thing, it wadna fill the wame."

The laird smiled, and Quirkum laughed outright at the sally, and both at once accepted the invitation by which it was associated. Acceptation was speedily followed by accomplishment. In little more than a quarter of an hour after, the whole three were seated around a comfortably covered table in a small, snug back parlour in the Brown Cow Inn. Dinner dispatched, tumblers were filled up, and a very pleasant career of talking and drinking commenced, and continued without interruption for somewhere about a couple of hours. At the end of this period, however, a circumstance occurred which somewhat disturbed the quiet sociality of the party. A person, evidently the worse of drink, unceremoniously entered the room, and, seemingly unconscious that he was intruding, deliberately planted himself in a chair directly opposite the laird. It was some seconds before he appeared to recognise any of the party—as, indeed, it was hard he should, for he knew and was known to none of them, but one. This one was our friend Guidyill, and him he knew to his cost; the laird having once defeated him in a law-plea about a certain pathway which passed through the corner of a field on the farmer's property. For the laird, therefore, this man, whose name was Moffat, entertained anything but a friendly feeling. It was, however, some little time before he was aware of his being in the presence of his ancient enemy on the present occasion, the liquor he had swallowed having considerably impaired his powers of discernment. These, however, at length helped him to a knowledge of the fact; and, when they had done so—

"Ho, ho, laird, are ye here?" he exclaimed, with a look and manner in which all the grudge he bore Guidyill was made manifest. "Ony law-pleas in the win' 'enow, laird—eh?"

"Was ye wantin ane?" said the laird, coolly. "I thoct I had gien ye aneuch o' that."

"Maybe ye hae, and maybe no," replied Moffat. "But there's some things I ken, and some things I dinna. I dinna ken what ye're guid for; and I ken that ye're the biggest aul' rogne in the county o' Renfrew—a litigious, leein, cheatin rascal."

"Revise that condescendence, fræen" replied the laird.

"Mr Quirkum and Skimclean, I tak ye to witness what that man has said. Defamation o' character as clean's a leek—a thumpin action cut and dry. I tak instruments in your hauns, Mr Quirkum, and employ you to do the needfu in this case. Ye baith distinctly heard what was said, and 'll testify to the fact when ca'ed upon in due course o' law."

Both Quirkum and Skimclean at once declared their willingness to do so—the latter, from a wish to serve his friend, the former from a wish to serve himself, as he saw in the affair something like the promise of a very tolerable job.

In the meantime, Moffat, rather alarmed at the formal and business-like manner in which his complimentary remarks on the laird's character had been taken up, first endeavoured to back out of the scrape, and, in default of success in this, sneaked out of the room, leaving the laird an infinitely happier man than he had found him, for he was now provided with a most unexceptionable ground for an action at law. It was a most unexpected piece of good fortune; chance having done for him in a moment what a long period of anxiety, directed to the same end, had failed to accomplish. It was truly delightful, and the laird *was* delighted, delighted beyond measure. But, alas! by how frail a tenure is all earthly felicity held! By how frail a thread is life itself suspended! We make the remark, and the sequel illustrates it.

The laird having given instructions on the spot to Quirkum to commence an action immediately against his defamer, the party broke up. The professional member repaired to his own house, and the laird and Skimclean mounted the Greenock coach, which passed within a short distance of their respective residences. Fatal proceeding! The coach was overturned, and the laird, falling on his head, received an injury which, in half-an-hour, proved fatal to him. Skimclean, more fortunate, escaped with some slight bruises. The latter was the first to come to the poor laird's assistance after the vehicle had capsized. He found him lying on his face on the road, bleeding profusely, and apparently insensible. On turning him round, however, and raising him up a little, he opened his eyes, and, recognising Drumwhussle, said, in a slow and scarcely audible tone—"The record's closed wi' me, Skimclean. I hae gotten my mittimus. Fate has decerned against me. It was an irregular summons; but it maun be obeyed, for a' that."

The poor laird was now conveyed to an adjoining house, where he was assiduously attended by his friend, Skimclean, to whom his last request was, that he would consult Quirkum, and see whether it would not be competent for him, Skimclean, to carry on the action against Moffat after his own decease. Shortly after making this request, the poor laird sank into a state of insensibility; and, just before he expired, having lain for some time previously without moving, scarcely breathing, he began muttering, evidently in delirium, something which the bystanders could not make out. Skimclean stooped down to catch the words. They were quivering on his lip, and proved to be "Re-re-vi-visc the Con-con-de-scen-dence;" and, with the last syllable of the last word of this favourite phrase of the laird's, his spirit departed, leaving but the frail perishable tenement of clay behind.





SERGEANT WILSON.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT.

CHAP. X.—SERGEANT WILSON.

It was early on Monday morning, in the cold month of March, Anno Domini 1683, that the farm-house of Barjarg, in the parish of Keir and county of Dumfries, was surrounded by dragoons. They were in quest of a sergeant of the name of Wilson—a Sergeant Wilson—who had all unexpectedly (for he was a steady man and a good soldier) deserted his colours, and was nowhere to be found. The reason why they had come to Barjarg, was the report which one of Sergeant Wilson's companions in arms had made, that he knew the deserter was in love with Catherine Chalmers, the farmer's fair and only child. Catherine Chalmers was indeed forthcoming in all her innocence and bloom—but William was nowhere to be found, though they searched most minutely into every hole and corner. Being compelled, at last, to retire without their object—though not without threatening Catherine with the thumbkins, if she persevered in refusing to discover her lover's retreat—the family of Barjarg was once more left to enjoy its wonted quietude and peace. Adjoining to the farm-house of Barjarg, and occupying the ground where the mansion-house now stands, there stood an old tower, containing one habitable apartment; but only occupied as a sleeping room by one of the ploughmen, and the herd boy. There were one or two lumber-garrets besides; but these were seldom entered, as they were understood to contain nothing of any value, besides being dark, and swarming with vermin. Reports of odd noises and fearful apparitions had begun to prevail about the place, and both ploughman and herd were unwilling to continue any longer in a lodgment into which it was their firm persuasion that something "no canny" had entered. Holding this exceedingly cheap, Adam Chalmers, the veteran guidman of Barjarg, agreed to take a night of the old tower, and to set the devil and all his imps at defiance; but it was observed, that he came home next morning thoughtful and out of spirits, agreeing, at once, that nobody should, in future, be compelled to sleep in the old tower. He said little of what he had seen or heard, but he shook his head, and seemed to intimate that he knew more than he was at liberty to divulge. Things went on in this manner for some time—reports of noises at unseasonable hours still prevailing, and every one shunning the place after dark—till, one morning before daylight, the whole building was observed to be on fire, surrounded, at the same time, as the flames were, by a troop of Grierson's men, with their leader at their head. The scream which Catherine Chalmers uttered when she beheld the flames, but too plainly intimated the state of her mind; nor was her father less composed, but went about, wringing his hands, and exclaiming—"Oh! poor Sergeant Wilson! poor Sergeant Wilson!" At this instant, the fire had made its way to the upper apartment, and had thrown light upon a human head and shoulders, which leaned over the decayed battlement. Every one was horror-struck except the inhuman soldiery, who collected around the burning pile, and shouted up their profane and insulting jests, in the face of the poor perishing being, who, from his footing immedi-

ately giving way, was precipitated into the flames, and disappeared.

"There, let him go," said Grierson, "dog and traitor as he is, let him sink to the lowest pit, there to await the arrival of his canting and Covenanting spouse, whom we shall now take the liberty of carrying to headquarters, there to await her sentence, for decoying a king's sworn servant and a sergeant, from his duty and allegiance."

No sooner said than done, was the order of these dreadful times. Catherine Chalmers was placed in one of her father's carts; and, notwithstanding every remonstrance, and an assurance that poor Catherine was now a widow, she was placed betwixt two soldiers, who rode alongside the cart on horseback, and conveyed her to Dumfries, there to stand her trial before the Sheriff, Clavers, and the inhuman Laird of Lag. When arrived at her destination, she was put under lock and key, but allowed more personal liberty than many others who were accused of crimes more heinous in the eyes of the persecutors, than those of which she was merely suspected to be guilty. It so happened, that the quarterly meeting of the court was held in a few days, and the chief witness produced against Catherine Wilson, was a servant maid of her father, who was compelled, very much against her will, to bear evidence to her having seen Sergeant Wilson and her mistress, (for Catherine kept her father's house) several times together in the old tower, as well as under a particular tree at the end of the old avenue, and that her mistress had told her that Sergeant Wilson was heartily tired of the service in which he was engaged. Her own father, too, was compelled to confess, that he had had an interview with the sergeant, in the tower, who had confessed to him the marriage, had asked and with difficulty obtained his forgiveness, and that he meditated a departure along with his wife, to some distant place, beyond the reach of his enemies. There was no direct evidence, however, that Catherine had persuaded him to desert, or to vilify the service which he had left; and the court were about to dismiss her *simpliciter* from the bar, when, to the amazement of all, Catherine rose in her place, and addressed the court to the following purpose:—"And now ye have done your utmost, and I am innocent, in as far as your evidence has gone; but I am NOT INNOCENT—I am deeply guilty, if guilt ye deem it, in this matter. 'Twas I that first awakened poor William's conscience to a sense of his danger, in serving an emissary of Satan; 'twas I that spoke to him of the blood that cries day and night under the Altar; 'twas I that made him tremble—ay, as an aspen leaf, and as some here will yet shake before the Judge of all—when I brought to his recollection the brutal scenes which he had witnessed, and in which he had taken a part; 'twas I that agreed to marry him privately, without my dear father's consent, (whose pardon I have sought on my knees, and whose blessing I have already obtained,) [here-upon her father nodded assent] provided he would desert, and retire with me, at least for a time, beyond the reach of ye all—ye messengers of evil, sent to scourge a guilty and backsliding race; 'twas I that visited him night after night in that old tower, which you inhumanly set on fire,

and in which—O my God!"—Hereupon she laid hold of the desk before her, and would have dropped to the earth, had not an officer in attendance supported her, and borne her, under the authority of the court, into the open air. She was now, notwithstanding her self-accusation, declared to be at liberty; and immediately, so soon as strength was given her, retired into the house of an acquaintance and relative, where suitable restoratives and refreshments were administered. The house where her friend lived was close upon what is called the Sands of Dumfries, adjoining to the river, which up to this point is navigable, and where boats are generally to be seen. During the night, she disappeared, and, though all search was made at home and everywhere else, she was not heard of. Her father at first took her disappearance sadly to heart; but time seemed to have a remedial effect upon his spirits, and he at length rallied, even into cheerfulness. Things went on for years and years, very much in the old way at Barjarg. The old man's hairs gradually whitened, and became more scanty, whilst this loss was made up for by an increase of wrinkles. The only change in his habits were not infrequent visits which he paid to an old friend, he said, in Whitehaven, and from which he always returned in high spirits. It might have been stated formerly that, when the ashes of the old tower were searched, after they had cooled, for the body of poor Wilson, no such body was found—but the inference was made by the neighbours, that the remains had been early removed by his wife's orders, who would naturally wish to possess herself of so valued a deposit. In fact, the whole transaction melted away in the stream of time, like the snow-flake on the surface of the water; and things went on very much as usual. Six long years revolved, and still no word of Catherine Wilson. Many conjectured that she had missed her foot in the dark, and fallen into the river, and been carried out to sea by the reflux of the tide. Others again hinted at suicide, from extreme grief; and some very charitable females nodded and winked something meant to be significant, about some people's not being easily known—and that some people, provided that they got a *grip* of a man, would not be very nice about the object or the manner!

Oh, what a blessed thing it was when King William cam' in!—and with him cam' amnesty, and peace, and restoration! It was upon a fine summer evening, in the year 1689, just six years after the mysterious disappearance of Catherine Wilson, that the old guidman of Barjarg was sitting enjoying the setting sun at his own door, on the root of an old tree, which had been converted into a *dais*, or out-of-doors seat. It was about the latter end of July, that most exuberantly lovely of all months, when Adam Chalmers, with Rutherford's Letters on his knee, sat gazing upon one of the most beautiful landscapes which our own romantic country can boast of. Before him flowed the Nith, over its blue pebbles, and through a thousand windings; beyond it were the woods and hills of Closeburn, all blooming and blushing in the setting beams of the sun, and rising up, tier above tier, till they terminated in the blue sky of the east. To the left were the Louth Hills, with their smooth-green magnificence, bearing away into the distance, and placed, as it were, to shelter this happy valley from the stormy north and its wintry blasts. At present, however, all idea of storm and blast was incongruous, for they seemed to sleep in the sun's effulgence, as if cradled into repose by the hand of God. To the south, and hard at hand, were the woods and the fields of Collestown, with the echoing Linn, and the rush of many waters. O land of our nativity!—how deeply art thou impressed upon this poor brain!—go where we will—see what we may—thou art still unique to us—thou art still superior to all other lands.

It was eight o'clock of the evening above referred to, when a chaise entered the old avenue, passed the ruins of the Tower and the old mansion-house, and drew up immediately opposite old Adam Chalmers. The steps were immediately let down, and out sprung, with a bound, the long lost child, the blooming and matronly looking Mrs Wilson. Behind her followed one whom the reader, I trust, has long ago considered as dead, and perhaps buried, her manly and rejoicing husband William Wilson, handing out a fine girl of five years of age, a boy about three, and an infant still at the breast! It was indeed a joyous meeting; and the old man bustled about, embracing and pressing his child, and then surveying, with silent and intense interest, his grandchildren; taking the oldest on his knee, and permitting him all manner of intercourse with his wrinkles and his grey hairs.

One of Lag's troop, the intimate and attached friend of the sergeant, had conveyed to him, by means of a letter, the fact, that his haunt was discovered; and that Lag had sworn he would search him out like a fox—in short, that he would burn the old tower about his ears. A thought struck Wilson, that, even though he should now escape, the pursuit would still be continued; but that, if he could by any means persuade his enemies that he had perished in the flames, the search of course would cease. As he was occupied with these thoughts, it occurred to him, that, by placing a couple of pillows, dressed in some old clothes, which were lying about, and which belonged to the former tenant, in the topmost turret of the tower, he might impose the belief upon Lag and his party, that he had actually perished in the flames. Having communicated this plan to his friend in the troop by a secret messenger, he immediately, and without waiting even to advertise his wife of the deception, departed, and hastened on to a brother's house in the neighbourhood of Dumfries, where he lay concealed. By the management of his friend, the deception was accomplished; for he even swore to the captain, that he heard Wilson scream, and jump upwards, and then sink down into the devouring flames. The trial was not unknown to Wilson, and he had prevailed upon his brother, with a few friends sworn to secrecy, to assist him in possessing himself of the person of his wife, in going to or coming from the court-house. Matters, however, succeeded beyond his utmost hopes. His spouse was liberated, and, by means of a boat well manned, he reached Douglas in the Isle of Man in safety, in the course of eight-and-forty hours. There, at last, he was safe, being beyond immediate pursuit, and indeed being supposed to be dead; and there, by a successful speculation or two, with money which had been left him by an uncle, after whom he was named, and who had prospered in the Virginia trade, he soon became prosperous, and even wealthy. His wife having a natural desire to see her father, took means to have him apprised of the secret of their retreat. His visits, nominally to England, were in fact made to Douglas; and the Revolution now put it in the power of Sergeant Wilson to return with his young and interesting family to the farm of Barjarg, and to purchase the property on which the old house stood, it being now in the market; to refit the old burnt tower; to rebuild the old castle, and to live there along with old Adam for several years, not only in comfort, but in splendour. When engaged over a bottle, of which he became ultimately rather more fond than was good for his health, he used to amuse his friends with the above narrative, adding always at the end—"The burning o' me has been the making o' me. The property has long passed into other hands, and is now in the family of Hunter; but such was its destination for at least fifty years, during the life of the sergeant, and the greater part of the life of the son, who, being a spendthrift, spent and sold it.

CHAP. XI.—HELEN PALMER.

HELEN PALMER was originally from Cumberland; her parents were English, but her father had removed with Helen, an only daughter, whilst yet a child, to the neighbourhood of Closeburn Castle, to a small village which still goes by the name of Croalchapel. There the husband and father had been employed originally as forester on the estate of Closeburn, belonging to Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, and had afterwards become chamberlain or factor on the same property. Peter Palmer was a superior man. He had been well educated for the time in which he lived, and had been employed in Cumberland in keeping accounts for a mining establishment. The death, however, in childbirth, of his beloved and well-born wife, (she had married below her station,) had, for some time, disgusted him with life, and his intellects had nearly given way. Having committed several acts of insanity, so as to make himself spoken of in the neighbourhood, he took a moonlight flitting, with his child and a faithful nurse, and, wandering north and north, at last fixed his residence in the locality already mentioned, where he was soon noticed as a superior person by the Laird of Closeburn, and advanced, as has been stated.

Helen Palmer was the apple of her father's eye; he would permit no one but the nurse to approach her person, and he himself was her only instructor; he taught her to read, to write, and to calculate accounts; in short, every spare hour he had was spent with little Helen. There you might see him, after dinner, with Helen on his knee, his forest dog sleeping before him, and a tumbler of negus on a small table by his side, conversing with his child, as he would have done with her mother; holding her out at arm's length, to mark her opening features; and then again straining her to his bosom in a paroxysm of tears.

"Just my Helen—my own dear Helen anew!" he would say; "oh, my child—my child!—dear, dear art thou to thy poor heart-broken father! but I will live for thee!—I will live with thee!—and when thou diest, child, thou shalt sleep on this breast—thou shalt be buried, child, in thy father's dust; and thy mother and we shall meet, and I will tell her of her babe; of that babe which cost her so much, and we will rejoin in divine love for ever and ever!"

Oh, how beautiful is paternal affection!—the love of an only surviving parent for an only child—and she a female. It is beautiful as the smile of Providence on benevolence—it is strong as the bond which binds the world to a common centre—it is enduring as the affections which, being cherished on earth, are matured above!

As Helen grew up, her eye kindled, her brow expanded, her cheeks freshened into the most delicious bloom, and she walked on fairy footsteps of the most delicate impression. Her feet, her hands, her arms, her bust, her whole person, spoke her at once the lady of a thousand descents—ages had modelled her into aristocratic symmetry. But with all this, there was a rustic simplicity about her, an open, frank, unaffected manner, which seemed to say, as plain as any manner could, "I am not ashamed of being my father's daughter." When Helen Palmer had attained her sixteenth year, she was quite a woman—not one of your thread-paper bulrushes, which shoot upwards merely into unflashed gentility; but a round, firm, well-spread, and formed woman—a bonny lass, invested with all the delicacy and softness of a complete lady. Her bodily accomplishments, however, were not her only recommendation; her mind was unusually acute, and her memory was stored with much and varied information. She knew, for example, that the age in which she lived was one of cruelty and bloodshed; that the second Charles, who, at that time, filled the throne, was a sensual tyrant; that Lag, Clavers

Douglas, Johnstone, and others, were bloody persecutors; and that even Sir Roger Kirkpatrick himself, the humane and amiable in many respects, was "a friend of the castle"—of the court—and would not permit any of the poor persecuted remnant to take refuge in the linns of Creehope, or in any of the fastnesses on his estate of Closeburn. All this grieved Helen's heart; but her father had taught her that it was *her* duty, as well as his own, to be silent on such subjects, and not to give offence to one whose bread he was eating, and whose patronage he had enjoyed to so great an extent.

There were frequent visitors, in those days, at Closeburn Castle. In fact, with all the chivalric hospitality of ancient times and of an ancient family, Sir Roger kept, in a manner, open house. During dinner, the drawbridge was regularly elevated, and, for a couple of hours at least, none might enter. This state ceremony had cost the family of Kirkpatrick many broad acres; for, when the old and heirless proprietor of the fine estate of Carlaverock called at the castle of Closeburn, with the view of bequeathing his whole property to the then laird, the drawbridge was up—he was refused immediate entrance, because Sir Thomas was at dinner. "Tell Sir Thomas," said the enraged visiter, "tell your master to take his dinner, and with zest; but tell him, at the same time, that I will put a better dinner *by* his table this day than ever was on it." So he went on to Drumlanrig, and left the whole property to Douglas of Queensberry. Such, however, was not the reception of some young gentlemen who arrived about this time at the castle of Closeburn, on a sporting expedition, with dogs and guns, and a suitable accompaniment of gamekeepers and other servants. These strangers were manifestly Englishmen, but from what quarter of England nobody knew, and, indeed, nobody inquired. They were only birds of passage, and would, in a month or so, give place to another arrival, about to disappear, in its turn, from a similar cause. As Helen Palmer was one day walking, according to her wont, amongst the Barmoorwoods, in her immediate neighbourhood, a hare crossed her path, followed closely by a greyhound, by which it was immediately killed. Poor Helen started, screamed, and dropped her book, in an agony of pity. She had not been accustomed to such barbarities; and the poor dying animal cried like a child, too, as it expired! At this instant, a horseman brought up his steed in her presence, and, immediately alighting, proceeded, in the most polite and delicate manner imaginable, to administer such relief as was in his power. He begged her to be composed, for the animal was now dead, and its suffering over; and her feelings should never be lacerated again in this manner, as they would pursue their sport somewhere else, at a greater distance from her abode. Upon recovering herself, Helen felt ashamed at her position, and even at her weakness in betraying her feelings, and, begging the stranger's pardon for the interruption to his sport which she had occasioned, with a most graceful courtesy she withdrew from his sight. The stranger was exceeding struck with her appearance. It was not that she was beautiful, for with beautiful women he had long been familiar; but there was something in the expression of her countenance which made him tremble all over—she was the very picture of his father; nay, his own features and hers bore a close resemblance. The same indefinite terror which had seized this young and exceedingly handsome sportsman had penetrated the breast of Helen. The resemblance of the stranger to herself, was what struck her with amazement. There was the same arched eyebrow—the same hazel eye—and the same dimple in the chin. Besides, there was an all-over sameness in the air, manner, and even step, which she could not, with all her efforts, drive from her recollection. She did not, however, think proper to inform her father of this little

foolish incident; but, ere she went to bed that night, she surveyed herself in the glass with more than wonted attention. Still, still, she was left in surprise, by comparing what she saw with what she recollected—the image in her bosom with that in the glass.

Next day, as might have been anticipated, the stranger called to see if she had recovered from her fright, and spent a considerable time in very pleasing conversation. Her father happened to be in the writing-office at the time, and did not see him. These calls were repeated from time to time, till at last it became evident to all about the castle, that the young heir of Middlefield, in Cumberland, was deeply in love. He had almost entirely given up his former amusements, and even railed against the cruelty of such sports. Mr Graham, a near connection of him of Netherby, was a young person of an excellent heart, and of a large property, to which, from his father's death, by an accident, he had just succeeded. He was, besides, one of the handsomest men in Cumberland; and it was reported that Sir James Graham's oldest daughter had expressed herself very favourably respecting her kinsman's pretensions to her hand, should he *presume so high!* However, his heart was not in the match, and he had made this visit to his father's intimate friend, in order to avoid all importunity on a subject which was irksome to him. It is useless to mince the matter. Helen, in spite of her father's remonstrances and representations, was deeply and irrecoverably in love with the gallant Graham, and he, in his turn, was at least equally enamoured of the face, person, manners, mind, and soul, of the lovely and fascinating Miss Palmer.

There was only one subject on which there was any division of opinion betwixt the lovers—Helen was every inch a Covenanter; whilst Mr William was rather of anything inclined to view their opposition to government as factious and inexcusable. He did not, indeed, approve of the atrocities which were practising every day around him, and in the parish of Closeburn in particular; but he ventured to hope that a few instances of severity would put an end to the delusion of the people, and that they would again return to their allegiance and their parish churches. Helen was mighty and magnificent in the cause of non-conformity and humanity. She talked of freedom, conscience, religion, on the one hand—of tyranny, treachery, oppression, and cruelty, on the other—till Mr William, either convinced, or appearing to be so, fairly gave in, promising most willingly, and in perfect good faith, that he would never assist the laird of Closeburn, or of Lag, in any of their unhallowed proceedings.

One day when Helen and her lover (for it was now no secret) were on a walk into the Barmoor-wood, they were naturally attracted to the spot where their intercourse had begun; and, sitting down opposite to each other on the trunks of some felled trees, they gradually began a somewhat confidential conversation respecting their birth and parentage. Helen disguised nothing; she was born in Cumberland, and brought here whilst a child; her mother, whose name was Helen Graham, had died at her birth. At the mention of this name, the stranger and lover started convulsively to his feet, and, running up to and embracing Helen, he exclaimed—"O God! O God! you are my own cousin!" Helen fainted, and was with difficulty recovered, by an application of water from the adjoining brook. It was indeed so. Out of delicacy, Mr William had made no particular inquiries at Helen respecting her mother; and Helen, on the other hand, knew that Graham is an almost universal name, in Cumberland in particular. This, therefore, excited no suspicion; but true it is, and of verity, these two similar and affianced beings were cousins-german. Helen Graham, the sister of the Lord of Middlefield, having married be-

neath her rank, was abandoned by her brother and family and her name was never mentioned in Middlefield House. An old servant, however, of the family had made the young heir master of the fact of the marriage, and of the death of his old aunt; but he could not tell what had become of the father or the child; he supposed they had either died or gone to the plantations abroad; and there the matter rested till this sudden and unexpected discovery. Peter Palmer, the father of Helen, was altogether unacquainted with William Graham, as he was a mere child when Peter left Cumberland; and his father had used him so cruelly as to make him avoid his residence and presence as carefully as possible.

Would to heaven we could stop here, and gratify the reader with a wedding, and as much matrimonial happiness as poor mortality can possibly inherit!—But it may not be. As Lockhart says beautifully of Sir Walter, we hear "the sound of the muffled drum."

Sir Roger and all the friends of Mr William Graham were opposed to his union with Miss Palmer, as Graham always called her. Her own father, too, was opposed to her forming a connection with the son of one who had treated him so cruelly, and, as he thought, unjustly—and it became manifest to William, as he was in every sense of the word his own master, that had he his fair betrothed in the leas of Middlefield, he might set them all at defiance, and effect their union peaceably, according to the rules of the church. In an evil hour, Helen consented to leave her father's house by night, along with her William, and on horseback, to take their way across the Border for Cumberland. They had reached the parish of Kirkconnel about two o'clock in the morning, and were giving their horses a mouthful of water in the little stream called Kirtle, when a shot was heard in the immediate neighbourhood—it was heard, alas! by two only, for the third was dying and in the act of falling from her seat in the saddle. She was caught by a servant, and by her lover; but she could only say—"I am gone—I am gone!" before breathing her last. Oh, curse upon the hand that fired the shot! It was, indeed, an accursed hand, but a fatal mistake. It was one of the bloody persecutors of Lag's troop, who, having been appointed to watch at this spot for some Covenanters who were expected to be passing on horseback into England, in order to escape from the savage cruelty of their persecutors, had immediately, and in drunken blindness, fired upon this inoffensive group. The ball, alas! took too fatal effect in the heart of Helen Palmer; and it was on her, and not, as Allan Cunningham represents it, "on Helen Irving, the daughter of the laird of Kirkconnel," that the following most pathetic verses were written:—

"I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries:
Oh, that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnel lea!"

"Oh, Helen fair beyond compare,
I'll make a garland of thy hair;
Shall bind my heart for ever, dear,
Until the day I dee."

"Christ be the heart that thought the thought
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropped
On fair Kirkconnel lea!"

CHAP. XII.—THE CAIRNY CAVE OF GAVIN MUIR.

THERE is a wild, uninhabited district, which separates Nithsdale from Annandale, in Dumfriesshire. It is called Gavin Muir; and, though lonely, and covered with sward and heather, exhibits some objects which merit the attention of the traveller in the wilderness. There is the King's

Loch, the King's Burn, and the King's Chair, all records of King James V.'s celebrated raid to subdue the thieves of Annandale. Tradition says, what seems extremely likely, that he spent a night in the midst of this muir; and hence the appellations of royalty which adhere to the objects which witnessed his bivouac. But, although the localities referred to possess an interest, they are exceeded, in this respect, by a number of "cairns," by which the summits of several hills, or rising-grounds, are topped. These cairns, which amount to five or six, are all within sight of each other—all on eminences, and all composed of an immense mass of loose, water-worn stones. And yet the neighbourhood is free from stones, being bare, and fit for sheep-pasturage only. Tradition says nothing of these cairns in particular; or, indeed, very little of any similar collections, frequent, as they are in Scotland and throughout all Scandinavia. Stone coffins, no doubt, have been discovered in them, and human bones; but, beyond this, all is surmise and uncertainty. Often, when yet a boy, and engaged in fishing in the King's Burn, have we mounted these pyramids, and felt that we were standing on holy ground. "Oh," thought we, "that some courteous cairn would blab it out what 'tis they are!" But the cairns were silent; and hence the necessity we are under of professing our ignorance of what they refused to divulge. But there is a large opening in the side of one of these cairns, respecting which tradition has preserved a pretty distinct narrative, which we shall now venture, for the first time, to put under types, for the instruction of our readers.

The whole hill country, in Dumfriesshire and Galloway in particular, is riddled, as it were, with caves and hiding-places. These, no doubt, afforded refuge, during the eight-and-twenty years of inhuman persecution, to the poor Covenanters; but they were not, in general, constructed for or by him. They existed from time immemorial, and were the work of the sons of night and darkness—the smuggler, who, in passing from the Brow at the mouth of the Nith, from Bombay, near Kirkcudbright, or from the estuary of the Cree, with untaxed goods from the Isle of Man—then a separate and independent kingdom—found it convenient to conceal both his goods and himself from the observation of the officers of excise. So frequent are these concealed caves in the locality to which we refer, that, in passing through the long, rank heather, we have more than once disappeared in an instant, and found ourselves several feet below the level of the upper world, and in the midst of a damp, but roomy subterranean apartment of considerable extent. We believe that they are now, in these piping times of peace and preventive service, generally filled up and closed by the shepherds, as they were dangerous pitfalls in the way of their flocks. In the time, however, to which we refer—namely, in the year 1683—they were not only open, but kept, as it were, in a state of repair, being tenanted by the poor, persecuted remnant (as they expressed it) of God's people. That the reader may fully understand the incidents of this narrative, it will be necessary that he and we travel back some hundred and fifty years, and some miles from the farm-house of Auchincairn, that we may have ocular demonstration of the curious contrivances to which the love of life, of liberty, and of a good conscience, had compelled our forefathers to have recourse. That cairn which appears so entire and complete, of which the stones seem to have been huddled together without any reference to arrangement, whatever, is, nevertheless, hollow underneath, and on occasions you may see—but only if you examine it narrowly—the blue smoke seeking its way in tiny jets through a thousand apertures. There is, in fact, room for four or five individuals. Beneath, there are a few plaids and bed-covers, with an old chair, a stool, and seats of stone. There is likewise a fire-place and some peats, extracted from the adjoining moss. But there is, in

fact, no entrance in this direction. You must bend your course round by the brow of that hollow, over which the heather hangs profusely; and there, by dividing and gently lifting up the heathy cover, you will be able to insert your person into a small orifice, from which you will escape into a dark but a roomy dungeon, which will, in its turn, conduct you through a narrow passage, into the very heart or centre of this seemingly solid accumulation of stones. When there, you will have light such as Milton gives to Pandemonium—just as much as to make darkness visible, through the small, and, on the outside, invisible crevices betwixt the stones. Should you be surprised in your lighted and fire apartment—should any accident or search bring a considerable weight above you, so as to break through your slightly supported roofing—you can retreat to your ante-room or dungeon, and from thence, if necessary, make your way into the adjoining linn, along the bottom of which, you may ultimately find skulking-shelter, or a pathway into a more inhabited district. Now that you have surveyed this arrangement, as it existed a hundred and fifty years ago, we may proceed to give you the narrative which is connected with it.

In the year above referred to, the persecution of the saints was at its height—Clavers, in particular, went about the country with his dragons, whom he designated (like the infamous Kirk) his *Lambs*, literally seeking to hurt and destroy in all the hill country, in particular of Dumfriesshire and Galloway. Auchincairn was a marked spot; it had often been a city of refuge to the shelterless and the famishing; but it had so frequently been searched, that every hole and corner was as well known to Clavers and his troop as to the inhabitants themselves. There was now, therefore, no longer any refuge to the faithful at Auchincairn; in fact, to come there was to meet the enemy half-way—to rush as it were into the jaws of the lion. In these circumstances, old Walter Gibson, a man upwards of seventy years of age, who, by his prayers and his attending conventicles, had rendered himself particularly obnoxious, was obliged to prolong a green old age by taking up his abode in the cave and under the cairn which has already been described. With him were associated, in his cold and comfortless retreat, the Rev. Robert Lawson, formerly minister of the parish of Closeburn; but who, rather than conform to the English prayer-book and formula, had taken to the mountain, to preach, to baptize, and even to dispense the Sacrament of the Supper, in glens, and linn, and coverts, far from the residence of man. Their retreat was known to the shepherds of the district, and indeed to the whole family of Auchincairn; but no one ever was suspected of imitating the conduct of the infamous Baxter, who had proved false, and discovered a cave in Glencairn, where four Covenanters were immediately shot, and two left hanging upon a tree. On one occasion, a little innocent girl, a granddaughter of old Walter, was surprised whilst carrying some provisions towards the hill-retreat, by a party of Clavers' dragons, who devoured the provisions, and used every brutal method to make the girl disclose the secret of the retreat; but she was neither to be intimidated nor cajoled, and told them plainly that she would rather die, as her granduncle had done before her, than betray her trust. They threw her into a peat-lag filled with water, and left her to sink or swim. She did not swim, however, but sank, never to rise again. Her spirit had been broken, and life had been rendered a burden to her. She expressed to her murderers, again and again, a wish that they would send her to meet her uncle (as she termed it) William. Her body was only discovered some time after, when the process of decomposition had deformed one of the most pleasing countenances which ever beamed with innocence and piety.

"The old hound will not be far off, when the young

whelp was so near," exclaimed Clavers, upon a recital of the inhuman murder. "We must watch the muirs by night; for it is then that these creatures congregate and fatten. We must continue to spoil their feasting, and leave them to feed on cranberries and moss-water." In consequence of this resolution, a strict watch was set all along Gavin Muir; and it became almost impossible to convey any sustenance to the famishing pair; yet the thing was done, and wonderfully managed, not in the night-time, but in the open day. One shepherd would call to another, in the note of the curlew or the miresnipe, and, without exciting suspicion, convey from the corner of his plaid the necessary refreshments, even down to a bottle of Nantz. The cave was never entered on such occasions; but the provisions were dropped amidst the rank heather; and a particular whistle immediately secured their disappearance. Night after night, therefore, were these prowlers disappointed of their object, till at last, despairing of success, or thinking, probably, that the birds had escaped, they betook themselves, for the time, elsewhere, and the cairn was relieved from siege. Clavers, in fact, had retired to Galloway, along with Grierson and Johnstone, and the coast was clear, at least for the present.

It was about the latter end of October, when Mr Lawson was preaching and dispensing the Sacrament to upwards of a hundred followers, in the hollow where stood the King's Chair. This locality was wonderfully well suited for the purpose—it was, in fact, a kind of amphitheatre, surrounded on all sides by rising ground, and in the centre of which three large stones constituted a chair, and several seats of the same material were ranged in a circular form around. The stones remain to this hour, and the truth of this description can be verified by any one who crosses Gavin Muir. It was a moonlight night—a harvest moon—and Mr Lawson, having banded the Sacramental cup around, was in the act of concluding with prayer, when the note of a bird, seemingly a plover, was heard at a great distance. It was responded to by a similar call, somewhat nearer; and, in an instant, a messenger rushed in upon their retreat, out of breath, and exclaiming, "You are all lost!—you are all dead men!—Clavers is within sight, and at full gallop, with all his troop at his back."

One advantage which the poor persecuted had over their persecutors, was a superior knowledge of localities. In an instant the hollow was tenanted; for the inmates had fled in all directions, and to various coverts and outlets into the vale of Annan. The minister alone remained at his post, continuing in ejaculatory prayer, and resisting all persuasion even to take advantage of the adjoining cairn-cave. In vain did Walter Gibson delay till the last moment, and talk of his farther usefulness. Mr Lawson's only answer was—"I am in the hands of a merciful Master, and, if he has more service for me, he himself will provide a way for my escape. I have neither wife nor child, nor, I may say, relation, alive. I am, as it were, a stranger in the land of duty. If the Lord so will it that the man of blood shall prevail over me, he will raise up others in my stead, fitter to serve him effectually than ever I have been; but, Walter, you have a bonny family of grandchildren around you, and your ain daughter the mother of them a', to bless you, and hear you speak the words of counselling and wisdom; so, make you for the cave and the cairn out by yonder—I will een remain where I am, and the Lord's will be done!" Seeing that all persuasion was unavailable, and that, by delaying his flight, he would only sacrifice his own life, without saving that of his friend, Walter appeared to take his departure for his place of refuge. It was neither Clavers, however, nor Lag, nor Johnstone, nor Winram, who was upon them; but only Captain Douglas, from Drumlanrig, to which place secret information of the night's mark, as it was termed, had been conveyed. Captain Douglas' hands were red with blood—he had shot poor Daniel M'Michan

in Dalveen Glen, and had given the word of command to blow out his brother's brains, as has been already recorded in the notices of these times. One of his troop had been wounded in the affair at Dalveen, and he was literally furious with rage and the thirst of blood. Down, therefore, Douglas came with about half-a-dozen men, (the rest being on duty in Galloway,) determined to kill or be killed—to put an end to these nightly conventicles, or perish in the attempt.

Mr Lawson had taken his position in the King's Chair, which, as was formerly described, consisted of three large stones set on end, around one in the centre, which served as a seat; and when Douglas came in sight, nothing appeared visible in the moonshine but these solitary stones.

"They are off, by G-d!" exclaimed Douglas; "the fox has broken cover—we must continue the chase; and Rob," added he, to one who rode near him, "blaw that bugle till it crack again. When you start the old fox, I should like mightily to be in at the death. But so—ho!—what have we here?—why, here are bottles and a cup, by Jove! These friends of the Covenant are no enemies, I perceive, to good cheer"—putting the bottle to his mouth, and making a long pull—"by the living Jingo! most excellent wine. Here, Rob," emptying what remained into the silver goblet or cup, "here, line your weasan with a drop of the red, and then for the red heart's blood of these psalm-singing, cup-kissing gentry. So ho—so ho!—hilloa—one and all—the fox is under cover still," (advancing towards the stone chair,) "and we thought him a-field, too. Stand forth, old Canticles, 5 and 8th, and let us see whether you have got one or five bottles under your belt. What! you wont, or you cant stand! Grunt again!—you are made of stone, are you?—why, then, we will try your qualities with a little burnt powder and lead. Gentlemen of the horse-brigade, do you alight, and be d—d to you, and, just by way of experiment, rattle me half a dozen bullets in the face of that there image of stone, which looks so mighty like the parson of Closeburn that one might easily mistake the one for the other."

The men had alighted with their holster pistols, and had arranged themselves, as directed, in the front of the stone chair, and with a full view of the figure which occupied the seat, when, at this very critical juncture, a band of upwards of fifty horses, with panniers on their backs, came up at a smart trot.

"Stop your hellish speed!" said a voice from the front of the band; "or, by this broadsword, and these long six-footers, you are all dead men, ere you can say, Present, fire!" Instantly, Douglas saw and comprehended his position—"To horse!" was his short exhortation, and, in an instant, his five followers and himself had cleared the brow of the glen, and were out of sight at full speed. "Shed not their blood!—shed not their blood!" continued to exclaim a well-known voice amongst the band of smugglers—for such the reader may have guessed they were. It was the voice of Walter Gibson, well known to many of the smugglers; for again and again they had supplied Auchincarn with Hollands and Nantz. "Shed not one drop of blood, I say; but leave them to Him who has said, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it;'—He will find His own time of revenging the death of my poor murdered bairn, whom they drowned in the King's Moss owre by there. But, dear me, Mr Lawson, are ye dead or living, that ye tak nae tent o' what's going on?" In fact, Mr Lawson, having given himself up as lost, had committed himself, with shut eyes, so intently to prayer, that he had but a very confused notion of what had happened.

"The Lord's will be done!" he exclaimed at last; "and is this you, Walter Gibson?—fearful! fearful!—are these the Philistines around you?—and are you and I to travel, hand in hand, into Immanuel's land?—or, but do my poor

eyes deceive me, and are these only our good friends, the fair traders, come to the rescue, under God and his mercy, in the time of our need?"

"Indeed," responded a known voice—that, namely, at whose bidding the work of death had been staid—"indeed, Mr Lawson, we are friends and not foes; and, whilst our cattle, which are a little blawn, with the haste into which they were hurried by old Walter here—until the beasts bite, I say, and eat their corn, we will e'en thank God, and take a little whet of the creature. You know, such comforts are not forbidden in the laws of Moses, or, indeed, in any laws but those of this persecuted and oppressed land."

So saying, he disengaged from a hamper a flagon of Nantz, and was about to make use of the Sacramental cup, which Douglas had dropped, to convey it around, when his arm was arrested by the still strong hand of Walter.

"For the sake of God and his church—of Him who shed his blood for poor sinners—profane not, I beseech you, the consecrated, the hallowed vessel which I have so lately held in these vile hands as the emblem of my purification through the blood of sprinkling—profane not, I say, that vessel which, when all worldly goods were forfeited and relinquished as things of no value, our worthy pastor has borne along with him—being the gift of his parishioners—to the mountain and the glen—to the desert and the wilderness!"

There needed no further admonition; the cup was deposited in the hands of its owner, and the whole *posse comitatus* spread themselves out on the grass—for, though all around was heath, this little spot was green and lovely—and, by applying the vessel directly to their lips, each one took a draught so long and hearty that the captain or leader had again and again to replenish the measure. Nor were Lawson and old Walter Gibson behind in this work of refreshment. Many a day they had laid themselves down to rest in the damp and cold cave, with little of food, and with nothing to cheer and support them but a mouthful, from time to time, of the *Solway waters*—viz., *smuggled brandy*. We are all the children, to a great amount, of circumstances; and the very men who, but a little ago, were engaged in the most solemn act of religion, and counted themselves as at the point of death—these very men were now so much cheered, and even exhilarated; by the reviving cordial, that they forgot, for the time, their dangers and their privations, and were not displeased to hear the smugglers sing the old song, "We are merry men all," when a figure approached, out of breath, exclaiming—

"The gaugers! the gaugers!—the excisemen from Dumfries!"

In an instant the whole troop stood to arms. They had been well-disciplined; and the horses, along with the parson and Walter, were stowed away, as they called it behind. They spoke not; but there was the click of gunlocks, and a powerful *recover*, on the ground, of heavy muskets, with barrels fully six feet long, which had been used by their forefathers in the times of the first Charles and the civil commotion. The enemy came up at the gallop; but they had plainly miscalculated the forces of their opponents—they were only about fifteen strong; so, wheeling suddenly round, they took their departure with as much dispatch as they had advanced.

"We must off instantly!" exclaimed the leader of this trading band. "We must gain the pass of Enterkin ere day-dawn; for these good neighbours will make common cause with the King's troops, whenever they meet them, and there will be bloody work, I trow, ere these kegs and good steeds change masters."

So saying, the march immediately proceeded up Gavin Muir, and the minister and Walter took possession of their

usual retreat—the Cairn Cave I have so often referred to.

Douglas was not thus, by accident, to be foiled in his object; for having, in the course of a few days, obtained additional forces from Galloway, he returned to the search in Gavin Muir, where he had, again and again, been told meetings still continued to be held, and some caves of concealment existed. Old Lauderdale in council had one day said—"Why, run down the devils, like the natives of Jamaica, with blood-hounds." And the hint was not lost on bloody Clavers—he had actually a pair of hounds of this description with him in Galloway at this time; and, at his earnest request, Douglas was favoured with one of them. Down therefore this monster came upon Gavin Muir, not to shoot blackcocks or muirfowl, in which it abounded, but to track, and start, and pistol, if necessary, poor, shivering, half-starved human beings, who had dared to think the laws of their God more binding than the empire and despotism of sinful men. The game was a merry one, and it was played by "merry men all:" forward went the hound through muirs and mosses; onward came the troop, hollowing and encouraging the animal in the pursuit of its horrid instincts. As they passed the moss-hole in which the poor granddaughter of Walter had been suffocated, the jest, and the oath, and the merriment were at their utmost.

"Had we but a slice of the young pup," said one, "to flesh our hound with, he would soon scent out the old one—they are kindred blood, you know. But what do I see?—old Bloody, is it, on the top of the cairn yonder?—and scooping, nosing, and giving tongue most determinedly. By the holy poker!—and that's a sanctified oath—I will on, and see what's agoing here." Thus saying, he put spurs to his horse, and, waving his sword round his head, "Here goes for old Watty!—and may the devil burn me if I do not unearth the fox at last!" Onwards they all advanced at the gallop; but Jack Johnston was greatly in front, and had dashed his horse half-way up the steep cairn, when, in an instant, horse and man rushed down, and immediately disappeared.

"Why," said Douglas, "what has become of Jack?—has old Sooty smelt him, and sent for him, on a short warning, to help in roasting Covenanters?—or have the fairies, those fair dames of the green knowe and the grey cairn, seen and admired his proportions, and made a young 'Tam Lean' of poor Jack Johnston? Let us on and see."

And see to be sure they did; for there was Jack, lying in the last agonies of death, under his horse, which itself was lamed and lying with feet uppermost. The horrid hound was lapping, with a growl, the blood which oozed from the nose and lips of the dying man, and, with a dreadful curse, the terrible being expired, just as the party came within view. He had tumbled headlong, owing to the pressure from the horse's feet, through the slight rafter-work beneath, and had pitched head-foremost against a stone seat, in consequence of which his skull was fractured, and his immediate death ensued. Douglas looked like one bewildered; he would scarcely credit his eyes; but his companion in arms did the needful; and Jack Johnston's body was removed, his horse shot through the brain, and the whole band returned, drooping and crest-fallen, to Drumlanrig. Throwing his sword down on the hall table when he arrived, he was hard to say, looking wildly and fearfully all the while, "The hand of God is in this thing, and I knew it not." It is a curious fact, but one of which my informant had no doubt, that this very Douglas became, after this, quite an altered man. Mr Lawson, who lived some years after his death, attended upon him in his last illness. "God only knows the heart," would he say; "but, to all outward appearance, William Douglas was a cleansed and a sanctified vessel: the mercy of God is infinite—it even extended to the thief on the Cross."

CHAP. XIII.—PORTER'S HOLE.

IN the west corner of the churchyard of Dalgarno—now a section of the parish of Closeburn—there is a small, but neat headstone, with two figures joining hands, as if in the attitude of marrying. Beneath is written, and still legible—“John Porter and Augnas Milligan. They were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.” There is neither date nor narrative; but, as this part of the churchyard has not been used as a burial-ground since the union of the parishes, in the reign of Charles the Second, the date must have been some time betwixt 1660 and 1684. This beautiful and sequestered churchyard, all silent and cheerless as it is, lies upon the banks of the Nith, immediately upon its union with the ocean; and near to the most famous salmon-fishing pool in the whole river, called Porter's Hole. Whilst yet a boy, and attending Closeburn school, our attention was, one sunny afternoon, (when the trouts were unwilling to visit the dry land,) drawn to the little stone in the corner, of which we have just made mention, and recollecting, at the same time, that Porter was the name of the pool, as well as of the person buried, we began to speculate upon the possibility of there being some connection betwixt the two circumstances—the name of the individual, and the well-known designation of the blackest and deepest pool in the Closeburn part of the river. Near to this solitary resting-place of the ashes of our forefathers—the Harknesses, the Gibsons, and the Watsons of Closeburn from time immemorial—there stood, at that time, an old cottage, straw or rather *grass*-thatched, (for it was covered with green chicken-weed,) where dwelt, in single solitude, Janet M'Guffoch—whether any relation of the celebrated individual of that name mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, we know not—but there dwelt Janet, a discontented old waspish body of one hundred years of age, according to general belief; and, being accompanied by a black cat and a broom besom, was marked, by us *boys*, as a decided witch. We never had any doubt about it, and the thing was confirmed by the laird of Closeburn's gamekeeper, who swore that he had often hunted hares to Janet's door; but never could start them again. Under all these circumstances, it required no common impulse to induce us to enter the den of this emissary of Satan; but our curiosity was excited by the similarity of the names “Porter's Grave” and “Porter's Hole,” (as the pool was familiarly named,) and we at length mustered faith, and strength, and courage to thrust ourselves past a bundle of withered twigs, which served Janet as a door in summer, and as a door-protector in the blasts of winter. Janet was as usual at her wheel, and crooning some old Covenanting ditty, about—

“Oh, gin Lag were dead and streckit,
An' that his ha' wi' mools was theeekit!”

when, by means of a six-inch-square skylight, our physiognomy became visible to Janet.

“And what art thou, that's creeping into an old body's dark den, and leaving ahint thee the guid sunshine?”

We responded by mentioning our name.

“Ay, ay,” said Janet, “come away and sit thee down on the creepy there, beside the heidstane*—thou art freely welcome, for thou art o' the seed o' the faithful, the precious salt of the earth: and the blessing of the God of the Covenant will rest upon its children, even to the third and the fourth generation!” Thus welcomed, we took our position as requested, eyeing all the while the large black cat with a somewhat suspicious regard.

“The beast winna stir thee,” said Janet, “It nas, like its auld mistress, mair regard for the martyr's seed.”

Having hereupon taken advantage of a pause in Janet's discourse, we at once stated the subject of our inquiry.

“Ay, ay,” said Janet; “and atweel there is a connec-

tion betwixt that bonny angel stane, and the pool ca'ed Porter's hole. Ay, is there; an' an awfu connection it is. But what comes thou here for to torment an auld body like me, wi' greetin and groain at my time o' life? Gae awa, gae awa—I canna thole the very thochts o' the story whilk thou ettles to ken.”

This only increased our curiosity, and, after some flattering language about Janet's good-nature, retentive memory, and Covenanting lineage, the old crone proceeded to the following purpose; and, as nearly as we can mind, (for it is a tale of fifty years,) repeated it in the following words.

“Thou kens the auld ruin, bairn, the auld wa's out by there. That's the auld farm-house o' Dalgarno, ere the new one at the path-head was biggit; and there, within the wa's, was ance a warm hearth, and twa as leal hearts as ever beat against pin or button. John Porter was young, handsome, and the tenant of the best farm in the parish o' Dalgarno; but he was nae frien to the vile curate, and a marked bird, as they ca' it, by Grierson o' Lag, in particular, who had been heard to say, that he would decant his porter for him some day yet, in the shape and colour of heart's bluid. Agnes Milligan was an orphan, brought up at Dalgarno—a sister's son of the auld Dalgarno, and a fu' cousin, ye ken, o' the young farmer. They had baith fed frae the same plate; slept under the same roof; played at the same sports; and dabbled in the same river—the bloody, bloody Nith!—from infancy to youth. Oh, sirs! but I canna get on awa”—Here Janet sorted her wheel, and apparently shed a tear, for she moved her apron corner to her eye. “Aweel, this was the nicht o' the wedding, bairn—no this nicht, like; but I think I just see it present, for I was there mysel, a wee bit whilking lassie. Lawson, guid godly Lawson, had tied the knot, an' we war a' merry like; but it was a fearfu spate, and the Nith went frae bank to brae. ‘They are comin!’ was the cry. I kenna wha cried it, but a voice said it, an' twenty voices repeated it. Lag an' his troop's comin; their gallopin owre the Cunning-holm at this moment. John Porter flew to his bonnet, an', in an instant, was raised six or seven feet high on his long stilts, with which he had often crossed the Nith when nae mortal could tak it on horseback. Agnes Milligan was out and after; the moon shone clear through a cloud, and she saw the brave man tak the water at the broadest. On he went—for we a' witnessed what he did—on he went, steady, firm, an' unwaverin; but, alas! it was hin' harvest, an' some sheaves o' corn had been carried off the holms by the spate. Ane o' them crossed his upper stilt, an', in a moment, his feet went frae him, an' doon he cam into the roarin flood. He was still near the Closeburn bank, an' we a' ran down the side to see if we could help him out. Again an' again he rose to his feet; but the water was mighty, it was terrible, it juist whumbled him owre, an' we saw nae mair o' him. Agnes ran for Porter's Hole, (then only kent as the salmon pool,) an' stood watching the eddy, as it whirled straw an' corn, an' sic like rubbish, aboot. Her husband's head appeared floating in the whirl—she screamed, leaped into the deep, deep pool, an' next day they were found clasped in each other's arms. Oh, my bairn, my bairn!—what brocht ye here the day?”

Janet was found, next morning, dead in her bed—the exertion and excitement had killed her.



* Vide Jameson.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VICTIM OF VANITY.

CHRISTIAN GRAHAM, in the prime of life, was considered not only handsome, but beautiful. Her full, black eyes glowed with a brightness which indicated the intensity of her feelings; and her well-formed countenance seemed equally expressive of shrewd discernment and acute sensibility. She possessed many natural graces and amiable qualities; and, had her mind been cultivated with as much care as her face, and her temper smoothed with as much assiduity as her raven locks, she might have turned out, in *reality*, such an image of mortal loveliness as those which youthful poets picture in their dreams. But Christian had no instructor to curb the first outbreaks of her impatient spirit, or to store her mind with the precepts of wisdom. Her father was a widower, who possessed but little intelligence, and less religion; and, as she was his only child, he doted upon her with a depth of affection which rendered him entirely blind to her faults, and excessively vain of the silly conceits which he considered her prettiest accomplishments. She was gratified with everything she asked, if it was within the power of his slender income to procure it; and many a ragged coat he subjected himself to wear, and many a meagre dinner he contented himself to eat, rather than break down the lady-like spirit of his girl, as he termed it, by refusing to comply with her desires. And thus her vanity, self-will, and extravagance, were fostered by a father's fondness, till they outgrew and corrupted the last bright traits of her character.

A "Holy Fair," as Burns has denominated the tent preachings which were common, a few years ago, upon sacramental occasions, was to be held in a neighbouring village; and Christian looked forward with peculiar interest to that day, as one on which her own pretty face and fashionable attire would cast no common lustre. The day at length arrived, and Christian, arrayed in all her finery, and fully confident in her own killing charms, set boldly forward. As she drew near the tent, which was erected on a grassy bank, she adjusted her ruff, muff, and veil; and put all things in such order as that they might be set off to the best advantage. Her eyes were soon engaged in scanning over the motley assembly, for the purpose of discovering a proper person beside whom she might take her stand with the most striking effect; for she was possessed of so much of the painter's art, as to be well aware of the influence of contrast; and she was not long in selecting an object entirely suitable to her intentions. Behind the tent, in an obscure corner, stood a solitary girl, plainly dressed, whom Christian soon recognised as her old acquaintance, Elizabeth Finlay. The girl seemed to be deeply engaged in her own meditations, and did not observe Christian's approach, till she touched her gently on the shoulder. Elizabeth looked round hurriedly and confusedly; and, at the same time, raised her hand to her eyes, to conceal the tears which had been trickling down her cheeks unseen. Christian took no notice of her emotion, but softly inquired, why she did not go to some place where she could see the minister. Elizabeth modestly replied, that "she could hear him as well there as any

gate." Christian prevailed, however, upon the simple girl to accompany her to a more conspicuous place in front of the minister; and there the characters as well as the dresses of the two girls appeared in admirable contrast. Christian turned her back upon the preacher, and her eyes to the forest of faces which rose around and above her; and there her heart and her soul were engaged in a sedulous search for notice and admiration. Elizabeth stood with her face to the tent, and her eyes bent to the ground, neither scanning the countenances of those around her, nor exhibiting the varying expression of her own, which changed into the glow of exalting animation, or sank into the languor of submissive sorrow, as the solemn and eloquent address which she listened to, operated upon her young and sensitive heart!

Meanwhile, a rustling sound was heard in the rear of the tent, which arrested the attention of all who stood near it. Christian turned fully round, and gazed inquiringly, as Betty Gowery glided toward the tent, with the air of a duchess, and took up her position by her side. Betty was as anxious an angler for admiration as her companion, and as skilful, too, in the art of exhibiting her charms; and Christian regarded her with no friendly look; for she now stood side by side with a most dangerous competitor. Betty's face was as full of pretty vanity as her own; and Betty's silk gown was far finer than her muslin drapery; and the consequence was, that Christian had the mortification to behold the homage of every eye, which she was covetous of arresting, turned with intense delight upon the shining silks of her rival. She endeavoured to shift her situation; but wherever Christian presented her face, Betty also presented hers. The glory of the day was past. Christian had come, not to hear sermons, but to gain suitors; and Miss Betty Gowery's silk gown had destroyed her hopes! Her eyes ceased to ogle the now indifferent gallants; her cheeks grew pale; her lips protruded; and her very heart burned with offended pride.

The preacher concluded his discourse, and Christian did not wait to be benefited by another orator, but gladly seized upon the opportunity to abandon a place where her charms had been so eclipsed. Elizabeth Finlay stole quietly away. As Christian was particularly desirous to secure a listener to her learned criticism upon the dress of her rival, she joined company with Elizabeth.

"Dear me, Lizzy," said the piqued coquette, as soon as they had got beyond ear-shot of the audience, "dear me, Lizzy! did ye see Bet Gowery flapping her silken wings around her at the tent? I protest she looked as *dignified* as if she had been a perfect *paragad* of fashion; but, if she had only *seed* her *ain* clumsy back and buncy *shouters*, as I did, she wadna lookit so lofty-like. I daresay she thought herself the queen of the company; but, I declare to ye, I could not help laughing at the silly *creature* in all her splendid *habuylments*."

"I did see Miss Betty gang past," said Elizabeth, with a gentle smile; "but I didna observe how she lookit, though I believe she wad be vain enough o' her silk gown; for it's natural for us a' to think owre muckle o' ourselves an our braw claes, as my faither was wont to tell me."

In this manner they continued their conversation, till

Elizabeth was sufficiently tired of Christian's rancorous vanity, though her timid civility of disposition prevented her from manifesting her disgust. Christian was equally displeased with Elizabeth's old-fashioned notions; and she often looked back, in the hope of discovering some more congenial spirit on the road, into whose ear she might discharge, without restraint, the full volume of spleen with which her throbbing breast was almost bursting. Fortune at last favoured her with a glimpse of a limber little man, making what speed he could in the same direction. She soon discovered the advancing stranger to be no less a personage than Jamie Rib, Major Bobwell's butler, and the reputed lover of Elizabeth Finlay; and, extending both her hands in exultation, she exclaimed—"Losh, Lizzy, woman! wait a little—here's Jamie Rib coming, and we'll get his company all the way."

Elizabeth paused for a moment; then, pleading that her duties at home would not permit her to delay so long, she bade her companion adieu, and, with a light step, glided away.

Christian, who felt herself relieved from all restraint by Elizabeth's departure, sat down upon the grassy footpath by the side of the road, and gave vent to her vexation in a fit of sobbing. She had succeeded, however, in drying her eyes, and in assuming her accustomed levity of look and manner, by the time that the young butler had reached the spot; and she returned Jamie's salutation in a tone as merry as his own. Jamie was a person exactly suited to Christian's taste. He was quite free from that *vulgarity* with which she was continually bored wherever she went; and, though he was not of a malicious disposition himself, he very good-naturedly joined in every ebullition of malice which he observed bubbling in the breasts of others. This happy disposition to fall into the humour of every one whom he met, and to listen attentively to everything which he heard, made him a common repository for all sorts of scandal; and he could at any time shake out from his well-filled head a correct account of the origin and issue of all the plots and counterplots, cabals and quarrels, which had occurred among nursery-maids, ladies-maids, kitchen-maids, cooks, and scullions, for many miles round, since the commencement of his reign as chief butler to the celebrated Major Bobwell.

We must now leave Christian to pursue her journey under the guidance of Jamie Rib, and give the reader an account of the character and circumstances of her late associate.

Elizabeth Finlay was an orphan. Her mother died while she was very young; and her father, whose house she kept till the day of his death, had perished about twelve months before the time of which we write, in a gallant and successful attempt to save a young man, the son of his master, from drowning. That master, out of gratitude for the deliverance of his son, took Elizabeth into his family, where she now lived in the capacity of a servant, and was treated with as much kindness as if she had been a daughter. The loss of her father, however, had made an impression upon her young and affectionate heart, which all the disinterested tenderness of strangers could not completely remove; and her countenance displayed a mixture of sweetness, sadness, and resignation, which moved the sympathy and commanded the respect of every sensible observer. She had only one relative alive, a younger brother, upon whom her heart brooded with sisterly affection. He was the last image of her father; the last living relic of her home; the last isolated object of her infant love; and

"She had rather died with him,
Than lived with all the world beside."

After Elizabeth had parted company with Christian Graham, her thoughts turned to her only brother. Nor was her

simple reverie unbefitting the sacred day, or the solemn errand from which she was returning. There was a secret sanctity in her heart, which sublimed all her emotions; and, at this time, the youthful image of her brother was blended in her mind with the fervent piety of her departed parent. Her pace became slower, as she pondered upon the present and the past; and tears began to trickle down her cheeks, as she thought upon the condition of her orphan brother—left destitute of a parent's example, and deprived of a parent's prayers. The levity of youth, and the confidence of health, thought she to herself, may obliterate the serious impressions of childhood, and leave him a prey to temptation, or lull him into forgetfulness of God. Her tears flowed faster at the idea of her brother's apostasy. "But, though he should forget to pray for himself," continued she, "and though he has now no father to supplicate heaven in his behalf, yet He who listens to the raven's cry will not despise even mine, when offered for so dear a relative." The ardour of her affections seemed to deprive her of the power of motion. She stood still, and, clasping her hands together, and casting up her straining eyes to heaven, she sobbed forth a silent supplication to heaven for the protection of her brother.

Elizabeth was now near the home of her master; and, as her piety was as unobtrusive as her grief, she endeavoured to dry her tears; and, fearful lest she should have neglected her duty, by the time which she had unconsciously spent in her devotion, she hurried on to the farm-house. As she drew near, her master's son, the young man whom her father had perished in saving from a watery grave, came to the door, and, as soon as he discovered Elizabeth approaching, advanced to meet her.

It has been already said, that Elizabeth Finlay was treated by her master with the kindness of a father; and, we may now add, that Henry Mackenzie looked upon the lovely daughter of his late deliverer with, at least, the affectionate regard of a brother. There was, however, at this time, a degree of grave seriousness quite unusual, in the demeanour of the frank, cheerful, open-hearted, young farmer.

"I have bad news for you, sister," said he, in a soft tone, taking her hand at the same time in his. "I am sorry to be the bearer of intelligence which will pain you," he continued; "but I was afraid that it might be communicated in a more painful manner."

The girl grew pale as ashes, and a pause of agonizing suspense ensued; for the youth trembled as he thought upon the probable consequences of unfolding his story. Elizabeth was the first who spoke.

"I am deeply indebted to you, Henry," said she, in faltering accents; "but tell me what has happened, my brother—speak."

"I will tell you," said Henry; "but I pray you to compose yourself. Do you think you are able to bear it?"

"I canna promise," said Elizabeth; "but I will try. May God help me! But, at any rate, speak it out, Henry."

"Well, then," said Henry, "I beg you to be comforted. Our brother Richard had a quarrel with his master's ill-natured son the other day; and, as Richard conceived himself to be in the right, he did not choose to submit to the lad's impertinence; and the consequence was, that he struck Richard with his plough-spade, and got a sound drubbing in return."

Here the youth stopped, as if to give the agitated girl time to recover herself, and to prepare for the still more painful information which followed. He looked in her face: it was composed, but colourless; the blood had fled from her lips; and her whole frame shook with emotion, which she vainly strove to suppress. She had anticipated worse tidings than were yet disclosed; and the pause so

considerately made by the narrator brought back one beam of hope to irradiate the parted lips, which seemed almost deserted by life. In a tremulous tone, and with a faint smile of complacency, she turned her tearful blue eyes upon the youth, and inquired—

“Is this all, Henry?”

“It is *not* all, sister,” said Henry; “but I hope you have heard the worst of the tale. Young Durdum was so severely bruised in the affray, that he was unable to walk home; and Richard took his enemy on his back, and kindly carried him to his father’s house, where he left him to the care of his mother. Two days after, Robert Ferguson happened to be in Kirkaldy, where he met Richard, in company with a recruiting sergeant, to whom he had enlisted. Robert intimated the circumstance to my father to-day at the kirk. He returned home immediately, and set off as fast as Batty’s feet would carry him, to rescue Richard from the hardships of a soldier’s life.”

“God speed his purpose! and bless him for it!” said Elizabeth, as she sank to the earth beneath the anguish of her overstrained feelings.

She uttered no scream as she fell; for her soul was gentle in its sympathies, and noiseless even in the agony of its grief. Henry became alarmed at her condition, and trembled for the consequences of the disclosure he had made. He kneeled down beside her: her eyes were closed; her breathing was imperceptible; and her whole countenance displayed that motionless but majestic serenity which is sometimes visible in the features of the dead—

“Ere Decay’s effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.”

Henry sprang to his feet; and, lifting the girl from the ground with the greatest gentleness and care, he conveyed her to the house, where, for the present, we must leave her to the motherly management of Mrs Mackenzie, and the brotherly attentions of her kind-hearted son.

When Christian Graham returned to her father’s cottage, after her excursion to the “Holy Fair,” it was in a state of mind bordering upon insanity. Every object which she met, and every word which her poor father uttered, with the intention of soothing her, increased her fury, and added volubility to her wrath. The chairs and stools which she contrived to find in her way, were overturned and kicked through the house in contemptuous confusion; and even her favourite cat, who lay basking upon the hearth, and winking at the flickering firelight, in unconscious security, did not escape a share of the same sort of discipline. Her gown, bonnet, and veil, which had once been the pride of her heart, were now torn off, and thrown aside, as if they had become unworthy of the regard of their wearer; and the rough handling which they received actually rendered some of them unfit for future service. This storm continued to rage with unabated violence, till old Adam began to expostulate with his daughter, and, at last, inquired the meaning of such an uproar.

“Such an uproar!” shouted Christian, in a voice quivering with ungovernable passion. “Who would not make such an uproar, if placed in such circumstances? Only think on me—obliged to go to kirk and market with a gown like a dishclout, while the worst-shapen wretches on earth are flying in silk and satin. Jamie Rib said it was a perfect shame to see a person of my *calabur* so shabbily dressed, while such a vulgar, *disproportionate* trollop as Bet Gowery is bouncing about with her barrel-like, beggarly body, as grand as a Countess; but I’ll be hanged if she *triumph* over me!—for, if I live to see another Sabbath, she may set herself by my side, if she likes, and feel whose gown’s finest, if she dares.”

“An’ whaur ’ll ye get the siller, Kirsty, for that braw new gown that ye’re to brag Bet Gowery wi’?” said her father.

“Where ’ll I get *silver*?” replied his daughter. “*Whey*, I’ll get three pounds in the drawer there and that ’ll buy a better gown than hers is.”

“Aha, lass!” said Adam, with a constrained smile, “ye’ve gotten owre mony gowns oot there already, for gettin ony mair this while. I gae Mr Counterstand the three pounds oot o’ the drawer yesterday, in clearance o’ yer auld account; an’ I tell’d him, at the same time, that, if he trusted you again, he wadna need to look to me for a settlement.”

At this information, Christian’s heart seemed to sink within her. She sat down on a chair; and sobbed, in sudden disappointment, till her father went to bed, when she too sought repose; but in vain.

“Sleep sits on lids unsullied by a tear;”

and hers were drenched with tears of the least amiable kind.

After a night of restless misery, Christian got up, and dressed herself hurriedly in her every-day clothes. When old Adam awoke, he was quite surprised at finding his daughter so early astir; nor was his surprise lessened when he discovered her busily employed collecting her various articles of apparel, and bundling them up in towels and napkins, as if preparing for an intended journey.

“What’s the meanin o’ a’ this gatherin, an’ pouchin, an’ packin?” said the old man, as he staggered into the middle of the floor. “Whaur are ye gaun, Kirsty? an’ what are ye for wi’ a’ thae tranlums?” continued he, rubbing his brow in amazement.

“Where am I going, and what am I for!” cried Christian, her eyes kindling into rage as she spoke. “Pray, what is your business with that?—the things are my own; and I’ll take them with me wherever I go!”

“Dear me, lassie!” said her father, “ye’ve surely gane beside yersel! What can be the meanin o’ a’ this turrivee? But I mann awa to my wark, Kirsty; an’ I advise ye just to sit doun an’ settle yersel, an’ the gee ’ll sune gang aff ye again.”

Adam departed with a troubled heart, to commence his day’s labour in the field, leaving his daughter to follow out the rash resolution which wounded pride had prompted her to adopt. Christian had heard from Elizabeth, while returning from the tent, that her neighbour was dead, and that her mistress wanted another servant; and Christian thought that, by offering herself to supply the vacancy, she would soon earn as much money as would enable her to appear as ladylike as the enviable Miss Betty Gowery. Her preparations were soon completed; and, locking the door, in which she left the key, she proceeded with all her property to the farm-house of Longleys, which was situated about two miles from her father’s cottage.

As Mrs Mackenzie was in great want of a servant, Christian was engaged with very little hesitation or inquiry, and thus, two individuals of the most opposite temperament were brought into the close connection of fellow-labourers in the same family.

Elizabeth Finlay had by this time recovered from the heavy faintness of her first grief, and was now engaged in performing her household tasks, with all the diligence and dexterity which was so natural to her docile and persevering disposition; but, though she suffered not her sorrow to interfere with her duty, her pale, melancholy countenance gave sufficient evidence that her heart was weeping while her eyes were dry. The guidman had not yet returned from his journey in quest of her enlisted brother; and his protracted stay suggested hopes of success to every one save Elizabeth herself, whose spirit seemed sadly resigned to believe and to endure the worst. Her fears were not long in being confirmed; for, in the course of the forenoon, the good old farmer came home, and briefly informed the family, who eagerly assembled to hear the news, that Richard

left Kirkaldy for Edinburgh two days before he reached it. Thither he also went, but found himself too late—the sergeant and his recruits being gone for the Isle of Wight, from which place, after the necessary training, it was supposed they would sail for America. “I could gang nae farther,” continued the guidman; “but I wrote a letter to the gentleman that they said was to be his captain, tellin him that I wad be furthcoming wi’ ony sum that he thoct fit to name, if he wad be sae guid as just let Richie come hame owre again.”

Elizabeth stood leaning upon a chair, with the tears of gratitude and grief chasing each other down her pale cheeks as she listened; and when the good farmer finished his tale, she was only able to say—“That was kind, maister; may God reward ye!”

“Hout, lassie, dinna haver,” was the guidman’s reply; “there was naething kind about it—I only did my duty; an’ I’m deservin’ o’ nae reward. But dinna greet, lassie; Richie ’ill be hame owre in a day or twa, an’ a’ things will be richt again.”

Richard did not return, however, which was a sufficient proof that the communication of his kind benefactor had been disregarded by the person to whom it was addressed; but all the old farmer’s powers of consolation were exerted to cheer the heart of his remaining protegée. Henry, too, was unceasing in his attempts to alleviate her sorrow; nor was Mrs Mackenzie deficient in motherly care for the welfare of the orphan. Christian Graham, alone, looked upon Elizabeth with disguised dislike. Her aspiring spirit could not bear to see any one a greater favourite with her mistress than herself. But there was another, and perhaps a more powerful motive for her hatred to the young orphan. She was desperately in love with Major Bobwell’s butler; and Jamie Rib, in his visits to Longleys, had always shewn more partiality for Elizabeth than herself. Influenced by these considerations, she began to exert her wicked ingenuity to bring her unsuspecting rival to ruin and disgrace; and the task was sooner accomplished than might have been supposed, for the simplest minds are always easiest circumvented. Mrs Mackenzie was selected as the properest person to commence operations with; and her arts were so cunningly and diligently employed, that Elizabeth soon began to experience a marked difference in the manners of her protectress. This unaccountable coldness increased her distress, and her distress increased Henry’s endeavours to alleviate it, and Henry’s attentions increased Christian’s hatred to the object who received them; and thus the life of Elizabeth became daily more miserable, under a consciousness of her mistress’s displeasure, and an uncertainty as to the cause of her offence. But the orphan’s fortune seemed tending to some important crisis, and Christian rejoiced in every occurrence which facilitated its approach.

The hay harvest at length came on; and Elizabeth was employed, along with Mr Mackenzie and his son, turning the “tedded grain” in one of the low-lying mossy meadows which were attached to the farm of Longleys. The day had been excessively hot; and Elizabeth, who always exerted herself to the utmost, seemed to be quite exhausted, though she never complained of her weariness. The ascent from this meadow to the house was rather steep; and, as the party moved homeward at night, Henry offered his arm to the orphan, to help her up the hill. Elizabeth gently declined the proffered assistance; but the old farmer, who easily guessed the delicacy of her motives, would not permit his son’s gallantry to be overlooked, and, with all his usual jocularly of manner, he exclaimed:—

“Tak his arm, lassie, tak his arm, an’ gang name like guid bairns afore me there; an’, if the loon turns lazy, Lizzy, tell me, lassie, an’ I’ll stang him up ahint wi’ the fork here.”

Mr Mackenzie laughed aloud; Henry and Elizabeth smiled in each other’s faces; while the latter felt such a sensation of gladness that all her former lassitude was dissipated in a moment.

While Elizabeth and Henry were climbing the brae, arm in arm, and the old man following at a short distance behind, Christian Graham happened to come to the door. She gazed for a second upon the advancing party, and then hurried back into the house. There was mischief in that gaze.

When the party arrived, Henry and his father went to the barn-yard, to attend to some business, while Elizabeth entered the kitchen, from which she was soon summoned to the presence of her mistress in the parlour. Christian cast a glance of malicious exultation after her as she went; and when she returned, her eyes were full of tears, and her mind seemed agitated almost to fainting; but she said nothing of her conference with Mrs Mackenzie. Christian was gratified, however, by these symptoms of the orphan’s grief; for she knew them to be the best indications of a successful plot.

The sun set, and the family retired to rest. He again rose, and the industrious farmer followed his example; but Elizabeth, who always used to be the first up of the family, was not to be seen; and the old man walked softly to the bedside, and inquired—

“Are ye weel, Lizzy?—It’s risin’ time—are ye weel, lassie?” No answer was made; and the good-natured farmer only muttered to himself, as he turned away, “She’s need o’ rest, puir thing; but she doesna use to be sae dull o’ hearin’—I’m feared there be something the matter wi’ her after a’.” He came back, and looked into the bed—but Elizabeth was not there; he went to the door; it was locked; but the key was not in it as it used to be; some thing tinkled at his feet—the door had been locked from the outside, and the key dropped in at an aperture. He took it up; and, as he applied it to the bolt, his thoughts again became audible.

“What can be the meanin’ o’ this?” said he: “can Lizzy hae gane oot wi’ that haikin callant, Jamie Rib, an’ forgotten to come in again? Na, that wadna be like her ava. Hoosumever, I’ll look round the town afore I mak ony wark about it; for it micht affront her, puir thing!”

Every place about the farm was searched with the greatest care, but no trace could be found of the orphan; and Mr Mackenzie returned to the house in the greatest perturbation. The whole family were soon alarmed. Christian denied any knowledge of Elizabeth’s departure; Henry was too much agitated at the information, for being accessory in the elopement; but Mrs Mackenzie seemed to guess more of the matter.

“Puir thing!” said she; “I didna think the lassie wad hae taen my words sae muckle amiss; I’m sure I said naething but what was intended for her benefit.”

“Aha, Lucky!” said the guidman; “I was just thinkin your lang tongue wad be at the bottom o’ t; but nae time’s to be lost noo. Tell the men, when they come to their wark, just to gang down by to the meadow there; and rin you, laddie, an’ saddle Batty an’ Birkie; and let’s ride south an’ north, as fast as we can drive, nor ever draw bridle till we find her; for I never saw sic a day as this since I was a callant.”

Henry had the horses ready in a trice, and, as he assisted his father to mount, he received the following injunction:—“Spare na the horse, laddie; for, if he kenned the errand he is on, he wad rin without spurin’.”

Henry bounded to the saddle, and was off at the gallop in an instant; and the old man followed as fast as his old horse could carry him. At this moment, Christian rushed from the house, and called out—“Stop, maister, stop and get yer hat; ye’re away wi’ yer nichtcap.”

Gae to the house wi' the hat, lassie," returned the guidman; "nichtcap or no nichtcap, I hae nae time to stop enoo."

We shall not narrate the adventures of the farmer and his son: it is sufficient to say, that, after a long day spent in an active search, they both returned without having discovered the slightest trace of the orphan. But Elizabeth was not yet given up as lost. Mr Mackenzie had numerous friends in different parts of the country, to all of whom he wrote, describing the appearance of the lost girl, and soliciting their interest for her recovery. He also proposed to write to his daughter, who had been engaged for several years past as lady's maid in a great family then residing in the Scottish metropolis; but to this proposal Mrs Mackenzie decidedly objected.

"Dinna ye ken, guidman," said the cautious matron, "that Lizzy an' Mary were aye just like twa sisters, as lang as they were thegither, an' it wad break our lassie's heart to hear o' this waefu affair? Tak my counsel, an' say naething about it; for it micht do muckle ill, an' canna do any guid."

The guidman acknowledged the wisdom of his wife's advice; and Mary was allowed to remain ignorant of the mysterious elopement of her adopted sister. Weeks and months passed away, but still no account was heard of Elizabeth; and deeply was her absence lamented by the little family at Longleys. The old farmer lost much of his wonted cheerfulness; but the name of the orphan, in conjunction with her friendless condition, was duly remembered in his nightly prayer. Henry became melancholy and abstracted, and even Mrs Mackenzie often regretted that such painful results should follow from the discharge of a necessary duty. Christian Graham *alone* looked like herself; for that which to every one else was a loss, to her was a victory—she rejoiced in the defeat of her rival.

Jamie Rib still continued his visits at Longleys; and Christian had now no competitor for his affections—in truth, she never had one in Elizabeth, who only suffered, but never encouraged his attentions. He knew his own importance; he came to be courted; he was wooed and won. They were married, but not settled in life. Jamie's master gave him intimation that he could not accommodate his wife, and that he would not any longer require his services. This was rather a hard beginning for the young pair; but they comforted themselves with the hope that a better situation would soon cast up. Christian took a room for herself, which she furnished with her husband's money, according to her own taste; and here she lived as fashionably, and dressed as lady-like, as the celebrated Miss Betty Gowry, whose silk gown had produced such an important era in her early history. Jamie continued flitting about from place to place in search of a situation; but he soon discovered that no gentleman had any use for a married butler. His small stock of money was soon exhausted, and his credit did not long outlast it. About this time, too, Christian bore a daughter, which forced them to part with some of their most highly valued frivolities, in order to procure the means of subsistence.

Jamie continued unemployed—starvation began to stare him in the face; and he saw no remedy for his misery, but to resume his original occupation as a weaver. The resolution was an honourable one; but how could the proud spirit of Christian ever endure the appellation of a *pirn-winder*—a term at which she had so often sneered with contempt? The occasion was a pressing one, however, and he boldly broached the subject to his wife.

"A weaver!" said Christian, as he intimated his intention; "had I thought that you ever would *disgrace* yourself by becoming a weaver, you *never* should have been my husband, Jamie!"

Though hunger cannot tame the tigress, it sometimes

compels her to hunt down a despicable prey: it was thus with Christian Graham, or Mrs Rib, as she wished to be called. She despised to be the wife of a weaver; and necessity made her the thing she despised. She was miserable in her *supposed* degradation; and she made her husband, who otherwise might have been happy, miserable with her repining. But we must leave them both, and return to the farm of Longleys.

Though years had elapsed since the mysterious disappearance of Elizabeth Finlay from the house of her protector, it still remained an uncertainty whether she was alive or dead. Her name was now seldom repeated in the neighbourhood; but time could not efface her image from the recollection of Henry Mackenzie, who, it was said, was never like himself again after her departure. All his youthful vivacity and sprightliness of manner vanished with the orphan; and the high-spirited, mirthful boy settled down at once into the grave, thoughtful, melancholy young man. Every year, as it passed away, seemed to leave a legacy of gloom to the unhappy Henry; but he was never morose in his sadness; and, though he seemed to take no interest in the objects which delighted him before, he was always grateful for every attempt which was made to divert his mind from its sorrowful reflections.

Mrs Mackenzie had early discovered the cause of all her son's silent musings and lonely walks; and, as she had long before determined upon Miss Betty Gowery as his partner through life, that young lady was almost a constant guest at the farmhouse of Longleys. But, though it was contrary to Henry's nature to treat any one disrespectfully, he shewed no attachment to the silk gown of his mother's young favourite; and her presence seldom increased his cheerfulness: nor yet did the old farmer seem very much transported with the qualifications of his intended daughter-in-law; for, in comparing her character with Elizabeth's, he said that "Betty could wear a silk gown, but Lizzy could earn ane." The Gowerys, however, had the appearance of opulence, and Mrs Mackenzie had an eye to the portion.

In course of time, Mr Gowery also became a regular visiter at Longley's. The old gentleman had, for many years, been one of the most extensive horse-dealers in the country; and, from long experience and close observation, he had acquired a knowledge of mankind, and a power of insinuation which few individuals could resist. All his arts were employed to gain the confidence of Mr Mackenzie, who, though a shrewd man, possessed a facility of temper, and a warmth of heart, which rendered him peculiarly susceptible to the impressions of kindness. They became *bosom* friends and *business* friends; that is to say, they communicated to each other all their secrets, and assisted each other in all their difficulties—but time shewed which was the best *market-man*.

Mr Gowery, under pretences which implied neither risk nor dishonour, at length succeeded in obtaining Mr Mackenzie's name as security to a bill for two thousand pounds. The sum was a great deal more than the worthy farmer was worth; but he never thought that there was anything more than mere form in the matter, nor ever dreamed that he might be called upon to substantiate the responsibility which he had incurred. The bill became due, however—Mr Gowery became a bankrupt—and Mr Mackenzie was a ruined man. The simple, upright principles of his heart, prevented him from taking advantage of those *crooks in the law* which a more skilful or less honourable *man of business* might, in his case, have turned to good account; and he beheld the whole of his property—the result of a long life of laborious exertion and patient economy—sacrificed, in a single day, to support the profusion of a knave.

We will not attempt to describe the old man's feelings, as he and his little family slowly left the abode where they had

spent so many years in contented comfort; but we may mention, that the patient placidity of spirit which characterised his conduct in the accumulation of his little fortune, did not desert him when he lost it. He bore his adversity with a firmness which shewed that the sources of his happiness were not all confined to earth. He even said to his son, as he left the scene of his more prosperous years behind him—

“We maunna repine at oor fortune, laddie; for the wages o’ sin is death; an’ I wad rather be the puir, pennyless body that I noo am, than tak Mr Gowery’s place, wi’ a’ the enjoyments that twa thoosan pouns o’ anither man’s money could procure me!”

Mrs Mackenzie was apparently more affected than her husband by the ruin of their circumstances. She had anticipated honour and wealth from her proposed connection with the Gowerys; and her hopes were miserably disappointed. She blamed herself, too, as the cause of all their misfortunes; and, as she took the last lingering look at Longleys, she wrung her hands, and wept bitterly—for, alas! it was no longer her home. The exigencies of his family had called the energies of Henry’s mind into operation; and his countenance shewed fewer signs of melancholy now than it had done during the period of his greatest prosperity. He had taken a small cottage, for the accommodation of his parents and himself; and thither they were now journeying, with a few articles of furniture which a friend had bought back for them at their own sale, proceeding in a cart before them.

Henry and his father soon procured employment, in their new situation, as day-labourers; and, though they must have felt many a pang, from exchanging their condition as masters for the humble occupation of servants, yet they were not altogether destitute of enjoyment; for a sense of moral rectitude will yield pleasure to the mind, in the performance of the sternest duties. Their employment diverted their attention, and dispelled the memory of their losses, which hung more heavily upon the spirits of Mrs Mackenzie, who was left at home to ruminate over the existence of those evils which she blamed herself for producing. Sickness sprung from vexation; and the good old man had every reason to fear that the death of his wife would soon be added to the loss of his fortune. His daughter got intimation of her mother’s condition, and left her service to attend her; but, notwithstanding of all the endeavours which were made for her recovery, she continued to linger in the most doubtful state—

“Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.”

On a dark and stormy night, as Henry was passing to the sick-chamber of his mother, with a candle in his hand, his attention was arrested by a gentle rap at the door; and, on opening it, a person, wrapped close in a tartan mantle, inquired, in a low voice—

“Does Mr Mackenzie live here?”

The tone in which these words were spoken, thrilled to the young man’s heart; and he mused, for a moment, before he returned a reply. The stranger seemed studious to avoid the light—for she always kept the shade of the door between her face and the candle; and, when her question was answered in the affirmative, she presented a letter—turning half round, at the same time, as if to depart. But Henry seized the hand that offered it, and said—

“I beg you to come in; it perhaps requires an answer.”

“I believe it does not,” said the stranger.

“Come in at any rate,” said Henry; “I cannot permit a woman to go away unprotected in such a night of storm and darkness as this; come near the fire for a moment, and I will accompany you home myself.” So saying, he drew her gently into the house, and she drew her mantle closer about her face as she entered. Henry, however, con-

trived, as if by accident, to ruffle back the hood, so as to display the countenance which it concealed. A single glance was sufficient to confirm his suppositions.

“Elizabeth!” he exclaimed, as the unmasked girl stood basking before him.

“It’s Lizzy,” shouted his father, as he started from his seat by the fire, and rushed towards her, in all the enthusiasm of unrestrained gladness. “It’s Lizzy, ye loon! for wham we hae been a’ mournin, moanin, this mony a year, an’ for wham yer auld mither has been down an’ deein this mony a day. But a sicht o’ the lassie ’ll do her health mair guid than twenty doctors, an’ twal pund o’ drugs, I trow.” So saying, he seized the slender girl in his arms, and ran with her to the sick-room of his wife, calling out as he went—“It’s Lizzy, woman—get up guidwife—it’s Lizzy, our ain lost Lizzy, woman—come back, like an angel, to lure ye into life again!”

The old man never stopped till he had deposited his gentle burden upon the same bed with his “better half;” and Mrs Mackenzie, whose attention was aroused by her husband’s boisterous demonstrations of joy, raised herself up upon her arm, and, extending her hand to the orphan, exclaimed—

“O Lizzy, Lizzy, woman, can ye forgie me? Tell me that ye forgie me, that I may either live or dee in peace!”

“Forgie ye!” said the orphan, grasping her hand, and sobbing as she spoke. “I hae muckle to be gratefu for, but naething to forgie. Ye was aye kind to me, mistress; an’ I could live wi’ ye, or dee for ye!” She bowed her head, and wept, when the old man exclaimed—

“Ay, that’s a guid bairn! we’ll be a’ richt noo, Lizzy; but we’ve done nae guid since ye left us, lassie.” At this moment Henry put the letter which he had received from Elizabeth into his father’s hand. He immediately broke it open; and, to his great astonishment, it contained twenty pounds, with the following words

“DEAR SIR,—Accept of this small trifle, from one who must live and die in your debt, but who shall never cease to pray for your welfare.”

“That’s most extraordinary,” said Mackenzie, the tears starting into his rough eyes at this new instance of disinterested generosity. “The lassie’s a perfect angel, I declare! but, dear me, Lizzy,” (turning to the girl,) “was ye gaun to rin awa frae’s, ye wild catty! an’ never tell’s the guid ye’d done us? Ye’re i’ the gled’s claws noo though, lass; and ye shanna get awa again, as lang’s auld Harry can prevent ye.”

The reader must already have imagined the motives which induced Elizabeth Finlay to abandon the house of her early protector, and seek an asylum among strangers. Her gentle nature could not bear the idea of returning coldness for kindness to one whom she so deeply loved; and to encourage a passion which his mother and her mistress had forbidden, she conceived to be both criminal and ungrateful. Under this impression, she set out at midnight for Edinburgh, where she thought that employment was at all times to be obtained. She had seen Henry upon the road; and, influenced by the same motives which occasioned her flight, she concealed herself behind a hedge till he passed. She reached the Scottish metropolis, but could not procure a mistress; and she was half-famished to death in the streets, when Mary Mackenzie found her, and exerted herself in her behalf. She obtained a situation in the family of a country gentleman, then in town; and in that situation she continued till her master returned to his estate in the neighbourhood of Wayside, where we last left her in the cottage of the Mackenzies. Her presence operated as a charm upon the ruined farmer and his family. Mrs Mackenzie regained her health

Henry recovered his spirits; and the old man again displayed all the innocent jocularly of his happiest years: nor was this all—at the first term after her return to the country, she left her place, bearing along with her the esteem and affection of her master and mistress, and became the happy wife of a happy husband.

The twenty pounds which Elizabeth had saved of her wages, added to his own accumulations, and a small sum contributed by his sister, enabled Henry to feu a piece of ground, and erect a cottage large enough to accommodate his father, mother, and sister, with a room for his wife and himself; and there they lived harmoniously, contentedly, and independently. But we must shift the picture.

Christian Graham, who now lived with her husband in the same village, and still possessed the same spirit of vindictive vanity which had made her writhe at sight of the silk gown of Miss Betty Gowery, and instigated her to plot against the happiness of Elizabeth, again began to fume and fret at the increasing prosperity of a once defeated rival. To behold the poor orphan, whom she once had the power of driving forth like a homeless wanderer into the world, inhabiting a house of her own from which no one could dislodge her, while she herself was only a tenant, and liable to be ejected at the first term, occasioned a severe pang to the proud heart of Christian Graham.

By this time the gallant butler, in his new capacity, had become what is commonly called a henpecked man. His spirit, which had always been more volatile than manly, soon broke down before the domestic domination of his wife; and whatever she willed, he patiently endeavoured to execute, without ever considering whether the command was reasonable or otherwise. Now, Mrs Rib had solemnly sworn that Lizzy Finlay should never triumph over her, though she had gotten a broken farmer's son—as she contemptuously called Mr Mackenzie—for her husband; and, in order to elevate herself to the level of one who really had no rivalry in her disposition, she resolved also to become the lady of a house. She had no money to expend upon its erection; but this was no great obstacle in the way of her wishes; others had borrowed—why not she? Jamie was accordingly dispatched to negotiate a loan with an individual who was supposed to be possessed of a few spare hundreds; and he was so far successful as to obtain a promise of the sum necessary for the prosecution of his wife's plan, on condition that the lender should receive the charter by which he held his possession, with a stipulated interest for the money advanced upon it. This agreement was quite satisfactory to Mrs Rib; for it promised her the gratification of being nominally the lady of a house; and, though interest and feu-duty would have made her considerably poorer every year than if she had only been a tenant, yet that sum was nothing in her estimation when weighed against the pleasure of being as lady-like as Lizzy Finlay.

Under these circumstances, the foundation stone of the proposed building was laid; and Jamie, for the purpose of forwarding the work, became himself a barrowman or mason's labourer; while his wife, for the purpose of saving money, became a most rigid economist—so much so, indeed, that Jamie frequently came home to an empty platter at dinner time, and went away again with an empty stomach. The result of all this poor living and hard labour was soon visible upon his person; for, as the house increased, he was diminished in size; and by the time that the humble structure was completed, the intended laird had almost melted away into an immaterial essence. Mrs Rib, however, lost none of her bodily substance by the building speculation in which she had engaged; on the contrary, every day which added a course to the walls, increased her rotundity, and added importance to her person. She frequently visited the work, dressed in her best gown, and

gave directions to the workmen, in such a style of authoritative dignity as quite surprised the masters of the "mystic word and grip," who usually remarked to her husband at her departure, "that he was blest wi' a through-gaun wife." Jamie only shook his head, with a look which seemed to say, "I hae my ain thochts, lads; but I wish ye had a while o' the blessin'!"

The house was at length completed, and Mrs Rib looked as *lady-like* as if it had actually been her own. She supposed herself exalted to a higher sphere; and considered her former associates as vulgar wretches, whose company would degrade the *lady of a house*. Her vanity was now full-blown; but, alas! it was soon to be blasted. Poor Jamie, worn out by want and exertion, sank at last into the arms of death, which seemed to be even more desirable than those of his wife, to whose desperate desire for grandeur he had become an untimely victim.

Mrs Rib now found herself deeply in debt, with two daughters to support; and long and bitterly did she lament over the lifeless remains of the poor man, whom she had so long and bitterly tormented, neglected, and despised. But her tears were neither the tears of affection nor repentance. They were the liquid fire-drops of disappointed ambition, which relieved not her burning breast, though they scorched her blood-shot eyes as they flowed. Her neighbours, forgetful of her former arrogance, came to condole with her in her distress; but she repelled them with haughty indifference. Her children clung to her for comfort, but she spurned them away with unnatural harshness. Every one who approached her, was either treated with coldness or scorn, as her madness happened to be active or sullen, and she was soon deserted by all. Her deceased husband's creditor sold the house which his money had erected. The term was approaching, and she knew not where to lay her head. Her children were pining with hunger; and, when they asked bread, she answered them with a blow. The bond of affection was broken; and, instead of pouring out their complaints upon their mother's breast, they shrunk from her very look, as if her eyes had been scorpions. She had lived upon flattery, and fixed her heart and her hopes upon earthly grandeur; and, when these illusions vanished, her reason, which had nothing to rest upon, began to falter, and frenzy seized her in her misery. Destruction became the predominating passion of her soul; and the few articles of furniture which remained in the house, were thrown on the fire or dashed to pieces against the walls. Her children fled for their lives; and when they returned, the destroyer had destroyed herself. Their mother was suspended from a bedpost; she was dead!—but no tear fell upon the lifeless remains of the unhallowed Victim of Vanity! Her poor orphans felt her death as a relief rather than a bereavement; for to them she had acted the part of a tormentor rather than that of a mother. She lived without affection and died without sympathy; for cruelty and misery had seared the hearts and alienated the love of those whom nature would have prompted to wipe away the tears of her widowhood, to watch her expiring breath, and to weep above her lowly grave.

Such was the end of Christian Graham; and we feel confident that every benevolent mind will gladly abandon the abode of the suicide, to take one parting peep at the comfortable cottage and placid countenance of her humble rival, Elizabeth Finlay. On entering this little dwelling of contented poverty and peace, every stranger received a courteous welcome; and none failed to observe the quiet cordiality and kindness which prevailed among all its inmates. If the hour was evening, a venerable old man was seen seated at one side of the fire, and a playful little boy jumping up and down upon his knee, and buttoning and unbuttoning his vest. Opposite to him, upon the other

side, sat his aged partner, dressing a doll, or smoothing the flaxen locks of a lovely girl, who occasionally looked up into her face, and lisped out some infantine request in the attentive ear of her affectionate *granny*. Before the fire sat a young man, reading aloud for the benefit of the family, and two young women, busily employed with their "needles and their shears," constructing new clothes for the children, or making the old ones "look amaisht as weel's the new."

In such order sat the happy occupants of this humble dwelling, when a well-dressed stranger unceremoniously entered, and seated himself by the side of Mary Mackenzie.

"I am informed," said he, after a pause, "that there is one inhabitant of this house in some degree related to Richard Finlay. Pray, have you heard anything about *him* of late?"

"My brother!" exclaimed Elizabeth, excited by the recollection of his name.

"My"—repeated Mary—but her lips closed upon the unfinished sentence, and a blush crimsoned her cheeks, as she strove to conceal her confusion by turning aside her face.

"Pray, what is Richard to *thee*, fair maiden?" said the stranger, with a smile of arch intelligence gathering around his mouth.

"He is my—my"—

"He is her brother-in-law, sir," said Elizabeth, who was glad to be able to relieve her sister's embarrassment.

"Na, na," said the old man by the fire, in answer to the first question of the stranger, "we hae heard naething o' Richie, pur fallow, since he gaed awa wi' the sodger loons; but, if ye can gie us ony information anent him, we needna tell you how glad we wad be to hear it."

"All the information that I can give you," said the stranger, "is, that Richard has acquired a small bit of an estate in America; and, as he is desirous of procuring an heir, he has come home in search of a wife. He divided a ring with a young girl in Edinburgh before he left his native land: here is his half of it; and I am authorized to say that he will be twal' pennies Scots in the debt of any one who will produce the other half."

"Pray shew me the ring," said Mary Mackenzie, the blush deepening on her fair face as she spoke. After examining it carefully for a few minutes, she plunged her hand into her bosom, and, apparently unconscious of the presence of any one but herself, pulled out the remaining fragment, and applied it to that which she held in her hand.

"'Tis the identical ring, love!" exclaimed the stranger, as he clasped her to his breast; "and by that token I know that the heart of Mary Mackenzie has been as true as the heart of him who now holds her in a lover's blessed embrace."

We need not inform our readers that the stranger was Richard Finlay—nor yet will they require to be told, that the woman who had loved him from his earliest years, and who had given him her heart when he had nothing but a heart to give in return, felt not her affections grow colder, when to all the qualifications which had rendered him the object of her early attachment, he added the possession of a pretty extensive estate, which had been acquired by merit and improved by industry; and which, when disposed of, produced a sum sufficient to elevate Mary Mackenzie and all her connections to a situation in society greatly superior to that which they had occupied in their most prosperous years.

But, as it may be interesting to some readers to know the means by which a poor orphan boy—enlisted as a private soldier—succeeded in acquiring the fortune which he now possessed, we shall conclude this narrative with a brief sketch of his career.

After receiving the usual training, Richard was de-

spatched, along with some other recruits, to join his regiment, which was then engaged in the first American war. He never inquired into the justness of the quarrel in which he was destined to act a part; and, though he sometimes heard the wise ones of his company deprecating the policy which obliged them to fight against the liberties of their fellow-men, he considered fidelity one of the noblest virtues of a soldier, and he determined to perform his duty to the utmost of his ability. After being engaged in a number of skirmishes, in which he distinguished himself as far as his private station would admit of, an opportunity occurred which enabled him at once to exhibit the fearlessness and the faithfulness of his disposition.

A part of the American army had fled before a detachment of the British till they had led their unwary pursuers into one of those perplexing positions where fight and flight are equally disadvantageous and difficult; and here the artful Republicans suddenly faced about, and welcomed their advancing enemies with a deafening shout of defiance. The British had been too often engaged in a similar game to be taken by surprise; and they halted and formed with all that coolness and regularity which veteran soldiers will ever exhibit in the greatest emergency. The American riflemen commenced the attack by a deadly discharge on the British lines, who returned the discharge with equal ardour, though with less fatal effect. Their numbers were nearly the same; and the strife was maintained by both parties with the greatest enthusiasm; for the men on the one side were animated by the idea that they were fighting in the cause of liberty; and, on the other, the recollection of former triumphs stimulated to heroic exertion. But the Americans—who fought under the protection of a wood, while their enemies were exposed on the open field—rightly judged that the British could not long maintain their ground; and a strong body was dispatched through the forest, with instructions to intercept their retreat; and, if possible, to make the whole party prisoners. The officer to whom the command of this body was intrusted was, fortunately for the honour of his country, singular in his desire for destruction; and, instead of obeying the order of his superior, when he came to a position parallel with the British lines, he opened a most deadly fire on their flank. A party of light infantry was immediately dispatched to dislodge these enfiladers; and Richard Finlay was one of the number. The undertaking was a desperate one; and it turned out both sanguinary and unsuccessful. The little company was so exhausted and thinned in the advance, that, when they came to the charge, their feeble onset made but little impression on the vigorous front of their enemies; and, though the American line was penetrated in some places, where it chanced to be opposed to men of uncommon power, the breaches were soon filled up, and the assailants compelled to retire. Richard Finlay was taken prisoner; but, regardless of the bullets which whistled around him like hailstones, he dashed off in the direction of his own regiment, and never halted till he drew up beneath the banner of his country. This instance of heroism and fidelity attracted the notice of the commanding officer; and, by his influence, at the conclusion of the war, Richard obtained a grant of a considerable extent of the most fertile land in Canada.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE PALANTINES.*

OF all the countless numbers that take their pleasure walks upon the Calton Hill of Edinburgh, none that do not remember it an isolated spot of awkward access can have any recollection of Sergeant Square's tall and gaunt figure, his cue, cocked hat, gaiters, and military appearance, as he took his daily promenade around the airy and delightful walks, or sat upon its highest point, where Nelson's Monument now stands, in stately solitude, as if he had been the genius of the hill, resting his square and bony chin on the top of his gold-headed cane, with his immense hands serving as a cushion between. Thus would he sit for hours, gazing on the busy scene beneath, as if he knew what occupied the bustling crowds, and directed their labours according to the impulse of his will. We had passed and repassed each other in our walks for weeks before any approach to recognition took place between us. I was the first to make an advance, by giving him a slight bow as we passed; this he returned, and an acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy. Under his stiff and formal air, I found one of the most kind and communicative hearts I ever communed with. It is long since I laid his head in the grave; and I never visit the hill, but memory conjures up his remarkable figure as vividly as if we stood face to face, till I almost think I may meet him at each turn, while I saunter along, lost in musing on days that are gone. I may meet with new piles of stone and mortar profaning the sacred spot; but, Sergeant Square I shall never meet there again! But to proceed. It was on that day the 42d regiment marched into Edinburgh, after their return from Egypt, that we were enjoying our usual walk. It was a spirit-stirring time, and our talk was of war and the gallant exploits of our countrymen. His eye flashed; his gold-headed cane rested on his shoulder as if it had been a musket; his walk became a march; he was evidently thinking of the battles he had been in; when, embracing the opportunity, I requested a short account of his adventures. It was some time before he took any notice of my request, so completely was his mind absorbed in his own recollections. We had reached the north-east angle of the hill before he spoke. At length he seated himself on the smooth green turf—I by his side; and, after a pause—

"If you have the patience to listen to me," he said, "I do not care if I do give you some account of what I have seen, suffered, and enjoyed in this strange world."

"It is of small importance," he began, "where a man was born, or who was his father—his own actions must bring him fame or shame. The first sounds that ever attracted my particular attention, were those of the music bells of old St Giles', and the firing of the guns in Edinburgh Castle. I had reached my twelfth year, when my

father, who was a Jacobite, joined the Highland army at Duddingstone, while Prince Charles was in Holyrood House and I never saw him again. My mother, who was weakly at the time, and our circumstances very poor—for my father was only a day-labourer—took it so much to heart that she survived only a few months, and I was thrown destitute upon my own resources, which, God knows, were scant enough. I was tall and stout for my age, and roughed it out, ragged, hungry, and cold, about the city, for three years and some months—running messages, or doing any little thing I could get to do for a piece of bread or a mouthful of victuals; and choosing the warmest stair, or any other convenient place, for a bed-room. Rough as this training was, I was far from being unhappy; for I had my enjoyments, humble as they were—as yet innocent, and as keenly relished as if they had been those of luxury. These few years of hardships were soon to be of eminent service to me—perhaps the means of saving my life.

It was the spring of the year. The winter had been very severe, and I was rejoicing in the thought of summer, which, for the poor, has fewer wants and less of suffering. Loitering, as usual, upon the High Street, hungry enough, and looking for some little job to earn a breakfast, I was accosted by a rough-looking man, rather genteelly dressed, who inquired if I would carry a parcel for him to Leith, and he would give me a sixpence. My heart bounding with joy at the rich reward, I said I would. Whereupon he inquired if my parents would not be angry at my going, or my master, if I had one. I told him I had neither parent nor master, not even a friend in the world to find fault with how I spent my time. A grim smile of satisfaction came over his countenance; he put the offered sixpence again into his pocket, and gave me a small paper parcel, with the direction where I was to carry it; adding, as I stood waiting for my reward—'Run quick, like a good boy. Tell them to give you some breakfast, and wait until I come and give you the sixpence.' Away I ran, like a greyhound from the slip, to get a breakfast and earn my sixpence. Swift as was my flight, never did the Canongate or the Easter-Road—the only one to Leith from Edinburgh at this time—appear so long to me. When I arrived at the house to which I had been directed, in one of the dark alleys near the shore, I was ushered into a small, darkened room. A stout, thick-set man, in a seaman's dress, heard my message, received my parcel, without once opening his lips, and locked the door.

Hungry, disappointed, and alarmed at this unlooked for reception, I stood for some time lost in amazement. At length I looked around; there was no furniture in the room, not even so much as a seat of any kind. My fears became excessive. I screamed to be set at liberty, and beat upon the door with my hands and feet, until I sank upon the floor from fatigue, and burst out into a fit of weeping. No answer was made, nor any notice taken of my efforts. I looked through my tears at the window but it was high, small, and strongly secured with iron stanchels. I had lain thus on the floor for an hour or two, when I heard the key turn in the lock. I sprang to my feet as the door opened; and the same person entered, bearing a pewter tankard of beer, some bread, and salt

* Palantine—a name given by the Americans and seamen to kidnapped individuals, or those who went out voluntarily to be indentured for a time agreed upon with any person in America who would pay the sum of money required by the captain for their passage out. The famous Williamson, who first invented the penny-post and directories, obtained damages from the magistrates of Aberdeen for suppressing his narrative, in which he exposed them for this traffic.

beef. A thick stick under his arm caught my eye, and excited new terrors. He set the victuals upon the floor, and then, brandishing the bludgeon over my head, threatened to beat my brains out if I made such a noise again—giving, in pure cruelty and wantonness of power, a few blows across the shoulders, to teach me, as he said, what I might expect if I did not attend to his orders. Pointing to the food, he surlily ordered me to eat, and immediately again locked the door. Hungry as I had been a short time before, my heart was too full for me to eat; and the blows I had received pained me very much. I sat down and wept more bitterly than I had done; but the hunger of a boy is keener than his grief—so I at length made a hearty meal, moistened by my tears, and wept myself asleep.

How long I had lain thus I had no means of ascertaining. I was roused by the voice of mirth and singing in another apartment. All was dark; so much so, I could not even distinguish the small grated window from the dead walls. I listened for some time in surprise, and would fain have persuaded myself I had been in an unpleasant dream; but my shoulders were still sore, and the small basket and tankard, I felt, were still at my side. For some time I revolved in my mind what step to take—whether to remain quiet, or knock upon the door, and implore my liberty—at least to be made acquainted with the cause of my being detained. At length my suspense became so unbearable that I resolved to brave every danger, and began to knock at the door, for which I had groped, tapping gently at first, and gradually knocking louder and louder. The voice of my jailor, evidently in extreme anger, again sounded fearfully through the key-hole—‘Be quiet, or I will come in and beat your noisy body to a mummy.’ I shrunk from the door, and leaned upon the wall as far from him as the small dimensions of the room would admit, trembling, in fearful expectation of his entrance. While I stood thus a prey to the keenest anguish, the mirth and jollity for a time increased, and at length grew fainter and fainter, until it ceased. All was still for a little; then I heard the noise of footsteps approaching the door of my prison-room, and a sound as if something was in the act of being dragged along the passage. The key was placed in the door, and it opened. My heart beat as if it would have burst my bosom, when I saw the ruffian who had locked me up, and another like himself, dragging what appeared to me to be the dead body of a man. I uttered a suppressed scream, and must have fallen to the ground, had I not been pent up in the corner. My eyes were as if they would have started from their sockets, and I could not withdraw them from the horrid sight. One of the men held a lanthorn in his left hand, which threw a feeble light upon the group; while, with his right hand, he grasped the left arm of the body; and, his companion exerting all his strength, they dragged it to the side of the room, and dropped it upon the floor. A stifled groan issued from it, which thrilled through my ears like an order for my execution; and I would have darted from the spot, wild with despair, although I saw the eyes of both watching me as they deposited the body with a malignant grin of satisfaction; but my limbs refused to obey my will, and I stood the image of despair. The men spoke not a word, but, retiring, locked the door upon me, and left me with a thing my nature revolted from. Scarce were they gone when similar sounds fell upon my ear, and they again entered with a second victim. This was more than I could endure: a wild energy came over me; I sank upon my knees, and implored them not to murder me, or leave me alone with the bodies, for mercy’s sake! I sank upon the floor, and grasped their legs in the fervency of my supplications. With a fiendish laugh they spurned me from them; and, as they locked the door, growled—

‘What does the fool mean?—beware the cudgel!’

As the sound of the closing and locking of the door died away, I was roused from my stupor of fear to an agony of terror, that drove me almost to madness. A movement in one of the bodies, accompanied by deep guttural sounds, indicated that the objects of my terror were coming to life again, or were not yet quite dead. This produced new terrors, and I dashed myself upon the door, uttering the most piercing cries. The ruffians again entered, and beat me without mercy; but I was now beyond the fear of personal suffering, and I really believe, so intense was my feeling of fear and horror, that I would have leaped into a furnace, to avoid or free myself from my situation. Their threats and blows were vain. I reiterated my cries more intensely, for I saw both the bodies become apparently animated, and turn their dull stupid gaze on me, as I struggled to wrench myself from the grasp of the ruffians. Our struggle was short, for one of them set down the lanthorn, forced down my arms behind me, and held me fast, while the other dropped the cudgel with which he had been beating me, and, taking a piece of rope-yarn from his jacket pocket, bound my wrists behind my back; he then deliberately took the large key out of the lock of the door, placed it in my mouth, across between my teeth, tied it firm behind my head, and so effectively gagged me, that I could not utter a sound. How I retained my reason at this fearful period I know not, for I expected death every moment; and there was a misty vagueness about my fate, that had even greater terror than death itself. As soon as I was thus silenced, they stood grinning at my agony for a minute, before either spoke. At length—

‘This is a troublesome customer enough, for noise part, said the first ruffian to the other; ‘but he will now be quiet enough, I think. I wish the boat were come, or we shall have plenty on our hands soon, when these two have slept it off. It is full tide now, and they were to have been here an hour ere flow. What can detain the lubbers, think you?’

‘Can’t say,’ replied the other; ‘perhaps something is in their way. There they are.’

At this moment a low whistle sounded faintly into the room, as if coming from under the window. One of the men answered by a similar whistle, and both left the room; and, in a few minutes, four sailors entered, and, taking up one of the objects of my dread, carried it out. One of the ruffians then assisted me to rise, and, holding me by the collar, dragged me out of the house after them down to the Ferry-boat Stairs at the quay, more dead than alive. The four seamen had placed their burden in a boat that lay there. I was placed beside it. It lay inanimate; and I, seated on one of the thwarts, was guarded by two seamen, who kept watch, while the four were away for the other victim. At length they came, deposited their burden beside the other, pushed off from the pier, and rowed out of the harbour’s mouth. As they pulled along, I felt my spirits revive, the fear of immediate death passed from my mind; and, besides, I was in company with living beings like myself however cruel they might be. Before we reached the beacon, the ruffian who had first locked me up, and who was now in the boat with us, loosened the key from my mouth, and untied the cord from my hands, which had begun to swell, from the tight manner in which they were tied. This act almost relieved me of my fears; still all was silence in the boat, not a word had as yet been spoken by any one; but afterwards, as we gained distance from the shore, they began to converse.

‘So the Betsy sails to-morrow without fail,’ said the first ruffian.

‘She does,’ was the answer of the seaman.

‘Why has her stay been so short, this trip?’ again asked the man. ‘We will make but a poor job of it. We have only nabbed five.’

'Why, I think you have done pretty well,' answered the sailor; 'twenty-five pounds for two days' work is good pay. Old Satan, you are never content.'

'None of your slack, mate,' rejoined the other; 'I won't stand it. Two days more would have made it fifty or better; and no man more than I would be content with one half of what he might and ought to have.'

'I believe we are full, old Grumbler,' said the tar; 'others are more active than you; but here we are just alongside of the Betsy. Ship, ahoy! Throw us a rope! Are you all asleep?'

In a few minutes, a rope was thrown; it was made fast by the fore thwarts, when the ruffian and mate went on board, and remained for some time. At length the mate returned, and, holding the end of the rope from the vessel, ordered me to ascend, which I did with difficulty. My two companions were then hoisted on board, being fastened to a rope, and dragged up by the crew of the vessel. As soon as they were on deck, the ruffians descended into a boat without speaking a word, and put off for the harbour.

When it was gone, I was conducted to the hold of the vessel; and the two companions of my adventure were carried, and placed beside me. My terror of them had now entirely fled; for, from their contortions and half-muttered expressions, I had perceived they were not dead, but in a beastly state of intoxication. Even to be from under the same roof with the cause of my sufferings was to me a change much for the better. With a mind comparatively at ease, I fell asleep upon the hard deck, where I had at first taken my station, and remained in happy unconsciousness until I was awake after sunrise, in consequence of the bustle and noise around me. For a few minutes I revolved the events of the preceding day and night in my mind, and shuddered as the recollection dawned upon me. Raising myself upon my elbow, I gazed around as well as the obscurity would permit, (for the main hatch was closed,) and saw the two young men who had caused me so much alarm, lying close beside me, in a profound sleep, and breathing very heavily. I attempted to rise; but felt so sick and giddy that I could not keep my feet, from the motion of the vessel. I longed for the presence of some of the crew; but none of them came near us. The two lads at length awoke from their sleep, bewildered and sick almost to death; they gazed around them with a vacant stare, as if they had just passed into a new state of existence. They spoke not a word; their minds were occupied in examining all around them, and, as I thought, ascertaining their own identity. Young as I was, had I been at ease, I could have enjoyed the extraordinary scene before me; but, alas! I was a partaker of all the feelings that were passing in their minds. At length they broke silence—

'Willie, Willie, what's come ower us now?' cried Peter.

'Indeed I do not know, Peter,' replied he; 'but I fear it is no good.'

'What good can be expected from such company as we were in last night?' continued the first, 'and such drinking as we had. O Willie, had you come away when I wanted—but I am as bad as you, or I wad have left you when I threatened.'

'There is no use to reflect upon what is done, when it cannot be undone,' said his friend. 'I fear the deceitful scoundrels drugged our liquor; for I have no recollection of anything that occurred after your proposing to leave them.'

Then, addressing me, he asked if I knew where they were, or in what ship. I answered that I did not, further than that, from what I had seen and heard, I thought we were on board of a vessel they called the Betsy; and then gave them an account of all I had witnessed the evening before. The younger of the two began to weep like a

child; while the other, whose rage knew no bounds, swore fearfully at the two ruffians who had betrayed them into their present situation. When he became more calm, I requested him to explain himself; and learned from him his own history and that of his companion. They were schoolfellows, cousins, and fellow-apprentices; had served their time as joiners; and then left their native village, to pursue their calling in the capital, with some views, though not matured, of emigrating to America. Having been unsuccessful in obtaining work in the city, they had come down to Leith to make inquiries about a passage to America; and were so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of one of the notorious plantation-crimps, who, pretending to be intimate with the captain of a vessel about to sail for America, enticed them to his den, that they might obtain all the information they required. They were plied with liquor; robbed of all the money they had; and placed in the situation in which I now saw them. From the inquiries they had made in Leith, and our mutual explanations, it was too evident to us all three that we had been kidnapped and sold to a palantine vessel, to be carried out to Virginia, and there sold as slaves to the highest bidder. The young men were inconsolable; as for me, I cared little about it, now that I was assured there was no immediate personal violence to be feared: hard fare and hard living were my lot—I knew no other. While others bred to better things were in misery, I was comparatively in happiness. Such is the influence of habit. To have my provisions regularly served, with nothing to do but lie upon the floor of the hold, or walk about in its narrow limits, was to me sufficient recompense for an evil which to others would have appeared irremediable.

The next tide after we were put on board, the Betsy left Leith Roads, and sailed for Aberdeen, on her progress north. Our number was there augmented to eighteen—the recruits being all boys about my own age, who, not being kidnapped, but trepanned with false promises, came on board in great spirits, and full of hope. I could notice the various operations going forward, in consequence of my cheerful and contented manner having obtained for me permission to come on deck and range over the vessel. My slight sickness went off as soon as we were under way; and, pleased with my new mode of life, I began to make myself as useful to the crew as I could; but the two lads were not so fortunate; for they were continually abusing the captain, or importuning him to put them on shore. In the forenoon of the day before we sailed from Aberdeen, a boat, containing a quantity of luggage, came alongside, and a genteelly-dressed couple came on board, and were ushered into the cabin. The female appeared very dejected; and, hanging upon the male with anxious fondness expressed through her silent tears, bent her gaze, alternately looking towards the shore with an expression of regret, and then in his face with a languid smile. He was as well-made and good-looking a man as I have ever seen in all my wanderings; but there was a marble-like rigidity in his features, only enlivened by a peculiar cast of his piercing black eyes, that created a peculiar feeling of uneasiness in me as I looked at him. He left the vessel; but when I know not; for we sailed before sunset; and I never again saw the female he left until we had passed Cape Wrath, some few days after. As for myself, I was quite happy, and felt myself more at home than I had done since my mother's death. The ship was a home to me. I had my allowance with the other palantines; slept in the hold with them at night; and enjoyed, along with many of them, the pleasure of building castles in the air—anticipations of the wealth and comforts we were to enjoy in the land of promise. It was, indeed, by delusive accounts of America, that most of them had been induced to embark.

We were now careering over the blue waves of the vast Atlantic, as if we were far above the earth. Nothing was there for the weary eye to rest upon but a dreary expanse of ocean and sky. All was still as death, save the hissing at the bows of the vessel, as she parted the unfathomable deep. The crew loitered upon the decks listlessly; and we, as palantines, huddled together around the mainmast, were whiling away the time in songs, or talking of the homes we had left behind, and future hopes in a foreign land. We were suddenly interrupted by the female I have already mentioned, who came rushing up the companion, from the cabin, and crouched amongst us like a frightened hare. I could not have believed that so short a period of time could have wrought so great a change upon a human being. She was thin, pale; her eyes red, and sunk in her head; her hair dishevelled; and her whole appearance exhibiting the extreme of neglect. We all looked upon her in astonishment; for, indeed, we were not aware that there was a female on board. Her sobs and distracted looks moved our young hearts almost to tears. She spoke nothing; fear had chained up her tongue; her eyes were either bent imploringly upon us, or turned, in aversion and terror, towards the quarter from whence she had come. All on deck was dumb show; the sailors looked on, apparently as much surprised as we were; and, in the midst of the silent scene, the captain came on deck, apparently in great agitation. He was coming towards us, when the female sank on her knees, and, raising her clasped hands, called on God to save her from that bad man; then, looking around to us, implored us, in the most thrilling accents, not to deliver her up to him. We were ourselves slaves; yet, such is the force of a woman's appeal, that we placed ourselves between her and him, while the crew stood apart, and looked silently on. The captain affected to laugh.

'Lady, what are you afraid of, that you have left the cabin?' he said. 'It was all in jest, upon my honour! You are as safe there as in your father's house. Come, madam, I shall have the pleasure to lead you back.'

'Oh, never!' screamed the female. 'Leave me! leave me! if you would not drive me mad, or into this boundless ocean! What on earth have I now to care for? I know I am your slave, by the basest and cruellest means; but worse I shall never be. A favour from your hands would be hateful to me. With these, my fellow-sufferers, I can alone feel myself secure from insult. Your cabin I shall never enter. Foolish—oh, how foolishly confiding I have been!—but criminal I shall never be. So, leave me, for mercy's sake!'

While she spoke, my eyes were fixed upon him. I saw the working of passion deeply depicted on his countenance; pity had no place there. A faint shade of shame passed over him; but disappointment settled into fierce rage. Stamping upon the deck, and in a voice hoarse from emotion—

'It is well, madam,' he cried. 'You have made your choice, and shall abide by it; and those who, by their looks, indicate their resolution to abet your folly, shall not fare the better for their interference. Mate, call the crew! force the Palantines below; and batten them down as base mutineers.'

Not one of us had as yet spoken one word; the whole was the affair of a few minutes. The mate ordered us below; and we were obeying the order as fast as we could—the distressed female huddling in the midst of us, fearful to be on the deck alone—when William, in his undaunted manner, stepped up to the captain, and began to upbraid him, both for his conduct in having kidnapped us, and for his present conduct towards an unprotected female. He even threatened him with exposure as soon as we reached the shores of America. Peter, his friend, in vain urged him

to refrain from irritating the captain; but the hot-headed youth heeded not the advice, and stood by his point, till the captain, who uttered not one word, bit his lip, and, hurrying to his cabin, returned with a cocked pistol in each hand. The mate, who was a good-hearted kind of lad, was, at the moment, persuading William to go below quietly; but his blood was up; and, even at sight of the pistols, he quailed not. I looked on with fear; for the captain's stern silence looked ominous. He levelled one of the pistols, and fired; the ball passed close by his intended victim, and went right through the foresail. The second he was in the act of raising, when William struck his hand down, and it went off, sending the ball through the deck. The furious man now called to the mate and crew to place poor William in irons. The youth stood still resolute, and would have rushed upon the captain and hurled him to the deck, or perhaps overboard, (for he was a powerful lad,) had not Peter held him back. The irons were now produced from the cabin—William and the captain eyeing each other meanwhile like two tigers; and three of the crew and the mate, set on by the captain, who kept blaspheming in a fearful manner, rushed to secure the young man. Peter at once loosed his hold of William, and stood in his defence; whereupon the captain, starting to give personal aid, uttered a shrill cry of pain, and fell upon the deck, which was stained with his blood. The ball had passed through his foot before it entered the wood. As many of us as the hatchway would admit, witnessed the scene; but none of us had any mind to be partakers in it. William and Peter were secured and put in irons before the vindictive villain would allow himself to be removed from the deck. It was no matter, in his anger, that his foot bled. He even stood, while the deck was streaming, till we were also battened down into the dark hold—the two companions remaining in irons above. As soon as we were all settled below, in which there was not even proper accommodation for us poor palantines, the female retired to one corner; and, seating herself on the bare boards, leaned her head to the side of the vessel, and wept bitterly. We were deeply affected by her situation and distress; but had nothing in our power whereby to alleviate her sorrow, save, indeed, our sympathy; and that we only gave in secret; for her ladylike appearance, in a great measure, overawed us, and made us retire from her. The greater part of us composed ourselves to sleep. Before morning, it blew a dreadful gale, as we could perceive by the pitching of the vessel and the noise of the rigging, which sounded fearfully in our ears. All of us became very sick. The poor lady I thought would have died: her weakness was extreme; and her suffering apparently beyond any present remedy. Two days and nights we remained in this dreadful situation, without a mouthful of food or a drop of water. Our sufferings increased hourly, and were almost more than we could endure. We shouted for help, or to be liberated from our noisome prison. Our cries were either unheeded or drowned by the noise and tumult of the storm. I and a few more had recovered from the sickness only to feel in greater horror our painful situation. The heat of the hold was intense, and aggravated our thirst tenfold. The air even became offensive; our breathing a kind of painful spasm of the windpipe. We crept to the foot of the ladder under the main hatch; and, holding by it, sucked in some fresh air. I had been here for some time, and felt my sufferings alleviated; and the poor female's situation in the distant corner, selfish as we had all become, moved us so much to pity, that two of us agreed to relinquish our envied post, to ascertain whether she still survived.

We found her extended upon the hard boards, to all appearance dead; I placed my hand upon her heart, to ascertain if life was extinct. She opened her eyes, and

made a motion with her hand as if she wished me to retire. Humanity forbade compliance; and, in the best manner we could, we conveyed her to the foot of the ladder, where she gradually began to recover and breathe more freely. This was now the third day of our confinement. The storm had almost subsided, as we could feel from the vessel lying more steady in the water; and, to our unspeakable joy, the hatch was opened, and a supply of water and biscuit given to us. Next to the water, the pure air of heaven was most welcome to us. I wet the parched lips of the pale sufferer, then held the beverage to them. She swallowed a few mouthfuls, blessed me for my kindness, then sank into her usual melancholy. We were now told by the mate that we were not to come on deck; but he would leave the hatch open. We obeyed this command, which came from the captain. William and Peter, who had witnessed and endured the whole storm in irons, lashed at the foot of the mainmast to a ring bolt, were also liberated, and came down amongst us. We learned from them that we had been in great danger, and that the mate and crew had been alarmed for the safety of the vessel. The captain was still unable to leave his cabin; and, from all accounts, he was very bad of the wound. This was so far fortunate; for the mate, who was of a humane disposition, brought some coffee for the female, which William, with great difficulty, prevailed upon her to take. She gradually began to recover; and the more passionate bursts of her grief having subsided, we were anxious to learn how she had been reduced to her present situation, and thought of making a delicate inquiry into her history. At length the frank and generous William put the question to her in the most gentle manner; a burst of tears followed the request.

‘Much as it will pain me,’ she said, ‘I am so indebted to you all for your kindness and humanity, that I cannot refuse your desire. I almost feel it a duty to myself; for appearances are strongly against me. So low as I must appear at present to you all, I was born in affluence, though not of an ancient family. My father was a wealthy merchant, and the best of parents. My sainted mother died before I had reached my tenth year, leaving us both inconsolable for her loss. My father, who could scarce endure to have me out of his sight—for I was an only child—engaged a governess to complete my education. She was a young woman of engaging manners and possessed of every accomplishment; yet under these she concealed a selfish disposition and hardness of heart, which neither my father nor myself suspected could have existed in one so young and bland in her speech. To me she was most kind and unremitting in her duties—more, indeed, like a mother than a hireling; and I loved her as if she had stood in that relation to me. This won my father’s esteem for her, which, unfortunately, soon ripened into love. One day, I recollect, as I was walking in the garden accompanied by him, he led me to an arbour, and, placing me beside him, said—

‘Eliza, do you love Marian?’

I artlessly threw my arms around his neck, and, exclaiming—

‘Oh, yes, papa; how much I thank you for getting me so good a governess!’

I had pleased him; for he smiled and said—

‘My dear Eliza, I mean to bind her to you by a stronger tie. I have watched her maternal care and affection for you, and mean to give her the right to call you daughter.’

I was delighted. The marriage was solemnised, and we lived in harmony and mutual love, so far as I could perceive, for six years. At this period my father fell into a bad state of health, which threatened to terminate fatally. Our attentions to him, unremitting and anxious, were repaid by a gratitude and love which seemed equally divided

between his young wife and the child of his first love. Marian shewed no jealousy; and my heart was incapable of any feelings but those of affection. Meanwhile, my dear parent, to prepare for the worst, settled his affairs. We were both in the room with him along with the lawyer. He was dissolved in tears, and asked us if we were satisfied with the manner in which he dictated the disposal of his wealth. I could only answer by my sobs. My grief was excessive. The making of a will, to my young and inexperienced mind, had all the appearance of the last act of a living person. Death soon closed the scene. By the settlement, it was provided that we were to be treated as sisters, only a greater share of power (as if she had been the elder sister) was given to his wife. It ran thus:—If neither married, we were to live together, and the survivor was to enjoy and have the disposal of all. If Marian married, she was, during her life, to enjoy one-half, which was to revert to me or my children at her death. If I married during her life without her consent, I was to be cut off from any part of my father’s property except what she might choose to give me. This was a hard condition. I was to have no claim at law; and, in the event of me or my husband instituting an action, I was to be cut off with a shilling. This fatal clause, which I heard read to me at the time with indifference, has been the cause of all my misfortunes, and since then I have had every reason to believe my confiding father was prompted to insert it at the suggestion of my artful stepmother. For some time, she had, at every opportunity, been speaking of foolish marriages made by young women, and their fatal consequences, illustrating them by numerous anecdotes and examples, whereby she invidiously prepared him for her selfish purpose, and at last compassed her object without the appearance of a dictation which he would have spurned. I was thus left at the mercy of this designing woman, who, when she put on her widow’s robes, put off her hypocrisy towards me, and began to appear in her true colours. Alas! I have every reason to think that her acting had all along been irksome to her. She became harsh and cruel, doing all she could to make the house and her presence disagreeable to me. She became gay, and frequented company, of which I was forced to partake; and when I could scarce refrain from tears at the remembrance of some cutting speech she had used to me only a few hours before, I was forced to smile to hide my chagrin. Before strangers, there was no change towards me, neither was there anything I could complain of to my acquaintance; for so artfully did she manage to make me miserable, that every fault was imputable to my own apparent bad temper. It was when alone that I experienced her bitter manner. All was wrong I said or did, and her admonitions for my amendment were more cutting than her reproofs and abuse. I had several eligible offers for my hand; all of which she refused, under one pretence or another—covering her designs against me by the mask of an anxiety for my happiness; so that she was looked upon by all who were acquainted with her as the best of stepmothers—the kindest protector of youth. At length, her wishes were accomplished. A nephew of her own, by her invitation, came to reside with us for a short time, upon a visit. As if my good genius warned me of my fate, I disliked him so much at first, that I felt unhappy in his presence; but his assiduities gradually won upon me. I contrasted him with his aunt; love succeeded to aversion; and I was ruined.

Here a burst of tears for a time choked her utterance. After some time, she resumed—

‘I was now, for a time, happy in the delirium of youthful love. His tender attentions had completely won my heart. With a thrill of pleasure, covered by maiden modesty, I heard his first declaration of unalterable love

for me. He saw too plainly the power he had over me. His aunt refused, as usual, her consent to our union; and, after upbraiding me for seducing the affections of her nephew, locked me up in my room while she retained him in the house. Stolen interviews were the natural consequence. He was all indignation at his aunt for her unkindness to me; and, if possible, more tender and respectful than ever. To escape the tyranny I had so long suffered, I unfortunately agreed to elope with him, and be privately married. I explained to him the situation in which I was placed by my father's will—he declared he loved me for myself alone. I was now completely in the toils; gave my consent; on the third night, left my late father's house in his company, and set off in a postchaise, which was drawn up at a short distance from the gate. Next forenoon, we were lawfully married—his aunt taking no steps to prevent it by following us, but contenting herself by putting on the appearance of grief, for my folly and ingratitude to her, for all the care and attention she had bestowed upon my education, and the base return I had made to all her kindness. Can there be a doubt she was the cause of all? Nay—she was the first to make known to me the prior history of my husband—the man whom she had first introduced to me, and to whom she gave every facility to win my unsuspecting heart. She herself now blushed not to say that he was a reprobate, without principle, addicted to every vice, and one whom his friends had found it out of their power to reclaim. With well-feigned tears of regret, she upbraided herself for having ever allowed him to enter her house—ascribing her motive to humanity, and a desire to reclaim him from his errors; and hinting, when she could, that I had defeated her good intentions, and ruined myself. Alas! how true the latter part has proved to me! I and my husband wrote to her letter after letter in vain. She refused, in the most insulting manner, to allow me a shilling of my father's fortune. All I obtained was my own personal effects, and a few of the jewels that had belonged to my mother. Poverty came fast upon us, and debts increased. My husband had become unkind, and often absent from me for days—excusing himself by fears for his creditors. In our extremity, he spoke of emigration to America, describing the country in glowing colours, and dwelling on the happy prospects he anticipated from the assistance of some relations he had there. I offered no objection; for I had now no partiality for one country more than another—where my husband was, there was my heart and home; and, with a severe pang, not for their value, but for the sake of her who now was unconscious of my situation, I parted with the last of my mother's jewels, to defray the expense of our voyage. My own jewels had been long since disposed of, to supply our urgent wants. We left Edinburgh, like guilty creatures, under the cloud of night, for fear of his being arrested, and proceeded to join the vessel at Aberdeen. I can proceed no further, lest my heart should burst. My heartless husband had sold me to the captain, to be disposed of in America—trepanned me north for his wicked purpose. The rest you know.

Here her tears could no longer be suppressed; nor could we restrain ours; yet no one spoke to interrupt her grief. William alone uttered a few execrations against the aunt and nephew.

The weather continued rough, and the wind contrary, and we suffered much for a few days from the pitching of the vessel. We were still confined to the hold by the captain's orders; yet we had no other cause of complaint, for the mate supplied all our wants in abundance. The captain, who had continued very ill from the wound in his foot, at length fevered, and his life was in danger; at his request, the lady left the hold and waited upon him. He begged forgiveness for the insult he had offered her; we were all

allowed the freedom of the vessel; and she continued to nurse and watch over him with all that care and assiduity that belong to women. After a tedious passage of nine weeks, we arrived off Baltimore, in the State of Maryland; the captain, who recovered, being still very lame, though able to come upon deck. As soon as we cast anchor off the mouth of the harbour, (for we did not enter,) a message was sent to the town by the captain; and, on the following day, a regular market was held upon our deck, when we were put up to sale, and knocked down by an auctioneer to the highest bidder. William and Peter brought large sums, being expert tradesmen, and their time of service was short compared with the others. Those like myself were fit only for field work, and our time, to make up the sum of forty pounds, which we averaged, was three years. We all thought the captain would have given the injured lady her liberty, and a present, for her care of him; but avarice was his ruling passion, and stifled gratitude. He had paid her unprincipled husband a large sum for his victim, and was determined to reimburse himself. All the favour he conferred upon her was, that he did not dispose of her with the same regardlessness as to who was the purchaser, but kept her on board several days, while he made inquiries as to an eligible situation. Those who knew him gave him little credit for his endeavours, and did not scruple to say that he was as anxious to drive a good bargain for himself as to find a good master for her. Whatever was his motive, it turned out very fortunate for her, as I heard afterwards; for a rich shipowner of the city, whose wife had died a few months before, satisfied the captain's cupidity, and took her to his house as a governess to his children, three of whom were daughters. Before I left Maryland, I heard that she had learned, through the English papers, which her master regularly got by one or other of the many vessels that traded to this port, that her unprincipled husband had been condemned and executed for robbing his aunt of a large sum of money, and forging an order upon her banker, not many weeks after we had left Scotland. Many years afterwards, I learned, in Edinburgh, from William, who had returned, after a long stay in Baltimore, with a considerable sum of money, and had commenced builder, that, before he left the city, she had married her master, and was as wealthy and happy as any lady in the province. But what struck me most forcibly was, the just retribution that had taken place in her singular fortunes. Her stepmother was, when he left, actually living in a humble dependant upon her bounty, in Baltimore. It appeared that, after she had succeeded in forcing her stepdaughter into the fatal marriage with her nephew, and obtained the object she plotted for—possession of the whole property—she herself fell a victim to a husband nearly as bad—a gambler and adventurer, of a most prepossessing figure and address: the consequence was, that all she possessed was lost by him, at play or squandered in dissipation. Both had been living in London in extreme want, when he was detected in swindling transactions to a considerable amount. Whether guilty or innocent of the fraudulent acts of her husband, there were many suspicious circumstances which she could not explain to the satisfaction of a jury, and both were convicted and banished to the plantations. By good fortune for them, the vessel that brought them out, bound for Norfolk in Virginia, had suffered much in a storm, put into Baltimore in a leaky state, and there landed the convicts, handing them over to the governor of Maryland. Eliza's husband, who was in the magistracy of the city, got the list of their names when they were transferred from the ship to the prison. Several of them had died on the voyage, from bad fare, confinement, and harsh treatment; mostly all were sickly more or less; and Marian was very ill. From her manners and appearance, Eliza's husband became interested in her; and, to save her life, had her removed

from the hospital in the jail, to his own house. You may form your own conjectures of the astonishment of both, when they met. Eliza was the most forgiving and gentle of creatures, as she had shewn in her attention to the captain after his bad usage of her; and, at her request, her husband got from the governor a grant of their services during the term the law had condemned them to serve. The husband ran from the country a few months after his arrival, and had not been heard of when William came away; but the wife remained under the protection of her she had attempted to ruin.

To return to myself after this long digression, I and other two of the young Aberdeen lads were purchased by a farmer, and removed that afternoon to his home, about twelve miles from Baltimore. A more pitiable figure, as regards dress, never landed on any shore. I had still the same remnant of clothes with which I had left Edinburgh; but now they scarcely held together, and were besmeared with tar; my feet and legs were clean, but shoes or stockings were a luxury I had been long unused to. My long yellow hair hung down my back, but covering I had none for my head. My heart was light and joyous, as was that of my companions. Our three years of bondage, we thought, would soon pass away, and the golden period commence. During our ride over the rough and ill-made road, in a waggon in which our master had brought a load of tobacco to town, our whole conversation was of our future golden prospects; but, alas! we were soon awakened from our pleasant dreams—for, upon our arrival at the farm, which was not until some time after nightfall, we were placed in a dark out-house, and the door barred upon us. Our master was a sour-looking, taciturn man, who had scarcely spoken to us all the way, save to inquire our ages, and what kind of work we could best perform. For some time we stood close by the door, unable to speak from surprise and fear. So dark was the place where we were confined, that we could not see our own hands, even when they touched our faces. After standing thus, melancholy and terrified, the bars were withdrawn, and our master entered with a lanthorn and a basket, in which was abundance of pork and Indian corn, boiled whole, and still warm, to be eaten as bread. In a surly manner, he ordered us to take our supper quickly, that we might be ready to turn out in the morning to work. Young and hungry, we were not long in dispatching our meal, when, pointing to a quantity of dry grass at one end of our prison, (for I can call it by no other name,) he lifted his lanthorn, and left us to ruminate upon our melancholy situation and dreary prospects under such a taskmaster. None of us felt inclined to speak; yet it was some time ere any of us could close our eyes, in consequence of the noise made by the bull-frogs in a swamp near the farm. If we had not heard them as we approached the place, and inquired what caused the to us strange sounds, we would have been terribly alarmed. Tired nature at length prevailed, and I sank asleep. Before sunrise next morning, the harsh voice of our master, whip in hand, roused us from repose. We started up and followed him into the enclosure in front of his barn and house.

This was an oblong square, enclosed with stout wooden paling, very thickly set, on the banks of a beautiful stream. At one side were the buildings, composed entirely of wood—the forest, which extended as far as the eye could reach, was at no great distance in the rear—everything around indicated the greatest plenty of all that was necessary for the enjoyment of life, as far as food could administer to it; there were several cows and horses, sleek and fat, feeding under a shed; brood sows with numerous progenies; and fowls actually swarming around. The morning was beautiful; the air, filled with a thousand grateful odours from the fields, imparting to our young minds a buoyancy we had been strangers to since we had left our own native shores.

Our hasty survey was made in a few minutes, while we stood waiting further orders. Our master, who had entered another part of the building, returned, accompanied by two of the most miserable-looking men I had ever seen—as wretchedly clad as I was myself, with the exception that they had broad straw hats upon their heads. Misery and they seemed to have been long intimates; my heart sank within me at their appearance; both had wooden clogs, consisting of a cut of about a foot long from the branch of a tree, chained to their right leg at the ankle; and this they carried over their arm. In addition, one of them had a stout collar round his neck, from which projected three iron hooks, about a foot from his head. We burst into tears, thinking we were to be similarly equipped, and would have fled, had flight been possible; all the riches in the world we would have counted a mean reward to the person who would have transported us from the tyrant's farmyard to the beautiful hills and valleys of Scotland. As they came to where we stood gazing through our tears, three tall, bony, sallow-looking lads, sons of the proprietor, issued from the principal building, with implements upon their shoulders, one of which was given to each of us, and we were now to begin our work. Before we proceeded, our master said to us, in his harsh manner—

‘Mind ye, lads, you are my bound servants for three years, to do my will—mayhap for more. If you offer to run away, I will catch you again; and, besides punishment, dress you so—and he pointed with malicious triumph to his victims—to prevent your running; and, mark me, for every day you are absent you serve me two.’

In spite of his threat, I believe there was not one of us who did not resolve to make his escape from him the first opportunity. Had he treated us kindly, we would have obeyed him with pleasure, nor thought of anything but completing our period of service; but humanity was foreign to his nature, and short-sighted avarice alone possessed all his thoughts. He had himself been a convict in his youth; but had for many years been free, and had purchased, when it was yet part of the forest, the lot of land he now cultivated. All had been the creation of his own labour, and he was proud of it to excess. When in good humour, which was seldom the case, his feats against, and escapes from the Indians, and praises of his lands, were the only things upon which he was loquacious.

We soon learned that our two companions in misery were government convicts, and very bad characters; both had been guilty of many crimes, and were so hardened that nothing but the strictest surveillance and coercion could keep them in subjection. They were like tigers in chains, and threatened the most fearful revenge as soon as the period of their servitude expired. This they did openly to his face; and not a day passed without an altercation, or without some punishment being inflicted upon them, when they would threaten again until they were tired, and wish that the Indians might give us a hot wakening before morning, and yield them an opportunity of making tobacco pouches of the scalps of the master and his sons.

I often wondered how he kept his temper; he seemed to treat them with scorn—for his cool, calculating mind had so long been familiar with the perils of his situation, that he heeded them not so long as he conceived himself secure. To us three youths, who trembled at his voice, he was not excessively cruel, further than working us almost beyond our strength. From sunrise to sunset, we were allowed no intervals but a few minutes to swallow our food, of which we had abundance and to spare.

‘Eat well, work well,’ he used to say, ‘is American fashion.’

I had been with him about six months, and was literally naked; my skin had become hard and brown as an Indian's; all my clothing consisted of some pieces of sheep

skin I had contrived for winter wear, and a straw hat of course enough manufacture, which I had plated and made for myself on the Sabbath days, to screen me from the intolerable glare and heat of the sun. Our appearance gave us no concern, for we were completely excluded from all intercourse with human beings, except those upon the plantation; and strangers were seldom seen in our neighbourhood. At the time I speak of, our master had been down to Baltimore, with a waggon load of produce, consisting of pork and salted beef, &c. He had made an excellent market, and returned in a fit of good-humour; at our return from labour, he called us three into the house, as we were passing to our prison, to be locked up for the night. We were surprised at the invitation, for we had never been within the walls of the dwelling-house. As soon as we entered, he inquired if we would purchase any clothing from him, seeing we were so much in want of them. Scarcely could we believe our ears and eyes, when, opening a box, he displayed canvas jackets, trousers, and check shirts."

'You surely mean to make sport with us,' said I; for you know well that we have not one farthing amongst us three to purchase the smallest necessary.'

'That I guess is not of much matter,' he replied, in his quiet, husky manner, 'if I choose to give you a long credit.'

We at once agreed to his own terms, and I signed a bond for one hundred dollars for a pair of coarse canvass trousers, a jacket of the same, two check shirts, and a good straw hat. My heart misgave me when I saw his peculiar smile, as he placed my bond in his pocket-book. Pleased as I was with my finery, I feared I had done wrong, but did not know to what extent until next morning, when we joined the convicts at labour. As soon as they saw us in our new dresses, they burst into a loud laugh.

'Oh!' said they, 'has the old villain limed his birds already? Poor greenhorns, you have sold yourselves for years to come. How are you to redeem the debts you have incurred, and others you must yet incur, but by new engagements? He has you in his toils.' And they again laughed aloud.

We resumed our labour with heavy hearts; despondency came upon us, and we began to droop and pine. At night, when we retired to rest, we, until overpowered by fatigue and sleep, talked of nothing but plans of escape. Numbers were formed and abandoned: to fly to the forests, we must perish through hunger and fatigue, or wander on, unknowing where to go; in the direction of the coast, was still more impracticable, for all the planters were in league with each other, to prevent the escape of the convicts and palantines, and no one could travel unmolested, without a certificate of his freedom. Our situation appeared to us truly without remedy, and bitterly did we lament our cruel fate.

Fortunately for us, we had—more to have something to keep a lingering hope of escape awake, than with any prospect of success—for several Sundays employed ourselves in undermining a part of the clay floor under the dried grass upon which we slept. The hole passed under the logs; and we had ascertained that it would be opened behind a wild vine that spread its luxuriance over a great part of the side and roof of our prison. We did not open it at the outside, but contented ourselves by pushing a thin piece of a branch through, lest we had been discovered by the lynx eyes of our master and his sons. For weeks, things had remained in this state, we resolving to run for it; and again our hearts failing us, when one night we were aroused out of our sleep by fearful cries, mixed with the firing of rifles. It was the war-whoop of the Indians, who had come down on a plundering expedition, and to avenge some old aggression our master had perpetrated upon them. So well had they concerted their plans, that the house was surrounded before any one knew of their being in the neighbourhood. We lay still and trembled, nor knew what

was passing without. Rifle after rifle cracked amidst the whooping of the Indians; no one came, to release us from our confined place, and we were afraid to venture out by our hole, lest we had been perceived by the savages, and murdered; for we had been informed that, in a case like the present, they gave no quarter, to man, woman, or child. At length, we could both smell and hear the crackling of fire raging without. In agony we dashed upon the door; it resisted our utmost effort; even death by the Indians, was preferable to death by fire in our present situation—it was horrible and astounding—the noise, too, was dreadful—animals and men, all the inmates of the enclosure, were uttering their wildest cries, and rushing round it in distraction. The fire had caught the place we were in. I entered our mine, and, by convulsive efforts, forced off the little turf and earth we had left. I crawled out, never rising from my belly, for I could perceive the Indians like fiends running about in all directions, anxiously gazing upon every object. The glare of the burning buildings cast a deep red ray of light around, rendering all fearfully distinct—my companions followed me—fortunately some tall bushes concealed us from the Indians as we crawled along the ground like serpents. The building we had left we saw was now burning most furiously; and the yelling continued. Thus we lay along upon the ground, trembling lest we would be discovered every moment. The Indians were passing and repassing where we lay, with their piercing eyes bent upon the smouldering ruins. The roof fell in, and no one appearing to issue out, they retired towards the dwelling-house, where the fire of rifles was still kept up, and the fire making fearful progress. I have been in several battles, both by sea and land; but no sound ever met my ears so appalling as the shout that arose when the unfortunate inmates burst forth to force their way through their foes, or sell their lives as dearly as they could. The firing almost immediately ceased, and a fearful stillness ensued, almost as unbearable in our present situation as the former tumult. The ruins still continued to smoulder, and we feared even to breathe, lest we should betray ourselves to the Indians.

At length the sun shone forth in all his glory upon the smoking ruins—our drooping spirits were partly revived, and we crept to the edge of the bushes, and timidly looked around—no human being was to be seen, and, after some time, we ventured to rise to our feet. The Indians appeared to have retired to the forest with their booty, and we ventured forth. A sight the most appalling soon met our eyes—there, close by each other, the old man and two of his sons lay mangled and scalped; the other had been consumed in the house, having doubtless been shot from without, and unable to leave it with the others. Soon the nearest proprietors began to ride up to the scene of murder and desolation, armed to the teeth, but too late to give any assistance. The bodies of the two convicts were not found; many believed they had either gone off or been carried off by the Indians. Being heartily sick of America, I returned to Baltimore, where I did labouring work for a few months, until I had got myself well clothed; then agreed with the captain of a Greenock vessel to work my passage to Scotland, where I arrived after an absence of two years and three months. Such is an instance of the nefarious system of which I was a victim."



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE MUTINY AT SEA.

"COME, Old Dick, carry on more sail, my boy; we've many a long mile to travel over afore we gets to our anchorage; and it's well on to eight bells, I daresay."

"I can't carry on any longer, Jem, with this game leg of mine; I b'lieve I must heave to for a while, and leave you to continny your perry-grinashun in solly-toode."

"Avast heaving with that fine lingo of your'n; it puts a plain-sailing man's pipe out; it's as bad as double Dutch coiled against the sun. It warn't for nothen they gev you the name of Old Dick; for blow me if Old Nick himself could understand you, when once you begins to tip us dix'nary."

Such was the conversation that greeted my ears, as I was walking, one fine summer evening, behind a hedge which skirted the Edinburgh road. The voice of one of the speakers struck me as being familiar to me, and the name of "Old Dick" recalled to my remembrance an old shipmate of my own. I hastened to a gate which opened on the road, and, on looking through, found that my conjecture had been a correct one. The speakers were two sailors, evidently lately landed, for their blue jackets were fresh from the slop shop, and the lustre of their well *black-balled* tarpaulin hats had not yet been dimmed by exposure to wind and weather. One of them was in the prime of life, tall, handsome, and active; the other an elderly man, with an old-womanish kind of face, expressive of nothing but solemn stupidity; his mahogany complexion, and iron grey hair, told of a lifetime's exposure to sun and storm. In the latter I immediately recognised my old shipmate, whose peculiarities I am almost afraid to present to the reader, as they were of such a unique cast, that, in chronicling them, I may be suspected of drawing largely upon my imagination; but I draw, in this instance, from the life, not even using the privilege allowed to all painters, to give a little heightened colouring to produce additional effect.

"A fine evening, sir," said the younger of the two travellers, touching his hat, as he approached me, and receiving an appropriate reply. The other seemed too much absorbed in the study of a small tattered book he had just pulled out of his jacket pocket, to take any notice of me; but at last he raised his eyes, and, as he hobbled towards me, said—

"The salutation of the wesper evening to you, sir. The horb of day has sunk, and the nocturnal luminairy will soon heave in sight."

"Well done, Old Dick!" replied I. "That speech was worthy of you—still polishing the King's English, and murdering Johnson—eh?" The old man stared at me; and his countenance brightened with as much animation as it was capable of expressing, as he slowly drawled out—"Why, bless me! if my hidears aint in a position of conglomeration, my organs of vision present before me the form of Mr Sebright."

"The same, old fellow. But come, drop the dictionary, and speak plain English. What brings you here?"

"Why, your Honour, the want of better hoccypashun. You may well ask what has hinduced a senile son of Nep-

tune to follow in the wake—no, that's not the word—track—aye, that's it—of a juvenile youngster like Jem. But the old proverb says—'Old fools is the worst of fools.'"

Old Dick had been a quartermaster in my last ship, and had acquired that cognomen by a habit of always carrying about with him a small edition of Johnson's Dictionary, in the study of which he used to employ his every leisure moment, not for the purpose of improving himself in orthography—for which he evinced the most sovereign contempt, even in the most simple words—but for that of exercising his memory in the acquisition of a stock of the most inflated and sonorous words he could find. Great was his ingenuity in substituting the most *jaw-breaking* and high-sounding terms for the more common and inelegant, but plain-spoken language of his messmates; and his application of them was often ludicrous in the extreme. I will give one or two instances of the ridiculous results of his dictionary mania. Instead of using, when in a passion with any of his shipmates, the common and blackguard epithet which, for the benefit of ears polite, I will translate "son of a female dog," he substituted, "offspring of a canine quadruped;" and, instead of a still more injurious term of reproach, which I will not mention in plain English, he adopted, "you spurious progeny of a meretricious female." Dick was a clever man of letters in his own estimation, whatever he might be in that of others; but he was clever in nothing else; a regular "hard bargain," harmless and useless: he could stand at the "con" to be sure, in fine weather, and cry "very well thise,"* and "no higher," and was a tolerable hand at cleaning the binnacle lamps, polishing brass-work, and so on; but he was hardly "worth his salt" as an efficient seaman. He had no enemies, however, though his shipmates enjoyed many a hearty laugh at his peculiarities; and his age and infirmity disarmed animosity. His beloved dictionary was his inseparable companion; his watch below was employed in poring over its well-thumbed leaves, and, in his watch on deck, he availed himself of every opportunity of astonishing his hearers with his euphony.—After a long rigmarole of excruciatingly fine words, the repetition of which I will spare the reader, I found that Dick and his younger companion were on their way to the neighbouring town of H—, where lived a young damsel who was the pole-star of Jem Halliday's affections, and whom he expected, he said, "to bring-to-under his lee, and to anchor with his prize in the harbour of matrimony." I told the travellers that night was closing in, that they were still many miles from their destination, and had better take up their quarters for the night in my house, where I could promise them a good glass of grog, and a comfortable bed. Young Halliday was eager to push on; but Old Dick seconded my proposal in the following terms, consulting his pocket friend at every pause in his speech, to brush up his recollection.

"My *ITCHING* limbs demands repose, Jem; I cannot (dictionary) accelerate my collective mass with such velocity as you; I will except Mr Sebright's benevolent offer, and slumber beneath his hospital roof. You can, if your mind prepond'rates otherways, pursue your honard* course."

* "This." So pronounced for "thus."

† Onward.

"What! and leave such an old water-logged hulk as you astern afore the cruise is out? No, blow me if I do! Why, you old devil's limb, you're as helpless as a sucking baby. What 'ud you do if your dry nurse was to leave you?"

"Don't vituperate me, you juvenile progeny of a marine dresser of wittles.* If your inclination inclines you to move on, proceed solytarly—I will remain."

"Then so I will, old jaw-breaker; and thank you, sir, for your kind offer."

Before I introduce the reader into my house, I must take the liberty of letting him a little into the private history of its owner—not because I am particularly fond of talking of myself, but because it is necessary to do so as an introduction to the tale I am about to narrate. I am the second son of a man of large fortune in a part of Scotland which shall be nameless; and, like many others who have had the misfortune to come into the world a year or two too late for their own future comfort, was destined to buffet my way through life as well as I could, as a sailor; while my elder brother, by virtue of his prudence in making his appearance earlier, and of his claims as heir-apparent, was brought up as the gentleman of the family, and condemned to lead a life of ease and idleness. I had no objection to this arrangement, for I was naturally of a restless disposition; and, if the choice of a profession had been left to myself, should, most probably, have anticipated my father's wishes. My brother, Charles, was a fine, liberal, warm-hearted fellow; and the ties of relationship between us were strengthened by warm attachment and sincere friendship. During my intervals of "liberty on shore," we were inseparable companions; he used to delight in listening to my marvellous yarns about seas mountains high—the shark that was large enough to swallow a marine with his muskets shouldered, and nothing of the mouthful visible but the point of the bayonet, sticking, like a toothpick, between his teeth—(this *was* rather a large mouthful to swallow!)—of whales, and waterspouts, and flying fish, and flying Dutchmen; and, in return for his patience and good-humour in listening to and laughing at my romances, I felt an equal pleasure in initiating him into the mysteries of rowing, sailing, swimming, &c., for which our periodical residence on the sea-coast afforded ample opportunity. He envied me my life of freedom and adventure. I must stop for a moment—that word freedom reminds me of the poor fellows who had been seized by a press-gang, and were all kept huddled together as prisoners in the tender, keeping up their spirits by singing, "Come cheer up, my lads," &c., and roaring in chorus, "Who so *free* as the sons of the waves!" By your pardon, reader. Yes, he envied me—he, the heir of wealth and rank, envied me, the poor, but light-hearted sailor; and he was right, for I was happier then, when I had nothing but my own exertions to trust to, than I have ever been since. My father was a man of violent passions, purse-proud, despotic, and overbearing; and I was but too happy to escape from his control; and I pitied the slavery in which my high-spirited brother was held; for my father was capricious even in his kindness. I had been some years at sea, when Charles formed an attachment to a young person of great beauty and accomplishments; but not a good match for him in the eyes of the world, for she was poor. Her name was Elliot—Marion Elliot. Her father and ours had been schoolfellows; but, in all the competitions of boyhood, Elliot always bore away the bell; and, whenever they met in after life, their plans and undertakings always seemed to jostle in some extraordinary way, as if the world was not wide enough for them both. This apparent rivalry so bitterly excited my father's proud, irritable, jealous disposition, that he nourished a feeling of deeply-rooted dislike—I might almost

* Alias, "son of a sea cook."

say hatred—of the man who, he imagined, seemed to delight in thwarting and annoying him. Elliot, however, little deserved such animosity. He was a man of most benevolent dispositions, and sincerely regretted that circumstances had occasioned such estrangement between him and one with whom he was anxious to be on friendly terms. He endeavoured, for some time, to conciliate my father; but, finding that his advances rather increased than diminished his groundless prejudice, he gave up the vain attempt, and became as a stranger to him. We were both aware, in our youth, of our father's aversion to the elder Elliot; but, as we often met the juniors of this family on the beach, which was not visible from our house, and as the boys were active and obliging, and Marion, their sister, gentle and amiable, we did not share in our father's feelings; but, on the contrary, with the ardour of childhood, mutually vowed everlasting friendship—a friendship rendered doubly romantic by the kind of mystery and caution we were obliged to exercise, for fear of offending my father, in our stolen interviews. During our annual summer visits to the coast, our intercourse was continued with unabated ardour, and further intimacy only served to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Thus years glided on—boyhood ripened into maturity—and Marion, the pretty playmate of our childhood, was now a graceful and lovely young woman, when Charles was one day summoned into the presence of his father, who had just returned home after a fortnight's absence. When the first salutations of meeting were over, my father remarked that it was time for Charles to be looking out for a partner for life; that he was sure, from the secluded life he had been leading, that he could not have made a choice for himself; and that he therefore had chosen for him, in the person of an amiable and accomplished girl, the daughter of a landed proprietor in a neighbouring county; and he ended by laying his *commands* upon him, to endeavour to make himself agreeable to the lady, whose father was already eager to forward the match. Poor Charles felt that he was on dangerous ground; he endeavoured to put off the evil day, saying there was no necessity for such precipitation—that he did not wish to change his condition for some years, and that he hoped his father would not press the matter at present.

"These are paltry and evasive excuses, Charles," said my father, passionately. "There is some other reason for your backwardness, which you are afraid to own."

"Afraid, sir!" replied my brother, firing up in his turn; "I would not be *your* son were I afraid of any man breathing."

"Then, why don't you speak out, sir? Why resort to idle excuses?"

"Well, sir, if you insist upon my speaking what you will be sorry to hear, the fault is not mine. I cannot comply with your wishes, or rather commands; my affections are otherwise engaged."

"Whew!" whistled my father, with a stare of astonishment, while the dark flush of passion shaded his brow. "And you have dared to—Pray, sir," continued he, in a taunting, sneering, sarcastic tone, "who may the object of your *affections* be?—if your father may be so bold as to ask. Some purple-checked, bare-legged, splay-footed dairymaid—eh?"

"No, sir, a lady far my superior in everything but fortune—one whom any lover might be proud of, and any father-in-law be happy to acknowledge."

"A very prettily-turned speech, indeed! And pray will your lovership condescend to be guilty of such profanity as to whisper the name of your divinity?"

"I need not *whisper* it," replied my brother, boldly; "it is one well-known to you already. It is Marion Elliot."

"Marion Elliot!" almost screamed my father, nearly

choking with passion. "The daughter of *that* man! Hear me, Charles!" continued he, stretching out his hand warningly—his voice suddenly changing to a low, stern, distinct tone, scarcely louder than a whisper at first, but gradually increasing, as he proceeded, to a loud burst of indignation—"Hear me!—listen to your father! I have loved you; watched over you; cherished you as the apple of my eye;—but promise to think no more of that woman; tear her from your heart; avoid her and him as you would the plague-spot; or"—and his voice again sank—"I will shut you from my house and heart; make your brother my heir; and turn you out, a penniless beggar, upon the world! Make your choice at once, young sir!"

"It is already made, sir," replied my brother, deliberately; while his cheek paled, and his lip quivered with agitation. "I will save you the trouble of *turning* me out. Farewell, sir!" And from that day my unfortunate brother has never been heard of.

All these details I heard afterwards. I was at sea at the time. When I returned to my native shores, I found a letter from my father waiting my arrival, in which he informed me of my brother's disobedience, and desired me to hasten home immediately, to learn the particulars. He told me there was no longer any necessity for my prosecuting my profession; for that my brother, by his wilful contempt for his wishes, had forfeited his birthright; and I must now consider myself heir to the family estates. I immediately obtained leave of absence, and hastened homewards, surprised and distressed by the communication I had received. Soon after my arrival, I heard all the particulars of the quarrel, and was distressed to find that no attempts had been made to ascertain the fate of my brother. My father's mortified pride had smothered every better feeling of his nature, and he seemed to be as indifferent to the consequences of his severity as if poor Charles had never had any claims upon his affection.

"And can it be possible, sir," said I, "that you have made no endeavour to find my brother?"

"He has chosen his lot," replied he, bitterly; "let him enjoy it as he best can. I beg his name may be no more mentioned."

"Impossible!" replied I, firmly. "Though you, sir, may stifle the feelings of nature, I cannot forget that he is my brother; and I will not consent to remain one day longer under this roof, unless I am satisfied that every effort will be made to discover Charles's retreat."

"So, so, young man," sneered my father; "you wish to be a beggar, too, do you? Beware how you excite my anger!"

"Father!" replied I, "you have driven from you one of your sons—it depends upon yourself whether you are left childless in your old age. My mind is made up; you may turn me out of your doors, if you think proper, as you have done my poor brother;—I shall always retain a son's affection towards you:—you cannot make me a beggar; my profession renders me independent; your estates may pass into the hands of strangers; but I will not consent to be considered as your heir, while a doubt remains as to my brother's fate."

My father was at first in a towering passion, and ordered me to leave the room immediately; and some hours passed before he again sent for me.

"Well, young sir," said he, "have you thought over what I said to you?"

"Yes, sir; and I adhere to my former resolution."

My father seemed to be staggered by my firmness. He walked up and down the room with an agitated air; and, at last, stopping opposite me, said—

"And so, sir, you are still determined to brave me?"

"Not to brave you, my dear father, but to endeavour to induce you to do what you will be glad of hereafter.

What will be the reflections of your declining years, if my brother should perish without a father's hand having been stretched out to save him? Dearest father, let your natural kindly feelings have their play, and do not sacrifice your peace of mind to your resentment?"

My father turned away, apparently softened by my appeal.

"Edward," said he, "you are right. I have been too hasty. I give you my word that no effort shall be spared to find your brother."

It was agreed between us, at last, that I should continue in my profession for four years longer; and if, at the end of that period, no news should have been obtained of my brother, I was to settle at home, and to take the management of my father's estates. Five years had elapsed, and my brother's fate was still uncertain. I was now in possession of my paternal property—my father having died about a year before. And now, kind reader, I have finished this long introduction of myself, which was absolutely necessary to prepare you for what is to follow, as we are perfectly strangers to each other, even by name. It is of little consequence to me, if you think me egotistical; if my story pleases you, you may think what you please of the writer.

The scene must now shift to a small room in my house, which was dignified by the name of a study, although I am ashamed to say it was seldom used in the manner *that* name implies. To this "sanctum" my blue-jacket friends were ushered, after a long sederunt with my house-keeper, to whose hospitable care I had specially recommended them. After a due quantity of nautical apologies, they were, at last, comfortably, or rather uncomfortably seated; for they evidently felt very much out of their latitude at first. I was, however, too old a sailor myself not to be acquainted with one infallible remedy for bashfulness in a brother tar; and an application to the bell-rope soon brought up that—the very sight of which inspired them with confidence, and gave an additional twinkle to their eyes.

"Your health, sir," said Jem Hamilton, as he sipped, or rather, I should say, judging by quantity, *shipped* his grog.

But such a commonplace salutation would not satisfy my old shipmate, Dick. Drawing his hand down over his grey locks, he took a sly peep at old "Johnson," and, in his usual drawling tone, began:—

"I wish your Honour saluberty and prosperity; and may you never want a suffishunshy of spiritooal likker to render your friends f'licitus!"

"Thank ye, Dick!—you deserve a good glass of grog after such a speech as that; but I long to hear your adventures. Which of you is the best hand at spinning a yarn?"

"Why, your Honour," said Halliday, laughing; "if so be as you wants a reg'lar sailor's log of our cruise, I'm your man to run the line off the reel, smooth as a well-greased marlinspike; but, if you're larned in what the long-shore chaps calls the hunknawn tongues, Old Dick's the boy for you, for he'd puzzle a Filly-delfy lawyer with what he calls his "well-rounded sintinces." I can clap a "rounding" on a cable myself, but rounding a sintince is beyond me. I b'live if the old gentleman himself, what made all them words in that dixnary, heard Old Dick, he wouldn't know his own children."

"And what do *you* know about it, you hignorant disciple?" said old Dick, sharply; "'tisn't all men as are bless'd alike with larning. When I speaks to a juvenile like you, it's for your hedicashun—hedeyefickashun, I mean—and if you does'nt hunderstand me, 't ill beseems you to wag your hunruly member at me."

"Well, well, old boy," said Hamilton, "take a sure turn with that till I pipes belay. Half your jabber is like the

wind to me—I hears a noise, but I doesn't know what its all about.

“But, after all this 'ere palaver, your Honour,” continued Hamilton, addressing me, “blowed if I think we've either on us got a decent yarn to tell. However, I'll overhaul the log of our last voyage for you; for it's too late to talk of old days, when I was but a boy, and Dick, for all he sits so quiet there, was a different guess sort of man from what he is now; though he always had that confounded knack of bothering our ears with that outlandish lingo of his'n. We sailed in a merchant brig, bound for the Cape o' Good Hope; Old Dick here, seeing he could 'shoot the sun,* and work a traverse, was mate and dry nurse to the captain, a slip of a youngster, son of the owner, and who was no more of a seaman than my old grandmother; to be sure, he knew how to box the compass, and to handle a quadrant; but as for handling a ship—a cow could handle a musket as well. There was as fine a set of fellows on board for a crew as ever I see'd, though I says it as shouldn't; for, 'cept Old Dick here, and the second mate, there wasn't a man of us above thirty years of age. The chief mate is sitting before you now, and, I'm no afeer'd to say it to his face, as good-hearted an old fellow as ever liv'd; though the best of his days has gone by, there's good stuff in him yet; but there wasn't devil enough in him, as it turned out, to match the devil he was under. The second mate, Dickson, was a short, stout, thick-set man, with a neck like a bull's, and a head like a bullet, round and thick, crojack-eyed,† with knees that would do for a ship's side, they were so bent; but if he'd the neck of a bull, he had the strength of one too, and, to give the devil his due, he was a sailor every inch of him. Though he was smooth enough in his discourse, he always look'd as if all wasn't fair and above board with him; he never could look a man straight in the face; and, when he tried to do so, one eye seemed to be looking through you, and the other watching some one else. We none on us ever liked him; for, when he frown'd, his face was like a thunder cloud with the devil peeping through it, and his grin was fit to give a man the mullygrubs. All went on very well for some time, for the captain seemed to be a hearty dashing blade, and we had good allowance of 'grub and bub.‡ But that 'ere smooth sailing was too pleasant to last long; they talk of the devil being busy in a gale of wind; but he never keeps so bright a look-out for work as when men have too little to do. Somehow or another the captain took a kind of dislike to Old Dick; and, after that, try as he would, nothing he did was ever done right.

As Dick fell in the captain's good books, Dickson became more and more his fav'rite; and they used to walk up and down the decks for hours at a time together. We all thought mischief was brewing; but who was to have the first swill we couldn't fathom. We all hated Dickson, and in course we'd the best of reasons to think that there was no love lost between us, and that he hated ev'ry man Jack of us. Day after day, matters grew worse between the captain and Old Dick; he used to take every opportunity of abusing the old man, right or wrong, and often said he would turn him before the mast; but he never could find no just cause. Meantime, though Dickson pretended to try to smooth matters, we all s'pected as how it was his 'under-current' of mischief as was setting old Dick on the rocks. At last he hauled down his false colours, and never made no more attempt to hide his dislike to the old man; but snarled and snapped at him constantly, for all the world like a terrier dog. We all on us was vexed to see poor Dick badger'd right and left at this rate; for we know'd as how he didn't deserve it, and we all liked him, he was so quiet and good natur'd; but then

we durstn't take any open part with him, fear of being thought mutinous. But, though our tongues didn't speak, our looks did, and Dickson soon felt that all hands sheer'd clear of him, as they would of a plague-ship; while they were as fond of Old Dick as if he were their father. You may be sure, sir, this did not hadd to the sweetness of his disposition, as Dick would say. He used to glare at the old man with his crojack eyes, as if he wished they were baynets to run him through at both sides. One day, Tim Sullivan comes down from his trick at the wheel, and calls us into the forecastle, and says he—

‘I'll tell ye what, bo's; if there's not bloody mischief a-hatching, never call me Tim Sullivan no more. When I was at the wheel, I see'd that devil's limb Dickson walking up and down with Old Dick, and shaking his fist at him; and, when he left him, he gave him a look—such a look!—if ever there was hathred or murder to be read in a man's face, it was there; and he ground his teeth, and mutter'd, (he didn't know I heard him,) ‘I'll get rid of him in some way or other.’ Now, I tells you this messmates, 'cause if any accident should happen to Old Dick, you knows what you knows.’

Well we all swore that we'd keep our eyes upon him, and that we'd stick to Old Dick through thick and thin.

One dark, squally night on the ‘Line,’ Dickson had had the first watch, and Old Dick relieved him at eight bells, just as I came up to relieve the man at the wheel. The two walked up and down the deck together for some time, and some angry words passed between them; a'terwards, they went forward together. The night was so dark I could not see them before the gangway, but I heard Dickson say, ‘Shake it, then,’ meaning the rigging; just then the brig gave a lurch to windward, and I heard a heavy plunge in the water, and Dickson singing out—

‘A man overboard!’

‘It's Old Dick!’ shouted I, as I put the helm down, and the watch ran aft to the boat falls. Dickson was the first to get hold of one of the tackle falls, and cheered the men on to ‘bear a hand,* calling out—‘Poor fellow! poor fellow! No chance for him, I'm afraid.’ But, somehow or another, his ‘fall’ got jammed, accidentally on purpose, I s'pose, and it was some time before the boat was lowered. Well, when she was down, it was like looking for a needle in a hay stack to look for a man on such a dark night. However, they kept pulling about for an hour nearly, and then gave it up for a bad job; and many a sore heart was there for poor Dick that night. Well, the skipper took the watch; and, after he'd been on deck some little time, he told me to keep my eye to windward, and to hail him down the ‘companion’ if I see'd any squall a-coming; and then down he dived to the cabin. He had not been a-gone long, when I see'd one o' the watch, as I thought, come from the weather mainchains, and, creeping along close to the bulwark, lay down on the deck close beside the wheel. Well, I just looks at him, but says nothen; for I couldn't see who it was, when presently I hears a voice whispering—‘Jem, Jem!’ My eyes I wasn't I afeer'd! I felt, I did not know how; for I knew the voice was Dick's, and I thought it was his ghost as was lying beside me; for I was so taken aback, I forgot at the time as how all reg'lar ghosts is white. I was just going to drop the wheel, and run for it; but I couldn't, for my legs trembled under me, and I couldn't sing out for the life o' me. Well, the voice says again, ‘Jem, don't be afeer'd.’”

“Afraid,” interrupted the old man, snappishly; “if you doesn't know how to talk hunadulterated English yourself, don't put him appropriate terms in the mouth of a man as has Johnson by 'art.”

* Take the altitude.
‡ Meat and drink.

† Cross-jack-eyed—squint-eyed.

* Be quick.

"Well, then," continued Hamilton, laughing, "the voice said—

'Don't be afraid, Jem. I'm alive—I'm no ghost. You must get me stowed away below, and I'll let you know all about it by and by.'

'Well,' said I, quite bold, when I know'd it wasn't a ghost; 'if this be'ant the rummest go ever I see'd! Here,' says I, stooping down, 'tip us your flipper, sir; I haven't been so pleased I don't know when. But you'd better go down to the cabin and shift your canvass.'

'The cabin!' whispered he—'no, not the cabin. You must stow me away forward, and keep me out of sight of the people abaft; for my life's in danger.'

'The devil it is!' says I. 'Oh, I begins to see, says the blind man. Keep close to the bulwark, sir; and creep forward abreast the forecastle; and I'll come to you as soon as I'm relieved.'

Well, at four bells, as soon as I was relieved at the wheel, away I goes forward, and smuggles Old Dick down below, and bundles him into my own berth, and gives him a drop as I happened to have in the bottle.

'And now, sir,' says I—for, in coorse, we always gave him a handle to his name when we were a-speaking to him, though we called him Old Dick among ourselves and on shore, 'cause we liked him—'Now, sir,' says I, 'all's quiet on deck, and all asleep below; and this 'll be as good a time as any to tell me what you have to say.'

"So, says he—'Now, sir,'" appealed young Hamilton to me, "I must tell the yarn my own way, and in my own words; for I can't, for the life o' me, recollect all Dick's what he calls hellocution."

"Oh, I'm sure Dick won't interrupt you. Will you, old oy?"

"Not if I can help it, sir; but all men hasn't the patience o' Job."

"Well, sir," continued Hamilton, "says Old Dick, says he—

'My life's not safe in this craft, Jem. If that blood-thirsty villain, Dickson, know'd I'd escaped drowning, he'd never be happy till he had made an end o' me. We had some words about the rigging. He said it was not properly set up; I said it was. 'Feel it,' said he. And I jumped upon the bulwarks, to shake it, when, all at once, I felt a blow on my side, and, the brig giving a lurch at the same time, away I went overboard. You know I am a good swimmer; so I soon strikes out, and gets hold of a rope hanging from the mainchains; and I hauled myself up by it; but, when I began to think of all that had passed, I made up my mind to remain quiet where I was, till I could find a hopportunity to speak to you, or some as I know'd were my friends—and here I am, Jem—thank Heaven!—safe and sound—no thanks to Dickson, though. And now, Jem, you must contrive to keep me stowed away till we make the land; for the devil that possessed him when he attempted my life will not leave him till he finishes what he has begun.'

'What!' says I. 'D'ye think he shoved you overboard?'

'Think?' says he. 'I'm sure on't. I didn't see him, to be sure, the night was so dark, and I was not watching him; but I felt him; and, look ye here, Jem—see what I found sticking in my jacket, after I got into the chains.'

It was a clasp-knife, your Honour; it had taken a slanting direction through his jacket and waistcoat, and remained sticking between his Guernsey frock and skin. On the haft was cut the letters 'J. Dickson;' and, without that, I could have sworn to the knife, I had seen it so often; besides, I had turned the grindstone for him, when he was a-sharpening it, a day or two before. I was struck all on a heap when I heard of the man's villany. At last, says I to Dick, says I—

'Oh, the murderous scoundrel! I'll pay him off for this! I'll tell him a bit of my mind! I'll make him think he'd better have had a shark in his wake than Jem Hamilton; for I'll never rest satisfied till I see him dancing the gallows-hornpipe.'

'Gently, gently, Jem,' said Old Dick; 'you must be very cautious, or you'll only make things worse. If Dickson know'd I was alive, he'd know as how his own life was in danger; and I wouldn't be at all surprised if he was to set fire to the brig, or some devilry of that kind, that we might all go to the bottom together. No, no; I must keep quietly out of the way, till we get into port; and then we'll bring him up all standing.'

'Well,' says I, 'there's reason in that; but it's impossible to keep the secret from the ship's company; for some one or other o' them will be coming athwart your hawse, and swearing they've seen your ghost; and then Dickson will smell a rat, and make a search for you; and, depend upon it, he'll not leave a hole or corner in the ship unsearched, if once he suspects anything.'

'You're right, Jem—you're right,' says he; 'so the sooner you broaches the business the better.'

Well, I determined to let the cat out o' the bag at breakfast-time, when we'd be all 'sembled together; but I was rather puzzled how to begin about it; for I know'd some on 'em would be frightened out of their wits if I brought Old Dick upon them at once; so I was obliged to mind my helm, and steer small. After considering a little, I began talking about poor Dick and his lamentable fate; and they all got very mollicolly about it.

'I've heard,' says I, 'of men as was thought to be drowned getting aboard the ship again, and nobody know nothing about it. I'm thinking, if poor Dick could ha' got aboard again, he'd ha' stowed himself out o' sight o' them abaft. It was a dog's life they led him, poor fellow! Well, they all thought the same; but they said that, at all rates, it would ha' been impossible for him to escape that dark, squally night. 'Unpossible?' says I. 'Why 'ud it be unpossible? The old man was a capital swimmer; and, I'll tell ye what, messmates, it's my hopinion that he is somewhere about the ship; for I heard his voice a-calling my name long after the boat was hoisted up.' Here they all looked round, as if they expected to see a ghost. 'And, now, messmates, I'm thinking some o' you knows o' his being aboard, and has got him stowed away; if so be as that's the case, speak out at once; I'm not the man to peach; and I think no one else would.' With that they all swore they knew nothing about Old Dick, and wondered at my ever thinking of such a thing.

'But,' says Jack Jones, 'I'd give every farthing o' pay that's due to me, if the old man was alive and among us.'

'And so would I,' said they all, one after another, individually, as Old Dick would say.

'Well, then, mates,' says I, 'what 'ud you think if I was to bring him bodily among you this blessed moment?'

They all gave a start when I said so, and some on 'em looked rather whitish, and gathered their legs under them as if they were making all ready for a run; but Jack Jones, after being a little *pauled* like the rest, said—

'Seeing's believing, Jem. You can't raise the dead, and I'm not afeer'd of the living. If so be Old Dick is alive, and there has been any foul play shewn him, as long as I've blood in my body, I'll stand by him till he's righted. What say ye, bo's, one and all?'

'Old Dick for ever!' muttered they; for I had warned 'em not to speak loud.

'But, Jem,' says Jack, putting on one of his thunder-and-lightning looks, 'I hopes this is none o' your monkey tricks? If it is, it will be the worse for you. Why don't you speak?'

'Here's one as shall speak for me, says I, as I pulled Old Dick from out the berth.

Although they had been prepared beforehand, they all started up when they see'd him, and crowded together like a flock of frightened sheep.

'Won't you speak to me, lads?' says Dick; but none o' them answered, till Jones, who was the boldest among them, came forward, and, in a kind of half sheepish way, held out his hand, which Dick shook heartily.

'Warm flesh and blood, by the hookey!' said Jones. 'No wonder we was a little taken aback when we thought old Davy had given up his prey. But now, sir, tell us how you escaped.'

Then Dick tells them the same story he had told me, and shews them the knife, which all on 'em swore to directly. My eyes! what a rage they were in! They durstn't speak out for fear of being heerd on deck; but they grinned like wild hallygators, and clenched their fists, and muttered vengeance on the murderer. They'd have rushed up in a body to seize him if we hadn't done all as we could to prevent them; but they took an oath, every man o' them, that they would protect Old Dick, and never rest till they had satisfaction on the villain Dickson; but that they would not, in the meantime, shew by their looks or manners that there was anything in the wind. But they overdid the business, your Honour; for they were all so uncommon civil to Dickson on duty, that he didn't know what to make of it, and began s'pect some mischief.

'Here's a queer change come over our men,' I heard him say to the captain one night, as I was pretending to be sleeping close to the bulwark. 'I know I'm no fav'rite among them; but they have lately been too civil by half, and too quiet. I don't like those half-muttered conversations, and clubbings in the waste. Still water runs deep, sir, and is never more deceitful than when the sun's upon it. I hope there's no mutiny hatching among them.'

The captain started, and answered—

'I huped not. I have observed the change myself; but I tributed it to the loss of their favourite, Old Dick; now he's out of the way, they can make no comparisons. Poor old fellow! I am sorry for him.'

There was a young chap on board as we'd shipp'd at Falmouth—a fine, handsome, clean-built fellow he was, and we all liked Harry Chalmers; for, though he was very quiet and resarved like, he was so good-natured and *ob-leeging* that it was impossible not to be pleased with him. He never told us nothing about himself; but we had a kind of 'spicion that he was better nor he seemed to be; for he could read and write as well as Old Dick himself, though he didn't tip us any o' them break-jaw words."

"No," interrupted old Dick, "he hadn't the gift of nellycooshun, poor fellow!"

"He had only been about five years at sea, but there warn't a man among us as could beat him either aloft or below; and he had 'Hamilton Moore*' at his fingers' ends, and could shoot the sun,† or work a traverse with any o' them. He was a great fav'rite of Old Dick here, and at first the captain took much notice of him; but, latterly, a great change had come over the skipper;‡ he used to be a cheery, devil-may-care looking fellow, but he had, for some time, been looking restless and uneasy, watching us all as if he suspected us of mischief; and that brute Dickson was always at his helbow, looking for all the world, with that ugly mug of his'n, like a tiger just a-going to make a spring. The steward told us as how the captain turned in with loaded pistols under his pillow, and locked the cabin door every night. I've seen him myself start at his own shadow, of a moonlight night; and, from

being a stout, hearty-looking fellow, he turned as thin as a lamp-post. We all wondered what could be the meaning of the change; for we had always done our duty cheerfully and well, and we'd never given him no cause to look black at us; but, at last we 'come to the conclusion,' as Dick 'ud say, that that villain Dickson was at the bottom of it all. How we did hate that fellow! He looked as if he was sharpening his teeth to eat us; every time he ground them at us for looking as we felt; and he was always on the watch for some word or fault to lay hold of; but we were all too wide awake for him. We had made up our minds to grin and bear it, and not to get ourselves into any scrape by impurence; but he couldn't punish for our looks, if we did our duty. One day, Harry Chalmers was on the fokslle with his quadrant, taking a sly squint at the sun, when the skipper twigs him from abaft, and shouts out—

'Hollo! What are you about, sir?'

'Taking an altitude, sir.'

'Altitude! I'll altitude you. If you can't find anything better to do than to play with things you don't understand, I'll find work for you.'

'There's no work doing just now, sir,' answered Harry, 'and I didn't know there was any harm in looking at the sun.'

'Silence, you mealy-mouth'd rascal!' cliimed in Dickson; 'none of your mutinous answers to the captain.'

'There was no mutiny in what I said, sir; and, as for my being a mealy-mouthed rascal, *you* might as well have left that unsaid, *Mister* Dickson.'

'What do you mean, you sneaking scoundrel?' shouted Dickson, running at him with his clenched fist, and looking furious with passion.

Chalmers drew back a foot or two, and turned first pale, and then red; his fingers worked up and down as if they longed to be at him; he pressed his lips together, and drew in his breath hard, as if struggling to keep the Devil down. At last, forgetting himself, he looks Dickson full in the face, and mutters, in a low, distinct voice—

'Are you going to serve me as you did Old Dick?'

If you had but seen Dickson's face, your Honour! He turned as white as a dirty sheet, and fairly staggered—the cold pruspirashun stood on his brow, and he hadn't a word to say for himself.

'What's the matter, Dickson?' said the captain. 'Are you not well?'

'Matter, sir!' answered he; 'isn't it matter enough to make a man sick at heart to think of such villany? Didn't you hear the rascal accuse us of murdering the old man? I told you there was mutiny bréving among them, and this barefaced lie is the first fruit of it.'

'Mutiny—yes, rank mutiny!' said the captain; 'but I'll check it before it goes further. Seize him, Dickson!—drag him aft!—put him in irons!'

'You need use no force, sir,' said Chalmers, quietly: 'I am no mutineer—I will go wherever you order me.'

'Take his *knife* from him, Dickson,' said the captain, 'a wasp is harmless without his sting.'

Chalmers gave up his knife, after looking at it long and earnestly.

'What are you looking at it so hard for?' said Dickson.

'That I may know it again,' replied Harry; 'my knife has no name carved on the haft, like yours.'

Again the mate turned pale, and looked long and anxiously into Harry's face, but he could make nothen out there. Well, they puts Harry in limbo, and then they had a long palaver together, and, after that, they both goes down below, and came up agen with pistols in their belts. The hands were then called up, and the captain spun them a long yarn, telling us as how he had long suspected us of being a mutinous set of rascals; but that he had caught one

* Moore's Navigation. † Take an altitude. ‡ Captain.

of us at last, and was determined to make an example. He then ordered Jack Jones and another to seize Harry up; but they never stirred. Dickson immediately rushed forward to seize them; but he was on the deck, and lashed to a ring-bolt, before he had time to look round him. The men then came forward in a body, and Jack Jones, touching his hat to the skipper, quite purlite, told him that the ship's company had determined not to see Chalmers flogged—that they meant the skipper no harm, but that they would not do a hand's turn of work unless Dickson was kept in confinement; that he had always been a tyrant, but that now they knew him to have been the cause of Old Dick's disappearance; and that they were determined to make him answerable as soon as they got into port. The captain was a little staggered at first; but, seeing how quiet we all stood, he took courage and began to bully, and, drawing out a pistol, called us mutinous scoundrels, and swore he'd shoot the first man that dared to say a word. 'Put up your pistol, sir,' said Jones, coolly; 'I told you afore, we mean you no harm; but, if you oblige us to use force to you, the blame will be your own.' Well, the captain would not listen to reason nohow, but snapped his pistol in Jack's face; and, if I hadn't knocked his arm up, he'd have blowed his brains out.

'Sorry for it, captain,' said Jones; 'but if I must I must;' and he knocks the captain down, and disarms him, and then sends him down to the cabin, and puts a sentry at the door—'And now, my lads,' says Jack, calling us all together below, 'we're fairly in fort; but it's no fault of ours. With a murderer for a mate, and a madman for a captain, it's time we should look out for ourselves and the owners. Who's to be our skipper now?'

'Old Dick!—Old Dick!' shouted all hands.

But Old Dick said he begged to incline the honour. He had come, he said, to years of seannility, I think he called it—they ought to have a jewofnile captain—as if they'd have a jew for a skipper!—that he 'ud be glad to act as mate still; but that he thought they had better keep the captain and Dickson in ignorance of his existence, till they returned to port; and, in the meantime, he advised them to make Harry Chalmers skipper, Jack Jones mate, and me second mate. Well, the lads followed Dick's advice, and swore to obey their new officers in everything, and to treat them with the same respect as if they'd never messed in the forecastle. Before Harry would take the command, however, we went down to the captain, and offered to give the ship up to him again, if so be as he'd promise to keep Dickson in confinement till we got ashore, and to treat us more as men should be treated. But he raved at us like a madman; called us mutinous rascals; and swore he would shoot every man of us, if he could. After this, there was no help for it. Harry took the command, and he and the mates consulted together what they should do with the brig; and, at last, it was agreed that we should 'bout ship, and shape our course for England again, and give her up to the owners. All hands were pleased with this move; for we were tired of the voyage already, and our going back would prove that we didn't intend to run away with the brig. We had a tolerable passage home; and, during the whole of the time, Dickson was kept in close confinement; but the captain was allowed a little more liberty, and would have been freed altogether, if he had behaved quietly. Neither he nor Dickson know'd that Old Dick was still alive; for he kept carefully out of their sight. Well, at last we makes the land; and, after a quick run up the Channel, we came to an anchor at Gravesend; there Harry Chalmers went on shore and told the story to the magistrates, and sent a letter to the owners. He and I accused Dickson of the murder of, or the intent to murder Old Dick; and he was put in limbo, to stand his trial on the charge. The captain,

in the meantime, had become so outrageous that we were obliged to keep him in close confinement; and he became raving mad. When Dickson was placed at the bar, as they calls it, and asked whether he pleaded guilty or not to the charge, he answered, as bold as brass—

'Not Guilty.'

He laughed at all our charges; said that we'd a spite again' him, and hatched a parcel of lies to ruin' him, and defied us to prove what we accused him of. He said that the night on which the accident happened was so dark that, even if he *had* shoved Old Dick overboard, nobody could have seen him. He asked what credit could be given to the testimony of a gang of mutineers, trying to swear away the life of their officer; and who, upon mere suspicion, accused him of murder, because a weak and hinfirm old man had fallen overboard, on a dark and squally night. Under colour of that suspicion they had broken out into open mutiny, and had taken the command of the vessel from the rightful captain; and now, upon mere suspicion, we accused him of a crime of which he was as hinnocent as the unborn baby; and, to support our 'tipsy Dick's hit,' as he called it, we could produce no proofs.

'Proofs?' I sings out—'you wants more proofs, eh? Do you know this knife?' And I lugs out his own bone-polisher. He changed colour, but answered, boldly—

'No.'

His denying it, however, was no go. The whole ship's company swore to it.

'Now,' says I, 'if you doesn't know the knife, do you think you know the man you wanted to stick it into?' And with that I pulls Old Dick out from behind me, and places him right before him; but his head was turned another way at the time.

'Dickson!' said the old man, solemnly.

At the sound of his voice, the prisoner started, and turned round; but, when he *saw* the man standing afore him whose body he thought had been snugly stowed away in old Davy's locker, his impudenc and pluck left him in a moment. He turned pale; trembled violently; covered his face with his hands; and, muttering—

'Mercy!—mercy!' fell back in a fit; or, as Dick would say, histrikes.

It was by Old Dick's hadvice we had kept back our principal proofs till the last, in order to himpress the jury—how he meant to do that in time of peace, I don't know. Well, the long and the short on't was, your Honour, that Dickson was condemned to transportation for life; and Dick and I, and Harry Chalmers, made sail, in company, to this country, where we all have friends. Harry parted from us an hour or two before we met your Honour, and promised to overtake us afore night; but I'm afared he'll be out in his reckoning now.

'Never fear him,' said Old Dick; 'he's a young man ot 'cute apprehensions. He knows the direction in which we have been persecuting our perrygrinashuns; and, though he hasn't been blessed with such hadvantages of heddyca-shun as *some* folks, he has a good tongue in his head, and knows how to employ it hadvantageously.'

'Well done, Dick!' said I; 'the recollection of Dickson has not driven the dictionary out of your head.'

Just at this point of our conversation, the servant entered to say that a sailor had come to the house inquiring after his two messmates.

'Shew him up here,' said I; 'it is the very man we were talking of, I daresay.'

The servant disappeared, and in a short time returned ushering in the stranger, a tall, active young man, very much darkened by the sun, with a patch over his left eye.

'Ah! Harry, my boy,' said Hamilton, who was by this time beginning to shew the effects of the good toddy he had been imbibing. 'I thought you had lost your reck-

ing; here we are, you see, hard and fast in a snug anchorage."

"Yes," said I, "you had better follow the example of your shipmates, and bring yourself to an anchor."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied he; "I hope you will not think me an intruder."

"Not at all;—what I have heard of you from your shipmates is sufficient to insure you a hearty welcome." There was something in the tone of the new-comer's voice, which had aroused my attention the moment he spoke. I felt convinced I had heard it before, but I looked in vain in his face for some confirmation of my conviction.

"I think we must have been shipmates, somewhere, my lad," said I; "for I am sure I have known you before."

"No, your Honour," replied he; "I never had the pleasure of sailing with you; I, perhaps, am like some old friend or shipmate."

"Perhaps so," I answered, but still I could not keep my eyes off his face. He was seated in the shade, however, and I could not distinguish his features distinctly; but I felt an irrepressible curiosity to know more of him. "Your messmates were afraid you would miss them," said I: "how did you contrive to find them out?"

"Oh, your Honour, I had been carrying on a press of sail to overhaul them, when I came to a long reach of the road, where I could see a precious long way ahead; and, as I couldn't twig anything of them, I concluded they had altered their course; so I hailed a man I saw walking through a field near the road, and asked him if he had seen any strange sail; and he told me he had seen two sailors hove to, and speaking the gentleman this house belonged to. 'No doubt,' said he, 'you'll find your friends there, for he never allows a sailor to pass his door.' With that, your Honour, I hauled my wind, and steered straight for this anchorage; and was not at all sorry, I can assure you, to find my two consorts lying here."

"And, now that you have found your way into this anchorage, as you call it," said I, "suppose you follow their example, and lay in a stock of provisions."

"With all the pleasure in life, sir; for my long cruise has given me an appetite. I could eat a stuffed marine."

Cold meat and spirits were placed before him; of which, notwithstanding his boasted appetite, he partook but sparingly. When he had finished his supper, his attention was attracted by a portrait which hung over the mantelpiece, and which he gazed at long and earnestly.

"That picture seems to please you," said I; "you had better examine it more closely—it is an uncommonly good likeness of my father."

"And who is this, sir?" said the young sailor, approaching a picture of my poor brother.

"That," replied I, "is the picture of the rightful master of this house—would that the original were here!—poor Charles!"

"Is he living, sir?"

"I fear not. Years have passed now since he left his home, and we have discovered no traces of him."

"Was he your favourite brother, sir?"

"My only one."

"This troublesome eye!" said the young man, wiping his shaded eye. "And were you great friends?"

"Friends!—I would give all I am possessed of in the world to see Charles standing before me."

The young sailor seemed much affected; and I was wondering at this unexpected display of sympathy in a stranger, when he tore the shade from his brow, turned full to the light, and sobbed out—"Edward! dear Edward!" It was my long lost brother. It was impossible for words to express my feelings; the dearest wish of my heart was satisfied—I was too happy for speech. For some moments we stood looking

at each other, with our hands locked in each other's, and tears of joy streaming down our cheeks.

"Charles, I have been thinking of you, longing for you, nay, dreaming of you, for years; and, after all, fool that I was, when you stood before me I did not know you."

"Consider my disguise, Edward, and my adopted slang; it would have been astonishing if you had recognised me; and yet, the sound of my voice seemed to startle you, and to awaken some kind of suspicion of my identity."

"Yes, it was like the sound of a long-forgotten melody; it was familiar to my ear, but I could not recall where I had before heard it. I then requested Charles to tell me all that had happened to him since we parted."

"No, no," said he; "Ned, we'll defer that to some future opportunity; we will devote to-night to older recollections. But, while we are thinking of the past, we must not forget my kind friends and shipmates here. Come, Jem, won't you heave a-head, and give your flipper to your old messmate?"

"Why, Harry, ax your pardon, mister; but now you've shipped a new name with a handle to it, mayhap you wouldn't like an old messmate to make so free."

"Give me your hand, Hamilton; it is the hand of a brave and honest man, and no one, however high in rank, need be ashamed to own a true heart for a friend. And you, too, my kind old shipmate," said he, addressing Dick, "have you no congratulations to offer me?"

"I do from the deepest depths of my heart, rejoice at your good fortune, Mr Sebright; for, as you are the brother of my old officer, I presume that is now your nomenclutcher."

"Yes, I am Edward Sebright now, Dick; but I trust that, when I doff the blue jacket, you will find I have the heart of a sailor still, and am not forgetful of old friends. We must find you a shelf to lay your Johnson upon."

"You must lay us side by side, then, sir," replied Dick, "we have been bosom friends too long to separate now."

"And now, Charles," said I, addressing my brother, "I am your guest—I have been only holding this property as your steward, and with sincere pleasure I resign it to its rightful owner. Had my father known you were alive, he would have made you his heir, and I know I am acting up to his intentions, in resigning my claims to you. He died, blessing your memory, and bitterly repenting the harshness which had driven you from your home."

As I had anticipated, it was not without a long, though friendly contention, that my high-minded brother would consent to this arrangement; but I was firm in my resolution, and told him that, if he refused, I would again leave my home, and seek an independence for myself. At last we compromised the matter; I making over to him every thing that had been settled upon me by my father; and he insisting upon settling upon me a handsome annuity, which, with my half-pay, has made me a comfortable man for life. He is married to Marion Elliot, his first and only love; and I live with them, a contented bachelor. Jem Hamilton, through our interest, obtained the command of a snug merchantman; and Old Dick, with his inseparable dictionary, is moored for life, in a neat cottage on the coast, and acts upon occasion as sailing captain of our little pleasure yacht, the Marion.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditional, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS, AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE CASE OF EVIDENCE.

I SHALL not now, I hope, be long upon the face of this earth. It is sinful to wish to die; but, when the spirit is weary of the trials of this evil world, and the body broken, and the bones stricken to their dried marrow with pains, surely a poor mortal may indulge the wish, that God's time of release may not be postponed beyond the power of bearing the weight of life. My years, if mentioned, would not, perhaps, appear to be many; but *age*, in the sense in which I take it, cannot be calculated by circumvolutions of the sun. There is an age of the spirit independently of that of the body; and to calculate that, we must have a measure of the effects of misfortune, and pain, and injury, on nerves toned in all the keys that rise in gradation, from the sensations of creatures a little above the brutes, to the sensibilities of individuals a little lower than the angels. In this view, I am indeed aged as the sons of Levi; for my soul, like the people of Pharaoh, has been smitten with boils and blains, by the poisoned bite of the serpent of the tongues of civilization. The spirit of the Indian under his plantain tree, lives till the body is sick of it; and, with a mistaken humanity, he is exposed in the desert, that the wants of the flesh may kill the spirit that yearns to live, and to rejoice again in the return of the seasons with their fruits and flowers; but the spirit of civilized man or woman is often dead long before the mortal tenement exhibits any decay; for, though spotted fever and limping palsy have passed on, and touched not the flesh, the spirit has been visited by plagues a thousand times more deadly, that rise from the refinements of civilized life. It is these that have made me aged, and weary of remaining longer here; and I am not doubtful, that, when I record what I have suffered from two causes—first, my own goodness; and, secondly, the evils inherent in the state of society in which we live—every one will acknowledge that I have little more to live for on this side of time, and that the sooner I am dissolved, the better it may be for myself, and those who sympathize in griefs that death alone can alleviate.

Brought up in the manse of Carden, by a pious father, the clergyman of the parish, a learned man—and by a mother, a woman of many virtues, who wished her daughter to be as good as herself—I enjoyed all the advantages of breeding or education; which, if turned to good account, make the ornaments of society. I cannot and never will admit that these advantages were lost upon me, though they have tended to make me miserable. I was accounted fair; and I believe that my beauty—a gift so much valued—has had also a share, and no inconsiderable one, in the production of the peculiar evils under which I have suffered, and still suffer. I was—what none knew so well as myself—sensitive to a degree bordering on diseased irritability; but my sensitiveness was of that higher kind, which, courting and receiving impressions and impulses from virtuous thoughts and elevated feelings, tends to elevate rather than depress. The fine culture I received from my father, co-operating with my refined sensibilities, produced in me the most exquisitely minute perceptions of moral good and evil; so that I came to have the same

delicate feeling of the graceful or the distorted in morals, that some *born* musicians are said to possess in regard to the tones of harmony in the world of sounds. This is not self-praise—it is truth wrung out of me; for, though possessed of many qualities which might have nourished vanity, the disrelish I ever felt of the exhibitions of a vain spirit in others, would have been effectual in quelling my own, even if I had had any to quell, which assuredly I never had. I believe that the strong view in which morals were presented to me by the precepts of my father, would have operated to the formation of a fine and healthy effect in one formed for the busy world; but in me, who seemed to have been formed with a connate, aspen-like, trembling sensitiveness of the traces of good and evil, his instructions, continued from day to day, and enforced by the power of his own example and that of my sainted mother, tended to give my original perceptions so strong and holy a sanction that, at a very early period, I had become a kind of worshipper of good. Virtue has a lovely aspect to all, even to those who tremble at her beauty, from the contrast of their own ugliness; religion has the power of making her more beautiful; and systems of morals, clothed in fine language, are effective in training many hearts to a high love of this emanation from God;—but I was, and I am yet, different from any individual whose moral perceptions are merely strengthened by these aids. I do not know if I make myself intelligible, but I myself feel the distinction I wish to impress: morals were to me that species of passion which in many exhibits itself only more perceptibly in regard to some other object—such as poetry, painting, sculpture, or music—with perhaps this difference, that, while these natural *illuminati* are merely annoyed by an exhibition of distortion, I was pained, sorely, miserably pained, by vice in whatever form it was exhibited to me. I was not contented with the ordinary appearances of purity. The jealousy offering was ever in my hand; and I was always sighing to see it waving before the goddess, and offered upon the altar of virtue. I looked upon the individual in whom the “water that causes the curse” became bitter, as a creature who was rotten, and had become a curse among the people.

Entertaining these sentiments, I loved to expatiate upon the beauties of my favourite subject, with a glow of eloquence that struck even the godly visitors of the manse with surprise and admiration. I often also, in my visits among my father's parishioners, exhibited the same warm enthusiasm, couching my sentiments in the gorgeous clothing of a young fancy enamoured of a deified personification of what I conceived to be the only true good and the only true beauty upon earth. But I was no apostle under the influence of a proselytizing spirit; for I only visited the virtuous, because I loved them, and those of an evil reputation I avoided with a thrilling horror, as creatures diseased and dangerous to approach. Those who believed me a religious enthusiast—and there were many who entertained that opinion of me—knew nothing of my real nature; for, though my father's precepts had had all due effect upon me, religion, far from being the origin of my feelings, lent merely a sanction to them, shewing the final cause of my enthusiastic views, and turning them to that account, in the contemplation of an after world, that ought to have

been at all times their end and object. I was rather a lover of virtue for its beauty; my feeling was an impassioned taste, luxuriating on every virtuous act, and dwelling with inexpressible delight on every cultivator of my favourite subject. A consequence of this was, the horror of vicious persons, which I possessed to a degree that made my father suspect that my passion was not the religious one, which is unavoidably accompanied with pity for the misguided votary of sin, and a straining effort to reclaim him to the paths of virtue. He was to a certain extent right; but I question much if, with all his learning, he possessed knowledge enough of the various peculiarities of human nature to enable him to analyze my character, or to understand the peculiarities of one under the dominion of passion for ethics.

I was, moreover, of a remarkably tender constitution of body—the consequence of early weakness, as well, perhaps, of that irritable temperament which fed and was nourished in turn by the high-strung sensibilities of my spirit. Up to the age of fifteen, I was subject to a species of fit, or nervous syncope; and I always found that, after an attack of these enervating prostrations of my physical powers, my mind recurred to my favourite subject with greater keenness—supplying my excited fancy with brilliant images of virtuous sacrifices, such as I had read of in the old classic authors, which I could read in the original; and these again swelled my heart, lighted my eye, and lent an eloquence to my tongue, which dwelt on the daring of Mutius, the sacrifice of Lucretia, the heroism of Brutus, the friendship of Damon, and the determination of Virginia. Exhausted by the swell of emotions produced by these subjects, I fell back upon the quieter, but no less delicious theme of a Howard's philanthropy, and ended with the contemplation of those instances of private charity which had come under my own eye. I never felt happier than when in these moods; and my mother, who knew my passion, contributed to its gratification by directing me to such recorded examples of worth as she knew where to find among my father's books.

Possessed of these views and feelings, so unsuitable to the cold maxims of the world, and with a weak and irritable constitution, I was ill prepared for the loss which was now, when I was in my twentieth year, impending over me—the death of both my parents, who, attacked by the same disease, some putrid species of typhus, died within a week of each other—leaving me, their only child, as much unprovided for, in regard to worldly wants, as I was unfitted for making up the deficiency by my personal exertions. My father left nothing but the furniture in the manse, which was all required to pay up some advances of stipend which had been made to him by several of the heritors, and which the extreme scantiness of his income necessitated him to have recourse to. I was a beggar, imbued with notions to make the people of the world admire and pity, and gifted with a countenance so beautiful—why need I spare the vain word when I now admit that age and pain have made me ugly?—that, with art, might have realized a fortune, or, with folly, might have ruined me. I sought the protection of a spendthrift uncle and a good aunt—the latter resident in the town of Stirling, an old lady of fortune, a Mrs Greville, who admired my principles, and possessed generosity enough to enable her to offer to repay the pleasures of my companionship by her house and her friendship. My tender frame, operated upon by the intense grief I had felt in the loss of my parents, sustained a shock which would have proved fatal to me if the assuasive attentions of that angelic being had not contributed to the recovery of my health. Her protection was much, her kindness valuable; but, above all, was I blessed in the possession of a friend who reduced to practice, though she could not *feel* as I felt, the prin-

ciples of virtue I had so long cherished with the fondness of a ruling passion. But my situation was now changed. In my father's manse I saw little of the world; but what came under my observation was congenial to my mind, and gratified my feelings by the exhibition of goodness as well of deed as of sentiment. The evil I saw was out of doors, and I eschewed it as a serpent which would beguile by the spiral turns of its insidious lines of beauty, and the shining hues of the colours of false loveliness. In our society at home, or in the houses of the parishioners, it never came under my experience, except by the report of crimes which grated on my irritable feelings, and pained me to a much greater extent than people of ordinary sensibilities may well comprehend. In my new residence, I was necessitated to mix with the world. My aunt saw much company, composed of the mixed inhabitants of the town, and I accompanied her to various parties where the *fashionable* vices were cultivated, as all fashionable things are, with an affected contempt of honest plainness and unadorned simplicity.

Though my aunt was herself a good woman, and admired the high-coloured, and, it may be, unnatural views I took of human life, she never understood the secret parts of my mental constitution, but took me simply for one who entertained a somewhat strong sense of the beauty of a good life, and who therefore could mix with society of acknowledged honesty as the world goes, without allowing the frailty of human nature to interfere with my own views, and far less with my comfort and peace of mind. My beauty made her proud of me; and I was soon introduced to scenes which stirred all the antipathies that, as the result of my past modes of thinking and feeling, lay strong within my heart, and ready to be called forth by a departure in others from the rules of life I had so long loved. The first view I got of the mysteries of card-playing—in the house of Captain Semple of Tennet, who lived in town, only a few doors removed from where I lived—produced an effect of pain upon me similar to that which Mozart declared he felt when his harmony was lost in discordance. They played for what they called high stakes; and there was exhibited, on a lesser scale, the keen avaricious eye, the forced choking laugh, the lying smile, the trembling hand, and burning brow of the gambler of the London grade. The whole family engaged in this play. I recollect, at this distant period, the effect produced upon me by the agonized countenance of the beautiful Catherine Semple, the eldest daughter, when she lost a high stake, and yet turned the expression of the worst look of the devil into a smile far more hideous than that which it concealed. Nor was the effect less painful that was produced upon my high-wrought sensibilities by the cruel triumph that burned in the beautiful blue eye of Esther her sister, who had pocketed the hard-won earnings of a poor surgeon, and seemed to feed on the poisoned garbage of his depression and disappointment. The face of her mother, who looked on, partook alternately of the expression of those of her daughters; and while I, a stranger, beheld with pain the first principles of goodness subverted, and the fairest samples of God's creatures penetrated to the core by the worst feelings of our fallen nature, she, their parent, sympathized with a daughter's deceit and revenge, or gloried in her triumph over what might be the approaches of ruin to a fallen creature. I went home after that exhibition, dispirited and miserable; the chords of the moral harp, that had so long responded to the sweet sounds of a virtue imagined, felt, and dreamed of, as a beatific vision, were disrupted and torn asunder, and I imagined that the individuals who had thus laid upon it their sacrilegious hands, were worthy of a hatred unqualified by pity, as destroyers of the most beautiful fabric ever erected by God's love. These were not the gloomy views of the monastic ascetic, or the religious

enthusiast—for I was neither. I was, indeed, peculiarly formed; but I knew not my peculiarity, and even now I could scarcely abate one ray of the effulgence that, if you please, blinded me to the factitious virtues of the *juste milieu* of a bad world's morality.

Some nights afterwards, I accompanied my aunt to the house of Mrs Ball, also a neighbour, and one who could afford to live in a style that, in such a town as Stirling, might be conceived to be high. She had a daughter, Anne, and a son, George, an attorney, both accomplished and handsome, and wearing on their faces the external appearances of simplicity and goodness. The recollections of Semple's family were still busy with my heart, and I trembled to approach another assemblage of fashionable people. I was placed in the midst of a large tea *coterie*, and expected to hear a conversation suited to the views of human life I so fondly cherished. Stories of generosity, of age assuaged, bereavement ameliorated, want supplied, and hunger and nakedness fed and clothed, must, I thought, issue from such a quiet-looking assemblage of people, brought together apparently for no other purpose than to promote the cause of their own happiness, which surely might be best done by contemplating the means of the happiness of others. Having had one of my fits in the fore part of the day, I was more irritable than usual; but having got, in some measure, quit of the pain produced by the moral discordance that had, some days before, grated so painfully on my weak nerves, I expected to be able to join in a conversation which could not fail to embrace a part of my favourite theme. I was again destined to be made miserable—I was placed in the midst of a species of moral cannibals, who preyed ruthlessly and jestingly on the misfortunes and miseries of their fellow-creatures. Pecuniary embarrassments, matrimonial disagreements, detections of dishonesty, elopements, infidelities—everything that might render an individual worthy of pity or hatred—was treated in the same tone of concealed satisfaction. The burst of loud laughter followed on the heels of the whine of hollow sympathy; the sneer mixed its cutting sarcasm with the lying tribute to suffering worth; and, through all, over all, in all, there was the spirit of evil, in its worst, its ugliest form—rejoicing, secretly, no doubt, but not the less certainly, in the defection of mortals from God's law, and their devarication from my standard of moral beauty.

I experience a difficulty now, though then it would have been easy for me to describe what I felt on the occasion of this new display of this, to me, the ugliest parts of the hated system of evil which prevails in the world. The beautiful visions I had formed in my day-dreams, and which I had cherished as the source of my greatest happiness, appeared to me to have little or no relation to earth, or to earth's inhabitants; and a gloomy melancholy stole over me, and retained the dominion of my mind in spite of every effort to shake it off. I endeavoured to make my feelings understood by Mrs Greville; but she, though participant in my views of moral perfection, could not comprehend why the turpitude of men should have the effect of making a good person incapable of enjoying what was truly virtuous in nature, and far less why it should produce a gloomy misery in those who were themselves truly good. What people cannot comprehend, they sometimes state to others for the sake of assistance to their understandings; and my aunt, in the openness of her heart, stated my peculiarities to some friends, who coloured them to suit their fancies, and then communicated them to the families of the Semples, the Balls, and several others. My views, as I afterwards learned, were considered by these people as an impeachment of their morals; and I was set down as an arch-hypocrite, who wished to rear a character for goodness on the ruin of the reputation of others. The state of despondency into which I fell precipitated

me into a succession of my old nervous fits, and it was not for some time that I was again prevailed upon to visit the scenes where my feelings were exposed to such causes of laceration; but when I did again accompany my friend in her accustomed visits, I found that I had become unwelcome: oblique sneers, short, cutting taunts, and pointed insinuations, were directed against me; and, though I then knew nothing of the cause, I felt, with that trembling sensitiveness which was peculiar to me, the poignancy of the poison of a hatred that was scarcely attempted to be concealed.

In the little intercourse I had as yet had with the new world of sad reality into which I had entered, I had heard the characters of good people so fearfully belied and reviled, that I attributed the painful treatment I thus received to the same malevolent spirit that dictated the malicious scandal which seemed to penetrate almost every family I had yet visited. I inquired for no cause in myself; for I had done or said nothing to create merited individual hatred. It was the working of the same spirit of evil that generally prevailed, extended to me, a poor orphan, living on the dependence of a kind relation. It was one thing to see evil done towards others, and to feel it applied to one's self; and the pain I formerly felt was increased by the dread that I might yet be thrown upon that world which presented to me such fearful indications of cruelty and vice. It will soon be seen whether it was my good or evil fortune, at this gloomy period, to meet with one who appeared really to understand the constitution of my mind, to appreciate the exalted views I entertained of virtue, and to sympathise with me in the pain produced by the discordance between the actual state of society and what I so fondly wished it to be. Augustus Merling, proprietor of a fine property called the Park, yielding him about £1500 a-year, and who lived, for a great part of the year, in town with his widowed mother, visited my aunt, and often saw me. I have said I was possessed of much beauty, and the fact is undoubted; but there was about me such an aspen-like sensitiveness, derived from the nervous attacks to which I was enslaved, operating on a mind of originally fine structure, that the very look of man or woman, if boldly thrown upon me, whether from curiosity or confidence, made me shrink intuitively, and look confused or abashed; and I never could conceive that all the beauty I possessed could make amends for or overcome the prejudices against me originating in that cause. I was in this respect, however, entirely wrong. My sensitiveness gave me an interest in the eyes of Augustus, who, the moment he saw me, was so struck with the beauty of my face, and the shrinking sensitiveness of my manner, that he inquired at Mrs Greville every particular concerning me; and got such an account as he himself afterwards confessed increased his curiosity by the mystic obscurity in which my aunt's inability to understand me had wrapped all the peculiar attributes of my mind. He had felt some anticipative impression of a sympathy between our thoughts, and feelings; and our intercourse—for he sought me the more fervently the more I retired from him—soon satisfied him he was right in his estimate of my character. I am certain he understood me thoroughly, and I believe he was the only individual I had yet met who fathomed the mysteries of a heart only too good and pure for the world in which we live. But, if I was surprised and pleased with this, what may be conceived to be my feelings when I at last found, in a beautiful youth of fortune, the very moral counterpart of myself, with all my exalted views of my beloved and cherished goodness and moral loveliness! Often as the pen of poet has been employed in the description of the feelings of mortals under the influence of the tender passion, sublimed by the elevating power of virtuous

purity, I am satisfied that small approach has been made to the reality of the love that soon bound me and Augustus together as creatures made after the same model, and yet different from all mankind. If other matters did not hurry me forward, I could exhibit the thrilling details of a bliss which is thought to be peculiar to the regions above. I would only be afraid that the analysis would require to be carried so deep into the attenuated fibres of constitutions so seldom seen and so little understood, that I would be charged with my imputed error of applying un-earthly visions to things of earthly mould. Love has become a byword, because it is too often mixed with the impurities of vulgar natures; but such love as ours might tend to elevate and throw over the rapt fancies of imaginative beings a forecast of that exquisite bliss which awaits mankind in the regions of heaven.

But, even in this sweet dream, the evil of the world was destined to follow me. I had taken from two ladies the object of their love or ambition. Catharine Semple, and Anne Ball, whom I have already mentioned, had been severally intended by their mothers as the wife of Augustus—a match to which the young rivals themselves were as much inclined as their mothers, as well from the personal qualities of Augustus, as from his wealth and property. I was hated by these ladies before as a hypocrite. I was now the successful rival—apparently destined to blast all the cherished hopes of their love or ambition—and yet guiltless of even the thought of the earthly and debased feelings of what is known as rivalry. Our love was soon known to both the families, chiefly through the medium of George Ball, who acted as the man of business of Mrs Greville, and in that capacity was often a visiter at the house. The effect of the intelligence was intense and stirring; and, through the simple medium of my aunt, I heard myself denounced as one who carried virtue on my face and tongue; simulated nervous sensibility, to give effect to my affected distaste of vice; and who yet bore within my bosom, for a heart, the poisonous cockatrice, whose eggs were the guile and deceit that work more evil in the world than open-faced, unblushing vice. These statements were corroborated by what I myself saw; for when I again met the young ladies—and it was more by chance than intention—I was struck by the intensity with which they, even in the presence of others, expressed, by look and manner, the hatred they carried in their hearts against me, guiltless as I was of thought or deed inimical to them or any other mortal on earth. The enmity thus flared upon me, with such strength of feeling, was experienced in the height of the delicious dream of love in which I was entranced; and, softened and mellowed as I was with the sweet enjoyment of the actual experience in Augustus of the visions of perfection I had so devotedly cherished, I felt again, and in an increased degree, the pain which the workings of evil seemed fated to produce in me.

About the same time, another source of uneasiness rose at my side, in the person of George Ball. Whether actuated by love, or interest, or both, I know not—but I afterwards had reason to suppose he wished Augustus detached from me, to be free for his sister—this individual took the opportunity of my aunt's absence, and made, on his knees, warm professions of attachment to me. He declared that he was dying for me, and implored me to give him a test of his affection. I looked at him and trembled. He it was who had reported the affection of me and Augustus, and, with the knowledge that I loved and was beloved by another, he thus attempted to burst the bonds of a holy and elevated connection—to make me ungrateful, perfidious, and base; and to render him in whom all my happiness was centred, miserable and wretched. My frame of mind was too delicate for indignation; a slow creeping feeling of loathing was the form in which the contemplation of evil

produced an effect on me, and the sickening influence seldom failed in reducing me, for a time, to gloom and nervousness. I cannot describe my conduct on the occasion of this new discovery of the workings of the prevailing demon; but I believe that I hurried from the apartment with such an expression of my feelings depicted upon my countenance, as must have told him, more eloquently than words, the disgust he had roused in me, and the pain with which I was penetrated. The former he might understand, the latter was beyond the reach of his intelligence.

I found an assuagement of these evils in the bosom of Augustus, where lay the microcosm, that pure moral world I delighted to contemplate; but the illness of Mrs Greville, which shortly after supervened, called upon me to exercise actively those virtues of gratitude and kindness which formed a part of the scheme of my morality. Night and day I waited upon my benefactress, with the fondness of affection, and the fidelity and unwearied steadfastness of principle. Between her and my Augustus my time was passed; and I know not whether I felt more satisfaction in the theoretical contemplation, I enjoyed along with him, of the beauties of a good life, than in the practical application of our views to the amelioration of my aunt's feelings in her illness, and to the contribution to her ease and satisfaction. Yet all my assiduity seemed to be of little avail; she gradually grew worse; and there seemed to come over her, at times, sorrowful anticipations of what might befall me, in the event of her death, mixed with, if not suggested by, recollections of the manner in which I had been treated by the families whose daughters aspired to the hand of Augustus. These thoughts were busy with her one day, and she had sent for George Ball to make her will. Before he came, she was visited by the mother of Augustus; and before the latter departed, Miss Catharine Semple and Miss Anne Ball also came. I sat by her bedside, watching, through tears of sympathy, every indication of pain or solicitude. It was a strange meeting, and presented an opportunity for a declaration of sentiment on the part of my aunt, that, ill as she was, she could not let escape.

"Martha," she said, looking in my face, and taking my hand into hers, "oh, that I possessed the virtues of your clear, untainted mind!—for then I should be prepared to meet the bright beams of that light of heavenly glory which searches to purify, and shines to enlighten, and bless, and make happy. Your trial may be now, or rather when I am gone; but your triumph will come when you are as I now am. People have tried to injure you"—(she looked steadfastly at the two young ladies;) "but if Mrs Merling remains your friend, the viper-tongue of scandal or reproach cannot touch you. The terms on which you stand with Augustus, I know, though I never can be able to comprehend all the beauty of your mutual views and sentiments on that subject which is gradually opening upon me by the medium of a light from above. You have rivals"—(looking again at the two young ladies)—"but they are bold mortals who would dispute the victory with angels."

These words came to me like the "fountain which was opened to the house of David," for it banished from me many fears; but to Catharine Semple and Anne Ball they were as adders' tongues, whose eliminated poison, indigested, was thrown out upon me by every expression of hatred they could call up into their countenances. Mrs Merling was silent, but looked upon me with that sweetness which resulted from those angelic views of heaven-born greatness she had communicated to Augustus. That look was to me an ample panoply against the scorching, revengeful fire of the eyes of my rivals, who, having expended all the force of their malevolence by the side of their prostrate, and apparently dying friend, departed in wrath. In a short time, a servant came from George Ball, and stated that he was from

home, and would not return till next day. My aunt appeared disconcerted by the intelligence, but said she would not employ another, as he alone knew the state of her affairs. Mrs Merling kissed me, and told me to be of good heart, for that while she loved her Augustus, she must continue to love me, who was his counterpart, and therefore (she added with a soft smile) more of heaven than of earth. She departed, stating that she would return in the evening, to ascertain how my aunt then was. These assurances of friendship I required to sustain me amidst this trying scene, for my old complaint had been exhibiting an activity among my nerves, which shook me to the heart, and predisposed me for the pain of the endurance of enmity on the one side, and the solicitude of a friendship, on the eve of being ended for ever, on the other. I was sitting convulsed by conflicting emotions, with my hand on my forehead, when Mrs Greville again spoke.

"I feel worse, my beloved Martha," she said, "and am solicitous about the return of George Ball. I would send for another, but that I would so much prefer my usual man of business. So far, at least, I can insure your safety, my love, in the event of anything happening to me before his return. Hand me that box that lies on the top of my *escritoire*."

I complied, by fetching and laying the box on the bed. My aunt took a key that lay under her pillow, and, opening the secretary, exhibited a great number of jewels, which she had got on the death of her husband, who had been a jeweller on a great extent in London, and left her the treasure as her share of his fortune. Some of these she had disposed of, and laid out the proceeds in the purchase of heritable property, on the rents of which she lived; and the remainder, along with an inventory, written in her own hand, she had deposited in the box, of which she had always taken the greatest care. There were other valuable articles besides the jewels in the box: her title-deeds were there, and some bank-checks, for money she had saved out of her rents. She lifted up two or three pearl-necklaces, and other articles, to enable her to get to a string of diamonds, apparently of great value.

"These," she said, "were valued by James" (so she always spoke of her husband) "at four thousand pounds. They were intended as the portion of my little Agnes, who died only one week before her father. Who has a better right to them than you, my dear Martha?—take them, and along with them the necklaces, which I think are worth a hundred guineas each. The loose jewels in this interior box you may also take; they are of no great value, but they will suit you as articles of dress, when you become the wife of Augustus Merling. Take and place them all in your own trunk. If I get better, I will trust to your returning them to me *without a request on my part*, and the inventory may be left here to shew what you have got. When George Ball comes, I shall make him put a clause in my will, to accord with this act and my sentiments."

She then locked the box, and I, with tears of gratitude in my eyes, went and placed the jewels in my trunk, and returned to the bed of my benefactress.

"You must look to your treasure, Martha," she continued. "I have guarded it well, having had occasion to doubt the honesty of Magdalene, (the maid-servant,) who, I fear, knew too well what that box contained. I missed a beautiful brooch last year, and would have discharged her, but that I had no evidence against her. Look well to the key of your trunk."

I could not reply to these statements of my aunt. My heart was full, and my tongue would not express the feelings of gratitude with which I was penetrated; but she understood me, and was content. Shortly afterwards, she said she felt worse, and I dispatched Magdalene for Mrs Merling, who came within half-an-hour, accompanied by

Augustus, who sat in an antechamber, anxious to see me. The first look that Mrs Merling directed to her old friend detected the symptoms of approaching death, and she communicated to me secretly the melancholy information. She seemed anxious about the attorney; but the situation in which I, who would be benefited by the will, and her son, who was so near, stood in relation to each other, produced a delicacy which prevented her from shewing an anxiety on the subject. The medical man, who came soon after, held out to us a very faint hope, and even thinted that he himself was surprised at the sudden change that had taken place upon her. The unfavourable symptoms increased towards night, and the intelligence of her illness brought Mrs Ball to get her curiosity satisfied, and her feelings of humanity excited. She had been informed by her daughter of what had taken place in the forenoon, and had scarcely entered, when she alluded, in a sneering tone, to Augustus, whom she had seen in the anteroom as she passed. We sat round the bed of my dear relative, who began to exhibit symptoms of a wandering state of mind—a circumstance less noticed by the others than by me; and having heard that Augustus was in the house, she requested to see him. I ran for him—he came and bent himself over the sickbed, to administer some of the soothing sentiments of a mind replete with the balm of "the spirit of grace and supplications" which was poured on the house of David. She asked him to be seated, and, raising a little her body, she pointed to the box, which stood on the top of the *escritoire*, and wished it brought to her that she might give Augustus a ring as a keepsake. Mrs Merling, who sat next to it, obeyed the request, and brought the box. With trembling hands the patient sought for the key, and, having found it, tried to insert it in the lock; but she was unable, and Mrs Merling assisted her. The box was opened, and my aunt, now in a state of delirium, ran a wild eye over its contents, and, raising her hands to heaven, cried—

"Where are my jewels? I have been robbed. Wretches, tell me where are those jewels which I have guarded for twenty years?"

The excitement was fatal—she fell back, and expired. The confusion which followed this sudden and as yet unexpected event, drowned for a time the effect resulting from the extraordinary exclamation. The women were busy in various ways, and Augustus ran to support me, who at first, staggered by the exclamations, was rendered senseless by what so immediately followed. I swooned in his arms, and, when I recovered, found myself in my own parlour, with Mrs Ball leaning over me. Augustus, alarmed by the length of time I remained insensible, had hastened away for the doctor, and left me to the tender mercies of the mother of my rival. When I looked up, the first object that met my eyes was my trunk, where were deposited the jewels I had got gifted to me by my aunt; and, by the power of association, I heard ringing in my ears the words "I have been robbed." The air seemed thick, from the impediment which my swelling heart offered to my powers of respiration, and, holding out my hand, I pushed away her who held me. The resistance offered to my hands directed my attention to the face of Mrs Ball, who, smiling with a cutting satire, which spoke her suspicions—

"Who robbed your aunt, Miss Martha?" inquired she. "Why did you faint when she mentioned the loss of her jewels?"

"Ha!" answered I, with an exclamation, rubbing my forehead, and still searching in my mind for a full recollection of all that had taken place; "I wish my aunt to explain, in presence of Mrs Merling, and you, and Augustus, her extraordinary words. Come, come—let us go to her—she must explain, she must free me of the imputation."

"Your aunt is dead, young woman; you saw her die," she replied, with more bitter irony. "You have not yet recovered yourself. It was her death-bed confession. Why did it shake you so? *You* never can be suspected."

In an instant the full truth flashed upon me, and I saw that the death of my aunt precluded all hope of getting her statement recalled. I felt a horrible load upon my heart, and gasped for breath. The thought that I had *already* allowed to pass the proper opportunity of stating the truth, burned my brain with the pain of a seething iron. The force of truth was strong in me, and I struggled at this late period to tell all that had occurred; but, when I looked up in the face of my malicious tormentor, I could not speak, and I now felt that those sensibilities which made me so exquisitely alive to the sense of virtue had become my enemies. The thought of being suspected—and my confession that the jewels were in my trunk would amount almost to a conviction—seemed worse than death in its direst form; yet I essayed again and again to tell the truth, and still I failed to pronounce one intelligible word of explanation. Mrs Ball, finding me recovered, left me, as she said with her accustomed satire, to the attentions of Augustus Merling, who at that moment entered the room with the surgeon. He was delighted to see me recovered, and asked me, in tones that sounded in my ears more grating than ripped iron, how I felt. I answered, with difficulty, that I was better. The doctor gave me some stimulant, and he and Augustus sat down by my side, talking on the subject of the sudden change that had taken place in my aunt's disease, which no one had thought fatal. I sat silent, and expected every moment that Augustus would have mentioned something regarding the statement made by my aunt in reference to her jewels; but he never approached the subject—a circumstance which seemed to me extraordinary—for it was impossible, I thought, that so striking an incident could have escaped his memory; and as the presence of the doctor could form no reason (but rather the opposite) against a recurrence to the subject in his presence, I thought I had grounds for supposing that my presence formed the cause. The moment this thought entered my mind, I shook throughout my whole system. The question rose incessantly upon me, Why does my presence prevent him from disclosing so startling and important a circumstance? The answer appeared plain and simple—Because he suspects me. At the time these thoughts were passing through my mind, my eye caught again my trunk, and I now saw very plainly, from the position of the key, which, having been handled carelessly, was hanging from the keyhole, that some one had been there. I recollected that, when my aunt grew worse, I ran to her and left the key in the lock, and now suspected that Mrs Ball had opened it while I was in a state of insensibility. As I fixed my eye on the trunk, I heard Augustus stop in the middle of a sentence, and, turning upon him a timid, furtive glance, I thought I saw him look at me earnestly, with a different expression of countenance from any I had ever yet seen him assume. The doctor seemed to notice the break in the conversation, and to take it as a hint to retire, which he did almost immediately, to the great increase of my misery. I was now left alone with Augustus, and my whole mind became as it were concentrated in my ear, to hear him break the subject which had become so awfully interesting to me. I was silent, and he too apparently was inclined to be gloomy—a state of mind so inconsistent with the usual habitudes of a spirit ever in the contemplation of the fair side of human nature, that I looked upon it as inauspicious. I had forgotten entirely—so completely was my mind absorbed by the frightful subject before me—that he might respect the sorrow incident to my situation, and hold it too sacred for an abrupt and officious condolence. At

length the soft accents of sympathy stole from his lips; and had they been as "the ointment of spikenard," they would have aggravated my pain; for he avoided—it appeared to me studiously—all reference to the conduct of my aunt. I knew not what words to use in my inane replies; and the more studiously he seemed to avoid the subject, the more difficult, the more certainly impossible, I felt the task of approaching it myself. I felt now, more heavily than when in the presence of Mrs Ball, the weight of the *time* that had already been allowed to elapse without an explanation; and every minute that passed added to it immeasurably. My aunt's statement, standing alone, was powerful, almost insuperable; but, joined to the lapse of time between the charge and the denial—for what could it be now but a denial?—it would appear to be proof strong as holy writ. All this I felt with such soul-prostrating effect, that every effort I made to broach the subject, was strangled in my throat by the sympathetic power of a heart loaded with the shame of a suspicion that *never* could be disproved. In addition to all this, what I had already suffered had produced indications of a coming accession of my nervous affections; and thus overcome by shame, terror, and physical debility, I sat beside my comforter as one in whose ears are knelling the strokes of the hour of execution.

Augustus rose to depart; and, at this moment, his mother, who had been occupied dressing the dead body, came in, to ascertain how I was. She looked wistfully at me as I sat pale and trembling, and I thought I saw her motion to Augustus to leave us together. He went out, and, shortly after, my fit came upon me, and retained me in its ruthless grasp for a considerable period. I never had recovered from an attack to a perception of such realities as were now before me; and the more conscious I became, the more dreadful seemed my condition. My first thoughts were directed to the speech of Mrs Merling; and I soon found that she too avoided making the slightest allusion to my aunt's deathbed declaration. If the circumstance was strange in Augustus, it was more so in his mother, a female, not so apt to be forgetful of a matter where curiosity might have been expected to be roused to the highest pitch. I was now more and more convinced that both acted from a sense of delicacy towards me, on whom the whole weight of the suspicion of my aunt's declaration doubtless rested. I felt the same load on my breast as before—the same difficulty to approach the fearful subject; but now my energies were overcome by another cause, for the moment I began to struggle with myself with a view to overcome the choking impediment presented to a declaration, I was attacked by my nervous ailment, and laid senseless in the arms of my friend. This occurred several times within an hour, at the end of which period—with the fatal secret still in my bosom—I was so overcome with misery and pain that I was obliged to be consigned to my night-couch.

I lay for several days in a state of weakness, which was continued by occasional attacks of my complaint, by the weight of the peculiar misery with which I was affected, and, by the disturbing effects of horrid dreams, the consequence of the states of both my mind and body. These last assumed often the characters of nightmare, in which the form of my aunt was always (though dreadfully distorted) apparent among others; but dreadful as these were, I would have borne all their weight, and endured all their agony, rather than have suffered what always awaited me when I succeeded in wrenching my consciousness out of the grasp of the nocturnal fiend. Mrs Merling attended me, and Augustus was incessant in his requests to know how I was. My aunt was, in the meantime, buried; and Mrs Merling, who communicated to me the intelligence, seated herself by my bedside, with the view apparently of opening

to me some subject that lay near her heart. I looked at her and trembled.

"Martha," said she, "I am going to speak to you on a subject of great delicacy; and it is because I know you are possessed of as much good sense as generous feeling, that I will take the liberty of doing it after the manner of a friend."

She paused, and looked at me, as if her heart had been overpowered with pity. I expected now the long dreaded announcement, and lay motionless, almost senseless, to hear the pronouncement of my doom.

"Your aunt was no sooner laid under the ground," began Mrs Merling, "than her heir-at-law—who is, as you know, your uncle, by the mother's side, James Battie, one of the worst men that our part of the country has ever seen—came and demanded possession of the house, with the articles therein; to all which, and indeed to everything which belonged to the good old lady, he has an undoubted right, seeing that she left no will. The keys are accordingly to be delivered this evening to his agent, who, by the by, is Mr George Ball, and who has likely been selected in consequence of his having acted in that capacity for your aunt, and therefore acquainted with her concerns. Every lock and drawer in the other parts of the house was sealed up before the funeral; and it was only on the representation that you were lying here in a state of distress, that this room has not been entered. It is therefore necessary that you remove from this house this evening; and as I and my son know you have no home, no friends, and I fear no means, we have resolved to take from you no denial to our request, that you permit yourself to be removed to our house, where, allow me to say, my dear Martha, I hope to see you in the character of a respected and beloved daughter-in-law."

This announcement satisfied me that neither Mrs Merling nor her son had any suspicions of my being possessed of my aunt's jewels; and so far as regarded these individuals, I had no reason for the apprehensions that had assailed me; but, alas! how long could they remain in that state of mind, when, as it had appeared, Mrs Ball's son was appointed the attorney of the heir-at-law? That fact appeared decisive of my ruin. I could not contemplate the probable evils that might result from it, without exposing myself to the danger of another fit of my ailment; and, making an effort to reply suitably to Mrs Merling, I, with great difficulty, rose and got myself dressed, and removed with my trunks to the residence of my new benefactress, where I might have enjoyed all the happiness of which my nature was capable of, had I not taken with me the burden that still pressed upon my heart. Augustus seemed to realize some fond dream in having me under his mother's roof as his intended wife; he renewed our former studies and conversations, wooed my heart in many forms, and with numerous allurements, to the calm, virtuous enjoyments of love; and seemed to make a total sacrifice of himself, his pursuits, and feelings, to the reclamation of me to my wonted participation in his sentiments, and sympathy with his high-souled aspirations. These benefits, this worship, that offer of happiness, only tended to render me from hour to hour more incapable to unburden to him my mind. The burden pressed upon me with the weight and horror of an incubus. I forced myself repeatedly from the presence of him I loved above all earthly things, and wept in my closet, over a fate which held before my eyes a fair heaven, imparted the capabilities of enjoying it and the burning wish to reach it, and yet guarded it with a demon whose visage was the chosen birthplace of terror. My struggles to impart the intelligence had become weaker and weaker, as the lapse of time rendered any declaration I could make less and less worthy of credit. If I had had the feeling of guilt, I would have naturally taken means, by removing the articles, to avoid detection; but, filled though I was with the forebodings of ruin and shame, none of the ordinary means of avoiding my fate ever occurred to me; and,

though they had, my mind, filled with pure and elevated sentiments, would have shrunk aghast at the devices of guilt.

What I had already suffered produced such an effect upon me, that I was reduced to the condition of a sickly, lingering creature, destitute of the sustaining power that enables the most wretched of mortals to support their existence, and continue on this stage of crime and misery. Even my cherished views of the grace and beauty of my favourite ethics ceased to yield me any pleasure; all my thoughts, hopes, and feelings were absorbed by the one great and ever-present conviction, that I was liable to be suspected—nay, proved a robber; and every ring of the door bell sounded in my ears as the prelude to my ruin. My condition was soon noticed by the solicitude of my benefactors, who, by inviting company to the house, endeavoured to drive away what they termed my sorrow for my aunt. Mrs Ball and Anne Ball were of these parties. They looked at me as if they enjoyed some signal triumph; and though, by crouching into the corner of the room, I tried to avoid them, they seemed to take a delight in following me and contrasting the hilarity of their joy with the gloom of my melancholy. Shall I ever forget the looks of these women? When shall their words fade from my ear? Anne Ball put a question to me—Why did I not wear my aunt's diamond necklace? I swooned, and was carried out. What a night was that!

In the morning I forced myself to the breakfast table, though I could scarcely walk that length. Augustus had, for several hours, been studying some portions of Plato, where that philosopher, as he said, arrays, in the most beautiful language of any nation on earth, the most exalted ideas of man's capabilities in the great field of heaven-directed virtue that ever fired the brain of the philosophic philanthropist. Ill as I was, I listened to his description of what he had read; but every word was a dagger whose hilt was set with rubies, whose point sought my heart. The thrilling and swelling emotions which would, at one time, have obeyed the sounds of his voice attuned to such music of moral spheres, seemed to fall back upon my heart and suffocate me. The bell of the outer door now rang with considerable vehemence, and I heard the steps of several individuals enter. I thought I heard my own name mentioned, and shortly the step of one person, the others apparently remaining below, was heard upon the stair. The parlour door opened, and George Ball, holding in his hand a paper, stood before us. He bowed to Augustus and his mother; but to me he threw only the glance of a cunning, triumphant eye. My heart was still; every muscle, voluntary and involuntary, seemed bound up in the grasp of a spasm; and freezing fear, in place of breath, when my lungs played not, sustained me as a statue is sustained. George Ball spoke—

"I trouble your family this morning, Mr Merling, on a matter of business. I hold in my hand a warrant of the sheriff to search the repositories of Miss Martha Ballingal, resident in your house, for certain jewels of great value, which belonged to Miss Greville, her aunt, and an inventory of which was found in the empty box where the articles were deposited. Mrs Greville, as you and your mother both know, declared on her deathbed that she had been robbed of these jewels; there was another witness who heard the same declaration; and the empty box, with the inventory, corroborated the statement of Mrs Greville, who, indeed, could not have been wrong in a matter which so nearly concerned herself. Now, the heir-at-law has good reason to suppose that these jewels, and particularly a diamond necklace, several pearl ones, and a number of loose jewels, all as set forth in the inventory, are in the trunks of Miss Ballingal; and the sheriff has, accordingly, granted a warrant for the purpose of having her repositories

examined. I have stated these things to you at once, because the lady is under your protection, and I would not have conceived it fair to search lockfast places in your house without first making this intimation to you personally."

Augustus looked at George Ball for some moments without speaking. He had been taken by surprise, and the communication had roused in him such a conflict of feelings that he was entirely unmanned. A short time brought him to the power of a reply. Mrs Merling sat as one entranced. I was still able to maintain my position, but was ready to fall at a single turn of this extraordinary ceremony.

"We were aware, sir," replied Augustus, "that Mrs Greville had lost or been robbed of her jewels, because we heard her declare so; but, in duty to the feelings of Miss Ballingal, who is beyond suspicion, we have refrained from alluding to the subject until some light should be thrown upon the manner in which the articles were carried off. The repositories of the maid should have been searched. As to Miss Ballingal, that lady, I will take upon me to say, will cheerfully lay them open to your inspection."

I heard no more that I could understand. A confused sound of men's voices, and of their feet, passing and re-passing, fell on my ear, and stifled screams of a female mixed at times with them, and died away into hollow moans. I do not know what time elapsed; but I found myself in my own apartment alone. I tried to lift myself up and look around. My trunks were open; the place where the jewels had been was ransacked; the jewels themselves were gone. I went to the door and tried to open it; but it was locked, and the rough voice of a man answered by requesting me to remain quiet. It was not the voice of Augustus or of George Ball. I had never heard it before. Presently the door was opened with a loud noise, and three men entered. They threw a shawl over me, and placed on my head my bonnet, which was lying near me; for they said that I was unable to do these offices for myself. They took hold of my arms, and proceeded to direct me outwards. I passed through the room where we had been breakfasting. Mrs Merling sat in one corner, with a handkerchief over her face, and loud sobs burst from her. Augustus had buried his face in his hands, and I heard heavy groans forcing themselves from his convulsed bosom, in spite of all his efforts to restrain them. They never looked at me. A feeble cry of "Augustus!" came involuntarily from me as I was hurried forward, and I could see his hand waving as if he disowned me in sorrow. In a few minutes more, I was lodged in a prison.

The cell to which I was consigned was dark and loathsome, as all Scotch jails then were, and as many of them still are. A small grating looked out into a yard, where sick debtors were allowed space to walk. A small stream of light came in at this aperture, and exhibited to me all the horrors of my place of confinement—the pallet of straw, a broken chair, and fragments of iron chains, which had been used for the purpose of binding felons. I cannot describe what I felt as my eye glanced on the dim light of the cell, over these articles; yet they added nothing to my pain. I may even say with truth, that they had rather the power of diminishing it—the lowest condition of despair sometimes drawing from an additional evil a species of frozen insensibility, which is felt as a relief. For two or three days, I scarcely moved; my meat lay by the side of my pallet, and I saw crowds of hungry rats come and eat of it—fighting with each other over the vessel, and turning, at times, and looking at me, apparently without terror. The sight of these creatures, at one time, would have made me fly and scream, from an involuntary fear of them, to

which I had all my life been subject; but I now sat and looked at them with apathy, though they approached so near to me that I could have seized them with my extended hand. This fit of inanity gradually wore off; but it was succeeded by a condition a thousand times more fearful; for, as if the restrained blood had obeyed some impulse of reacting nature, my veins began to beat violently, my temples throbbed, and the thoughts that had been frozen or fixed in one gloomy direction, began to career violently—touching all subjects in their progress, retracing every painful circumstance of my lot; contrasting my former happiness with my present misery; foreshadowing my trial, my condemnation, my execution or banishment; and then, again, mixing up a thousand images, leaving me in a state of wild confusion, incapable of distinguishing one thing from another. This was the beginning of a fever. I was insensible for many days—had been bled and blistered—despaired of; and recovered from the brink of death, to meet a fate a thousand times more dreadful. My trial, as I understood, was put off until I should be in a condition to be able to sit upright in the dock. When I became able to speak, I was waited on by a man of the law. I knew not who sent him; but suspected that he came at the bidding of Augustus, who, probably, thought I might yet be brought off. I told the man the truth, and requested him to ascertain whether my aunt was in her senses when she made the declaration on her death-bed. He answered, that he had already made inquiries on that subject; but that none of the witnesses would admit that she was otherwise than sane; and the circumstance of her having been on her death-bed militated against me. He seemed to pity me; but held out no hope. I asked to have one meeting with Augustus, but knew not whether my message reached him. He never came; and I had no relatives to take a part for me in my defence.

The day of trial came; and I was removed in a carriage to the justice hall, and placed at the bar. No one could have known me. I was the mere ghost of what I was, and would have fallen from my seat had I not been supported by two officers who sat by my side. I answered the judges' question, of guilty or not guilty, without rising, according to custom; and the words were no sooner out of my mouth, than I fainted. When I recovered, the trial had begun. The sounds of the witnesses' voices seemed to come to me through some other medium than the ear; for, though seemingly unconscious, I yet heard. Mrs Ball appeared, and swore to the statement of Mrs Greville. The maid-servant identified the jewels. Augustus Merling was put into the witnesses' box. He spoke the truth—what he had heard my aunt declare. His mother was also there, and she spoke the truth—what she had heard my aunt declare. What availed my story against such evidence? What jury could hesitate on a point so clear? I was condemned and sentenced to transportation beyond seas for seven years; but my sentence was commuted for a year's imprisonment. How I bore that—where I have lived since my release—under what name, what privations, what agency, what madness—is it necessary for me to say? Twenty years have passed, and I am still a living, sensitive being. I have seen the children of Ann Ball and Augustus Merling, and I have seen also their parents, though they knew me not. O God! when shall I be relieved!



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAP. XII.—THE EPICURE.

THE varieties in the human constitution are so numerous, and we see so many instances of the will of frail man being subjected to the dominion of appetites whose governing power seems to be almost beyond the reach of moral resolutions, that we cannot always pronounce with certainty that there is in every state of body absolutely *no excuse* for many individuals who are debased by the vice of gulosity. In certain states of the system, there is a demand for food to a certain extent, to keep it up; and, though this may be very great, it as often happens that it is put "in an ill skin" as that it produces overgrowth. But these are advanced stages of the bodily condition; and the very *necessity* for large quantities of food that seems to grow out of certain states of the body, just evinces what we wish to elucidate, that every man is bound to keep off these conditions in the beginning, if he wishes to avoid that fearful complaint, apoplexy, which has become so common in this country—which seems to have been sent upon earth (for every vice has its mulct) as the special and stated punishment of this abuse of the laws of the human constitution, and the sternness and fatality of which proves the rigour of Nature in vindicating her prerogatives.

The late Mr Hector D—, of —, was, in many respects, a peculiar individual. Nature had given him a powerful mind—and his father an excellent education; both of which he applied to purposes of trifling and amusement. Possessed of great powers of humour and wit, he was much beloved by the gentlemen of the county where he resided. They made him preses of their county four-in-hand club—an office which very probably led him into those epicurean habits which afterwards became so inveterately fixed in his constitution. His love of the sports of the field, and of the society of his brother sportsmen, prevented him from thinking of matrimony, except as a subject of merriment. He gloried in celibacy, and used to declare that he never knew a man who arrived at any high sporting character after he burdened himself with a wife. Neither did he think that a married man could ever be a perfect *goulu*; for his wife, he remarked, conceiving herself to be mistress of the house, including the kitchen, interferes with the culinary department, and continually destroys the dishes on which his mind is placed. He had many other peculiarities, which he exhibited more for the amusement of his friends than for the sake of making proselytes, for he did not conceive that moral truth was sufficiently immutable to be worthy of making any great work about—his maxim being the epicurean creed, which inculcates ease and pleasure, however they may be obtained.

At the time when I began to visit Mr D—, he might be about fifty years of age. He had attained to great corpulency, and his habit of body was very unfavourable to health—having a short neck, a round full chest, and high shoulders. He was, in fact, signally an *apoplectique*, though no one could ever convince him that he was not remarkably well made—making allowances for his stoutness, which, he admitted, interfered in some degree with the natural out-

line of his form—as well as a good subject for a long life. This, by the way, is an extraordinary peculiarity in most men, as well as women. There seems to be some *inherent* principle of self-deception in mankind, which prevents them from seeing themselves in their true colours, which they cannot, if they would, conceal from their neighbours. I have, in particular, been long struck with that very remarkable fact in the nature of man, that no individual, however dangerously he is formed for the access of a disease—though he carry about with him a slumbering pro-cataartic cause of a fatal complaint, coiled up like a sleeping serpent in his bowels—will allow himself to believe that there is the slightest risk attending *his* particular case. This fact seems to be founded on the same inherent natural principle which so often conceals from deformed individuals—especially young women, who have dislocations of the spine—a deformity which, to the eyes of all others, is as clear as the midday sun. Indeed, the same principle extends to moral deformities, preventing, as we see every hour, the slave of vice, from either contemplating or admitting his crimes or his faults, while, in regard to the imperfections of his neighbours, he exerts and glories in the exercise of a power of vivid perception which will not allow to escape his censure the most venial peccadillo. Mr D— persisted in believing that he was the best formed man of the four-in-hand club; and used to take many a bet that he would outlive all its members.

The occasion of my first visit to Mr D—, was a slight attack of the gout. The pain of this enemy of good-living and good-humour was a great annoyance to him, as, without having danger enough attending it to produce serious thoughts, it interfered with his habits of good-fellowship in a manner that provoked his spleen, which he found worse to digest than his ragouts, however piquant they were made by his French *artiste*. We have two remedies for this complaint—temperance and flannel. I recommended both to him; but he laughed heartily at my prescription of spare living, and asked me if I conceived he would make a good exchange, by *swapping* gout for melancholy—a disease invariably attending an empty stomach. He had no objections to the flannel, which, he admitted was one of the most comfortable medicines in the pharmacopeia; but I assured him that its power did not extend to the fountain head of the disease, being efficacious only in removing, by absorption, a part of the stream which was supplied by the deeper sources of high and luxurious living. I cannot say he did not believe me, or doubted my professional opinion; but, like all the rest of his kind, he was not disposed to trouble himself about the truth of a proposition which, if established, would interfere with the sovereign of his enjoyments—good living. He was quite contented, he said, good-naturedly, accompanying his statement with a peculiarly rich Ionic chuckle, to suffer a few pangs about the extremities, in consideration of the pleasure he derived from the more important part of his system—the stomach.

I had another and a better reason, however, for rousing him to a proper sense of the danger attending his love of good cheer. I never saw any person more favourably disposed, by the form of his body, for an attack of apoplexy.

It is not our province to push forward our opinions officiously, when they may have the effect of producing apprehension in the minds of patients; and though, in this instance, I knew that I had a reckless, joyous, and fearless individual to work upon, I was anxious to produce in him some amendment in his mode of living, rather by the fear of a stronger attack of his gout, than by an allusion to the more serious disease which threatened to cut him off on some early day on a moment's warning. I had little doubt but that his gout would increase, in a short time, to a degree which would defy his Ionic laugh, and prove a powerful auxiliary in the cause of the regeneration of his habits.

He had afterwards various attacks of his gout—each succeeding paroxysm being stronger than its predecessor. One onset of the disease was exceedingly violent. His left foot was greatly swelled, and the pain shot up his limb like the pangs of a splintered bone. As he sat in his large, soft-backed arm-chair, with his foot, like a well-grown child, swathed in flannel, resting on a pillow, his hand pressed on his left knee, and his back rigid, his head thrown back on the chair, and the muscles of his face all strung with pain, I sat and contemplated the victim of gulosity and epicurism. I was determined to seize the opportunity of doing him a signal service; and, in spite of the twisting of his face into the most frightful grimaces, I introduced the subject of eating.

"I suppose," said I, "you are satisfied, at least for *the present moment*, that it would be for your advantage to amend your mode of living, renounce the factitious and unhealthy dishes prepared by your French cook, and return to natural food."

"Doctor, you are a cruel man," he replied, "to plague me *now* on such a subject. Do you not perceive the pain I am enduring? How can you suppose my mind can work when the body is under such hellish torture? Oh! oh! that large toe—what a rebellious scoundrel!"

"The seat of the rebellion is in the stomach," said I, relentlessly following up my purpose. "The provinces are easily managed when the capital is subdued."

"Another time—another time, for mercy's sake," he cried, still grinning hideously with real pain. "My agony rises to such a pitch as even to take away my very hearing. Your words carry merely an uncertain confused sound to my ear. Ha! that lacerating pang! I fear the disease is getting to my heart. I never felt the pain so high before. I fear I'm in for what you doctors call retrocedent gout. Eh! Is not that the name?"

"I was talking about the stomach," continued I, "into which the gout sometimes retreats."

"Oh! we shall keep it out there," said he. "Louis Gerard will take care of that."

"And drive it into the kidneys," said I. "Louis Gerard, I presume, is your French cook. I am satisfied he will be your murderer. These pains proclaim his power over you. Is it possible that you will persist in a course of living which produces such tortures as you are now suffering?"

"Tortures indeed!—tortures indeed!" cried he, wringing his hands. "Did ever mortal endure such agony. You see I'm totally unable to understand you, and yet you persevere cruelly in assailing my unconscious ears with ill-timed advices. Ha! that stinging adder!"

The door opened at this moment, and the grinning face of a Frenchman presented itself.

"How is de turkey to be done, Monsieur?" cried he.

"*Dindon en daube*," replied the victim of gout.

"And de chicken?" said the cook.

"*Poulets aux huitres*," responded the invalid.

"I cannot get de hoysters," said the cook. "There are none in de market."

"But they're in the sea, you rascal," cried Mr D—, in a great rage. "Hasten to the coast, and bribe the fishermen to drag for my especial use."

The Frenchman disappeared in an instant, well assured no doubt, of the uselessness of endeavouring to change the Medes-and-Persians law of a determined epicure.

"Your sense of hearing," said I, after the door was shut, "revived very suddenly on the appearance of the French cook."

"Did you never hear of Miss M'Avoy of Liverpool," replied he, half laughing and half grinning from the effect of his pain, "who not only heard through her stomach, but could read print by it. If a leaf of a cookery book were placed upon mine, I believe I should be able to read it, especially if it treated of *dindon en daube*."

"I fear I must give you up as incurable," said I. "I have already told you I can do nothing for your gout, except by the means of a regeneration of your stomach. That lies with yourself, and my commission is ended."

I left him that day, angry at his stubbornness, yet not a little amused by the preference shewn to the conversation of the scientific Frenchman over that of the scientific Englishman. His gout continued for several weeks, during which time he continued to eat and drink as usual. I did not again, while that attack lasted, endeavour to turn him from his imprudent, if not dangerous course, for I plainly saw that it was not at least in the power of all the pain of that most painful of diseases to prevent him from gratifying his diseased appetite with the poisonous preparations of his French *artisle*."

My next visit was requested by a sister of Mr D—, a maiden lady of some understanding and sensitive feelings, but great vanity, and of a wonderfully spare habit of body. She took me into her apartment, and, with an appearance of great sorrow, apprehension, and mystery, told me she wanted to consult me on a very delicate affair. I was at a loss to understand the meaning of this slipshod kind of approach to the important affair she had to communicate and had a kind of suspicion that she was about to enter upon some of the precincts of the dominion of the blind god. How far wide of the truth was my vain thought! She began, in a low whisper, to say that she had a dreadful apprehension of apoplexy—a disease which appeared to her the most terrible of all human ailments, in so far as it afforded no time to the dying sinner to think of his eternal interests. She then asked me if the visitation was often incident to females. I replied that they certainly were not exempt from the disease; but that a great many more men than women became victims to this disease, and very often from the effects of their own folly, in pampering an overgrown body. My statement seemed both to please and grieve her, if I could judge from the alternation of feelings that appeared in her countenance. She remained silent for some time—again fell into her mysterious attitude, and drew her chair a little nearer me. She then said, still speaking low, that her father had died of apoplexy; she understood also her grandfather; and, after a very laborious investigation through old genealogical aunts, she had ascertained that her great-grand-aunt Betty D—, who lived in the year 1705, had died of the same complaint, on the very day of her third marriage, with Mr William Mosley of Castlemyrtille. As she finished this statement, she cast a deep sigh, and stared me full in the face, as if to see the effect that such a fearful announcement produced upon me. I exhibited, I presume, no great surprise, and far less any appearance of sympathetic apprehension—a circumstance which probably surprised her.

She waited some time in expectation of hearing me say something in reference to her statement, while I was waiting for her own application of her statement to the use for which she had designed it. When she came to see the

relative position in which we were placed by these cross purposes she perceived the necessity of proceeding; but she was apparently afraid to trust her lips with the thought that weighed upon her heart. After some struggles of the throat, she at last said—

“Is it your opinion, sir, that apoplexy is hereditary?”

I replied that, unless the disease was in some degree connected with form of body, it was not generally considered to have much of an hereditary character; but that certainly, if there was any decided descent of form and habit of system, there might be reason for supposing that the same cause, such as high and luxurious living, would produce, in many instances, the same effects as a direct hereditary taint.

“Ah, God be praised,” she said “I do not live luxuriously—the leg of a lark, or the little bird they call wheatear, would almost be a surfeit to me; but I am only one of the family—my poor brother, you know, sir, how he lives, and no one can mistake his apoplectic figure—it is the very picture of his father’s; yet it is impossible to make him think so. I have hinted the subject to him often, and receive for my pains what you, I presume, sir, have also done—nothing but some good-humoured joke.”

I was not ill-pleased at this coincidence of thought and purpose between me and Miss D—. I augured from it good results in favour of Mr D—. I told her, for her own satisfaction, (examining the while her spare, scraggy figure, on which there was scarcely twenty pounds of flesh,) that, so far as I was able to discover, she ran no great risk of experiencing the fate of her ancestor Betty.

She looked at me, as I spoke, with a curious, suspicious, disappointed-like expression, as if she thought I meant that she would not die of apoplexy *on the day of her third marriage*; but it was necessary for me to misunderstand, or misconstrue, or pay no attention to her look. I was approaching quicksands, and became cautious.

I proceeded, therefore, more specifically, in telling her that she ran no risk of falling a victim to apoplexy, at least if I could judge from her shape. I was again getting into danger, but of a very different kind. I saw her eye turned askance upon the mirror, and observed a very peculiar kick of the head, which I have often seen in maiden ladies, and the meaning of which it is not difficult to understand.

“No; God be thanked!” she said, in an affected tone, “*my figure* is not apoplectic.”

Doctors have no right to laugh in the presence of serious-minded patients; but I was almost constrained to transgress the rule, as I scanned her wrinkled neck, as thin and long as a heron’s, her high cheek-bones, and shoulders that seemed ready to cut the skin and escape.

“I believe,” she continued, “that thin, genteel, handsome people, are seldom molested by this disease, whose victims are generally bull-necked, round-shouldered, full-breasted, and stout all over. Eh! am I right in my description, doctor?”

I assured her that Galen could not have described the persons of an apoplectic and non-apoplectic more correctly. Her personal triumph was now finished and complete; and, with a seriousness and gravity, real enough, doubtless, but evidently based on the satisfaction of a gratified *belle*, she said—

“But, oh! poor Hector!” (her brother,) “how differently *he* is formed! You cannot imagine, sir, how I tremble at his huge, vulgar figure. He cannot even bow now with any passable grace; and his gout, which you say is entirely owing to his high living, prevents him from walking. But what are these things to the danger of falling down in a fit of apoplexy? Merciful heaven! I often think he will drop at my side. I could not outlive the sight an hour. I would die with perfect fright. The very thought of it

haunts me night and day, and even now I shudder nervously (as you may see) at the very mention of it.”

I saw plainly that this fear had taken deep root in her mind, and endeavoured to bring her to a more sober way of contemplating the subject, by telling her that no appearances were more fallacious in medicine than those of mere bodily formation—the body being a machine endued with a conservative principle of existence, coiled up often in the very heart of distortions—counteracting depraved action, and turning it to account of the natural functions of health.

“But you said, doctor,” continued she, “that where the son inherits the shape of his father, and follows his system of high living, he runs the same risk as if there was a real hereditary taint. This confirms my apprehensions. Is there no way by which we can (acting together) avert from him this dreaded calamity?”

It was not my wish to remove entirely, even if that had been in my power, her apprehensions. I could make her an instrument in my endeavours to save her brother from the ruin into which he was evidently fast hastening. I therefore told her that it had, for some time, been my object to get him to live more moderately—a change which I expected to produce by the timeous appearance of a powerful auxiliary, his gout—but that I had not yet been able to produce any impression upon him. It was, however, my intention, I added, to persevere in my endeavours; and her assistance might be of much service in the good cause. My explanation pleased her. I undertook, in the first instance, to lay before her brother a true statement of his danger, resulting from the combination of co-operating causes—his hereditary form, his acquired *polysarchia*, and his luxurious gulosity; while she agreed to back me by her efforts in the kitchen, where, as appeared from her confessions, her authority was every hour disputed by the *artiste*, who was patronised by his master, and authorized to defend himself, his *fricassees*, *salmis*, and *devils*, by the aid of forks, spits, skewers, and pokers, *brevi manu*, or *ad longum manum*, as he might find convenient. She informed me of what I was aware, that her brother would defend himself by a good-humoured raillery and determined scepticism to the very last, and that she despaired of our being able, by our combined efforts, of making anything of him.

I had lost, in the meantime, my auxiliary the gout; and my only weapon being the terrors of apoplexy, I confess I had no great hopes of success; for, as I have already taken occasion to remark, the most of mankind receive, along with their natural faults, a natural scepticism which resists every effort of friends to shew them in their natural colours; but if it is difficult to shew a man his bad habits of body, and more difficult, in the general case, to get him to amend them, how much more difficult is it to produce that amendment through a compelled sacrifice of one of the strongest appetites—a love of good eating! On my next visit, I watched for some time my opportunity, and found it in a disquisition into which my *healthy* patient glided by my leading, as to the breeding of hunters. I took occasion to remark, that there was also in our species a very remarkable descent, from father to son, of the type or character of the structure and disposition of the parent; and I saw that, as I broached this subject, his eye sought my face suspiciously, as if he had had some reason to suppose that I alluded to the case of him and his father; but I proceeded, and stated that we could enumerate a great many hereditary diseases which undoubtedly followed a peculiarity of corporeal structure. I then instanced the case of his father and grandfather, and asked him if he did not think there was a great necessity for his conforming himself to the rules of a rigid sobriety and continence, with a view to escape (what was worse than the gout) his

family disease. I studied his countenance as I put to him this question, which I thought could not have been answered by any ordinary person without at least some twinge of fear and solicitude; but, as I suspected, in place of exhibiting any symptoms of apprehension (a feeling produced by us with too much facility, and often against our inclinations) he appeared careless and reckless, if he did not assume an air of buoyant triumph over what he may have thought the prejudices of old women and doctors.

"I see what your aim is," he replied, indulging in that peculiar kind of laugh called the "Ionic laugh," because it was used by Ionic epicures, and afterwards applied to the cackination of all votaries of luxury. "You wish to make out that I, though, maugre my stoutness, as handsome as Apollo Belvidere, inherit the form of my father, who, unfortunately, possessed an apoplectic habit; and that, therefore, I must live like Diogenes, on herbs, and renounce all the good things of this world. Ha! sir, this will not do. I must be plain with you; for, by the wine-cups of Sybaris, and the flesh-pots of Egypt, I am partial to the old saying of Terence, that he who lives *well* lives *long*. Abate your terrors; there is no fear of me. If I eat to get *stout*, I shall hunt to get *lean*; and, if my neck is made no longer, it runs no great risk of becoming shorter; so that I may defy the two enemies of short-necked lovers of pleasure—a rope, and apoplexy."

I heard this irreverent treatment of a serious subject, with pity; and the curious fact, which I have so often seen exemplified, was again proved to me—that good living induces an easy, good-humoured state of mind, which is absolutely impervious to any fear of danger arising from the vice of the *goulu*: gluttony wraps itself up in the mantle of Momus, and dies blindfolded. I was determined to take the bull by the horns, and used the liberty of pointing out to him the dangerous parts of his form. I even made him measure with his hand, the distance between his chin and the top of the sternum, and apply the same gauge to me. He complied, with the very best temper, raising always the chorus of his Ionic chuckle, in the midst of his sceptical expressions; and swearing, by genteel oaths, that I was cheating him by my projected mode of measurement.

"It will not do!" he exclaimed, at last. "I am satisfied I have a good neck; and by the manes of Apicius, I'm right glad on't, for two reasons:—*Primo*, I'm independent of this bugbear, apoplexy; and may enjoy my dinner like other honest men. *Secundo*, By having a long craig, I possess the advantage of enjoying the *long journey* of a sweet *morceau* down my throat, to its ultimate place of destination."

He laughed immoderately at his joke, throwing the light of his merry eye over the dark cloud that lay on my ominous countenance. I observed that the operation of his diaphragm and lungs, forced up into his face a great superabundance of blood, and produced a kind of choking wheeze, not unlike the sound uttered by the victim of croup.

"Come, said he," after the choking symptoms had subsided, "you must dine with me. I shall answer all your arguments by and through the *tongue*, which stands to the belly in the place of an *ear*. The ancients were right, when they said that the belly had no ears—*venter auribus caret*—if they meant natural ears; for you are deaf to all my arguments, that good living is good life; and it is well that is so, since, otherwise, that noble receptacle of the good things of the world would have been filled with sounds in place of victuals; and I would have become, like the old woman of Cumæ, or my sister, Miss Grizel—a mere voice. You must, therefore, *hear* through the *tongue*. Ha! man, what are you alarmed at? Plutarch says, that

man is made lighter by a well-filled stomach. I know not what my hunter, Springall, would say to that; but what enables me to laugh over the ills of this cursed world, but the elasticity of the lightest of all animal consistence, *fat*? Ay, sir, smile as you may, I repeat it—*fat—fat*."

Every sally of his humour produced a chuckle; but he had now wrought himself up to such a pitch of fun, that his whole body *hobbled* under the excitement of his lungs. I have always found that a bold assumption and a good laugh, provided the latter moves the whole viscera, are worth a thousand arguments; and are, indeed, almost insuperable. I could not reply to the triumphant *goulu*. Any weak attempt I made, was in the beginning drowned by the reverberations (as they might be called) of his deep laugh, which continued at intervals, like the decaying cackle of a parturient hen, to give indications of its action, long after the original spirit had exhausted itself. He continued to press me to dine with him. I consented, with a view principally to see "the lion feed;" and in the hope of being able afterwards to shew, by a specification of his sweet poisons, how injurious they must prove to his constitution.

I attended, on the day appointed for dinner. In the drawing-room, I saw Mr D—, and thought I could observe that, from his look and manner, he anticipated some further triumph over me. A number of brother gourmands were collected, doubtless for the purpose of serving as his staff. They were collected in a coterie; and seemed busy discussing the comparative qualities of some dishes, which they did with that peculiar blandness of look, clear oily appearance of the lips, and softness of manner, so apparent in gourmands engaged in an argument. In religion, politics, and even philosophy, how high do we see the arguments rise!—how bitterly do the antagonists assail each other!—what epithets do they fulminate from their heated batteries, as if they intended to kill in the manner of wind-bullets, by the mere speed and bicker of their words!—their eyes shoot forth fire, their hands are clenched, their lips are as dry as buckram. In *gourmandise*, how wonderfully is every thing changed! Though the combatants are *toto calo* opposed, they never get angry; they get, on the contrary, better pleased; because every argument, even of an opponent, is stated in support of a *dish* which makes their mouths water; they smile upon each other in *opposition*; they fight with soft words of peace, and kill each other with the blandishments of epicurean love. Such was the kind of battle in which Mr D— and his brother gourmands were engaged, as I sat by them waiting the announcement of the dinner, by what the epicureans termed a bell; but what I was inclined to call a knell. The effect of this sound upon the combatants, was like that of a declaration of peace; but never were the effects of this blessing less contrasted with the misfortunes of war.

The dinner was intended as a silent mockery of my *meagre* theory—a scene of ludicrous contrast, prepared by the master with a view to gratify at once his love of good eating and good humour. His sister, who, as already stated, was as spare as a greyhound, got placed before her dishes intended to be distributed by her, of the most meagre or grotesque kind; while, opposite to Mr D—, were placed the most luscious and expensive that could be procured. Below Mr D—'s gratified nostrils, I observed, first, a very rich dish of turbot, garnished in the most superb manner; while the spare Miss D— was required to unravel a coil of spitchcocked eels, entire—a dish not of a meagre kind certainly, but presenting an appearance whose grotesqueness made up for its want on that score. Then came (no attention to order being observed) turtle soup—the claret smell of which stimulated the olfactory nerves of the master till his eyes and lips seemed to vic with each other in the extent of their exertions. This he was himself

to deal forth with triumphant hands ; while the spare Miss Grizel D—— was destined to pour upon her guests the thin luxury of what is called in Scotland “green kail”—a dish of which I partook at her fair hands, to the great glee and merriment of the whole gourmands. The next contrast was produced by a fat, large turkey, done in the way of Mr D——’s peculiar liking—*dindon en daube*—and placed opposite to him, at the one end ; while a dish of roasted larks, wheatears, and, as I shrewdly suspected, sparrows, figured opposite to Miss D——. When the cover was taken off the latter dish, the whole table rung with laughter, in consequence, chiefly, as I thought, of a little, pert bird, with kame and top of feathers, being placed, in a living attitude, in the midst of the dish. Miss D—— seemed much annoyed by this trick, and more by the laughter of the guests ; but, recovering herself, she cut off a leg of one of the small crew, of the species of which she was certain, and proceeded, solemnly and proudly, to pick the tiny bones, regardless of the humour of the gluttons, who, between every laugh, were putting in their mouths pieces of the turkey as large as one of the birds which were thus unconsciously the cause of so much merriment. On the same regulating principle, the other parts of this extraordinary entertainment were conducted : richness being opposed by meagreness ; dulness by poignancy ; sweetness by bitterness ; the haggis by the small, piquant *croquet* ; the sheep’s head by a tongue-peeling *salmi* of wild-fowl ; the French *blancmange* with plum-pudding ; cranberries by grapes ; and so forth, through all the variety of courses and changes.

It was curious to notice the triumph of the company as some one described the occult nature of the poisons that were thus introduced, for the apparent purpose of forcing the full stomach to writhe and distend itself into a capacity fitted for receiving, through the mediation of their advocates, the charmed eye and stimulated nostrils of the epicure. It was easy for me to see an effort, on the part of my host, to continue his humorous spirit of opposition to my professional notions of frugality of living—laughing heartily as he saw me prefer the meagre dishes to the proud, sumptuous opponents, of which he partook largely and greedily. He who has seen the peculiar twinkle of the illumined eye of the epicure, as he surveys the object of his love lying smoking before him, sending up to his gladdened nostrils the delightful, stimulating effluvia of its spiced, savoury spirit, never can fail in the detection of the same indication again ; for it is not like any other expression of pleasure or satisfaction I have ever beheld. Every nerve connected with the stomach, gullet, pallet, tongue, nose, lips, and eyes, claims an interest in the delight, and a privilege in its expression—defying all the efforts of an affected indifference to prevent their natural language from being understood ; but my patient took no pains to conceal his delight, if he did not glory in its expression, and rise into an eloquent enthusiasm, mixed with an oblique bantering of me, as he detailed, with the spirit and talent of the scientific *goulu*, all the exquisite virtues of the dishes of which he partook. I endeavoured to oppose him, by enlarging on the dangers of gulosity, in which gratified desires of the appetite generally ended, and on the advantages of spare living, as well to the body as to the mind ; but, so long as the spiced and savoury perfumes of the rich dishes raised their incense of flattery to his face, I produced no effect on the company, who servilely humoured the host by laughing to his witty reply to my argument, that no syllogism against good eating, though framed by Aristotle, could live for a moment in the atmosphere of fragrances we were then inhaling.

“Aristotle never was such a fool,” cried the master, “as to frame an argument against good eating ! All the ancients were great eaters and great drinkers. They were also splendid Amphitryons. Witness their curious cup

they called *amphithetum*, which was made in such a form as to appear to be possessed, in whatever way it was placed, of no bottom ; so that no one could tell how much he drank. Ha ! there was an excellent humour, i’ faith, in that device. But, alas ! the amphithetum has perished—no copy of it remains ; and perished, too, has the noble spirit that inspired the artificer that made, and the Amphitryon that bought it, and the guests that tried in vain to drain it to the bottom. I weep when I think that every man nowadays must know the exact quantity he eats, and the last drop he drinks. Every one holds up in your face the bottom of your dish, and tells you, with sombre looks, that there is ‘death in the pot.’ Ha, ha !—*death in the pot !* Mark that, my Apiciuses—*death in the pot !* I say, keep death out of the pot, as we keep the cold, phlegmatic Bare-bones out of our stomachs, by stuffing them with things that sustain life.”

Many of the gourmands proceeded in much the same style as the master of ceremonies. My weak voice was drowned ; and Miss D——’s looks were treated—as maiden ladies’ looks generally are, even though they are *side ones*—with contempt. I left the party soon, with a determination to resign my efforts at reclaiming one so far beyond the reach of even a sense of his own danger.

I think it was about three years after the period I have now mentioned, that I was one day suddenly called to attend Mr D——, who had been suddenly seized with a violent illness. I was just at the time preparing for a very late dinner ; but personal considerations are the doctor’s sacrifice ; and luckily I felt less reluctance in postponing my meal, than he to whom I was called would have been inclined to do. I posted hard to his house, where a scene presented itself beyond description. There were a great number of people collected in the diningroom, which was lighted up with chandeliers, filled with wax tapers ; the table was covered with a variety of dishes, some whole, some half-consumed ; and everything indicated that dinner had been suddenly interrupted. On a chair at the foot of the table, sat, or lay, Mr D——, with his head thrown back, and half reclining to a side, as if he was in a faint ; his vest was thrown open, and various individuals were busy about him, some holding scent-bottles, water, wine, and stimulants ; and one or two applying them confusedly, and all apparently at a loss what to do.

The moment I saw him, and heard the well-known snort of the apoplectic, I knew all—he was under a severe attack of apoplexy, having been seized in the midst of his dinner.

What an extraordinary coincidence ! In our affected love of physical causes, and our pride of attributing all things to their influence, we settle down from the wonder produced by such an occurrence into the apathy of cold philosophy. These things are calculated by the doctrine of chances, and there is an end to’t. Thus are the ways of heaven analyzed by the conduct of man, who stands on the threshold of the knowledge of nature, and thinks in pride he is within the *penetralia* of the temple.

I bled him, and got him put to bed. The company separated—for they had *dined*.

I afterwards attended the patient in the illness which succeeded this attack. I required to bleed him often ; and the consequence was, that he was miserably reduced in body. His mind, too, was, in some degree, impaired—at least, his sister made that allegation—for my visits were generally too short to enable me to observe any signs of weakness of intellect beyond the ordinary effects of great reduction of the body. I saw, however, a great change was in the course of being effected in the domestic economy. The French cook was turned away, and Miss D—— was determined to retain the power she had acquired, and exercise it for the purpose of preventing a

repetition of the occurrence that had taken place. The patient, who was very weak, was removed, by her orders, up to the highest room in the house. She said this change was for affording him the benefit of the air; but I shrewdly suspected it was for the purpose of his being the more effectually subjected to her power and will. From her hints, I could plainly perceive that she was inclined to be more severe in the discipline she was to impose, in consequence of having suffered, for so many years, so much terror and anguish from his perseverance in the course which had ended so miserably. Having made him prisoner in this way, she proceeded to feed him precisely according to her own ideas of what was proper and necessary for him; and, notwithstanding of my wish to keep him on a regimen of low diet, I was necessitated to recommend something more generous occasionally than she seemed inclined to give him. I would not say that there was any revenge mixed up with her feelings towards a brother in such a miserable situation as he was now reduced to. She seemed to love him; but yet there was apparent in her conduct some slight feeling of triumph over one who, for so long a time, had rendered her miserable, and at length himself helpless, by disregarding her counsel.

For several months the poor invalid was kept in the attic story of his own house, and fed upon a species of food which above all things he abhorred. I ascertained very soon that he was beginning again to express a wish for something "nice"—the very breathing of which had put his sister in great alarm. He had made the request to her in a piteous tone, and he expressed it also to me. I was not inclined to be so rigorous as his keeper, and accordingly recommended some safe diet, which, without being too nutritious, might quicken the powers of his system, which had suffered dreadfully from the attack. I had no doubt but that my directions would be obeyed. But I had soon reason to suspect that the relentless disciplinarian had paid no attention to them, having persevered in giving him, in spite of his remonstrances and threats, (the latter of which he was unable to execute,) the slops and maigre dishes she thought best calculated to keep down his flesh, and conquer his returning appetite for savory food.

For some time I was kept in ignorance of this proceeding, the jailor-nurse having adroitly told me in the lobby that Mr D—— did not require to see me at that time, that he was asleep, and did not wish to be wakened, and so forth. This could be carried on only for a short period; and latterly I insisted upon seeing the patient whether he was asleep or awake. She reluctantly allowed me to take my course, and I proceeded to his bed-side. I soon saw that he was much improved in health, though very thin, and, as it turned out, very hungry. When I drew aside the curtain, he beckoned me to listen to his whisper, and told me to get his sister out of the room. I did so with some difficulty, and I saw the patient's eyes glisten with joy as he found he had an opportunity of speaking to me alone.

"O doctor!" he said, "how delighted I am to see you! You will force that relentless woman to do me justice. Would you believe it," (whispering low,) "that I have not tasted roast, stewed, boiled, or brandered, for two months? Nothing, O God! nothing but thin, white, watery slops, for ever and ever. My stomach is bleached and washed, and bleached again, with her infernal broths, and teas, and gruels, till I feel all throughout like an old child with the weaning fever. What am I to do? I am a thousand times more miserable than I was when I lay convulsed under the effect of your lancet. Death would be a relief to me. The twisting anguish of hunger is insufferable. I cannot bear it. I must have meat, or I will die by this hand."

I had here a delicate part to play. I said what I have often noticed, that his morbid appetite was coming back upon him, and that the attack had not produced a salutary fear of another visitation. While, therefore, I could not altogether approve of the conduct of Miss D—— in keeping him on a diet so low that it might rather nourish his wish to return to his old life, I could not shew him that I disapproved of her conduct.

"Your sister," said I, "is keeping you on this low diet for your good. If you get up in body again, and feed yourself with strong nutritious meats, you will produce another attack of apoplexy, which will, in all likelihood, kill you outright."

"That dreadful warning I fear," he said, mournfully; "but I would rather die by such a visitation than be tortured in the manner I now am. My stomach seems to feed on its own coats, and my whole viscera are wrung and twisted by the agonies of hunger. My mind, meanwhile, revolves eternally on a joint. Savory smells haunt my nostrils, and visions of the goodly roast float in my brain. Then comes the hollow grumbling of an empty stomach, with its sad reality of unmitigated misery. I cry, I roar for a single mouthful of solid food, for mercy's sake. My sister hears me as if she heard me not. I am unable to rise. The servants dare not attend me. I crawled yesterday to the top of the stair, and cried for my cook, in a voice that would have melted stone—'Louis Gerard!—Louis Gerard!—for the sake of heaven, come to the assistance of your master!' But no answer was given me, and the cold forced me to crawl to my bed again. O doctor! one mouthful of a fricassee, or even of a vulgar, plain boiled or roasted joint. For God's sake! one single solitary mouthful, and I will bless you for ever."

He seized me by the arm as he ejaculated, with great vehemence, these words. I tried to liberate myself; but he would not allow me to go until I promised to give directions for the gratification of his wishes. I proceeded then to Miss D——'s apartment, where I found her alone.

"Your brother says you are starving him, Madam," said I, with a half-smile. "I know you are incapable of injuring him; but I fear you are, by this strict regimen, only torturing his stomach, and forcing it to yearn the more strongly after his old habits of living."

"I give him exactly," said she, gravely and solemnly, "ounce for ounce, sup for sup, kind for kind, of what I take to myself. Many a day he forced me to take what he took; now he must take what I take. It is all for his good. What supports me cannot injure him."

"Good God! madam," said I, in amazement, "do you suppose that a man with a large person and an extended stomach, can be supported by what sustains your fragile form?"

"For twenty years, sir," answered she, "I laboured to bring myself to my present genteel size, by drinking vinegar and 'eating small,' as becomes all delicate females. I would have been as large as he if I had eaten as he did. He may now be as small as I am by eating as I do. But do you not know, sir, that he is again sighing after his old habits of high-living, crying out wildly for *fricassees*, *salmis*, and *ragouts*, and disregarding the safety of his weak body, and the interests of his soul? The moment he is able to rise, my authority is at an end, his ruin sealed; and, if I do not use the opportunity of reclaiming him I now possess, in all likelihood a sudden death will prevent me from ever having another."

I had myself had some evidence of the truth of her assertion, and could not help being considerably influenced by her statement.

"If you give him," said I, "a reasonable quantity of food moderately nutritious, I shall be contented, whatever he may be."

"That he already gets," replied she: "and you know

am mistress of this house"—(trying to smile.) "It was your province to bleed, it is mine to feed. Leave him to me."

"I do not wish," said I, "to interfere with your authority; but you are aware that all morbid appetites and affections must be cured gradually. A sudden check put upon these often produces death."

"I must have been a great murderer then," said she, smiling satirically, and looking sideways into the mirror; "for I have more than once checked a violent passion without producing death. I never hesitate about putting a sudden extinguisher upon the affections of the men that presume to sigh for me;" (ogling herself again; "yet, did you ever hear that I killed a lover? The stomach is as tough and sinewy as the heart. He! he! he!")

And she giggled, and looked again in the mirror. Much as I pitied the condition of her brother, who was subjected to the authority of this dry, bare-boned personification of female tyranny, I thought he had reason to bless himself that he was her brother only, and not her lover. She had sense and feeling enough, however, to prevent her from pushing her rigid discipline to extremities; and, upon the whole, I saw more danger in gratifying the returning desire of her brother, for his former luxurious habits, than in the stern restraint she was imposing upon him, with a view to reclaim him from his indulgences. Knowing the love of maiden ladies for tea, I was somewhat apprehensive she might give the patient too much of that beverage.

"I have every confidence in your treatment of your brother," said I, "and cannot doubt that you will see the propriety of not exciting his nerves. A little *beef-tea* should be given him to strengthen him, while a cup of the vegetable kind may occasionally be given to enliven him."

"For twenty years," replied she, "my brother and I quarreled about that heavenly gift, the Chinese cordial. He hated it as strongly as I loved it. I take it three times a-day. It puts one in such exquisite spirits, and makes one so interesting! It brings out in such perfection all the feminine qualities of tenderness, irritability, and sensibility; so as really to be capable of making one weep or faint on a moment's notice, and on the slightest occasion. It keeps off that nasty, vulgar obesity I so much abominate; and must be a very—really a very good thing for Hector. He gets it thrice a-day. How I stare at him, as he twists his face at so delicate a cordial! He even curses it—ay, sir, the profane creature curses *tea*. But I know what's good for him; and you must just leave him to me. He *must* be cured, for I would not suffer what I have suffered from the fear of apoplexy—no, sir, for the whole earth."

"Not even with *China* included?" said I. "But, seriously, madam, you must give your brother less tea. It is not good for him, except occasionally, as a refreshment."

Latterly, I got the rigid maiden to come more into my terms; but her discipline continued to be kept up with great perseverance; and such was her authority over the servants—some of whom she changed, to suit her own views—that no one dared to interfere in behalf of the helpless epicure. The necessity for my appearing to be strictly opposed to his wishes, prevented me from modifying, so far as I would have done, her stern rules, and forced me to the choice of the lesser of two evils. The state, in the meantime, of the poor patient, was the most miserable that could be imagined. The feelings of the confirmed drunkard, who is, by force or necessity, debarred from the use of his accustomed stimulant, have been described, and are well known. Less attention has been paid (because the case has not so often occurred) to the case of the *gouty* under a stern regimen; but I am satisfied that his misery is, if possible, even greater than that of the votary of Bacchus; for, while he endures all the physical pains to which the drunkard is exposed from the horrid *void* and eternal

craving which (as physical causes) depress him and gnaw his vitals, his fancy, through which career the endless series of images of his luxury, supplies that more exquisite torture of the continued disappointment of wishes, strengthened by a diseased appetite, and blazoned by the workings of imagination.

The state of the patient, when I next saw him, was, if possible, still more miserable, though his bodily health was, perhaps, improved. Indeed, his misery increased with his strength; for his appetite, curbed and restrained by the stern regimen still kept up, became more and more importunate, while he was yet unable to assert his right of dominion as master, and take what he wanted by force. His pain was excessive, and his situation deplorable; but he had forfeited any claim to proper sympathy, by his former reckless disregard of good advice. He made again the most piteous appeals to me for assistance against what he called the tyranny of his sister.

"I will indict you all for murder!" he exclaimed, as I stood by his bed. "Starvation of a man in his own house, and by those who are bound, by the obligations of duty and gratitude, to afford him the necessaries of life, is surely a crime of the deepest die. Doctors have before now been indicted and condemned, and a sister is not exempted from the vengeance of an injured brother. But when shall I have strength to execute my purpose? Ha, sir! that is a part of the plot. These slops are intended to *keep me weak*—to prevent me from executing my revenge. I see it all. My sister is in my settlement; and you, sir, are unwed. Mark that! Cruel, cruel wretches! But, sir," (lowering his voice almost to a whisper,) "I will forgive you, and her, and every one connected with this affair, if you will grant me one good, substantial meal. If I am to die, let me at least enjoy once more that pleasure which nature has extended to all animals. If I die of a surfeit, her purpose will equally be served. For God's sake, grant me this one request! Give Gerard, my French cook, the liberty of communing with me, for an instant! Let him be my confessor, and, if you please, my murderer! I would sooner die by his hands than those of any other."

The strength of his applications almost forced him from the bed to throw himself at my feet. I assured him that all that had been done was for his service; and that, if he would exercise a little patience, the pangs consequent upon this sudden change in his mode of living would cease, and subsequent good health would repay him for all he was suffering. My advice had no effect upon him. He got only the more violent when he saw that I was not inclined to grant his request.

"Then, sir," cried he, in despair, "I will take my own remedy. I have given you this warning; and, if you disregard it, the consequences be on your own head. I can bear this no longer—it must, it *shall* be put an end to."

The threat implied by these words was, I thought, one of suicide. I felt it, therefore, necessary to put his sister on her guard, that she might remove everything from his reach by which he might effectuate his purpose. This communication roused again fears on her part as strong as those by which she was assailed when she expected the fate which overtook her brother. On both sides she was, as she said, beset with danger. If she gave him his own way, and allowed him to eat as his appetite required, he would, in a very short time, be in the same condition as before; and, if she tried to save him by continuing the course she was now following, he might destroy himself to get quit of the pain produced by the change in his mode of life. I suggested a middle course, recommending to her to gratify him to a certain extent.

"He will get soon stronger, in any event," I continued; "and that, of course, we cannot prevent, even if it should enable him to gratify again his inordinate desire of food."

so, sooner or later, your discipline must end; and, I presume, the safest way will be to begin in time to make a virtue of necessity, and give him what may be termed ordinary meals."

"Alas! I have proceeded too far to recede," replied Miss D—. "Terrified as I am by his threat, I am more terrified by the double evil of his relapsing into his old condition, and of banishing me from the house, which he will instantly do. I must persevere a little longer. You say his pain will go off as his system becomes more reconciled to my spare regimen. How strangely different are people formed! I felt no pain when I, for the sake of being handsome, limited myself to *tea*. Yet he gets, in addition, a very fair allowance. Nothing will satisfy him but a load that would suffocate an ordinary man."

Upon hearing Miss D—'s account of what she had been giving him, I could not find much fault with her regimen, strict as it was. I, therefore, again left him to her charge. Next morning, at an early hour, I was roused by a knocking at my door. A messenger desired my attendance at the house of Mr D—. I went instantly; and found matters in a very extraordinary position. During night, the patient had found his way, on his hands and feet, down stairs, to the larder, where, having eaten voraciously a great load of meat, he became sick, and could not return to his chamber. He had lain all night on the steps of the inside stair leading to his bedroom; and, in the morning, Miss D—, having found his room empty, concluded he had committed self-murder. She immediately began to scream, and, running down stairs to awaken the servants, she fell over the body of her brother, and fainted from the effects of her fright. When I called, both the invalids had been put to their respective beds. Miss D— soon got the better of her fears; but it was some time before my patient recovered from the combined effects of the surfeit and the cold. I had my fears that this unsuccessful rebellion against the authority of the old maid would make him fare worse, if possible, than he had yet done; and my fears were soon realized, for she declared to me her resolution to lock him up, so that it would be out of his power again to throw her into hysterics, either by bringing on another fit of his dreaded disease, or by repeating the act which had produced to her so much terror. Her determination to hold fast the authority she had acquired, was, in short, confirmed by his effort to escape from it; and her subsequent conduct proved that she had all the firmness to put it into execution. A sterner regimen than ever was imposed, with all the tyranny of the rigid disciplinarian. The Chinese cordial was accompanied with less of the sustaining aliment I had prescribed; and I truly began to fear that he might ultimately fall a victim to hunger and passion. I had already exhausted all my arguments in favour of a gradual return to a plain diet. Her answer was ready, and, in her estimation, insuperable—that what supported her was sufficient to support him; and that his own good, and her safety from alarm, could only be consulted by following the system she had adopted.

I now felt myself placed, in my professional capacity, in a situation of some difficulty. I had, of course, nothing to do with the economy of his house: but, while I attended as medical adviser, I was bound to see justice done to the invalid, though his recovery and freedom were ultimately to prove his ruin. I was, however, at this juncture, opportunely freed from my dilemma, by the return home of the brother of the patient, Captain D—, who had for some time been abroad, and who, on my representation, soon saw the necessity of taking the charge of the invalid, and of his house, upon his own responsibility.

On passing through the lobby one day, I was called by Miss D— into her apartment. She was agitated, and kept pacing the room backwards and forwards, casting,

according to her custom at all times, whether composed or excited, occasional glances at the mirror, as she passed and repassed before it.

"You have ruined my brother, sir," she said.

"Why so, madam?" replied I.

"By liberating him from my regimen," she continued, "and transferring my authority to Captain D—."

"It was impossible, madam, that your system could have continued," said I. "I could not have answered for the consequences."

"And will you answer for those that are now more likely to follow?" she replied.

"What mean you, madam?"

"Have you not observed the family habit of body in Captain D— himself," she replied. "Have you not detected the spirit of the epicure in his dull eye and bloated lips, and the body of him, in his overgrown size and unwieldy limbs. It is true, sir. The one is as great an epicure as the other. Gerard the cook is brought back. Mr D— was yesterday lifted to the dinner table, which was literally groaning with the same species of dishes you formerly observed in this house. The old system has again commenced. My sick brother is fast regaining his health and former size of person; and he has sworn that so soon as he is able to take the command of his establishment, he will place *me* on a regimen, in revenge for my dutiful and benevolent endeavours to save him from death."

I suspected there was much truth in her statement; but, ominous as the change seemed, I could not refrain from asking the nature of the regimen by which her crime was to be punished. When I put the question, she drew up her shrivelled person, and eyed herself again in the mirror, where there were reflected the thin cheeks of the antiquated maiden—

"Roast beef, boiled turkeys, fricassees, salmis, devils, plum-puddings, and all the other poisons; ay, sir, not one safe dish—not a cup of tea—not a diluent to save my gracility, my shape, my health, my life. I will starve first, sir. Thank God! they have no power to force me to eat more than is consistent with the retaining of the proper and natural form and elegance of the human body."

And to prove to herself that she had not lost these inestimable advantages, she had again recourse to her monitor.

"Will you not interfere farther, sir, to save your patient?" she continued.

I answered that I had already performed my duty in recommending plain food; and, after some farther conversation, I left the house. It was not long afterwards till I discovered that Miss D— was correct in her calculation of consequences. The old habits of Mr D— having been resumed, he attained again to his former unwieldy size. That he did not fear another attack could not be asserted, or rather, it might be affirmed, that he was almost continually under some apprehension of that kind; but, as I have found in many other cases, the desires of a morbid appetite transcend all the powers of mere moral feelings, and persons in his position will gratify the demon, while they tremble for the consequences. About a year after, he was struck again. I was called when it was too late. He died at the table.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE TWO COMRADES.

STILL, calm, and lovely lay the sleeping waters of Loch Ard, as they reposed in their beauty on the morning of the 17th of August 17—. The hour was early, and the rays of the rising sun had not yet dispersed the thick mists that hung on the bosoms of the surrounding hills. The scenery around, therefore, although of the most romantic character, and composed of the choicest materials for the picturesque, had an air of gloominess and rawness about it, that did but little justice to the thousand beauties which its simple elements of wood and water, rock and hill, were capable, by their various combinations, of producing. That scene yet wanted the life and soul, the cheering, spirit-stirring influence of the blessed sun-light, to bring out its loveliness, and to exhibit its beauteous details in all their fairy brightness. This want, however, was not long of being supplied. The sun rose in all his splendour; the mist rolled away from the face of the hill; the calm, placid surface of the lake, like a mighty mirror, embedded in its rude and gigantic, but gorgeous frame-work of wooded mountains, shone with dazzling effulgence; and the hills and forests displayed themselves in their robes of brightest green.

As every one who has visited these romantic regions knows, the road that conducts to Aberfoyle from the west end of Loch Ard, runs, for a considerable space, close by the margin of the lake on its northern side—and a most beauteous locality this is. Low and level is the road; and on one hand is the bright, smooth, sandy shore of the loch, with its clear, shallow water; and, on the other, steep mountains, shaggy with primeval woods. We have directed the attention of the reader to this particular point in the landscape, for the purpose of saying, that, at the moment at which our story opens, (namely, on the morning of the 17th August 17—,) two persons were seen, at the early hour which our description would indicate, trudging silently along by the margin of the lake. They were two young men, and evidently prosecuting a journey of some length. Over the shoulder of each projected a stout oak stick, on whose extremity a small bundle was suspended; probably, small as they were, containing all the earthly possessions of their bearers. Yet, however poor the lads might be in world's wealth—for they were, as was sufficiently evident from their dress, of the humblest class—they were rich in the gifts of nature, for a couple of handsomer looking young men than they were, the Highlands of Scotland could not have produced. Strongly built, and exhibiting, in their erect and springy gait, the peculiar muscular energy of their mountain education, they appeared men capable of any fatigue; and, to judge by the air of calm determination and mild resolution expressed in their bold and manly countenances, of any deed of honourable daring. Such was the personal appearance—for, although differing in individual features, they resembled each other in their general characteristics—of James M'Intyre and Roderick M'Leod, which were the names of the two young men whom we have just introduced to the reader. The ages of the two seemed to be about equal—somewhere about

five or six and twenty; in stature they were also nearly the same; but, if there was any difference between them in this particular, it was in favour of M'Intyre, who stood nearly six feet in height. M'Leod might be an inch shorter. They had been brought up together from their infancy; had a thousand times, together, climbed the heights of Cruagh Moran, and as often swam across the deep, dark waters of Loch Uisk, which lay just before their doors. Their parents were next-door neighbours in the little village of Ardvortan, situated in one of the most beautiful straths in the West of Scotland. James and Roderick had not only been companions from their earliest years, but friends—they loved each other as brothers. In maturer life, they had, as often as circumstances would admit of it, pursued together those laborious duties by which they earned their scanty subsistence; and they were now, together, about to try their fortunes in a world to which they had hitherto been strangers. Stories of the warlike renown of their ancestors, with more recent tales of the achievements of their countrymen who had enlisted in the Forty-Second and other Highland regiments, had roused the martial spirit which they inherited from their fathers, and determined them to leave their peaceful glen and native hills, to seek, in "the ranks of death," for that which they had been taught to believe was the proudest gift of fortune—a soldier's fame.

It was a sad, and yet a proud day, for the mothers of the young men, that on which they left their native village. Natural affection deplored their departure, while maternal pride gloried in visions of the honours that awaited them on the fields of war. The plumed bonnet, the belted plaid, and all the other gallant array of the Highland soldier, presented themselves to the fond mothers; and they thought, as they gazed on the stately forms of their sons for the last time, how well they would look in the martial garb which they were about to assume. The young men, then, whom we have represented as wending their way by the margin of Loch Ard, and prosecuting a southward journey, were proceeding to Glasgow, one of the recruiting stations of the —th Highland regiment, to enroll themselves in that gallant corps, which was already filled with their friends and countrymen.

On arriving at Glasgow, which, although a distance of nearly forty miles from the spot where we first introduced them to the reader, they made out with perfect ease on the evening of the same day on which they left their native village, the young men repaired to a well-known resort of the privates of Highland regiments which were from time to time quartered in Glasgow. This was a low, dark public-house, in the High Street of that city, kept by a Sergeant M'Nab, an old veteran, who had seen service in his day; and who, although he had now retired into private life, continued to maintain all his military connexions with as much zeal as if he was still in the discharge of his military duties; and, indeed, this he was to some extent, having still an authority to enlist. The house of M'Nab was thus filled from morning to night with soldiers of various grades of rank—sergeants, corporals, and privates—and of various degrees of standing, from the raw, newly-enrolled recruit, with his stiff black stock—the

only article of his military equipment with which he had been yet provided—to the veteran sergeant, who had literally fought his way to his present rank. In every corner of every room in this favourite resort of the Celtic warriors, lay heaps of muskets resting against the wall; and on every table lay piles of Highland bonnets—their owners being engaged in discussing the contents of the oft-replenished *half-mutchkin stoup*. Occasionally, too, the scream of a bagpipe might be suddenly heard in some apartment, where the party by which it was occupied had attained the point of musical excitement, while, over all, except the sounds of the aforementioned instrument, prevailed the din of noisy, but good-humoured colloquy, in sonorous Gaelic; for no other language was ever heard in the warlike domicile of Sergeant M'Nab.

Such, then, was the house—further distinguished, we forgot to say, by the sign of the Ram's Head—to which James M'Intyre and Roderick M'Leod now repaired. They were met at the door by M'Nab, who was in the act of bidding good-by to a batch of sergeants, who, adjusting their bonnets as they stepped one after the other from beneath the low doorway of the Ram's Head, were about to form a recruiting party to beat up through the streets for young aspirants after military glory—a single drummer and fifer being in attendance for this purpose.

"Ah, Shames! Ou, Rory!" exclaimed M'Nab, taking each of the young men, who were both well-known to him, (he being from the same part of the country,) by the hand—"what has brought you" (we translate—for this was spoken in Gaelic) "to this quarter of the world?"

The lads smiled, and said they would inform him of that presently. Accustomed to such visits for such a purpose as M'Intyre and M'Leod now made, M'Nab at once guessed their object, and, without any further remark, conducted them into his own private apartment, where, the tact of the recruiting sergeant and the natural hospitality of the man combining, he entertained them liberally with the best his house afforded. During this refection, the young men made known the object of their visit. The sergeant highly approved of their spirit, descanted on the glories of a soldier's life, stirred up their ambition of military fame by recounting various exploits performed by relations and acquaintances of their own with whom he had served, and concluded by tendering them the ominous shilling. It was accepted, and James M'Intyre and Roderick M'Leod became soldiers in his Majesty's —th regiment of foot.

Desirous, however, as the young men were of enlisting, there was a condition which they insisted on being conceded them before they finally committed themselves. This was, that they should continue comrades after they became soldiers; that is, as is well-known to every one in the least conversant with these matters, that they should occupy the same bed, and be placed in a position to render each other the little services of domestic intercourse in quarters.

M'Nab at once promised that their wishes in this respect should be complied with; and the promise was faithfully kept. The two lads were allowed to continue as comrades after they had joined the regiment; and in this situation maintained that feeling of tender friendship for each other, which had distinguished the previous part of their lives.

Two handsomer or finer-looking soldiers than James M'Intyre and Roderick M'Leod, after they had donned the full costume of the corps to which they belonged, and had acquired the military air of their new profession, could not have been found, not only in their own regiment, but perhaps in the whole British army. Modest in their manners, quiet and civil in their deportment, cleanly, sober, and attentive to their duties, they were beloved by their equals, and looked upon with especial favour by their su-

periors; they were, in short, the pride and boast of the regiment—no small honour in a corps where there was an unusual proportion of stout and steady men.

For some years, the military life of M'Intyre and M'Leod was unmarked by any striking vicissitude. The usual movements of the corps from place to place occurred; but, hitherto, they had not been called on to take any share in active service. Their turn, however, was to come—and it did come. They were ordered to America, shortly after the commencement of the first war with that country and Great Britain. Previous to their embarking for the seat of war, the two comrades obtained three days' leave of absence—it was all that could be allowed them—to visit their friends in the Highlands. The time was short—too short for the distance they had to travel; but, as the point of embarkation was Greenock, they thought they could make it out; and, by travelling night and day, they did so. They presented themselves in their native glen in the full costume of their corps, and gratified their mothers' hearts by this display of their military appointments. A few short hours of enjoyment succeeded; another bitter parting followed; and the two comrades were again on their way to rejoin their regiment. On the second day after, they were crossing the ocean with their regiment, to the seat of war in the New World.

In this new scene of experience, the two friends distinguished themselves as much by their bravery as they had before by their exemplary and soldierly conduct. In all the actions in which they were engaged, they made themselves conspicuous by their gallantry, and by several instances of individual heroism. But they rendered themselves still more remarkable by the tenderness of their friendship, made manifest in a thousand little acts of brotherly love. They stood together foremost in the fight, and attended each other with unremitting kindness and assiduity, when wounds and sickness had alternately stretched them on the couch of suffering. Their affection for each other soon became, in short, a subject of general remark, exciting a singular degree of interest, from the romantic character with which the bravery of the two friends had invested it.

About this time—that is, about the middle of the war—the regiment to which M'Intyre and M'Leod belonged had the misfortune to lose their commanding officer, who was killed in action. To the regiment this was a misfortune, and one of the most serious kind; for the gallant soldier who had fallen, was the friend as well as the commander of his men. He studied and adapted himself to their peculiarities; knew and appreciated their character; and was beloved by them in return, for the kind consideration which he always evinced for their best interests. He was, moreover, their countryman—a circumstance which formed an additional tie between him and the brave men whom he commanded.

But the death of Colonel Campbell was a double mischance to the regiment; inasmuch as to his loss was added the misfortune of his place being supplied by a man of totally opposite character. His successor, stern and unfor- giving, endeavoured to procure that efficiency in his corps through fear, which his predecessor had commanded through love. He was an Englishman; and was a perfect stranger to the feelings and national peculiarities of the men over whom he was thus so suddenly placed: neither was he at any pains to acquire so necessary a piece of information, nor in any way to conform his system of discipline to the peculiar spirit of the mountain band which was now under his harsh and indiscriminating control.

Unfortunate, however, as was the circumstance of this officer's being put in command of the —th regiment to every soldier in that gallant corp generally, there were two individuals to whom it was indeed a misfortune of the

most melancholy and deplorable kind, and these two the most meritorious and deserving men in the regiment—need we say that these were James M'Intyre and Roderick M'Leod? But we must detail the circumstances as they occurred.

To do this, then, let us mention that, after a weary night-march of many miles over a mountainous road covered with snow, the —th regiment, with several others, found itself within cannon shot of one of the enemy's positions. The ground destined for the British troops having been gained, the whole were ordered silently to bivouac, till the morning light should enable them to advance to the attack which was the particular object of the movement. It was yet, however, some hours till morning; and it was thus necessary, in case of sudden surprisal, to establish a chain of outposts around the position occupied by the troops. Amongst those selected for this duty, was Roderick M'Leod, who was placed alone in a solitary post at one of the most remote points of the circle formed by the British sentinels. It was a perilous and important position; and for these reasons was it that M'Leod was chosen to occupy it—every reliance being placed on his courage, vigilance, and well-known steadiness.

Aware of the importance of his trust, Roderick, with his shouldered firelock, commenced pacing smartly—for the night was intensely cold—in the limits of his appointed place, and keeping a sharp look-out in the direction of the enemy. This position he had occupied about half an hour, when he thought he heard footsteps approaching. Roderick brought down and cocked his piece, and stood ready to fire. The sounds became more audible. He raised his musket to his shoulder, and placed his finger on the trigger. He saw some persons approaching, apparently with confident step. He challenged, and was answered. It was a piquet of his own regiment, commanded by a sergeant, a particular acquaintance and friend, the son of one of his father's neighbours. He was making a round of the outposts, to see that all were on the alert, and to inquire if anything had been stirring.

"All quiet, Roderick?" said Sergeant More M'Alister, on approaching the former.

"All quiet, sergeant," replied M'Leod.

"Cold work this, Rory," rejoined the sergeant, at the same time drawing a flask from his bosom, and handing it to the former; "here, take a mouthful of that, to keep the frost out."

M'Leod, perishing of cold, gratefully acknowledged the very timeous kindness, placed the flask to his mouth, and unguardedly took a hearty pull of the brandy it contained. Shortly after, the visiting party moved off on their rounds, and, for a little time subsequently, M'Leod felt himself renovated by the spirits he had taken. The excitement, however, was but temporary; reaction took place; a degree of lassitude came over him, which, aided as it was by the fatigue of his previous march, and the severity of the cold, he found himself unable to shake off. In this state of feeling, he leant against a tree which stood close by his post, and, ere he was aware, fell into a profound sleep. At this unfortunate moment, his commanding officer, accompanied by a small party, rode up to M'Leod. He was found asleep; and, still more heinous offence, when awakened, he was found to be the worse of drink—a momentary incoherence, and the smell of his breath, which betrayed the presence of ardent spirits, being held as conclusive proof by his superior that he was drunk.

"I am not drunk, sir," replied M'Leod, calmly, on being harshly charged with that offence by Colonel Maberly.

"You are, sir," was the peremptory rejoinder. "Besides, you have been asleep at your post. Men, disarm that fellow, and make him your prisoner."

The order was instantly obeyed. M'Leod's musket

and bayonet were taken from him; another man was placed on his post; and he was marched away to abide the consequence of his dereliction of military duty. As the intended attack on the enemy took place on the following morning, no proceedings were instituted in M'Leod's case for some days after; but all dreaded the most fatal result from these, when they should occur, from the ferocious and unforgiving nature of Colonel Maberly.

We fear we would but weaken the effect of the reader's more impressive conceptions, were we to attempt to describe the feelings of M'Intyre during the days of agonizing suspense between the period of his comrade's arrestment and the judgment which followed. He refused all sustenance; and, from being one of the most active and cheerful men in the regiment, became careless in his duties and morose in his temper, and seemed as if he courted, or would willingly have done something which would have exposed him to the same fate which he had no doubt awaited his unhappy comrade. The two unfortunate men—for the one was scarcely less an object of compassion than the other—had frequent interviews previous to M'Leod's receiving the sentence which was thought due to his offence; and these were of the most heart-rending description. These men, of stout frame and lion heart, who could, and often had, marched unappalled up to the cannon's mouth, wept in each other's arms like women. Words they had none, or they were but few.

At length the fatal judgment was passed. M'Leod was condemned to be shot; and the sentence was ordered to be carried into execution on the afternoon of the same day on which it was awarded. The unhappy victim of military law shrunk not at the contemplation of the miserable fate that awaited him. He heard it announced with unmoved countenance and unshrinking nerve; his only remark, simply expressed in his native language, being, "that, as to being shot, he minded it not; but he could have wished that it had been on the field of battle." Although prepared for the dreadful intelligence which was to inform him of the doom of his comrade—for he had no doubt from the first that it would be so—M'Intyre knew not yet the one half of the misery that awaited him in connection with the impending death of his friend. It was possible to aggravate to him the horrors of that event tenfold, and to increase inconceivably the torture of his already agonized mind—and poor M'Intyre found it was so.

We leave it to the reader to conceive what were his feelings when he was informed that he was to be one of the firing party—one of his comrade's executioners! This was a refinement in cruelty which had been reserved for Colonel Maberly. It was unparalleled. But his order had gone forth. He had willed it so, and it was known that he never yielded a point on which he had once determined. It was believed also, that his usual obstinacy and hard-heartedness would be increased in this case, from an idea that he was adding to the terror of the example, by the savage proceeding just alluded to. The idea, however, of compelling one comrade to assist in putting another to death, was so revolting to every feeling of humanity, so wantonly cruel, that the men of the regiment determined on sending a deputation to the colonel to entreat of him to rescind his order, and to relieve M'Intyre of the horrible duty to which he had appointed him. This deputation accordingly waited on the commanding officer, and, in the most respectful language, preferred their petition. They did not seek a remission of the unfortunate man's sentence; for they felt and acknowledged that, however stern and cruelly severe it was, it was yet according to military law; but they implored that his comrade might not be compelled to share in its execution. The petition was preferred in vain. Colonel Maberly was inexorable.

"He had given his orders," he said, briefly and impatiently, "and they must be obeyed."

Finding it in vain to urge their request farther, the deputation sadly withdrew, to communicate to M'Intyre, who was awaiting their return in a state of mind bordering on distraction, the result of their mission. When it was told him, he said nothing, made no reply, but seemed lost in thought for some moments. At length—

"I will go to the colonel myself," he said; "and, if there be any portion of our common nature in him, he will not refuse to hear me. If he does not"—

Here he clenched his teeth fiercely together, but left the sentence unfinished. Acting on the resolution which he had thus formed, M'Intyre sought out Colonel Maberly. When he found him—

"Colonel," he said, touching his bonnet with a military salute, "you have ordered me to be of the party who are to shoot"—here his voice faltered, and it was some seconds before he could add—"my comrade, M'Leod."

"I have, sir—and what of that?" replied the colonel, fiercely; but he quailed when he marked the deadly scowl that now gleamed in the eye of M'Intyre.

"It was cruel, sir," replied the latter, with a desperate calmness and determination of manner; "and I implore you, as you hope for mercy from the God that made you, to release me from this horrible duty."

"Sir," exclaimed Colonel Maberly, furiously, "do you mean to mutiny?—do you mean to disobey orders?"

"No, sir; I do not. I merely ask you to relieve me from the dreadful task of being my comrade's executioner."

"Then I'll be d—d if I do!" said the military tyrant. "You had better, sir, *for your own sake*," replied M'Intyre.

"What, sir! Do you threaten me?" exclaimed Colonel Maberly, in an outrageous passion.

"Oh, no, sir," replied M'Intyre, with an air of affected respect; but it was one in which some deep mysterious meaning might have been discovered. "Will you absolve me from this duty?"

"No, sir; I will not," replied Colonel Maberly, turning on his heel, and cutting the conference short by walking away.

"Your blood be upon your own head, you cruel, merciless man!" muttered M'Intyre, as he looked after Colonel Maberly, himself continuing to stand the while in the spot where the latter had left him.

M'Intyre soon after returned to his quarters, and was seen calmly and silently preparing his arms for the dreadful duty which they were about to be called on to perform. In making these preparations, he was observed to be particularly careful that everything should be in the most serviceable condition. He fitted several flints to his piece, snapping each repeatedly before being satisfied with its efficiency, and was even at the pains to dry and pulverise a small quantity of powder for priming, to ensure a more certain explosion than could be counted on in its original state of grittiness.

In the meantime, the hour of execution approached, and at length arrived. The entire regiment was drawn out to witness the example which was about to be made of the consequences that attended such departures from duty as M'Leod's misconduct involved. Being formed in military order, and the prisoner placed in a conspicuous yet secure position, the whole were marched off, to the music of fife and muffled drum, to a level piece of ground at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the quarters occupied by the regiment. M'Leod's conduct on this trying occasion was in perfect keeping with his general character. It was calm, firm, and manly. His step was steady and dignified; and his whole bearing bespoke at once a resigned and

undaunted spirit. Yet it might not—nay, it certainly would not have been so, had he known that the comrade of his bosom was to be one of his executioners. This, however, had been mercifully concealed from him. It was all his fellow-soldiers could do for him; but, to a man had they all anxiously and carefully kept from him the appalling secret; for they knew it would have unnerved him in the hour of trial—in the hour of death.

All unconscious, therefore, of the additional misery with which the cruel order of his commanding officer was yet to visit him, M'Leod marched undauntedly on to his doom. His mein was erect, his eye calm and composed, and a slight paleness of countenance alone bore testimony to his consciousness of the awful situation in which he was placed. On reaching the locality intended for the scene of execution, the corps was formed into three sides of a square. In the centre of that which was vacant, the prisoner was placed; and, at the distance of about twenty yards further in the square, stood the firing party. On the left of these, and between them and the prisoner, stood Colonel Maberly, who, in consequence of having seen some very marked symptoms of disgust with his severity in the corps, had determined on presiding at the execution in person.

It was now, for the first time, that M'Leod became aware that his comrade was to be of the number of his executioners. He saw him amongst the firing party. Unknowing the fact, and never dreaming of the possibility of such an atrocity as that which M'Intyre's position involved, M'Leod calmly asked a sergeant who stood near him—"What does James do there?" The sergeant evaded a reply, or rather affected not to hear him. At this moment, the chaplain of the regiment came up to the unfortunate man, to administer the comfort and consolation of religious aid to the doomed soldier. But, ere he could enter on his sacred duties, M'Leod, on whose mind some approximation to the horrid truth as regarded the part assigned his comrade had now flashed, put the same question to the chaplain as he had done to the sergeant.

"Mr Fraser," he said; "I guess the truth; but I would fain be assured of it. Why is my comrade, James M'Intyre, amongst the firing party?"

The chaplain, as the sergeant had done, endeavoured to evade a reply, by directing the unhappy man to matters of spiritual concernment; but he would not be evaded, and again repeated the question. Thus pressed, the chaplain could no longer avoid the explanation he sought. He told him M'Intyre was one of the firing party by order of the commanding officer.

"I guessed as much," said M'Leod, calmly. "It is a piece of dreadful cruelty; but may God forgive him, as I freely do!"

He then, without making any further remark, entered solemnly and composedly into the devotional exercises prescribed by his spiritual comforter. These concluded, and everything being ready for the last fatal act of the tragedy, the firing party were ordered to advance nearer, when M'Intyre, stepping out from his place amongst them, advanced towards the colonel, and again implored him to release him from the dreadful duty imposed on him. The colonel's reply was as determined and peremptory as before.

"Do your duty, sir!" he said, waving his hand impatiently, as a signal to M'Intyre to return to his place, and stepping a pace or two away from him as he spoke. "Do your duty, sir, or I'll compel you; I'll have you in the same situation with your friend."

M'Intyre obeyed the ruthless order without saying another word. He returned to his place. The prisoner's eyes were now bandaged. The firing party had levelled their muskets, and were waiting the fatal sign. It was

made. Colonel Maberly himself made it. The volley was discharged, and M'Leod fell—but he fell not alone. In the same instant, the commanding officer of the —th regiment was also stretched lifeless on the plain. The well-aimed musket of M'Intyre had sent its ball through the heart of the ruthless tyrant. On perpetrating the deed, the former threw his piece on the ground, exclaiming—"Roderick is avenged, and the mercy the tyrant shewed to others, has been meted out to himself;" and offered himself up, an unresisting prisoner, to whoever might choose to execute that duty.

It was some minutes—so sudden and unexpected had been the catastrophe—before any one made the slightest movement; all looking on in silent and fixed amazement, but we cannot add, with much regret; till at length a sergeant stepped out of the ranks, and seized M'Intyre by the breast.

"Right, Sergeant Thompson, right," said the latter, calmly; "you are doing your duty. I know what awaits me, and I am prepared for it. I did not do what I have done without making up my mind to the consequences."

These were indeed inevitable. On the third day thereafter, the roll of the muffled drum announced that M'Intyre's hour was come; and he fell, but not unpitied, beneath the bullets of a party of his fellow-soldiers, on the identical spot where, three days before, his unfortunate comrade had met a similar doom.

THE SURTOUT.

"THE decret's oot the morn, Mr Fairly, against that man Simmins," quoth an equivocal-looking gentleman, with a stick under his arm, a marvellously shabby hat, a rusty black coat, waistcoat pinned up to the throat, and followed out by a battered stock, glazed and greasy, with its edges worn to the bone; and thus making an unseemly exhibition of the internal composition of said article of wearing apparel. No shirt, or, at least, none visible; countenance bearing strong marks of dissipation; voice loud and ferocious; look ditto. Such, then, was the personage who conveyed the information above recorded to Mr Fairly; and, considering the very particular nature of that information, together with certain other little circumstances thereafter following, the reader will be at no great loss, we should suppose, to guess both the nature of his profession and the purpose of his call. In case, however, he should not, we beg to inform him that the speaker was one of those meritorious enforcers of the law, called, in Scotland, messengers—in England, bailiffs.

Mr Fairly, again—the person spoken to—was a fashionable tailor in a certain city not a hundred miles from Arthur's Seat. He was a little, active man; sharp and keen as a razor; and altogether a dangerous-looking customer to those who found it inconvenient to settle his demands in due time; he was, in short, the dread and terror of dilatory payers. In such cases he hung out the black flag, and gave no quarter. He was, in truth, just as merciless a tailor as ever cut cloth, and well were his savage propensities known to, and much were they respected by, a certain class of his customers; meaning those who stuck too long on the left hand side of his ledger—the fatal ledger. Such, then, was our other interlocutor, Mr Fairly. We have only to add, that the scene which we have opened was in a certain parlour in that gentleman's house, and then to proceed with the conference which this necessary digression has interrupted.

"The decret's oot the morn, Mr Fairly, against that man Simmins," said his visiter, Mr John Howison; "what do ye mean to do?—are we to incarcerate?"

It was a needless question; for Fairly incarcerated everybody, right and left, in such circumstances, sparing neither sex nor age.

"Incarcerate!" he repeated, with a ferocious emphasis. "Surely, surely. Nab the scoundrel. Don't give him a minute beyond his time. Let me see what were the articles again." And he proceeded to turn over the leaves of his ominous ledger. "Ay, a surtout, extra superfine Saxony blue, richly braided, &c. &c. £4: 15s., due 21st December, and this is the 19th January. A month past date! Nab him, Howison. Nab the villain, and we'll give him six months of the cage, at any rate, and that'll be some satisfaction."

Howison grinned a grin, partly of satisfaction at the prospect of a job, and partly of approval of his employer's wit. "But I don't know the chap exactly," said the former. "I only saw him once."

"Oh, that's easily sorted," replied Fairly. "Although you don't know him, you may know my surtout, which he constantly wears—having no other coat, I verily believe, to his back. Here, see, here is the neighbour of it." And he ran into a back apartment, whence he shortly returned with a very flashy article of the description he referred to, and, expanding it before Howison, bade him mark its peculiarities. "Sir," he said, "it's one of a thousand. The only one of the same cut and fashion in the whole city. That I know. I would pick it out, blind, from amongst a million."

Howison having carefully scanned the garment, declared that he was ready to take his chance of recognising his man—other circumstances corroborating—by its particular cut and adornments; and, in truth, he needed have little hesitation about the matter; for, indeed, the surtout was, as Fairly had said, one of a thousand. It was altogether a very marked sort of article, especially in the department of braiding, that being singularly rich and voluminous and if, as its maker had also said, it had not its fellow in the town, (barring, of course, the duplicate which he was now exhibiting,) there could be no difficulty whatever in identifying the devoted debtor.

Matters being thus arranged, the messenger, after having obtained Simmins' address, took leave of his employer, with full authority to visit the unhappy owner of the surtout with the utmost vengeance of the law, and with a promise on his own part that he would duly inform the latter of his subsequent proceedings in the case—meaning thereby, that, so soon as the bird was caged, he would give due intimation thereof.

Leaving the process just detailed at the point to which we have brought it, we beg to introduce the reader to another personage who figures in our little drama: this is Mr Jacob Merrilees, a student of medicine, a gentlemanly young man, of limited means, but fair prospects, and, withal, talented and promising. He was, at this moment, pursuing his studies at the college of ———, and was making a progress in professional learning that augured well for his future success in the world. However, with this part of his history we have little or nothing to do—our interest in him being on a totally different account.

Talented, however, as our young friend was, he had, like other men, his little weaknesses; one in particular—but it was a natural and a harmless one—this was a rather excessive fastidiousness on the score of dress. He loved, of all things, to be smartly attired; and was thus, upon the whole, something of a dandy in his way. Unfortunately for poor Jacob, however, this was a taste which he was not always able to indulge in to the extent he could have wished. His circumstances, or rather his father's penuriousness, prevented it; and the consequence was, that he frequently found himself considerably below his own standard of perfection in the article toggery. It is true,

that one less particular in this matter would hardly have agreed with him; but such were his own feelings on the subject, and that was enough.

Having mentioned the little weakness above alluded to— if, indeed, it can be called a weakness—it becomes our duty to shew cause for having called the reader's attention to it. This duty, then, we will forthwith discharge; but we must be allowed to do so in our own way. We have said, that our friend Merrilees was making rapid progress in his professional education; he was so, but he was advancing with no less celerity in another and fully more congenial study—namely, the study of love. What fair maiden, in the eyes of Jacob Merrilees, could compete with Miss Julia Willoughby? None. She was peerless! She was the fairest of the fair! Miss Julia Willoughby, then, was the chosen of Jacob's heart; but he had yet no assurance that his tender feelings towards her were reciprocated. Little else than the ordinary courtesies of society had yet passed between them, although these were certainly rapidly melting into more familiar intercourse. Still, as we said before, Jacob could not positively fix on the precise position which he held in the affections of Miss Julia Willoughby. He was still in a state of uncertainty; for no particular mark of favour had yet been bestowed upon him by the coy fair one. Judge, then, good reader, of the joyous feelings of the enamoured Jacob Merrilees, when he received the following note, written on glazed pink paper, sealed with the impression of a heart pierced by an arrow—said heart being supported by two pigeons—and folded into something of the fashion of a love knot. Judge, then, good reader we say, of his feelings on receiving this precious billet, the first palpable hint of his acceptability with which he had ever been favoured by his fair innamorato:—

“DEAR MR MERRILEES,—Would you make one of a party to visit the wax-work to-morrow? I should be happy if you could. There will be several young ladies of my acquaintance with us, and one or two gentlemen. We propose meeting at our house. Hour, twelve of the clock precisely. It will particularly gratify me, if you can make it convenient to be one of the party,” &c. &c.

“JULIA WILLOUGHBY.”

“Dear, delightful creature!” exclaimed Jacob, in an ecstasy of rapture, and kissing the delicious document with the fervour and enthusiasm of a rapt and devoted love. “Make it convenient!” he exclaimed, with expressive energy. “Ay, that I will, adored and beloved Julia! although ten thousand difficulties were in my way. All engagements, all considerations, all duties, light of my life, idol of my adoration, must give way to thy slightest wish. It will particularly gratify thee!” he exclaimed, with a laugh of wild ecstasy. “Will it, will it?—oh! will it? Then am I a happy man indeed!” and he began to pace the room with the light rapid step of sudden and excessive joy.

In this process, Jacob had indulged for several minutes, without advertent, as he usually did, in similar circumstances, to the representation of his own handsome person in a large mirror, which hung on one side of the apartment. As his fervour, however, began to abate, he began to glance at the glass *en passant*, and, with every turn, these glances became more earnest, and of longer duration, until he at length fairly planted himself before the faithful reflector, in order to submit his person to a thorough and deliberate inspection. The survey was perfectly satisfactory to Jacob; and he was turning away, highly gratified by its results, when his eye fell on the sleeve of his coat. “Ha,” said Jacob, “getting scuffy, by all that's annoying. Had no idea. Won't do, won't do—that's clear. Can

never go through the streets with Julia, and her fair bevy of acquaintances, in such a coat as this—never, never, never.” And, in great perplexity at the discovery he had made, Jacob flung himself down in a chair, and, with his hand placed on his forehead, began to think profoundly on the means of remedying the evil of a shabby coat. The time was too short to admit of his providing a new one; and, indeed, although it had been longer, this was an experiment on his tailor on which he could hardly have ventured, that gentleman having lately shewn symptoms of restiveness which were by no means encouraging. What was to be done, then? “I have it!” said Jacob, starting up: “I will borrow a coat for the nonce from my friend, Bob Simmins. He will supply me with the desiderated garment.” No sooner conceived than executed. Down Jacob immediately sat, and forthwith indited the following billet to his friend Bob:—

“DEAR BOB,—Being invited for to-morrow to a party, in which there is to be a large infusion of the fair sex, and finding, after a careful inspection, that my coat is not in the most healthy condition, might I request the favour of your lending me a corresponding piece of toggery for the occasion, if you have such an article to spare, and said article be of a kind creditable to the wearer.

“We are about a size, I think, and can therefore calculate on a fit. Yours truly,

“JACOB MERRILEES.”

Having written this note, Jacob forthwith sealed it, and put it into the hands of the maid-servant, with a request that she would see to its immediate delivery. The request was complied with. In ten minutes after, the girl was in the presence of the redoubted Bob Simmins; for redoubted he was, Bob being one of the most dashing fellows of his time, nevertheless of a rigid adherence to the praiseworthy rule of never paying a copper to anybody for anything.

Having opened his friend's note, and scanned it over—

“Ah! yes, let me see”—and he stroked his chin, threw himself back in the chair, gazed on the roof, and thought for a moment. At length—“My compliments to Mr Merrilees,” he said; “I will send him what he wants to-morrow morning.”

In due course of time, to-morrow morning made its appearance, and with it came to Jacob's lodgings the promised article of dress. A bundle neatly put up, and whose outward covering was a yellow silk handkerchief, was handed in to Mr Merrilees, as he sat at breakfast. At once guessing at the contents of the package, Jacob started up, undid the knots by which it was secured, with an eager and impatient hand, took up the article it contained, shook out its folds, and gazed with ecstasy on a splendid surtout. It was Simmins'. Jacob knew it again. He had seen it a thousand times on his friend, and as often had praised and admired it. The cut, the braiding, the elegant fur neck—all had been marked, and cordially approved of. How good of Simmins, poor fellow! to send him his best coat! It was an obligation he would never forget.

Having unfolded the surtout, Jacob's next proceeding was to try it on. It was a beautiful fit. Not the hundredth part of an inch too short, too long, or too wide. It was, in fact, just the thing. Couldn't have been better, although it had been cut for him by Stultz's foreman. Convinced of this pleasing truth, Jacob stood before the glass for fully a quarter of an hour, throwing himself into various attitudes, in order to bring out all the beauties of the much admired garment; and every change of position increasing the favourable opinion which he entertained of his own appearance. Satisfied with the contemplation of himself in the mirror, Jacob now commenced a series of

turns up and down the apartment; sometimes throwing his arms akimbo, sometimes folding them across his breast, and, anon, glancing down with a smile of ineffable admiration on the flowing skirts of his surtout. This new test of the merits of the borrowed garment having also been found satisfactory, and every other ordeal to which it could be subjected having also been had recourse to, and it having stood them all, Jacob put the last finishing touch to his person, gave a last look at the glass, and, with mincing step, went forth to conquer and to captivate. And never did man or woman either take the field for such a purpose with greater confidence in their own powers, or with greater certainty of success.

Before proceeding, however, to the place of meeting, Jacob bethought him of making a run the length of his friend Bob's, just to thank him for his kindness, and to shew him how the surtout fitted. Obeying this impulse, he was, in a few minutes after, in the presence of the obliging Simmins. A lively chat ensued between the two friends, and continued with unabated energy, until Jacob suddenly pulling out his watch, found that his appointed hour had passed. On making this discovery, he started from his chair, seized his hat, rushed out of the house, and, at the top of his speed, made for the residence of his beloved Julia Willoughby. Notwithstanding his speed, however, he was a little late. The party were already assembled. This was a trifle awkward; but it had its advantages—as we shall presently shew. The approach to Miss Willoughby's residence was through a garden of considerable length, and thus all visitors might be fully, fairly, and minutely scanned as they advanced. Now, Jacob being a little late, as we have already said, the party, particularly the ladies, in their impatience for his arrival, had clustered around the windows, and were anxiously looking for his advent—so that the moment he opened the gate, both himself and his surtout were in full view of some half dozen or more admiring spinsters. It was a complete triumph to Jacob; and he felt it to be so. He saw that all eyes were bent on him as he approached the house; that his surtout had attracted particular notice, and had become a subject of general remark and general approbation. He felt, in short, conscious that he had excited a sensation amongst the fair spectators of his approach. He saw the flutter of agitation. He marked the blush, the averted eye. He was delighted, elated. His surtout was triumphant. It had produced all the effects, so far as others are concerned, for which a surtout can be coveted. Conscious of the impression he had made, through the medium of his surtout, Jacob's step became more buoyant, his head more erect, and his whole mien more elevated and dignified.

Thus he entered the parlour, where the waiting party were assembled; and here, again, he had the satisfaction of finding his surtout an object of general observation. But let us ask, while Jacob is thus enjoying the favouring smiles of the fair, and thus revelling in his own delightful feelings, who and what are they, these two fellows who are skulking about Mr Willoughby's garden gate, as if waiting the egress of some one. Why, it is Howison; no other; and another professional gentleman, a concurrent. They are upon business. They have got scent of prey, and are following it out, with noses as keen and purpose as fell as those of a sleuth hound. There can be no doubt of it. Hear them; listen to the gentle small talk that is passing between them.

Howison loquitor, and wiping his perspiring forehead with his handkerchief—"Feth, Davy, that was a rin; and no to mak him oot after a'. But we'll nail him yet."

Concurrent respondent—"But are ye sure it was him, after a'?"

"Oh, perfectly. I canna be mistaen. It's the surtout, beyond a' manner o' doot; and, of course, it's the man, too, seein' he cam oot o' the house we were directed to."

The reasoning being quite satisfactory to the concurrent, he ventured no farther remark on the subject of identity; and we avail ourselves of the temporary pause which now took place between the speakers to explain that they had seen Jacob emerging from Simmins'. They were just approaching at the moment; but the rapid rate at which the former was going, prevented the closer intimacy which they intended, and hence the chase.

"Will we pin him in this house, then?" inquired Davy, again resuming the conversation.

"No. They might deny him. We'll wait whar we are a bit, till he comes oot. Dog him, if he taks the direction o' the jail, and nab him at a convenient opportunity."

"He may bilk us."

"We'll tak care o' that. We'll gie him heels for't, Davy, if that's his gemm."

A pause in the conversation, which was not for some time interrupted, here ensued. After a short while, however, it was again broken in upon.

"Whisht! whisht! Back, Davy, back." (The two professional gentlemen were ensconced in a close or entry directly opposite Mr Willoughby's garden gate.) "Back, Davy, back," said Howison. "There's somebody comin'. I hear folk speaking and lauchin in the garden."

Davy listened an instant, then acknowledged there were good grounds for the assertion, and immediately drew himself farther into his hiding-place, like an alarmed snail into its shell.

Howison, as the principal, now placed himself in front of his assistant, squeezed himself as close as he could to the wall, until he stuck as close to and as flat on it as a bat. He then, by a dexterous movement, thrust his head in a lateral direction, till his nose just cleared the corner of the close, when, closing his left eye, and concentrating his whole powers of vision in his right, he planted the solitary optic with eager vigilance on the garden gate, to watch the coming forth of those who were on its opposite side. For this he had not long to wait. In a few moments the gate flew open, and out sallied, with frequent bursts of merriment, one of the gayest and most joyous parties that a bright summer day ever brought forth; and gayest and most joyous of the whole was Jacob Merrilees. Of the whole squad his laugh was the loudest, his motions the liveliest, his looks the most cheerful. Jacob was in his element. He was in the midst of a bevy of ladies. One hung on each arm; while others, to whom fortune had not been so propitious in allowing them to get nearer his person, contented themselves with taking the arms again of their more favoured sisters—of those two enviable spinsters who had secured the posts of honour, the immediate vicinity of the admired Jacob Merrilees. Jacob was thus in the very centre of the gay band of fair spinsters, and a proud man was he of his enviable position. He talked—ye gods, how he talked!—and chattered away in a way that was most delightful to hear; at least, so it seemed from the frequent bursts of laughter which he elicited from his lively protegées. He smirked and he smiled, and he bowed first to one side, and then to another, after his most captivating manner, and, in short, did all that a man who was pleased with himself and desired to please others, could possibly do to maintain these agreeable feelings. He was the king of the roost—that was evident; the very centre of attraction; the delight, the glory, the leading star in the galaxy of beauty of which he formed a part.

The party having cleared the gate, took the road with a circular sweep round, and a burst of merriment that sufficiently betokened the lightness of heart and of heel of those of whom it was composed.

"Deek yon, Davy," exclaimed Howison, at this interesting moment, and now addressing the worthy just named, who had by this time come up alongside of him, and was also indulging himself in a bird's-eye view of the party round the corner of the close. "Deek yon, Davy. He's aff like a paitrik; but we'll bring him up wi' a short turn, I'm thinkin. We'll pit a slug through his wing. Little does he ken wha's watchin him."

"Wull we gie chase?" said the concurrent, who stood at this instant like a dog in the slip, with his neck on the stretch, and every nerve braced for the run.

"No, no, gie him the start a bit till he gathers confidence, and then we'll pounce on him. Wary, Davy, wary—keep in a bit. Dinna shute oot your head so far. If he gets a glisk o' ye, he'll tak to his trotters in a minnit, and gie us an infernal rin for't. See what lang legs the sinner has!"

"I think I could rin him ony day," replied Howison's concurrent, "and gie him a start o' a hunner yards to the bargain."

"I'm no sure o' that," rejoined Howison, shaking his head doubtfully; "ye dinna ken hoo a man can rin wi' a caption at his heels. It makes them go at a devil o' a rate. I've seen great, fat, auld chaps, that ye wadna hae thoct could rin a yard an't were to save their lives, flee like the win' before a Whereas."

"Noo, noo, Davy," continued Howison, and now recalling his neighbour's attention to business, "let us be joggin. He's takin the richt road, so we'll just pin him at our leisure."

Saying this, the pair started, and, in a short time, were hovering on the skirts of the heedless party, and their heedless and unwary leader, the devoted Jacob Merri-tees.

Wholly unconscious, as the reader will readily believe, of the plot that was thickening over his head, or rather at his heels, Jacob was continuing the career of banter, and lively small talk, and smart repartee, which distinguished his first appearance at the garden gate, when he suddenly felt himself gently touched from behind on the left shoulder. He turned round, but without quitting the arms of the fair ladies who hung upon him, and looked frowningly on Howison.

"What do you mean, sir?" inquired Jacob, indignantly, and now glancing also at Howison's companion, who stood close by, with his stick tucked under his arm.

To this query the only reply was a knowing wink, and a significant wag of the forefinger, which, when translated, meant—"Come here, friend, and I'll tell you."

"Get along with you, sir!" said Jacob, contemptuously.

"Thank you, but I won't," replied Howison, saucily.

"No! Then what the devil do you want?"

"You," said the former, emphatically. "But you had better conduct yourself quietly, for your own sake."

"Now, my good fellow," replied Jacob, in a satirically calm tone, "do tell me what you mean."

"Do ye ken such a man as Fairly the tailor?" inquired Howison, who always affected a degree of playfulness in the execution of this department of his duties. "Do ye ken Fairly the tailor?" he said, with an intelligent smile.

"I know no such man, sir; never heard his name before," replied Jacob, angrily; and now urging his fair protégées onwards—the whole party having been stopped by the incident just detailed.

"Not so fast, friend," exclaimed Howison, making after his prey, and again slapping him on the shoulder, but now less ceremoniously. "You are my prisoner, and here's my authority," he added, pulling out a crumpled piece of paper. It was the decret against Simmins. "Although

you dont know Fairly, I happen to know Fairly's surtout. The short and the long of the matter is, sir," continued Howison, "that I arrest you at the instance of John Fairly, tailor and clothier, for a debt of £4: 15s., with interest and expenses, said debt being the price of the identical surtout which you have just now on your back. So come along quietly, or it may be worse for you."

We do not suppose it is necessary that we should describe the amazement of the unhappy wearer of the surtout in question, on so very extraordinary and incomprehensible a statement being made to him, nor that of his party, from the same cause. The reader will at once conceive what it was, without any such proceeding on our part.

Confounded, however, and amazed as he was, Jacob's presence of mind instantly shewed him that he was in a dilemma, a regular scrape. That he must either acknowledge—and, in the presence of all his fair friends, there was death in the idea—that the surtout he wore, and which had procured for him so much admiration, was a borrowed one, or quietly submit to be dragged to jail as the true debtor. Jacob further saw exactly how the case stood. He saw that his friend Simmins had never paid for the very flashy article in which he was now arrayed, (a discovery this, however, which did not in the least surprise him,) and that he was the person for whom the honours of Howison were intended.

Having, however, no fancy for incarceration, Jacob finally determined on avowing the distressing fact, that his surtout was a borrowed one, and that, not being its true owner, he was, of course, free of the attentions of Mr Howison. With a face, then, red as scarlet, and a voice expressive of great tribulation, Jacob made a public acknowledgment of this humiliating truth, and was about to avail himself of the advantage which he calculated on deriving from it—namely, that of proceeding on his way—when, to his great horror and further confusion, he found that Howison determined on still sticking by him. In great agitation, Jacob again repeated, that he was not Simmins; and that he had merely borrowed the surtout from that gentleman. To these earnest asseverations, Howison at first merely replied by an incredulous smile, then added—"It may be sae, sir; but that's a matter that maun be cleared up afterwards. In the meantime, ye'll go wi' me if you please; and, if no o' your ain accord, as I wad advise ye, by force, as I'll compel ye." Saying this, he plunged his hand into one of his pockets, and produced a pair of handcuffs, like a rat-trap. The exhibition of these ornaments, and the dread of getting up a scene on the public street, at once decided the unfortunate surtout borrower to submit to his fate, and to walk quietly off with his new friends, Mr Howison and concurrent.

In ten minutes after, Jacob found himself snugly quartered in an airy chamber, with grated windows, commanding a pleasant view of a tread-mill in full operation; and here he remained until the following morning brought such evidence of his identity as procured his liberation. On once more snuffing the fresh air, Jacob swore he would take care again whose coat he borrowed, when he should have occasion to ask such a favour from a friend; and we would advise the reader to exercise the like caution, should he ever find himself in similar circumstances.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT.

CHAP. XIII.—JAMES RENWICK.

IN the times in which we live, party spirit is carried very far. Many honest tradesmen, merchants, and shopkeepers, are ruined by their votes at elections. The ordinary intercourse of social life is obstructed and deranged. Friends go up to the polling station with friends, but separate there, and become, it may be, the most inveterate enemies. This, our later reformation of 1832, has cost us much; but our sufferings are nothing to those which marked the two previous reformations from Popery and Prelacy. In the one instance, fire and faggot were the ordinary means adopted for defending political arrangements; in the other, the gallows and the maiden did the same work, and the boots and the thumbikins acted as ministering engines of torture. The whole of society was convulsed; men's blood boiled in their veins at the revolting sights which were almost daily obtruding upon their attention; and their judgments being greatly influenced by their feelings, it is not to be wondered at, that they should, in a few instances, have overshot, as it were, the mark—have sacrificed their lives to the support of opinions which appear now not materially different from those which their enemies pressed upon their acceptance. It is a sad mistake to suppose that the friends of Presbytery, during the fearful twenty-eight years' persecution of Charles and James, died in the support of certain doctrines and forms of church government merely. With these were, unhappily, or rather, as things have turned out, fortunately, combined, political or civil liberty, the establishment and support of a supreme power, vested in King, Lords, and Commons—instead of being vested, by usurpation, merely in the King alone. By avoiding to call Parliaments, and by obtaining supplies of money from France and otherwise, the two last of the Stuart Despots had, in fact, broken the compact of government, and had exposed themselves all along, through the twenty-eight years of persecution, to dethronement for high treason. This was the strong view taken by those who fought and who fell at Bothwell Bridge, and this was the view taken by nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Scotland—of the descendants and admirers of Bruce and Wallace—of Knox and Carstairs. James Renwick, the last of the Martyrs in the cause of religion and liberty, was executed in Edinburgh in his 26th year. He was a young man of liberal education, conducted both at the college of Edinburgh, and Groningen, abroad—of the most amiable disposition, and the most unblemished moral character—yet, simply because he avowed, and supported, and publicly preached doctrines on which, in twelve months after his execution, the British Government was based, he was adjudged to the death, and ignominiously executed in the presence of his poor mother and other relatives, as well as of the Edinburgh public. Mr Woodrow, in his history of this man's life, alludes to some papers which he had seen, containing notices of Mr Renwick's trials and hair-breadth escapes, prior to his capture and execution—which, however, he refrains from giving to the public. It so happens that,

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from my acquaintance with a lineal descendant of the last of the Martyrs, I have it in my power, in some measure, to supply the deficiency; his own note, or memorandum-book, being still in existence, though it never has been, nor ever will, probably, be published.

It was in the month of January 1688, that Mr Renwick was preaching, after nightfall, to a few followers, at Braid Craigs, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. The night was stormy—a cold east wind, with occasional blasts of snow; whilst the moon, in her second quarter, looked out, at intervals, on plaids and bonnets nestled to the leeward of rocks and furze. It was a piteous sight to view rational and immortal creatures reduced to a state upon the level with the hares and the foxes. Renwick discoursed to them from the point of a rock which protruded over the leeside of the Craigiacknowe. His manner was solemn and impressive. He was a young man of about twenty-five years of age; and his mother, Elspeth Carson, sat immediately before him—an old woman of threescore and upwards—in her tartan plaid and velvet hood. Her son had been born to larger promise, and had enjoyed an excellent academic education; and much it had originally grieved the old woman's heart to find all her hopes of seeing him minister of her native parish of Glencairn, blasted; but his conscience would not allow him to conform; and she had followed him in his wanderings and field-preachings, through Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, and all along by the Pentland Hills, to Edinburgh, where a sister of hers was married, and lived in a respectable way on the Castle Hill. This evening, after psalm-singing and prayer, Mr Renwick had chosen for his text these words, in the fourth verse of the eighteenth chapter of the book of Revelation—"Come out of her, my people." The kindly phrase, "my people," was beautifully insisted upon.

"There ye are," said Renwick, stretching out his hand into the darkening sleet; "there ye are—a poor, shivering, fainting, despised, persecuted remnant, whom the great ones despise, and the men of might, and of war, and of blood, cut down with their swords, and rack with their tortures. Ye are, like ye'r great Master, despised and rejected of men; but the Master whom ye serve, and whom angels serve with veiled faces, and even He who created and supports the sun, the moon, and the stars, He—blessed be his name!—is not ashamed to acknowledge ye, under all your humiliation, as *His* people. 'Come out of her,' says He, '*my people*.' O sirs, this is a sweet and a loving invitation. Ye are '*His people*,' the sheep of his pasture, after all; and who would have thought it, that heard ye, but yesterday, denounced at the cross of Edinburgh as traitors and rebels, and non-conformists, as the offscourings of the earth, the filth and the abomination in the eyes and in the nostrils of the great and the mighty? 'Come out!' says the text, and out ye have come—'done ere ye bade, guid Lord!' Ye may truly and reverentially say—Here we are, guid Lord; we have come out from the West Port, and from the Grassmarket, and from the Nether Bow, and from the Canongate—out we have come, because we are thy people. We know thy voice, and thy servants' voice; and a stranger and a hireling, with his stipend and his worldly rewards, will we not follow; but we will

listen to him whose reward is with him; whose stipend is Thy divine approbation; whose manse is the wilderness; and whose glebe land is the barren rock and the shelterless knowe. Come out of *her*. There *she* sits," (pointing towards Edinburgh, now visible in the scattered rays of the moon,) "there she sits, like a lady, in her delicacies, and her drawing-rooms, and her ball-rooms, and her closetings, and her abominations. Ye can almost hear the hum of her many voices on the wings of the tempest. There she sits in her easy chair, stretching her feet downwards, from west to east, from castle to palace! But she has lost her first love, and has deserted her covenanted husband. She hath gone astray—she hath gone astray!—and He who made her hath denounced her—He whose she was in the day of her betrothment, hath said, She is no longer mine, 'come out of her, my people'—be not misled by her witcheries, and her dalliance, and her smiles—be not terrified by her threats, and cruelties, and her murderings—she is drunk, she is drunk—and with the most dangerous and intoxicating beverage too—she is drunk with the blood of the saints. When shipwrecked and famishing sailors kill each other, and drink the blood, it is written that they immediately become mad, and, uttering all manner of blasphemies, expire! Thus it is with the 'Lady of the rock'—she is now in her terrible blasphemies, and will, by and by, expire in her frenzy. And who sits upon her throne?—even the bloody Papist, who misrules these unhappy lands—he the usurper of a throne from which by law he is debarred—even the cruel and Papistical Duke, whom men, in their folly or in their fears, denominate 'KING'—he, too, is doomed—the decree hath gone forth, and he will perish with her, because he would not come out."

"Will he indeed, Mr Bletherwell? But there are some here who must perish first." So said the wily and infuriated Claverhouse, as he poured in his men by a signal from the adjoining glen, (where the lonely Hermitage now stands in its silent beauty,) and in an instant had made Renwick, and about ten of his followers—the old woman, his mother, included—prisoners. This was done in an instant, for the arrangements had been made prior to the hour of meeting, and Claverhouse, attired in plaid and bonnet, had actually sat during the whole discourse, listening to the speaker till once he should utter something treasonable, when, by rising on a rock, and shaking the corners of his plaid, he brought the troop up from their hidingplaces, amidst the whins and the broom by which the glen was at that time covered. Renwick, seeing all resistance useless, and indeed forbidding his followers, who were not unprovided for the occasion, to fire upon the military, marched onwards, in silence, towards Edinburgh. As they passed along by the land now denominated "Canaan," they halted at a small public-house kept by a woman well known at the time by the nickname of "Red-herrings," on account of her making frequent use of these viands, to stimulate a desire for her strong drink. Over her door-way, indeed, a red-herring and a foaming tankard were rudely sketched on a sign-board, (like cause and effect, or mere sequence!) in loving unity. The prisoners were accommodated with standing-room in Tibby's kitchen; while the soldiers, with their leader, occupied the ben-room and the only door-way—thus securing their prisoners from all possibility of escape. Refreshments, such as Tibby could muster, consisting principally of brandy and ale, mixed up in about equal proportions of each, were distributed amongst the soldiers—who were, in fact, from their long exposure in the open air, in need of some such stimulants; whilst the poor prisoners were only watched, and made a subject of great merriment by the soldiers. The halt, however, was very temporary; but, temporary as it was, it enabled several of the members of the field-

meeting to reach Edinburgh, and to apprise their friends, and what is termed the mob of the streets, of the doings at "Braid Craigs." Onwards advanced the party—soldiers before and behind, and their captives in the middle—till they reached the Westport, at the foot of the Grassmarket. It was near about ten o'clock, and the streets were in a buzz with idle 'prentices, bakers' boys, shoemaker lads, &c. The march along the Grassmarket seemed to alarm Clavers; for he halted his men, made them examine their firelocks, spread themselves all around the prisoners, and, advancing himself in front, and on his famous black horse, with drawn sword and holster pistols, seemed to set all opposition at defiance. The party had already gained the middle of that narrow and winding pass the Westbow, when a waggon, heavily loaded with stones, was hurled downwards upon the party, with irresistible force and rapidity—Clavers's horse shied, and escaped the moving destruction; but it came full force into the very midst of the soldiers, who, from a natural instinct, turned off into open doors and side closes; in this they were imitated by the poor prisoners, who were better acquainted with the localities of the Westbow than the soldiery. In an instant afterwards, a dense and armed mob rushed headlong down the street, carrying all before them, and shouting aloud, "Renwick for ever! Renwick for ever!" This was taken as a hint by the prisoners, who, in an instant, had mixed with the mob; or sunk, as it were, through the earth, into dark passages and cellars. "Fire!" was Claverhouse's immediate order, so soon as the human torrent had reached him; and *fire* some of the soldiers did, but not to the injury of any of the prisoners, but to that of a person—a bride, as it turned out—who, in her curiosity or fear, had looked from a window above; she was shot through the head, and died instantly. But, in the meantime, the rescue was complete—Claverhouse, afraid manifestly of being shot from a window, galloped up the brae, and made the best of his way to the castle, there to demand fresh troops, to quell what he called the insurrection; whilst, in the meantime, the men, after a very temporary search or pursuit, marched onwards, with their muskets presented to the open windows, in case any head should protrude. But no heads were to be seen; and the soldiers escaped to the guard-house (to the heart of Mid-Lothian) in safety. Here, however, a scene ensued of a most heart-rending nature. Scarcely had the men grounded their muskets in the guard-house, when a seeming maniac rushed upon them with an open knife, and cut right and left like a fury. He was immediately secured, but not till after many of the soldiers were bleeding profusely. They thrust him immediately, bound hand and foot, into the black-hole, to await the decision of next morning; but next morning death had decided his fate—he had manifestly died of apoplexy, brought on by extreme excitement. His mother, who had followed her son when he issued forth, deprived seemingly of reason, having lost sight of him in the darkness, had learned next morning of his fate and situation. She came, therefore, with the return of light, to the prison door, and had been waiting hours before it was opened. At last Clavers arrived, and ordered the maniac to be brought into his presence, and that of the Court, for examination. But it was all over; and the distorted limbs and features of a young and a handsome man were all the mark by which a fond mother could certify the identity of an only son. From this poor woman's examination, it turned out that her son was to have been married on that very day to a young woman whom he had long loved; but that he had been called to see her corpse, after she was shot by the soldiery, and had rushed out in the frantic and armed manner already described. The poor woman, from that hour, became melancholy; refused to take food; and, always calling upon the names of

her "bonny murdered bairns," was found dead one morning in her bed.

In the meantime, James Renwick had made the best of his way down the Cowgate, and across, by a narrow wynd, into the Canongate, where a friend of his kept a small public-house. He had gone to bed; but his wife was still at the bar, and two men sat drinking in a small side apartment. He asked immediately for her husband, and was recognised, but with a wink and a look which but too plainly spoke her suspicion of the persons who were witnesses of his entrance. Hereupon he called for some refreshment, as if he had been a perfect stranger, and, seating himself at a small table, began to read in a little note-book which he took from his side pocket—"four, five, six, seven"—yes, seven, said he—and it has cost me seven pounds my journey to Edinburgh. This he said so audibly as to be heard by the persons who were sitting in the adjoining box, that they might regard him as a stranger, and unconnected with Edinburgh. But, as he afterwards expressed it, he deeply repented of the attempt to mislead. The Lord, he said, had justly punished him for distrusting his power to extricate him, as he had already done, from his troubles. The men, after one had accosted him in a friendly tone about the weather, or some indifferent subject, took their departure; and Mrs Chalmers and he, now joined by the husband, enjoyed one hour's canny crack ere bedtime, over some warm repast. The whole truth was made known to them; but, though perfectly trustworthy themselves, they expressed a doubt of their customers, who were known to be little better than hired informers, who went about to public-houses, at the expense of the Government, listening and prying if they could find any evidence against the poor Covenanters. Next day, even before daylight, the house was surrounded by armed men, and Renwick was demanded by name. Mr Chalmers did not deny that he was in the house, but said that he came to him as to a distant relation, and that he was no way connected with his doctrines or opinions. In the meantime, Renwick was aroused, and had resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible. He was a young and an active man, and trusted, as he owned with great regret afterwards, to his strength and activity, rather than to the mercy and the wisdom of his Maker. So, rushing suddenly down stairs, and throwing himself, whilst discharging a pistol, (which, however, did no harm,) into the street, he was out of sight in a twinkling; but, in passing along, his hat fell off; and this circumstance drew the attention and suspicion of every one whom he passed, to his appearance. One foot, in particular, pressed hard upon him from behind, and a voice kept constantly crying, "Stop thief!—stop thief!" He ran down a blind alley, on the other side of the Canongate, and was at last taken, without resistance, by three men, one of whom—and it was the one who had all along pursued him—was the person who had accosted him last night in the public-house, respecting the weather. He was immediately carried to prison, where he remained—visited indeed by his mother—till next assizes, when he was tried, condemned, and afterwards executed—the Last of the Martyrs!

The conversation which he had with his mother, his public confessions of faith, and adherence to the covenanted cause, as well as his last address, drowned at the time in the sound of drums—all these are given at full length in Woodrow, (the edition of Dr. Burns of Paisley,) to which I must refer the reader who is curious upon such subjects. In this valuable work will likewise be found the inscription placed upon a very handsome cippus, or monument of stone, erected to his memory. We give it to the reader. There is another, if we mistake not, in the Greyfriars of Edinburgh, somewhat in the same style. They are both equally simple and touching.

In memory to the late
REVEREND JAMES RENWICK,
the last who suffered to the death, for attachment to the
Covenanted Cause of CHRIST
in Scotland.

Born near this spot, 15th February 1662,
and executed at the
Grass Market, Edinburgh,
1688.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."
Ps. cxii. and 6.

Erected by subscription, 1828.

The late James Hastings, Esq. gave a donation of the ground. The subscriptions, amounting to about £100, were collected at large from Christians of all denominations; and the gentleman who took the most active part in suggesting and carrying through the undertaking, was the Rev. Gavin Mowat, minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation at Whithorn, and formerly at Scar-brig, in Penpont, Dumfriesshire. The monument is placed upon the farm of Knees, at no great distance from the farmhouse where the martyr was born. It stands upon an eminence, from which it may be seen at the distance of several miles down the glen, in which the village of Mony-aive is situated. It was visited last summer by the author of this narrative; when the resolution, which has now been very imperfectly fulfilled, was taken.

CHAP. XIV.—OLD ISBEL KIRK.

ISBEL KIRK lived in Pothouse, Closeburn, in that very house where that distinguished scholar, the late Professor Hunter of St Andrew's, was born. She had never been married, and lived in a small lonely cottage, with no companions but her cat and cricket, which chirped occasionally from beneath the hudstone, against which her peat-fire was built. There sat old, and now nearly blind, Isbel Kirk, spinning or carding wool, crooning occasionally an old Scotch song, or, it might be, one of David's psalms, and enjoying at intervals her pipe, a visit from her next neighbour Nanny Nivison, or her champit-potatoes—a luxury which the west country, and that alone, has hitherto enjoyed. Two old Irish women had settled some time before this on the skirts of the opposite brae, where they had built a small turf cabin, and lived nobody could well tell how. They were generally understood to make a kind of precarious living, by going about the country periodically, giving *pigs* or crockery ware in exchange for wool. Isbel Kirk was a most simple, honest creature, living on little, but procuring that little by her industry in spinning sale yarn, weaving garters, and using her needle occasionally; to assist the guidwife of Gilchristland in shirt-making for a large family. But the M'Dermots were the aversion of everybody, and seldom visited even by the guidman of Barmoor, on whose farm, or rather on the debatable skirts of it, they had sat down, almost in spite of his teeth. He was a humane man; and, though he loved not such visitors, yet he tolerated the nuisance, as his wife reckoned them skilled in curing children's diseases, and in spaing the young women's fortunes. John Watson pastured sheep, where corn harvests now wave in abundance; and his flocks spread about to the door of the M'Dermots and Isbel Kirk. These flocks gradually decreased, and much suspicion was attached to his Irish and heathenish neighbours—for they attended no place of worship, not even the conformed Curate's; but there was no proof against them. At last, a search was suddenly and secretly instituted under the authority of the Laird of Closeburn; and, although much wool was found, still there were no entire fleeces, nor any means left of bringing it home to the M'Dermots.

"Na. na. guidman." said the elder of the two Harridans.

"Na—ye needna stir about the kail-pot in that way—ye'll find naething there, but a fine bit o' the dead braxy I gat frae the guidman o' Gilchristland, for helping the mistress wi' her kirm, that wadna mak butter; but there are folks that ye dinna suspect, and that are maybe no that far off either, wha could very weel tell ye gin they liked whar yer braw gimmer yows gang till."

Being pushed to be more particular, they were seemingly compelled at last to intimate that auld Isbel Kirk, she and her friend Nanny Nivison, could give an account of the stolen sheep, if they liked. The guidman would not credit such allegations; but the old women persisted in their averment, and even offered to give the guidman of Barmoor ocular demonstration of the guilt o' the twa *saunts*, as they called them. A few days passed, and still a lamb or an old sheep would disappear—they melted away gradually, and the guidman began to think that his flocks must be bewitched, and that the devil himself must keep a kitchen somewhere about the Chaise Craig, over which Archy Tait had often seen the *old gentleman* driving six in hand about twelve o'clock at night. Returning, therefore, one morning to the M'Dermots, and renewing the conversation respecting Isbel Kirk and Nanny Nivison, it was agreed that one of the Irish sisterhood should walk over to Isbel's with him next forenoon, and that she would give him evidence of the fate of his flocks. Isbel was sitting before her door, in the sunshine of a fine spring morning, when the guidman and Esther M'Dermot arrived. She welcomed them kindly into her small but clean and neat cottage; and, with all the despatch which her blindness would permit of, dusted for their use an old-fashioned chair, and a round stool, which served the double purpose of stool and table. The conversation went on as usual about the weather, and the last sufferer in the cause of the Covenant, when Esther M'Dermot went into a dark corner, and forthwith drew out into the guidman's view, and to his infinite astonishment, a sheep's head, which bore the well-known mark of the farm on its ears.

"Look there, guidman," said Esther, "isna that proof positive of the way in which your braw hirsels is disposed of? By Jasus and the holy St Patrick, and here is a foot too, and twa horns!"

Poor Isbel Kirk could scarcely be made to apprehend the meaning of all this—indeed she could scarcely see the evidences of her guilt—and assured the guidman, in the most unequivocal manner imaginable, that she was innocent as the child unborn; indeed she said, what should she do with dead sheep, or how should she get hold of them, seeing she was old and blind, and had not enjoyed a bit of mutton, or any other flesh meat, since the new year.

"Ay," responded old Esther; "but ye hae friends that can help ye; dinna I whiles see, after dark, twa tall figures stealing o'er your way frae the Whitside linn yonder? I se warrant they dinna live on deaf nits, after lying a' day in a dark and damp cave." Isbel held up her hands in prayer, entreating the Lord to be merciful to her and to his ain inheritance, and to discomfit the plans of his and her enemies.

"Ye may pray," said Elspat, "as ye like, but ye'll no mak the guidman here distrust his ain een, wi' yer praying and yer Whiggery." This last suggestion of the nightly visitors staggered Mr Watson not a little; he well knew how friendly old Isbel was to the poor Covenanters, and brought himself to conclude, under the weighty and conclusive evidence before him, that Isbel might have persuaded herself that she was rendering God good service by feeding his chosen people with the best of his flock. Isbel could only protest her innocence and ignorance of the way in which these evidences against her came there; whilst the guidman and Esther took their leave; he threatening that the matter should not rest where it was, and

the old Irish jade pretending to commiserate Isbel on the unfortunate discovery.

Next morning, the pothouse was surrounded, and carefully searched by a detachment of Lag's men, to whom information of Isbel's harbouring rebels had been (the reader may guess how) communicated. Having been unsuccessful in their search, they put the poor blind creature to the torture, because she would not discover, or, perhaps, could not reveal, the retreat of the persecuted people. A burning match was put betwixt her fingers, and she was firmly tied to a bedpost, whilst the fire was blown into a flame by one of the soldiers. Not a feature in Isbel's countenance changed; but her lips moved, and she was evidently deeply absorbed in devotional exercise.

"Come, come, old Beary," said one, "out with it! or we will roast you on the coals, like a red herring, for Beelzebub's breakfast."

"Ye can only do what ye're permitted to do," said the poor sufferer, now writhing with pain, and suffering all the agonies of martyrdom. "Ye may burn this poor auld body, and reduce it to its natural dust; but ye will never hear my tongue betray any of the poor persecuted remnant."

It is horrible to relate, but the fact cannot be disputed, that these monsters stood by and blew the match till the poor creature's fingers were actually burnt off—yet she only once cried for mercy; but, when they mentioned the conditions, she fainted; and thus nature relieved her from her sufferings. When she came again to herself, she found that they had killed the only living creature which she could call companion, and actually hung the body of the dead cat around her neck; but they were gone, and her hands were untied.

During the ensuing night a watch was set upon poor Isbel's house, thinking, as the persecutors did, that they would catch the nightly visitants, who were yet ignorant of their friend's sufferings in their behalf. The men lay concealed among brackens, on the bank opposite to the pothouse, and near to Staffybiggin, the residence of the M'Dermots. To their surprise, a figure, about twelve o'clock, came warily and stealthily around a flock of sheep which lay ruminating in the hollow. It was a female figure, if not the Devil in a female garb. They continued to keep silent and lie still. At last they saw the whole flock driven over and across a thick-set bush of fern. One of the sheep immediately began to struggle; but it was manifestly held by the foot—in a few instants, two figures were seen dragging it into M'Dermot's door. This naturally excited their surprise, and, rushing immediately into the hut, they found the two old women in the act of preparing in a pit—which, during the day time, was concealed—mutton for their own use. The murder was now out. These wretched women had been in the habit, for some years, of supplying themselves from the Barmoor flocks; the one lying flat down on her back amongst the furze, and the other driving the sheep over her breast. Thus the sister who caught, had an opportunity of selecting; and the best of the wedders had thus from time to time disappeared.

Poor Isbel Kirk!—her innocence was now fully established; but it was too late. Her kind friend Nanny Nivison attended her in her last illness, and the guidman of Barmoor paid every humane attention. But the ruffians of a mistaken and ill-advised government had deranged her nervous system. Besides, the burn never properly healed; it at last mortified, and she died almost insensible, either of pain or presence. Her soul seemed to have left its frail tabernacle ere life was extinct. The example we have here given is taken from that humble source, which the historian leaves open to the gleaner. Indeed, the histories of those times, give but a very imperfect idea of the atrocities of that remarkable period. The cottage door must be opened to get at the truth; but the stately political historian seldom enters.

CHAP. XV.—THE CURLERS.

WINTER 1684-5 was, like the last, cold, frosty, and stormy. The ice was on lake and muir from new year's day till the month of March. Curling was then, as it is still, the great winter amusement in the south and west of Scotland. The ploughman lad rose by two o'clock of a frosty morning, had the day's fodder threshed for the cattle, and was on the ice, besom in hand, by nine o'clock. The farmer, after seeing things right in the stable and the byre, was not long behind his servant. The minister left his study and his M.S., his concordance and his desk, for the loch, and the rink, and the channel-stane. Even the laird himself was not proof against the temptation, but often preferred full twelve hours of rousing game on the ice, to all the fascinations of the drawing or the billiard-room, or the study. Even the schoolmaster was incapable of resisting the tempting and animating sound; and, at every peal of laughter which broke upon his own and his pupils' ears, turned his eyes and his steps towards the window which looked upon the adjoining loch; and, at last, entirely overcome by the shout over a contested shot, off he and his bevy swarmed, helter-skelter, across the Carse Meadow, to the ice. From all accounts which I have heard of it, this was a notable amongst many notable days. The factor was never in such play; the master greatly outdid himself; the laird played hind-hand in beautiful style; and Sutor John came up the rink "like Jehu in time o' need." Shots were laid just a yard, right and left, before and behind the tee; shots were taken out, and run off the ice with wonderful precision; guards, that most ticklish of all plays, were rested just over the hog-score, so as completely to cover the winner; inwicks were taken to a hair, and the player's stone whirled in most gracefully, (like a lady in a country dance,) and settled, three-deep-guarded, upon the top of the tee. Chance had her triumphs as well as good play. A random shot, driven with such fury that the stone rebounded and split in two, deprived the opposite side of four shots, and took the game. The sky was blue as indigo, and the sun shot his beams over the Keir Hills in penetrating and invigorating splendour. Old women frequented the loch with baskets; boys and young lads skated gracefully around; the whisky-bottle did its duty; and even the herons at the spring-wells had their necks greatly elongated by the roaring fun. It was a capital day's sport. Little did this happy scene exhibit of the suffering and the misery which was all this while perpetrated by the men of violence. Clavers, the ever-infamous, was in Wigtonshire with his Lambs; Grierson was lying in his den of Lag, like a lion on the spring; Johnstone was on the Annan; and Winram on the Doon; whilst Douglas was here, and there, and everywhere, flying, like a malevolent spirit, from strath to strath, and from hill to dale. The snow lay, and had long been lying, more than a foot deep, crisp and white, over the bleak but beautiful wild; the sheep were perishing for want of pasture; and many poor creatures were in absolute want of the necessaries of life. (The potato, that true friend of the people, had not yet made its way to any extent into Scotland.) Caves, dens, and out-houses were crowded with the persecuted flock. The ousted ministers were still lifting up their voice in the wilderness, and the distant hum of psalmody was heard afar amongst the hills, and by the side of the frozen stream and the bare hawthorn. What a contrast did all this present to the fun, frolic, and downright ecstasy of this day's sport! But the night came, with its beef and its greens, and its song, and its punch, and its anecdote, and its thrice-played games, and its warm words, and its half-muttered threats, and its dispersion about three in the morning.

"Wha was yon stranger?" said John Harkness to Sandy Gibson, as they met next day on the hill. "I didna like the look o' him; an' yet he played his stane weel, an' took a great lead in the conversation. I wish he mayna be a spy, after a'; for I never heard o' ony Watsons in Ecclefechan, till yon creature cast up."

"Indeed," said lang Sandy, "I didna like the creature—it got sae fou an' impudent, late at nicht; an' then that puir haverel, Will Paterson, cam in, an' let oot that the cave at Glencairn had been surprised, an' the auld minister murdered. If it be na the case—as I believe it isna hitherto—there was enough said last night to mak it necessary to hae the puir, persecuted saint informed o' his danger."

"An' that's as true," responded John; "an' I think you an' I canna do better than wear awa wast o'er when the sun gaes down, an' let honest Mr Lawson ken that his retreat is known. That Watson creature—didna ye tent?—went aff, wi' the curate, a wee afore the lave; they were heard busy talking together, in a low tone of voice, as they went hame to the manse. I wonder what maks the laird—wha is a perfect gentleman, an' a friend, too, o' the Covenanted truth—keep company, on the ice or off it, wi' that rotten-hearted, roupit creature, the curate o' Closeburn."

"Indeed," replied the other, "he is sae clean daft about playing at channel-stane, that, I believe, baith him, an' the dominie, an' the factor—forby Souter Ferguson—would play wi' auld Symmie himsel, provided he was a keen and a guid shot! But it will be mirk dark—an' there's nae moon—ere we mak Glencairn cave o't."

John Harkness and Sandy Gibson arrived at Monyaive, in Glencairn, a little after dark. The cave was about a mile distant from the town; and, with the view of refreshment, as well as of concerting the best way of avoiding suspicion, they entered a small alehouse, kept by an old woman at the farther end of the bridge. They were shewn into a narrow and meanly-furnished apartment, and called for a bottle of the best beer, with a suitable accompaniment of bread and cheese. The landlady, by-and-by, was sent for, and was asked to partake of her own beverage, and questioned, in a careless and incidental manner, respecting the news. She looked somewhat embarrassed; and, fixing her eyes upon a keyhole, in a door which conducted to an adjoining apartment, she said, in a whisper—

"I ken brawly wha ye are, an' maybe, too, what ye're after; but ye hae need to be active, lads; for there are those in that ither room that wadna care though a' yer heads, as well as those o' some ither folks that shall be nameless, were stuck on the West Port o' Edinbro."

In an instant, the two young farmers were *butt* the house, and beside Tibby Haddo's peat-fire. In the course of a short, and, to all but themselves, an inaudible conversation, they learned that Lag himself, disguised as a common soldier, was in the next room, in close colloquy with a person clothed in grey duffle, with a broad bonnet on his head. From the description of the person, the two Closeburnians had no manner of doubt that the information obtained last night, in regard to the existence of a place of refuge in Glencairn, was now in the act of being communicated.

"At one o'clock!" said a well-known voice—it was that of Lag, to a certainty.

"Yes, at one," responded the stranger, Watson—whose voice was equally well-known to the farmers—"at one!" And they parted—the one going east, and the other west—and were lost in the darkness of night.

It was now past seven, with a clear, frosty night. What was to be done? It was manifest that the cave was betrayed—at least, that the *whereabouts* was known—and it was likewise necessary that this information should be conveyed to the poor inmate. But where was he to find

a refuge, after the cave had been vacated? It struck them, in consulting, that, if they could get the old woman to be friendly and assisting, the escape might be effected before the time evidently fixed upon for taking the cave by surprise. This was, however, a somewhat dangerous experiment; for, although Tibby M'Murdo was known to be favourable—as who amongst the lower classes was not—to the non-conformists? yet she might not choose to run the immense risk of ruin and even death, which might result from her knowingly giving harbour to a rebel. So, by way of sounding the old woman—who lived in the house by herself, her granddaughter, who was at service in the town, only visiting her occasionally—they proposed to stay all night in the house, as they were in hourly expectation of a wool-dealer who had made an appointment to meet them here; but who, owing to the heavy roads, had manifestly been detained beyond the appointed time. The old woman had various objections to this arrangement; but was at last persuaded to make an addition to her fire, to put half-a-dozen bottles of her best ale on the table, with a tappit hen, with what she termed “a wee drap o’ the creature,” and to retire to rest, about eight o’ clock, her usual hour, they having already paid for all, and promised not to leave the house till she rose in the morning. At this time, about eight o’ clock, the night had suddenly become dark and cloudy, and there was a strange noise up amongst the rocks overhead. It was manifest that there was a change of weather fast approaching. At last the snow descended, the wind arose, and it became a perfect tempest. Next morning, there were three human beings in Tibby’s small *ben*, busily employed in discussing the good things already purchased, as well as in higgling and bothering about the price of wool. The weather, which had been exceedingly boisterous all night, had again cleared up into frost, and the inhabitants of Monyaive were busied in cutting away the accumulated snow from their doors, when in burst old Tibby’s granddaughter, and, all at once, with exceeding animation, made the following communication:—

“Ay, granny, ye never heard what has taen place this last nicht! I had it a’ frae Jock Johnston. Ye ken Jock—he’s our maister’s foreman, an’ unco weel acquaint wi’ the dragoons that lodge in the Spread Eagle. Weel, Jock tells me that Lag was here last nicht, in disguise like, an’ that they had gotten information, frae ane o’ their spies like, aboot a cave up by yonder where some o’ the puir persecuted folks is concealed; and that, about ane o’clock o’ this morning—an’ an awsome morning it was—they had marched on, three abreast, through the drift, carrying strae along wi’ them an’ lighted matches; and that they gaed straight to the cave, an’ immediately summoned the puir folks to come out and be shot; and that they only answered by a groan, which tellt them as plainly as could be, that the puir creature was there; and that they immediately set fire to the strae at the mouth of the cave, and fairly smoked him (Jock tells me) to death. Did ye ever hear the like o’ t’?”

“O woman!” responded the grandmother, “but that is fearfu’!—these are, indeed, fearfu’ times; there is naeboddy sure o’ their lives for half-an-hour thegither, wna doesna gae to hear the fushionless curates!”

At this instant, one of the dragoons drew up his horse at the door, asking if a man, such as he described, with a blue bonnet and a grey duffle coat, had returned late last night, or rather this morning, to bed. Old Tibby answered, in a quavering voice, that the man mentioned had left her house about eight o’clock, and had not yet returned. The dragoon appeared somewhat incredulous; and, giving his horse to the girl to hold, he dashed at once and boldly into the room, where the three persons already mentioned were seated. The young farmers questioned im-

mediately the propriety of his conduct; but he drew his sword, and swore that he would make cats’ meat of the first that should lay hold upon him. He had no sooner said so, than a man sprung upon him from the fireside, and, striking his sword-arm down with the poker, immediately secured his person by such means as the place and time presented. The fellow roared like a bull, blaspheming and vociferating mightily of the crime of arresting a king’s soldier in the discharge of his duty. But he was hurried into a concealed bed, tied firmly down with ropes and even blankets, and made to know that, unless he was silent, he might have to pay for his disobedience with his life. When old Tibby saw how things were going on, and that her house might suffer by such transactions, she sallied forth as fast as her feeble limbs and well-worn staff would carry her, exclaiming as she went—“We’ll a’ be slain—we’ll a’ be slain!—the laird o’ Lag will be here—and Clavers will be here—and the King himself will be here—an’ we’ll a’ be murdered—we’ll a’ be murdered!” At this moment, the trooper appeared in his regimentals, mounted his horse, and was off at full gallop. The granddaughter, now relieved from holding the dragoon’s horse, followed her grandmother, and brought her lamp to the house; but, to their infinite surprise, there was nobody there save the very cursing trooper whom she had seen so recently ride off. His voice was loud, and his complainings fearful; but neither Tibby nor her granddaughter durst go near him, as they were fully convinced that he was a devil, and no man, since he had the power at once of mounting a horse and flying rather than riding away, and, at the same time, of lying cursing and swearing in a press bed in the *ben*. At last a neighbour heard the tale, and, being less superstitious, relieved the unfortunate prisoner from his rather awkward predicament. He swore revenge, and to cut poor old Tibby into two with his sword; but he found, upon searching for his weapon, that it was absent, as well as his clothes, which had been forcibly stripped from him when he was tied—and that without leave—and that he had nothing for it but to thrust himself into canonicals—in which garb he actually walked home to his quarters, amidst the shouts of his companions, and to the astonishment of all the staring villagers.

As he was making the best of his way to hide his disgrace in the Spread Eagle, he was told that his commanding officer, Sir Robert Grierson, had been wishing to speak with him, for some time past. Upon appearing immediately in the presence of authority, he was questioned in regard to the mission on which he had been dispatched, and was scarcely credited when he narrated the treatment which he had met with, and the loss which he had sustained. A detachment was immediately dispatched in quest of the thief, the *wool-merchant*, who had so cleverly supplied himself with a passport from the king; and, after our soldier’s person had been unrobed, and attired for the present in his stable undress, Lag set out with a few followers, to examine the cave, in order to be assured of Mr Lawson’s death. “They may gallop off with our horses,” said Lag, in a jocular manner, by the way; “but they will not easily gallop off with the old choked hound, who has led us so many dances over the hills of Queensberry and Auchenleck.” At last, they arrived at the mouth of the cave, and entered. Black and blue, and severely bruised, lay the dead body before them. “Ah, ha!” said Lag, making his boot, as he expressed it, acquainted with old Canticle’s posteriors. “Ah, ha! my fleet bird of the mountain, and we have caught you at last, and caught you *napping*—ha, ha! Why don’t you speak, old fire and brimstone? What! not a word now!—and yet you had plenty when you preached from the Gouk Thorn, to upwards of two thousand of your prick-eared, purse-mouthed, canting followers. Come, my lads, we have less work to do now: we will e’en back to quarters, and drink a

safe voyage into the Holy Land, to old Dumb-and-flat there!" So saying, he reined up his horse, and was on the point of withdrawing the men, when one of them, who had eyed the body, which was imperfectly seen in the dark cave, more nearly than the rest, exclaimed—"And, by the Lord Harry, and we are all at fault, and the game is off, on four living legs, after all—off and away! and we standing drivelling here, when we should be many miles off in hot pursuit of this cunning fox who has contrived to give us the slip once more."

"What means the idiot?" vociferated Grierson.

"Mean!—why, what should I mean, Sir Robert, but that this here piece of carrion is no more the stinking corpse of old Closeburn, than I am a son of the Covenant!"

It turned out, upon investigation, that this was the body of the informer Watson, who had preceded Lag to the cave during the terrible drift; had been observed by John Harkness and Sandy Gibson, who were then employed in removing Lawson to the small inn; and, after a drubbing, which disabled him from moving, he had been left the only tenant of the cave. When Grierson came, as above mentioned, from the drift and the cold, as well as the beating, he was unable to speak; but his groans brought his miserable death upon him; and Lawson, by assuming the dragoon's garb and steed, was enabled to escape, and to officiate, as has been already mentioned in a former paper, for several years before his death, in his own church, from which he had been so long and so unjustly driven. Thus did it please God to punish the infamous conduct of Watson, and to enable his own servant to effect his escape. The dragoon's horse was found, one morning at day-light, neighing and beating the hoof at old Tibby's door. It soon found an owner, but told no stories respecting its late occupant, who was now snugly lodged in William Graham's parlour in the guid'town of Kendal. Graham and he were cousins-german.

CHAP. XVI.—THE VIOLATED COFFIN.

AN effort has, of late, been made to repel the allegations which, for ages past, have been made against the infamous instruments of cruelty during the twenty-eight years' persecution. The Covenanters have been represented as factious democrats, setting at defiance all constituted authority, and exposing themselves to the vengeance of law and justice. These sentiments are apt to identify themselves with modern politics; but we hope we will never see our country again devastated by oppression, cruelty, and all the shootings, and headings, and hangings of the Stuart despotism repeated. It becomes, therefore, the duty of every friend of good and equal government to put his hand to the work, and to support those principles under which Britain has flourished so long, and every man has sat in safety and in peace under his own vine and his own fig-tree. No train of reasoning, or of demonstration, however, will suffice for this. The judgment is, in many occasions, convinced of error and injustice, whilst the heart and the conduct remain the same. There must be something in accordance with the decisions of the judgment pressed home upon the feelings. There must be vivid pictures of the workings of a system of misrule placed before the mind's eye, so that a deep and a human interest may be felt in the picture. The reader must open the doors of our suffering peasantry, and witness their family and fireside bereavements. He must become their companion under the snow-wreath and the damp cave—he must mount the scaffold with them, and even listen to their last act and testimony. How vast is the impression which a painter can, in this way, make upon the spirit of the spectator! Let Allan's famous Circassian slave be an instance in point; but the painter is limited to a

single point of time, and the relation which that bears and exhibits to what has gone before or will come after; but the writer of narrative possesses the power of shifting his telescope from eminence to eminence—of varying, *ad libitum*, time, place, and circumstances—and thus of making up for the acknowledged inferiority of written description or narratives to what is submitted, as Horace says, "*Oculis fidelibus*," by his vast and unlimited power of variety. The means, therefore, by which past generations have been made to feel and acknowledge the inhumanities, the scandalous atrocities of those blood-stained times, still remain subservient to their original and long-tried purposes; and it becomes the imperious duty of every succeeding age to transmit and perpetuate the impressions of abhorrence with which those times were regarded and recollected. This duty, too, becomes so much the more necessary, as the times become the more remote. The object which is rapidly passed and distanced by the speed of the steam-engine, does not more naturally diminish in dimensions to the eye, as it recedes into the depths of distance, than do the events which, in passing, figured largely and impressively, lose their bulk and their interest when removed from us by the dim and darkening interval of successive centuries; and the only method by which their natural and universal law can be modified, or in any degree counteracted, is by a continuous and uninterrupted reference to the past—by making what is old, recent by description and imagination; and by more carefully tracing and acknowledging the connection which past agents and times have, or may be supposed to have, upon the present advancement and happiness of man. Had the devotedness of the Covenanter and Non-conformist been less entire than it was—had the arbitrary desires of a bigotten priesthood and a tyrant prince been submitted to—then had the Duke of York been king to the end of his days—Rome had again triumphed in her priesthood; and we at this hour, if at all awakened from the influence of surrounding advancement to a sense of our degradation, had been only enacting bloody Reformation, instead of bloodless Reform, and suffering the incalculable miseries which our forefathers, centuries ago, anticipated. Nay, more, but for the lesson taught us by the friends of the Covenant and the conventicle, where had been the great encouragement to resist political oppression in all time to come, when the proudly elevated finger may point to the record, which said, and still says, in letters indeed of blood—"A people resolved to be free, can never be ultimately enslaved." The Covenant had its use—and, immense in its own day, and in its immediate efforts, it placed William, and law, and freedom on the throne of Britain; but that is as nothing in the balance, when compared with the less visible and more remote effects of this distinguished triumph:—It, throughout all the last century, maintained a firm and unyielding struggle with despotism, sometimes indeed worsted, but never altogether subdued; and it has, of late years, issued in events and triumphs too recent and too agitating to be now fairly and fully discussed. Nor will the influence of the Covenant cease to be felt in our land, till God shall have deserted her, and left her entirely to the freedom of her own will, to the debasing influence of that luxury and corruption which has formed the grave of every kingdom that has yet lived out its limited period.

These Gleanings of the Covenant have been written under the impression, and with the view above expressed; and it is hoped that the following narrative, true in all its leading circumstances, and more than true in the "*vraisemblable*," may contribute something to the object thus distinctly stated.

The funeral of Thomas Thomson had advanced from the Gaitend to the Lakehead. The accompaniment was numerous—the group was denser. Thomas had lived

respected, and died regretted. He was the father of five helpless children, all females, and his wife was manifestly about to be delivered of a sixth. Just as the procession had advanced to the house of Will Coultart, a troop of ten men rode up. They had evidently been drinking, and spoke not only blasphemously, but in terms of intimidation.—“Stop, you cursed crew,” said the leader. “He has escaped law, but he shall not escape justice. Come here, lad;” and at once they alighted from their horses, seized the coffin, and opening the lid, were about to penetrate the corpse through and through. “Stop a little,” said John Ferguson, the famous souter of Closeburn; there are maybe twa at a bargain-making; so saying, he lifted an axe which he took up at a wright’s door, and dared any one to disturb them in their Christian duty. A “pell-mell” took place, in the midst of which poor Ferguson was killed. He had two sons in the company, who, seeing how their father had been used, rushed upon the dragoons, and were both of them severely wounded. In the meantime, Douglas of Drumlanrig came up, and, understanding how things went, ordered the soldiers to give in, and the wounded men to be taken care of. All this was wondrous well; but what follows is not so. The body of Ferguson was carried to Croalchapel; and the two sons accompanied it, with many tears. Douglas seemed to feel what had happened, and could not help accompanying the party home. He entered the house of mourning, where there was a dead father, a weeping widow, and two wounded sons. He entered, but he saw nothing but Peggy. Poor Peggy was an only sister of these lads—an only daughter of her murdered father. Douglas was a man of the world! Oh! my God, what a term that is! and how much misery and horror does it not contain! Peggy was really beautiful; not like Georgina Gordon, or Lady William, or Mrs Norton, or Lady Blessington; for her beauty depended in no degree upon art. Had you arrayed her in rags, and placed her in a poor’s-house, she would have appeared to advantage. Peggy, too, (the God who made her knows,) was pure in soul, and innocent in act as is the Angel Gabriel! she never once thought of sinning, as a woman may, and does (sometimes) sin; she lived for her father, whom she loved—and for her mother, whom she did not greatly dislike. But her mother was a step-mother, and Peggy liked her father. Guess, then, her grief, when Peggy saw her father murdered, her brothers wounded, and knew the cause thereof. Lift her, said Douglas to his men, after he had, in seeming humanity, seen the corpse and brothers home; lift her into Red Rob’s saddle, and carry her to Drumlanrig. No sooner said than done. The weeping, screaming girl was lifted into the saddle, and conveyed, per force, to Drumlanrig. At that gate there stood a figure clothed in dyed garments. It was the elder brother of Peggy, he who had been least injured of the two. He stood with his sword in his hand, and dared any one who would conduct his sister into the abode of dishonour. Douglas snapped, and then fired a pistol at him, but neither took effect. In the meantime, the brother was secured, and the sister was carried into the “Blue Room,” well known afterwards as the infamous sleeping chamber of old “Q.” The not less infamous, though ultimately repentant Douglas, advanced into the chamber. The poor girl seemed as if she had seen a snake; she shrunk from his approach, and from his blandishments. She had previously opened the window into the green walk; she had taken her resolve, and, in a few instants, lay a maimed, almost mangled being, on the beautiful walks of Drumlanrig. Douglas was manifestly struck by the incident, but not converted. He took sufficient care to have the poor girl conveyed home, and to have the brothers provided for; but his hour was not yet come. It was not till after his frequent conversations with the minister of Closeburn, that

he came to a proper sense of his horrible conduct. But what was the awful devastation of this family. The poor beautiful flower Peggy, who was about to have been married to a farmer’s son, (Kirkpatrick of Auchincain,) was by him rejected. He called at the house sometime afterwards, with a view to see her; but he came full of suspicion, and therefore unwilling to receive the truth. He had heard the whole story, and must have known that his Peggy was at least as pure in mind as she had been beautiful in person; but he belonged not naturally to the noble stock of the family to which he was to have been allied, and gave himself up to prejudice. The girl was still in bed, to which, from her bruises, she had been confined for months. The meeting might have been one which a poet would have gloried in describing, or a painter in delineating and embellishing, with hues stolen from the arc of Heaven. Alas! it was one only worthy of the pencil of a Ribera—fraught with cruelty, and abounding in selfishness and dishonour. The girl, as she turned her pale yet beautiful face on him, told him the truth, and watched, with tears in her eyes, the effect of her narrative on one whose image had never been absent from her mind, if indeed it had not supported her in her struggle, and nerved her to the purpose which preferred death to dishonour. Her bruises and wounds spoke for her, and, to any one but her lover, would have proved that he was a part of the object of her sacrifice. It was all to no purpose. The eloquence of truth, of love, of nature, was lost upon him; nothing would persuade him that the object of his love had not been degraded. He turned a cold glance of doubt upon her, and turned to leave the room. Peggy rushed out of bed, and, maimed and weak as she was, would have stopped him. Her energies failed her; her lover was gone; and her mother, roused by the cries of her pain, came and assisted her again into bed. Poor Peggy heard no more of Kirkpatrick. She sickened and died?—no! far worse!—she became desperate, married a black-guard, and lived a drunkard; the sons were banished for firing at Douglas, as he passed in his carriage through Thornhill; and the poor mother of the whole family became—shall I tell it!—an object of charity. Thus was, to my certain knowledge, at least to that of my ancestors, a most creditable and well-doing family ruined, root and branch, by the persecutors; or, in other words, by those who, without knowing what they did, regarded the “Covenant” as an unholy thing, and fought the foremost in the ranks of oppression and uniformity.

Now, there is not a word of this in Woodrow, or Burns, or even in the MS. of the Advocates’ Library; and yet we can assure the reader, that the material facts are as true as is the death of Darnley, or the murder of Rizzio! God bless you, madam! you have, and can have, and ought to have no notion whatever of the united current of *horribility*, which ran through the whole ocean of cruelty during these awful and most terrific times! May the God that made, the Saviour that redeemed, and the Holy Spirit that prepares us for heaven, make us thankful that in *those times* we do not live; and that such men as Woodrow and Burns (the first and the last) have been raised up, to vindicate and to justify such men as then suffered in their families, or in their persons, for the covenanted cause of the Great Head of our Presbyterian Church!



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE ABDUCTION.

THE farm of Kelpiehaugh, at a short distance from Les-sudden, was, at an early period of the St Boswell's meetings, occupied by Giles Ramsay—a man who, as often happens in Scotland, was not loath to admit that “his grey mare was the better horse.” He liked the philosophy of the old ballad quoted by Shakspeare, and received it as a general maxim, that “nought's to be had at woman's hand” unless, in every case, “ye gie her a' the plea.” And, verily, Matty did not love him the worse for his correct notions of womenkind, though, as for anything like gratitude for his easy submission to her entire authority, she knew nothing of the sentiment, if she did not heartily despise it. The reason was indeed plain enough; for she had the capacity to know that, whatever superiority Nature intended her husband should possess over her, in his character of one of the lords of the creation, he had none whatever in the capacity of her husband. In this there was a secret which she communicated to no one; and that was simply, that Giles was, in all respects, a stupid, simple, honest “cudden,” and she was one of the cleverest dames that ever made a good-natured husband cry “barlafummil” in a matrimonial skirmish. Yet, with all the guidwife's cleverness, she had not been able either to prevent Giles from getting behind with his rent—the more by token as, we fancy, that Kelpiehaugh was too dear—or to get “the glaikit hizzy,” Mary, her daughter, well buckled to a canny laird, who might help them to pay up their arrears. The first was clearly no marvel; but the second might have been termed somewhat extraordinary, seeing the young woman was as fair as Dowsabell.

Something as regarded the rent depended upon the next sale of cattle at St Boswell's, for which honest Giles had ready six as good stirks as ever grazed on a green lea; and it was arranged between him and the better partner of the matrimonial firm, that he must get six pounds for every head of them, otherwise he might have small chance for “love's roundelay” on his return.

“It will mak thirty-six pounds, Giles,” said Matty; “and that will enable us to pay up ten pounds o' oor arrears.”

“And what will I get for a superplus o' a pound a-head on them?” said Giles.

“The liberty to buy a new gown for Mary,” replied she, “that we may try to get her aff at the next fair. But, if ye sell them for a pound less, I rede ye to seek a quieter bield for your hame than Kelpiehaugh will be on your return.”

And so primed, old Giles set off with his six stirks to St Boswell's. He arrived at the green, and exposed his bestial in the most favourable manner he could; but he found that Matty's price did not accord with the humour of the buyers, who probably thought proper to judge for themselves in the question of value. The time passed, and Giles saw before him nothing but the necessity of driving the stirks back again to Kelpiehaugh—an operation he by no means relished. As he stood musing on the apparently forlorn hope of a customer, an old man, much bent, with

a grey beard, and a patch over his left eye, as big as the blind of him of forging celebrity, “Blackpatch” himself, came up to him, and at once offered him eight pounds a-head for his stock. The old farmer wondered, smiled, and accepted. The bargain was struck, and forty-eight good pounds were instanter placed in the hands of the seller.

“Now I have a favour to ask of you, good Mr Ramsay,” said the buyer.

“It will be an unreasonable request I winna grant to ane wha has gien me my ain price,” replied the farmer. “What is't?”

“That you will drive the cattle home to Kelpiehaugh, and keep them there at my risk and cost till I send for them,” said the other.

“Granted, an' wi' thanks,” said the farmer.

“I have another favour to ask,” said the other.

“As mony's ye like, sir, if they're a' o' a kind,” answered the farmer, smiling. “Out wi't.”

“That you'll give me a bed at Kelpiehaugh to-night,” said the old man. “I have a distance to ride, and would fain halve the stage, by making your house a half-way restingplace.”

“Of a surety, sir,” replied the farmer; “ye'll hae the best bed and the best victuals Kelpiehaugh can boast o', and nae boast after a', though Matty, I am proud to say kens hussyskep as weel as ony woman in a' the shirradom. Will ye gang wi' me or come yersel?”

“I will come by myself,” said the buyer. “I have some other affairs to settle before the fair breaks up, and it may be later than your time before I have finished.”

The matter being thus arranged, the two parted. Giles was anxious to know who his customer was; but no one could tell anything of him, and the hour getting forward to the gloaming, he set off again for his farm, with his forty-eight pounds in his pocket and the cattle before him. On his approaching Kelpiehaugh, Matty, along with her fair daughter, was at the door, waiting for him. It was now dark; but she could hear his voice in articulations which pleased her not. “Hey! hey! yaud, yaud!” and then came the sound of a thwack on the backs of the lazy troop he was driving before him.

“An' ye've brought them back again, ye sorry simpleton!” cried the wife.

The husband answered nothing, but continued thumping in the nolt, with his “hey,” and “yaud,” and “phew”—every ejaculation having the effect of an objurgatory attack on the dame herself.

“Ay, ay,” she cried, “thump them and drive them into the shade, Giles, that they may be ready for the roup o' our plenishing and stocking. The auctioneer's hammer will knock them down wi' mair pith than that rung ye are using, wi' a' the spite o' an angry, disappointed man, wha couldna mak a sale o' his ain kye.”

Her cutting words had still no effect upon the good-natured farmer, who continued his operations till he got the six steers safely lodged in their shade. He then came into the house quietly, and, with a “heih, that job's weel owre,” sat him down by the side of the fire, opposite to his wife and daughter. For some minutes there was silence

in the house of Kelpiehaugh; the reason whereof was that Matty's authority was for once apparently disregarded, or set at naught, by the apparent absence of all tokens of fear and contrition on the part of her mate. She had already indicated sufficiently her sense of his stupidity, and given him a peremptory notice of what he might expect for the next half year to come; yet there was he, against all custom, and all the laws of marital subordination, sitting as easy and comfortable as if he merited her praise and deserved her blessing. She could only look daggers at him, with occasionally an expression of staring wonder at a nonchalance that disproved twenty years of authority.

"Is there naething in Kelpiehaugh for its master to eat or drink?" said he, at last, in a calm, soft voice. "A hard day's wark deserves something at een."

"Is he adding impertinence to his folly?" thought the dame, as she sat doggedly silent and immovable.

"Come, Mary," added he; "since Matty will gie us naething, rise, lassie, and gie your father the best that's in the house; and, by way o' bribe, here's a new gown to ye—the bonniest and brawest I could find at St Boswell's."

The girl started up and laid hold of the dress. The bright hues glared her eyes. The dame cast a side-eye on the gaudy article.

"Waur and waur, Giles," she ejaculated. "Are ye mad, man? What, in the name o' a' that's guid or ill, possessed ye? Will that gown pay our rent?"

"Maybe it may," rejoined Giles. "Mary's the bonniest lass on this side o' the Tweed, and beauty's nae waur o' being weel busked. It may bring her a husband wha'll pay our rent; and, if it doesna, there's nae skaith, seeing we may yet be able to do it ourselves."

"The man's as mad as a March hare or a gled-stung quey," cried Matty.

"But am I to get nae supper, Matty?" rejoined he, with the same calmness.

"The deil a bit," ejaculated the dame.

"Maybe this may bribe ye," said he, as he pulled out of another pocket a gown-piece, as bright as the other, for his beloved spouse.

The charm had no power save that of increasing the wonder of the dame; and the statement which immediately followed, that there was a stranger to be entertained at Kelpiehaugh that night, roused her still farther. It was not till she began to look more narrowly into the face of her husband, that she observed a dry humour about him, that might be anything but the result of an unsuccessful attempt to dispose of his bestial, and, going up to him, she shook him heartily by the shoulders.

"Come, come, Giles," she said, "there's a secret at the bottom o' a' this, and maybe this may explain it."

And, seizing his pocket-book, she opened it, and pulled forth the bunch of notes. They were counted on the instant, and the eyes of the dame brightened up at every addition to the calculation. The farmer explained all, and, in the course of his narration, Matty's wonder waxed great again. She was not altogether satisfied. She looked at the notes, to see that they were not forged; glanced at Giles; fell into a brown study; looked at Mary; hemmed and hey'd; and began to make preparations for the stranger. In about an hour afterwards, the old customer arrived, was ushered in to the fire, and took his seat, while Giles went to look to the putting up of his horse, which, he observed, was as clever and clean-limbed a creature as that which carried the "fair ladye" and "true Thomas" over the Eildon Hills. The supper was, in the meantime, in the act of being served up. The old man coughed and told stories, Mary listened, and Matty eyed her guest with a peculiar expression, which made him rub his beard, cough more and more, and retire farther into the recess which he had taken pos-

session of. Nor would the supper draw him forth; for he said he had supped before he came, yet had he no objection to drink the ale which Matty handed him, and was as merry as an old man might be, who had seen so many summers as his beard betokened. Many a thing they talked of; but they all concerned the farmer, and his wife and daughter, for the never a word would he say of himself, either as to what he was or where he lived—the dry skeleton of a name, Mr Farquharson, being all he gratified them with, while, in return, he asked so much of the condition and doings of his host and family, that one might have thought he intended either to pay their arrears of rent, or marry the daughter at the very least. The supper, of which he partook not, being done, he said he wished not to put them about in their arrangements, and would be very well pleased to lie in the small bed behind him, unless that were set apart for some other of the family.

"That ye may weel hae, sir," said Matty on the instant, "if ye have a fancy to it. A sma' reward for the guid price ye gave for the cattle. Mary can sleep for a night in the kitchen—for Jenny is at St Boswell's, and winna be hame before the morn."

"You will have only one night's trouble of me," replied the old man; "but you may have more of the cattle—eight at least—and I think I will better pay you before-hand, Mr Ramsay, that there may be no mistake when the men come to take them away."

And he put into the farmer's hand three times the sum he would have demanded for the keeping of the steers. The farmer would have refused the money, but Matty, whose by-play all along had been unnoticed by her husband, pinched him on the arm, and the words of rejection died away in his mouth. The parties afterwards retired to bed, leaving the strange visiter in the apartment allotted to him.

"Ye never did a better day's wark, guidwife," said the farmer to his partner, when they went up stairs.

"Hush! hush! man, ye dinna ken what ye have done," replied she; and the next moment she was busy whispering something in the ear of the farmer. He started instantly, cried "Impossible, impossible!" and stood for a moment in dismay and consternation. But Matty gave him no time for thought. She was again busy with his ear; and the next exhibition he made was of an opposite character—a strange impression was upon his face, and he slapped her upon the back in the extravagance of a feeling that, whether betokening good-humour or not, seemed to have no bounds. In a short time, the house was as quiet as grimal-kin himself could have wished it when bent on a hunting foray. All had apparently gone to bed, and the stillness continued till considerably after midnight. A slow tap at the kitchen door shewed that one individual at least was astir.

"Mary, Mary, are you awake," said a voice, that at least was uninterrupted by a cough.

The answer was a whisper from within. After some parley, the door was opened, and a series of secret doings, among which the opening of the outer door of the house, a recourse to the stable, the saddling of the fleet horse, and other furtive preparations for a departure, were the most important. During all this time, the figure of a female wrapped in a cloak, stood in the recess of the door. The horse was quietly walked to the loan, and the mantled figure glided as secretly as a ghost, who knows that the pimp Gallus will shortly awaken, to the starting post. One swing brought her to the pad, and another placed before her one whom the light of the faint moon exhibited without a bend in his body or beard on his chin. Away they set—

"On on they rade, and farther on—
The steed gaed swifter than the wind:





THE ABDUCTION.

Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind."

Not a word passed between the couple. The one was occupied spurring on the steed, and the other clung to him, as if love had nerved her arms, and made them as tenacious of the grasp of his waist, as Lenora, of German celebrity, was of the soulless body of her Wilhelm. Sometimes he slackened his pace, to ascertain whether the guidman of Kelpiehaugh was up and away in quest of his run-away bride, like the Græmes after the heiress of Netherby, o'er Cannobie-lee; and then, when he thought he heard the clatter of a horse's hoof, he applied the spur again, and away they went, over moss and muir, with such speed as love and fear in the rider may alone impart to the obedient steed. At other times, the space of a few minutes was devoted to soft whispers, and the gallant pressed the encircling arms of his fair one, and sighed as he felt her embrace as tight as a lover's heart could wish. He was as happy as one who is on the verge of the enjoyment of stolen pleasures can be in a world where lawful indulgences had no zest for him; and he turned his head for the muffled kiss, which was granted as freely as any rieving lover, even Lochinvar himself, or Jock o' Hazledean, could have desired. Nor less was he pleased with the pressure of her fair arms, which accompanied or followed the other demonstrations of her affection, and the speed of his steed, now safe as he thought himself, from all pursuit, was quickened, that he might reach the goal where all the joys of a long sighed for possession awaited him. At length, he gave his horse breathing-time, and, taking himself a long inspiration—

"When, think ye, Mary," said he, "I will send for the six steers I purchased from your father, yesterday

"Maybe never, Robert," was the whispered reply.

"You say right, love. It was never my intention," said he. "I thought it but fair to leave old Giles some consideration for his daughter."

A squeeze was the expression of the gratitude felt by the female for the boon so generously bestowed on the farmer of Kelpiehaugh.

"Was I known, think ye," he continued. "I liked not the sharp eye of your mother. By my faith, I quailed under it. The devil an ancient carlin duenna in an old romance ever observed so sharp a look-out for the safety of her ward. But ha! ha! Mary, we have outwitted the old dame, and let her catch us now if she can. We want only two miles of Langholm, and then hey! hey! and be merry, as the song says:—

"Now all this time let us be merry,
And set nocht by this world a cherry."

Safe in my house at Langholm, Mary, let Giles and his old dame enjoy the bargain they have got. They may sell the steers at the next fair of St Boswell's; but I will not so soon part with my Mary."

"Na, I hope not," replied the whispering female. "But hearna ye the sounds o' a horse's feet?"

The lover turned his head.

"Your father, by the rood!" cried he; and, clapping spurs again to his horse, they set off at a quick gallop, with a view to distance their pursuer, who was no other than Giles Ramsay himself, mounted on one of his quickest plough horses, and brandishing a huge cudgel, in the double act of beating his nag, and threatening vengeance on the fugitives. The pursued were now in danger of being overtaken; for the greater speed of the hunter was counterbalanced by the greater burden, and it was clearly a cast up whether they would be able to escape the vengeance that awaited them. But, whatever might be the issue, there was no want of energy in either hand or heel of the ab-

ductor; and he lashed and spurred his steed more furiously as his fears increased—

"Still looking the side-long woods among,
Before, around him, and behind;
And aye, whene'er the echo rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind."

And no less energetic was the fearful pursuer, whose hearty thwacks upon the curpan of his shaggy cart-tracer, mixed with loud halloos, might be heard in the distance, awakening the echoes of the silent night. The lover relished not the appearance, and still less the cries of the lusty farmer; and as little apparently did his companion—who, as the horse increased his speed, grasped her abductor round the waist—wish to fall into the hands of the enraged pursuer. Away they scoured, and, "Fear not, Mary—love will distance the old churl," fell from the lips of the panting lover, in reply to the inspiring pressure of her arms; while, "Na, na, Robert, flee for the love o' heaven," added more energy to the spur, and more passion to his breast. They reached the skirts of the woody Langholm; but it was not the abductor's intention to stop at his residence, while he was in danger of being overtaken—so, striking to the left, and dashing into a *corrie*, or deep lirk of a hill, he stretched on with the flight of desperation. His wish was to clear the fern brae, as the height was called, and, getting into the thick wood at the back, make a sudden turn and elude the quick eye of the farmer; but the latter kept dashing and bounding on, hallooing in the distance, and still brandishing his oaken ryss, in the most fearful demonstrations of a vengeance that would be contented with nothing less, apparently, than the body of the one, and the life of the other. Still the fond female turned her eyes behind, and, giving her companion reports of the progress of the pursuer, kept up his energies and alive his spirit.

"All the work of that accursed old duenna, your mother," muttered he.

"Ay, ay, nae doot, nae doot," rejoined she, and hugged him again more closely than ever. The turn of the fern hill did not seem, however, to bring the relief which it promised, for the couple were still within hail of the redoubted Giles; and his shouting reverberated among the rocks like the tally-ho of the hunter, or rather like the deep-mouthed bay of the pack.

But here a more extraordinary phenomenon presented itself, and that was an accession of strength to the sturdy Giles of no fewer than three horsemen, who, probably attracted by his war-whoop, had tendered their services in endeavouring to overtake and seize the fugitives. This circumstance was proclaimed by a united cry of the whole pursuers, which rung in the ears of the lover like the howl which met the Florentine on his visit to the region of the wicked in Hades. There was, however, more in the appearance of the strangers, as seen in the light of the now bright moon, than in their war-shout that carried dismay to the breast of the abductor. What this was, he told not; but his muttering of "Who can have brought him and his servants to this part of the country at this time?" satisfied his companion that he knew the individuals who had thus opportunely joined the cause of the farmer; and now, if indeed that were possible, he urged his panting steed forward at a still quicker pace. His chance of escape was diminishing every moment. The horses of the assistants were fleetier than those of the farmer; and, if he did not succeed in overtaking the fugitives, it was too evident that they would accomplish for him the object he had in view. The lover seemed doubtful what he should do—whether still to press on, lay down his charge, or make sweep round the hill, and take refuge in Langholm. A clump of trees now intervening between him and the party, he appeared to resolve suddenly on the last manœuvre; and

his reason probably was, that he might have time to secret his fair one among some of the outhouses of the mansion before the pursuers came up. Acting upon this resolution, he turned the head of his horse, swept in by the tail of the height, struck into a loan, and, after a rapid run of a few minutes, was opposite to the house of Langholm.

"Quick! quick, Mary! jump, and follow me," he cried, as he took her in his arms. "This way," and he flew first to one door and then another. They were shut, and he had no alternative left but to take his fair charge into the mansion itself. Rushing up stairs, and dragging after him his abducted love, he reached a small bed-room, thrust her into it, shut the door, locked it, and returned to face boldly his pursuers. By the time he arrived at the landing-place, his horse had sought the stable; and there was no apparent sign, save his appearance there at that hour, of his having been engaged in the unlawful undertaking for which he had been so hotly pursued.

"I have paid well for my love-errantry," said he, as he took a handkerchief and wiped the sweat from his face. "There is not another beauty in Scotland for whom I would have toiled as I have now done. Have I given them the slip? Mayhap I may, unless I am right in that fearful conjecture, suggested by the appearance of my strange pursuers."

"Ho, there!" cried the voice of a man, rushing up on horseback. "What is this, Robert?"

"My father!" ejaculated the youth—"what has brought you from Craigton at this hour?"

"Robert! Robert!" ejaculated a voice from a bedroom window, at that moment drawn up—"why have you placed a woman in my bedroom, and locked her in?"

"Is that you, my love?" rejoined the father, in answer to the cry of his wife. "Why, here is some infernal mystery. Your mother and I arrived here to day. We heard you were at St Boswell's, and I left her here that I might go and join you at the market. Now I have returned to witness a scene that baffles all my wits. Here is a man who has a claim upon you which your mother corroborates by her extraordinary inquiry."

The cavalcade at that moment came up—Giles in the rear, still brandishing his rung, and muttering incoherent threats against the abductor. The youth was surrounded, his father cried for information, his mother screamed from the window, Giles demanded restitution, and the voice of the abducted female was heard in shrill tones over all.

"Ha! Matty, lass, this is sad wark," cried the farmer, on recognising the voice of his wife.

"Is it possible, Robert Melville," said the father, "that you could disgrace your family and your pedigree, by carrying off the wife of this honest farmer—a woman stricken in years—and place her in the bedroom occupied by your mother?"

"It's owre true," cried Giles, with something like a suppressed laugh. "I see her face at the window. He came to Kelpiehaugh habited as an auld man wi' a grey beard stuck on his cliin, and a scratch wig on his head; and, in return for a supper and a bed, carried off my helpmate, with whom I hae lived, in love and honour, for thirty years."

The scene was getting more extraordinary. The young man was sceptical of the truth of Giles' statement; but he could not disprove it by stating what he conceived to be the veritable fact—that he had run away with Mary, the young daughter of the farmer of Kelpiehaugh. He looked at the latter, then turned up his eyes to the window, where he then saw only the face of his mother. Her cries still rung in his ears; the father called for the key; Giles insisted on the truth of the statement; and the inquiries of the servants mingled with the general confusion. By an impulse he could not resist he gave his father the key; the door was opened, and the mother, who was now dressed,

came down stairs along with her husband, followed by the female, on whom they turned eyes, in which wonder and indignation alternated their suitable expressions. The female threw back her hood.

"We hae had a lang and a hard ride, Mr Melville," said she. "My faith, ye did weel; but your horse did better; and Giles, man, ye did as I never saw ye do before."

"I couldna want ye, Matty," replied Giles; "and, if I havena testified my love for ye by this night's wark, never a man in Scotland ever proved his affection for his wife."

The absence of all ill-humour, the winks which Matty directed to the wonder-struck youth, and his apparent amazement, added to the puzzle which perplexed the minds of the father and the mother.

"What does all this mean, Robert?" cried the mother.

"For God's sake, explain this extraordinary affair," rejoined the father.

The youth was still mute. At length, Matty whispered something in his ear. He spoke for the first time since the scene commenced.

"It may be as you say, Mrs Ramsay," said he.

"Aweel, it's a' right," replied she; "but it may please Giles and myself if ye will acknowledge it in the presence of your father and mother."

"I have no objections," replied he; and, turning to his parents, who understood not one word of all this dialogue, and far less of the strange scene still acting around them, he added—"I hereby declare, in presence of you as witnesses, that I hereby renounce all claim"—

"To whom?" cried the mother—"to another man's wife, an aged matron? Fie, Robert! Say no more. Close the lips that would dishonour a son in presence of his parents."

"I hereby renounce all claim to six stirks at present lying at the farm of Kelpiehaugh, and promise never to trouble Giles Ramsay for the same."

"It's a' settled and adjusted," cried Matty. "I am satisfied; and Giles, I fancy, you are no ill-pleased wi' my night's wark?"

"I dinna ken which o' us has done best," replied the farmer. "Between us, our arrears o' rent will be paid up. My bargain was guid; but I freely admit yours is better."

"Then this affair is at last arranged," said the youth.

The farmer assented. The worthy couple bade adieu to their friends, and proceeded on their way to Kelpiehaugh. We cannot tell what explanations took place at Langholm between the young man and his parents; neither can we tell precisely the import of the conversation that took place between the farmer and his wife on their journey homewards; but we strongly suspect they enjoyed a hearty laugh at the clever manœuvre of the dame. It is probable that Giles himself was in the secret—at least the good humour he exhibited in getting again possession of his spouse would lead us to believe that he had been a willing party in the plot that had been so cleverly laid and executed. How far the daughter was to blame has not been recorded; and, to do justice to the farmer and his wife, they never taxed her with indiscretion. She was some time afterwards married, and so put beyond the power of the wild youth who had been so completely foiled by the genius of a clever dame.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.





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