

CHAPTER XII.

The maiden in the dewy dell
 Wanders all alone,
 And whispers to the fairy well,
 "All, all are gone."
 The maiden leans on a slender tree,
 And sinks on a mossy stone,
 And sobs and sighs, "Ah! woe is me,
 All, all are gone!"

Legend of a Broken Heart.



HE party at the Mint were thrown into a state of great perplexity and distress by the intelligence now brought them of the mysterious disappearance of poor Phemie, who had become an object of deep interest to them all. Her history, as recorded by the musician—the high expectations to which she had been born—her amiable disposition, valuable qualities, and superior accomplishments—her devoted affection for her father—her unrequited love for a villain who had deceived her—her hard fate, which had reduced her from affluence to a state of dependence on a poor though faithful friend, one who had himself but lately subsisted on the bounty of her father—all contributed to awaken a strong feeling of curiosity to see her, and a sincere desire to befriend her. During the progress of the musician's narrative, my aunt had more than once drawn her cloak around her, and adjusted her bonnet, with the intention of proceeding in quest of the poor child of sorrow, but had been as often restrained by the increasing interest which she felt in every succeeding sentence of the story. The disappointment was therefore the greater at having missed the opportunity of administering to the necessities of the sensitive child of nature, and the musician seemed altogether distraught with alarm.

"What will become of her!" he exclaimed. "Whither will she fly? Where will my wounded dove find shelter? Ah! I was to blame for leaving her, even for an instant. I ought to have known that she would not remain behind her faithful

though humble friend ;” and he covered his face with his hands, leaned his head forward on his breast, and wept bitterly.

The Gaberlunzie, who was pretty well aware of the keen sensibility of his friend's feelings, stepped forward, and succeeded in diverting his thoughts into another channel. He reminded him that this additional calamity was an additional motive for immediate action. “Phemie,” he judiciously remarked, “would not likely linger about town. In her present state, it was probable she would either make her way to Glasgow to visit her father's grave, or to the home of her early years. That this last was the place they had proposed going to, and he thought the sooner they were on the road, the greater was the likelihood of their meeting with her. Their friends would use every exertion to ascertain whether she still lingered about town, and if they found her would pay her every attention.

The organist now suddenly rose to his feet, exclaiming, “Let us be away instantly, my friend! I now feel with you that this is indeed an imperative call on our most strenuous exertions. I feel already my whole frame fired with new vigour, and I shall, I am sure, get stronger as we proceed on our journey.”

The Gaberlunzie and musician accordingly immediately set out, having received previously many such friendly injunctions as the following :—

“Be canny,” said Matty, addressing the former ; “your poor friend will need twa or three days ower his head before he'll be able to step weel out. And mind ye,” she continued, looking up to the Gaberlunzie, whose tall form was disappearing at the door ; “mind ye, he's no sae lang leggit as you, wi' your seven-league hoppers, so tak it canny.”

“An' be nae cast doon,” said Walter, “though ye dinna fa' in wi' Phemie at first. They're slee hiders that willing seekers canna find out.”

“And,” added Nairn, “if you do hear or see anything of that miscreant Frenchman, do nothing of yourselves—nothing rashly—but let us know, and we shall give justice the hint to look after him.”

The Gaberlunzie and musician were both old travellers, and instead of keeping the highway on leaving Edinburgh, they plunged into bye-paths, crossed fields and fences, cutting off

all corners, and keeping as nearly as they could in a straight line to Cairnielee, on the road to which lay Kelpie Cleugh. They, however, kept the main road always near enough to be able to make occasional inquiries about Phemie at any traveller who chanced to be passing, and at the cottages that lay in their route, but could discover no trace of her. Once, indeed, a herd boy informed them, that a young woman had passed him, at a slow pace, singing to herself in under tones. Thinking it possible this person might be poor Phemie, they followed the course pointed out by the lad, as the one she had taken, but without success ; and long before the dusky shades of evening began to gather around them, the musician, who was still very weak, had almost dropped down with fatigue. They were therefore compelled to take up their quarters in a small village at the foot of the hills. The cottage to which they repaired for the night was inhabited by a lone woman, whom the Gaberlunzie has described in the following verses, which, as they convey a tolerably correct portrait of an individual of a class at that time to be found in almost every Scottish village, I make no apology for introducing here :—

AULD JANET.

O KEN ye auld Janet's bit hamilt made biggin,
 The wa's stievely sowther'd wi' gude claut an' clay ;
 Wi' a slopit wood lum an' a twisted saugh rigin,
 An' roof cozy theekit wi' moss-cover'd strae.
 An auld hallow'd trough-stane to haud the hens' drink in,
 Aside her bit seatie stands close by the door ;
 An' thro' her wee winnock at night is seen blinkin
 A lowe that will guide ye for miles ower the moor !

Gae round now, an' look to her bonny bit yardie,
 Weel fill'd wi' potatoes, troth Janet fends weel ;
 She shears a' the hairst to a kind neighbour lairdie,
 Wha keeps her bit ark aye weel filled wi' aitmeal.
 On our village common her cowie gangs feedin',
 The ne'er ane says " Janet, how daur ye do sae ?"
 She works her ain stockings, an' spins her ain cleedin',
 And keeps herself tosh frae the tap to the tae !

'Twad do your heart gude to gang into her housie,
 An' see how its keepit sae toshly and clean ;
 The dominie paps in to read her the news aye,
 She's bright in the mind tho' she's dim in the een.
 Her wee bit black cat and the dominie's doggie
 Sit cuddlin' thegither upon the hearthstane ;
 The hens cackle in, an' pick out their left coggie,
 An' ilka dumb thing claims the house as its ain !

Her cozy box-bed an' her weel polish'd awmrie,
 Wi' massy brass handles a' shining sae braw ;
 Her shelf-fu' o' pewter, a' glancing like glaurmie,
 An' braw bawbee pictures nail'd round on the wa'.
 But that claspit Bible's the chief pride o' Janet,
 Its wooden boards wrapt in a black leather skin ;
 Her grandfather preach'd on the mountains upon it,
 An' that's a' she's left now to brag o' her kin !

Auld Janet's alane, an' she never was married,
 Though askit by mony, she buckled wi' nane ;
 Folks say she ance lo'ed, but her love it miscarried,
 Her joe gaed to sea, she ne'er saw him again.
 Yet, ah ! her warm breast is a wellspring o' feelin',
 Her kind glints like sunbeams she showers on us a' ;
 And, oh ! when cauld death to her cottage comes stealin',
 God help her poor neighbours when Janet's awa !

At an early hour next morning the two friends left their kind and amiable hostess, and pursued their journey. Their road lay chiefly over a hilly region, at times of such difficult ascent as to render their progress exceedingly slow, the musician being still very weakly. Towards the afternoon they had gained the summit of a long ridge of hills that separates the fertile fields of West Lothian from the sterile moors that cover the greater portion of the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire. Here they stopped every now and then to gaze on the magnificent scene that lay beneath them. To the east the richly-wooded landscape was finely broken up by the romantic crags and hills around Edinburgh, and by the waters of the Firth of Forth, which together formed a middle distance at once romantic and beautiful. To the west, as far as the eye could scan, lay an

unbroken solitude of moor and morass. Immediately beneath them, and stretching for miles along the under ridge of the hills on which they stood, they were able to descry some hundreds of stone heaps or cairns, generally believed by the country people to indicate the locality of some desperate battle between the Romans and Caledonians. That these interesting memorials have existed since the invasion of the country by the former there can be little doubt. But from their number and size they would seem to indicate rather a burying-ground or place of sepulture than a field of battle. Such piles of stone, evidently brought from various and distant quarters, and which must have taken the labour of years to collect, would hardly have been accumulated to commemorate merely a single battle. This may not improbably, therefore, have been the site of a great Roman station. The adjoining country still bears evidence of having been at one time covered with wood, to which the brave defenders of their native land were doubtless often indebted for shelter when warring with her invaders. The ridge of hills on which these cairns are placed have been bleak and bare since the flood. The Romans found their advantage in keeping possession of such open places, where they were less exposed to the assaults of their fierce enemies. Yet these old moss-grown monuments afford sufficient evidence, that, even in their strongholds, the conquerors of the earth had been beaten by the freeborn sons of Caledonia. In this light, the Gaberlunzie contemplated these memorials of other years, when descending to the ridge on which rose one of the largest cairns, he ascended to its summit, and thus apostrophised the scene around him—

ODE TO CALEDON.

BLEAK mountain, on whose sterile sod
Imperial Rome's proud sons have trod,
Who strove to make our fathers slaves,
And, seeking conquest, here found graves;
When Freedom girt her broadsword on,
And shouted "This is Caledon!"

What though our Caledonian sires
Bent naked at their altar fires?

Their covert but the forest trees,
Their lullaby the mountain breeze ;
 The heroes knelt, the bright sun shone,
 And God bless'd ancient Caledon !

I gaze athwart this purple heath,
The field of fame, the bed of death,
Where heather-bell and thistle bloom
Wave o'er each Roman warrior's tomb,
 And twine round every gray-hair'd stone,
 Meet emblems of free Caledon !

And while I stretch my straining eyes
Where Scotia's rocky mountains rise,
Or o'er the brown and stunted moor,
I feel that God still guards the poor ;
 That freedom here hath fix'd her throne
 Amid the wilds of Caledon !

Where were the gods of ancient Greece—
The home of science, art, and peace,—
Where was Minerva's fostering care,
When Freedom lost her birthright there,
 And placed her thrice-dyed standard on
 The summit of old Caledon ?

O what is life, O what is fame,
Without a freeman's spotless name ?
And what is pomp, and what is power ?—
All weeds that wither in an hour ;
 But Truth and Freedom blent in one,
 Immortal bloom in Caledon !

Hail ! happy land, where yet no foe
Hath ever struck the conquering blow ;
Thy sons have fought, thy sons have bled,
Thy sons have died, but never fled ;
 And God to sire, and sire to son,
 Bequeaths unconquer'd Caledon !

The genial effects of as beautiful a summer day as ever poured
its brilliance over these brown muirlands, the ennobling and

spirit-stirring associations awakened by the scenery around, and strengthened by the exciting ode of the Gaberlunzie, tended to refresh the drooping spirit of the poor fiddler, who had been seated at the foot of the cairn, and he arose from his seat with a lightened heart, when the two friends pursued their journey with increased alacrity.

A few miles further on they reached the farm-house of Kelpie Cleugh, described in an early part of this narrative. Braxholme, although considerably in advance of his neighbours, had been so busily engaged with his out-door employment, that he had little left to improve the interior of his domicile. But the gentle spirit and refined nature of the heiress of Keith presided over the domestic arrangements of the Cleugh, and the kindly welcome with which the Gaberlunzie and his companion were received, was an ample compensation for the fatigues of their journey. At the time of their arrival, the farmer was at work on some distant part of the farm, and they had thus ample leisure to communicate to his amiable wife the purpose of their visit. The Gaberlunzie introduced the fiddler to her notice, gave her a brief account of his life, how he had been the main instrument in preserving the documents, without which her connexion with Hepburn could never have been established. He however cautioned her against saying a word about the matter, even to her husband, whose open nature might induce him to be more communicative on the subject than might be desirable in the present stage of the business. The necessary papers, he added, were not yet forthcoming, but they were in search of them, and the greater secrecy, therefore, that was observed in the meantime the better.

The Gaberlunzie and his companion now sat down to the frugal repast which had been set before them. They were delighted with the beauty and playfulness of the children, and the two friends felt how amply their labour would be requited, should they succeed in raising so interesting a family to a state of independence.

At nightfall the farmer returned home. The children, who had been watching his return from the knoll opposite the door, came running in, crying, that "a lady was coming along with their father." Shortly after the farmer entered, leading in the slender form of Feckless Phemie.

To the reader's imagination I leave it to conceive with what



FECKLESS PHEMIE

*"I got her seated on the stump o' an auld tree down
by the stream, whaur the cows gang to shelter them-
sells in the simmer afternoons."*

joyful haste the musician rushed to meet her, how he took her by the hand, and led her to the seat on which he had been himself sitting; how all around looked on with surprise at the silent but tender meeting, till Braxy, in his usual blunt manner, said—

“Ay, ay, lassie, an’ hae ye freends here too? Puir thing,” he added, in under tones to the Gaberlunzie, “I got her seated on the stump o’ an auld tree down by the stream, whaur the cows gang to shelter themsel’s in the simmer afternoons. I thought I had seen her afore, and frae the feckless way she looked at me, I thought her heart was broken, so I speered her whaur she was gaun, or gin she had ony hame to gang to. She shook her head, and in reply hummed ower a verse o’ a wae-some ballant, so I asked her to come hame wi’ me. The tears cam to her een, and she rose and followed me.”

While this communication was being made by the farmer to the Gaberlunzie, Phemie had been gazing alternately at all the persons present; her eye at last resting on the musician, she looked at him steadfastly for some time, shook her head, put her hand to her brow, again shook her head, then fixing on the hostess her brilliant eyes, she arose from her seat, rushed towards her, fell on her neck, and burst into tears.

The Gaberlunzie now perceived that her malady was of that description that precluded all hope of recovery. Under this impression he took his friend the musician aside, and thus addressed him:—

“My dear friend, our poor Phemie, I perceive, has almost entirely forgotten you. A day or two more and her malady will be confirmed. A short time longer, and she will have lost all remembrance of you, her preserver. Till that time, you had better remain here, where, I need not tell you, you will be a most welcome guest. You are much fatigued, and require rest and refreshment. In the meantime, I shall go forward to Cairnielee, and make inquiries about Champfleur. Time is of so much importance that a single hour’s delay might be fatal to our cause. For my sudden departure I need make no apology to my good friends here, as they are so much accustomed to my unexpected comings and goings, that they think nothing of me leaving at midnight without warning. I will travel all night, will be at Cairnielee in the morning, and trust I shall be able to bring you good news from that quarter.”

On the Gaberlunzie intimating his intention of leaving immediately, Braxholme earnestly endeavoured to prevail on him to remain over the night. "He wanted," he said, "to let him see in the morning what grand craps o' turnips he was raising on the auld black croft, and what the wedge-draining was doing for the sour meadow." But notwithstanding these strong temptations, which at another time the Gaberlunzie would have felt difficulty in resisting, he shouldered his wallet, seized his staff, kissed the children, who were busy mumping the gingerbread he had brought them, and shaking them all cordially by the hand, he bade adieu for a time to Kelpie Cleugh, Braxy exclaiming after he had left, "Whaur, in a' the earth, can the auld carle be gaun to the night? It's no for naething he's in sic a hurry awa."

The Gaberlunzie arrived in the neighbourhood of Cairnielee early in the morning, and before any one was stirring about the tower. He had learnt the character of its present possessor from the cottars in the neighbourhood, by whom he was represented to be a retired London merchant, who had purchased, and lately came to reside in the house. This person had already become a general favourite in the neighbourhood, being of a hospitable, frank, and affable disposition, kind to the poor, and discharging at once courteously and efficiently all the duties of a country gentleman. From this description, it did not appear likely that such a man would purchase an estate with a doubtful or defective title, or have had anything to do with it, but in the way of open and honourable dealing. The Gaberlunzie accordingly went boldly to the house, was admitted, introduced himself as a friend to the old family of Blackburn, and stated that his object in visiting the place was to endeavour to recover some papers which had been secreted in a panel over the mantelpiece of the library. The gentleman conducted him into that apartment, opened the little door in the panel, and showed him the recess, which had been discovered only a few days before by an ingenious mechanic, who had been fitting up some new bookshelves in the room. The gentleman could give no information about Champfleur, farther than that the former agents for the property had represented him as a reckless, unprincipled villain, who frequented all the gambling hells in London, and who, in all likelihood, would soon get quit of the purchase-money of Cairnielee.

From this account of Champfleur, the Gaberlunzie thought there would not be much difficulty in tracing him in the great city, and having obtained from the gentleman the name of the agent who had sold him the property, he determined on proceeding to London in quest of him. He accordingly returned in the first place to Kelpie Cleugh, communicated to its mistress, and her inmate the musician, the result of his inquiries, and his resolution to set out immediately for the metropolis. He then proposed that Phemie should be left at the Cleugh, where she could roam about at pleasure, and return when weary to a home where all her wants would be kindly supplied. She would thus be much happier than if she were shut up under the close superintendence of some zealous, but injudicious, well-wisher. He advised the fiddler also to remain in his present quarters, until he should have completely recovered his strength. Having made these arrangements, he proceeded to Edinburgh, whence, after having consulted with his old friends, and replenished his wallet with some necessary provender, he started off on his journey to London. Land conveyances being then extremely tedious, and those by sea extremely uncertain, the Gaberlunzie resolved on performing the journey on foot, and on foot he did perform it, reaching the great city in safety, and in a wonderfully short space of time.

On arriving in London, he found that the agent, although always exceedingly polite, either would not, or could not, give him any information regarding Champfleur that could be of the least service in leading to his discovery. He said that he had lost all trace of him; that he had paid him all the purchase-money for the estate of Cairnielee on the day after the bargain had been concluded; and that he thought, from his habits, he must have gone to the Continent—very probably to Paris. Notwithstanding this disheartening intelligence, the Gaberlunzie resolved to leave no stone unturned to accomplish his object, and proceeded to explore all the haunts of vice and dissipation in which he thought there was the slightest chance of meeting with Champfleur,—the old man's strange dress creating considerable speculation among the Cockneys, who at that time believed that Scotsmen wore no other kind of dress than the kilt. The pawky carle, by the aid of a certain silver key, found ready access to every place where gambling was practised, from the lowest dens in Wapping, where coal-heavers

thumb their greasy cards, to the swell palaces in St James's, where titled gamblers play at *rouge et noir*. In these sinks of iniquity, he met with vice in all its forms, in high as well as in low life, but still he met no Champfleur. Tired and weary of looking on such scenes of wickedness, day after day, for months, the Gaberlunzie at length resolved on going to Paris; whither he accordingly went, having provided himself with letters of introduction from his friend Nairn to persons residing there; but here also his search was unsuccessful. He did, indeed, discover some of the early friends and relations of Champfleur, but was told by them, that they had long lost all traces of him, and cared not to recover them, as some instances of his unprincipled disposition had come to light shortly after he had left Paris for Scotland. They added that, in consequence of this, they had written Blackburn, to put him on his guard, but had received no answer to their letters, which, they said, they believed, from what the Gaberlunzie now revealed, had been intercepted by the swindler, and had never reached the hands of him for whose benefit they were intended.

After spending a full year in this fruitless pursuit in Paris and London, the Gaberlunzie returned to Scotland, greatly dispirited, and not a little out of temper, with his want of success. He arrived in Edinburgh in the afternoon of a sultry summer day, during which he had walked a distance of full forty miles, and it was therefore with something of a halting pace, and with a head perhaps a little less erect than usual, that the stalwart carle made his appearance in the Mint, just as Nairn and my uncle had left together to dine with the Lord Provost.

At the moment the Gaberlunzie presented himself, Nanny sat with her inseparable companions, the two cats, at the front window, busily engaged in knitting a pair of rig-and-fur stockings for the Laird, who, being afflicted lately with rheumatism, she had determined on coaxing out of his black silks before the approach of winter. With this view, she had commenced her present labours, hoping that, if on no other account, he would wear the stockings for the sake of her who wrought them. She meant to point out for the Laird's imitation the athletic Gaberlunzie, to whose warm and comfortable habilaments, she ascribed his strong and healthy appearance. Just as these and similar reflections were passing through her mind, she lifted up her eyes, and beheld the Gaberlunzie, the identical model she

intended proposing to her master as a study. Starting up in surprise, she threw down her clew of worsted, and the straw stocks which were stuck into her apron-string, removed from beneath her cap the small wires which were thrust into her gray hairs, hastened to the stairhead, and before the Gaberlunzie had reached the foot of the steps, began to overwhelm him with a world of questions.

"Come awa, come awa," she said. "Ay man, an' ye hae gotten safe back frae amang thae French vermin! Lord help us, I ne'er expectit to hae seen ye in life. What wi' the deevilish temper o' the wretches, or that doon-looking, dumpit bodie, wee Buonaparte, I thought they wad hae made minced meat o' ye, or hae swallowed ye up hale, as they do puddocks, filthy bodies! Gude help us, man, but ye're sair forfoughten, and, I'll warrant, are baith dry and hungry; sae sit ye down there," and she hastened to a little wall-press in the passage, and taking from it the well-known siller-taed cappie, and a greybeard in which she kept a "wee drappie o' her ain," she filled up the former, and presenting it to the Gaberlunzie, said, "Tak ye aff that, my man, it'll do ye gude. It's a drap real Ferintosh, I coft mysel' about twa years ago frae a bare-leggit loon, wha said he had brought it on his pownie for a hunder miles; sae ye see I'm nae great drinker whan I tak sae lang to get through wi' a twa-gallon greybeard. The Laird and Mr Hepburn's awa out to dine wi' the Provost; so say awa, and drink their healths."

"Say awa yoursel' first, Nanny," said the Gaberlunzie, "and mind me, I'm e'en right blythe to get this length again, and to hear your gude auld Scotch tongue wagging. I'm clean sick an' tired o' parlyvooving, and how-d'ye-doing, and glad to hear our hamely 'How's a' wi' ye?' again."

"Now," said Nanny, after having taken off her glass, and seen the Gaberlunzie discuss another, "I trow ye'll be fearfu' hungry, sae I'll just mak a slice o' something play skirl in the pan, and put ye a' to rights in a twinklin'. Od, man, the Laird 'ill be sae blythe to see ye. I'm sure ye're muckle thought o', for little else has been crackit about here atween Mr Nairn and Mr Hepburn but you a' the time ye hae been awa. They ferlied what ye were doing, how ye were coming on, whaur ye were, and then they wad fill up the ither cupfu', and tout it off to your health, and the success o' your mission.

Od, I'm blythe I'm at hame my lane this afternoon, for they'll be like to worry ye wi' kindness, and a puir bodie like me winna get near ye. They're awa, as I telt ye, to the Provost's to dine, and Miss Hepburn's wi' them in a braw sedan, and they'll be late o' coming back; so ye maun just mak yoursel' at hame, an' I'll mak ye as comfortable as I can."

"Thanks to ye atweel, Nanny," said the Gaberlunzie; "an' how are a' my friends getting on? Hae ye heard ony speerings lately o' the Laird's young friend in the west country?"

"Aye," answered Nanny, "we had the ledly here staying wi' us for a week or twa in the beginning o' summer. I heard her saying to the Laird that if she had ony notion whaur ye were, she wad write ye."

"Her letter wadna hae easily found me out amang sae mony outlandish folks, and out o' the way places as I hae been in," replied the Gaberlunzie.

"Puir fellow," exclaimed Nanny, "I daresay ye wad whiles no be that ower weel lookit to, either in your bed or your board. How did ye like the French puddocks?" she inquired, laughingly, as she ran backwards and forwards with the cooking utensils to the kitchen fireplace, to which the Gaberlunzie also made his way, remarking, "that he likit the lug o' the kitchen fire best." "And how did ye like their fricassees and their frippery? I wonder they didna puzhun ye. I'm sure ye maun hae been fairly sconnert whiles wi' their pastry and puffing, to say naething o' the dinlin' your lugs wad get wi' their drums an' fifes rattling and squeaking, Sunday an' Saturday, they tell me. Gude help us, they maun be a set o' salvages!"

"Atweel, Nanny, the French folks are no sae far ahint as ye wad think; they ken weel how to coax the stamack, and please the ee. I was very weel pleased wi' their tidy wee dishes, and likit their leevin."

"Gude gude us, I wonder to hear ye say sae! I mind o' a wee buikit body o' a Frenchman lodging wi' Lucky Leather-tongue ower in the scale stairs, and the wretch o' a creature played in some playactor band; and what think ye he did ance? what but begin skirlin' awa on his flute ae Fast day, when a' the folk were gaun to the kirk, just by way o' trying to break the neighbourhood in, to let him practise his profane tunes on a Sunday; but lang luggit Laurie, the bethral o' Haddo's Hole kirk, heard the ungodly sounds, an' came wi' four o' the Town

Guard at his back, and linkit awa the wee Frenchman to jail."

"Whaur he wad likely lie lang enough," said the Gaberlunzie. "Nanny, ye shouldna be ower hard on the poor French folks; they ken nae better, an' besides, ye ken, we used to hae whistles in our kirks lang ago oursel's; ye maunna let the fiddler, our freend, hear ye rinnin' doun Sunday music that way; ye ken, he ance made his bread by that no far awa."

"Ay," said Nanny, "I mind o' that; and to tell ye the truth, I used to creep up the stair mysel' whiles to hear a sough o' the bonny tunes that he used to play. But then they were aye sacred tunes, and although they were sung to Papist psalms, they werena like the pookit body rattlin' awa at tunes like 'Jenny dang the Weaver,' an' 'Brose and Butter.'"

"Talking of the fiddler, have ye heard any word of him lately?" inquired the Gaberlunzie.

"No," said Nanny; "ye ken I maunna be ower inquisitive. But sit ye in, there's something will suit your Scotch stamack better nor French frogs; just eat awa there, and I'll run ower the way to Bell's brewery, and get ye a pint o' black cork to synd it doun wi'."

The Gaberlunzie ate heartily of the savory dish which Nanny placed before him, and thanked his stars he was at home once more. Nanny and he discussed many questions, and talked on many topics; at last, when the evening was wearing through, the former's quick ear caught the short tramp of two Highland chairmen with their burden coming into the Mint. Ay, ay," said she, "there he comes now; puir man, he's getting frail, and no able to stand that fatigue he was wont to do. Five years ago, he wadna hae had it said for a trifle that Laird Nairn cam hame in a sedan-chair, or by any other conveyance than his feet. But, gude help us! time's a sicker master, an' we maun a' bend afore him."

Nairn was handed out of his chair, and armed up the stair by his trusty housekeeper; and although he had evidently two or three good bumpers under his belt, the sight of the Gaberlunzie served effectually to recall him to himself, and they were closeted for fully two hours together that night before they parted. The Gaberlunzie gave Nairn a detailed account of all his travels, the reception he had met with in Paris and London, his want of success in the search for Champfleure, and the

apparent hopelessness of the recovery of the much desired documents. At the same time he was happy to be able to communicate to him a report current in London, that there was a probability of a change in the ministry, and that Mr Hepburn's Whig friends were expected shortly to be in office. "He understood," he added, that they were likely to commence their career by a display of liberality. Your own party," he continued, "have treated you rather scurvily, putting off your case from time to time, and answering your petitions with empty or evasive promises. Let Hepburn ply his friends now, and do you second his applications, and I think it likely that, in the hope of securing you in their interest, and with the view at the same time of rewarding your friend Hepburn, who has for many years stuck to them through good and evil repute, they may be inclined to bring a bill into parliament to reinstate you in the possessions of your ancestors."

Nairn, who received this intelligence with no great satisfaction, said "that his friend Hepburn might do as he pleased, but as for himself he had no idea that any exertion on his part would be of the smallest avail. His own party," he said, "had hitherto done nothing for him in the matter, and he could not expect that a party to whom he had always been opposed would do more. However," he continued, "we shall see Walter in the morning, and hear what he has to say on the subject. He has now given up his shop in the Parliament Close, and lives retired in a snug house with a garden in Warriston's Close, which he has lately purchased. He is getting quite gay in his old age, and has given two or three flashy parties lately, at which there has been an unusual number of his own political creed, and this for a reason which I can now see pretty plainly. Well, he is an indefatigable man, and I am in little danger of falling while I have you and him for my supporters. Walter's active mind requires something to keep it perpetually engaged, and I think it likely that he will bestir himself in this matter, and to some purpose. In the meantime, I shall remain silent. I have humbly, but in vain, petitioned my own friends. Now, if my opponents take my case into consideration, without solicitation on my part, the greater will be their merit."

"You may remain inactive, if you please," said the Gaberlunzie, "but your doing so will only form an additional in-

centive to your friends to exert themselves in your behalf. I shall call on Mr Hepburn early in the morning. Meantime, as I feel weary and fatigued, perhaps you will allow me to retire to rest. I must be your lodger for the night, and happy am I to be once more domiciled under your hospitable roof."

In the morning, when the Gaberlunzie waited on my uncle, the old gentleman listened to his account of his journey with mingled feelings of regret and satisfaction,—regret that the Hepburn documents had not been found, and satisfaction at the prospect of the political party with whom he had so long been identified getting into office. "Yes," he said, "I have for some time past foreseen that this would shortly come to pass. I shall now let my good friend Nairn see something that will astonish him; and although his own political friends would not back him, notwithstanding his zealous support of their old rotten faction, I shall now be able to give him a lift at head quarters, and it will not be long, I promise you, before he is either Laird of Keith, or of some other estate equally good. Government has still some land in its own hands, and I warrant you our good friend Nairn shall not have the worst bit that's going. Wha's to be prime minister, say ye? Charlie Fox? Troth man, that's good news indeed: he's the boy that'll gie them a clean parritch-stick to lick: he's the chield that can gaur them stand about when he taks up his flail. Troth an' Billie Pitt may now e'en dight his neb and flee up. I shall pay him out in his ain coin, for throwing aside his auld friend Nairn's petition, and rejecting, as he did contemptuously, the humble petition for reform that was sent up frae our incorporation, and whilk cost me twa or three dinners to get the members to sign, and gin they hadna been weel banged they wouldna hae signed it yet. Deil be in his hank chafts, but we'll gie him hard crusts to chew yet. And what says Nairn?"

"I left him dressing, but he'll be here by-and-by to speak for himself. Of course, he taks the side o' his ain party, and says he's sorry for the change; but ne'er mind what he says, but exert yourself well, and leave the result to time."

In a short time Nairn arrived, and a council of war was forthwith held on the matters just spoken of. My aunt was more than usually excited. She was evidently gratified that her dear brother was to have his due share in the glory of the achievement in dependance. She thought, and was proud to

think, that if the efforts about to be made should be successful, that success would be attained chiefly through her brother's means. My uncle now wrote to a political friend in London, whom he thought likely to interest himself in the matter in hand, and although Nairn doggedly and pertinaciously adhered to his resolution, not to solicit any favour from a party to whom he was so opposed, yet not a few of the strongest sentences in the letter were either suggested or dictated by him.

The letter, which contained the united wisdom of all their four noddles, was despatched by the first post. It was a model worthy the study of all applicants for favours to persons in power, and its success was proportionate to its merits. At the expiry of a fortnight, my uncle received a letter with the London post-mark, and sealed with the government seal. So great was his agitation, that he could not for some time open it, but continued turning it round and round, now examining the seal, now the superscription. Could he believe his eyes? Was it indeed an official document? No doubt of it. Little doubt either that it contained good news. Its having the government seal on it was a favourable omen. At length the letter was opened, Matty looking over her brother's shoulder as he unfolded the interesting sheet. It was found to be a letter from the Secretary for the Home Department, stating that my uncle's application on behalf of his friend Mr Nairn had been under the consideration of the Cabinet Council, and had been received in the most favourable manner; and that although the Honourable Secretary would not pledge himself, nor any of his colleagues, to any special course, he had no hesitation in saying it was his belief, that in a very short time the most of the estates which had been confiscated in consequence of the part their owners had taken in the late rebellion, would be restored to their descendants.

This was a delightful consummation to all my uncle's fondest wishes, an ample reward for a long and steady adherence to the political party whose power was now in the ascendant. The old man fairly leaped up with joy after perusing this welcome communication. He smacked my aunt Matty on the cheeks, seized his cocked hat, waved it round his head, and gave three hearty cheers for the Hepburns of Keith; then scampered away down the High Street like a boy of fifteen, and arrived at the Mint just as Nairn had sat down to breakfast.

"Look at that, mun; look at that!" he said, throwing down the letter on the table; "there's a document, a real signed and



sealed government letter addressed to me, Walter Hepburn. It wad hae been lang or ony o' your whilly-whaing friends wad

hae sent you onything o' the kind, I trow. Look at that, man ; nane o' your promises to tak the case into consideration, but an intimation that your case has already been under notice, an' that there is every chance o' your wrongs being righted. That's what I ca' doin' business. There's smeddum for you. What say ye to that, man? When will your party do a generous off-hand thing like that, eh?"

"New brooms sweep clean, Walter, my friend," said Nairn, putting on his spectacles and perusing the letter; "you must not gut fish before you catch them. Your friends may make promises enough just now, under the impression that such proceedings may tend to secure them in their places, but after all they may promise more than they are able or willing to perform; and even when they intend well may, like my own friends, take a long time to redeem their pledges."

"Aweel, aweel," said Walter, "the proof o' the puddin's the preeing o't, but I'm willing to take ye a bet o' ony sum, an' to gie ye lang odds, that we winna be lang o' seeing ye Laird o' Keith; at least haudin' the estate in charge until we are able to prove our amiable friend at Kelpie Cleugh o' lineal descent in the direct line frae James Hepburn. I ferlie when these documents we hae been sae lang on the hunt for are to be forthcoming. We maun say naething about her claims till we get them, or my own friends, clever though they be, wad be glad o' sic an excuse as a disputed succession to postpone the matter indefinitely. In the meantime, we'll just keep dunning at them, an' wha kens what may turn up in time. I hae aye a strong conviction that the papers we want will be found some day."

"Well," said Nairn, "we must just wait with patience, watching and noting carefully every turn things may take. There seems little probability of immediate success, as regards my own claim; and unless the desiderated certificates be recovered, there will be an end to those of our amiable friend at Kelpie Cleugh. My own near relations, who are my heirs-at-law, will of course easily set aside her pretensions, unless these can be backed by legal and indisputable evidence. So that, upon the whole, I consider it our wisest course to continue to keep all our movements as secret as possible. Even the husband of our dear friend must not know of the claims of his family till there be some surer promise of ultimate success than has yet appeared. It would be a cruelty to awaken hopes that may

never be realized. I shall, in the meantime, keep up a correspondence as usual with the family, the members of which, I trust, will never be strangers either to my heart or home. We shall now and then exchange friendly visits, and I shall occasionally send them a token of remembrance."

"And sae shall I, and sae shall Matty," said my uncle.

"Thank you, thank you, my dear friend," replied Nairn. "Your kindness on every succeeding occasion but binds me closer to you in the ties of friendship; and thus, I trust, shall we continue mutually inciting each other to accomplish an object so dear to all our hearts."

"Yes," said my uncle; "and with the assistance of that queer carle the Gaberlunzie, who appears still sanguine in his expectations, I flatter myself we are on the high road to ultimate success."

"Without the aid of that worthy person our exertions would indeed be vain," said Nairn. "What dangers has he not braved! what fatigues has he not encountered during the last two years in his search after that unprincipled villain Champfleu! For this he seems to live, think, and act; for this has he wandered over half of the globe. Extraordinary man! what can be his motive for making this matter the great business of his life? Can it be from the common impulse of humanity, or can he have some more powerful reason that is unknown to us? It has sometimes occurred to me that he is more nearly related to the Hepburn family than he cares to acknowledge."

"As for that," said my uncle, "I really dinna ken. But," looking his watch, "it's high time we were moving. The carle was to meet us in Johnnie Dowie's to-day at meridian hour, an' we'll try there what we can pick out o' him. Hae ye heard ony thing lately anent puir Phemie, in your communications frae Kelpie Cleugh? Is she and the fiddler still staying there?"

"Phemie," said Nairn, "still remains there, although she is getting more and more addicted to wandering. She frequently disappears at night, and appears again in the morning, and this not only during summer, but in the depths of winter. She is apparently insensible to the inclemency of the weather, and on several occasions has been instrumental in saving the lives of travellers who had been overtaken by the storm, and who but for poor, kind, innocent Phemie might have perished. She never speaks but in song, is quite calm and quiet, and is allowed to come and go at pleasure. She gains more and more on their

affections every day, and they become every day more and more attached to her."

"And the fiddler, what of him?" inquired my uncle.

"He, also, I understand, has lately resumed his old habits," replied Nairn, "and goes about the country with his fiddle, determined, as he says, to owe his living to no one, while he can subsist by the exercise of his musical skill. Occasionally, however, he pays a visit to Kelpie Cleugh, and appears on every return to be more light-hearted than before. His son has lately come home from India, has been discharged, has married, and has settled down as a weaver in Paisley. The old man has been busy in the matter, and now resides chiefly with his son. Last time he was at the Cleugh, he told them 'that his son's wife had brought her husband a fine boy, who had been named after him, his grandfather, and that he meant to make a musician of the young fellow, if he had any music in his ear.'

"This new world of domestic love and affection," the Laird added, "that has now opened up on the old organist, has tended to withdraw his attention in part, though none of his regard, from Phemie. Seeing her so comfortably situated, and so kindly provided for, his visits to the Cleugh are every day becoming more rare, while Phemie no longer regards him with that anxious solicitude and fond familiarity which she was wont to exhibit towards him. She has become more shy and distant in her manner generally, although at parting she always sings some little pensive melody, which, reminding the old man of other days, brings the tears to his eyes; and always, when taking his leave, he presses her hand, looks in her face, and rushes to the door to conceal his emotion. Notwithstanding these touching parting scenes, however, Phemie is becoming so much attached, particularly to the younger branches of the interesting family under whose roof she is domiciled, that her old preceptor begins to assume but a secondary place in her regards. Under these circumstances we must not expect much assistance from the musician in our inquiry, but must rely on our own and our friend the Gaberlunzie's exertions, always asking His assistance who presides over the universe, who never fails to reward virtue and punish vice, and who will, if humbly besought, give us His assistance, in relieving suffering humanity, and in advocating the principles of rectitude and justice."

After this long conversation the two friends set out for Johnnie Dowie's, where the Gaberlunzie awaited them, and where the whole matter, in all its bearings, was again gone over, and point after point debated with eager and anxious interest. Uncle Walter lugged out the government despatch, and talked with great confidence of his friends now in office. Nairn chafed him a little, and somewhat checked his garrulity, by telling him plainly that he had no confidence to place in the word of his Whig friends; that he firmly believed that the proper quarter for him to look to for deliverance was his own friends; and that he did not expect to be successful in his suit until they came into power again—an event which, if he might judge from the signs of the times, there was every chance of very soon coming to pass. The Gaberlunzie declared, that if he had the certificate of Hepburn's marriage once in his possession, he would soon let both Whig and Tory hear the claims of the Keith family "on the deafest sides o' their heads."