

TALES

OF THE

WARS OF MONTROSE.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	Page
THE ADVENTURES OF COLONEL PETER ASTON	1
JULIA M'KENZIE	117
REMARKABLE ADVENTURES OF SIR SIMON BRODIE	165

THE ADVENTURES
OF
COLONEL PETER ASTON.

THIS heroic young gentleman was bred up in the family of John, the eighth Earl of Mar, and was generally supposed to have been a near connection of that nobleman's, but whether legitimate or illegitimate, is no where affirmed. It was indeed whispered among the domestics, that he sprung from a youthful amour between Lord Aston, of Forfar, and a nearer connection of the Mar family than I choose to insinuate. Certain it is, however, that the boy was christened by the name of Peter, and retained the surname of Aston to his dying day.

Although young Aston was taught every accomplishment of the age, yet he had no settled situation, either of honour or emolument. He looked forward to the life of a soldier, but hitherto his patron had made no provision for him. He was a principal man at weapons-haws, excelling every competitor. An excellent bargeman, a most acute marksman, and, at the sword exercise, he was not surpassed by any young man in the kingdom.

His chief and benefactor, the Earl of Mar, was a man of great power and authority, but about this time he got embroiled in the troubles of the period, and suffered some grievous losses and misfortunes, owing to the malignity of some of the parliamentary leaders, and so hardly was he pressed, that he was obliged to make his escape into Ireland, and his family was scattered among his relations.

But perceiving the dangers that were approaching him, he established young

Aston in the north, as constable of the Castles of Brae-Mar and Kildrummie, and sole keeper of the Earl's immense forests in those parts. This was a grand appointment for our young hero, requiring all the energies of his mind, for the forest was then of such extent that no living sportsman knew the limits of it, and concerning which the different foresters were not at all agreed, no, not to the extent of ten and twelve miles in some directions. Throughout this boundless chase, the great red deer of the Highlands strayed in thousands, beside numberless roes, wild boars, foxes, and other meaner animals. Here also the king of game, the great cock-of-the-wood, or capperkailzie, was to be found in every copse, with grouse of every description without number, so that it was indeed a scene of prodigious interest to Peter. Here his adventurous life began, and in this early stage of it were displayed many of the rising

energies which marked his character. Here he was enabled to maintain the Earl's castles and domains against all opposition ; for among the woods and fastnesses of the great Mar forest, no regular troops durst trust themselves ; and here our young hero, with his hardy Farquharsons and Finlays, kept all the straggling bands of the parliament forces at a due distance.

But Peter had other enemies whom he found it harder to deal with. These were bands of deer-stalkers or poachers, who established themselves on the skirts of the forest, and subsisted on its plunder. The deer and the game were so abundant, that hordes of sundry neighbouring clans made incursions into its richest glens occasionally, and made spoil of the Earl's deer. Over these men, our hero began at once to keep a jealous eye, and soon forced them to escape from his limits, for he could not endure to see the best of the deer slaughtered by men who did not even

acknowledge vassalage to his chief. He took several of these marauders prisoners, chastised others, and by dint of watching, threatening, and fearless demeanour, he soon cleared the forest; so that he proved a most unwelcome guest to all the poachers and deer-stalkers of that country; while his pursuits of and engagements with them contributed greatly to the romantic excitement of his employment, and afforded numerous opportunities for exhibiting that personal prowess for which he was becoming every day more renowned.

Among all those bands of depredators, the worst and most obstinate was one Nicol Grant. This resolute outlaw had established himself and a body of his kinsmen in a little solitary dell, not far from the side of Loch-Bily, where the remains of their hamlet is still visible, though nearly covered with the green sward. It was a perilous situation for

Peter and his men; for it was actually upon the chief of the Grants' property, although indented into that of Glen-Gairn, one of the richest glens of the Mar forest: and there Nicol Grant persisted in remaining, and held all the adherents of the Earl of Mar at defiance.

Against this man there were grievous complaints lodged, from the first commencement of Peter's command, and instead of dying away under the new rigours of our determined keeper, the complaints of his under-foresters became still more loud; for though they knew that he harried their forest, they could not catch him, his art of concealment greatly surpassing their skill in discovery. They often caught his warders, placed on hills to give him various warnings, but these they could not even punish with any show of justice, as they were all unarmed intentionally, their situations being so much exposed.

Peter at last determined one day, all of a sudden, that he would step into this highland reaver's den, and expostulate with him on the baseness and impolicy of his conduct, and try to convince him of these, and persuade him to keep his own laird's bounds. Expostulate indeed! never was there a man less likely to succeed in expostulation than Mr. Constable Aston, for he was violently passionate when he conceived himself wronged, and though himself swayed by principles of the most perfect justice and integrity, had no patience with any one whom he deemed in the wrong. Moreover, having been brought up at Alloa Castle, on the Forth, he understood the Gaelic so imperfectly, that he frequently took it up in a sense the very reverse of what it was, which ruined all chance of expostulation. His attendant, Farquhar, however, understood both languages middling well, so that there he was not at so great a loss.

Well, it so chanced that Peter and this one attendant was hunting or watching one day upon the eastern division of the great mountain Ben-Aoon, when Farquhar pointed out to him the smoke issuing from the abode of Nicol Grant and his associates. The smoke appeared so nigh, that all at once the fancy struck Peter of going directly there and hearing what this obstinate freebooter had to say for himself; and notwithstanding of all that Farquhar could say, he persisted in his resolution.

The way was longer than he expected, and on coming nigh the hamlet, almost impervious, so that had it not been for the smoke, the two could not have found it; but the smoke was like the smoke of a great camp, or a city on a small scale, and as they approached, a savoury scent of the well-known venison came temptingly over the senses of our two hungry invaders. But though that gave Farquhar a strong desire to partake of the viands, he conti-

nued to expostulate with his master on the madness and danger of this visit, but all to no purpose.

If ever there existed a man who really knew not what fear was, as far as regarded beings of flesh and blood, it was Peter Aston, and without the least hesitation, in he went, followed by his attendant, to the largest house of the encampment, from whence the greatest quantity of smoke issued, and from which, likewise, the savoury perfume seemed to proceed. At his very first step within the threshold, (O woful sight to Peter's eyes!) he perceived hundreds, if not thousands of deer hams, all hanging drying in the smoke, tier above tier innumerable. The house being something like a large highland barn, with its walls made of stake-and-rise, there was in the other end a kilnful of malt drying, for ale and whiskey to these bold marauders. It was this which had produced the great column of smoke, by which

the keeper and his man had been directed through the intricacies of rock and forest to this singularly sequestered abode. There was, moreover, a large fire in the middle of this rude edifice, on which hung an enormous kettle simmering full of a venison stew, and two coarse-looking highland women kept constantly stirring and pouching it up.

All this was far too much for the patience of Peter. The moment he cast his eyes to the countless number of deer hams, the calm-expostulation part of his errand vanished. He and his attendant were both well armed with long firelocks, bows, arrows, and broad swords; and stepping up resolutely into the middle of this singular store-house and refectory, he said fiercely, "By the faith of my body, but you gentlemen deer-stalkers seem to live well here, and rather to know too well where the Earl of Mar's best bucks graze."

There were four or five ragged and

sulky looking fellows sitting on the floor in a ring, employed on something, but as they understood no English, they made no answer, but one of the women at the kettle, called out "Eon," and straight a tall hard-featured fellow came from another apartment, who, with a bow that would not have disgraced a nobleman, welcomed the stranger Sassenach to his friend's humble abode.

"Why I was saying, sir," said Peter, "that you seem to live devilish well here, and rather to know too well where the Earl of Mar's best bucks graze; what say you to that?"

"Why sir," said the fellow, "she just pe saying tat her fare pe very mooch te-pending on her creat induster. She pe often tear pought and far sought. But such as she pe, te stranger always welcome to his share."

"Answer me this one civil question,

sir," said Peter, in a voice of thunder, "where the devil did you get all those deer hams, and on whose land and in what district did you obtain them all. You can answer me, can't you?"

"Yes," said the highlander, drawing himself up. "To one who can pe knowing a steir's ham from that of a buck, and a highland shentlemans from a mere gilly she could pe answering te questions."

Peter, without once thinking of his perilous situation among a horde that had sworn his death, stepped fiercely up, and seized the man by the collar, "I'll have no shuffling, sir," said he. "I am the Earl of Mar's castellan and forester, and I demand an implicit answer, whether, as has been reported to me, those deer have been stolen from his forest."

The man, not doubting that Peter had a strong and overpowering party without, answered him softly, by assuring him that

he was not master there, but that he might depend on being satisfactorily answered by his leader and kinsman.

By this time one had run and apprized Nicol Grant of the arrival of a youthful Sassenach, who was assuming unaccountable airs and authority among his kinsmen. Nicol belted on his sword, and hasted into his rude hall, and there perceived a stately youth, of not more than nineteen years of age, collaring his kinsman, the redoubted John of Larg, his greatest hero and right hand man, a well-trying warrior, whom he had never known to flinch. The scene was so ludicrous that the captain of that Katheran band could not help smiling, and going up, he tapped Peter on the shoulder, addressing him in the most diabolical English; something as follows:—"Fwat pe te mhatte, prave poy? Fwat haif my cousin Larg peen tooing or saying?"

"What?" said Peter:—he said no more but that one short monosyllable, yet he

expressed a great deal, for what from his look and that one word, he set all present into a roar of laughter, except Nicol.

“ Pray fwat should pe your grotharh, tat is your call upon me after?” said the latter.

“ What ?” said Peter, louder than before, for he really did not understand what Grant said, and to four or five violent speeches of the highlander, this word was the only answer, still louder and louder. Both were getting into a rage, when Farquhar interposed, desiring each of them to speak in his own mother tongue, and he would interpret between them. By this means Farquhar hoped to soften both answers, and for a short while effected a delay of the breaking out of the quarrel, but to the old question by Peter, “ where he destroyed all those deer ?” Grant made a speech, which Farquhar being obliged to interpret, put an end to all peaceable col-

loquy. He said he lived upon his chief's own land, and took the deer where he could get them, and defied the Earl of Mar and all his adherents to prove him a thief or dishonourable man. That he had as good blood in his veins as that great chief had or any belonging to him, and that he set him and his whole clan at defiance.

“ Sir, to be short with you,” said Peter, “ since I find you such a determined and incorrigible villain, I give you this warning, that if I find you or any one of your gang henceforth in the Earl of Mar's forest, I'll shoot you like wild dogs or wolves. Remember, you are forwarned.”

“ Kill the Sassenach, kill him,” shouted a number of voices at once, and half a dozen of naked swords were presented to Aston's breast at once. “ No, no, hold off !” cried Nicol, “ since he has dared to beard the old fox in his den, I'll show him how little I regard his prowess, or the power of those

who sent him. Young gentleman, are you willing to fight me for the right of shooting in Mar forest?"

"By the faith of my body, and that I am," said Peter, pulling out his sword. "But you dare not, sir. You dare not, for the soul that is in your body, fight me single handed."

"May te teal mon take tat soul ten!" exclaimed Grant. "Hurrah! all hands aloof! It shall never pe said tat Nicol Craunt took odds akainst a Sassenach, far less a stripe of a fhoolish poy. Come on, praif mhaister, you shall never chase a Craunt from the Prae-Mhar forest akhain."

The two went joyfully out to the combat, and were followed by the whole hamlet, men, women, and children, an amazing number, and among the rest, not fewer than twenty-five armed hunters were among the crowd. Farquhar besought a word of his master, and tried to persuade him to come to some accommoda-

tion for the present, for as it was, in whatever way the combat terminated, they were both dead men. But his remonstrances were vain. Peter never could be brought to perceive danger. There was a deadly rancour in each heart, and they took the field against each other with the most determined inveteracy.

They fought with swords and bucklers, at which it was supposed each of them believed himself unmatched. But they had not crossed swords for five minutes, till Peter discovered that Grant was no match for him. The latter fought with the violence of a game-cock, and he being more than double the age of Peter, soon began to lose his breath. Peter let him toil and fume on, defending himself with the greatest ease, till at last he chose an opportunity of putting in practice a notable quirk in the sword exercise, that he had learned from M'Dowell, his master, at Alloa castle. He struck Grant's elbow

with the knob of his buckler, so as to take the whole power out of his arm, and the next moment twirled his sword from his hand, making it fly to a great distance, and without the loss of an instant, while the Katheran chief was in this dilemma, Aston tripped him up, and set his foot upon his breast, waving his sword above his throat.

It was not to be borne by the Grants, as he might easily have supposed. A loud cry and a general rush forward was the consequence, and in one moment Peter Aston was overpowered and bound with cords, his hands behind his back and his feet with many folds. Why they did not slay him on the instant, as Nicol Grant and his gang had sworn his death many a time, is not easy to be accounted for, but there can be no doubt that some selfish motive predominated.

He was carried to a sort of dark hovel of an outhouse, thrown upon the floor, and a single armed guard placed at the

door. He requested to have his servant Farquhar to attend him, but the savages only laughed at him, spoke in Gaelic, and left him. Thus was our hero vanquished by numbers, but still nothing dismayed. His mind seems to have been incapable of terror from man; but hunger came in its place, which was worse to bear, and now began to tease him most unmercifully, nor had he any means of repelling that most troublesome guest, and he began to dread that the savages were going to starve him to death, and his blood ran chill at the thought.

He fell asleep, but it was a troubled sleep, for he had dreams of eating at the Earl of Mar's table, but was ashamed because his appetite was insatiable. He ate up whole quarters of venison, and began to attack the beef with unimaginable glee; but still the desire increased with repletion, and there was no end either of the feast or the most intolerant rapacity.

While in the very height of this singular enjoyment, he imagined that he saw a lovely female figure coming in to partake of his viands. He tried to speak and welcome her, but he could not. He tried to stretch out his arms and embrace her, but he could not. She was, however, no vision, for the lovely being loosed the cords from his hands, and as he came to himself by degrees he heard her whispering—"Be not afraid, gallant stranger; I have come at the risk of my life to set you free. I saw how fearlessly and nobly you acquitted yourself to-day, and though you vanquished my own father, I admired you, for we never knew of his being vanquished before. And besides there is a party on the way which will be here shortly, and these men are to carry you into your own bounds, and drown or strangle you; for it is a rule with my father that no man, however great his offence, shall be put down here. Knowing

all this, and hearing the orders given, I thought it hard that so gallant a youth and a stranger should be cut off in this manner, for doing that which he conceived to be his duty. I have therefore taken my life in my hand, and come to set you at liberty, provided you give me your sacred troth, that you will spare this little community, that by the troubles of the times have been driven to the hard circumstances in which you find us. But in particular you are to promise me, if I now give you your life, which your rashness has forfeited, that you are never to shed the blood of my parent, but to ward off his vengeance in the best way you may; for well I know he never will forgive the stain which you have this day cast on his honour by vanquishing him, and setting your foot on his breast at his own threshold, and in the midst of his dependants. Now, before I set you free, do you promise me this?"

Peter was deeply affected by the interest taken in his fortune by this lovely young female, the daughter of his mortal enemy; yea, affected in a way which he had never before experienced. "I would have granted anything at your request, my comely maiden, without any conditions," said Peter; "but as it is *your* request, it is granted. Henceforth Nicol Grant's life shall be held precious in my sight, as if it were the life of my own parent; and as a pledge of my troth, now that my hands are free, I will halve this bonnet-piece of gold between us, and let the sight of your half or mine always remain a memorial between us and a witness of this vow." And then, after a good deal of sawing, cutting, and nibbling, he parted the gold coin between them.

"I am satisfied and happy, brave youth," said the maiden; "and to tell the truth, I had resolved to set you at liberty, and to trust to your generosity

and your honour, whether you had promised or not ; but your promise and your pledge makes me happy ; for well I know my father will never forgive you, but will thirst for your blood. But the times are perilous, and you and my father may soon come into the battle-field together, or against each other ; and should you once cover his head on such a day, he then might be all your own : and what a guardian I should then have for my brave old and impetuous parent !”

“ Lady, who are you, that I may know you again ?” said Peter ; “ for such sentiment and high and generous feeling in such a place as this, appears to me as an anomaly in human nature.”

“ I am Marsali Grant,” said she ; “ the sole child and darling of the man whom you this day vanquished in fight. But there is no time for more parley ; your executioners will presently be here. There is something both to eat and drink, but for Heaven’s sake

escape to the solitudes and fastnesses of the hills before partaking of either. Remember you are unarmed, for I durst not bring your armour for fear of a discovery. Haste and make your escape by the western branch of the glen, and avoid the eastern as you would the door of death. Make your way through this divot roof, for though your guard is asleep, which I effected, yet I dare not trust you in his sight. My father and his men are all absent on some expedition. Not another word. God speed you."

"But where is Farquhar?" said he; "What has become of my faithful Farquhar?" Marsali shook her head, and again charged him to look to his own safety; so, after giving her an affectionate embrace, and shedding a tear of gratitude or love, we shall not decide which, on her cheek, our hero took his leave, made his way by the western branch of the glen, as the maid had directed him, and on the

following morning reached the castle of Brae-Mar in safety.

Peter had the day before summoned the Earl's men of the western glens together, to watch the motions of some of the marching divisions of the enemy, and found them assembled at the castle on his return. To them he related his adventure precisely as it had happened, save that he did not mention his promise to Marsali. The men insisted on being led against that nest of freebooters, to cut them off root and branch, but Peter refused, on which the men of Mar looked at one another, not being able to divine the cause of Peter's backwardness, it being so much the reverse of his general disposition.

Peter really was convinced in his own mind that Nicol Grant only took that mode of releasing him, to give it a little more effect—to make a deeper impression on his mind, and extract a promise from him which Grant could not otherwise have

obtained. Our hero was wrong, as will appear in the sequel; but, at all events, he would not have injured a hair of one of that tribe's head, and all for the sake of their lovely young mistress.

The confusion in the south of Scotland became dreadful about this period. New tidings arrived at Brae-Mar every day, of new revolutions and counter-movements of the different armies. Certain word at length arrived, that the Earl of Mar had been compelled to fly the country, and that his son Lord John, who commanded in Stirlingshire, had been so hard pressed by Argyle and his party, that he had been obliged to abscond along with a few principal friends. It was rumoured that they had escaped to Argyleshire, and joined Montrose, who was then laying waste the devoted Campbells. But young Aston could not help wondering why his lord should not have retired to his highland dominions, where the force continued

stedfast, strong and unbroken ; but it was to save those dominions from ravage that both noblemen escaped in a different direction.

A messenger at length arrived from Ireland, who brought a confirmation of Peter's investiture in the chief command of all the Earl's people in those parts. His instructions were to keep his men prepared, but to temporise as long as possible, without showing a decided hostility to any party ; but if fairly forced to take a part, then to join his troops to those of the king, and stand or fall with the royal cause. The Earl's people were thus left in a ticklish position, being surrounded on all sides by the whig or parliamentary forces, excepting indeed their powerful neighbours the Gordons of Strath-Bogie and Aboyne. They had marshalled again and again in great force, but had not yet finally declared themselves ; the Marquess of Huntly and his son being both in prison

in Edinburgh Castle, so that they were as much at a loss how to proceed, deprived of their leaders, as the Earl of Mar's people were. Peter, now styled Captain Aston, continued to act in the most fearless and independent manner. He held the strong castle of Kildrummie Cogarth and Brae-Mar, and showed a resolution of repelling force by force on the first opportunity.

It is well known, that in the event of any national commotion in Scotland, it has always been the prevailing sin of the clans, in the first place, to wreak their vengeance on their next neighbours, and this disposition shewed itself at that time over all the north. And in particular as relates to our narrative, the Grants deeming theirs the prevailing party, became as intolerant as any clan of them all; but many and severe were the chastisements they received from Captain Aston, who missed no opportunity of inflicting on them

the most rigorous retaliation. They could live no longer with him, and determined on having him cut off, cost what it would. Nicol Grant, of Glen Bilg, and his desperate gang of deer-stalkers were applied to as the most able and likely to effect this laudable work; and they undertook it with avidity, swearing over the sword to shed his blood, or forego the name and habitation of their fathers.

On the morning after Peter's escape from the hands of these ruffians, Grant's party of executioners arrived at the encampment about the break of day, in order to carry off the prisoner, to hang or drown him in his own bounds. They found the armed highlander walking backward and forward before the door, but on entering the bothy there were the bonds lying, and the prisoner gone through a hole in the roof. The highlander swore to them that he had never for a moment quitted, but that he once thought he found the smell of the

devil coming from the cottage, and heard him saying to the prisoner, that the Grants might rue the day that he was born. The Grants were astonished, and believing all this, they looked on their very existence as a tribe to depend on the death of this young man, and tried every means of accomplishing their purpose. Nicol Grant burst into the heart of the forest with a stronger party than he had hitherto headed, and defeating a party of Mar's men on the hill above Invercauld, he pursued them with such eagerness, thinking they were led by the captain, that he lost all thought of his danger. The man whom he took for Captain Aston perceived that he was singled out by Grant, and fled toward a ford in the linn of Glen-quais, where one only can step at a time, and where one good fellow might guard the ford against fifty. Finlay Bawn leaped the gully, and then turned to fight the Katheran chief, but Grant heaved a stone with such deadly

aim, that Finlay's feet being entangled among the rocks, it knocked him down, or some way caused him to fall, on which old Grant sprang over the gully, and cut the unfortunate youth down as he was trying to gain his feet, and with many curses and oaths began a-hacking off his head. He was that moment saluted by a shower of huge stones, which laid him prostrate at once, and he was seized and bound by three of the Farquharsons.

As they were binding him, he growled a hideous laugh, and said, "Ay, you cravens, do your worst, now I have kept my oath. I have avenged the wrongs of my clan, and my own disgrace, and removed the spell of a cursed enchanter. I am satisfied."

"Is it the death of our young friend, Finlay Bawn, that is to effect all this?" said the men.

"Finlay Bawn!" exclaimed the savage, in a tone of agony; "and is it only

Finlay Bawn, whose death I have effected with the loss of my own life? Bramble! brandling! would that I were at liberty to hew you into a thousand pieces for thus disappointing me of my just and noble revenge."

"What a pity we have not a rope," said one of his captors, "that we might hang him over the first tree."

"What need have we of a rope," said another. "Give me a fair stroke at the monster, and I'll engage to cut off his head as accurately as it had never been on."

"I'll defy you," said Grant; "now try your hand at it."

"O, that is a stale joke," said the first; "you want to fall by a quick and honourable death, but you shall hang like a dog. Off to the castle with him, that our captain may have the satisfaction of hanging him with his own hand."

Nicol Grant was then hauled away,

with his hands bound behind his back, to the castle of Brae-Mar, and flung into the dungeon until the arrival of the Captain, who was not expected till the evening. In the mean time, Finlay Bawn's father arrived at the castle, and insisted on inflicting vengeance on the slayer of his son, with his own hand. He being a man of some note among the Earl's people, none of the assembled vassals opposed the motion, and Grant being delivered up to the irritated father of a beloved son, a scene of great outrage ensued. Old Finlay put a rope about the culprit's neck, and began a-dragging him up to the gallows that stood at the cross of the village of Castle-ton, about a quarter of a mile from the castle. Grant was so dogged and sulky that he would neither lead nor trail, and a few boors, with braying laughter, were beating him on with sticks like an ox. Grant cursed them; tried to kick them; and said again and again, "Were your

lord here, as he is in Ireland, the best of you durst not use me thus."

At this critical juncture, Captain Aston arrived from Kildrummie, and galloping up the green beheld his sworn enemy Nicol Grant led like a bullock by a long rope, and a parcel of clowns threshing him on with stones. He rode into the middle of them, knocking sundry of them down with his sheathed sword. "Who dares to lead a prisoner to execution here without my orders?" cried he. "I claim this prisoner as mine to try or to pardon; for though he slew your son in a forest broil, he slew him for me, and therefore the revenge is mine."

"What, sir?" cried old Finlay, "refuse me due vengeance on this old outlaw for the death of my brave son? I'll have it, sir!"

"Hold your peace, and be —— to you," cried Aston. "I am captain here, until either the Earl or Lord John re-

turn, and I'll have no vassal voice to countermand my orders. I am sorry for the loss of the brave young man, but the stroke, as I understand, was meant for my head, not his; therefore, the prisoner is mine."

So saying, he alighted and loosed the rope from the neck of Nicol Grant with his own hands, unscrewing also the chain that held his hands together.

Old Grant gnashed his teeth and bit his lip in astonishment, but said not a word. He was conducted back, and again thrown into the dungeon of the castle, without being offered either meat or drink. "Lie there, and eat the flesh from off your bones, old murderous vagabond," said Aston; "I carry this key to the wars with me, and if I never return your cursed bones shall never be buried."

Nicol Grant laid him down on his dungeon floor, and after exhausting his curses on Pender-tana-mor, fairly made up his

mind to suffer death by hunger and thirst without complaint, and without a cry being heard from the dungeon.

As he was lying half asleep, grinning with despair, he thought he heard the outer door of the castle slowly unlocked; then a few steps as approaching down the stone stair, and finally the dungeon door was unlocked, and in stepped Captain Aston. He carried armour, and old Grant perceived at once that he was to be murdered in private and in cold blood, and grinned a disdainful smile in the face of his hated enemy.

“ You have always judged too hard of me, Grant,” said he. “ I was never your personal enemy, nor the enemy of your clan, but only the enemy of injustice and robbery; and if you and your adherents will desist from robbing my lord and master’s forests, I will unite in friendship with you for ever. It is not now a time for loyal subjects to be quarrelling among

themselves and cutting each other's throats."

"Young squire, I want no directions from you where I and my men are to hunt or not to hunt. I will hunt where I please over all Scotland," said Grant; "and you or the Earl of Mar hinder me at your peril."

"What folly to speak to me in that manner, Grant," said Captain Aston, "considering that you are in my power, and sensible as you must be that I have spared you and your nest of forest robbers merely that I might not make enemies of my powerful neighbours the Grants; hoping that we shall yet combine in the same noble cause. Nor, for all your malice, shall a chieftain of the Grants be put down by me. I desire to be your friend and your companion in arms, for I know you for a brave man. Therefore, though I dare not tell my men, but must pretend I leave you here to die of hunger and thirst,

here is both meat and drink for you in abundance; but haste and escape to the fastnesses of the mountains before partaking of either, for I cannot answer one minute for your life while you are in the environs of this castle."

"Boy! stripling! low-lived Sassenach!" exclaimed Nicol. "Do you think I would take my life in a present from you? No, caitiff, I would rather die a thousand deaths!"

"Well, if you put hand to your own life, that is no act of mine," said Aston, gaily; "but I hope better things of you, and yet to fight side by side with you." So saying, he thrust him out of the castle, loaden with venison, bread, and wine, and bolted him out.

Grant felt himself degraded below the standard of humanity. Never was there a more wretched and miserable being. He felt himself doubly—trebly conquered; and his savage nature recoiling from the con-

temptation, he cherished nothing but the most deadly revenge.

He returned home, to the great joy of his clan, but he had not the face to tell them of his degradation; but his darling Marsali wormed it out of him, partly in his sleep and partly when awake. But by day his whole conversation with his associates was how to accomplish the death of Aston. He was represented as a necromancer, a limb of Satan, and a scourge of God on the Grants; and one on whose death the welfare and very existence of the clan depended. His death was again sworn to over the sword, and shortly after a fit opportunity offered.

A watcher came one night, and informed Nicol Grant that he had discovered a nightly retreat of Pender-Mor's, near the head of the Gairn, on the very confines of their bounds; and that, what with the different lights and bugle blasts that he used, the Grants could not stir a foot but

they were surprised; and that he had dodged them with a few chosen men for three successive nights, and would likely remain till discovered or expelled.

This was joyful news for old Nicol, and all was bustle among the Grants of Glen-Bilg, to secure the success of their great enterprise. The scouts kept all day coming and going, and meeting one another, and at night it was ascertained that the dreaded party was still there, as the smoke was seen ascending from the bothy, although scarcely discernible through the trees that surrounded the rock, at the foot of which the shieling was placed. They then set their guard, so as it was impossible the foe could escape.

But none of their consultations were concealed from Marsali; she was one of themselves, and heard every thing. No one ever suspected her of having set their great foe at liberty, the devil having been the only person suspected there. None,

however, knew of her lover's engagement to her, and no one but herself knew of the generous relief he had afforded to her indomitable parent. She therefore resolved to save the young and generous hero's life still, if practicable, by sending a private message to him. But how to get that private message to him,—there lay the difficulty! However, love will accomplish much. She knew the scene well, though only from hourly description, and she imagined she could direct one to it. But she had as yet no confidant whom she could trust, and such an interest in the clan's greatest tormentor was a dangerous secret to impart.

Captain Aston and six of his bravest followers had again met by appointment at their wild bothy that evening. The place was on the very boundary of the Grant's land, and fixed on as a check to them as well as for its singular safety; for the bothy could only be approached by

one man at a time, and that with difficulty. And, moreover, the inmates had a retreat up from behind on a ladder into a concealed cave in a tremendous rock, and when the ladder was pulled up, the men who took shelter there were safe, though assailed by a thousand foes.

Peter (or rather Captain Aston) and his men were sitting in the bothy at the foot of the rock, cooking a hidefull of the finest venison, with other game mixed, and always now and then tasting the delicious liquor, to ascertain if was ready for their grand repast, when all at once a watcher in a loud whisper, gave the word, "A Grant! a Grant!" "By the blessed rood, he dies then, if he were their chief," cried the Captain, and fitting an arrow to his bow, and waiting a little space until the intruder came to the highest part of the path, his form was wholly exposed between the captain's eye and the sky, and was thus rendered a complete butt for an archer's

eye. The intruder was a slender youth, and hasting towards them with eager speed. Peter took a hasty aim, the bow-string twanged, the shaft sped, and pierced the stranger's lightsome form, who with a loud cry fell to the ground. The captain was first at him, and found a comely youth lying bleeding on the height, with a deep wound in his shoulder, from which he had just pulled the barbed arrow. The youth wept bitterly, and blamed the captain for shooting a friend who came on a message of life and death. The other retaliated the blame on the wounded youth, for his temerity in coming without the password.

“ I want a single word with you in private, sir, before I die,” said the youth.

“ Die !” exclaimed the captain, “ why it is a mere scratch, it would not cause a girl to lose an hour's sleep. Retire, my friends, to your supper, till I hear what this stripling has to communicate.” The men

did so, when the youth instantly produced the token which our hero had given to Marsali Grant, and at the same time charged him to follow where he should lead the way, else in half an hour he and his party would all be dead men.

“There you are mistaken, my brave boy,” said Peter; “for here I and my party are safe, and defy all the Grants of Strath-Aven.”

“Are you not bound in honour to answer this token, sir.” Peter bowed, and acknowledged the obligation. “Then,” continued the youth, “you must come and speak with my young mistress without, for she has something of the utmost importance to communicate to you.”

Peter did not hesitate a moment in complying with his beauteous deliverer's injunctions. He ran to his men, desiring them to take shelter in the cave for the night, and draw up the ladder, and returned to his young ragged and weeping conductor.

“ O sir,” said he, “ if you know of any path out of this entanglement in any direction, for heaven’s sake lead on, for my master’s men surround this place in great force, and will immediately be upon us ; and if I guess aright, it was to save your life that I was sent. What shall we do ? For I am wounded and cannot fly with you, and if I am taken, my life is the forfeit.”

“ Fear not, and follow me,” said the captain ; and taking the youth by the hand, he pulled him along on the narrow path by which he had come. They had not proceeded far, ere they heard the rush of the Grants approaching, on which they were obliged to creep into the thicket on one side, and squat themselves to the earth. The poor timorous youth clung to the captain’s bosom, and sobbed and wept ; for he heard their whispered vengeance in his native tongue, and their rejoicings that they had their

greatest enemy once more in the toil. When they were all gone by, the two arose and pursued another path in deep silence, and it was not long ere they gained the height, and perceived the blue waters of Loch-Bily below them, whose waves glittered bright in the beams of the rising moon.

Here the captain dressed the youth's shoulder, which had still continued to bleed a little and rendered him somewhat faint; but Peter, binding it hard up with some herbs, assured him that it was nothing, and the two proceeded on in silence, the youth taking the lead. In an amazing short time, our hero found himself in the middle of the encampment of the Grants; and the sly youth who had led him by such a near rout, seemed to enjoy his consternation greatly, when he saw where he was and heard what he heard. This was a wild and terrible anthem, proceeding from the large rude hall in which he

had been formerly. The song seemed a battle strain, ending with a coronach for the dead. When it was ended, the youth whispered him to walk deliberately in, and use his own discretion until he went and apprised his young mistress of his arrival. The mention of her name thrilled him to the heart, and without thinking of aught else, he walked boldly and slowly into the hall amid the astonished group. They were all females, some old and some young; but there was one powerful old dragon among them, whom Peter set down in his mind at once as a witch. One wild exclamation in Gaelic followed another, but these our hero did not fully comprehend, neither did they his salutations; but it was manifest that their astonishment was extreme. The superstition of that age was such as cannot now be comprehended. People lived and breathed in a world of spirits, witches, warlocks, and necromancers of all descriptions, so that it was

amazing how they escaped a day with life and reason. Peter believed in them all; and as for the Grants of the gien, they had from the beginning set him down as a demi-devil—a sort of changeling from the spiritual to the human nature: and there was a prophecy among them which that same old hag continued oft to repeat. It was in Gaelic, but bore that “when Peter, the great son of Satan, should fall, their house should fall with him,”—thus regarding him the evil angel of their race. His wonderful escape from them formerly, his surprising feats of arms, and most of all, his present appearance in the midst of them, as they were singing his death-song, impressed them with the firm belief that he was indeed a super-human being. They sent off one message after another for their young mistress, but she could not be found, and no one knew where she was. But in a short time Marsali herself stepped in, arrayed in the brilliant tartan of the clan,

and really, in such a scene, appeared like the guardian divinity of the wilderness. There was such a combination of beauty, simplicity, and elegance, both in her appearance and deportment, that Captain Aston, brave and resolute as he was, instantly felt that he was only a secondary and subordinate person there.

The guileful creature instantly kneeled before him, and prayed him—in Gaelic, that all the women might thoroughly understand her—that for her sake he would restrain his soldiers, by whom they were surrounded, from ravaging and destroying a parcel of poor helpless women who had been left without a guard.

“Madam, you know that I do not understand you,” said he. “But you also know that I cannot refuse anything to you, if you will speak in a language with which I am acquainted.”

She then thanked him again in Gaelic for his boundless kindness and generosity

in thus always repaying them good for evil. And the women hearing this, conceiving of course that their adored mistress had gained a great victory, and saved all their lives, danced for joy around them, and blessed them both in a verse of sacred song.

Marsali led her lover into her own chamber, and addressed him in the language to which he was accustomed; and that with a frankness and affection which greatly endeared the maiden to his fond heart, unpractised as it was to any of the blandishments of love or flattery. He gazed and gazed at her, his eyes beaming with delight, and then said, "I am afraid of you, Marsali. And well I may, for I find that I am your captive—that you can make me do what you please; and aware as I am of that, where is my security for not doing every day something that is wrong."

"O, noble sir, can you not trust my

generosity and affection. Let me clasp your knees, and kiss them, for your unmerited kindness in rescuing my infatuated father from an instant and ignominious death."

"And where is my recompense, Marsali? When I thought to have secured him as my friend and companion in arms for ever, you see how I am rewarded. Parent as he is yours, Nicol Grant has the nature of a demon."

"Say not so, noble sir, but listen to me. It grieves my heart to find that my father, in place of being won by your kindness, is more inveterate against you than ever. He feels that he is not only conquered in warrior prowess but in generosity, and feels every moment of his life as if he were writhing beneath your foot. His yearning for vengeance is altogether insupportable; and I have now no other resource but to endeavour your separation for ever; and it was to effect

this that I sent for you from the forest of Glen-Gairn.”

“ Bless me ! I never till this moment remembered to ask you wherefore you sent for me so hastily, and forced me to leave my men in some danger.”

“ I sent, in the first place, to warn you of your danger, and save your life, which I need not say I feel now to be too dear to me. But, for shame ! how could you shoot my messenger ?”

“ The rascal came without our pass-word, and what could I do ? He had not even the sense to answer our challenge by calling out ‘ a friend.’ But I was little sorry for the accident, for such a poor whining elf I never beheld : I could hardly refrain from kicking him ; for what do you think ? he actually cried like a girl for a scratch on the shoulder.”

“ Poor fellow ! he’s a very kind hearted, faithful, and pretty boy.”

“ He a pretty boy ! an ugly keystrel !

a chit ! The worst-looking howlet that I ever saw in my life, ah—a—a—a.” Here our bold Captain’s volley of obloquy against the poor boy was suddenly cut short, while the hero himself was to be seen standing gaping like one seized with a paralytic affection. For the lovely, the accomplished and engaging Marsali Grant had thrown back her silken tartan, and there was the identical wound, on a shoulder as white as the snows on Ben-Aven, which our hero had recklessly inflicted, and as carelessly dressed on the height of Glen-Gairn.

Peter’s mouth turned into the shape of a cross-bow—he looked over his right shoulder, but seeing nothing there worth looking at, his eyes reverted again to the wound on the lovely shoulder, at which the victorious damsel stood pointing. The round tears stood in our hero’s large blue eyes, which seemed dilated above measure; and so, to prevent himself from crying

outright, even louder than the maiden had done herself, he turned his face over his left shoulder, and began a-laughing, while at the same time his face went awry and the tears ran down in streams.

“ So you never saw a shabbier keystrel or a worse-looking boy, did you not ?” said she most provokingly.

“ Dear, dear Marsali, you are too hard upon me ; Heaven knows, I wish the wound had been mine. And yet it is nothing to one you have given me. I—I—fear—I love you, Marsali.”

“ A bold confession ! but forgive me for laughing at it. It is however given in good time, for I have a most serious request to make of you, and one that nearly concerns both our happiness and our lives. Did I not hear you say lately, noble Aston, that you could not refuse me any thing ?”

“ Perhaps you did ; and if I said so, what then ?”

“ Alas ! the time is hard at hand, when your sword and my father’s must both be drawn in this ruinous war, which is a more serious affair than broils about forest land, which God ordained should be free. This country is now destined to be the seat of bloody and destructive war ; and no tribe, nor clan, nor family is to be suffered to remain neutral, without being subjected to plunder, fire, and sword. Both parties have issued summons and threats, and to the one or the other we must cling. I know the part that the Grants will take, and my father and his followers will be the foremost men. Should you and the men of Mar take the same side, as is reported, think what the issue will be. Either you or my father will never come home again, nor can you even subsist together in life for a single day. He is altogether irreconcilable, and nothing but your blood will satisfy him. He has sworn an hundred times to wash his

hands in it, and in the event of either of you falling by the other's hand, *what is to become of me?*”

“ But, dearest Marsali, what can I do to prevent this? I will be friends with your father for your sake alone; and I will be a shield to him in the day of battle, provided he will be friends with me; but if I am attacked unfairly, or by ruffian ferocity, what can I do but defend myself?”

“ There is only one expedient in nature to save one or both of your lives, and mine besides; and that is, for you either to keep personally out of this war, or lead your troops to some other district. It was principally for this that I brought you here, to plead with you in a maiden's habit; and as a maiden should do, move your heart to the one of these alternatives.”

“ What you ask, Marsali, is out of my power. My orders are, to join the king's

troops if forced to the field; and where else can I go, or find a leader save the gallant Montrose."

"Then it is all over with poor Marsali, and the sybil's prediction must be fulfilled. Our happiness is over, and our days numbered."

"What *would* you have me to do, dearest Marsali?"

"Either to keep from the war personally, or take the opposite side to my father. In the latter case I have only the chances of war to dread; but in the same army you cannot subsist without bloodshed and ruin to all concerned. But, dear Aston, cannot you live in the forest with me?"

"If I stay another moment, I am a lost and ruined man," cried Peter, and bounded away to the hill like a wild deer. The maid followed by the light of the moon, and contrived to keep sight of him; and when at length he sat down upon a

stone, and began to think and repeat to himself, that he had used this matchless girl very ill, he never wist till her own sweet voice said close behind him, "Well stay, and take me with you, Aston, and be counselled by me, else you will repent it at your last gasp, when there is no redress to be found."

"Spare my honour, for mercy's sake!" cried Aston; "not to night, my dear Marsali, not to night; for a fitter time will soon come. I am engaged, and must stick to my engagement. I have nearly forfeited my credit with my lord's men already; and if it were not that they believe your father is locked up in the dungeon of the castle to die of hunger, I could not call out Mar's vassals. Therefore not to night, for heaven's sake not to night."

Marsali sat down, and wiped her eyes, and cried, "I now know that I shall lose both my kind father and my noble and

generous lover. But, what could a maid do more! God of heaven, prevent them from meeting in deadly feud." Marsali went home with a heart overpowered with the deepest affliction, and a settled presentiment that a terrible judgment hung over her house and her lover.

Never was there a man so much astonished as Nicol Grant was, on learning what had happened in his absence, and comparing that with what he had himself seen. He had surrounded Aston's bothy at the foot of the rock, so that a fox could not have made his escape. He had seen the fire burning, and the guardians of the forest passing and repassing in the light. He had rushed in, to surprise the man he accounted his greatest opponent on earth. The fire was still blazing. The venison steaks were still warm upon the stone table, but human beings there were none to be found. Nicol's hair stood on end, and his looks were so troubled that all

his followers partook of the infection, for they imagined they were opposed to men who were in conjunction with the evil one, and who could convey themselves through the air, or the bowels of the solid rock, as suited their convenience. But when Grant came home, and learned from the females appertaining to the clan, that at the very time when he was surrounding Aston and his Brae-Mar men in their bothy, Aston and his men were surrounding the encampment of the Grants, and that if it had not been for the intercessions of Marsali, they would all have been ravaged, slaughtered, and plundered, —why Nicol Grant knew not what to think. He tried to frame some probable solution of the thing, but he found it impracticable ; and if I had been Nicol Grant, I think I would have found myself in the same predicament, though it is well known that there is no man in Scotland less superstitious than I am.

But the trump of war was now sounded in the distracted valleys, and by degrees reached the most bewildered of the Gram-pian Glens, where it was hailed with joy by men who could lose nothing but their lives,—which were every day laid in peril, and the loss of them naturally the less dreaded,—while a foray, upon the lowlands or their rival clans, was their highest delight. And while the trivial events above detailed were going on, the war raged in the western highlands. The intrepid Marquess of Montrose had turned on the braes of Lochaber, like a lion caught in the toils, and beat the Campbells to pieces at the battle of Inverlochy, and forthwith the conqueror arrived in the eastern districts, where two powerful armies of the reformers were sent against him. Every clan was then obliged to join the one side or the other, further temporising being impracticable. The Laird of Grant, a very powerful chief, was the

first to declare for the royal cause. He sent a brave array, under the command of Ballindaloch, his brother, consisting of 500 men, while the Strath-Avon men were led by our redoubted forester and freebooter, Nicol Grant. While Captain Peter Aston, having his lord's private orders, raised the forces of the Dee and the Don for his royal master.

It was on the 28th of April, that Nicol Grant joined the royal army with no fewer than 300 men, all robust and wild katherans. He was received by his Colonel, Ballindaloch, with high approbation, and placed next in command to himself. Nicol was a proud man that day, on seeing so many of his own name and clan together in arms, and forming the wing of the royal army that lay next to their own country. Forthwith, Nicol thought not of advantages over the king's enemies, but, with that fiendish malignity of which he possessed a portion above all

men, he immediately began to concert plans how he might revenge old jealousies, now that he saw the Grants in such force as appeared to him supreme.

Accordingly, with speech full of malevolence, he represented to his colonel, how that the Earl of Mar's people were rising in great force to join the opposing army, and that it would be of the greatest consequence were he and his men permitted to crush the insurrection in the bud, before their array gathered fairly to a head. Ballindaloch believing this, hastened to Montrose, and laid the intelligence before him; Montrose was hard of belief, knowing the firm loyalty of the Earl of Mar, and charged Ballindaloch to beware how he proceeded rashly in the matter; but, at all events, to prevent the men of Mar from joining the covenanters.

This piece of treachery in Nicol Grant had the effect of bringing about great events, for the Grants moving southward

to watch the movements of the Mar men, weakened the main body of the king's army, and hastened on the great battle of Auldearn. But, in the mean time, Nicol Grant was despatched with his regiment to the south, to waylay the men of Mar, and bring them to an explanation one way or another. This was the very commission Nicol Grant wanted, for he knew every pass and ford of that country, and now was his time for executing that vengeance which gnawed his heart. He had likewise orders to watch the motions of General Baillie, but, to that part of his commission, he determined on paying only a secondary regard.

Now, it so happened, that at the muster of the Earl of Mar's clans at Kildrummie, the men of Cluny and Glen-Shee did not appear, but Aston finding 300 gentlemen cavalry assembled, he left John Steward, of Kildrummie, to gather in and bring up the foot, and he himself

rode off with the cavalry to join the royal standard, lest the expected battle should be fought ere he got forward with the whole.

Our young hero's heart was never so uplifted before, as when viewing this gallant array led on by himself. He thought of what mighty exploits he would perform for his king and country, but he could never help mingling these thoughts with others of what would become of the lovely and accomplished Marsali Grant during the war. If she would accompany the old deer-stalker to the camp, or retire to some place of safety. He wished he had known, for he found he could *not* get her out of his mind.

Such were some of the brave Captain Aston's cogitations, when lo, at the fall of evening, as he was fording a river at the head of his men, which I think, from the description, must have been at the ford of the Don above Kirkton, he was suddenly

attacked by a force of great power, which, from its array, appeared to be of the Clan-Grant. But certain that they had joined the royal party, he deemed them labouring under some mistake, and for a while, he and his troops only stood on the defensive, calling out what they wanted, and likewise that he was for the king and Montrose. It availed nothing, down they came with fury on his first division, while the rest of his troops were entangled in the river, and ere he had given orders for an attack, his front rank, which had gained the firm ground, began to waver. He was as yet but little acquainted with the practical science of war, measuring merely the strength of his army with his own, and, at length, waving his sword over his head, he called out "On them, brethren! follow me."

He was at the head of his column on the left when he gave this order for the

charge, and instantly thereon he spurred his horse against the right of the Grants, the place where he knew their leader would be. He was followed by a few resolute fellows, who, at the first, made an opening in the front ranks of the Grants, but several of them were cut down, and the captain himself nearly inclosed. Terrible were the blows he dealt, but though they made the Grants recoil, it was only to return with redoubled fury; and just while in this dilemma, their leader rushed forward on him, and closed with him, crying at the same time in Gaelic, as if bursting with rage, "Perdition on thy soul! I have thee now."

With these words, he struck at Aston with the fury of a maniac. The latter warded the first blow, but the second, which was a back stroke, wounded his horse on the head, and at the same time, cut the head-band of his bridle. Never was there a warrior

who did his opponent a greater service, for the rest plunged onward, and our young hero would have been cut in pieces, for he entertained no thought of a retreat, but his horse disliking the claymores of the Grants exceedingly, and feeling himself under no further control from the bridle, turned and scoured after his associates swifter than the wind, outrunning the most intense flyers, and thus bearing his rider from instant death.

In less than ten minutes, the handful of the Mar cavalry that had reached the firm ground were broken and chased by their enemies to the eastward, while those still entangled in the river were glad to retreat to the other side.

Captain Aston's heart was absolutely like to burst with vexation at being thus baffled and broken by the old infernal deer-stalker, whom he had so lately and so generously rescued from death,—for too well he knew his voice and his bearing,—

and in his heart cursing him as the most implacable barbarian, wished that he had let the men hang him as they intended, and then he should have been guiltless of his blood.

The Grants being on foot, there was no danger of a hasty pursuit. Still the captain continued to scour on, followed by his front division alone, consisting of about 120 men. He knew not what had become of all the rest; if Nicol Grant had slain them all in the coils of the Don, or chased them back again to Brae-Mar. How came he thus to be flying from the face of an enemy of whom he had no fear, and whom he still wished to fight? In the confusion of his reminiscences, he did not perceive clearly the reason of this, which the reader will easily do. His horse wanted the bridle, as the reins only hung by the martingale, and our hero wasted his strength in vain, pulling in his wounded and furious steed by the shoulders.

A spruce cavalier of his troop, who had all the way kept close by his side, now ventured to address him, asking him sharply, whither he intended to lead them in such abundant and unnecessary haste?

“It is my horse who is in such a persevering haste, and not I,” said Aston. “He is wounded, and so much affrighted that he is beyond control. I may as well try to turn the hill of Loch-na-gaur. No, no! here we go! push on, boy!”

“Captain, this is sheer madness!” said the youth. “If you cannot command your horse, throw yourself from his back and call a muster.”

“I never thought of the expedient before. Thank you, young sir,” said the captain, flinging himself from his horse, and then, coming to close grips with him, commanded him by force, when it appeared the animal wanted the bits, was wounded in the head, and had

one of his ears cut off. A council of war was then called, and it was resolved that they should try to unite their force in the morning by break of day, return in a body, and cut all the Grants into small pieces!

From this laudable resolution there was no dissentient voice, till the stripling before mentioned stood up at the captain's hand, and said—"Brother cavaliers, I, for one, must dissent from this mad resolve, for several reasons; and the first is, the certainty of losing our captain, the first man on the field. It is quite manifest, that he understands no mode of attack beyond what he can do with the might of his own arm, and no mode of retreat save the old one of who to be foremost."

"What do you say, sir? what is your name? and whose son are you?" said the captain, fiercely.

"It is not every man, Captain, that can tell whose son he is," retorted the youth,

with a sly bow, which raised the titter so much against the captain that he only bit his lip and waited in silence what the stripling had farther to say. "I am quite serious, Captain, for I perceive that in any private broil your bold temerity would be the ruin of your followers. My most serious and candid advice then is, that you lead us straight to the royal army, and then, fighting at our head in the regular ranks, I know not on whom we would turn our backs. I am the more serious in this advice, that I am certain we were attacked through mistake. These men have been despatched to watch the motions of General Baillie, and prevent the junction of his army with that of Sir John Urry. And as the former general's army consists mostly of cavalry, there cannot be a doubt but that the Grants mistook us for his advanced guard; for how could they expect a regiment of horse from Brae-Mar? Let us then assemble our men, haste on to the

main army, and represent the case to the Lord Lieutenant, who we are sure will do us justice, either on friends or enemies. This, in my estimation, will be behaving like true and loyal soldiers, while in the other case, it would be acting like savage banditti, to avenge supposed wrongs on friends who believed they were doing their duty."

"Young gentleman, your wisdom is so far above your years, that I request to know your name and lineage," said the Captain.

"My name is Colin," said the youth; "I am the son of a gentleman of your acquaintance, and newly returned from school; but my surname I shall for the present keep, lest I behave ill in the wars. Let it suffice then that I am Colin, a young gentleman volunteer to the banner of the Earl of Mar. I came with the intent of following Captain John Stewart, whom you have left behind, but since it

has been my fate to fall under the command of another, I shall do my duty, either in council or field. Captain, you shall never find me desert you."

"I admire your sagacity, young Sir," said Aston; "but I know more than you do, and I know that you are wrong. However, as my brethren judge your advice the best; I am willing to follow it. And henceforth I attach you to me as my page, for a sword you can scarcely wield yet."

Colin's proposal was immediately applauded and adopted. A whistle from the other side of the river announced the vicinity of their associates, who joined them at day-break at a place called Blackmeadow ford, all but five men, and thus they advanced straight on to the army, then lying close to the Moray firth.

Montrose received them with the greatest kindness and affability, but his staff could scarcely refrain from laughter at the blunt-

ness of our hero, when he made his complaint against the Grants, and told how he had been routed by them, and had lost sundry brave men. The Marquess looked thoughtful and displeased, and sending for Ballindaloch, requested an explanation. That worthy gentleman could give him none, for he saw that he had been duped from a motive of private revenge. Montrose plainly perceived the same, and after some severe general remarks on the way in which the royal army had been distracted by private feuds, he added, "Colonel Grant, your lieutenant must be punished." And forthwith there was an express sent off to order Nicol Grant's division from the passes of the mountains.

On the 4th of May, 1645, the famous battle of Auldearn was fought. And here I judge it requisite to be a little more particular on the events relating to this battle, than perhaps the thread of my narrative

requires, because I am in possession of some information relating to it not possessed by any other person ; it was originally taken from the lips of a gentleman who had a subordinate command in the royal army, and may be implicitly relied on. And, moreover, it proves to a certainty the authenticity of this tale.

At this period, then, Sir John Ürry, with a well-appointed army of seven powerful regiments of the Reformers, had been approaching nigher and nigher to Montrose for some days. While General Baillie also approaching from the south with an army equal in magnitude and superior in appointment to either of the other two, their intent was to hem in the royal army between them, when they supposed it would fall an easy prey. The noble Marquess had resolved to fight each of these armies singly. Still he was quite unprepared, for his clans were scattered all

abroad. But it so happened that Murray of Kennet-Haugh, having had a sharp difference with the laird of Hali-burton, and not being able to obtain any redress owing to that hero's great credit with the General, deserted on the following night to the Whigs. He then represented to Sir John Urry that if he wished to gain immortal renown, that this was the time to crush for ever the redoubted Marquess of Montrose. "His strength is reduced to nothing, and certain victory awaiting you," said he. "The Grants are at a distance on a fool's errand. The Stewarts and Murrays of Athol are gone home to protect their own country from pillage. The M'Leans are still as far off as Glen-Orchy, and in eight days the force of Montrose will be doubled by other western clans, that are all on their way to his camp. At present he has nothing to depend on but the regiments of Colkitto

and Muidart, for as for the men of Strath-Bogie they cannot fight at all.”

This was Murray's speech, as afterwards rehearsed to the council by Sir John, and with such words as these he stirred up that general, a vain and precipitate man, forthwith to push on and complete the overthrow and ruin of the terrible Montrose. And truly the circumstances of his army made the opportunity too favourable a one to be overlooked. Indeed had it not been for the activity and presence of mind of one Mr. Neil Gordon, who rode with all his speed and apprised Montrose, Urry would have taken him completely by surprise. He put his battle in array with all expedition, took the command of the right wing himself, and assigned the left to a brave and irresistible hero, M'Donald of Colkitto. The centre was commanded by John of Muidart, captain of the Clan-ranald, and the cavalry by

Lord Gordon ; so says my authority, for the truth of which I can vouch.

Ere this hurried array was fairly completed, the army of the Reformers appeared in columns hasting on to the attack. But this Montrose would not risk, for he never suffered his clans to wait an attack, but caused them always to rush on and break or disorder the enemy's ranks at the first onset ; and this mode he never had reason to repent. No man that ever led the clans to battle knew their nature and capabilities so well as he did. Captain Aston and his regiment were of course placed under the command of Lord Gordon, and fought on his right hand, and the men of Lewis and Kintail were opposed to them.

It was a hard fought and bloody battle, and many were slain and wounded on both sides ; for the brave M'Donald having a mixture of Irish soldiers, with both Lowlanders and Highlanders in his division, they fought at odds, disdaining to support

one another, so that his wing was driven back and very nigh broken to pieces. It was then that the Lord Gordon and his cavalry were hard put to it; their left wing being left exposed, and the M'Kenzies hotly engaged with them in front, mixing with them, and holding them in such dreadful play, that at that period the issue of the battle was, not only doubtful but very nigh hopeless on the part of the Marquess, for the army of the Reformers was mixed with small bodies of archers which galled the cavalry exceedingly.

The path by which M'Donald was compelled to retreat, was a narrow, rugged one, between a cattle-fold and a steep rocky ascent, part of the inclosure being formed by a rugged, impassable ravine. From the side of this burn there was a little green hollow, which at the top could only be ascended by two or three at a time. On reaching this hollow, the laird of Lawins with great spirit and judgment stopped his

regiment in the pursuit, and ordered his men to run up that hollow and attack the rear of the Gordons and the men of Mar.

Montrose galloped to an eminence and called to the Earl of Antrim to assist M'Donald, but still this manœuvre by the laird of Lawins was concealed from his sight, which if it had even but partially succeeded, at that doubtful and dangerous period of the battle, it would have completed the ruin of the royal army. Captain Aston was the very first man who perceived it, and pointed out the danger to the Lord Gordon. The combat with the M'Kenzies being then at the very hottest, Lord Gordon would not stop it, but swearing a great oath that all was ruined if yon dogs were suffered to rally on the height, he wheeled his charger about, and without giving any orders to follow, galloped full speed to the verge of the precipice, where Lawins's men were beginning to appear.

Aston and his page Colin followed close to him, and a few others by chance noticed and flew to the assistance of their brave young lord. He was indeed a perfect hero, but never spared a good oath in a difficulty, so careering full drive upon the few who had gained a footing on the height, and d——g them all to h—l, asked what they were seeking there; but without waiting for a reply, he struck the lieutenant that led them in the throat with his spear with such force, that the point of the weapon went out at the back of his shoulder. He was a gentleman of gigantic size, and on receiving the wound he made such a tremendous spring over the precipice, bolting headlong down among his followers, that he overthrew many more, and greatly marred the ascent at that critical moment. Captain Aston seconded his leader's efforts with equal if not superior might, and the page, though

he never drew his sword, shot two of the enemy dead with his pistols.

Montrose, who had the eye of the eagle, beheld this gallant action, and asked at Alexander Og, who stood next him, if ever an army could be defeated which contained such men? And Alexander answered, "With fair play, my lord, it never will." M'Donald also perceived the dismay wrought among his enemies, principally by the might of two individuals, and he said to the gentlemen around him who had taken shelter in the fold, "What, shall we stand here and see Lord Gordon win the battle with his own hand?" He instantly led his motley array back to the combat, on which Lawins's regiment was forced to retreat in its turn. Montrose at the same time causing his wing to close with the enemy, in half an hour after the rout became general; and every leader acknowledged that the gallant and desperate defence made by Lord

Gordon and Captain Peter Aston, had turned the fortune of the day. It was the hinge, or rather pivot on which the fate of the battle turned;—on such small incidents often hang the fates of kingdoms and armies.

My authority says, that Sir John Urry's plan was a good one, and boldly executed. He brought the whole strength of his array to bear upon Montrose's left wing, in order to turn the flank of the strong centre division. He had gained his point so far; and if that regiment had fairly gained a footing on the height in the rear of the horse and the Clan-ranalds, it is quite evident that ruin to the Royalists was inevitable,—which two determined heroes alone prevented. While their regiments were still struggling with enemies behind and enemies before, they heard a great shout; and on looking round, they beheld the Kintail men scouring up the rising ground, like so many frightened

kyloes galloping before their pursuers. Seaforth tried with all his power to rally them, but in vain, and immediately after he perceived his Lewis regiment coming full speed in the same direction. He then lost all patience, and galloped in amongst them, threatening to cut down every man who would not turn and face the enemy; but his efforts were fruitless, for the Gordons and Mar horsemen were hacking them down behind. The Lord Gordon espied his adversary, and rode up to him, accosting him thus; "Traitor, thou hast betrayed the cause which thou hadst sworn to defend. Dost thou not see the justice of God pursuing thee?"

"Art thou the justice of God, my Lord," said Seaforth? "If so, it shall pursue me no farther." On saying which he rode at young Huntly with his spear. The latter met his career with equal promptitude, and the struggle was very sharp between them for three minutes' space. At

that instant three brethren, gentlemen of Lewis's, of the name of M'Lellan, came to their lord's rescue; and time was it, for Lord Gordon had both him and his horse rolling in the mud. The M'Lellans, however, defended their lord gallantly, got him again on horseback, and fled with him. Aston was too late for this scuffle, but he pursued after Lord Seaforth as far as a place called Ardrier, on the road to Inverness, and got so nigh to him at the bridge of the Nairn, that he struck at him and wounded his horse, and it was with the greatest difficulty his lordship escaped. Captain Aston, however, returned with many gallant prisoners.

Such was the issue of this hard-fought battle, and on these particulars the reader may rely as authentic. It was the absence of the Grants that brought it on, and a few heroic individuals that turned the fate of the day when it was on the eve of being lost. There was a happy and joy-

ful meeting among those heroes. Two of the M'Donalds were knighted in the field, and Captain Aston was raised to the rank of Colonel, besides being presented with a gold-mounted sword from the noble Marquess's own hand, and publicly thanked in his majesty's name.

Nicol Grant, to whom an express had been sent by his colonel, arrived in the camp the day after the battle, and was instantly called to account before the general. A very bungling account he attempted at first to make of it; but on back questioning with regard to other proofs, his proud and unbridled spirit rose, and he owned his hatred of the leader, and his purpose of yet being revenged on him. Montrose pronounced such a fellow incapable of any more serving his majesty, and caused his sword to be broken over his right arm, and himself cashiered and banished the camp, with orders no more to approach it on pain of being shot.

It now seemed as if every thing in nature combined to agonize the heart of Nicol Grant, but this was the unkindest thrust of all; his abhorred rival thus advanced, and himself publicly disgraced and debased for ever. His breast again burnt with untameable vengeance, and once more he kneeled on the sward, and with clenched teeth and hands swore eternal vengeance on the abhorred wretch that was born for his debasement. He retired into concealment, he and his friend John of Lurg, who attached himself to all his fortunes, and watched for an opportunity of assassinating Colonel Aston. No such opportunity offering, and the army at length moving southward loaden with spoil, Montrose crossed the Spey into Banffshire, and set up his head quarters at the house of Birken-bog, while the rest of his army were cantoned in the towns and villages around him. Colonel Aston with his Brae-Mar cavalry were despatched up

to Glen-Fiddich for the sake of the best forage ; and here he encamped in a handsome tent taken from the Whigs, with his soldiers around him. His page, Colin, never quitted him. He would sometimes take a nap in his master's tent by day, but he watched every night along with the patrol, and was beloved by every one for his kindness and affability ; but whenever he saw any straggling highlander hovering about or entering the camp, he was the first to make up to them, enquire their business, and warn them off.

So one evening late he perceived the tall rugged form of John of Lurg approaching Colonel Aston's tent, and straight the stripling made up to him, and withstood him. "What do you want, sir?" said he, "and whom seek you here?"

"Och-hon and hersel just pe wanting a von singil worts with te captain."

The youth answered in Gaelic, "Know you so little of the regulations of your

sovereign's army, sir, and of the orders issued by our general, as to make such a demand?—a demand the complying with which would cost me my life. Return to the outpost instantly, before I cause you to be arrested; tell your name and commission to him; from him I will transmit it to our Colonel; but for your life dare not to come within the outposts till the message be returned.”

“On my troth,” said the rough highlander, in the same language, “you are, for a stripling, ane strick disciplinarian! Are you of a gentleman, boy?”

“I am, sir; and he who calls me less shall not do it with impunity,” presenting a horse-pistol at him. “Retire instantly. Make good your retreat beyond our outposts, else here goes. But while I remember to ask, and you have life to answer, how did you get within them?”

“Och-hon, just te pest way she coult. Teal mor pe in te poy, fwat a weazel of

a termagant ting she pe! She pe tell you fawat young man: since you should pe a shentlemans, she would rather pe telling her message to you tan te post. Will you then, as a mhan of honour, pear Mr. Nicol Craunt's challenge and defiances to your captain, or colonel as you pe pleased to call him, and tell him tat he and mine own self, Jhon Craunt, of Lurg, will fight him to-morrow, and te pest mhan in all your army; and if he 'll be so coot as name his hour and place. Fwat do you start at agunach? pe you afrait of ploom? Hoo! put tere mhost pe ploom, and heart's ploom too. Teliver tis mmessage, poy, as may pe a shentlemans."

"And dare you try, sir, to make me the bearer of treason, to raise new feuds among the clans, which our lord-lieutenant has been at such pains to put down? I can tell you your head is in forfeit; for the general is well aware of this treason which was avowed to his face. But that I am

a highlander myself, and related to the Grants, I would have you beheaded by to-morrow's sun rising. But I will not disclose this: only go instantly to your den in Glen-Bilg, else if our scouts find you to-morrow, you and all concerned in this vile plot are dead men. Sentinels! attend here!" shouted he with a loud voice.

"Och-hon! te creat pig teil is in tis cursed poy! Hold your pay-hay for a mhoment, my tear, till she hexplain. Och! Cot's creat pig tams be upon her, —here comes te Mhar tragoons."

"John Farquharson, you are the captain of the guard for the night," cried the page. "Take this suspicious fellow and convey him without the limits of our camp, and if ever any of you see him again, shoot him—or any of these malevolent deerstalkers of the forest."

"That we shall, Colin," said the guard, "with better will than ever we shot a stag." Lurg held his peace, and was

obliged to submit. They took him to the outpost on the banks of the Fiddich, gave him the bastinado, and pushed him into the river.

“She haif purnt her tongue sipping oder people’s khail,” said Lurg; “put she shall purn te saul, and te pody, and te heart’s ploit of te captain tat ordered tis.”

Colin never told his colonel a word about this challenge, and therefore the latter lived in perfect security. But on the second day or the third after this, he got a note from Montrose, requesting him, as his was the outermost station, to send out messengers, and keep a good watch for the return of the Athol men and the M’Leans, who he knew were on their way to join the camp, and he was afraid they might be waylaid by some of the Whigs. Colonel Aston, certain that the clans would return by the forest paths, placed wardens with bugles on every

height from the sources of the Tilt to Belrinnes, who were to warn him of their approach. The bugles had never yet sounded; and one day Colonel Aston said to two gentlemen with whom he was walking, "What would you think of a walk to the top of Belrinnes this fine day, to get the news from our warder and see the hills of the Dee?" The names of these two gentlemen were John Finlayson and Alexander Duff. They acquiesced at once, and Colin, who never quitted his master, accompanied them. They reached the top of the hill about noon. The warder had *thought* he had heard a bugle from the south-west that morning, but he had heard no more; but he was assured the clans were coming. Nevertheless, the two gentlemen noted that their colonel's eyes were always fixed in another direction. "Why do you strain your eyes so much in that direction, sir?" said Duff.

"O! I am just looking toward my own

beloved hills of the Dee," said he. "But tell me, for you should know that country, is yon Loch-Bilg that we see."

"Oh, I cannot think it, sir," said Duff. "It is too far to the south; Loch-Bilg should be westerly."

"Begging your pardon, sir," said Colin Ray, as they called him, "yon is Loch-Bilg. Look you, yonder is a small part of Ben-M'Drei westernmost, the king of the Grampians. Then yon next is Benni-Bourd, and that opposite us is Ben-Aven, so yon must be a glimpse of the waters of Loch-Bilg."

"You are quite right, boy," said Colonel Aston; "I know them all as well now as I do the fingers on my right hand. And yon is Glen-Bilg. How I should like to be yonder to-night."

"And I wish I were with you," said the boy.

Colonel Aston was astounded at the soft and serious tone in which these few

words were said. He turned and looked with such intensesness on the boy, that his associates wondered. What he thought, or what he felt, at that moment, is a secret, and ever must remain so. He spoke little more all that day, but seemed wrapped up in some confused and doubtful hallucinations. They lingered on the top of the hill, for the days were long, it being then May, and the weather delightful. Towards evening they descended to their post on the banks of the Fiddich, but many a look Colonel Aston took of his page, with the long matted black hair hanging about his ears, but for what reason was not known. He continued still silent and thoughtful. At length the page accosting him, said, "Sir, had we not better keep the open country down the ridge of Ard-Nethy, and not go by the pass to-night?"

"I care not though we do, Colin," said the Colonel.

“It is more than two miles about,” said Duff.

“Nay, it is half a dozen,” said Finlayson. “Nonsense! the boy is afraid of spirits in the pass.”

“Yes, sir, I am,” said Colin; “I have an eye that can discern spirits where yours cannot. I beg of you, dear Colonel, to humour me in this, and do not go by the pass to-night.”

“With all my heart, Colin, I will go a few miles about to humour your superstitious fears. With all my heart, boy.”

The other two gentlemen laughed aloud at this, and swore they would go by the nearest path, though all the devils of hell were there; so the Colonel too was obliged to laugh and join them, and Colin followed behind, weeping. As they proceeded through the pass that brought them to the valley of Fiddich, Colin touched his master's arm, and pointed out to him three men who were whispering

together, and seemed to be waylaying them. "You would not take my way to the camp, sir," said the youth sobbing, "do you see who are yonder?" Aston knew them too well. The party consisted of Nicol Grant, John of Lurg, and one Charles Grant, younger, of Aikenway, as determined a deer-stalker as any of the other two. "By the God that made me," said Aston, "I could not have believed in aught so ungenerous and malevolent in human nature as this! Gentlemen, it would appear that we will be obliged to fight our way here."

"So much the better," said Duff. "They are only three to three, or rather three to four; for this brave boy will bring down one in a pinch. Who the devil can they be, for those fellows are not in the least like covenanters? Katherans, I suppose—let us have at them."

"Draw your swords," said the Colonel; "but if they do not challenge us, take no

note of them." The gentlemen did so; but though men of high spirit and courage, they had never been accustomed to war or danger. The three drew their swords, and marched boldly on. The three Grants drew up in the pass before them. "Slave! upstart! poltroon!" roared Nicol Grant. "I sent you my challenge and defiance, from which you skulked. I have you now! Stand to your defences."

"Vile, ungrateful charlatan," exclaimed Colonel Aston; "you know that you are no better than a child under my brand; but you know, from experience, that I will not harm your life: therefore, you take the coward's part, and dare me in safety. Do your worst, I defy you; but as for these gentlemen, who are of so much value in the king's service, let them and your two friends merely stand as judges of the combat."

“ I will either fight or kill one or both of them,” said John of Lurg.

“ Three to three, if you dare, for the blood and the souls that are within you !” said young Aikenway.

The two gentlemen of the Garioch, Duff and Finlayson, advanced boldly, although little used to wield their swords, so that the three veteran Grants had a decided though unacknowledged advantage.

The combat began with the most deadly intent on the one side at least, and at the second turn, Duff received a wound from a back stroke aslant the breast, from the point of Lurg’s sword, which brought him down. Finlayson fought most courageously, but finding himself unequal to Charles Grant, of Aikenway, with the claymore, he closed with him at the risk of his life. After a deadly struggle, they both went down wounded, but they still held firm by each other with the most

determined grasps. They tried again and again who to rise first, but Finlayson was the most powerful man, and after a long and hard struggle, he gave Charles Grant such a blow with the hilt of his sword that it stunned him, but yet for all that he could do, he could not get out of his grasp. They rolled over and over each other till they tumbled over the bank into the river, when Finlayson fell uppermost, and held his opponent down till he fairly drowned him, which he very quickly effected, for he was wounded and out of breath; but to make sure he run him through the heart, and then let him float his way; for all that, he continued for some time to splash feebly with his arms, and make attempts to rise, although the whole river ran red with his blood, so tenacious is a highlander of life. At length he came upon an abrupt rock, which stopped him, and there he lay

moving backwards and forwards with the torrent, a ghastly bleeding corpse.

Although the description of this deadly struggle occupies a considerable space, it was nevertheless very short, and when John Finlayson beheld his colonel fighting with odds, he attempted to rise and haste to the rescue, but to his sorrow he found that he could not, for his limb had been dislocated, either in the struggle or the fall from the bank, and there he was obliged to lie reclining on some dry rocks, and witness the unequal contest. He lived long after to give an account of this, and often declared that such a gallant and desperate defence never was made by man. Nicol Grant and Lurg were both upon him, and both thirsting for his blood, yet such was his strength and agility, that he kept them both at play for the space of ten minutes without receiving a single wound; while Grant, from his furious im-

petuosity, was wounded twice. The Colonel always fought retreating, bounding first to the one side and then to the other, while they durst not for a moment separate, for they found that, single-handed, they were nothing to him. At length they drove him to the point of the valley, where a ledge of rock met the precipitate bank of the river, and then he had nothing for it but to fight it out against the two swords with his back to the rock; and then, indeed, they reached him several wounds, though none of them deadly.

In the heat of this last mortal combat, their ears were all at once astounded by a loud shriek of horror which came from the top of the rock immediately above them, where the page Colin and two countrymen that instant appeared, and the former darted from the precipice swifter than a shooting star, and rushed between the swords of the combatants, spreading out his arms, screaming and

staring in maniac wise, at the same time uttering words which neither of the parties comprehended, taking them for the words of raving and madness. Aston was all over covered with blood, but still fighting like a lion when this interruption took place; Nicol Grant, too, was bleeding and sorely exhausted, but the furious Lurg, perceiving the two countrymen hastening round the rock, rushed in upon the gallant youth, and closed with him, and the struggle for about half a minute was very hard; but then Aston made his opponent's sword twirl into the river, and clove his left shoulder to the chest. "Take that, cowardly ruffian, for your unfair and unmanly conduct!" cried he; and John of Lurg tumbled headlong into the river, where he lay grovelling with his head down and his feet up.

During this last struggle, Nicol Grant, seeing that the last stake for executing his hideous purpose of revenge was on the

eve of being lost for ever, made a fierce effort to reach Colonel Aston's side; but the youth Colin seized his arm, struggled with, and prevented him, crying out, "O, for the love of Christ! for your own soul's sake, and for the sake of your only child, forbear! forbear! desist!"

But in the mania of rage he would not listen. He threw down the youth, uttered a bitter curse upon him, ran him through the body, and flew now to the unequal combat. "Old ruffian," exclaimed Aston, "I have vowed to spare your life, and *have* spared it ere now, but after such a deed as this——" Aston heaved his heavy sword, his teeth were clenched, the blood dropped from his eyebrows, and the furious gleams of rage glanced from between the drops of blood. That lifted stroke had cleft the old barbarian to the heart, had not these chilling words ascended in a shriek, "Spare! O spare my old father."

Both their swords dropped at the same moment, and they turned their eyes on the prostrate and bleeding youth from whom the words proceeded. They gazed and remained mute till they again heard these killing words, uttered in a sweet but feeble voice, "I am Marsali. I have overcome much to save both your lives, and have effected it. Yes! thanks be to God! I have effected it now, but have lost my own! O! my poor wretched old father! What *is* to become of you?"

Colonel Aston could not utter a word. His bloody face was in an instant all suffused with tears, and he then, for the first time, recollected his thrilling suspicions regarding her identity on the top of the hill of Belrinnes. He lifted her in his arms and carried her softly to the side of the river, and gave her a drink out of the hilt of his sword. Her blue bonnet with its plumes dropped into the river, and down

flowed the lovely chesnut locks of Marsali. She drank plentifully, said she was better, and begged to be laid down at her ease upon the sward. Her lover complied, and then, at her request, opened her vest and examined her wound. Never was there seen so piteous a sight! So fair a bosom striped with its own heart's blood, and that blood shed by the reckless hand of a father! Homely phrase cannot describe a sight so moving, and all who beheld it were in agonies. The two countrymen, whom she had brought to separate the combatants, could comprehend nothing, but stood and gazed in mute astonishment.

Old Nicol Grant only saw matters darkly, as through a glass, but he saw them in a distorted and exaggerated view. He sat upon a stone, throbbing deeply and awfully, and sometimes growling out a curse in his rude native tongue, and muttering in his breast something

about sorcery. At last, as the scene between the lovers grew more and more affecting, his passion grew to a sort of madness, and had the two armed countrymen not marked his intent and restrained him, he would have immolated the brave youth without once warning him.

Poor Marsali continued to assure her lover that she was getting a little better, and would soon be quite well; but alas! the blanched roses on her cheek, the pallid lip, and the languid eye, spoke a different language, while the frequent falling tear proclaimed the heart's consciousness of approaching dissolution. Perceiving the dark looks of her father, she intreated him to come near her and give her his hand, but through grief and rage he shook like an aspen, and only answered her by thrusting his hand in his bosom.

“What! my dear father,” said she feebly, “will you not come nigh me that we may exchange forgiveness? And sure-

ly you will give me a farewell kiss, and not suffer your poor murdered Marsali to leave this world without your blessing?"

The old barbarian uttered something between a neigh and a groan, hung down his head, and wept bitterly; yea, till the howls of sorrow that he uttered became absolutely heart-rending.

"God of mercy and forgiveness, pity my poor distracted parent, and preserve his reason," cried Marsali, lifting her eyes and her hands to heaven.

Her father then made an attempt to come to her, but felt himself incapable, for he could only bend his looks on the man he hated,—the curse of him and of his race,—and those looks expressed in language the most intense, how impossible it was for those two to accord, even in an act of pity and commiseration; so he retreated again to his stone, and sat groaning.

But this scene of sorrow was fast wearing to a close. Marsali lifted her

eyes painfully to her lover's. "The thing that I dreaded has come at last, hard as I have striven to prevent it," said she; "O, Aston! are you not sorry to part with me so soon?"

"Talk of living or dying as you please, beloved Marsali," said he; "but never talk of parting with you, for where thou goest I will go; for I find the world that wants thee would be to me a world of defeat and darkness, and that which has thee, a world of victory and light. Till this hour, I never dreamed what the affection of woman was capable of enduring, but having found one dear instance, I shall never look for another below the sun. O, I should like to have my arms around thee, Marsali, even in death, and in the grave to sleep with thee in some remote corner of the wilderness."

While he yet spoke, the dying maid embraced his neck, and again sunk back on the green; and he heard these heart-

piercing words syllabled in a soft whisper —“ Farewell!—Kiss me!” It was a last effort; Marsali closed her eyes like one going to sleep, and breathed her last.

Old Grant's irremediable loss now burst full on him, and was expressed in the most passionate sublimity. “ O! is she gone!—is she gone?” cried he. “ Is my darling, my orphan Marsali, gone, and left me for ever? No, it cannot be, for she was my all!—My hawk and my hound!—my bow and my arrow—my hands and my feet! The sight of my eyes, and the life of my soul! and without whom I am nothing! God of justice! where are thy bolts of vengeance that thou dost not launch them at a guilty father's head?”

But unable to endure the sight of his abhorred enemy kissing the lips of his dead child and weeping over her, the old man fled from the scene with rapid but faltering steps, and roaring and howling,

he sought the thickest part of the forest and vanished.

John Finlayson then called to the two countrymen, who lifted him from his rocky bed and laid him on the green, until the arrival of the camp litters. He lived to an old age, but was lame till the day of his death.

The body of Marsali was at Colonel Aston's request carried into his own tent, where he watched it day and night, weeping over it, and refusing all sustenance. On the morning of the third day, he was found bleeding to death on the floor of his tent, and the body removed. The only words that he spoke after his attendants entered were—"They have taken *her* away."

An express was sent to the Marquess, who was soon at the spot. A body of the Grants, who were the patrol for the first watch of the night, were missing.

Montrose ordered a hasty pursuit, but as well might he have tried to trace the fox without the hounds as to trace a party of a clan when the rest are true. The men escaped, but no one doubted that at the last Nicol Grant had got his vengeance sated, and had murdered the brave Colonel Aston. A horrible, bearded, naked maniac, for some time after that, haunted the forest of Glen-Avon:—it was Nicol Grant, whose bones were at last found on the heath.

Colonel Aston died before noon on the day he was found wounded, deeply lamented by all who knew him, and by none more than his noble General, who wrote the following lines on his death, which are only remarkable for having been the composition of so great a man. I know it has been alleged by some, that the lines were written on the death of the Lord Gordon, but it appears quite evident that they were written on that of Colonel

Peter Aston. Lord Gordon fell bravely fighting in the field of battle, and it is not such a death which the heroic Marquess here deprecates, but one of treachery, such as that to which the young lamented hero fell a victim.

L I N E S

ON

THE DEATH OF COLONEL ASTON.

WRITTEN BY THE GREAT MONTROSE.

Brave, young, and just, I mourn thy fate ;
As good thou wert thou hadst been great,
If those with whom thy fate was blent
Had been like thee. But thou was sent
Forth in a world of guile and harm,
Without one guardian but thy arm.
I wail thee more as looking with woe
Forth on the path I have to go ;
Thinking, as thus I part with thee,
As is thy fate so mine may be.
That cause for which the just combine,
Hath need of manly arms like thine !

Alas! that such a cause had been,
To stamp the age that we have seen
With hell's own brand. But hadst thou died
With heroes bleeding by thy side,
Wrapp'd in the arms of Victory,
Thy death had not been mourned by me.

THE [illegible]

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document.]

JULIA M'KENZIE.

THE following extraordinary story was told to me by Lady Brewster, a highland lady herself, the sole daughter of the celebrated Ossian M'Pherson; and she assured me that every sentence of it was literally and substantially true. If the leading events should then be at all doubted, to that amiable lady I appeal for the truth of them, and there are many in the north of Scotland, who from their family traditions can substantiate the same.

It was never till the time of the wars of Montrose, that the chiefs and chieftainships of the highlands came to be much

disputed, and held in estimation. The efficiency of the clans had then been fairly proven, and every proprietor was valued according to the number of vassals that acknowledged him as their lord and rose at his command, and in proportion with these was his interest with the rulers of the realm.

It was at that time, however, that the following horrible circumstances occurred in a great northern family, now for a long time on the wane, and therefore, for the sake of its numerous dependants and relatives, to all of whom the story is well known, I must alter the designations in a small degree, but shall describe the scene so that it cannot be mistaken.

Castle-Garnet, as we shall call the residence of the great chief to whom I allude, stands near to the junction of two notable rivers in the north highlands of Scotland, having tremendous mountains behind it towards the west, and a fine river and

estuary toward the east. The castle overhangs the principal branch of the river, which appears here and there through the ancient trees, foaming and boiling far below. It is a terrible but grand situation, and a striking emblem of the stormy age in which it had been reared. Below it, at a short distance, a wooden bridge crossed the river at its narrowest and roughest part. The precipitous banks on each side were at least twenty fathoms deep, so that a more tremendous passage cannot be conceived. That bridge was standing in my own remembrance, and though in a very dilapidated state, I have crossed it at little more than forty years ago. It was reared of oak rough and unhewn as it had come from the forest, but the planks were of prodigious dimensions. They rested on the rocks at each end, and met on a strange sort of scaffolding in the middle, that branched out from one row of beams. It

had neither buttress nor balustrade ; yet, narrow as it was, troops of horse were known to have crossed on it, there being no passable ford near.

But the ancient glory of Castle-Garnet had sunk to decay during the turbulent reigns of the Stuarts, whose policy it was to break the strength of the too powerful noblemen, chiefs, and barons by the arms of one another. The ancient and head title of that powerful family had passed away, but a stem of nobility still remained to the present chief, in the more modern title of Lord Edirdale. He was moreover the sole remaining branch of the house, and his influence was prodigious; the chief of a powerful clan. But on his demise, the estate and chieftainship were likely to devolve on the man whom, above all others in the world, he and his people hated ; to the man who had deprived him and them of wealth and honours ; and

who, though a near blood relation, was, at the very time I am treating of, endeavouring to undermine and ruin him.

This being a hard pill to swallow, Edirdale, by the advice of his chieftains, married Julia, the flower of all the M'Kenzies, while both were yet very young. She was lovely as an angel, kind, virtuous, and compliant, the darling of her husband and his whole clan; but, alas! years came and passed by, and no child appeared to heir the estate of Glen-Garnet and lordship of Edirdale. What was to be done? The clan was all in commotion, and the chieftains held meeting after meeting, in all of which it was unanimously agreed, that it were better that ten of the chief ladies of the clan should perish, than that the whole clan itself, and all that it possessed, should fall under the control of the hated Nagarre.

When the seventh year of the marriage had elapsed, a deputation of the chief men, headed by the veteran Carnoch, the

next in power to the chief, waited on Lord Edirdale, and boldly represented to him the absolute necessity of parting with his lady, either by divorce or death. He answered them with fury and disdain, and dared them ever to mention such a thing to him again. But old Carnoch told him flatly that without them he was nothing, and they were determined that not only his lady, but all the chief ladies of the clan should rather perish, than that his people should become bond slaves to the hateful tyrant Nagarre. Their lord hearing them assume this high and decisive tone, was obliged to succumb. He said it was indeed a hard case, but if the Governor of the universe saw meet that their ancient line should end in him, the decree could not be reversed; and to endeavour to do so by a crime of such magnitude, would only bring a tenfold curse upon them. He said, moreover, that he and his lady were still both very young, not yet

at the prime of life, and there was every probability that she might yet be the mother of many children; but that, at all events, she was the jewel of his heart, and that he was determined much rather to part with all his land, and with all his people, than to part with her.

Carnoch shook his grey locks and said, the latter part of his speech was a very imprudent and cruel answer to his people's request, and which they little deserved at his hand. But for that part of it which regarded his lady's youth, it bore some show of reason, and on that score alone, they would postpone compulsion for three years, and then, for the sake of thousands who looked up to him as their earthly father, their protector, and only hope, it behoved him to part with her and take another; for on that effort the very existence of the clan and the name depended.

Three years present a long vista of existence to any one, and who knows what events may intervene to avert a dreaded catastrophe. Lord Edirdale accepted the conditions, and the leading cadets of the family returned to their homes in peace. The third year came, being the tenth from the chief's marriage, and still there was no appearance of a family. The lady Julia remained courteous and beautiful as ever, and quite unconscious of any discontent or combination against her. But alas! her doom had been resolved on by the whole clan, male and female, for their dissatisfaction now raged like a hurricane, and every tongue among them denounced her death or removal. Several of the old dames had combined to take her off by poison, but their agent, as soon as she saw Lady Julia's lovely face, relented and destroyed the potion. They then tried en-

chantment, which also failed; and there was nothing for it but another deputation, which, on the very day that the stipulated three years expired, arrived at the castle, with old Carnoch once more at their head.

The chief now knew not what to do. He had given his word to his clan, their part had been fulfilled—his behoved to be so. He had not a word to say. A splendid dinner was prepared and spread; such a dinner as had never graced the halls of Castle-Garnet. Lady Julia took her seat at the head of the table, shining in the silken tartan of the clan, and dazzling with gold and jewels. She seemed never before so lovely, so affable, and so perfectly bewitching, so that when she rose and left them there was hardly a dry eye in the hall; nor had one of them a word to say,—all sat silent and gazed at one another.

The chief seized that moment of feeling and keen impression, to implore his kins-

men for a further reprieve. He said he found that to part with that darling of his heart and of all hearts, was out of his power; death and oblivion were nothing to it; that his life was bound up in her, and, therefore, consent to her death he never could, and to divorce and banish her from his side would be to her a still worse death than the other, for that she lived but in his affections, and he was certain that any violence done to her would drive him distracted, and he should never more lead his clan to the field; he spoke very feelingly too of her courtesy and affectionate interest in him and his whole clan. The gentlemen wept, but they made no reply; they entered into no stipulations, but parted from their lord as they met with him, in a state of reckless despair; but as they were already summoned to the field to fight the enemies of the king, they thought it prudent to preserve the peace and equanimity of the

clan for the present, and afterwards to be ruled by circumstances, but ultimately to have their own way.

Shortly after this, the perturbation of Lord Edirdale's mind threw him into a violent fever, and his whole clan into the last degree of consternation. They thought not then of shedding their lady's blood, for in the event of their chief's demise, she was their only rallying point to preserve them from the control of Nagarre, the next of blood; and as all the cadets of the family manifested so much kindness and attention both to himself and lady, he became impressed with the idea that his Julia's beauty and virtue had subdued all their hearts as well as his own, and that his kinsmen felt incapable of doing her any injury, or even of proposing such a thing. This fond conceit, working upon his fancy, was the great mean of restoring him to health after his life had been

despaired of, so that in the course of five months he was quite well.

But news of dreadful import arrived from the south, and the chief was again summoned to march southward with his whole strength to the assistance of Montrose, who was in great jeopardy, with enemies before and behind. The chief obeyed, but could only procure arms for 300 men, and with these he marched by night, and after a sharp scuffle with the clans of Monro and Forbes, reached Montrose's camp just in time to bear a part in the bloody battle of the Don, fought on the 2d of July, 1645, and in which they did great execution on the left wing of the army of the Parliament, pursued with great inveteracy, and returned to their glens loaden with spoil, without losing a man, save two whom they left wounded; and as the royal army then left the highlands, our old friends, the chieftains of the

clan, began to mutiny in private against their chieftain with more intensity than ever. They had now seen several instances of the great power and influence of an acknowledged patriarchal chief, and felt that without such the clan would be annihilated; and they saw, from the face of the times, that theirs must rally so as to preserve the balance of power in the north. Something behoved to be done—any thing but falling under Nagarre, and the clan losing its power and name in his. Prophets, sybils, and second-sighters were consulted, and a fearful doom read, which could not be thoroughly comprehended.

A deputation once more waited on the chief, but it was not to crave the dismissal of his lady, but only a solemn pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Bothan, on Christmas; for that they had learned from a combination of predictions, that from such a pilgrimage alone, and the nature and value of the offering bequeathed, an

heir was to arise to the great house of Glen-Garnet and Edirdale; and that from the same predictions they had also been assured, that the clan was never to fall under the sway of the cursed Nagarre.

Lord Edirdale was delighted. His beloved, his darling Julia, was now to be his own for ever. He invited all the cadets of the family and all their ladies to assist in the grand procession. But Christmas brought such a storm with it, that scarcely a human being could look out of doors; it was dreadful. Though the weather at that season throughout the highlands is generally of the most boisterous description, this winter exceeded them all. The snow fell to an unprecedented depth, and on Christmas eve such a tempest of wind and rain commenced as the oldest inhabitant of that clime had never witnessed. The country became waist-deep of lapper or half melted snow; impassable torrents poured from every

steep; so that when the morning of Christmas appeared, all hopes of the grand procession were given up, for the rivers were flooded to an enormous degree, and instead of the whole gentlemen and ladies of the clan, only four chieftains, the most interested and nearest of kin, appeared at the castle, and these at the risk of their lives. All of them declared that the procession must take place that very day, at whatever toil or trouble, for that no other subsequent one to the end of the world could have the desired effect. A part of the way was perilous, but the distance to walk was short; so Julia, who was prepared for the event, with her usual sweet complaisance, wrapped herself well up, and away they went on their gloomy pilgrimage. At their very first outset they had to cross the river by Drochaidmaide, (the wooden bridge, I suppose.) Never was there such a scene witnessed

in Scotland. The river was more than half way up the linn, roaring and thundering on with a deafening noise, while many yawning chasms between the planks, shewed to the eye of the passenger its dazzling swiftness, and all the while the frail fabric was tottering like a cradle. Lady Julia's resolution failed her, a terror came over her heart, and she drew back from the dreadful scene; but on seeing the resolute looks of all the rest, she surmounted her terror, and closing her eyes she laid fast hold of her husband's arm, and they two led the way. Carnoch and his nephew, Barvoolin, were next to them, and Auchnasheen and Monar last; and just a little after passing the crown of the bridge, Carnoch and Barvoolin seized Lady Julia, and in one moment plunged her into the abyss below. The act was so sudden, that she had not time to utter a scream nor even to open her

eyes, but descending like a swan in placid silence, she alighted on the middle of the surface of the fleet torrent. Such was its density and velocity, that iron, lead, or a feather bore all the same weight there. The lady fell on her back, in a half sitting posture. She did not dip an inch, but shot down on the torrent as swift as an arrow out of a bow; and at the turn of the river round a rocky promontory, she vanished from their view.

The moment that the lady was tossed from Drochaid-maide, the four chieftains seized on her husband and bore him back to the castle in their arms. He was raving mad:—he only knew that he had lost his lady, by what means he did not comprehend. At first he cursed Barvoolin, and swore that he saw his hand touching her; but the other assuring him that he only did so to prevent the dizzy and distracted leap, and the rest all averring the same thing, before night they

had persuaded him that the terror of the scene had produced a momentary madness, and that the Lady Julia in a fit had flung herself over.

Men on horseback were despatched on the instant to the meeting of the tide with the river, where all the boats were put in requisition; but in that unparalleled flood both of tide and stream, the body of Lady Julia could not be found. This was a second grievous distress to her lord; but so anxious were the clansmen for his safety, that they would not suffer him to assist in the search. He had loved his lady with the deepest—purest affection of which the heart of man is capable; for his pathetic lamentations over her loss often affected the old devotees of clanship to the heart, and they began to repent them of the atrocious deed they had committed; particularly when,—after representing to him that he lived and acted not only for himself but for thousands beside, and

that since it had pleased the Almighty, in his over-ruling, to take from his side in a terrific way the benign creature who alone stood between them and all their hopes, it behoved him by all means to take another wife without delay, in order to preserve the houses of their fathers from utter oblivion, and themselves, their sons, and daughters, from becoming the vassals and slaves of an abhorred house,—“These are indeed powerful reasons, my friends,” said he: “I have always acknowledged with deep regret that Heaven should have decreed it. But man has not these things in his power, and though there are some hearts so much swayed by self-interest that it becomes the motive of all their actions and modulates all their feelings, such heart is not mine, for there are certain lengths it can go and no farther. As soon as it forgets my Julia, I shall take to myself another wife, but when that may be I have no mode of cal-

culatation. How can I woo another bride? I could only woo her as Julia; I could only exchange love and marriage-vows with her as Julia; and when I awoke in the morning and found that another than Julia had slept in my bosom, I should go distracted, and murder both her and myself. Believe me, my dear and brave kinsmen, when I assure you, that the impression of my lost Julia is so deeply engraven on my heart that it can take no other. Whenever I feel that possible, I will yield to your intreaties, but not till then."

This was a cutting speech to the old proud cadets of the family, and made them scowl and shake their heads in great indignation as well as sorrow. They had brought innocent blood on their heads, and made matters only worse. While Lady Julia was alive, there was some chance remaining for family heirs, for alas! she had been cut off in her twenty-

ninth year ; but now there was none, and they began to repent them heartily of what they had done.

While matters were in this state,—while the fate of Lady Julia was the sole topic of conversation up stairs at the castle, it was no less so down stairs, but in the latter conviction appeared arrayed in different habiliments. The secrets and combinations of a clan are generally known through all its ramifications, except to the person combined against. It is, or rather was, a trait in the character of this patriarchal race, and rather a mean subservient one, that they only saw, heard, felt, and acted in conformity with their chiefs and superiors, and they never betrayed their secrets. In the present instance, perhaps Lady Julia was the only person of the whole clan who did not know of the dissatisfaction that prevailed, and the great danger she was in. The menials, of course, strongly suspected that their lady's

death had been effected by stratagem, taking all things into view, yet they were so servile, that hearing their lord and his relatives thought otherwise and spoke otherwise, they did the same. But there was one little beautiful pestilent girl, named Ecky M'Kenzie, who was Lady Julia's foster-sister, and had come from her own country or district with her, who was loud and bitter against the subordinate chieftains,—and old Carnoch, as the head and leader of them, in particular,—asserting boldly that he had murdered their lady and deceived their lord, because he knew he was next of kin to the chief, and that he and his family would succeed him, as the clan would never submit to Nagarre, which he knew full well. The rest of the menials accused her of uttering falsehoods, and threatened to expose her; but they gathered around, and gaped and stared upon one another at her bold asseverations. “I know it all,” she would

add. " I know all how that angelic creature was hated, combined against, and murdered by your vile servile race, and particularly by that old serpent, Carnoch, who has all this while acted as huntsman to a pack of blood-hounds. But vengeance will overtake him. There will a witness appear at the castle in a few days who shall convict him to the satisfaction of the whole world ; and I know, for I have it from the country beyond the grave, that I shall soon see him lying a mangled corpse between the castle wall and the precipice which overhangs the river."

These asseverations were so unreserved and violent, that one Angus Seers went direct and told his lord every thing that Ecky had said, adding, that unless she was made to hold her tongue, she would bring disgrace on the whole clan. The chief judged for himself in that instance ; happy had it been for him if he had done so always ; but nothing in the world was

now of interest to him save what related to his late lady. So after dinner, while seven of the duniwastles (or gentlemen) of the clan were present, he sent for Ecky M'Kenzie up stairs, after saying to his friends, "There is a little vixen of a maid here, who was related to my lost lady, her foster-sister and confidante, who is spreading such reports against you and me, and maintaining them with such audacity, that I must call her to account for it.

"Ecky come up here; stand before me, and look me in the face. What wicked and malicious reports are those that you have been spreading so broadly and asserting so confidently before my domestics?"

"I have asserted nothing but the truth, my Lord, and nothing that I will not stand to before you and all your friends; ay, and before the very man whom I have accused."

"Ecky, you cannot assert any thing for

a truth of which you were not an eye-witness."

"Can I not? I know otherwise however. Much is revealed to me that I never saw. So you think I do not know who murdered my dear lady? You might know, considering the former proposals which were made to you. But if you are really so blinded that you do not know, which I think you are, I shall tell you. It was by the hands of those two men who now sit on your right and left hand; in particular, by that old fiend, Carnoch, who has for years been hatching a plot against your beloved Julia, and who at last executed it in a moment of terror and confusion. Ay, and not unassisted by his tremulous nephew there, the redoubted Barvoolin. You may scowl—I care not. I know the foundation of your devilish plot. My lord does not know the principal motive. And for a poor selfish consideration you have taken the life of a

lady than whom a more pure, lovely, and affectionate creature never drew the breath of life. Ay, well may you start, and well may the tears drop from your dim remorseless eyes. You know I have told you the truth, and you are welcome to ruminate on it."

"What do I see? Why do you weep, cousin?" said the chief to Carnoch.

"It is, my lord, because in my researches into futurity, I discovered that the death of Lady Julia was to bring about my own. I had forgot the prediction, unconscious how one life could hang upon another, until this wicked minx's bold and false assertion reminded me of it, and convinced me that she herself would be the cause of it. My lord, shall such audacity and falsehood pass unpunished under your roof?"

"Nothing shall pass — but punishment must follow conviction, not antecede it. Now, Ecky, they are all present

who witnessed my lady's death? You did not, that we know of."

"Did I not? Let the murderers see to that. Do you think I was going to let her cross the river that day with these hell-hounds without looking after her? *They* know well that I am telling the truth, and I will bring it home to them. Let them beware of their necks." And she made a circle with her finger round her own.

The chief was struck dumb with astonishment at hearing his kinsmen so boldly accused to their faces, and it is probable that at that moment he began to suspect their guilt and duplicity, but Carnoch, springing to his feet, drew his sword, and said fiercely, "My lord, this is not to be borne, nor shall it. That infatuated girl must die to-night."

"Not so fast, Carnoch!" cried the elfin, shaking her little white fist in his face. "No, Carnoch, I must *not* die to-night,

nor will I for your pleasure. I know that your relentless heart will seek my death to-night, knowing your danger from me; but I will sleep far beyond the power of your cruel arm to-night, and have communication, too, with her whom that arm put down. And note well what I say: Take not my word for the certainty of these men's guilt. If a witness does not arrive at the castle, - my lord, in less than three days, that shall convict them to your satisfaction,—ay, and a witness from another country, too,—then I give you liberty to cut me all to pieces, and feed the crows and the eagles with me. No, Carnoch, I must *not* die to-night, for I must live till I convince my too easy and confiding lord. As for you, murderers, you need no conviction; you know well that I am telling the truth. Carnoch, I had a dream that I found you lying a mangled corpse at the bottom of the castle wall, and I know it will be fulfilled. But, O, I hope you will

be hung first! Good night, sir; and remember, I *won't* die to-night, but will live out of despite to you!"

"What does the baggage mean?" said the guilty compeers, staring at one another; "'she will give us liberty to cut her all in pieces, if a witness against us do not appear from another country; and that she will have communication with her late lady to-night.' What does the infernal little witch mean?"

"Her meaning is far beyond my comprehension," said Edirdale; "not so her assertion. Would to God that I did not suspect it this night as bearing on the truth. But it is easy for us to wait three days, and see the issue of this strange witness's intelligence. After that we shall bring the minx to judgment."

"She may have escaped beyond our power before that time," said Carnoch; "as I think she was threatening as much to-night. The reptile should be

arrested at once. My advice therefore is, that she be put down this very night, or confined to the dungeon. I myself shall undertake to be her jailor."

"I stand her security that she shall be forthcoming at the end of three days, either dead or alive," said the chief.

There was no more to be said, not another word on that head; but on the girl's asseverations many words passed. Though the guiltiest of the associates pretended to hold the prediction light before the chief, it was manifest that it annoyed them in no ordinary degree; for they all sat with altered faces, dreading that a storm was brewing around them, which would burst upon their heads. Old Carnoch, in particular, had his visage changed to that of an unhappy ghost. He was a strange character, brave, cruel, and attached to his clan and his chief; but never was there a more superstitious being lived in that superstitious country. He

believed in the second-sight, and was constantly tampering with the professors of it. He durst not go a voyage to Ireland to see or assist a body of his clansmen there, without first buying a fair wind from a weird woman who lived in Sky. He believed in apparitions, and in the existence of land and water spirits, all of which took cognizance of human affairs. Therefore Ecky's threatenings, corresponding with some previously-conceived idea arising from enchantments and predictions, impressed him so deeply, that he was rather like a man beside himself. An unearthly witness coming from beyond the grave to charge him with the crime of which he well knew he was guilty, was more than he could contemplate and retain his reason. He had no intention of remaining any longer there, and made preparations for going away ; but his lord shamed him out of his cowardly resolution, and said that his flying from the castle in that

manner was tantamount to a full confession. On that ground, he not only adjured but ordered him to remain, and await the issue of the extraordinary accusation. The evening following, it being the first after Ecky's examination, Carnoch took his nephew apart, and proposed a full confession, which the other opposed most strenuously, assuring his uncle that in the spirit of regret that preyed on the chief, he would hang them both without the least reluctance; "and moreover," added he, "a girl's word, who only saw from a distance, cannot overturn the testimony of four gentlemen who were present. No, no, Carnoch, since we have laid our lives at stake for the good of our people, let us stand together to the last."

The dinner was late that evening, and the chief perceiving the depression of his kinsmen's spirits, plied them well with wine; but Carnoch continued quite nervous and excited in an extraordinary degree,

—the wine made him worse. His looks were wild and unstable, and his voice loud and intermittent; and whenever the late lady of the mansion was named, the tears blinded his eyes. In this distracted sort of way the wassail was proceeding, when just as the sand-glass was running the ninth hour, they were interrupted by the arrival of an extraordinary guest.

It was a dark night in January. The storm which had raged for many days had died away, and a still and awful calm succeeded. The sky was overspread with a pall of blackness. It was like the house of death, after the last convulsion of nature; and the arrival of any guest at the castle in such a night, and by such paths, was enough to strike the whole party with consternation. The din of conversation in the chief's dining apartment had reached its acme for the evening, for just then a rap came to the grand entrance door, at which none but people of the highest qua-

lity presumed to approach. Surely there must have been something very equivocal in that tap; for never was there another made such an impression on the hearts and looks of so many brave and warlike men. The din of ebriety was hushed at once; a black and drumbly dismay was imprinted on every countenance, and every eye, afraid of meeting the gleams of terror from another, was fixed on the door. Light steps were heard approaching by the great staircase; they came close to the back of the door of the apartment, where they paused a considerable space—and an awful pause that was for those within. The door was at length opened slowly and hesitatingly, and in glided, scarcely moving, Ecky M'Kenzie, with a snow-white sheet around her, a face as pale as death, and a white napkin around her head. Well she knew the character of the man she hated; she fixed one death-like look on Carnoch, and raising

her forefinger, pointed at him,—then retreating, she introduced Lady Julia !

This is no falsehood—no wild illusion of a poet's brain. It is a fact as well authenticated as any event in the annals of any family in Britain. Yes ; at that moment Lady Julia entered, in the very robes in which she had been precipitated from the bridge. Her face was pale, and her look to the chieftains severe ; still she was the Lady Julia in every lineament. A shudder and a smothered expression of horror issued from the circle. Carnoch, in one moment, rushed to the casement at the further end of the apartment ; it opened on hinges, and Ecky had intentionally neglected to bolt it. He pulled it open, and threw himself from it. Barvoolin followed his example, but none of the rest having actually imbrued their hands in their lady's blood, they waited the issue ; but so terror-smitten were they all, that

not one perceived the desperate exit of the two chieftains, save the apparition itself, which uttered an eldrich scream as each of them disappeared. These yells astounded the kinsmen with double amazement, laying all their faculties asleep in a torpid numbness. But their souls were soon aroused by new excitations; for the incidents, as they came all rushing on one another, were quite beyond their comprehension. The apparition fixed its eyes, as if glistening with tears, on one of them only, then spreading forth its arms, and throwing its face towards heaven as if in agony, it exclaimed, "No one to welcome me back to my own home!" The chief assumed the same posture, but had not power to speak or move, till the apparition, flying to him with the swiftness of lightning, clasped him in her arms, laid her head upon his bosom, and wept. "God of my fathers, it is my Julia, my own

Julia, as I live and breathe," cried he in an ecstasy. It was the Lady Julia herself.

"Pray, Mr. Shepherd, does not this require some explanation?"

"It does, Madam, which is forthcoming immediately, in as few sentences as I can make you understand it."

On the side of the river opposite to the castle, and consequently in another country, according to the idiomatic phrase constantly used in that land, there lived a bold native yeoman, called Mungo M'Craw, miller, of Clackmullin; (I cannot help the alliteration, it is none of my making;) but in those days, mill-ponds and mill-leads, with their sluices and burns, to say nothing about the mill-stones and mill-wheels, were in a very rude ineffective state. Such a morning as that was about Clackmullin! Mungo was often heard to declare—"Tat tere was not peing her equal from the flood of No till

te tay of shudgement, however long she might be behind."

That great Christmas flood had been a prototype of the late floods in Morayshire so movingly described by the Hon. Noah Lauder Dick. For one thing, it levelled Mungo M'Craw's weirs and sluices as if no such things had existed; and what was worse, as the dam came off at the acute angle of the river, the flood followed on in that straight forward direction, and threatened instant destruction, not only to the mill and the kiln but to the whole Mill town, which stood a little more elevated; and there was Mungo, with his son Quinten, his daughter Diana, and his stout old wife ycleped Mistress M'Craw, toiling between death and life, rearing a rampart of defence with wood, stones, divots, and loads of manure from the dunghill.

They were not trying to stop the mighty torrent, that was out of the power

of man, but to give it a cast by their habitation ; and there were they plunging and working at a terrible rate ; Mungo scolding and calling for further exertion. “ Ply, ply, you goslings of te Teal Mor, else we shall all pe swept away out of te worlt wid tat roaring ocean of destruction tat pe coming roaring down from te hills and te corvies. Oh, Mistress M'Craw, cannot you pe plying tese creat pig shenteel hands of yours. Haif you not te fears of Cot before your eyes, nor M'Tavish Mar, tat you will pe rolling your creat druim in tat ways. Go fill all te sacks in te mill with dung, and let us pe plunging tem into te preach. Diana, you mumping rosy chick, what are you thoughting upon ? I teclare you pe not carrying creat above ten stones of dung at a time. You pe too small at te curp, and better for a dunnewastle's leman tan te miller's daughter of Clach-Mhuillian on a floody tay. Quintain, oh you great mastiff dog, you creat

lazy puppy of a cucannech, do you not see tat we shall pe all carried away from te univarse of Cot, unless you ply as never man plied pefore? ”

“ Father, is Keppoch charged? ”

“ Malluchid! If I do not pe preaking your head for you. What does te creat bhaist want with te gun just now? ”

“ Because here is a swan coming on us full sail.”

“ Then damh palmahar! run and bring Keppoch. She is always charged, clean and dry, and let us have a pluff at te swan, come of te mill what will. Life of my soul! if she pe not a drowned lady instead of a swan! Mistress M'Crow, and you young witch, Diana, where pe your hearts and your souls now? Och now tere will pe such splashing and squalling, and hoo-hooing, tat I shall have more ado with te living tan te dead, for women's hearts pe all made of oladh-heighis. There now, I have lost my grand shot, and shall

lose my good mill and all te gentle's corn, and te poor fears' likewise. Alas! dear soul, a warmer and a drier couch would have fitted you creat petter to-day! Come, help me to carry her, you noisy, thoughtless, noisy cummers, and help me to carry her in. What! howling and wringing your hands? See, give me hold of all your four arms, and let her head hang down, that the drumbly water may run out at her mouth like a mill-spout."

"No, no, Mungo, keep up my head. I am little the worse. My head has never yet been below the water."

"As I shall pe sworn before te tay of shudgement, it is te creat and cood lady of Edirdale. Cot pe wid my dhear and plessed matam, how tid you come here?"

"Even as you see, Mungo. But put me into your warm bed, and by and by I shall tell you all; for I have had a dreadful voyage to your habitation; but it has been a rapid one. It is not above

half a minute since I lost hold of my husband's arm on the dizzy cradle on the top of Drochaid-maide."

With many exclamations and prayers and tears, the Lady Julia was put into bed, and nursed with all the care and affection of which the honest and kind-hearted miller and his family were capable. She bound them all to secrecy until she thought it time to reveal herself; but her recovery was not so sudden as might have been expected. An undefinable terror preyed upon her spirits, which she found it impossible to remove—a terror of that which was past. It was a feeling of horror that was quite unbrookable—a worm that gnawed at her heart, and almost drank up the fountain of existence. It was a painful, thrilling suspicion that her husband had tossed her over. She had not the heart nor the capability of mentioning this to any at the mill, and that made the impression on her health and spirits;

but she resolved to remain there in quiet concealment till the mystery of her intended death was satisfactorily cleared up to her.

She then offered Quinten, the young miller, a high bribe, if he would go privately to the castle, and procure her a secret conference with her humble cousin and foster-sister, Ecky M'Kenzie.

“Och, dear heart,” said Mistress M'Craw, “he needs no bribe to go privately to Miss Ecky M'Kenzie. He is oftener there than at the kirk. It would require a very high bribe to keep him away; and she is so cunning and handy that neither your ladyship nor any about the castle have ever discovered them. I shall answer for that errand being cheerfully and faithfully performed, but if the boy take one highland penny for his trouble, I'll feed him on black bear-meal brochen for a month.”

Poor Ecky cried bitterly for joy, and

was so delighted that she actually threw her handsome arms around the great burly miller's neck and kissed him ; but she would tarry none to court that night, but forced Quinten to return to Clackmullin with her.

The meeting of the two was affecting and full of the deepest interest, but I may not dwell on it, but haste to a conclusion ; for a long explanatory conclusion is like the fifth act of a play, a wearisome supplement.

At that meeting, Ecky first discovered to her lady the horrible combination that had existed so long to take her off, but knowing the chief's stedfast resolution, never either to injure or part with her, she never told all that she knew for fear of giving her dear lady uneasiness ; that they never would have accomplished their purpose, had it not been for the sham pilgrimage to St. Bothan's shrine ; and that the two kinsmen seized her in a moment of confusion,

and hurled her over the bridge; then all the four seized on their lord, and bore him into the castle, where they convinced his simple and too-confiding heart that his lady had, of her own accord, taken the dizzy and distracted leap.

She was now convinced of her husband's innocency, and that the love he had ever expressed towards her was sincere; and as she lived but in his affections, all other earthly concerns appeared to her but as nothing; and to have the proofs of their own consciences, the two settled the time, manner, and mode of her return, which was all contrived by the affectionate Ecky, and put in practice according to her arrangement, and the above-narrated catastrophe was the result.

On going out with torches, the foremost of which was borne by Ecky M'Kenzie, they found old Carnoch lying at the bottom of the wall next to the river, with his

neck broken, and his body otherwise grievously mangled; and Barvoolin very much crushed by his fall. He made a full confession to Lady Julia, and at her intercession was pardoned, as being only the organ of a whole clan, but he proved a lametar to the day of his death. His confession to the lady in private was a curious one, and shows the devotedness of that original people to their respective clans and all that concerns them;—he said, “that finding after many trials they could make nothing of her lord, they contrived that pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Bothan’s to intercede with the saint to take pity on their race; but they had resolved that she should never return from that devout festival. They had no idea of drowning until the tremendous flood came, which frustrated the other plan. They meant to have taken her off by poison, and had brought a bottle of poisoned wine with them, which was to

have been presented to each of the ladies of rank who should sit on high with the Lady Julia, in a small golden chalice, and it appearing impossible to make exceptions, *they had resolved to sacrifice the whole to bear their lady company!*"

But the far best part of the story is yet to come. Whether it was the sleeping for a fortnight on a hard heather bed, or the subsisting for that time on milk-brose and butter, or whether the ducking and correspondent fright, wrought a happy change on Lady Julia, I know not; but of this I am certain, that within a twelvemonth from the date of her return to the castle she gave birth to a comely daughter, and subsequently to two sons; and the descendants of that affectionate couple occupy a portion of their once extensive patrimonial domains to this day.

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A FEW
REMARKABLE ADVENTURES
OF
SIR SIMON BRÓDIE.

As I have been at great pains in drawing together all possible records and traditions during the troubled reign of Charles the First, and being aware that I have many of those relating to Scotland to which no other person ever had access, I must relate some incidents in the life of one extraordinary character; a character so well known to traditionary lore, that I have but to name him to interest every

Scotchman and woman in his heroic adventures. The hero I mean is Sir Simon Brodie, of Castle-Garl, whose romantic exploits well deserve to be kept in record.

My tale begins on the 7th of July, 1644, and in the middle of the wastes of Bewcastle, where three cavaliers, wearied with a long and perilous journey overnight, had alighted at a well to refresh themselves and their worn-out horses. Two of them were disguised as parliamentary officers, and the third accoutred as a shabby groom, in an old-fashioned worn-out livery, not unlike the garb of a street coachman of the present day. They were three principal officers of the king's army, endeavouring to make their escape to the Highlands of Scotland, after the battle of Marston-moor. And, as I hate all trick by way of effect, in relating facts which can be proven as such by turning

up the histories of that period, I will tell at once who the three disguised warriors were.

The shabby groom, then, was no other than the great Marquess of Montrose; the two others were Sir William Rollack, and Colonel Sibbald, both brave and loyal gentlemen, and distinguished in many battles.

“How are you in health this morning, Rollack?” said the Marquess. “Your appearance would bespeak you both low in spirits and sickly in health.”

“In health I am well, my lord, but I confess, in spirits but so so; and how can it be otherwise. It is not the perils by which we are surrounded that distress me, for I know you to be of that singular constitution that your spirits and energies always increase with danger. But you must confess, that our royal master’s cause is at this instant almost desperate. You cannot but perceive what a grievous fall-

ing off there is here since we last traversed this country together ! How welcome we are as Covenanters, and with what virulence great and small speak of his majesty.”

“ Yes, but I trust you shall not find it so in Scotland. I still hope, for the honour of my country, that the greater part of her inhabitants will adhere to their sovereign, when once they perceive the aim of the Covenanters, which is now fairly divulged. Men cannot be all blind to honour and integrity. Let us speed then to Sir Richard Graham, of Netherby, he, I am sure, will not desert his sovereign.”

“ A traitor, my lord, depend on it. A snivelling, bare-faced traitor.”

“ I cannot believe it after the favours which King Charles has heaped upon him. Sibbald, you are asleep. Sit up and tell us what your opinion is of Sir Richard.”

“ My mind is not made up about that, my lord,” said Colonel Sibbald. “ Suppose

we pay him a visit and try him. He seemed apt enough a short time ago, and raised his whole clan on our side."

"And what did his whole clan do?" said Rollock. "Run all away like traitors. And think you not it was by a traitor's command? I am well aware it was by his private order to leave us in the lurch."

"I am loath to believe it, but let us go and see," said Montrose, "for I weary of this hypocritical disguise. The sin and shame of having been deceived by that party will never be scrubbed from my conscience; and I feel as if I were again going to renew my deplored engagements."

"Well, I must confess," said Rollock, "that you act the part of a covenanter's groom with great spirit, though I can never help laughing to myself at seeing the great Montrose riding on a sorry jade,

and leading a gallant steed in a hair halter. As for our friend Sibbald, I will never believe but that he is a true reformer at heart, or at least that the seeds of reform are there implanted, so exactly does he act the part of one. Had it not been for his whining and canting we had never reached thus far; three times we were on the very point of being discovered. If he turns not out a covenanter, ay, and a leader of the herd too, let me never trust my philosophy again."

"You had better spare your calculations for the present, Sir William," said Sibbald, "and let our deeds prove us. Because I have strained every fold of dissimulation for the safety of two lives that I esteem of the highest value to our sovereign's cause, am I therefore to be branded as a traitor?"

"I said you would turn out one, and I say so still, else what makes your com-

plexion rise in that manner. By heaven it is because you feel you are charged justly.”

“No more of this, Rollock,” said Montrose. “I beseech you to keep that fiery temper of your’s in some sort of subordination, and do not let fatigue and disappointment move you to insult your best friends, and breed strife where there is so much need of amity. Come, let us on to Netherby, and visit Sir Richard at all hazards. And here comes a squire going the same way; we will sound him a little.”

Sir William and Sibbald then mounted their horses, and took the road together, and the great Montrose mounting his sorry jade, fell a thrashing him most manfully, and at the same time, kicking with his spurless heels in a manner quite ludicrous, while the horse that he led in the hair halter kept capering round and round, and appeared to incommode him exceed-

ingly. The squire who came up behind was highly diverted, and anticipating some sport with the groom, he spurred on, and soon came up with him. "Whoy friend, I think thou hast made a small mistake this morning," said he.

"And wherefore think'st thou that?" said the groom.

"Whoy because thou hast mounted the wrong horse. An I wor as thee I would mount this grand gelding, and lead that dom'd ould hack be the head."

"Whoy, but look thee friend, this is muster's hworse, and if I were to mwont him, there would be nothing but groamb-ling and baisting."

"And pray who is thy measter, that would be so unreasonable?"

"Oho! you thinks to smoke I; but let me alwane for that. Do you think every man at liberty to tell his muster's name in these coarsed times? Why now, fwor instance, who is thine own muster?"

“Sir Richard Graham, of Netherby, is my measter. I dwont thinks any sheame of my measter as thou doest.”

“Why then, hwonest friend, to tell thee a secret, them two measters of mine are two of the domdest knaves in the whole world. Naw, but I must whisper it to thee. What think’st thou of the dogs. They are no other than two covenanting lwords, going from the parliament’s army into Scwotland, to raise all that wild people against their king. Coorse them! But I can tell thee, they are frightened for thy measter, for they know that he is a loyal and true knight.”

“They need nwot be so very frightened for Sir Richard, mine honest friend. I am his steward and secretary, and know all his affairs. Your two measters shall go with me to Netherby Hall, and welcome guests they shall be.”

“Nwo, nwo, but I tell thee they shall

not go, for Mr. Secretary, thou shan't betray my two measters bad as they are. I only twold thee in confidence in return for thine, so if thou break honour with me here goes you see."

"Oh, I have these crackers as well as thee; but not the less, I tell thee that they *shall*, and I moreover assure thee that they *will* be made most welcome. Ay, and so shalt thou, though a bit of a malignant."

"Thou canst give me a pledge, canst thou, that thy measter will nwot betray mine two rascally musters?"

"Yes, but I can though, canst thou read a scroll?"

"O yees. If he be printed in big letters I'll try him."

"See, canst thou read this direction then?"

"Oh yees, surely. I see it is to Sir Richard Graham, of Netherby, esquire."

“Ha! ha! sooch an eaxellent schwolar as thou is! Whoy thou hast the wrong scyde of the letter up.”

“The devil a bit.”

“But I say thou hast. Turn it this way, and see how it reads. Now, what is it leyke?”

“Oh, it is leyke leatin. I can’t read nwo leatin.” Montrose saw it was to General Middleton, but feigned perfect ignorance, and added “Nwo, nwo, I tell thee that is nwo pledge at all; my measters shall nwot go a fwoot’s length with thee.”

The secretary then showed him letters to all the parliamentary leaders that were nigh the border, and one to Netherby himself; by which Montrose plainly perceived that Sir Richard was turned traitor to a sovereign who had favoured him above all others.

Montrose then took a large flask of brandy from his wallet, and pledging the

secretary, he set it to his mouth, and pretended to take a tremendous draught, without swallowing a drop; and then, as if half choaked, he handed it to the secretary, who took a most bedazzling pull. This loosed his tongue still more, and he told all his master's plans. How he had made his peace with the covenanters, and watched the west borders for them, where he had taken already many noble prisoners and persons of distinction, and had pledged himself to take some of more consequence still. These were heavy news to our cavaliers, but still they affected to disbelieve the man, saying, the thing was not possible, which made him still divulge more and more, for he was really anxious that the two lords should visit his master. But now they durst not venture on any account, for they were all personally and intimately known to Sir Richard. Therefore, to get quit of the man, Colonel Sibbald asked the groom for a dram, and

taking the flask in his hand, he lifted his morion, muttered a long blessing, and then setting the flask to his lips, he, like his commander, swallowed long without swallowing a spoonful. He then handed it to the secretary, who took such a sterling Border-draught, that in five minutes he could not articulate a sentence.

In lucky time was that draught given and taken, for while yet the three were standing reasoning with the drunken man, and laughing at his answers, up came one Thomas Duncan, who had very lately been one of Montrose's troopers. The man instantly lifted his bonnet, and saluted the Marquess by his title. He shook his head at him, as if he meant to hint to the countryman that he was mistaken, and at all events to make him hold his peace. The fellow would likely have acquiesced had the secretary let him alone. But this worthy hearing the great Montrose's name, stood for a space shaking

like one in a palsy ; his chaps fallen down, and his eyes set in his head. But looking again at the clownish Yorkshire groom, and thinking of him being mistaken for the great Montrose, whose very name spread terror and dismay through the land, he fell down in a volley of drunken laughter. "Thou't a great fool as well as a knave, Tammy Duncan," said he, "thou thinkst I's drunk, and thou's gaun to impose a bully of a Yorkshire groom on me for the great Montrose, for the which, if I were oop, I's leather thee hide to thee."

"Dear man, does thou think that I doosna ken my lord Montrose, under whom I have fought and conquered so often? I kens him better than I dooes thee, or any of thee kin."

"The devil you do ; then here's for your chops, for your mocking, my man."

He struck Duncan with his whip, and Duncan in a moment flew at his throat.

Montrose finding that all would out, interfered, and rushing between them, he knocked the drunken secretary down, and taking all his despatches from him, he mounted Duncan on his horse, and off the four galloped as fast as they could, leaving the secretary in a way not soon to reach Netherby-hall on foot. The despatches carried them safe through Sir Richard's lands, though no fewer than three hundred armed men watching every pass and ford on the west border.

Montrose now consulted with his late trooper on the best means of escape. He gave him bad accounts of the country gentlemen, assuring him that, with the exception of Sir John Scott, of Davington, every one had joined the parliament party. By Duncan's direction, our cavaliers turned from the high road to the right, and made all speed toward the castle of Davington.

They found Sir John Scott as reported,

staunch and true to the Royal cause, and waiting but an opportunity of rising with his fellows as soon as an army appeared, which he could join in any part of Scotland. Nevertheless, they did not make known to him their quality, only assuring him they were on their way to the north Highlands, to join the king's standard, where he had many powerful and zealous friends, and where Sir John and his followers should find a hearty welcome. Montrose easily perceived that Sir John's force was of no avail. He was a broken and oppressed man, and in desperate circumstances, but he was decidedly and strenuously loyal, and sent a guide with them all the way to Castle-Garl, promising to join the king's army wherever it appeared; and he was as good as his word.

On the approach of the Marquess and his friends toward Castle-Garl, they could hardly believe they were in the lowlands of Scotland, the scenery was so wild and

majestic. The hills on each side of the valley were so steep, they appeared next to inaccessible, while the narrow valley itself was nearly as level as the surface of the ocean; and at the head of it the dark castle appeared before them, with its turrets and bastions, apparently a noble remnant of antiquity. As they ascended the narrow valley of Glen-Garl, Montrose was often heard to exclaim "Would to heaven I had all the rebels of the country in this glen, and half their number of loyal and true men at my back, soon should this shameful controversy be settled. There, on that hillock, should the Royal Standard be placed. That impassable gulf should guard my left, and that steep should be well lined with musketeers. Look you, Sibbald; did you ever see a situation so advantageous?"

"I do not like the appearance of the place," said Sibbald. "There is neither corn, garden, nor orchard, about it. It is

rather a hungry-looking place, yet I am told one of the noblest and loveliest dames of the kingdom has made choice of it for her residence in these times. I wish you would rather consider, my lord, how we are to manage this singular hero, on whose solitude we are about to encroach."

"If a gentleman be truly loyal," said Montrose, "I hold all other things in mean estimation, and the very appearance of the castle assures me of Sir Simon's loyalty."

They now arrived before the gate of the castle, which stood in nearly the centre of a walled court, garnished with much of the circumstance of war. There were loop-holes bristled with tremendous matchlocks, and culverins on the top of the wall and by the front turrets. Two gruff pikemen stood without the gate, and six of the same stamp within. As soon as the three cavaliers entered an archway about fifty paces from the main gate, they were hailed

from the battlements, and their business and quality demanded. They answered, that they were friends, and came to the gallant and loyal Sir Simon Brodie in the king's name. The inner gate, notwithstanding, was swung to with a tremendous jangle, and all the guns and arrows of the castle pointed directly to the gate, in the faces of their guests.

“ This is truly a castle of romance,” said Rollock, “ and I augur that the holder of it is indeed a true man and a leel, for were he of the popular party, he would not need to coop himself up in this manner.” Montrose, as a Yorkshire groom, was at this time standing at a due distance behind, while Sibbald, who was spokesman, thus addressed the porters.

“ Be pleased, masters, to unbar your gates, and admit us to a conference with the lord of this castle. Why do you close your gates in the faces of his majesty's messengers and your master's friends ?”

“ In trowth, honest man,” said the chief porter, “ gin ye be my master’s friends, ye maun leeve a gayen lang gate frae this, for weel we ken he has nane hereabouts.”

“ Admit us to a conference, however, if consistent with your august pleasure,” said Sibbald, “ and we will soon convince Sir Simon of our friendship and of the object of our mission to him.”

“ Ye will hae to convince me o’ that first, sir, ay, an’ mae than me, else this threshold you cross not to-night,” said the dogged porter. “ My orders are to admit none wha dinna think fit to gie their names and their business. These, if you please? We have no guests here; and a stranger’s foot hath not crossed this gate since the Scottish army entered England.”

“ We are true king’s men, and on the king’s express business, which we don’t choose to divulge to evéry saucy menial who takes it on him to ask,” said Sir W. Rollock passionately, at the same time

drawing his sword. "Admit us instantly, and no more words." Rollock, who never had any control over his passion, would doubtless have cleft the porter instantly, had not Sibbald tipt him the wink and pointed to the guns on the wall. The burly groom, who had for some time been writing with his back toward them, now handed Sibbald a small scroll privately. It was written in latin, and with that one of the grooms inside was despatched to Sir Simon. In a few minutes all was bustle within the court as well as the castle. The six yeomen vanished from within the gate; doors were opening and shutting with tremendous clashes. The warriors disappeared from the wall, and grooms were running through the court as if for a race. The warriors were highly amused at all this unavailing bustle, but their pleasing astonishment cannot be described when they beheld two most beautiful and elegant young ladies appear on

the wall, who viewed our cavaliers with curious eyes, beckoned to them, and vanished, leaving their guests gazing at one another in the utmost consternation.

The constable of the castle now made his appearance, arrayed in his cloak, cap, and feather, and walking with strides so majestic, as if Glen-Garl and all the forests around it had been his own. Our cavaliers could scarcely keep their gravity, for such a figure as Mr. Andrew Little, steward, constable, and counsellor to Sir Simon Brodie has perchance rarely or never been seen in Scotland. It was that of a gigantic skeleton, nearly seven feet in height, with bones and joints of mighty dimensions, his beard black and shaggy, unshaven and untrimmed, and his whole countenance betraying evident marks of impatience and servility; "Whence come you, and whither bound, honoured and belated travellers," said he with a swagger that nearly wheeled him round.

“ We are straight from the royal army in England,” said Colonel Sibbald, “ and are bound to the north express. But we desire some private conversation with the loyal knight that holds this fortress, and shelter within his castle for the night.”

“ Most honourable and courteous gentlemen, sorry am I to say you nay,” said Mr. Andrew Little, with three swaggers half round, and a low obeisance; “ but subtilty in the present day holds predominance—inveterate enemies are prowling around us—and where—where, gentlemen, can persecuted loyalty hide its head, save domiciled within its own walls. If you have any mission say it to me. If not, pass on—for—I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that your appearance is much against you—*You—are—suspected.*”

“ Are you the lord here? Is it Sir Simon Brodie to whom I speak?”

“ Peremptorily—not.”

“ Then it is with him only that we de-

sire speech. With him only can we communicate. Sir Simon would not miss our communication for half the lands of Glen-Garl."

"Your request then is granted. Enter, most illustrious warriors, the unconquered castle and fortress of Castle-Garl. But it is a custom which we never forego, to disarm our guests—*Deliver—up—your—arms.*"

Rollock and Sibbald submitted, though with some sarcastic remarks; but the Marquess positively refused, in his character of a Yorkshire groom. "Ney, ney, friend—nwot so fast," said he; "I'll nwot give up neyne of my harms to thou nor ney one helze. What then should hy ave to defend me among low grooms and wil-lains."

"Then you must consent, and yield, and condescend, as we say, to be locked up with your horses in the stall or stable, as we say."

“ I’ll be dom’d if I wool ; I’s gwoing into the hell amwong the meydens to ave swoom foon, and drink the ealth of ould Sir Simon the keyng, and yoong Sir Simon his swon.”

“ Thou art a perverse and froward one,” said Andrew, locking up the two gentlemen’s armour in a strong closet within the porch ; “ But I give thee up, and abandon thee, to those who will look to thee ; for of such I have no charge. Condescend, noble strangers, to follow me.” Then, after sundry low bows, he marshalled the way in to his master, to whom he introduced them as two of his majesty’s officers.

“ What, what !” said Sir Simon, “ Officers, officers ? Yes, yes ! very well, very well ! Welcome, gentlemen, welcome !”

The singular character who delivered this address was dressed in a fantastic old style, and armed with a long sword having a gold handle. He was a strong ath-

letic man, about the meridian of life, with a broad cadaverous face of extreme simplicity and good-nature, but withal manifesting a singular vacancy and indecision of character. Indeed, he appeared to the two cavaliers to be quite a character, and to be rather what the Scots call a half-daft man. In every expression, however, he was enthusiastically, madly loyal; on that point they were soon convinced, and quite at their ease, for there was no sophistication in the character of Sir Simon. He cursed the covenanters with great energy, but added, "Gayen like them yoursel's! Gayen like, gayen like!"

They then informed him that they found the country so disloyal, they were obliged to assume the disguise of two parliamentary leaders, as in that character alone they found it possible to execute their mission. But that in his ear, and his alone, would they communicate their names and business.

“ Good, good, that ! Quite right, quite right ! ” said Sir Simon, “ What now, Mr. Andrew, what now ? Shut the door, will you ? Good that, good, good ! ”

Mr. Andrew Little had withdrawn, but neither orders nor menaces could keep him away ; for besides that his curiosity about the two strangers was boundless, he was never sure what his master might say, his tongue being so apt to run before his wit. At this time he entered to introduce Lady Susan Maylove, daughter to Lord Overbury, Sir Simon’s only sister. The young lady was, of course, not only his niece, but his adopted child and the darling of his heart. She was a lovely and interesting young creature, apparently of a sedate and thoughtful mind, looking rather as if something preyed on her youthful heart. The entry of this young lady at that moment put a stop to any farther explanation between the cavaliers and her uncle, while the lady’s person and

manners were so fascinating that she made one at least forget that any farther explanation was necessary. Scarcely had they begun to converse when in came Mr. Andrew again, and with all his customary obeisances, introduced Miss Mary Bewly. This lady was quite the reverse of her companion; for though lovely as Diana, she was volatile beyond measure, wild as an untamed colt; but Sibbald had met with her in his father's house, and knew all her family well, but he hoped that she would not recognise him through his disguise; but nobody could comprehend Mary. She courtesied slightly to the one and then to the other. "So, so!" cried she, in feigned astonishment, "what do I see? How d'ye do general? Sir William, I hope you are quite well? Ah! this is all your doing, Lady Sue! I knew always you were a covenanter at heart; but I won't suffer our brave Sir Simon to be betrayed thus. Good, Sir Simon, do you

know whom you have received and welcomed into your castle? No other than two of the principal parliamentary leaders—rank spies—I know them both very well—traitors, traitors!”

“ Good that ! Good that ! ” said Sir Simon in manifest trepidation, and that moment he seized each of them by the collar with a grasp of iron, and calling for assistance, conducted them to the dungeon, nor would he hear them speak a word. In vain did Lady Sue plead with her uncle, and represent to him that it was no more than one of Miss Bewly’s mischievous devices which she practised on him every day. He would not listen to her, but caused them to be searched, and the very first thing that came to his hand was the correspondence taken from Sir Richard Graham’s secretary. “ What’s this ? What’s that ? What’s this ? What’s this ? ” cried Sir Simon, with terrible rapidity, putting the papers into the hands

of his gigantic seneschal, for he could not read them himself. Andrew glanced them over, and perceiving at once what they were, turned to our cavaliers, and said with a majestic sneer, "Gentlemen, you have fairly run your heads into a noose, as we say—peremptorily so—Sir Simon is a dangerous knight on whom to exercise your devious deceits—your days on earth will be short."

"Peremptorily so, as we say," said Mary Bewly, courtesying to Andrew.

He then read over all the documents with stately gravity and great fluency, while Sir Simon, perfectly astonished at their atrocity, kept saying every now and then, "Good that, good that! Gallows, gallows!"

The gentlemen began to explain, by telling the plain truth how those documents had been come by, but Sir Simon would not listen to them, crying out, "No, no, no! Rebels never want lees; never,

never!" Their cause looked extremely ill with such a judge, and their state dangerous, at which Mary Bewly appeared quite delighted, for her motto might well be, "The more mischief the better sport." Sir Simon was much in love with her; she knew it well, and knew too that she could make him do whatever she had a mind. Sir Simon's love was the best sport ever she got in her life, and she resolved this night to have a night of sport.

A great bustle and noise now approached. The Yorkshire groom had been taken prisoner, and as they were bringing him down to be examined, he was fighting and swearing manfully; but overpowered by numbers, he was brought and searched before all the people of the castle, for all now were gathered together to execute their master's commands. It so happened that the very first document put into Mr. Andrew's hand to decipher

was his majesty's commission to Montrose constituting him lieutenant-general of Scotland, with the royal signature and seal appended. Andrew became paralyzed, for he was a worshipper of rank and power. He trembled and stared about him, first at one of the strangers, then at another. "Peremptorily, there is some grand misconstruction here, Sir Simon," said he. "It would appear that some of the highest personages of the kingdom are present, for here is our sovereign's commission to the great Montrose."

"Montrose?" cried Miss Bewly. "Is that the renegade chief who put his hand to the plough and then drew back? Out on him! There will never good come of him!" Sibbald and Rollock looked one to another; but Sir Simon was driven half-distracted, for Montrose was his idol. "What, what!" cried he, running to each of the two gentlemen and looking into their faces; "Montrose, Montrose, Montrose!"

What, what! Which is he? Which, which? Montrose in my castle? Which is he? Which, which?"

With that, Bauldy Kirkhope, the knight's fool, stepped forward, and laying his hand on Montrose's shoulder, cried out, "This is him, Simmy! This is him; I ken him weel. Ye'll either be made an earl now, Simmy, or a knight wanting the head. Stop, stop now, Simmy, an' dinna brik out wi' nane o' your great blethers o' nonsense. Do ye no mind when you and me, and other thirty, or thereabouts, rade away to the fords o' the saut sea an' joined a great army that chased away the Englishmen; an' how we took a great town they ca'd Drumfriesh, the greatest town ever I saw in my life, an' how we filled our wallets, an' then raid for bare life? An' do ye no mind wha was our general then? This is the chap, Simmy! this is the chap! that you may depend on. Dinna ye mind, my lord, when I ran away afore ye an' rang a' the

bells o' Lochmaben? Ah! ye're a gayen brave cheeld! That you are! I ken you weel!"

"Whoy, friend, thou'rt a great fool," said the groom. "And if mine hands were loose I would baste thee."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Bauldy. "Faith, that you wad, an' ten like me! Loose him, Simmy, man. . What for dinna ye loose him wi' your ain hands? Stand back, ye deevils! I'll loose the greatest warrior i' the kingdom mysel."

He did so; and in the meantime Mary Bewly, who well knew that Bauldy never was mistaken in any person he had once seen, went up and whispered Sir Simon thus: "I see perfectly how it is; when the great Montrose is the groom, the other two can be no other than the Prince of Wales and Prince Rupert. Bauldy is never wrong."

"True, Mary! true, true! Lord, what shall be done! Gentlemen, gentlemen, a' your ain blames, a' your ain

blames! Never would tell me who you were. Never, never! Beg pardon, beg pardon! Bad times, my Lord, bad times, when the best men i' the kingdom maun travel in disguise. But return we to dinner. Good that, good that! Its even faithits! No questions now. In, my Lord Montrose. Company all well! Good, good."

There is scarcely a doubt that Sir Simon believed that he had the Prince of Wales and the Prince Palatine of the Rhine under his roof, although he did not acknowledge it. But his eyes gleamed with a wild delight, and in kindness and hospitality he exerted himself to extravagance. And Mary Bewly, who had a serious design on her friend and early acquaintance, Colonel Sibbald, after giving him a sly look, addressed both gentlemen by the titles of "Your Royal Highness."

But these ominous words falling on the

ears of Andrew Little, almost deprived him of breath. He had been called in by Sir Simon to furnish certain wines, but when he half understood that he was ministering to royalty, his jaws fell down, his eyes fixed sidewise in the position of the table, and his limbs lost the power of motion. There he stood, like a gigantic skeleton; "Did you hear my uncle's orders, Mr. Andrew?" said Lady Susan.

"Peremptorily not, madam, for my ears were drunken with the sounds of dignity supreme," said Mr. Andrew; "blessed are the ears that hear, and the joyful sounds that know, as we say."

"Vanish, officious eavesdropper," cried Mary Bewly, walking up to him with a stately air; "certain sounds were not meant for ears like thine, and silence will best become thy tongue. Bring thy choicest beverage, as we say, Mr. Andrew."

Sir Simon pledged cup after cup, first to his majesty, then to his cause and all his leaders one by one. He was quite glorious. But all that Montrose could do, he could not keep him to any point. He flew from one thing to another, uttering short rapid sentences, the import of which it was impossible to divine. He found him enthusiastic in his majesty's service, but came at no calculation what force he could raise; for then he only cursed the reforming sentiments of the people.

As for the two young cavaliers, their attention was wholly taken up with the two young ladies; and it may well be conceived that, locked up in a fortress as they had been for months, the sight of the brave young warriors was a joyful one to them. Both asked assignations for a private tête-à-tête, and both were refused them, although in a manner which made their ultimate success appear certain.

In the mean time a colloquy took place

between Montrose and the unconquerable Mary Bewly, which when Lady Susan saw it inevitable she grew as pale as a white rose, for she knew her friend's sentiments well, which none present did but herself. But Mary neither blushed nor grew pale when as he was taking a turn through the hall, as if to consider of something, he came close up to her and took her hand, which she gave him frankly. "Well," said he, "you tried to play a severe trick on my two friends and me, in order to get us hung for spies of the covenanters."

"And sorry I am, my lord, that I did not succeed," said she; "for Sir Simon and I hate you covenant people very bad. Lady Susan, indeed, rather favours your party; you may see by her demure looks that *she* is a covenanter. But as you could not be mistaken of Sir Simon's sentiments and mine, it was rather far ventured in you to come here. True, you came

disguised ; that shewed some modesty of nature as well as good sense, to escape Sir Simon's vengeance. But now that you *are* discovered, you know what you deserve."

"Sir Simon and I understand each other's sentiments pretty well on these matters, my pretty piece of petulance," said he ; "you do not know who I am, nor what I have come here for, if you indeed suppose me a covenanter."

"Sir Simon and *you* understand each other, my lord?" said she ; "quite impossible ! as adverse as the elements of fire and water. I tell you, my lord, he and I not only hate the covenanting rebels, but we despise them. Think of that. And you say I don't know who you are. But I do : and I wish I had not known so well. I know you to be the very champion of the covenanters. I know you took the covenant on your knees at St. Andrew's, and likewise took the sacrament on your oath ; and dare you, in the face

of heaven, now protest that you are an adversary to it. O, no! the thing is not in nature—at least in a noble nature. Therefore, whatever you may pretend, it is but reason to suppose that you must be endeavouring to further that cause; for that purpose I believed you had come here, and I believe it still. Gracious Heaven! how long is it since you took the city of Aberdeen by storm, and made all the magistrates and chief inhabitants swear the covenant at the point of the sword. And would you make the honest and unsuspecting Sir Simon Brodie believe that you are seriously opposed to it.”

Montrose was manifestly nettled and put out of countenance by the petulant girl, while his two associates could not help enjoying his predicament exceedingly, which Mary perceiving, she was just running on, when Sir Simon broke out with a terrible volley of untangible exclamations. “Yough—yough—yough,” cried he; “yelp

—yelp—yelp! she terrier! she terrier! fight wi' the cat, fight wi' the cat. Bow—wow — wow! botheration, botheration! good that, good that! covenanters! rebels! boo—boo—boo, blubberheads! Never heed, never heed. Yaugh—yaugh—yaugh, fight wi' the cat," &c.

The history of that short night would take a long time in detailing. What with courting, toying, and making assignations on the one side, and the most anxious enquiries with regard to the state of the country on the other, Montrose's eagle eye soon discovered, that though they were served with much state and ceremony, yet every thing showed depression of circumstances. This he was grieved to see, as he had expected some sterling support from that truly loyal knight, with all his absurdity; but whoever entered that castle gate, he perceived saw the whole of Sir Simon's interior strength at once.

The two young ladies knew the names

and qualities of their guests perfectly. Sir Simon as yet was uncertain, but with Mr. Andrew matters were widely different. From all appearances, and from what he heard, he still believed that he had two royal princes in the castle, and his eagerness to ingratiate himself with them was truly ludicrous. Andrew's situation was indeed a very poor one. He had been bred for the episcopal church, but both church and state of Scotland had gone into anarchy, and here was poor Mr. Andrew no more than a sort of hanger-on, willing always to make himself useful as he could; but most anxious to provide for himself the first opportunity.

He easily perceived the fondness of the two strangers for the two young ladies, and heard more than half an assignation between the one he supposed to be Prince Charles and Miss Bewly; and as Andrew hated her from his soul, and had often heard of the gallantry of the prince, Mr.

Andrew thought the best way of ingratiating himself into royal favour would be to further his royal highness's designs on his daily persecutor. But how to effect this greatly puzzled Mr. Andrew. He however attended to all their motions, and on showing them to their chambers, he asked Colonel Sibbald, whom he took for the Prince of Wales, if he would not like to take a look through the castle. Sibbald answered with great earnestness that he would be highly gratified.

Andrew then took the light and led the way, with a swagger quite indescribable; but it was a short way that Sibbald went, or cared to go, for as they passed Miss Bewly's chamber, Mr. Andrew turned gently round, and making a motion with his finger toward the door nodded and winked with his eye. Then leading the way into the guard-chamber in the turret, where was a bright fire blazing, he forthwith began a bombastical harangue, pre-

fatory to a petition for some clerical employment under a government which he had made every effort to support. But Colonel Sibbald's thoughts were running on something else, and he cut him short by asking if that was Miss Bewly's chamber they had just passed.

“Peremptorily so indeed, please your royal highness,” said Andrew; “it is that lady's place of solitary repose. And if your royal highness would condescend—” continued he, kneeling on the floor—

“Hush, hush!” cried Sibbald, laying his hand upon the mouth of Andrew. “That is a dangerous insinuation. Who told you that I was the prince?”

“Ah, there needed not verbal instruction to assist discernment in this respect,” exclaimed Mr. Andrew. “It is apparent in every lineament, in every word, in every look. Yes, in the heaven-stamped magnificence of majesty there is that—”

“Hold, hold, friend Dominie, said Sib-

bald, "and be assured that your intense discernment has misinformed you. But at all events, be silent regarding such a suggestion for my sake. Do you not see that it is fraught with danger?"

"Peremptorily, my liege prince, I will lay my hand upon my mouth, and my mouth in the dust, and be silent," said Andrew. "And now, that I may not detain your majesty from needful repose, please to observe that here are fire and lamps, and this bolt shuts out all interference, should you incline a little solitary meditation, or an indulgment in such cogitations as delight the youthful heart, as we say."

Sibbald thanked him abruptly, and having now seen all of the castle he wanted to see, returned to his apartment, leaving Mr. Andrew greatly disappointed at not having extracted any promise or acknowledgement from the prince. He determined, however, to watch the whole

night, and if he could not benefit himself, at least to make some discoveries which might give him an advantage over his inveterate persecutor, Mary Bewly. Accordingly, he ensconced himself snugly in an abrupt corner formed by an angle of a stair with the turret, and right opposite to Miss Bewly's chamber door, saying to himself—"Peremptorily, it is but just and right that I obtain some good to myself out of the evil propensities of others."

But although Mary's chamber door stood off the latch, yet the prince's did not move, and as Andrew's long legs began to sleep, he felt very uneasy, and said to himself—"Peremptorily, this young man is not endowed with the spirit of his father. But lo! I am undone! for who have we here?"

An unlucky encounter for Mr. Andrew now approached, for at that instant up came Sir W. Rollock and Lady Susan, walking slowly arm in arm, and carrying

a lighted torch, and apparently bound to the turret chamber. For Andrew to conceal himself from them was impossible, and not choosing to be caught listening at a lady's chamber door in the dark, he took the hasty expedient of gliding softly inside Mary's door until the pair passed, and then make his escape. Mary had lain down without undressing, for she expected that perhaps she might be called up ere morning. She had insinuated to Sibbald, that she was anxious to have a word with him in private relating to the sentiments of his mother and sisters, though there was little doubt that it was out of regard for the gallant young hero himself. Consequently she heard from time to time there was some person in the gallery, and when Andrew opened the door she was seized with a tremor, thinking it was the noble cavalier, and dreading what she most wished. But as the torch passed by, her disappointment and irritation may

well be conceived when she got a glimpse of the ungainly form of Andrew standing cowering at her bed foot. She instantly rose, locked her chamber, and taking out the key, said to herself in an under voice "I shall prevent any intrusion here, however," and that instant was again ensconced among the sheets.

Never was Mary Bewly in such a plight in her life as now. The dilemma in which little Andrew was placed tickled her so much that she was like to burst with laughter, and yet it behoved her to be quiet. But when she heard him begin fumbling about the lock, and fetching now and then a profound sob, as coming gradually to the sense of his shameful predicament, she lay in joyful tribulation. She anticipated with extreme delight the shame and chastisement to which he had certainly now exposed himself; but most of all she wondered what he would do. She heard him weeping and praying most

potently, but still these, with a full exercise of his faith, did not release him.

He was now driven to his last shift, which he determined to manage with the most profound policy. He walked softly to Mary's bed-side, gave her shoulder a gentle shake, and said in a whisper—"Sleep you or wake you, gentle Miss Bewly!"

"Who's there?" cried she.

"Hush, for Heaven's sake!" whispered Andrew. "The prince desires a word with you, fair and fortunate maiden."

"The prince! what prince?" cried she, feigning great surprise. "Ah, merciful Heaven! a man in my chamber! A man, a man! Oh! help, help! A ruffian, a ruffian!"

These ominous words the unconscionable Mary shouted without any alleviation of voice, and in the meantime seizing Andrew's mantle of office she tore it from his shoulders, nor ceased she to scream and

to tear with both hands, until she had literally torn Andrew's thread-bare black suit to pieces, leaving the Reverend Seneschal scarcely a rag to cover him. And moreover her chamber-door key, which she had still held in her hand, she slipped into one of the pockets of those dilapidated garments, while yell for yell went her voice with prodigious rapidity—it got full scope. But the most unlucky thing of all for Andrew was his attempting to stifle the first breaking forth of her voice with his hand, until he could bring her to some degree of reason.

Colonel Sibbald was the first at the door, but entrance there was none; and now Lady Susan, joining her voice to that of her beloved friend, the alarm became dreadful. Montrose and Sir Simon soon joined the other three, for the two had still been sitting in the great hall unmindful of sleep. The screams of desperation continuing within, they had no resource

left but to break open the door, which the might of the four men soon accomplished, when behold there sat the distressed and sorely-abused dame, Mary Bewly, with dishevelled hair and a well-dissembled wildness of frenzy in her looks ; and there stood the Reverend and learned Mr. Andrew Little, wofully tattered and torn, and with features of the most withered despair, while the only effort of which he appeared capable was that of gathering some of his tattered robes round before him, to enable him to appear with decency before the august company. The astonishment of the party may be somewhat guessed at, when they beheld this extraordinary scene. Each one uttered some exclamation of horror, and Sir Simon and Montrose being both armed, the two attendants of the latter cried to him with one voice to shoot the monster.

“ No, not in the presence of the ladies,”

said Montrose; “but death is too light a punishment for such horrid atrocity.”

“No, no, don’t shoot him,” cried Mary; “for my sake, don’t shoot him here; but O beat him! beat him! will nobody beat him?”

Sibbald knocked him down, and fell a-kicking him till Sir Simon interposed his boardly frame in defence of his seneschal and secretary. He well knew Andrew was incapable of any such base attempt, and as well that his adored Mary was capable of any wicked device in order to play a trick on him. Therefore he cried out—“No, no, no! No blood, no blood! What? what? good that, good that! Don’t know! Mary, its—faithits. All fudge—all fudge. Hear him—hear him!”

Montrose then proceeded to the examination of the culprit in hand. “Explain yourself, sir,” said he. “On what intent did you break into this lady’s chamber and lock the door inside?”

“ My lord, hear me !” said he, kneeling and weeping ; “ and believe me when I declare the truth before Heaven, that I did not break open her chamber door, nor did I lock it inside.”

“ How then came you there ? Did she desire you to come or entice you in any way ?”

“ Peremptorily not, my lord. I went in,—yes, I went in of my own accord,—I confess I did.”

“ And for what purpose ? You have not explained that. You surely did not go in there at midnight solely for the purpose of getting out again !”

“ Peremptorily so, my lord. It is amazing how you have guessed so well ! I went in for the sole purpose of coming out again.”

“ Nothing can be made of this fellow but utter absurdities. Young lady, what do you suppose took him there ? On

what purpose do you suppose he was bent ?”

“ For the worst of purposes rest assured, my lord. Take him away, else I shall faint. He even tried to stifle me—to choke me by holding in my breath.”

Montrose took out one of his pistols and cocked it. “ Wretch !” said he, “ make thy peace with Heaven.”

“ No, no,” cried Mary again ; “ touch not his life. For my sake, touch not his life ; but take my key from him, and take him away, for should he keep possession of my key, as he intends, what is to become of me ?”

“ Ay, search me and try me,” cried he ; “ and if my hand have touched her key, what do I not deserve ? Search all these forlorn garments and see.”

They searched him as he desired and found the key. But still Sir Simon, from a principle of justice, withstood

all further punishment, declaring it was all fudge; all trick; and that they did not know Mary. The protestations of poor Andrew and his lamentations were without end. Even his want of clothing was naturally a source of great trouble to him. The warriors at length pitying him, left him to hide himself as best he could.

There was no more undressing or bedding that night. Montrose and Sir Simon betook them again to their consultation; the other two gallant cavaliers each to a conference with one of the fair inmates of the castle, and short as the hours were, that conference was never forgot, and was afterwards conducive of great and important events. Lady Susan was indeed as great an enthusiast in the royal cause as any of them all, if not the greatest; but how much astonished was Colonel Sibbald to discover that his lovely, and apparently light-hearted and volatile, Mary Bewly,

was a strenuous reformer: a being that lived and breathed but to laud the deeds and principles of the covenanters, and to execrate the policy and principles of the royalists. Her amiable friend, Lady Susan Maylove, knew this well, but concealed it so that they might not be compelled to part. Sibbald's mother and sisters were also violent reformers, and in their sentiments had he been bred, and engaged when very young on the side of the covenanters, but quitted it with Montrose, taking the side of chivalry and danger, quite disregarding the prophecies and warning voices raked up by his mother and sisters of the downfall of the house of Stuart; who likewise begged of him, in many pressing epistles, to take the side of the presbyterians, for the sake of Heaven and a good conscience.

None of these remonstrances had the least effect. But what the remonstrances

of his friends for so long a time could not effect, this lovely enthusiast accomplished in one hour. At least, she accomplished it so far, that she made him acknowledge that it was not the principles he disliked, but the men. The selfish motives of the leaders of the party, he said, he could not endure; but he would think seriously of her advice, which he never before had done; and if he found a leader whom he could follow, for her sake, and for the peace of his family, *perhaps* he might take the parliamentary side.

“For my part, Colonel,” said Mary, “I will admit of no *perhapses* in the matter; I renounce all interest in you, and all correspondence with you, unless you once more adopt the principles of your family, and the principles which must ultimately prevail in spite of a few brave and romantic spirits. What are they to the whole force of a mighty nation combined? Only a drop in the bucket and small dust in

the balance. You may shed a great deal of blood if that will benefit you, and I have no doubt that you will do so under your enthusiastic renegade, now honoured with such a dangerous commission for his native country. Out upon him for a man-sworn villain! He is my detestation, and I hope to live to see him mount the scaffold, for until then the reformed religion will never be safe. I must now retire to my father's halls, where I will again associate daily with your sisters and mother, and our discourse will often be of you. But never shall I think or say well of you, till you renounce the tyrant's cause, and that bloody inefficient side."

Such was the sum of Miss Bewly's insinuations; but Sibbald would still promise her no more than before stated. It is probable, that he supposed the influence which she possessed over him might turn out but of short duration, like many other

youthful partialities, but he found to his experience that distance, time, and danger only added to the purity of his esteem and vehemence of his love.

That was a night to be remembered in the castle of Glen-Garl! A night from which sprung many new feelings, new views, new delights, fears, and pursuits. A night that might be termed the accidental germ dropped in the earth, from which grew the ruin of some armies and families, and the exaltation of others. But we must not anticipate the great events to which our story leads, suffice it that Montrose and his two friends departed early next morning, and reached Juchbrakie on the verge of the Highlands in safety on the second night following. Lady Susan and Miss Bewly were escorted to Bewly-hall, her father's mansion, as a place of sure retreat among the popular party.

Sir Simon sounded the tocsin of war.

He had a commission for raising men for the king, and applied to all the noblemen and gentlemen within reach. Murray, of Hangingshaw, sent him word that "whatever men he raised for the king, he would not confide them to the charge of a daft man." Traquair sent him word that he was raising a regiment for the king, but his son was to lead them, and so on. There was a Mr. William Murray sent seven, another Mr. Murray sent nine, Sir John Scott, of Davington, came himself with twenty-three, and a Mr. John Scott, called of Wall, with twenty-one; Sir Simon himself, by a last mortgage, raised and accoutred nearly sixty; and with this small retinue of hardy, but lean, hungry warriors, Sir Simon set out for the north.

He was a man like Leviathan, made without fear. Positively he seemed not to be aware what it was; and his followers being constantly teasing him for money which he had not, and for meat

and drink, of which he assured them there was plenty among the cursed Whigs for the fighting for, consequently Sir Simon's progress was one constant scene of reaving and skirmishing for meat. He took it for granted that the people were all Whigs, and spared none of them. A foray that Sir Simon made upon the town of Linton, rendered his memory detested there for ages. It was on a Sunday he arrived, and the people being all in the church, he sent nine troopers to guard the doors, who would not let a soul of them out till their companions had plundered the town of every thing valuable, and were well on their way for the mountain verge of West-Lothian, and then they scoured away after them. But there was a gentleman in the vicinity named Kirk-michael, who having come to most loss of any, he raised the townsmen and pursued. A confused engagement took place at

Harper-ridge, in the fall of evening, where the prowess of Sir Simon alone turned the fortune of the day. When the townsmen came upon his men with a great hurrah! they were so much astonished and surprised that they fled, and Sir Simon actually fled too like others, for his ideas were slow in coming. But immediately he broke out with a tremendous "hullebaloo! hilloa! hilloa! botheration! down with them! down with the Whig carles!" And wheeling his horse about, he attacked the few front riders single handed, unhorsing and wounding Kirk-michael, and heroically checking the rest. The Brodies soon were at his side, for he had six and thirty men there of his own, and a set of as hardy, fearless ruffians as ever were born; — give them plenty of meat and drink and they would rush upon any danger, and though mostly vassals to the Earl of Traquair, they followed their

chief. They were hard put to it at this their first encounter, but they fought and swore terribly, bearing the whole brunt of the combat until their companions rallied and came to their assistance, when they drove the men of Linton from the field. It was with difficulty Sir Simon's associates could get him to draw off and make his escape by night with the booty, for fear of the country people rising on them.

This advice proved a good one, for next morning, it being sacrament time, Sir Simon and his party met a great number of people coming out of a place called Battigate, on their way to church. Sir Simon and his Brodies, who were the advanced guard, immediately drew up and challenged them, calling out "For the king or the parliament?" But the men mocked him and said some one thing, and some another; while he, thinking they were going to a rendezvous, it not being Sunday, attacked them at once, and scattered

them like sheep; and there were the Brodies galloping through corn-field and meadows, cracking the kirk people's crowns, and with awful oaths calling on them to yield. While this was going on in front, the rear came up at full canter, pursued by the Linton men and a number of other country people. Sir Simon soon rallied his burly Brodies, and notwithstanding the rest of his troops were wanting, he would not let them fly, but turned to the charge, again taking the lead. The countrymen fired a volley at him, which only wounded one man and two horses, and before they could get time to load again, Sir Simon dashed on to the charge. But they were prepared for him this time with a front of long shafted forks and leisters, which completely checked the Brodies in that narrow path, while the rest of the countrymen saluted their opponents with such tremendous showers of stones and other missiles, that there was no standing

them; they instantly began to retreat, all save Sir Simon, who dashed on. But a great shower of stones all thrown at him knocked him senseless, and two or three forks stuck into his horse's face, threw him on his hams, and down went Sir Simon in the mud, his horse scouring off like fire without him. He was now in his enemies' hands, and in woful plight, for his men had fled. The Linton men, however, feared to do him any wrong, thinking he might be some great man, and not at all comprehending the real nature of their quarrel, or on what warrant the seizure had been made. They therefore disarmed him, and left him in charge of three men to bring up, pushing on to recover their goods. A sort of flying fight was kept up for some time, for the party liked very ill to part with their rich booty. But the Linton men and their friends were now joined by all the kirk

people, and Sir John Scott, who now took the command, found himself surrounded by such numbers, that he was obliged to open a way through the kirk-people by flinging his ill got gear from him. In vain did the Brodies shout aloud with oaths and curses to charge the other way, for their chief was fallen. The rest judging that plan impracticable, pushed on straight to Stirling.

When Sir Simon came fairly to his senses, and found himself in the hands of three hinds, he asked them as well as his unpliant stuttering tongue could, “whether they were for the king or the parliament?”

“An what’s that to you, honest man?” said one.

“Hoo—hoo—hoo! what to me? Because ye see an ye be for the king, you and I, yes, faithits! are the best of friends. But if you are for the rebel parliament, why it’s

even—hoo—hoo—faithits ! you are my prisoners.”

The men laughed aloud, and told him they were for the kirk and the parliament, and he was their prisoner.

“ Hoo—hoo, good that, good that ! it’s a d—d lee however,” and in one moment he knocked the two men next him down, the other fled, and Sir Simon disarming them, one of a horse pistol and the other of a sword, strode deliberately up to a farm house, saddled a horse and mounted him, and rode as he thought straight after his men. The people of the farm having run all off, great and small, after the fray, no one challenged Sir Simon, and off he rode on a great cart-horse, as fast as the beast could carry him. But he neither came up with his men nor their pursuers, to his great amazement, which if he had he would have been worse than ever. At length he encountered an advanced guard of twelve men coming at a brisk trot, and

instantly, with his old rusty sword in one hand, and his uncouth horse pistol, he ordered them to stand, and enquired "For the king or parliament?"

"For the king, noble fellow," said the captain, "and I am sure so are you. Turn and ride with us."

"Hoo—hoo, but faithits! let me first hear you say it's God save the king."

The party obeyed with enthusiasm, and then Sir Simon was quite delighted, and told them of his adventure, and how many men he was leading to join Montrose, and in what way he had lost them. The captain, whose name was Home, was likewise leading a party of loyal gentlemen to join Montrose, then in the neighbourhood of Stirling. He was quite delighted with the enthusiastic loyalty and absurdity of Sir Simon, and they two became the greatest of friends. It was south of Falkirk where Sir Simon met with this party, he having gone quite off his road, and as

Captain Home had to wait the coming up of the rest of his company, they tarried at Falkirk all night.

Word arrived at Falkirk in the evening that General Baillie's Fife militia were passing the Firth at Alloa, and would cross all night, while the horse and regulars were marching for Stirling Bridge. Sir Simon wanted to attack them without loss of time, and swore that if he had had his own little clan with them, he would not have left a man of the Fife rebels alive. Early in the morning Captain Home's party had a view of that division of the Whig army, which seemed getting in order to march with great irregularity; and it was manifest they would have very easily been cut off from the rest of the army and discomfited, but Home had only a troop of sixty horse, which his lord had sent as an earnest to Montrose; and to have dashed on to such an enterprise would have been madness. But nothing would satisfy Sir

Simon ; he came round with his great cart-horse in front, and made a speech such as generals made to their armies in the days of old. “ It’s even hoo—hoo, noble heroes ; this is faithits ! the time—to, hoo—hoo, rush on to even, faithits ! everlasting glory. Good, good that ! it’s even hoo—hoo, follow me ! ” And away rode Sir Simon with his long rusty sword over his shoulder, his large horse pistol in the other hand, and galloping on his huge stiff cart-horse straight toward the ranks of the enemy. Whether he really supposed the Homes were following or did not regard whether they followed or not, certain it is he never looked over his shoulder, but rode straight onward into the ranks of the enemy, shouting “ It’s even hoo—hoo, for the king aho ! you dogs ! ”

“ For the kirk and the covenant,” shouted the leader.

“ Hoo—hoo—hoo ! for the devil, and its even faithits ! for the length of hell,

you dogs ; hoo—hoo, down with your arms to the king then. For it's even faithits! I charge you to yield in the king's name."

"If you are a trumpet, sir, name your conditions, which shall be laid before the committee of states," said the colonel.

"Hoo—hoo, a trumpet, sir? What it's even the length of hell fire, do you mean by its faithits! a trumpet. Am I it's even anything like a, hoo—hoo, a trumpet? My conditions are it's even down with your arms, or you shall be every one of you slain, and it's even faithits! executed."

"Make your escape, sir, or get you into my rear."

"Hoo—hoo, it's there I shall soon be," shouted Sir Simon, and instantly rode furiously on to the charge. He was as good as his word, for the colonel fled (a notable Fife laird) and Sir Simon pursued him into the thickest of his troops, where he was surrounded and taken pri-

soner, after being wounded in three different places. He then ordered the colonel and all his men to follow him as lawful prisoners into the rear of the great Marquess of Montrose, "the length of it's even governor of Scotland."

The colonel thinking him a gentleman labouring under some temporary derangement, disarmed him, and ordered him to be taken care of and used civilly until his rank was found out. Nevertheless he continued to give orders to the division to move this way and that way, to reach the rear of Montrose's army, and believed all the while that his orders were being obeyed. And in the fatal battle that ensued at Kilsythe, the next morning, as that division were debouching on the left, he earnestly requested to speak with the colonel, and told him in his own heterogeneous manner, that if he did not obey his orders and fall round into the rear of

Montrose, he would not answer for him and his men being every soul of them cut in pieces.

This threat was laughed at ; but, alas ! it was too soon verified, for on the onset of the Ogilvies, with whom the Brodies and Scotts were joined, this division, not having space to fly, were cut to pieces every man. When Sir Simon met with his burly Brodies slashing on like devils, he put himself joyfully at the head of them, but being unarmed they conducted him to Montrose, who received him with great kindness, and gave him his own sword and pistols, for arms were plenty enough to be had that day. Sir Simon had just time to tell him that he had brought 1200 men captive to the camp, with his own single arm, but in hesitating to obey his orders, they had been all killed every man. Montrose, glad to get quit of him in that busy and bloody day, said to him, pointing with his hand, “ Yonder is Ar-

gyle, flying with only a few fugitive kinsmen. Bring me him in also, and an earldom is your own." Away flew Sir Simon, at the head of his burly Brodies, but the Scotts and Murrays clung to Davington, on whom the command of the party had devolved in the absence of Sir Simon. The paths were terribly blocked up with heaps of slain, and raging highlanders slaughtering the Whigs like silly sheep, that Sir Simon and his Brodies could not get well on. Besides, they were so intent on plunder, that they fell from him, by small degrees, till at the last he had only six. He could not make up with Argyle; for though the great cart-horse was rather a responsible beast and laid himself out in a clumsy and awkward mode, groaning and sniffling when he got a thrust of Sir Simon's ample spur, yet he had been accustomed to tread warily among the human species, and even to go round a child in the stable-yard; consequently, a dead man, or one

lying in the dead-thraw, was an impediment over which he would not pass. It was a matter of conscience with him. Whipping and spurring only made him more positive. And though Sir Simon, in his eager pursuit, quitted the high-ways, which were literally heaped with slain, yet no where could he go but he came upon the dead and the dying; and whenever he came upon one of these suddenly, the horse made such a jerk to one side or backward that he sometimes flung his rider, rolling him in the blood of the slain; so that Sir Simon often remarked to his followers, that "He was the d—dest cowardly Whig of a horse that faithits! ever was born."

Sir Simon slew not a man of the flyers. He had taken and given quarter to 1200 of them, and as he did not know one from another, he would not touch them, particularly as they were every man of them unarmed; for the whole Whig army had

thrown away their arms, trying to escape with life; and Sir Simon deemed it a wretched warfare to be slaughtering unarmed men; he even tried all that he could to check it in his progress, but in vain. The whole army was destroyed, insomuch that out of seven thousand men never above sixty could be again mustered.

Sir Simon at length got parallel with Argyle, and rather before him, to the eastward, but coming to a wall, and seeing no outgate, he threw himself from his cart-horse, leaped over the wall, and if it had not been for a field of strong standing corn that he got among, he would have got before and waylaid Argyle. As it was, he was very near him, and called him to stay and yield in the king's name, but Argyle hasted on, and reaching the shore before his pursuer, got into a boat. While Sir Simon was standing on the shore challenging them in the king's name, and

cursing them to return, they fired at him, which he totally disregarded. But the boat having to return to shore for Sir Colin Campbell and his son, Sir Simon forced himself in spite of all their efforts to prevent him, and went on board with them. When there, he asked for the commander; and being shewn the captain of the ship, he went up to him, and asked if he was for the king or the covenant.

“ I am for neither of them, sir,” said the man. “ But what’s that to thee at present ?”

“ Why, hoo—hoo, because you see faithits! even of the very greatest importance to, hoo—hoo, both you and me, sir; for if you are for the king, then it’s even we are the length of good friends, and I am, it’s even faithits! your humble servant. But it’s hoo—hoo, by the it’s even the lord Harry, if you are for the covenant, then you and all that are here are my prisoners

of war, and I arrest you and Argyle and every one on board, in his majesty's name."

"I suppose then I must be for the king for such a valuable friendship," said the captain, and then called down the hatchway "My lord, here is a gentleman who has taken us all prisoners. What is to be said about it?"

"Oh, of course, it is our duty to obey," said Argyle; "in the mean time put the gentleman below, and let him be taken care of until we ask counsel of heaven." Sir Simon was then put under hatches, and Argyle and his party began and sung psalms of deliverance, while two covenanting ministers, Mr. Guthrie and Mr. Law, prayed alternately, denouncing the judgments of heaven against the bloody murderers of Kilsythe and asking counsel of God regarding this mad adherent of royalty, who had thus run headlong into their

hands. After wrestling long with heaven in prayer, it was announced to them that he was to be cut off.

Sir Simon was then brought up for judgment, and the reverend divines pressed him hard to confess and repent. But he only answered them with “Hoo—hoo, hold your it’s even peace, you two babbling blockheads, and sail as I order you, it’s even the length of Leith, whence I will faithits! take you in safe convoy to his majesty’s jail. But if you do not, it’s even, hoo—hoo, precisely as I order you, then (d—n you for a nest of canting dogs,) if I will answer for the safety of one of your heads.”

They then pronounced him irreclaimable; and Argyle, in a formal manner, pronounced sentence of death upon him, adjudging him to be instantly thrown overboard. When Sir Simon heard this solemn sentence he laughed till the tears stood in his eyes, and dared them for their

souls to wrong a hair of his head, at the same time cursing them for rebels and traitors, and calling them all the evil names he was master of. He concluded his anathemas by saying, "I would it's even faithits! like to see you throw me into that's the sea. I know you dare not. But hoo—hoo, had you the courage, I *would* like to see you do it just even faithits! for the vengeance that my friend Montrose will wreak on you."

That insinuation made them start and give an involuntary shudder; but the mention of that name only whetted Argyll's vengeance, who called out "Away with him!" and beckoned obedience to his will. Sir Simon then began and knocked his assailants down right and left, until it took the whole party of the ship to force him overboard. When he found himself on the very brink of going down, he called out, "It's even of the ho—ho—hoy! my lord! faithits! even stop!" but that mo-

ment he plunged into the sea, and away rode the beautiful ship the Faith down the Firth, and without waiting to obey Sir Simon's orders sailed straight for Berwick.

Sir Simon was now hard bested; for though he could swim and dive like an otter, he was encumbered with his sword and pistols. But he was short time left to himself, for a mermaid made up to him, or some sort of large seal which he took for one, and the creature taking Sir Simon for a male of the same species, became very teasing and familiar with him. Sir Simon tried to draw his sword, but he could not. He held in his breath, let himself sink, and tried it again with both hands, but it would not come, for the water made the sheath retain it. His enamoured friend was still by his side, sometimes above and sometimes below him. Sir Simon, feeling himself teased and harassed, at length said to his companion, "Faithits! Mrs. Mermaid, I have even just the length of one

question to ask at you, and it's faithits! even this, are you for the king or the parliament?" The seal shook her head. "Oh, d—n it, madam, it's even speak out. If you are for the king, you and I are the best of friends; but say so, else faithits! I take you prisoner at once in his majesty's name."

So saying, he seized the seal by the huge tail, directing her to make straight to his majesty's nearest port. The seal, rather apparently pleased and tickled by his embrace, cut the wave in a most beautiful manner with our knight in tow, the two leaving behind a curvated swell like the wake of a boat. However, Sir Simon, by and by holding tighter than the mermaid deemed necessary or convenient, she took a prodigious dive into the depths of the Firth. But there's a singular propensity in a drowning man to hold the gripe he has, even though it were leading to his own destruction, so Sir Simon held his, although

the bubbles on the surface were like a track of irregular globes of crystal. The seal, however, could keep her breath very little longer than our knight, so she arose again to the surface, when his honour, after puffing a while like a porpoise, found himself on the coast of an island, whither the creature had dragged him purposely perhaps for a night of dalliance with her accomplished paramour. Sir Simon made with all his might to the shore, whither his friend the mermaid still accompanied him, but whenever she saw him take the upright position, she fled and plunged into the sea with a great growl. “Faithits! even go thy ways for a vile Whig gentlewoman,” said Sir Simon, “for I am even glad it’s hoo—hoo, to see you turn your tail; although, I believe, you have saved my life. It’s of the hoy! Mistress! gude e’en.”

Sir Simon was now landed on the desolate isle of Inch-Colm, and it being the

evening of September the 15th, the night fell very dark on the instant after his landing, and he perceiving the splendid gray ruins between him and the sky; conjectured that he was come to some enchanted palace or castle. He soon got entangled, however, among nettles and briars, and could not find an entrance. He then raised his voice, shouting most strenuously, "It's even of the hoy! within there! where is your door? it's even speak up, and be d——d to you!"

These cries were heard well enough on the coast of Fife, but the lieges of Aberdour, instead of coming to our forlorn knight's assistance, were terrified, and hid their heads. For it so happened at that very time that the island had been totally deserted by its few inhabitants by reason of a ghost, which issued from the ruins every night, whose groans were so hideous and its motions so fantastic that no one could stand it. And, though the old

hereditary tacksman, in whose possession it had long remained, came over by day to cultivate his little garden and carry off the produce, he durst by no means tarry the setting of the sun. Sir Simon, quite unaware of all this, went prowling about the ruins, shouting with a voice like a trumpet, until at length out came this terrible visitant, as if answering to his call. It was a corpse dressed in a winding sheet, with a white napkin round its head, but the part of the face that was uncovered was a sort of a mouldy black, for Sir Simon now saw tolerably well by the light of a rising harvest-moon in her last quarter, so that it must have been near midnight. The figure was nearly eight feet in height, and always when it made its obeisances, it bowed backward with its head near to the ground, and uttered a sort of chattering groan. Sir Simon drew out his sword, the present of Montrose; as for his pistols, they

were quite useless, by reason of his swim at the tail of the mermaid. "Faithits! even friend, I would go the length of requesting you to give over your becks and your bows," said Sir Simon, "and show me it's even the length of the door into this enchanted castle."

"Whatever mortal enters the precincts of this monastery," said the figure, "never again sees the light. I am the ghost of prior Albertus, who was foully murdered here, and the habitation is mine for ever. Depart in peace, or remain at your peril."

"Hoo—hoo, heard ever any body the like of that!" cried Sir Simon; "well friend, if prior Albertus resembled his representative, he has been even a daft like carl. But I have just the length of one single civil question to ask you, which is even this,—Are you for the king or the parliament?"

"I am for the church invisible," said the ghost.

“What is even that?” said Sir Simon. “For it’s I cannot even see the length of any church being invisible that ever was made. That is I suppose that you are faithits! even the length of being for the covenant.”

“For the covenant indeed,” said the spirit. But though this was only the beginning of the sentence, Sir Simon gave it no time to finish it. “Then here’s for you, friend, be you ghost or it’s even the length of devil, if not for the king. In the name of the king and the great Montrose, whose sword I bear, kneel down and submit yourself my prisoner, or it’s I’ll even run that faithits! steeple form of your’s through the body.”

The ghost was rather nonplused. It uttered some awful threatening, but in an abrupt and hesitating manner, when Sir Simon broke in on it, crying “Faithits! even none of your hems and haws with

me, Sir Ghost, for I'll conquer or die in the cause of the king and Montrose."

So saying, he reached the immense tall apparition with the point of his sword, giving it a prod, as he called it, when he found it was flesh and blood, and resisted the stroke. The creature fled, and Sir Simon pursued over stiles, broken down walls, and by many turnings, till at length he pursued it down a long winding stair by hearing alone, and at length it entered a door, from which beamed a momentary light, and was then shut in his face. No man but Sir Simon would ever have thought, in such equivocal circumstances, to have forced an entrance, but an entrance he would not be denied. He laid on with the hilt of his sword, kicked with his feet, and bawled out lustily for admittance in the king's name, until the inmates finding that they could not get quit of this audacious guest, admitted him. There he

found five mysterious looking beings with long beards, and each having a drawn sword in his hand; but they were all of ordinary height, none of them being eight feet high. They inhabited a large gloomy apartment, in which was a good coal fire burning, and a strange unnatural smell pervaded the room, as if they had been roasting some human body in it. Sir Simon looked round him a little wildly, but nothing daunted him. He instantly charged them to yield themselves his prisoners in the king's name, but they all at once set upon him and disarmed him, and told him that though they were all for the king as well as he, yet he behoved to remain their prisoner for the present. They would explain nothing to him, on what account they had chosen that ghastly retreat, but hearing they were for the king, he took courage and acknowledged them as friends. They set victuals before him, of which he ate heartily, without

asking any questions, having tasted nothing since the morning of that eventful day. The men were extremely anxious to learn the details of the battle, but Sir Simon's account was so disjointed they could make little of it, only they perceived that a great and bloody victory had been gained, and that Argyle, as usual, had escaped by sea, and they seemed pleased with the events.

Nevertheless, as it approached midnight, they shut Sir Simon up in a dungeon, with a lamp and a little bed of dried sea-weed, and told him he must content himself with that lodging for the night, only laughing at his uncouth expostulation. Shortly after, he heard a violent altercation, and laying his ear to the bottom of the door, he heard every sentence distinctly; it was about himself. Every one of them gave his voice for his immediate death, save one, who said he knew the sword and pistols of the great

Montrose as well as he knew his own, and he would never consent to the putting down a beloved friend of the greatest man of the realm. "Why the man is altogether a fool," said another, "and not one word that he says can be relied on. Think of his stories of taking 1200 men prisoners with his own hand; his pursuit and seizure of Argyle; and last of all, his being brought to our retreat hanging at the tail of a mermaid. I maintain that there is not and cannot be a word of truth in one of those relations."

"Its faithits! even the length of the d—dest lie that you are telling, sir, that ever came the length of a tongue;" shouted Sir Simon from under the door. "And that I'll faithits! prove on your body, hand to hand, if you will return me my sword." But this only made them laugh and retire to a greater distance. He, however, shouted after them, and

braved them for their lives to touch a hair of his head.

A small crevice of Sir Simon's dungeon overlooked the sea, and from that he perceived a boat approach the monastery at midnight, and either the whole or a part of his mysterious hosts embarked in her, and sailed away; and there the knight was left in no very enviable circumstances. But terror was a stranger to his breast. So after cursing his captors most heartily for a parcel of heartless cowards, he crept down on his bed of sea-weed, and slept as sound as the labourer on his couch of peace. It was fair forenoon before he awoke, but what time of the day he knew not. He looked over sea and land, where all seemed busy and overcast with a hopeless gloom. The greater part of the men of Fife having been slain in the battle, boats were incessantly passing laden with the slain, but every one kept

aloof from the sacred fane of St. Columb, as from a place infected; the unearthly shouts heard thence the evening before having created a new alarm. Sir Simon looked at one time over the firth, and at another, laid his ear to the bottom of the door to listen, but no sound reached him; then he would shout from the same place "It's even of the hoy! you devils!" but no answer was returned. He then naturally grew quite desperate, and watching every boat that passed to and from the field of battle, he hailed them with prodigious energy of lungs, till at length one little barge drew up below the narrow port-hole, the owner being curious to know who or what the being was who was thus roaring from that deserted ruin. When the owner of the barge, whose name was Gavin, heard the strange jabbering address of the mysterious inmate, he was utterly confounded; and when he heard from his own mouth that he was

landed there by a mermaid, and introduced by a ghost, Gavin smiled to his assistants, and looked incredulous. Nevertheless, it was manifest that there was some sort of being there in desperate circumstances, and Gavin endeavoured to release him, but with all his efforts he could find no entrance to the place; he however handed him in some barley-meal bannock, and promised for a reward of a thousand marks to carry the word to Montrose that night.

Gavin was as good as his word. On reaching Borrowstouness, he learned that Montrose himself, with a party of gentlemen and two troops of horse, were at Falkirk, and thither he despatched his son on horseback, with the strange tidings that his friend Sir Simon Brodie was confined and left to starve in a dungeon on the lone isle of Inch-Colm, whither he had been taken by a mermaid, and imprisoned by a ghost. The marquess was disposed to laugh and disregard

the information, but luckily for Sir Simon he had a friend present whose heart was interested in his safety.

In the mean time, Sir Simon having despatched his barley bannock, and looked out upon the firth until it grew dark, cursed his ghostly captors once more, and betook him to his sea-weed couch, where he slept as sound as if nothing extraordinary had befallen him, until some time after midnight that he was awakened by the entrance of his five long bearded hosts, with lights and a rope. After arousing him, and bringing him fairly to his senses, one of them addressed him thus:—

“Stranger, your equivocal arrival here and appearance altogether, convince us that you are a spy sent here by those who thirst for our blood, and after deliberate counsel taken, we find that your instant execution is absolutely necessary for our own preservation. But because one of our brethren pleads for your life,

and moreover, because we would not at this critical period wantonly offend the champion of Scotland, if you will take a solemn oath never to divulge what you have here witnessed, you shall have your life and liberty. Otherwise, this hour is your last." And so saying, he pointed to the rope and one of the large iron hooks fixed in the vault.

"Ha—ha—ha, ho—ho—ho!" brayed Sir Simon. "Faithits! gentlemen, I'll even be the d——d before I take any such oath; for the very first man that I meet I'll tell him it's even the length of what a confounded set of its thieves and robbers and scoundrels, it's of the devil's servants, live here; and I'll come myself, and faithits! see you hanged every soul of you."

"Think of the alternative, foolish man," said the spokesman, "you are an intruder here on desperate men, and your doom is decreed."

"Faithits! sir, you had better it's even

take less upon you," said Sir Simon, "for if that I hear much more of your jabber, I'll it's even be the d——d if I don't hang you up every man of you."

"You refuse to take the oath then?"

"Ye—ye—yes, of the—indeed I do, sir."

"Then you will excuse us in the first place for binding your hands."

"Ye—ye—yes, it's sir, and that I will when once you have bound them," said Sir Simon disdainfully; his eyes and his countenance glowing with stern defiance, and as the men closed with him he struck right and left, and in one moment he had three of them lying flat on the floor! The other two fled, but he pursued them into the hall, where seizing a sword he soon despatched them. He then returned into the dungeon, and deliberately hanged up all the five delinquents by the neck, none of them being able from his former blows to offer any special resistance. "Now it's even, take you that my masters," said

he, laughing at them as they hung spurning all in a row; "Faithits! I'll even learn you to meddle with a true loyal knight, who stands for his king! If you had not been it's even the length of the d——d rebels and knaves, you would not have put out hands to murder me. But it's even, yes it's with your leave, we'll change apartments to night." Then taking all the keys from their pockets, he bade them good e'en, and locked them up in their dungeon.

Sir Simon now commenced an extended search for viands, of which he stood in great need, and the first thing he came upon being a cask of wine with a spigot in it, out of that he drunk a health to the king, another to the great Montrose, and forthwith to every renowned leader of the royal party, till he got into prodigious humour, laughing immoderately, sometimes apostrophising himself and sometimes his audacious hosts who meant to

have entertained him in a very different way.

A little after midnight, as he supposed, the most singular adventure of all befel our knight. He was sitting at a good coal fire, carousing away and enjoying himself exceedingly, when he weened he heard his name called from the dungeon in which the five corpses were hanging firmly locked up. This was considerably above Sir Simon's calculation, but he was one of those sensible men who never distrusted the evidence of his senses. He was sure he heard a voice call him from the dungeon, and that circumstance, at such a time of night and from such a place, where five human victims still hung warm from the ceiling, would have appalled any other human heart. I am sure it would have put me out of my judgment. Sir Simon Brodie only laughed at it, and said jocosely to himself, "Ay, faithits! cry you away there as long as you made me cry

in vain; for it's I'll even be d—d if I open the door to you this night." And then he sung his favourite song of "Old Sir Simon the king." At the close of one of the stanzas his ears were saluted by the ominous call the second time, repeated in a louder key, on which he returned answer in his trumpet tone, "It's even of the hoy! you devils! what is awanting now?"

All was again silent for a considerable time, till at length he heard the corpses distinctly muttering and talking to one another. He never tried to comprehend or calculate how the thing could be, he was certain he heard them conversing, and of course took it for granted that they were doing so; but he was mightily tickled with the oddity of the dead men conversing together, particularly as they were all hanging by the necks in the most disadvantageous plight imaginable for carrying on a social dialogue. His curiosity was

awakened, he drew near to the dungeon door as formerly and listened, and while prostrate in this position, he was addressed a third time from within in apparently the same voice, which said "Sir Simon Brodie! Are you still a living man?"

"Faithits! yes, indeed, and that I am, Sir," returned the knight, "which is even more than you can say."

"Then, pray let us into you," said the voice.

"I'll see you, faithits! the length of the devil first before you get in here to-night," said Sir Simon, "hang you still in peace and quietness there, as I would rather dispense with your company if it's even of the same to you. What is gone wrong with you that you are come to life again?"

"You do not know us, Sir Simon," said the voice again. "We are your friends."

"It's the length of as d—d a lie as ever was spoken!" said the knight, "else faith-

its! you shewed the purest symptoms of kindness of any friends I ever met with."

"It is I, Sir William Rollock, who speaks to you," said the voice. "And these with me are all loyal soldiers and your sincere friends."

"It's of the lord. What have I done then!" exclaimed Sir Simon, running for the key of the dungeon. "That comes of your tricks upon friends. Confound your disguises and long beards?" So saying, he seized a torch and rushed into the dungeon, running first up to one corpse and then another to find out which was his venerated friend. They were all hanging with black faces and their jaws hanging down so low it was impossible one of them could have spoken. This was the most puzzling part for Sir Simon of the whole. He was bewildered; and running through and through among the corpses as if dancing a reel, swearing at them to speak out, he

was at once arrested by a voice behind him which slowly and awfully syllabled his name. Sir Simon whirled about and whirled about. No—there was no living creature there. The voice called him again, and then he for the first time discovered that it came from the narrow slip-hole that overlooked the tide. The whole truth then flashed upon his opaque intellect at once. He recollected his bargaining with Gavin the bargeman, recognised his friends, and was quite overjoyed. “What a horrible scene is presented to us here, Sir Simon!” said Sir William. “Among all the perils that surrounded us in these terrible times, I have witnessed nothing so summary as this; who or what are they?”

“Only a parcel of rebels and knaves,” returned he, “on whom I have executed justice and taken possession of their castle, to which you are heartily welcome.” Now, though it was next to impossible to find the entrance from without

it was easy to do so from within, there being but one massive door that led from this mysterious hall of which Sir Simon had the key, so with a touch he conducted his friends through the intricate labyrinths of the ruins into his hall and store of rich viands, for they soon found plenty to eat as well as drink; and then they spent their time most jovially until forenoon, diverted beyond measure at the extraordinary adventures of Sir Simon. Three of the dead bodies were recognised by the cavaliers as those of three murderers who had rendered themselves obnoxious to both parties. One of them was a Mr. John Stewart who had basely murdered a nobleman whose title I have forgot, and the other two were brothers of the name of Douglas, who had basely murdered a wounded young royalist of high birth, one of the Clan-Gordon, and it is likely the other two in their company would not be much better. The cavaliers left them in a mass in the corner of the

dungeon, locked the door and brought away the key, and there their bones were discovered so late as 1793, which seems to lend some authority to this romantic tale.

The party then joined Montrose on his route to Glasgow. Sir Simon escaped at the battle of Philliphaugh and saved his life by skulking about Glen-Garl, but from that unfortunate day he never met Montrose again. He was exempted from Cromwell's act of grace, and wore out an old age of honest poverty among his friends in Aberdeenshire, his lands being confiscated to the State. Sir John Scott of Davington was likewise ruined by the same luckless expedition.

In the original copy of this tale, I related the love adventures of Rollock and Sibbald with the two lovely enthusiasts whom they met at Castle-Garl. But the issue was so painful I have thought fit to obliterate that part of the narrative. It is impossible to find

a story of that period which turns out happily, for always as the one party or the other prevailed, the leading men of both were cut off.

All men were astonished when Colonel Sibbald deserted Montrose:—they blamed Argyle and the Earl of Loudon for having bribed him. Alas! they knew little of that brave officer's heart! The highest command and the highest titles the Whigs could have bestowed would not have moved him to have deserted his general, who trusted him as his own right hand. Yet, desert him he did, and for nothing more than the love of a maid—that enthusiastic reformer, Mary Bewly. It was a special messenger, who was sent to him at Strath-Bogie, with letters from his mother, sisters, and Miss Bewly, that drew him off from his regiment in the royal army at that time, and brought him home, where he was privately married.

The same messenger brought letters also

from Lady Susan Maylove to Sir William Rollock, but how different was their import? These last were filled with devotion to the cause of royalty, and tended to spirit her hero up in the cause he had espoused, while Sibbald's letters were filled with reproaches for his desertion of the cause of the reformed religion, in which he was brought up. Mary's letters (part of which I have seen) were filled with most vehement expressions on the side of the covenanting party. She conjured her lover to renounce the cause of popery and tyranny, which went always hand in hand, without which she vowed to renounce him. The following letter from the colonel to Mary seems worthy of being preserved.

“ Airlee, October 27th, 1645.

“ DEAREST MARY,

“ For your love, I have done a deed which I fear I will repent as long as I live. I have no doubt that your re-

ligious tenets are right, and I love them for your sake; but it was never tenets that I troubled my head much about. You have caused me to forsake a man whom I loved and revered; the most noble, the most generous, and the most valiant of men. The most consummate hero in my estimation. Ah, Mary! if you but knew him half as well as I know him, you never would have insisted on our parting until death parted us, and but for you we never had. Well, dearest Mary, for your sake, I *have* done it, and for that reason you owe me a portion of love ten times doubled; for indeed I am not happy. I would have liked to have lived and died with my brave general, and but for you I had done it. But you have seduced me, not I you, and now I am despised by both parties. Remain with Mrs. Ferguson until I return. Love to Jane. Your unhappy

“WM. SIBBALD.”

From this period, in spite of all my researches, I lose sight of Colonel Sibbald, but it is manifest that he had again joined his noble commander, as he was taken and brought to the scaffold along with him. He was by both friends and foes accounted a hero of the first rank. Mary Bewly did not survive his death many days, but broke her heart and died with a baby at her breast in the house of Mrs. Ferguson of Linglee.

These were dreadful days for Scotland, nothing seeming to delight so much as the rending up of every feeling of humanity. After the capture of Sir William Rollock, in a place where he had bogged his horse at Finnies on Yarrow, at the rout of Philliphaugh, Lady Susan followed him to prison, but was denied admittance with every species of rudeness. All that she could therefore do was to write a long letter to him, commending him for his steady loyalty, encouraging him to

suffer like a man and a hero, and taking an affectionate farewell of him. She was subsequently married into a noble family in England, and survived her first gallant lover half a century. These traditions according in every respect with the histories of the period, I have merely retained the mention of them, and left out the affecting detail.

END OF VOL. II.