

*Life-size Regal. 16 1/2*

# TALES OF THE MOORS

OR,

RAINY DAYS IN ROSS-SHIRE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

SELWYN IN SEARCH OF A DAUGHTER.

"Does it always rain in this confounded climate of yours?"

"Na sir,—it snaws whiles!"

*English Tourist.*

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH: AND  
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXVIII.

TO

**SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,**

THESE PAGES ARE RESPECTFULLY

AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

**THE AUTHOR.**



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## INTRODUCTION.

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DURING the course of the present summer, a mutual passion for sport, intimate, through casual acquaintance, and a relish for each other's society, combined to induce four gentlemen, of congenial minds, though very various ages, pursuits, and professions, to join in renting an extensive shooting-quarter, in one of the remotest and least accessible parts of Ross-shire.

Two of the party were English. The one, a country gentleman of large fortune, whom connexion on the mother's side with Scotland, had brought, with his wife and family, the previous winter, to Edinburgh, where his mingled urbanity and frankness had rendered him an



universal favourite. The other, a young man of interesting manners, and somewhat delicate health, whom a severe wound had early disabled from pursuing his military career, but who indemnified himself by a passion for travelling and the fine arts, for the disappointment of more ambitious views.

The third member of the *partie quarrée* was a Colonel in the army, of Irish extraction, and Irish warmth of heart, though educated in England, and grown prematurely grey amid all the vicissitudes of a most eventful warfare. He had been quartered in Scotland for some months, and, like the other two strangers, indebted for much enjoyment there, to the good offices of the only Scotsman of the group, a young advocate of very rising fame and promising talents, nearly connected with one of the oldest families in the West country, at whose suggestions the present shooting-party had been originally projected, and to whose energetic disposition its details had been chiefly intrusted.

The sportsmen arrived at their destination, from opposite points of the compass, before the eventful 12th of August, and for the few first days found ample excitement in the primary object of their long and arduous journey, some of them having come in quest of grouse and happiness from the farthest extremity of the Island.

But men and dogs are alike subject to fatigue. By the end of the first week, both were completely exhausted, and the weather, as we all know, set in inexorably rainy. The servants and agents, whose various cares had been exerted to provide for the bodily comforts of their masters, had totally overlooked any food for the mind ; and the weekly newspaper, (itself a week old,) of the nearest post-town, and two last year's Sporting Magazines, were but scanty provision for four highly intellectual human beings, of cultivated minds and energetic character.

The party were assembled at breakfast one loomy morning, when the night-caps, which



all the surrounding hills pertinaciously retained, indicated the certainty of an impending deluge. The meal had reached the utmost length to which *ennui* and idleness could protract it. The dogs had been fed profusely with grouse-pie and mutton-ham ; their bruised and tender feet examined and prescribed for ; their pedigrees traced, and their individual qualities enlarged on *con amore*. Guns had been handled and criticised ; and the relative merits of flints and percussion set at rest by a provoking unanimity of sentiment ; while the shepherd's well-thumbed Aberdeen Almanack, and a cracked barometer of the laird's, carefully compared and collated, gave an equally ominous concurrence of rainy symptoms as the result. One of the party, more desperate than the rest, had even ventured on the forlorn hope of exploring, from a rising ground in front of the door, the aspect of the skies and mountains, and his lengthened visage and dripping habiliments made even the hardy gillies in waiting allow it to be a " saft morn-

ing," and the party within poke the not very well dried peat-fire, till they succeeded in making it burn worse than before.

"This puts me in mind," said the good-humoured Colonel, "of the times when I, and my two Subs, and an old crazy Doctor, were shut up together in Heligoland, with your Scottish alternative of rain and *snaw*, for a climate, letter-smuggling for a duty, and counting our fingers for a pastime. It drove us to an expedient, however, which killed time wonderfully. I move that we revive it, and write our adventures."

"Adventures !" echoed the young lawyer, to whom writing, perhaps, suggested no very pleasurable ideas—"that may be very well for you, Colonel Sullivan, who have been campaigning all your life ; and you, Mr Vernon, who were once a diplomatist ; and even for you, too, Frederick, who, though but a *stickit* soldier, have served in Spain, and travelled in Italy. But, pray, where the deuce am I to find adventures,



who can prate of no "*whereabout*" save the Parliament-House, and whose *Ultima Thule* has been this d—d caravanseraï in Ross-shire? I never write but for a handsome fee; and, I am sure, my adventures would make a dear halfpenny ballad. I move the previous question, which, I think, in this case, means a good nap, like those sensible creatures Ponto and Juno, and the rest of the miscalled brute creation."

"Flat rebellion!" cried the Colonel, "against me, as commandant of the Ross-shire sharpshooters, and high treason against your own powers of fancy and imagination. If you have no adventures of your own to narrate, there is romance enough in your uncle's, that fine Oriental-looking old man I dined with at your father's in Glasgow, t'other day, to satisfy a German. Your mother just hinted at the circumstances sufficiently to raise my curiosity: you must know them fully, and, on pain of being sent to Coventry, which, I assure you, is no joke any-

where, and especially in Ross-shire, you shall sit down and write, no matter how carelessly, the history of your uncle's return, *incog.* to Scotland. It will be another sort of work than a law-paper; and, under the inspiration of this grouse-pie and flask of Rhenish, which shall be your fellow-prisoners, I dare say, by dinner-time, you will have produced a very *spirited* evening's entertainment. I'll rub up my memory in the meantime, for an anecdote of my own life, and in spite of your fling at my campaigns, Master Hamilton, it shall *not* be military. Vernon here shall give us a touch of his embassy; and I am sure it will be nuts to Fred. Harrington to be allowed to scribble a little about Rome. Be merciful though, Fred. on the subject of pictures,—and remember we are none of us connoisseurs."

The Colonel's motion was carried by acclamation; and the lawyer handed over to solitary confinement in one of the odd turrets, or *roundles*, as they used to be called in Scotland, growing



out like excrescences from the long, narrow, cross-lighted dining-room, one window of which sidled for comfort close to the old-fashioned projecting fire-place, and balked indiscreet curiosity by looking directly out on a huge flanker of dead wall; while, at the opposite corner of the room, the other, like the retreating partner in a minuet or strathspey, bashfully sought the door, probably for the advantage of the delightful prospect afforded by a black peat moss, immediately fronting the mansion.

At one side of the room, but by no means in the centre, a concealed door,—whose site was, however, somewhat ominously indicated by the decapitation in its construction of a red-headed Celtic ancestor of the family,—led into a dark vaulted chamber, to which the awful name of the dead-room had been affixed, by its immemorial reception of the body of the chieftain, between his demise and interment. Spiral staircases, and passages leading to nothing, sprung up at every corner, and the five stairs of the

house of Glen-Brechan, were not, in the eyes of the clan, the least of its marvels.

The Advocate's contumacy had been at first threatened with the dead-room; but the fear of his committing suicide had commuted his banishment to the turret, where—its loop-hole window being too narrow for a *lawyer's leap*,—no such consummation could be apprehended.

The rest gradually settled to their prescribed occupation. The young traveller made notes from his journal into blank leaves of his sketch-book, filling up the pauses in his compilation with studies of trees, and Highlanders in full costume.

Mr Vernon, with true English luxury, rung the bell for a certain knowing sort of a portfolio, which smelt of diplomacy, and looked altogether too dignified for a common letter-case. He pulled out two or three, however, whose diminutive crossed lines, or bold half-text, disclosed their domestic origin, and seemed ever and anon, as a relief from the uphill work im-



sed upon him by his comrades, to indulge in voluntary chit-chat with his wife and children.

The Colonel, meanwhile, with one foot on each side the grate, in true camp style, thought of his with the feelings of one who seldom before had left them but on compulsion. With the dear idea of his wife, came others thick and fast, connected with their first meeting, and, long before he could bring himself to put pen to paper, he had mentally indited his contribution to the general budget.

It was opened on successive rainy days, with all the zest which *ennui* and idleness could impart to hasty narratives, indebted, of course, to these for much of the good-will which marked their reception, and destined, very appropriately in the opinion of the writers, to pack up and envelope the game, which, with the return of sunshine, consigned them to oblivion.

Having, however, been rescued from this fate, and *bagged* among his master's other effects, by a literary valet of Mr Vernon's, the rage for

autobiography, which at present prevails, suggested the idea of their publication, the natural scruples of the Editor being overruled by the consideration, that since even Almack's was a sealed book to all who live ten miles beyond Hyde Park Corner, the public at large may be very safely intrusted with the Ayrshire anecdotes, German gossip, and Roman reminiscences, hastily thrown together by a few private individuals, for the amusement of Rainy Days in Ross-shire.

# TALES OF THE MOORS.

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TALE I.

*The Return.*



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# TALES OF THE MOORS.

## TALE I.

### The Return.

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IT was on a fine spring afternoon, in the early part of the nineteenth century, that an elderly gentleman, recently returned from a residence of thirty years in India, found himself once more on the road leading to the Northern University, where he had received his education. His national pride had derived exquisite gratification during the few days he had already passed in Scotland, from the great and universal improvements which the face of the country exhibited; but with none of these had he been so forcibly struck, as with that which now presented itself, in traversing the smiling district, lying between the metropolis of one of the most fertile and

best cultivated counties in Scotland, and the venerable seat of learning to which he was hastening.

He looked in vain for the tracts of furze and broom which had formed the boundary of his more distant bird-nesting rambles on a sunshine holiday; far as the eye could reach, a system of judicious and successful cultivation had banished them from the soil, while to their blossoms, once "unprofitably gay," the deep and lively green of innumerable wheat fields had succeeded. The wretched hovels, varying only in size, but equally destitute of neatness and comfort, once thinly scattered over the waste, had yielded to substantial farm-houses, indicating the highest state of agricultural prosperity. Well-stocked barn-yards surrounded each of these cheerful dwellings, and numerous ploughs, held by a steady and active race, and drawn by handsome horses, pursued their jocund labours in every field.

These were delightful changes; delightful in a peculiar manner to one, who, in the most comprehensive sense in which the word was ever used, was a philanthropist, who loved his



brother literally as himself, and by whom every addition to the sum of human happiness was viewed in the light of an individual benefit.

Yet it was a natural feeling which taught the eye of Buchanan to wander at last from the triumphs of human industry, in quest of those bolder features of Nature, which defy the power of innovation, and mock alike at improvement or decay. When that eye first caught the graceful windings of the magnificent bay on which the city of St Rule's is situated, he saw with all the joys of the fondest reminiscence the proud waves "sport their majestic forms as heretofore," over the long line of shining sands, on which his infant limbs first learned to buffet with their fury; and where, at a more advanced and thoughtful period, he had wandered, musing on his future prospects. Before him rose the Grampians, in snow-clad majesty, towering above the opposite shores of the bay, as he had seen them a thousand and a thousand times. In their wild outline he seemed to recognise the features of a friend.

Harmonizing with these well-known objects, lay before him a venerable monument of priest-

ly munificence, the ancient bridge across the placid Eden ; nor was he sorry that it stood inconvenient, but picturesque, as formerly, to tell the tale of the olden time.

When at length he approached the city, truth obliges us to confess, he saw with pleasure that the plough had forborne to mock with useless toil the sandy downs, or links, to which, from time immemorial, young, old, and middle-aged, had resorted for the national game of Golf. . It was the hour of recreation when he passed, and the grave professor and noisy schoolboy mingled alike in the healthful pastime. The scarlet gowns of the students, as, in busy groups, each armed with a variety of curiously-shaped weapons, they pursued the devious track of their respective balls, transported Buchanan back so effectually to the period of his long-forgotten boyhood, that he was only roused from his reverie by the sudden jolt which his vehicle experienced on entering beneath the ancient gateway of the city, and passing from a reasonably smooth road to a pavement, or rather causeway, proverbially so constructed as

to afford the greatest possible quantum of exercise to all who should travel over it.

On the aspect of the venerable city itself, Time had probably made less change than on any other within the island. As he drove along the spacious airy street, so sublimely terminated by the ruins of the Cathedral, its slender spires rose before him, their dilapidation not perceptibly increased by the paltry revolution of nearly half a century; while their far older neighbour, the tower of St Regulus, set off, by its unpicturesque rectangularity, their graceful Gothic forms, while it seemed, in stern and savage simplicity, to stand like the sullen shade of Knox, and exult over their ephemeral magnificence.

Buchanan remarked with pleasure, that many of those exterior staircases of wood, or rude masonry, which deformed our older Scottish towns, had disappeared, and that the inferior dwellings had on the whole assumed an air of greater neatness and comfort, while ranges of smart shops displayed their gay wares on either side the way. However, on approaching the precincts of the ancient Abbey, still from eccle-



siastical associations the court-end of the town, he was glad to recognize most of the hospitable mansions he had frequented in his youth, still presenting their former irregularity of *façade*, and only distinguished by being—as the Irishman has it—*white-washed*, of every possible hue, from the palest cream to the brightest yellow, according to the taste of their respective occupants. One or two, on which the brilliancy of the ochre which stained their walls, was agreeably relieved by grey-painted lintels and door-posts, brought forcibly to his remembrance the description of Hudibras's beard,—

“ The upper part whereof was grey,  
The nether, orange mixed with whey——”

Coming, as Buchanan recently did, from the crowded mart of London, and the comparatively populous metropolis of Scotland, he was certainly struck, as strangers universally are, with the desolate appearance of the streets of a quiet University town, destitute of commerce and manufactures, and so situated on the angle formed by its bay, as to partake in none of the benefits or disadvantages of a thoroughfare. But to a man, who in the evening of abusy and

eventful life sought tranquillity, without wishing to resign altogether the pleasures of society, there was nothing alarming in this apparent stillness, which accorded infinitely better with the antique character of the buildings, than a more bustling population would have done.

So thought Buchanan, as the chaise stopped at the inn, fifty years before allowed to be one of the worst in Scotland, and which certainly had not then forfeited its title to that "bad eminence," by any increase of comfort or cleanliness. The smoky and dingy parlour into which he was ushered, inspired him with a faint recollection of having seen it before, and he amused himself in scrutinizing the faces of the few passengers, in the vain hope of recognising one that might be familiar to him, until the arrival of his beef-steak, which took place in as little time as could reasonably be allotted for its dismemberment from the carcase of a newly-slaughtered animal at the other end of the town, and the more than sufficient culinary preparation it had evidently undergone. This delicate morsel did not derive any additional

zest from the cinder sauce with which it was liberally bestrewed ; nor was the flavour of the bottle of tolerable port which succeeded, at all heightened by the application (which Buchanan could not avoid seeing in an opposite mirror) of the slip-shod waiter's dirty jacket to his dusty glass. But in his present frame of mind, these minor incidents passed almost as unheeded as the noisy merriment of a band of heroes of the golf, who, in an adjoining room, were celebrating their monthly orgies ; each with stentorian lungs recounting the exploits of the day, and challenging, with increasing boldness and vociferation, all his equally sanguine competitors.

The chief object of Buchanan in hastening to St Rule's, had been to embrace, if still alive, the venerable Professor under whose roof his youthful years had happily glided, and to acquire from him particulars relative to the surviving members of his own family, to whom peculiar circumstances prevented his directly addressing himself. In answer to his inquiries respecting the good Doctor, he found, to his inexpressible regret, that he had died, full of years, but in possession of all his faculties, only



a few months before ; but learning that his maiden sister, the careful and benevolent superintendent of his household, yet survived, he could not resist introducing to the warm-hearted and almost maternal friend of his youth, one whose boyish pranks might perhaps form his chief hold on her recollection.

Having sent a previous message, under his assumed name, requesting permission to wait on the old lady, (still, as he was informed, in the full vigour of her intellect at the advanced age of eighty,) he prepared to follow the almost superfluous guidance of the damsel who came to escort him to the well-remembered scene of his youthful joys and sorrows. The low-browed entry leading to the good lady's dwelling, as he mechanically bowed on passing beneath it, forcibly recalled the sundry intimations of increasing stature bestowed upon him, when he last frequented it in the erect pride of fast approaching manhood ; and amid the Cimmerian darkness of the winding staircase, he felt as much at home as when his elastic footsteps last bounded over the threshold.

His heart beat almost audibly, as the maid

threw open the door of a small wainscoted parlour, and he found himself in the presence of a being, who, in the absence of maternal tenderness, had been to him a mother. Consideration for her advanced age, and various prudential reasons, induced him to open the conference as a stranger; but his assumed composure sustained grievous attacks from the associations with which the small apartment teemed. Amid the revolution of empires, and the rapid strides towards improvement, he had everywhere observed, here all remained unaltered, save that the size alone of this dining-room, once so spacious in his eyes, seemed to have unaccountably diminished. There were the dark and gloomy wainscoted walls, the high-backed ponderous chairs, the shining well-rubbed tables, the pride of Miss Nelly's heart,—in the polished edge of which, the conscious eye of Buchanan sought and found an incision, made in the wantonness of power, with the first knife of which he had been lawful possessor;—an outrage which only drew from the indulgent matron the well-known proverb about “fules and chapping sticks.”—Upon the rug, whose cross-stitch had employed

for many years the patient fingers of Miss Nelly, reclined the lineal representative of a race of cats, whom she had taught even boys to treat with deference ; and last, not least, in the solitary arm-chair, sacred, in earlier days, to the afternoon slumbers of her brother, sat the upright and wonderfully well preserved figure of the old lady herself.

She rose, with apparent difficulty, on Buchanan's entrance ; and with far greater difficulty, as he hastened to prevent her, did he refrain from throwing himself at once into her arms. For Buchanan, where feeling was concerned, was, in many respects, as much a boy as when he quitted the scene of his education. He had had little intercourse with the world to blunt his sensibilities, and to etiquette he was as much a stranger as the wild tribes among whom his life had been passed.

Summoning to his aid all the composure he could muster, he briefly apologized for intruding on the good lady, to make inquiries respecting old acquaintance at St Rule's ; which, without acknowledging it as the place of his education, he mentioned having frequently visited in his



youth. The simple words—"Ye wad ken my puir brither?—I miss him sair"—drew from Buchanan a tribute of respect to the Doctor's memory; during which, his eye twinkled, and his lips faltered, to a degree which might have startled eyes and ears more acute than the good lady's. "The Doctor," continued he, "was justly beloved by all who knew him, and by none so much as his former pupils, with one of whom I was very intimate in India. Do you recollect William Hamilton?"

"Do I mind lang Willie Hamilton?" ejaculated the old lady, in the fondest tone of reminiscence: "I maun forget mysell when I cease to mind the laddie that lo'ed me better than his ain mither; though, to be sure, that was na saying muckle, for she was but a step-mither. But he was aye a dear weel-doin' laddie;—he risked his life to pu' my puir brither out o' the deepest part o' the Witch Lake, and wared his first siller in India to buy me this braw shawl;—may my right hand forget its cunning, if I forget Willie Hamilton!—But," suddenly lowering her voice, and wiping her eyes, "he maun be dead, puir fallow, for it's mony a year since ony

ane could tell me a word about him. There's few that care," added she, sighing, "but frem'd folk like me, for he was aye o'er gude for his ain kith and kin."

"You mentioned his family," said Buchanan, after a pause; "do you know what surviving relations he has?"

"Troth I couldna say exactly—The braw madam that his father married, spent a' the siller she brought, and a hantle mair; and she died no lang after Sir John. The young laird, he was aye saft and gude-natured, and I've heard tell he was maist ruined wi' a feckless Glasgow wife, and o'er muckle company."

"And Marion?" eagerly inquired Buchanan, "what became of her?"

"Did ye ken Menie Hamilton? Sweet bonny lamb! She was sair misguided amang them after her brother gaed to India. Her step-mither wad hae her to marry some auld deboshed lord, and Menie couldna consent, and they led her sic a life, that they drave her in desperation to marry her half-brother's dominie; but a gude lad he was, as I've heard tell, and as weel born as hersell, though he hadna a bawbee; but he

had friends in England, where he was brought up, and he got some bit kirk in their way, and what's come o' them I never could hear.— But," continued the old lady, suddenly interrupting herself amid these long-forgotten reminiscences, "you said ye were a friend o' puir Willie's. Maybe ye can tell me whan or whar he died? To think that I dinna even ken whar the creature lies that I looded as my ain son!"

"He was alive and well but lately," said Buchanan, quivering with suppressed emotion, yet fearful of the effect of a discovery on a frame so delicate, and a mind so unprepared.

"God be praised!" ejaculated his old friend; "I'm blythe to hear he's in the land o' the living. But will he hae forgotten us a', think ye? Will he be grown rich, and proud, and cauld-hearted, that he never speirs after the folk he likit sae weel when he was a daft callant? Some o' us are awa to the kirkyard, and the rest grown auld, and frail, and doited; but if Willie wasna sair changed——"

"And sair changed he must be, when you can speak to him as a stranger," exclaimed Buchanan, moved beyond the power of dissem-



bling by this pathetic appeal. He bent before her, and clasped her withered hand in his—"Do you know this?" said he, guiding her aged finger to a scar, inflicted by a sunken rock while wrestling with the billows for her darling brother's life, which his still smooth brow retained. "As well might you forget yon day of jeopardy and joy, as I the blessing you then prayed for on my head. It has been elsewhere remembered, mother of my youth, and granted, though but in part. I have been in peril, and delivered—in poverty, and am now rich; but, oh, you prayed that I might never want friends, and, alas! I am come home like a ghost from the grave, and know not that I have a friend in the world."

There was some danger of his having assisted to realize this melancholy picture; for the thin figure of his aged friend became rigid in his embrace, and the flush of emotion gave place to a deathlike paleness. She, however, retained such a firm grasp of his hand, that he could scarce extricate himself to fly for water, which was fortunately in the room; and when, after hastily swallowing a little, speech and colour

slowly returned, it was evident that consciousness had never fled, from the connected answer she returned to his sad forebodings.

“Dinna say sae, my ain dear Willie,” said she, gazing on him with unspeakable tenderness, and trying to identify the embrowned and elderly stranger with the handsome stripling of her fond remembrance—“dinna say sae, and me sitting here. If I, that was an auld useless body when ye were a light-hearted bafflins callant, am spared to bid ye welcome hame again, why should ye no hae them o’ your ain time o’ life to take ye kindly by the hand?”

“Have you forgotten, then, my earliest and best friend,” said Buchanan, “how few, few indeed, I left to care for me, and how likely it is that these sleep in their graves? You can tell me nothing of them, and I dread to ask those who can. You can at least, however,” continued he, anxious, from the good lady’s increasing tremor, to turn the conversation into less agitating channels, “give me some account of those so kind to me in former times at St Rule’s.”

“And what can I tell you o’ them that would

do your kind heart gude, Willie?" said the old lady, sighing mournfully. "My brother, yoken, is gane to his rest, and sae are maist o' the auld grey pillars o' the College, whose blessing gaed wi' you. The comrades that played at the gouf wi' ye, are a' fleein' hither and yont, like gouf ba's themsells; some few may be fawn in the bonnie lown sunny spots o' this warld's wilderness, but mair, nae doubt, sunk amang its troubles, or entangled wi' its briers. And the very bits o' lassies!—Phemie Leslie, that ye danced shantreuse wi', and that nae mortal could look at without blessing the blythe blink o' her ee, is a broken-hearted widow, and a mourner for stately sons, aulder far than yewere, when ye gaed to the wars, and said ye wad come back and marry her! But wae's me," added she, wiping her eyes, "I've little need to tell you a' this, when I should be doing my best to gie ye a cheery hame-coming! Dinna be cast down wi' the dowie cracks o' an auld body that's lived ower lang for her ain gude. There's some in St Rule's yet that will mind and welcome ye bravely, and there's sons and daughters o' them ye were wont to love and honour tread-



ing in their fathers' footsteps, and inheriting their kind hearts. Ye'll be nae stranger here the morn, Willie, when they hear wha's been wi' me."

"But that, my dear old friend, is just what at present they must not hear. Anxiety about those nearest and dearest to me carries me hence early to-morrow, and till I have personally ascertained the state of my own family, my return to Europe, I may say to this world, must remain a secret. You will not refuse to keep it for your wandering Willie, till he comes back, and I trust right shortly, to unlock your lips and the hearts of all his well-wishers at St Rule's."

"Ye were aye wont to mak' me do your bidding, Willie!" sighed the old lady, in evident disappointment, "and I see ye haena forgotten the gate o't. I'll tell naebody till ye gie me liberty; but oh! dinna be lang o' coming back, for I wouldna like to carry your secret wi' me to the kirkyard, and troth I whiles weary to be awa to my brother."

Her tremulous shake of the head became so perceptibly increased, and her venerable cheek so evidently flushed by the continuance of this

agitating interview, that Buchanan felt the necessity of putting an abrupt period to his visit. Pressing her trembling hand a thousand times, with mingled emotions of gratitude, affection, and reverence, he tore himself from the well-known apartment, and, recommending to the damsel whom he met at the door, especial attention on this eventful evening to her aged mistress, found his way unassisted into the street.

Buchanan's feelings were too highly wrought to permit his returning at once to the commonplace discomforts of his inn. To rest, under a cloud of reminiscences which would have murdered the sleep of a more successful votary of Morpheus, was out of the question; so, guided by a resplendent moon, he instinctively turned towards the cemetery, lying under the shadow of the majestic ruins, where he knew must repose the ashes of the friends of his boyhood.

The ruins of the Cathedral, now shielded by praiseworthy, though somewhat annoying *surveillance* from daily dilapidation, were then open alike to the school-boy who sought renown on their dizzy pinnacles, and to the mourner, who

courted privacy amidst their mouldering tombs. Buchanan had but to lift a latch, and stoop beneath a low-browed door-way—which admitted more frequently the dead than the living, and whose massy lintel, a relic of the tempest-tost invincible Armada, made it but the more appropriate entrance to a cemetery—to find himself once more on the scene of many a boyish exploit, and a little further on in the now silent society of most of the instructors of his youth.

He was at no loss to discover the plain slab which modestly recounted the unobtrusive virtues of Dr X——, for he remembered the niche in the long aisle where slumbered the remains of that early buried partner, with whom he was probably now reunited on earth as in heaven; and while the moonbeams fell strongly and brightly on the still pure marble of their mutual grave, Memory threw her no less powerful light on the tenor of their equally spotless life.

Other revered names called forth their heartfelt tribute. There reposed together, in placid stillness, the deep-read theologian; the mild and persuasive pastor; the kind, though awful pedagogue; the warm-hearted, hospitable matron;



ay, and the well-remembered object of many a boyish prank, the whist-playing ancient maiden, whose groaning Christmas tea-table seldom, however, failed to conciliate, at this joy-dispensing period, the most mischievous urchin of the grammar school. Even he, perhaps, had passed at once from childhood's bright holiday to his early rest, and slumbered placidly beside his native waters, while his competitors in the voyage of life struggled on, now buffeting the adverse wave, now rising buoyant on its bosom !

Buchanan lingered amid the grass-grown aisles, till warned by the chill of night that exercise was necessary ; and then, gliding forth with the solemn motion of a spectre, to which his height gave him no small resemblance, turned towards the well-known walk along the top of the cliff overhanging the sea, and found himself opposite to the sensibly dilapidated remains of the once proud castle of the vindictive and vengeance-devoted Beaton. He strolled into its desolate court, where he had played at ball when ambition and revenge were to him words of empty sound ; and where, at a subsequent and

more thoughtful period, he had mused, almost to madness, on the frenzy of priestly cruelty, and the retributive justice of heaven. Another generation had since pursued, one was now pursuing similar pastimes, and cherishing similar reflections, and he felt amid these revolutions as Fancy has pictured to herself some guardian genius, hovering with fond, yet tearful predilection, over scenes the dearer for their desolation.

He paced awhile along the dizzy cliff, gazing alternately on the clear expanse of unruffled waters, and on the hence admirably grouped and peculiarly imposing ruins—then, turning from the vestiges of departed greatness, sought with quickened step the links or downs already mentioned, where he had plied the golf-club in all the vigour of youth, with comrades, whose subsequent destiny, with one or two exceptions, was to him utterly unknown. His had been a life of singular and painful, though in some respects voluntary alienation from the men and things of Europe, which even in the East generally retain so strong a hold on the affections

and habits of her sons ; and perhaps we cannot better employ the solemn midnight hour of Buchanan's silent perambulation over the short elastic turf, or yet more noiseless sands, than by giving the reader a brief sketch of his singular history.



## CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM HAMILTON, a name which our hero, out of deference to the aristocratic prejudices of his family, relinquished on exchanging military for commercial adventure, was the second son of a baronet in the west of Scotland, and, with his elder brother, and a sister some years younger, was destined to experience at a very early age, the cruel transition from the exquisite tenderness of an indulgent parent, to the constrained caresses, and soon unconcealed aversion of a harsh and unamiable step-mother. Towards the eldest son, a boy of mild easy temper, this dislike was always in some measure mitigated by his compliance with her behests, and by a vague apprehension of being one day at his mercy, excited by the precarious health of her elderly and infirm husband; but the manly and independent spirit of William, though tempered with a good nature and kindness

which made him an universal favourite with others, rendered him from the first the object of her hatred and persecution, and involved the gentle and innocent Marion, his darling protégée, in a double portion of the same rancour and malevolence.

Willie's desire for escape from a now detested home, concurred with his step-mother's wishes for his estrangement from a still partial father, to procure his removal to that distant seat of learning, whence both were aware his visits to Marknows, the paternal mansion, could be but few and far between; and when these did take place, it required all Willie's respect for the grey hairs and increasing infirmities of his father, and all his affection for his darling Marion, to render tolerable the scanty period allotted for his residence in the once dear West. St Rule's, where he had found under good Dr X.'s roof a parental home, and where all sympathized with his worse than orphan condition, became thus to him the spot to which memory clung amid all the vicissitudes of life; while Marknows, with its venerable woods and green lawns, dwelt there only as the early grave of

his beautiful and beloved mother, and the hell of her surviving progeny.

As the close of his academic career drew nigh, the spirit of William panted for some profession, amid whose excitements he might forget the sorrows of home, and by diligence and success in which he might purchase Marion's emancipation from the painful bondage in which her sex and youth enthralled her. He therefore listened with delight to the proposal of a distant relation from the East—who compassionated the case of a fine youth neglected and depreciated in his own family—to procure him a cadetcy to India; in those days a rapid and certain road to fortune, barring the hazards of a then perpetual and sanguinary warfare.

Little opposition was offered by Sir John, who thought the military profession, in some of its modifications, the only one consistent with the dignity of his family, and who had exhausted his interest and decreasing means in procuring early advancement in the British army for his eldest son. Lady Hamilton felt an unspeakable relief in the farther removal of one before whose spirit hers sunk, and whose contempt she could



only revenge on the gentle object of his partiality. This mild and lovely being alone wept over the departure of her darling brother, and the removal of the only check to her step-mother's tyranny, with tears of mingled tenderness and apprehension. Willie, sharing, amid all the exultation of approaching independence, her bitter regrets at parting, could only dry her tears by the warmest assurances of unchangeable affection, and glowing predictions of those better and not far distant days, when he would return with the fruits of his honourable exertions, to rescue his Menie from unkindness and oppression, and transplant her to his own fostering care.

After a parting visit to St Rule's, the cordiality of whose worthy and partial inhabitants stamped it indelibly on the warm heart and grateful disposition of young Hamilton; after the hearty embrace and paternal admonition of the good Doctor, followed up by the fond maternal lecture, the kiss on both sides of the face, and still carefully treasured pocket Bible, the parting gift of his worthy sister, the sorest trial

Willie's fortitude had to sustain, was the rough squeeze and sobbing farewell of a rude but honest comrade of his youth, of inferior though respectable parentage, whose early and instinctive attachment to young Hamilton had carried him in his train to the same distant seminary, where, however, his studies had received a premature termination, by the resolution of his father, himself a man of business in the village nearest Marknows, to launch his son in his own lucrative profession, though, with laudable ambition, on the more extensive ocean of metropolitan adventure, as an apprentice to an eminent writer in Edinburgh. Davie, who had been some time initiated in the mysteries of the quill, before his *fidus Achates* assumed the sword, felt, if possible, for the latter an increase of esteem and admiration; and would have willingly renounced all the certain emoluments of the chamber, for the more precarious ones of the field, had not duty to a most affectionate parent opposed an effectual barrier. Davie, therefore, wrung his young friend's hand, dropped an unwonted tear, and made for a day or two after

his sailing, equally unwonted blunders in his usually fair and legible copy-sheet.

Hamilton, on his arrival in India, found his active services in immediate requisition, and in two successive campaigns gained rapid promotion, and an inconsiderable share of booty, all of which found its way, in the shape of shawls, snuff-boxes, and trinkets, to the few beloved objects who were ever in his mind's eye, and whom absence only endeared to his affectionate heart. Another step, and richer plunder,—in those days of earlier subjugation a still unexhausted mine,—enabled him to form projects for being more extensively useful to his sister, by purchasing for her an asylum among strangers, till he could offer her a home, when he heard, with more of regret than surprise, that she had been driven, by the additional severity which would have substituted an odious and degrading alliance for domestic tyranny, into the arms of a very handsome and pleasing English clergyman, of Scottish extraction, who, about the time of his quitting Scotland, had been admitted into his father's family, as tutor to the idolized and all-engrossing son, with whom the



new Lady Hamilton had soon after her marriage presented her lord, and whose birth had greatly tended to alienate her from his former family.

Through his constant ally, and faithful correspondent Davie, Hamilton learned the true history of his sister's hasty marriage, which rumour had, as usual, distorted and perverted; and through the same channel he sent his blessing to the proscribed couple, and the more substantial benefit of an annuity, far exceeding that which he reserved for his own moderate wants and simple habits.

Though, while in the field, equally remarkable for activity, abstinence from all the luxurious indulgence so common among his countrymen, and undaunted bravery, which was rendered more conspicuous by his uncommon height and singularly handsome person, Hamilton did not find the profession of arms peculiarly congenial to his naturally mild and benignant disposition—perhaps the unwarlike appearance and inoffensive deportment of many of his Hindoo opponents tended to strengthen the feeling of distaste with which he beheld them mowed

down by the superior destructiveness of European warfare. Be this as it may, he was, in the very thickest of a skirmish, in a distant part of the country, against the troops of an enterprising and powerful native prince, desperately wounded and subsequently taken prisoner; the state of his wounds, when last seen by his countrymen, being such as to afford very little probability of his surviving, especially under the unskilful hands of native practitioners, should their cares even be exerted in his behalf. Hamilton was accordingly returned, "severely wounded and missing;" and the little army having soon after, in consequence of serious reverses, evacuated the territory, without any tidings of Hamilton's recovery reaching headquarters, his place was, after the lapse of some months, filled up, leaving him to act as a supernumerary should he unexpectedly re-appear.

Meantime the Rajah, an amiable and uncommonly enlightened prince, to whose good graces the fine person and bravery of his prisoner had warmly recommended him, took considerable interest in his wonderful though tedious recovery, in which youth and a good constitution were,

of course, the chief agents. After gaining his good-will by almost parental kindness, he endeavoured by lavish gifts to induce him to desert the standard of his country, and give him the benefit of his warlike experience, such as it was ; but this Hamilton indignantly and steadily rejected, at the hazard of indefinitely protracting a hopeless captivity, for the Rajah obstinately refused to hear of his exchange, and the wide interval of hostile territory now interposed between him and his countrymen forbade all thoughts of escape, even could he reconcile himself to break the sort of tacit parole imposed upon him by the generous treatment and fatherly kindness of his captor.

Finding, after an interval of some months, that his health, though partially restored, would long render him unequal to resume his professional duties, and that his sword-arm in particular, was likely to retain, from the laceration of some of its muscles, a weakness which might permanently unfit him for service, Hamilton made to the Rajah a proposal, by which he might remain attached to his court and person, without compromising his own honour or sense



of duty; and offered, on condition of being allowed to negotiate at head-quarters a treaty highly advantageous to his countrymen, to give in his resignation, and return in a civil capacity to Candapore.

The Rajah, whose troops, though temporarily victorious, wanted repose, and whose territory had suffered dreadfully from the ravages of a protracted campaign, lent a ready ear to his young favourite's proposal; and dispatched him, accompanied by one of his principal officers, to the Presidency, to conclude the treaty; the chief article of which was to be his own release from military duty. The terms were too favourable not to find prompt acquiescence; and Hamilton's still shattered frame afforded abundant ground for his honourable retreat from the active service of his country. He turned his attention, however, towards its welfare in a more congenial pursuit than that of conquest and plunder; and pointed out, from local acquaintance with his protector's dominions, sources of profitable traffic to his new allies, far more lucrative, as well as permanent, than the course of ravage and spoliation, which, if sub-

jugated, they would have been doomed to undergo. He was empowered to open, both on public and private account, extensive connexions with this distant and hitherto little known region, rich in some of the rarest and most precious products of the East; and he agreed in future to divide his time between residence at the Rajah's court, to strengthen his favourable dispositions, and excursions into the mountainous interior of his country, to superintend the collection of the ivory, precious stones, &c. which were to form the staple of the newly opened intercourse.

Before leaving, probably for many years, the abodes of Europeans, Hamilton, having converted into money some costly jewels, forced upon him by the Rajah, and added to their produce the arrears of pay and prize-money due to him, transmitted the whole, a sum of several thousand pounds, to his beloved Marion and her husband. This, however, like all his other transactions after the period of his resignation, had been conducted under his assumed name of Buchanan, adopted from consideration for his father's feelings, and some lingering aristocra-



tic prejudices in his own breast ; and the letters which he intrusted to a private hand, in which he informed his sister of the change in his views and profession, having perished with their bearer, in the total loss of the vessel in which he sailed, the uncontradicted rumour of his death in action, only gained credibility in her mind from the apparent bequest of so large a sum, in lieu of the annual income which her dear brother had before so liberally shared with her.

Lady Hamilton, though privately informed, many months after these events, of the reported residence of her step-son at a native court, affected totally to disbelieve it, and suffered her aged husband to depart in the full persuasion that his son had fallen honourably in his country's battles. Intercourse with India was then by no means what the rapidity and facility of modern communication has rendered it, and many were the relatives as imperfectly informed of the welfare, and even life, of those dearer far to them than poor Hamilton to any in Scotland. To Davie Gudefallow alone, in that country, had he written a similar letter to the



one addressed to his sister ; and, unaware of the fatality which attended both epistles, he flattered himself he had thus set at rest those two affectionate hearts, as to his present situation and future prospects, and suffered for some years, indolence, from the effects of climate, and increasing estrangement from European habits and ideas, to prevent his resuming a correspondence which he concluded to have unaccountably dropped on their side.

Though bound still more by gratitude than promises, not to quit permanently, during the life of the Rajah, that liberal benefactor and unalterable patron, into whose councils and domestic administration he had the satisfaction of introducing the most beneficial measures ; yet, anxiety about his sister, uncontrollable thirst for news from Europe, and that vague presentiment which often hurries us, as it were, to anticipate the blow that awaits us, led him, at the end of about five or six years' seclusion, to Calcutta, where he experienced, from the honourable sharers in his peaceful gains, a reception warm in proportion to the benefits he had conferred upon them.

The long file of European journals, perused with the feverish intenseness of curiosity, long repressed rather than extinguished, presented many a casualty among ancient friends and youthful associates; but these were speedily forgotten in one overwhelming wreck of nearly all the ties that anchored him to Britain. Tidings were there, in which his kind hosts never dreamed that the recluse and isolated Buchanan was to find the annihilation of all hopes of domestic happiness, and all his desires of wealth and recovered liberty. The obituary of one short but eventful month presented to his tear-dimmed eye the names of his still dear, though half-alienated father, and of his fondly cherished Marion, the fancied sharer of all his hard-earned gains, who was to gild with her angel smile the evening of a life whose meridian was thus sadly estranged from congenial and civilized society.

The blow was dreadful as unexpected! He read and read again. Though the designation was somewhat vague, and the residence (in Cumberland) unknown to him, he could scarcely allow himself to cherish a sickly hope that

the Mrs Douglas whose death he read recorded, might be another than his Marion. In fact, such a hope never at first gained admission to his mind, and only arose there when, as a possibility of his return to Europe approached, his heart strove to cling to some twig on the wide ocean of life, in which he felt himself an utter stranger.

The immediate effect of these sad tidings was to send him back, in deep despondence, to the country of his adoption, where he at length found, in the task of soothing the declining age of his benefactor, perhaps the only alleviation of which his own bereavement admitted.

Five-and-twenty years had elapsed from Buchanan's arrival, a wounded and rifled captive at the city of Candapore, ere, high in favour and loaded with honourable wealth, he sorrowfully laid in the dust the amiable head of him to whom he owed them. Buchanan's unobtrusive virtues and judicious conduct, had disarmed envy, and excited universal respect; and the heir of the Rajah's Musnud was disposed to extend to him the same good-will and confidence; but Buchanan in the Rajah had lost a



friend, and one for whom the East could afford no substitute. He therefore pleaded indisposition, and indulged for some months his genuine sorrow amid those wild regions, to which the chase of the elephant, and other pursuits of mingled pleasure and profit, had hitherto frequently led him. Solitude, so beneficial and grateful to the full heart, preys on that which presents but a fearful void; and Buchanan, after a dutiful farewell to the nephew of his friend, and fond adieu to his now lone palace, and silent mausoleum, turned his thoughts and steps once more to European haunts, and European associations.

He found, at the nearest settlement of his countrymen, precisely that small and friendly circle of polished individuals, in which grief finds insensible solace, and misfortune tacit consolation. The latter he found himself called upon to bestow, as well as receive; for this sympathizing society had latterly afforded an asylum in its bosom to an interesting young creature, whose husband, a gallant officer, had been surprised and cut off during a journey, by a band of marauding Pindarries. The widow

herself had narrowly escaped by the fidelity of some native attendants; but the little property of her husband had all been carried off, with the exception of some trifling claims on a house at Calcutta, which Buchanan, as a man of business, was requested to negotiate. This he willingly undertook, and the intercourse to which this transaction admitted him, soon ripened into an attachment, heightened on his side by long estrangement from cultivated female society, and on hers, by the forlorn and unprotected state in which she found herself.

There needed only time to throw into fainter distance the painful circumstances of her late loss, to dispose her to do justice to all the strong claims Buchanan still possessed on female partiality. He was now little more than seven-and-forty, and the regular course of life, and manly exercises which he had never relinquished, had preserved, under the suns of a temperate part of India, much of his native freshness and vigour, while his expressive features, and commanding form, might challenge even admiration.

The young widow's desolate heart warmed

at length towards so amiable and attractive an object, and in Buchanan she soon found the very protector to whom the husband of her youth would, in his last moments, have wished to consign her. A short year of mutual happiness was theirs; but Louisa's constitution had never recovered the shock her husband's cruel fate had inflicted. Buchanan learned to look forward with more of fear than hope, to the period which was to make him a father; and the first and sole faint cry of his child mingled with its mother's latest sigh, and both died away for ever, leaving him as desolate and more to be pitied, than when he first sought sympathy from the kind inmates of L——. It was not now wanting; but the scene was too painful, and Buchanan, to whom Europe and Asia were now alike a desert, began to look forward to a return to the former, merely as an escape from the visible desolation of the latter.

One source of possible future interest in Britain had occupied his mind, ever since that feeble voice of infancy touched a new and tender chord within his breast. Marion had perhaps left children, though none were born



during the years immediately succeeding her marriage, and to these he might surely attach himself for her dear sake, with truly paternal fondness. Should it be otherwise, he even began to think of his elder brother's family as of those who might at least inherit his wealth if not his affections; and, stimulated by these long-forgotten thoughts, he set out for Calcutta, seriously determined to wind up his multifarious concerns, and return to England.

This, notwithstanding the energy of new-born hopes, was not to be easily, or rapidly accomplished; and it was only by the sacrifice of large portions of almost superfluous wealth, that Buchanan, after nearly two years' detention at Calcutta, purchased at length the power of quitting a country, which had been to him, like Egypt to Joseph, the scene of captivity and exaltation; of joy and misery; of tender ties and melancholy bereavement.

Fortune did not smile favourably on his homeward voyage. Damage, nearly amounting to shipwreck, detained the vessel many months beyond her appointed period, and the nervous impatience of hope long deferred, had nearly

conquered Buchanan's habitual calmness and resignation, ere he set foot once more on the shores of his native island.

A few hurried days in London were rendered indispensable by urgent business ; as soon as it could be dispatched, Buchanan flew to Edinburgh, and on inquiring for his friend Gudefallow, to whom alone he could apply for information respecting Marion's husband and surviving family, found, to his extreme disappointment, that he had left town on professional business for a day or two. This interval he determined to devote to that hasty visit to St Rule's which we have already described, the unsatisfactory result of which to his curiosity, however soothing to his feelings, sent him the following morning as rapidly back to Edinburgh.

## CHAPTER III.

ON arriving in Edinburgh, Buchanan's first inquiry was, of course, directed to ascertain the return to town, and place of residence, of his old school-fellow, Davie Gudefallow, who, as the son of his late father's factor, was, of all persons, most likely to possess information respecting the state of the family, and whose present situation and profession, that of a well-employed and respectable writer, promised to render him a valuable auxiliary to one so inexperienced in the ways of Europe.

Had he been left to seek his quondam friend on the strength of his own recollections or conjectures, they would have carried him to a land in the High Street, or even to a more unpretending and less aristocratic domicile in one of its numerous wynds; but being reduced by an intolerably wet day to the durance of a hackney-coach, and passive acquiescence in the



directions given by the waiter of the hotel to the coachman,—directions, by the by, which the bare mention of Mr Gudefallow's name seemed to render abundantly superfluous,—he found himself, to his astonishment, set down at the door of a capital house in George Street, then the *Ultima Thule* of that tide of ink which has lately flowed with resistless impetuosity to mingle with the once rural waters of Leith, and invade the sylvan fount of Hygeia herself.

The slip-shod lass by whom the door was opened—for Mr Gudefallow being a frugal bachelor, his establishment did not afford the one footman, whose multifarious services in the households of Edinburgh, seem nearly absorbed in the perpetual office of porter—hardly corresponded to the style of the house, and perhaps struck Buchanan more forcibly, from the long disuse of female attendants to which he had been accustomed in the East. The damsel, a true specimen of the antique, with legs submitting to shoes as a less evil than stockings, and a head tenacious of the almost exploded *mutch*, ushered Buchanan into the *sanctum sanctorum* of her master's premises, where, almost

buried amid papers, law-books, and ledgers, sat the portly form and well-remembered phiz of Davie himself; as like the Davie of the parish-school of Gairlie as the lapse of more than thirty years could well allow. His broad open countenance seemed only to have somewhat expanded, under the united influence of good cheer and good humour, while the temperate suns and fresh breezes of the North, had only given a hardier tint to the rustic roses of youth; and the blue eye, which had lost not a jot of its vivacity, twinkled with the mingled fire of natural shrewdness and acquired sagacity.

On seeing his playmate thus gravely seated, amidst cases of title-deeds, and piles of mortgages, the arbiter and custodier of perhaps more property than any man in Scotland, and, as he had been informed, discharging the trust with equal integrity and feeling, his thoughts instantly reverted to an incident in which both these qualities shone forth in Davie as a boy. He had stumbled on a set of younger culprits, quarrelling about the division of a basket of stolen apples; bestowing on each of the offenders a share of cuffs instead of booty, Davie had

marched three miles in a hot day to restore the property, and, on being desired to keep it for his honesty, carried it a mile farther, to replenish the stall of a very poor widow, against the approaching market-day.

The natural but momentary mortification which Buchanan felt, on finding that thirty years in the East had rendered his spare form, and embrowned cheek, perfectly unknown to his friend, (that friend having, moreover, for the last twenty years concluded him to be dead,) soon gave place to the desire of improving this incognito, for the purpose of obtaining calmer and more unsuspected testimony as to the place he might hold in Davie's remembrance, and his private opinion of his own surviving relatives. Strongly resisting one or two violent impulses to take Davie round the neck, as he had done when he last stood blubbering and ashamed on the pier of Leith, to witness his departure, he mentioned, in answer to his friend's inquiring glance, the name of Buchanan; and this obviously throwing no light on the subject, added, that his object in calling, was to obtain



information concerning the family and affairs of the late Mr William Hamilton, a cadet of Marknows.

The ejaculation of "Puir Willie!" seemed, from its suppressed and deep-drawn character, to proceed from the very bottom of the honest writer's heart. "You appear to have known him well," said Buchanan, "can you give me any information about him?"

"Troth no, sir," answered the other, whose —shire Doric had lost none of its purity during a thirty years' residence in the modern Athens; "I heard from him often on his first gaun out to India, till about the eighty-two, or three, and then we were told he had been either killed or ta'en, in a battle wi' the natives; and though I did hear afterwards, that he had been seen alive at the court o' ane of their Rajahs, by an officer who gaed on a mission to that outlandish part o' the country, yet I never could trace the report to any good authority; and I dinna believe a word o't, sir, for though Willie had few in Scotland to care whether he died or lived, he had aye Davie Gudefallow that wished him weel, and that he but to ken."

Buchanan's heart smote him for having left this kind creature so long in ignorance of his fate, which, now for the first time adverting to the probable loss of his letters, he feared might have extended to one still nearer and dearer. Aware that this tender subject, if once touched on, would bring on a discovery which he felt he could not much longer defer, he became anxious to anticipate it, by gaining in his assumed character, a true account of the rest of the family.

"Sir James Hamilton, I have heard, is dead," said he abruptly. "Was his life prosperous?—Did he leave his affairs in good order?—What family had he?" These questions he put all in a breath, while that breath lasted, that the answer of Gudefallow might be of sufficient length to allow him to collect strength for a much more interesting and painful inquiry.

"Why, as to his life, *puir man*!" said the honest writer, "I doubt it wasna a' gold that glisten'd wi' him. His father's second wife took care that he should come to a nominal estate, and she thought she made a' right, by getting him a rich Glasgow wife; but Sir James was ower easy, and his wife ower extravagant;

and when he died lately, things were come to that pass, that the bonny estate o' Marknows, which my father managed sae many years wi' skill and honesty, but which, thanks be praised! they never gae me ony share in flinging to the cocks, is riding in the Advertiser,—my lady and her dochters lookin' out for a house in Ayr, —and the bonny spunky laddie, Sir Walter, that his grandfather lived to see born, and swore should be a Guardsman, canna afford to starve on a title and a company o' grenadiers, and is awa' up to Lunnon, to get an exchange to India, —I'm thinking ye're frae the East, sir?—and get himself knocked on the head, like his puir uncle, in some skirmish wi' the black deevils. Odd it's a pity! for he's an honour to the family. I've seen the callant often, when I gaed to speir for my auld sister at the Gairlie;—but I've nae heart to gang up to the place now, for as near as it is—indeed, I was never bidden——”

“ But, good Heavens !” said Buchanan, who had only been prevented from sooner interrupting the honest writer, by the excess of his astonishment, “ I always understood the estate



of Marknows to be strictly entailed; and yet you talk of sale as possible?"

"Odd, sir," answered the man of law, "our forbears werena sae cunning at tying knots as we are turned at loosing them; half the entails o' Scotland are barkin' and fleein' e'ennow. But this o' Marknows was never suspected; and the mair honour to the noble creature that scorned to tak' advantage o't."

"Is the state of the family affairs irremediable, do you think?" said Buchanan, his heart yearning towards his mother's grandson; "would an advance of money save Marknows from the hammer?"

"I really couldna say," answered the writer; "'hawks suldna pike out hawks' een;' but if Johnny Laidlaw, the writer in Gairlie," half muttering to himself, "carries on now wi' his clients as he did langsyne, when he stole his auntie's bawbees on the Saturday night, and lent her ane o' them to put in the brod on Sunday, perhaps the eye o' an honest man, and a pickle weel-ward siller, might do something."

"It shall be tried," said Buchanan, half internally. Then mustering all his composure,

he asked the good man, whom he began to consider as the guardian genius of his house, the fate of his half-brother, the boy whom he had left about seven years old, still in hopes of receiving incidentally that information about his darling Marion, which to request in the character of a stranger, he felt utterly beyond his powers of dissimulation.

“ Oh ! Geordie Hamilton, sir, is the only prosperous man o’ the family, and could buy Marknows weel eneugh, which mony folk say he is thinkin’ o’. But what would the ghost o’ auld Sir John say if he could look up, and see the heir o’ his honours a pennyless soger, and the ha’ o’ his ancestors the purchased domain o’ a Glasgow sugar-merchant, though his ain son ? The Baronet was an auld-warld man, and couldna awa’ wi’ trade. I believe the takin’ a Glasgow wife for his auldest son laid his grey head in the grave ; and I wonder makin’ his youngest, though he never cared muckle about him, a grôcer, didna raise it out again ! Willie Hamilton, sir, your friend and mine,” said the worthy writer, kindling as he went over these old and half-forgotten associations, “ to

my certain knowledge might hae been taken into a great house in Lunnon, by a cousin o' his mother's, but they never durst speak o't to Sir John ; he wad hae been clean wud."

Buchanan could not help congratulating himself on the silence, at least during his father's life, which had kept him in ignorance of his mercantile adventures, though he feared that silence might have been fatal to one still dearer.—Further suspense became unbearable.

"And Marion? Miss Hamilton, I mean," gasped he ; "she married, did she not?"

"Ay ! *puir Menie !*" said the writer, in the same heartfelt tone which marked his first ejaculation ; "she made what the world called a very low marriage ; and nae doubt it was as low in point o' circumstances as weel could be. But Douglas (and I kent him weel) was neither low in birth, for his family was aulder than her ain—and nae Hamilton need look down upon a Douglas—nor low in mind, for he had the spirit o' a prince, and the mildness o' a Christian ; nor low in character, for he had the gude word o' every ane in the parish ; and though the family in their frenzy kept him from gettin' the living,



on the strength of which he offered puir Marion a home, yet, I believe, she found the curacy of Coldinghame a paradise to the hell of Marknows. Peace to her memory ! she was the sweetest o' lassies. I thought, maybe, ower muckle o' her mysell, when I kent nae better. The last time I saw her," continued he, too much engrossed with his own mournful recollections to notice Buchanan, to whom the mention of Coldinghame conveyed a confirmation of his too well-grounded fears, "was when I gaed to Lunnon in the great Montgomery cause. She had lost a' her bonny bairns but ae bit blossom in the cradle—she was droopin' fast hersell, and was sae unlike the rosy creature that played about Marknows that I dinna think I could hae kent her, only she sat lookin' on the bairn, that was sune to be mitherless, wi' the self-same saft smile that I minded on her face when I laid on her knee the nestfu' o' forsaken linties that I brought her frae the Gairlie Muir !"

"She is then dead !" said Buchanan, after a long pause. "I had heard it, but hope will linger"—and brushing away a big drop or two,

which the writer only failed to observe because he was similarly occupied,—“ You mention a child—is it alive ? is it doubly an orphan ?”

“ As fine a lassie as ever you saw,” answered Davie, resuming his natural cheerfulness of manner—“ just like enow to her mother to be the dearer to her worthy father, without mindin’ him every moment o’ his sair loss. Indeed, how should he miss even Menie, wi’ sic a dear young creature aye in his sight, watchin’ every turn o’ his ee, and kennin’ better than he does himsell what will make him happy and comfortable a’ the day lang ?”

“ You see them, then, occasionally ? Are they in Scotland ?”

“ Ou ay, just at Linhaven, the fishing-town yonder below Marknows. Ye see, as lang as Marion lived, the solitude o’ Cumberland was paradise to Douglas ; and as they sune received an annuity frae Willie, out o’ the very first o’ his soldier’s booty, they didna care to increase their means by removing to livings that were offered them in strange parts o’ the country, and crowded manufacturing towns. So they lived at Coldinghame, a blessing to the green hills

and dales about them, till, in lieu of the annuity, which ceased, there came a sum o' some thousand pounds, a bequest from puir Willie, nae doubt, at his death, though how he became possessed o' sae muckle nane could tell; however, there was great plunder gaun in India at that time. Marion was then in a declining way; and wha can say if sorrow for her favourite brother did not make her droop faster? She died—and then Douglas loathed Coldinghame as much as he had ever loved it; and being in his moderate idea quite independent, listened gladly to the proposal o' his brother-in-law, Sir James—who, to do him justice, never joined in the cry against Menie, for he was a good-natured, weel-meanin' creature—to bring his bit lassie near her ain kith and kin, and accept the charge o' a small Episcopalian flock at Linhaven, the easy duties of which would leave him full leisure for his daughter's education; and where she wad get a' the advantages o' society to which her birth entitled her. They have now been fifteen years at Linhaven, a bonnie place, wi' gude sea-bathing, and hot-baths besides, which brings a few quiet invalids in summer; and there's a



grand neighbourhood a' round Marknows. Oh ! that puir Willie Hamilton could see his Menie's humble husband looked up to by them a' as a father, and her bairn dawted among them a' like a pet lamb !”

“ God be praised for it, and for all his mercies !” exclaimed Buchanan, throwing himself into the astonished writer's arms, whose disjointed ejaculations of, “ Gude safe's, Willie Hamilton ! God be thanket !” and “ Doited deevil !” applied to himself, sufficiently testified the overpowering influence of the discovery.

When these transports subsided, and he had wrung Willie's thin fingers with a cordiality they had not known since before in the same rough grasp, he sat down opposite to him, and began a deliberate survey of his features. “ Am I no dreaming,” said he, rubbing his eyes, “ or are you the wraith o' lang Willie ? Ye hae his glancin' een, and his hawk nose, and his thin lips, but ye want his quiet saft smile, the neighbour o' Menie's !—Na, but ye dinna,” said he, correcting himself, as his guest's mild features relaxed into that peculiarly winning expression,

which seldom failed, when united with their noble regularity, to conciliate the good-will of even the passing stranger ; but which, with those who knew it to be an index of his mind, exercised absolute fascination.

Buchanan (as from long habit we must continue to call him) was in truth the *beau ideal* of an elderly man. The fine black eye which nature made brilliant, life and sorrow had rendered mild and thoughtful. The other features, casually moulded in a northern climate into a rare resemblance with the most majestic cast of southern or eastern beauty, harmonized admirably with the shade those climes had thrown over them. His fine bald head might have furnished a model to Spurzheim, or a study to Rembrandt ; and the silver locks which thinly flowed on either side of the benevolent countenance, were strongly and peculiarly set off by contrast with the unaltered hue of the well-defined black eye-brows ; while a partial adoption of Oriental diet and habits had tended to preserve the well-set range of teeth, which the smile above alluded to half displayed.

Such was the head—and whether the ma-

jestic form on which this head reposed with tranquil grace, was, as rarely occurred, dilated to its full height by conscious dignity on his own account, or assertion of the rights of others; or, as more frequently happened, bent over a staff in the carelessness of somewhat languid movements, or the ease of familiar converse, it was one on whose like we may not soon look again.

After some hours of the most interesting conversation, over Buchanan's already bespoken dinner at the hotel, (for in Gudefallow's own house he could not have commanded an uninterrupted ten minutes, from the reference of clerks, and the intrusion of business calls,) the friends parted, on an understanding, that after two days devoted to Buchanan's seeing the town, under the guidance of a protégé of Gudefallow's, an advocate of more taste than practice, Davie should consign to the devil the writing-chamber, the Register-Office, and the Outer and Inner-Houses; and in the *beau milieu* of the summer session accompany lang Willie to —shire, reconciling, however, his conscience to this heinous dereliction of duty, by its being



a business excursion, whose laudable object was the purchase of the Marknows estate, if it could not be otherwise extricated from the fangs of Johnny Laidlaw.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE bell was about to ring for afternoon service, on one of those peculiarly lovely spring Sabbaths, when April seems to lay aside its inconstancy, or May its proverbial treachery, to enjoy the calm beauty of the green pastoral hills, and sunny straths of Scotland, which, though assuming, as the features of Scottish landscape (Heaven be praised for it !) still do, a character of solemn stillness peculiar to the day, are yet enlivened by groups of honest rustics, hastening from all directions to join in social worship ; a sight surely gratifying to the best feelings of our nature, and better calculated to swell the heart with genuine devotion, than the most gorgeous procession ever devised by our pomp-loving sister of Rome.

The church of M—— was not one which its primitive congregation could approach without reverence, or the stranger without admiration.

Situated on a wooded eminence, in the heart of an undulating and richly cultivated country, its humble portal commanded a prospect which had gladdened many a young heart, and soothed many an aged one. On the one hand, all the bounties of Heaven, displayed in fields rich in the promise of spring, or the exuberance of autumn; on the other, its serenest smiles, reflected from a silver loch, on whose bosom fleets of swans, meet emblems of purity, sailed fearlessly along, or sunned their snowy plumage under the hallowed shelter of the very house of prayer. Who could lean on that kirk-stile, with no sound on the air but the low yet sonorous bell, re-echoed by the woods beyond the lake, and floating on its unruffled waters; with no sight meeting the eye save fields "white unto that harvest" which is not reaped on this side of time, and not feel how natural, how inevitable, in such a place, is the ascent "from Nature up to Nature's God?"

As, however, the rustic groups successively passed into the church-yard, a physiognomist might have amused himself (more fancifully perhaps than profitably) by reading in the faces



of each, through the decent seriousness of their general demeanour, those shades of worldly feeling which mingle more or less with the imperfect devotions of most among us. Here and there, indeed, beneath the blue bonnet or scarlet plaid of the elder members of the congregation, a countenance appeared, which, purified from the dross of human passions, might have been chosen by Guido to pourtray a venerable Simeon, or a holy Anna, ready when permitted, to "depart in peace." But on the hard features of the mechanic, and on the sunburnt cheek of the farmer, the lines of daily toil, though smoothed, were not obliterated. On the visage of the careful matron might be discovered anxiety for her infant brood, left perhaps to the heedless guardianship of childhood; while, from the lingering step and wandering glance of the very young, it might, without a breach of charity, be concluded, that some one was expected, in whose society the duties of the day would be at least more cheerfully performed.

On the Sabbath to which we are at present alluding, there occurred a far more outrageous, yet perhaps pardonable, intrusion of secular af-

fairs within the precincts of the sanctuary, in the person of that worthy and notable matron, the landlady of the Wallace Inn, from whom the unexpected sight of a chaise,—a rare one on that somewhat unfrequented road of a Sunday, winding slowly along the summit of a hill, at the foot of which the hostel aforesaid is situated,—extorted the following half-ludicrous, half-pathetic exclamation :—

“Hech ! guide’s a’, sirs ! what will be dune ? An there isna a chaise drivin’ up to our house, and the gudeman no at hame, and me here, and the minister just at hand, and naething within the door but a soup kail, and a wheen skin puddings. We dinna use to be sae sair at a loss, but the road’s been unco dull this while, and the weather unco warm,—and wha wad hae thought o’ company on the Sabbath day ! They’ll no can get horses to gang forrit, for the gudeman’s riding Bauldie, and brown Nansie’s cripple o’ the right shouther. Lizzie’ll be sair perplexed ! An it had been an ilka day, she wad sune hae thrawn the neck o’ a hen ; but she’s a fendy lass, and I reckon she’ll step down to the minister’s and see what can be gotten

there. Miss Baby's aye glad to serve a neighbour. But what need I speak o' the Manse, when yonder's a' the family coming up the loan, and a' the doors made fast ahint them, nae doubt. Aweel, Lizzie's a fendy lass, and fouk shouldna travel on the Sabbath day !"

With this reflection the gudewife was forced to console herself as the bell ceased ringing. No one could fail to regard the effort with which she composed herself to silence and seriousness, and abstained from quitting the church door to see after her domestic affairs, when the character of her house was in such jeopardy, as a heroic sacrifice to duty and propriety.

The chaise which occasioned such perturbation in the bosom of mine hostess, contained, as the reader has doubtless anticipated, Buchanan and the worthy writer, whose professional convenience had dictated the commencement of their journey on a Saturday. That day, however, was insufficient for its termination, and in deference to the regular habits of the one traveller, and the early and still cherished impressions of the other, as well as to avoid the notoriety of a long sojourn in the gossiping



village of Gairlie, previous to the opening of their negotiation, it was resolved to halt, for the purpose of attending church on Sunday, at the Wallace Inn, whose vicinity to a celebrated preacher, and reputation for clean beds and civility, had determined Gudefallow on this deviation from the great line of road leading to Marknows. Unforeseen delays, however, on the road, and a slight indisposition of Buchanan's, whose health was beginning to be affected by change of climate, and the conflicting emotions of the last few months, frustrated their good intentions, and the bell having rung in, full a quarter of an hour ere they reached the bottom of the hill whence they had been desisted by mine hostess, they were obliged reluctantly to content themselves, in lieu of the social worship and splendid eloquence they anticipated, with the delightful Sabbath stillness so gratifying to the returned Scotsman, and with the rural seclusion and cheerful cleanliness of the village inn.

After depositing Buchanan in the sunny parlour, and inquiring in vain for either landlord or landlady, Gudefallow bustled into the kit-

chen, to apprise Lizzie, the serving damsel aforesaid, of their intention to remain all night at the Wallace Inn, and summed up his information with (considering the state of the larder) the somewhat astounding requisition, that dinner might be ready as soon as possible, as the invalid was accustomed to Indian hours, and he himself having breakfasted early, began, as he facetiously expressed it, to "find the ground o' his stomach."

Little accustomed to travel off the great lines of road, a want of ordinary provisions did not occur to him as a possible contingency, and he shaped his bill of fare according to what he conceived the likeliest viands of a country inn, when he bespoke a chicken for the sick gentleman; "And for myself, lass," added he, "I'm no nice, and a piece o' your good saut beef and greens wad fit me to a hair."

Lizzie possessed, in an eminent degree, a quality inestimable in all stations of life. She displayed on this occasion a presence of mind, of which the most finished diplomatist might have been proud. Betraying not the smallest hint of the poverty of her *garde-manger*, she gave

the chicken and salt beef overture that assent which is usually understood to be conveyed by silence, and having given directions to a little boy, the son of the landlord, who officiated as waiter, to lay the cloth, and put on the fire a plentiful dish of greens, she sallied forth on what might be termed, in military phrase, a foraging excursion.

There lounged at all times, but especially on summer Sabbaths, and sunshine holidays, round the door of the Wallace Inn, a natural, or idiot boy, who, though in general as harmless as any of those whom the humane customs of Scotland leave free to wander over their native banks and braes, was, nevertheless, as great an amateur in executions, as the renowned *Petit André* or *Trois Echelles*;—with this difference, that the two-legged animals whose fate he always longed, and was sometimes permitted to expedite, were not the “plumeless bipeds” of Linnæus, but the feathered tenants of the dove-cot and poultry-yard.

In slaying and plucking these, during seasons of special hurry and bustle, Gowk Geordie’s services had been in frequent requisition ;



and the fatal turn down of the thumb did not more silently and infallibly consign to his fate, the Gladiator whom Roman caprice devoted to destruction, than one expressive jerk of Lizzie's wrist could convey to Geordie's ever alert organ of destructiveness, the death-warrant of one of his feathered play-fellows.

Lizzie, whose Cameronian fingers would on no account have tampered on the Sabbath-day with the windpipe of any of God's creatures, readily availed herself of the irresponsibility of her privileged deputy, and gave, in passing through the yard, a signal which spread dismay amid the unconscious baskers in the sunshine; and mingled, ere she was out of hearing, the death-song of a fine howtowdy, with the shrill alarum of its indignant grandsire.

"It's nae sin in the laddie," said Lizzie to herself, as she went along, with a casuistry which might have done honour to the school of Loyola, "for I never could learn him the commands, though I've tried mony a time. The creature canna need rest, for he never did a day's darg in his life; and as for thraving the neck o' fowls, it canna be ca'd wark to ane that counts it a ploy at

any time. I wish," continued Lizzie, "I had as gude a warrant for takin' Andrew Micklewame's beef out o' his kail-pot on the Sabbath-day; but it's only a lend, and he'll get it back no muckle the waur, when the gentles up by are served."

So saying, she lightly jumped the garden fence of a farm, a few hundred yards from the Inn; and, unfastening, with some difficulty, a window in the back part of the house, committed upon the deserted premises a *spreagh* or *raid*, only differing from those to which some of her Highland ancestors had formerly been addicted, in that the booty consisted not of herds of beeves, but of one dainty *heuk-bane* of well corned beef, with which, as this female Rob Roy well knew, the kail-pot of the worthy farmer was hebdomadally furnished, and where-with he was wont, in the overflowings of his wealth and hospitality, to treat his fellow elders, after the toils and duties of the day.

To the sacrilegious invasion of this orthodox seething pot, we are sorry to say the conscience of Lizzie, like that of the sons of Eli, was easily reconciled by the savoury smell and comely

appearance of the *bouilli* ; and after ascertaining by gustatory demonstration, that it had at least performed its office of imparting to the kail a consolatory share of strength and flavour, she consigned it to the durance of her clean white apron, and effected, unobserved save by a cat and two clocking hens, her retreat to the Wallace Inn.

In the kitchen stood Gowk Geordie, his scanty raiment so plentifully bestrewed with feathers, that he seemed to have changed characters with the spoliated victim in his hand. The same vigorous exertion of Lizzie's arm sent him spinning into the yard to shake himself, and rescued from his grasp the reluctantly yielded spoil. Chucky was quickly, but unconsciously, prepared by Lizzie in the manner styled by our Gallic masters in gastronomy, *à la crapaudine*, or brandered, *more Scottico*, with all expedition ; so that little more than half an hour had elapsed from the arrival of the guests, ere their board was graced with the viands specified in their *carte*, with rather more punctuality and precision than the orders of a newly imported Cockney



for *bifftick* (alias, burnt mutton) and *haricot blanc*, (which, to his horror, proves, instead of a delicate fricassee, a dish of old kidney beans,) are executed at Very's or Beauvillier's.

The repast had just been eaten, praised, and dismissed, as the gudewife (for once in her life, thinking Dr X—— had been somewhat long) arrived out of breath at her own door; and Lizzie, having disappeared to replace and extenuate the rape of the *petit salé*, she forthwith bustled up stairs with the cobwebbed bottle of her seven years old port, which had just been called for, eager to apologize for the unprecedented exhaustion of her resources, and the consequent poverty of their entertainment.

“Troth, Lucky,” said Mr Gudefallow, “I dinna ken what ye ca’ short commons; but I wish I may never see waur than a piece o’ gude saut beef and greens, and a brandered chucky. My friend here says he has seen naething sae gude since he left Scotland some thirty years syne.” The bottle nearly dropped from the landlady’s hand with astonishment; but being sufficiently akin to her diplomatic deputy not to betray it, she made a silent curtsy and hasten-

ed down to the kitchen. The sight of Gowk Geordie, *riving* with cannibal joy the bones of his old acquaintance, and of Lizzie returning with an empty dish by the garden gate, threw light on the mystery ; and the same discriminating sense of merit, which procures for a Turkish Pacha an additional tail, and for a British Commander two yards of blue or green ribbon, procured for Lizzie, this evening, admission to her mistress's tea-table, and a share of her delicate smuggled hyson ; two fragrant dishes of which, as courteously offered as graciously accepted, refreshed in due time the way-worn spirits of the travellers.

Having rewarded with an extra *douceur*, an ingenuity and dexterity in lifting which Davie became incidentally informed of in the course of a morning ramble with the landlord's little boy, and which, in ancient Sparta, would have procured for its fair possessor a crown of *parsley*, or some such appropriate material, the travellers early next day left the Wallace Inn, and arrived some hours after at the well-known village of Gairlie.

Buchanan's eye rested with painful surprise

on the long straggling suburb, crowded with a manufacturing population, which had arisen since his departure, to mock the narrow extent, and mar the rural seclusion, of one of the most picturesque villages in Scotland. After passing rapidly through parallel lines of cottages, whose novelty alone gave them a probably fallacious air of cleanliness, while here and there only a solitary attempt at a flower-plot before the door, attested the superior taste, but scanty industry of the pale and night-capped weaver, who stood breathing the fresh air on the threshold,—it was a refreshment both to eye and mind to arrive at the ancient nucleus of this ephemeral creation, to see standing, in every possible attitude of defiance to symmetry and formality, here a front and there a gable, some thatched, a few only more ambitiously slated, the identical cottages, chiefly detached *feus* from his father's estate, in which Buchanan had bought gingerbread, or roasted stolen apples, and listened from old retainers to tales of better times, when Marknows was unencumbered, and stepmothers were not.

As the chaise slowly ascended the steep and



ill-paved street, the travellers had leisure to give a sigh as they passed to the lowly school-house, where their friendship commenced, and to the church-yard, beautifully situated on a wooded knoll, where reposed the ashes of their fathers; of the proud, but reduced Sir John, beside those of his humble, but prosperous *doer*. Amid the unpretending lowliness, and somewhat slovenly antiquity of this agricultural quarter of the village, one building alone raised its lofty head, "like a tall bully," to a height of two stories; while its white-washed front, and redolence of windows, bespoke the opulence of its proprietor, no less than the *parterre* in front, with its profusion of peonies and marigolds, did his taste in horticulture. A sardonic smile from Davie directed the eye of Buchanan to the domicile of his brother attorney, even before the fact was put beyond dispute, by a brass plate, containing, in letters half a foot long, the redoubtable name of Mr John Laidlaw, writer.

A head was seen peeping over the blind of a parlour window. "Willie," said the metropolitan scribe, "I thought to have carried ye to

my sister's, and bidden ye rest awhile after your journey, before we gaed up to Marknows; but it'll be hard on ye, gang when ye like, and Johnny Laidlaw's lugs are as lang as his claws. If he gets scent o' me in the town wi' a stranger, he'll suspect something, and maybe throw glamour in our een; at ony rate, he wad hae word up to the leddy, and ye wadna see things just as they are. So e'en set a stout heart to a stey braise; and if the memory o' your saint o' a mother is like to get the better o' ye, let the thought o' the gude ye meditate to her grandson cheer ye up again. Ye'll no need to waste muckle sympathy on your brother's widow, for she's a heartless jade, and grieves mair that there's a flaw in her jointure than that her only son is like to lose his estate. They say the daughters are like hersell, silly taupies, that held their heads sae high while their father lived, that poverty sits upon them a' the waur. But the Captain,—ye'll no see him, I'm thinkin', for he's up in Lonnon,—takes after your auld father, and is a gentleman every inch o' him, wi' twice the wit o' puir Sir John. We maun keep him laird if we can."

Davie availed himself of the silence of Buchanan's full heart, to give the necessary orders to the post-boy, and the travellers quitting the village, a sudden sweep brought them within the massive gates and venerable avenue leading to Marknows. The latter still, thanks to the inveterate prejudices of the late Baronet, boasted most of the same gigantic oaks and far-spreading limes which overshadowed the sports of his ancestors; but his necessities might be read in the occasional blanks in their majestic array, and in the giant stumps, whose moss-grown circumference bore testimony to the grandeur of the fallen. The avenue had gained in cheerfulness what it had lost in solemnity; the sunbeams played freely on its grassy verges, and it hardly seemed to Buchanan the same as when he last traversed it, in a carriage, on a gloomy November morning, to embark for India, or when he first drove in solemn procession along its interminable length, a sorrowful but wondering child, to attend the funeral of his mother. To the last-mentioned of these periods, however, he was so irresistibly recalled, that when, on approaching the termination of the



avenue, his eye rested on the house, the ample escutcheon, which testified the recent demise of his brother, seemed identified with that, the somewhat indecent haste of whose removal had preceded his father's second marriage.

It needed not this association to make every glance at the paternal mansion a dagger to Buchanan. His mother's favourite flower-garden had been early displaced, in the rage for innovation of her successor ; but in Sir John's time, it was at least a shrub-tangled wilderness, where a child might wander unmolested, while the sporting propensities and reckless character of his eldest son, had rendered it the unhallowed site of a kennel of hounds, which had absorbed much of the already impaired revenues of the family. The spot where Marion and he had spent their stolen moments of unrestrained and affectionate intercourse, was for ever desecrated, and regret for the consequences of a ruinous folly, was substituted for its originally pleasing though painful associations.

Another startling change awaited Buchanan. The love of expensive and tasteless alteration had not been confined to his step-mother ; her

successor in office, whose ideas of suburban elegance were dissatisfied with the imposing regularity of *façade*, which Marknows, the work of the first architect of a dignified age, exhibited, chose to fancy the current of air created by the long straight avenue intolerable, and wantonly marred the striking appearance of the building, by walling up its noble entrance, and conducting the bewildered visitor to a sneaking side-door, to procure ingress at which, the sunny summer-parlour, which answered in the days of the first Lady Hamilton the purposes of a modern boudoir, was ruthlessly sacrificed.

It was hard upon Buchanan, who expected, amid the ample bounds of the grand-staircase and saloon, to have time to gather a little self-possession, to be at once ushered by an awkward footman into the very *sanctum sanctorum* of his infant bliss and woe,—to the spot where he had received from his doating parent the daily kiss of maternal fondness, and where he had torn himself in speechless anguish from the last embrace of his orphan sister. But the in-

dignation excited by these wanton changes, served to steel a heart which softer impressions would have unfitted for keeping up the show of business; and the fortunate delay which the desire of appearing before the stranger in all the pomp of widowed woe, occasioned in Lady Hamilton's arrival, allowed him leisure to withdraw his thoughts, by a strong effort, from the past, and enter into his companion's views for the future.

It was in the simple light of a wealthy purchaser for Marknows, that Davie proposed first introducing Buchanan, leaving it to subsequent consideration, and further knowledge of the state of affairs, whether he should step forward in the character of a friend to the family, to avert its sale altogether, by pecuniary advances.

The widow at length arrived—no less anxious to bury in amplitude of crape her paucity of sorrow, than to conceal, by assumed dignity and consequence, the innate vulgarity of her ideas and manners. The latter were the more strikingly offensive to Buchanan, as he



had never had an opportunity of associating with vulgar opulence, and had left his country at a period when stateliness of deportment was nearly universal amid the higher ranks of his countrywomen. His stepmother, a person of equal birth and breeding, had injured, but never disgusted him; but towards the plebeian wife of his easy-minded brother, contempt was soon the predominant feeling.

Of the sale of the estate she spoke with selfish indifference, or rather a suppressed consciousness that her interests, and those of her favourite daughters, would thereby be promoted, as, in its present involved state, their provisions were necessarily uncertain and ill paid; and a glance or two towards Buchanan's fine face and noble figure, convincing her that the Nabob was still worth angling for, she ordered refreshments, whose appearance was the signal for that of the young ladies. Two tall flaunting misses, who had managed to be *fine*, even in crape and bombazine for a parent, entered arm in arm, and so ably seconded by their display the evident designs of their mamma, that the sensitive mind and delicate feelings of Bu-

chanan nearly sunk under the ordeal of being an object of mercenary manœuvres to his own sister-in-law and nieces. It required all the bustling activity of his ally and agent, to cover the absence and disgust of his principal; and after being, as was anticipated, referred to Johnny Laidlaw for further information connected with the property, they were arising to depart, when Davie, who saw at once the person with whom he had to deal, and how superfluous delicacy would be on the occasion, took the widow aside into a window, leaving Buchanan at the mercy of the fair matrimonialists, and said, with his characteristic plainness, “Madam, if my client there, a friend o’ puir Willie Hamilton’s, that ye’ll hae often heard o’, insures you your jointure, wi’ maybe an additional hundred, and the tochers o’ your twa dochters down on the nail, without the sale o’ the land to anither, or even buying it himsell, wad ye be disposed to gie me,—and ye ken I’ve managed mair kittle matters in my time,—a bit line under your hand, that may authorize me to rive the banes o’ the bonny estate o’ Marknows out o’ the claws o’ Johnny

Laidlaw, and make a man o' your noble fellow o' a son again?"

The widow, thus taken by surprise, coloured and fidgeted, and said something about the great obligations of the family to Mr Laidlaw, and his long services.

"Oh! madam, we understand a' that quite weel; it just means that there is a lang account between ye; but there's as gude siller in the Bank o' Edinbro' as in the Bank o' Glasgow; and if Mr Laidlaw gets his due, it signifies little whar it comes frae. My client, ye may believe, is no disposed to gie him mair, and as little wad ye be inclined to wrang your son; so if ye just gie me your bit line, as guardian to your dochters, and acting for Sir Walter, who, I hear, is no in the country, empowering me to settle matters wi' Johnny, it'll gang hard but we'll save the estate yet. One condition only, madam, we maun insist on, that ye'll no say a word to ony ane, no even to the young man, were he to come hame, or the whole affair wad be at an end immediately."

Gudefallow could see, from the gradual dispersion of the cloud on Lady Hamilton's brow,



during this manifesto, that this opportunity of escaping without personal collision and wordy war from the immemorial thralldom of the Gairlie practitioner, was not unacceptable. He placed pen and paper before her, and, stepping to the relief of his friend, left to her uninfluenced judgment the best mode of cashiering the writer.

Her brief epistle bore, "that a highly advantageous purchaser having appeared for the estate, an immediate production of its rent-roll and burdens was of course indispensable; and that she, as sole trustee and guardian for her family, had united with the said intending purchaser, an old friend of the house of Mark-knows, in deputing the highly respectable and skilful Mr Gudefallow of Edinburgh, to co-operate with Mr Laidlaw in bringing matters to a satisfactory issue, the first object of which should be the liquidation of his (Mr Laidlaw's) own long and extensive advances on the property. The arrangement in view being highly advantageous to the family, she was sure Mr L. would be the last man to object to its summary conclusion."

This deathblow to Johnny's *ci-devant* supremacy, she had no more scruple in subscribing as his obliged and faithful servant, than the late Emperor of France had in committing, according to royal usage, of which he was a servile observer, to the holy keeping of God, the brother sovereign whom he intended forthwith to despoil of every earthly appendage.

Buchanan, whose patience during this by-play had wellnigh oozed out at his fingers' ends, and whom a few minutes more would have converted from the reluctant endurer of his nieces' assiduities, into their incensed and indignant uncle, gave a hasty acquiescence to all Davie had engaged for, on condition of inviolable secrecy, and rushing impatiently through his mother's twice polluted sanctuary, threw himself, quite exhausted, into the chaise.

The change from his usually placid and benign deportment was so striking, that Davie ejaculated, "Eh! Willie, man! ye mind me o' the days when ye garr'd the proud woman that your father trembled before, shrink frae the glance o' a laddie! Ye're lang enow at any time, but aye as yon gill-flirts set their sense-

less caps at ye, ye grew taller and taller, till I thought your head wad hae been through the plaster."

In the present mood of Buchanan's mind, it was no small relief to him to find, on returning to the village, that the worthy sister of his friend, whose unconscious kindness would have been a fresh tax on his feelings and powers of dissimulation, was unexpectedly absent on a visit of charity to a sick neighbour, though her well arranged little household afforded all the comforts of which the travellers stood in need. Of these, rest was to Buchanan the most indispensable; and early in the evening, while Davie sought in vain a conference which instinct had taught his brother scribe to avoid, by a real or feigned absence, his friend retired to his chamber, to sleep "with what appetite he might."

The village of Linhaven, the residence of Marion's husband and daughter, was little more than a couple of miles from Gairlie, from which it was separated by the estate of Marknows; to the north-east of which, on a rising ground, the latter hamlet was situated; while the former



lay on the sea-shore, almost hid under beetling cliffs, its site only indicated by the lofty contiguous ruins of the stately castle of Oakenshaws, the patrimonial domain of the Hamiltons, and their residence, till the final devastation of the castle by fire had induced their removal to the more central site of Marknows, on which the present spacious mansion had been erected by the father of Buchanan.

To Linhaven the wanderer's heart would have carried him on the morrow, in spite of the prudential reasons which might have deferred the interview till he could appear there in the unsuspected character of an ordinary resident, had not all struggle between prudence and natural affection been cut short by the information, that Mr Douglas had repaired to Edinburgh on some matters of importance connected with the venerable remnant of Episcopacy of which he was a member, taking with him his daughter, from whom, indeed, he never voluntarily separated, except during her occasional visits to Marknows.

One other member of his father's family had claims, though inferior ones, upon the warm

heart of Buchanan ; and their present vicinity to Glasgow, and the one day more which Gude-fallow could devote to the introduction,—combining the digression, for conscience sake, with a bit of professional business in the Western Metropolis,—determined Buchanan to pay, during the short interval of Douglas's absence, a visit to his half-brother George, of whose establishment as a wealthy and prosperous West India merchant the reader is already aware.

## CHAPTER V.

It was late in the evening when Buchanan arrived in Glasgow, and beyond the wonderfully increased splendour of his hotel, and the great additional length of streets requisite for attaining its central position, he could make no observations on the Western Metropolis. He had visited it more than once when a boy, and his recollections were quite sufficient to make him appreciate, on the morrow, the external improvement which thirty years had accomplished; but it was not till he had estimated with the practised eye of one not unused to traffic, the vast extent of buildings devoted to commercial purposes, and almost countless number of vessels, whose riches every tide deposited on her princely quays, that he felt how fully the wish of the municipal motto\* had been realized.

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\* "Let Glasgow Flourish."



His benevolent heart expanded at the sight of human prosperity in all its forms; but it found a source of more personal and warm gratification in the evident comfort and opulence of his brother, whose family, they learned, were, as usual, enjoying the sultry season in a luxurious villa on the banks of the Clyde, but whom they were fortunate enough to find himself at his equally handsome town residence.

Buchanan, who, on being ushered into his brother's spacious and well furnished dining-room, soon found in the portly and good-looking merchant before him, not only the slightly-altered features of the chubby boy he had loved in spite of his mother, but a strong family resemblance to his dear father, thanked the natural frankness of that brother's manners for a cordial shake of the hand, more congenial to his suppressed feelings than the ordinary courtesies of introduction. With Gudefallow Mr Hamilton was already well acquainted, and the title of his friend sufficed to secure not only a kind reception, but real good-will, to whoever might bear it. After a few preliminary remarks on

trade and the times, the honest writer came at once to the point.

“It is nae news to you, Mr George, that the bonny estate o’ Marknows maun come to the hammer; it’s a pity, nae doubt; but if a’ tales be true, it’s no likely to gang out o’ the family. Ye are said to be an intending purchaser,—if so, my worthy friend here, who has been viewing the place wi’ similar designs, wad be very sorry to stand in your way, and very willin’ to seek out another investment for his *lacks*, as they ca’ them in India.”

“I am sure,” answered the honest merchant, a glow of gratification illuming his comely features, “I consider myself much obliged by your friend’s very handsome conduct in giving me this intimation, and I shall be equally frank in reply. It can seldom suit a man engaged in extensive mercantile transactions to withdraw a large portion of his capital; but though some of the Marknows family, I doubt, would think me but a degenerate scion of the old stock, I cannot forget that I am one; and rather than the place should become the property of stran-



gers, however respectable," bowing to Buchanan, "I would pinch myself and my children now, to keep it in the Hamilton name at least. But I may truly add, that I had far rather it could, as it has ever done, accompany the title, and be nursed for my fine fellow of a nephew, as, with better management than it has of late known, might perhaps be the case. Lady Hamilton and I have little intercourse now-a-days. She faints at the thought of the sugar hogsheads and rum puncheons to which she owes her title, and has forgot the road to Glasgow ever since the day four horses carried her and her dirty tocher to Marknows. There's little enough of it to the fore, if reports be true; and I am sure, for all her airs, I would be heartily glad to lend a helping hand to prop the family-tree with some of my honestly gotten gains."

"Well spoken! and like a man!" said Gudefallow, clapping the worthy merchant on the shoulder; "there's mair Hamilton blude in ye than a' the rum in Jamaica wad ever wash out, if it were even a shame to deal in't, which naebody could think but a fule or a distiller. I maun tell ye, that my friend here,



who's just a merchant like yersell, only that he has been in some wild outlandish kind o' trade, like what the Bible tells o' Solomon, about gold of Ophir and ivory,—whether he dealt in apes and peacocks too, he best kens,—was a college comrade o' your brither Willie's, and, for his sake, wad be mair than willing to join ye in keeping the land and the title thegither. We've been at Marknows, and gotten a search-warrant into matters frae the lady, and if ye'll advance a like sum wi' Mr Buchanan here, say about eight or ten thousand, to get aff some ugly auld bonds that I ken o', at high interest, I think, in spite o' the Deil and Johnny Laidlaw, (that's whiles o'er sib to him,) we may perhaps get a' clear and cantie by the time Sir Walter comes hame frae his campaigns. And I'm thinkin', Mr George, ye'll hae mair pleasure in sittin' at your nephew's ingle, and hearin' him thank ye for its possession, than in ownin' it yersell, and him deein' o' the liver in India,—though folk dinna *aye* die there," with an arch smile at Buchanan,—“or pinin' there for the house and hame o' his forefathers.”

“And so, sir,” said George Hamilton, who,

during the writer's harangue, had been gazing on Buchanan with a strange bewildering kind of consciousness, such as has led some individuals to fancy that they recollected persons or things in a state of pre-existence, "so you were an early companion of my poor brother William's? I remember him very imperfectly, for I was a mere boy when he went away; but he was good and kind to me, though I believe a more unbearable spoilt child never existed; and my sister Marion, who was very like him, and who loved him dearly, often spoke of him after he was gone. Her husband, Mr Douglas, did his best to put sense and principle into me, and if I have either, I owe it to him. If chance throws into your way Willie Hamilton's brother-in-law, your heart, I am sure, will warm towards him."

"It has warmed to his brother already," exclaimed Buchanan, moved beyond the power of entirely suppressing feelings for which he gladly seized a pretext. "I honour what I have already seen, sufficiently to desire further acquaintance with so liberal-minded a member of my own late profession."

Again the brothers shook hands with a warmth to which nature silently prompted the one, as yet unaware of her concern in the matter.

“With all my heart,” said the Glaswegian, cordially; “and as, in our northern island, and especially in this its western portion, nothing cements friendship like a good dinner, suppose you and Mr Gudefallow here take pot-luck with me to-day? You need not dread these ominous words, as one of our great *bon vivans* has called them; for they are not to-day to be literally interpreted, but mean two courses and a dessert; turtle, lime-punch, and preserves, a pleasant party, and a hearty welcome, at five o’clock. I go down of course in the steam-boat, and will call for you at four.”

The invitation was cordially accepted, and while Davie transacted his law-business, Buchanan sallied forth, under the auspices of his brother’s clerk—for his personal Ciceroneship was precluded by professional avocations—to see the manufacturing wonders of Glasgow.

To Buchanan, whose eye had long been familiar with that rude and elementary process by which the patient Indian, seemingly little



advanced in the scale of intellect and activity beyond the spider or silk-worm, which pursue their instinctive labours in the branches above his head, becomes, like those wonderful insects, almost identified with the delicate fabric which gradually unfolds under his hand, the magical celerity and boundless extent of these operations were absolutely astounding; and their effect would have been unmingled admiration, but for the pale countenances of the imprisoned young, and demoralized elder inhabitants of an atmosphere, which had the temperature of the sultry East, without its invigorating breeze.

When Buchanan quitted the huge spinning-mill, with its ceaseless din and complicated marvels, reminding him of the hundred-armed giant of some Eastern romance—it was like turning another page of the same extravagant fictions to the fairy legerdemain of spirits of the fire and air, when he beheld tissues light as the latter element, and formed of the most combustible of all materials, come into actual contact with the former, and escape not only unharmed but embellished. With still livelier surprise, he was shown flowers silently grow-

ing on their clear bosom under the influence of an unseen agent, with unwearying activity, and unvarying regularity ; and when at length the same long dormant power, whose gigantic and yet docile energies had been developed since his departure from his country, lent its aid to waft him along the bosom of the silver Clyde to his brother's villa, he felt as if to achieve such a revolution in human affairs, centuries instead of years must have been necessary.

His reception by the smiling family of his brother corresponded to the hearty profusion of their entertainment. A pleasing wife and flourishing children graced his board ; but Buchanan's fancy was chiefly taken with his eldest nephew, a lad of about sixteen, whose animated countenance and frank manners were peculiarly attractive. The conversation turned after dinner on a tour of two or three days, which the youth was to commence on the morrow with some of his comrades, in one of the first steam-vessels which ambitiously ventured beyond the precincts of the river up Loch Fine ; and Buchanan feeling that a sight of his coun-

try's beauties in such joyous society was likely to be the best medicine for his health and spirits, and the best means of passing the time till the return of Douglas and his daughter to Linhaven, willingly closed with a proposal of accompanying them.

Greenock, with its noble quay and princely custom-house, appeared to Buchanan a meet handmaid for the Queen of the West; but he was glad to escape from the inevitable bustle of a port, to pass the night on the tranquil shores of Bute.

The little town of Rothesay, situated in a deep and lovely bay in the centre of the island, looked picturesque by moon-light, nor did its morning aspect belie the promise it then held out—and from an eminence above it, the bay, the clean, well-built village, the majestic river, and, above all, the fine old ruined Castle, formed a most pleasing panorama.

This ancient fortalice, the former residence of many a Scottish monarch, and which gives its title to the heir of the British crown—with its venerable date of the year 1100, its uncommon and picturesque plan, viz. a perfectly cir-



cular form, with four round towers projecting from the main one, all fantastically overgrown with ivy, and their regularity pleasingly broken by the comparatively modern ruins of a contiguous palace erected by one of the Roberts—seems worthy of a more prominent place in modern song, than its legends and its charms have as yet assigned to it. In the dungeon, a miserable subterranean apartment, fifteen feet by ten, having only a loop-hole, level with the ground, for light and air, young Patrick Lindsay, brother to the Walter Scott of that day, expiated, by a year's imprisonment, some slight offence given to one of the James's; and in the royal family itself, it is said to have been the theatre of events still more tragical. Buchanan's light-hearted fellow-travellers shuddered as they re-emerged from its difficult entrance, and felt for a while the sobering influence of this cave of Trophonius.

On returning to the place of embarkation, the little port exhibited a scene of unusual bustle and activity. Innumerable passengers of all ranks were availing themselves of the popular new conveyance, and articles equally miscellaneous, from agricultural implements to

children's toys, were scattered on the deck, to gladden the hearts of young and old in the hitherto rarely accessible Hebrides. Gigs and horses, pointers and pheasants, might be seen side by side. The former conveying sporting travellers to scenes of Highland hospitality; the latter providing new and unknown sports for the inhabitants of the *ultima Thule*. All seemed to indicate that this cloudy and mysterious region had come suddenly within mortal ken, and would henceforth exchange poetic sublimity for the substantial comforts of civilized life.

The bold and lofty peaks of Arran, rising abruptly from the noble sheet of water, whose entrance they seem to guard—that broad expanse itself, with its high and rugged shores—the towers of Maccallummore, though erected at an unfortunate period, and partaking neither of the grandeur of antiquity, nor the revived Gothic taste of our own day—above all, the fantastic summit of Dunicoich, and the interminable avenues of ancient trees diverging from the Castle in all directions, afforded unmixed delight to the returned Scotchman. They realized the Caledonia of his fancy, if not of his

actual remembrance, and blended with it that freedom and solitude of the East, for which, amid the unwonted haunts of men, he still occasionally sighed. He could have lingered for ever among the delightful charms of nature, but her voice still more powerfully called him to Linhaven, and the third day from his leaving Glasgow brought him back to the Western Metropolis.

Buchanan had no sooner rested a little from the fatigue of his excursion than he strolled down to the town house of his brother, where he was agreeably surprised to find the female members of the family. His reception from Mrs Hamilton and the young people was as kind as ever; but he could not help perceiving that it wanted the cheerful cordiality of their last meeting, and that a kind of ominous sadness sat on the open brow of his brother's wife, and extended its sombre influence even over the youngest of the group around her. In spite of the interest it derived from his recent voyage, conversation soon flagged; refreshments were offered with a languid courtesy, so different from the former frank hospitality that would take no



denial, that Buchanan felt it would be a relief to all parties to put an end to this visit.

He was about to do so, when the well-known step of the master of the house, heard on the stair-case, threw his wife into a state of nervous agitation, which it was wholly beyond her power to disguise, and sent her, scarcely apologizing to her distressed visitor, abruptly out of the room. Few words passed between her and her husband ere his entrance, but their import might be gathered from suppressed hysteric sobs, which soon caught the ear of the bewildered children, and hurried them after their beloved and hitherto ever-smiling mother. Hamilton entered, his manly frame trembling with emotion, which he seemed determined to conquer, but gathering from misfortune a dignity which was not the habitual character of his open and guileless countenance.

Buchanan could scarce stammer words of course about the unseasonableness of a visit which he began to suspect might be critically providential, when George, detaining him, said, in a changed but steady voice, "Mr Buchanan, I cannot allow you to quit Glasgow in igno-

rance of an event which a few days must make public. You behaved handsomely in consulting me respecting my views on the family estate; all thoughts of purchasing, all hopes of redeeming it, are alike at an end with me. My creditors have just met, and in three days George Hamilton's name will be in the gazette, and his wife and children in the street! I thank God, no man can charge me with dishonesty, extravagance, or even imprudence, for the rash speculation which has beggared me was another's! Excuse my agitation, Mr Buchanan—it is not for myself—Wife and bairns, they make a man soft-hearted! Annie will dry her tears, and be the same kind creature in the storm she has ever been in the sunshine. But perhaps I count too much on the goodness of a stranger's heart, when I hope that your fancy for my boy may put him in the way of earning his bread honestly. You are from India—will you help a pennyless lad to an honourable existence?"

"By the God that succoured me when I was one myself!" exclaimed Buchanan, whose only oaths were solemn adjurations, on similar oc-

casions, "and by the Father that gave us both birth, George Hamilton's son shall never want a friend in his uncle William!"

Is it recorded, that Joseph wept upon the neck of his brethren, estranged, alienated, and hostile, though they were; and shall we be ashamed to own that tears relieved the full hearts of our two brothers, and gave vent to the long-suppressed agitation of the one, and the exquisite joy of the other? Buchanan, whose emotions were less complicated, first recovered his voice, and blessed aloud the Being who had prospered his far pilgrimage, and made him, like the patriarch, a prop to his father's house. He felt, indeed, as if the same unerring finger had directed his return at so critical a time, to avert from it the horror and disgrace of bankruptcy, and would not have hesitated to apply all he was worth to the pious purpose. Far less, however, he was aware would suffice; for the unimpeachable integrity of George Hamilton had secured him many friends, and an advance of some thousands to meet immediate and unforeseen claims, seemed all that was requisite to support the credit of a long-established and re-



spectable firm. The satisfaction which this opportune loan, for such it was of course to appear to the world at large, diffused among those to whom the worthy merchant's temporary peril was known, confirmed Buchanan's partial impressions, and made him proud indeed of his upright brother, who, accepting the fraternal obligation as frankly and liberally as it was tendered, stipulated only for permission to gladden his Annie's kind heart, by a knowledge of the tie that bound her to his benefactor.

The good creature, who, as her husband had predicted, was soon strengthened by piety and conjugal affection against the impending blast, proved a very woman in giving way to the effects of joy, and shed ten tears for every one which the loss of fortune had called forth. She repaid Buchanan richly for all his bounty, by a heartfelt tribute of praise to Douglas and his daughter; and from her he gathered a thousand interesting particulars relative to his niece, such as female lips could alone do justice to. Among a host of delightful and engaging qualities, Marion had but one fault with her doating aunt, and that was of a very pardonable nature, viz.,

her reluctance to quit her father's side for any other society, however dear and congenial.—Douglas, indeed, deserved such devotion, for he had reared her with a father's solicitude and a mother's tenderness.

To remain longer apart from such relatives was impossible ; and for Linhaven, Buchanan departed, without farther delay than sufficed to give his brother George an unlimited credit on Gudefallow, and receive in return from the latter such credentials as should enable him, in pursuance of a system of incognito, which he felt could not be of long duration, to claim as a stranger the good offices of the pastor and his daughter.

He found, in passing through the immediate neighbourhood of his paternal mansion, little save the immutable features of nature, to claim his sympathies or awaken his recollections. Cultivation and improvement had here, it was true, been less rapid in their strides than in the east of Scotland ; and the diminishing wealth of the proprietors of Marknows, had left their cottages and steadings in a state of picturesque dilapidation. But the race which tenanted these pri-

mitive habitations was no more; and among their descendants (for few families had been dispossessed) Buchanan could not, consistently with his incognito, assert his hereditary claims.

One farm alone, the residence of his foster-father, and the scene of many a blessed day of boyish emancipation from restraint and unkindness, he could not bring himself to pass unvisited; though he well knew, that the nurse who tended him through a puny and wayward infancy, and her honest goodman, who had always a smile for him, even more cordial than that which his own hardy offspring drew forth, were both resting from their labours in a better world. The rosy boys, who grew up in hearty, unceremonious comradeship with the Baronet's son, were all dead, or dispersed in foreign climates; and the farm had, for more than twenty years, been possessed by a bright-eyed happy girl—his nurse's only daughter, and Buchanan's foster-sister, whom he used to call his little wife, and whose infant beauty made her the pet of all the hamlet round—and by her kind-hearted hard-working husband. But he too was gone—carried off, by lingering disease, in



the midst of honest, though unprosperous industry; and the widow, after a hopeless struggle to keep the farm, was about to remove, as soon as an humbler dwelling could be found to shelter her prematurely helpless condition.

Buchanan had heard somewhat of this, though vaguely; for the lowly steading of Briary Bush was beyond the scope of Gudefallow's walks of benevolent inquiry, and situated in the upland part of the property, farthest from the high-road. To this spot the returned wanderer found himself irresistibly attracted, as much by the hope of contributing, in some indirect manner, to the comfort of its inmates, as by the force of youthful attachment.

The day was hot and sultry, and the walk one of two miles at least from the village of Gairlie, where his carriage remained; so that there was little of pretext in the thirst and fatigue, which were to form Buchanan's plea for intrusion. When he approached the well-known, though dilapidated cottage, (whose thatch looked the more rugged, and its garden the more overgrown, that all else in Scotland seemed to have advanced while it had retrograded,) such a

profound stillness reigned around the desolate doors, that Buchanan concluded the removal to have taken place, and regretted his own tardiness in not having sooner found his way thither.

On coming close to an open window, however, a low murmuring sound, as of whispered conversation, testified the presence of inhabitants ; and he felt it almost equally unjustifiable to listen or intrude. Not to look in was, however, impossible ; and he was inexpressibly struck, on perceiving that the sounds he had mistaken for conversation, proceeded from recitations of Scripture, with which the only inmate of the cottage was beguiling her solitude.

Beside an almost expiring fire, which even at this genial season her thin and wasted frame seemed to render necessary, sat a figure in a widow's garb, so meekly beautiful even amid infirmity and sorrow, that he would at once have recognised Lilly Arnot, even had the singularly brilliant black eyes, for which, as a child, she was celebrated, not sufficed to identify his once blooming foster-sister. She had been knitting ; but her work had dropped on

her knee, superseded by the loftier meditations in which she was engrossed ; and, with her fine eyes turned towards heaven, she was just pronouncing, with the animation of settled, though long-tried faith, the words, “ A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation.”

When Buchanan lifted the latch, and gave her the traveller’s homely good-morrow, she started on hearing the step and address, but made no attempt to come forward ; and though, directed by the sound, her eyes turned in the proper direction, there was just enough of peculiarity in their unimpaired brightness, to inform him that poor Lilly, in addition to grief and poverty, was blind ! This, though it conveyed a pang to his benevolent heart, seemed to hold out facilities for unsuspected intercourse, and emboldened him to request, as a weary pedestrian, a seat at her fireside, and, when some more active member of the family should return, a draught of milk or water.

Lilly hung a moment on his words, as if some reminiscence was dimly connected with their sound, to an ear sharpened by privation of sight,



then rising with a sigh, answered that she was not so helpless as to be unable to move freely about her own dwelling. "I ken a' the gaits o't ower weel to do mysell a mischief here; but oh! it'll be lang ere I get sic freedom in a fremit house! It's hard, sir, for onybody to flit at my time o' life, but harder still for ane that's blind; for the neuks and corners I've been sae lang acquaint wi' 'll aye be afore my mind, and I'll no can learn them I never saw wi' my bodily een. But what signifies it?" added she, resignedly; "I'll hae little room to reel whar I'm gaun, and less still whar we maun a' gae ere lang!" So saying, she stepped softly into an adjoining closet, and dipping a wooden *quaich*, with whose position she seemed familiar, into the nearest milk-dish, walked almost directly up to Buchanan with the grateful beverage.

"I feel quite concerned to have given you this trouble, gudewife," said Buchanan, as composedly as his emotion would allow.

"Trouble! nae trouble at a'," replied the kind creature; "I'm blythe to hae something to offer a weary man at my ain fireside. It's the

last day I'll hae ought to do wi' kye, that I was amang a' my days; and I canna but think a kind Providence sent ye to bring a blessing on her that maun henceforth be content to gie a cup o' cold water in her Master's name!—Ye maun pree the bannocks,—for I've ane to bake for me, blind though I be,—so I'm better aff than mony ane, for a' my sinfu' repining."

"How long has this misfortune befallen you?" asked Buchanan, with deep feeling.

"About fifteen years syne, as near as I can remember," replied his hostess, resuming her seat opposite, the undiminished lustre of her bright eyes lending singular interest to her tale of sorrowful privation. "I was sitting my lane in the house, as I was when you cam' in e'en now. A' the folk were in the har'st field, and I had been unco thrang baking cakes for the rantin' kirk we were to hae gin night. I was wearied aye stooping afore the fire, and fand my een a wee stiff and curious; but I thought naething o't, and drew in my wheel to divert mysell spinning till the folk cam' in. On a sudden, I felt as if my lang hair, that was snooded up gayan loosely under my cap, had fallen

ower my een, and lifted my hand to put it back again. There was nae hair there !—but there was something like a thick curtain before my precious sight, and I never saw light again from that day to this. God forgie me—but I wasna sae resigned as I should hae been for mony a day. As lang as there was hope, there was impatience wi't ; but when a' the doctors in Glasgow said man could do nothing for me, I turned me to my God, and was enabled to say, ' The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord ! ' ”

“ I hope,” said Buchanan, after a solemn pause, “ you found, under Providence, comforters in your own household ? You have a family ? ”

“ I had, sir, in the days of my health and strength ; whether any remain to my age and adversity, He only kens who kens everything ! I buried a son and daughter before their father, but they died in the Lord, and I could see them taken out o' an evil world without sinful sorrow. But I had a laddie, sir, that I likit ower weel for his gude and my ain. He was my youngest, and but a callant at the schule



when I lost my sight, and being aye a gentle creature, and a grand scholar, he wad leave his play at ony time to read me a chapter, or help me to toddle to the door. The gudeman wad hae keepit him at hame to follow the plough, and weel might it hae been wi' us a', had this douce wiselike plan been followed; but Jamie was a thought proud, and no very stout, and the country way didna gae wi' his heart at a'. I was proud and foolish too, and fancied the lad ower gude for his honest father's calling; so I pinched and scrapit to keep him at the writing and counting, till the master said he was fit to be clerk to the King, and wi' muckle ado, and mony shakes o' the gudeman's head, I got him into a great muslin warehouse in Glasgow. Here he cost us a deal o' siller to keep him braw and neibour-like; but I didna grudge it when he cam at the New-Year to see us, and crackit wi' his auld master like a very newspaper, about times and prices, and I heard the lasses gaun by to the kirk, say, he was mair like a gentleman than a farmer's son. Aweel, sir, ye'll mind the great crash in Glasgow, when half the merchants broke, and the tither

half quaked in their shoon? Clerks were paid off in hundreds, and Jamie, that was but a young servant to a young master, was amang the first to be turned adrift. He seemed little cast down for a while, and spent a hantle o' his father's hard-won siller hanging on for a place about Edinburgh, but he couldna succeed; and in an evil day, after a weary summer's idleness at hame, he put his foot in a vessel, and sailed for Lonnon. Here he thought places grew in the streets; but instead o' that, they were swarming wi' pennyless lads like himsell. What to do he knew not—' he could not dig, and to beg he was ashamed.' He couldna bear to be a burden to his father, who, by this time, was frail and sickly, and gaun down in the world—so, God forgie the witless laddie! what does he do but list for the East Indies, and write us word o't when the ship was just sailing, and the matter past redemption! Oh! sir, when I got the letter, and thought o' my weel-faur'd, genteel, tenderly brought up laddie, carrying a musket, and broiling under yon awfu' sun,—him, that when he wad hae shorn a rig for a ploy, was maist as feckless and sune wearied

as his auld mither,—my very heart died within me ! The gudeman's got a death-blow. He lived years after, but aye minded me o' Jacob after Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites ! When his day's wark was ower muckle for him, as was maistly the case, he wad hae sighed out Johnny's name, that was a stout fellow, and had he been spared, wad hae made a grand farmer ; but when he couldna red up his year's accounts, and wanted a clear head and a ready pen to mak' a' right for the factor, Jamie's being off the country lay at his heart like a lump o' lead. Ye may be sure mine wasna light ! I blamed my folly, and I missed my bairn ; but as folk aye tell't me he wad get prize-money and promotion, I tried to think o' him as a sodger wi' some measure o' patience.

“ And he did get baith, puir fallow ! in course o' time, though it was lang ere we heard it, wi' sae mony thousand miles between us. He came, sir, to be a sergeant, and weel likit by his officers, as I have under their ain hands ; and it was ten pounds he sent in his last letter, that gae his puir father a blink o' pleasure on his death-bed, and a wiselike burial when a' was



dune. But, sir, it's three year amaist since that letter was wrote, though we only got it a year later by a neibour's son; and the young man that brought it said he was beginning to tak' ill wi' the climate, though he never let on to us. I've maist lost hope about my laddie, for had he been in life, he wad hae written. I whiles think I could better bear a certainty, than siccan a suspense; for oh! sir, ye canna think what it is to hae your nearest and dearest at the tither end o' the warld, and no to ken whether they be living to think on and pray for, or laid in strange earth, wi' some o' yon outlandish palm-trees ye see in Bible pictures, growing ower their grave!"

Buchanan's heart smote him at this unconscious reproof; but a sudden idea diverted his thoughts into a new and more pleasing channel. "What is your son's name, gudewife?" asked he, hastily—"yours is Arnot, is it not?"

"Ay, sir," said she, "Lilly Arnot, daughter to the farmers o' this place, frae father to son, for gude kens how lang; but my man's name and Jamie's was Fleming."

Buchanan, with a faltering hand, drew out

his pocket-book, unfolded in breathless haste and anxiety a letter it contained, and having glanced at its signature, rose and stood before his unconscious hostess.

“My worthy Lilly,” said he, “it has pleased Providence, as you augured, to bless my visit here. Your son was alive and well within these six months, when I saw him at Calcutta.”

“Did ye, indeed?” faltered the bewildered mother, after a pause, and a silent thanksgiving to Heaven from her sightless orbs.—“It’s mair than ever I’ll do!—but oh! God be praised for his health and safety! And is he no worn out or destroyed wi’ that weary sodgering, and him never stout, and latterly no weel? How does he look? He’ll hae lost a’ his fine ruddy colour, and skin that was fair as ony lady’s?—But if he be spared, what signifies looks?”

“He is not a soldier now, Lilly,” said Buchanan, gently. “His good education and excellent conduct made him many friends in his regiment; and when it was pronounced that his health was unequal to active service, they kindly, though unwillingly, parted with him for his

good. They recommended him to Government at Calcutta, and he is now a clerk in a public office, with L.150 a-year salary."

"Gude safe's! mair than the rent o' Briary Bush!" ejaculated the astonished mother. "Oh! that the gudeman had lived to hear tell o't!—maybe it wad hae kept him out o' his grave till now. But oh! sir, I hope James's no spending a' this siller, but laying it up cannily to come hame wi'?"

"He is laying it up, where alone treasure is incorruptible, Lilly," said Buchanan, "by doing his duty with it to his mother. That very letter in your hand (gently closing her fingers on the precious paper) gives you twenty pounds for present comfort, and secures you the like sum yearly, while your son lives and holds his present situation."

"Blessings on the dear mindfu' creature!" exclaimed the overwhelmed mother,—“the blessing of Him whose favour is life!—But how did you fa' in wi' my Jamie? Ye maun excuse my asking a' about it."

"Having complicated affairs to wind up, my good friend, with the office your son writes in,



I was pleased with his correctness in business, and taken with his gentle modest manners—One Scotsman's heart soon warms to another—I found out he was Ayrshire, and a new tie arose between us——”

“So you're o' this country?” interrupted Lilly, on this somewhat incautious admission—“I'm glad to hear it—I hope ye're come to settle?”

“I hope so too,” said Buchanan, mentally, then continued aloud—“Well, Jamie finding me about to sail for Europe, told me he had a mother, to whom during his long and lingering illness he had been unable or unwilling to write, but hoped to make up for it, by the pleasing nature of his present dispatches. The letter is in your hand, Lilly; its contents you already know from me. I have only to add, that he is all a mother can wish, and hopes to be home whenever he has saved enough to make you and one other person comfortable.”

“That's Mary Lee!” exclaimed the mother joyfully.—“I aye said it,—I said it but yesterday, when the lassie sat greetin' whar you sit now, and fearing that, though Jamie were spa-

red, he wad never remember her ; and yet there was aye word till her in a' the letters we got—at the very end, as gin he were blate to write her name. Little does he ken, that, but for her, I wad hae been roupit out a year sooner ! She toiled and fought, and kept a' right as lang as it wad keep ; and it was but yestreen she refused a grand place, to sit and spin at my cauld lonesome ingle, through the lang winter nights !”

“ It need be no cold ingle now, Lilly,” said Buchanan ; “ your son’s kindness will make it cozie and canty enough.”

“ Oh, sir,” said she, “ prosperity makes folk uplifted and unreasonable ! Wad ye believe it ? wi’ a’ my joy at my son’s welfare and bounty, I’m wae to flit, and wad gie the half o’t, to get leave to wear out my days at Briary Bush.”

“ Could any one manage the farm for you, were it taken during your life ?” asked her foster-brother, trying to act a stranger’s cautious part.

“ Oh, ay—Mary Lee’s brother, that should hae been my gudeson, had it pleased the Lord to spare Phemie, wrought to me the last two years for half wages, to keep us a’ thegither ;

and if the stock could ance be bought and the first year's rent paid, Jock Lee would hae the bit land in heart in a jiffy. He's a hard-working, weel-doing, kind-hearted creature—and likes as ill to gae aff the taft as mysell. But what need I speak o' what canna be, when I have sae muckle cause to praise the Lord for his goodness ! I've mair need to thank you, sir, for bringing sic joyfu' tidings to a blind woman's fireside. Her blessing be wi' you, and a welcome to the land o' your nativity ! Ye say ye're o' the shire o' Ayr ; was you born and bred far frae this ?”

“ My cradle, Lilly, stood where you sit now, and often have we both lain in it ! Have you forgotten your tall foster-brother ?”

“ Lord have a care o' us, Mr William !” exclaimed Lilly, “ are you in the land o' the living ? If I didna think frae the time ye first spoke there was something no a'thegither strange about ye ! Come here and loot down, for I couldna reach ye lang afore ye were done growing, and let me feel your face ; it's a' the sight I have now, and never deceives me.” She passed her hand slowly over his features,



and said, "Little altered! Little altered! I would have kent ye onywhere, by the brent-brow and hawk-nose. But ye'll be brown, brown, like my Jamie, nae doubt, and nae sic white-faced, delicate-looking thing as ye was when my puir mother said she wad rather rear ten lairds than ae Jock the laird's brother."

"Perhaps I'll be laird mysell, Lilly, before long," said Buchanan. "The estate, you know, is to be sold. If I buy it, you need not be told the farm is yours for life; if anybody else is purchaser, I'll enable you to take it safely; and in the meantime, on the strength of your son's money (the amount of which you need not publish) you can stop the roup, and retain the stocking till the estate itself is sold."

"And oh! but I'll be glad to keep Bell and Whitefoot!—and so will Mary Lee!—Puir lassie, I wish she wad come hame and hear the news—I'm no right till I tell her!"

"Tell her only what relates to Jamie, my good friend," said Buchanan, warmly shaking his old playfellow's hand, and insinuating into it a well-filled purse for present emergencies.

"My being alive, and in the country, is a secret

which this room could alone have drawn forth, and which this room must keep like the grave, till it suits me to disclose it. I am sure it is safe with you; and the more so, when I tell you, that were it to get wind, I should never be laird of Marknows. You would not like to sit under a stranger."

"Na, na! but I hear sae muckle gude o' the young man down by, that I'm sorry he should hae to flit. Ye ken I'm no fond o' flitting mysell—Pity his father lived to ruin the puir lad! If my mother had nursed him, he would have had mair wit; but it was ane o' their thriftless English women that was gotten for him, for he was ower precious to be sent out like yoursell and Miss Marion. And she's dead—puir thing! but mony a time I speer after the bonny bairn she's left, and wad gie a great deal to hear her speak, and find if she's like her mother!"

"That ye shall, and very soon, Lilly," said Buchanan, forcing himself away, "provided you keep my counsel, which is your own also, and provided you add a prayer to your usual one to-night, for your returned foster-brother."

“Ye’ll no want an auld woman’s prayers, nor a young ane’s neither—when Mary Lee hears you have seen Jamie and been a friend to him. God’s blessing and mine gae wi’ ye, Maister Willie. Oh ! that my puir mither could hae lived to see your hamecoming !”

Buchanan felt a new tie to home in this worthy creature’s affectionate remembrance, and a fresh motive to become the purchaser of Marknows, in a desire to secure her against the possibility of removal. There was something, however, still more gratifying to his pride, generosity, and better feeling, in her disinterested tribute to the merits of the rightful, though impoverished heir : while her fond aspirations, after an interview with the daughter of his Marion, only heightened the emotions with which he anticipated the approaching meeting.

He regained his carriage by a by-path, which he had forgotten when on his way to the cottage, as if every idea connected with home had acquired renewed distinctness by his colloquy with its inhabitant. Every object on the road leading to Linhaven partook of the magical influence. The ragged stumps and venerable thistles



of a relic of the Gairlie Muir were hailed as individual acquaintances, and the very sheep pronounced lineal descendants of those whom his favourite terrier, Nettle, came to an untimely end for chasing. With the manes of Nettle were conjured up whole regiments of spectre rabbits, and as their fleshly prototypes popped in and out from innumerable holes in the sandbanks which flanked the road, Buchanan half-wondered that the race should have survived his boyish persecution.

His boyhood and all its pastimes flashed upon his memory. In these, his sister, for lack of female companions, had been a willing, though gentle auxiliary. They had mingled smiles and tears on earth, and though this lovely being was now where the latter are forgotten, he fancied she might yet smile from Heaven on his fatherly embrace of her orphan child.

## CHAPTER VI.

It will be necessary to go back a few months in our history, to introduce our readers to the kind-hearted and well-meaning, though weak and undignified Sir James Hamilton, whose health had long been rapidly declining under the influence of hereditary gout and habitual hard living; and to the son, whom, young as he was, he regarded with mingled feelings of respect and fond parental partiality.

Sir James, having married, more from complaisance to his friends, than preference for the lady, the daughter of a West India merchant and planter, with whose supposed large fortune it was deemed expedient to prop the exhausted finances of the family, but which, like many of those derived from the same sources, fell infinitely short of previous expectation, indemnified himself for this important concession, by spending twice his increased income, and doubling

those expenses connected with the sports of the field, in which he sought and found emancipation from matrimonial thralldom. Being, however, as good-natured as thoughtless, he at the same time allowed Lady Hamilton to suit her domestic establishment to her own lofty pretensions as an heiress, and her hospitalities to her taste, as the patroness of a host of upstart and needy relations ; so that before her father's death, the portion of her fortune which was tangible, (the rest being secured on herself and younger children,) was absorbed by the pressing demands of immediate creditors, without going, as had been planned, towards the extinction of the large debts which the young Baronet had contrived to incur in the army, during the life of his father, or even that father's own uncanceled obligations.

Old Sir John had been rather of a litigious turn, and that disposition, strengthened by his pecuniary embarrassments, had led him to resist many just claims, which, after being nursed, by the fostering care of Johnny Laidlaw, into vigorous thriving law-suits, had fallen with tre-



bled inconvenience on the head of his improvident successor.

It is quite needless, in these days of ingenuity and invention, when the art of ruin has made at least equal progress with all the sister sciences, to trace the gradations, by which a goodly estate becomes at length, as it were, a *caput mortuum*, or empty shell, like the fair outside husk of a hazel-nut, which has been the silent prey of a devouring insect. What with augmentations and litigations, interests and annuities, a writer *and* a pack of hounds, (*either* being reputed adequate to the purpose,) the estate of Marknows, with a rental of more than four thousand a-year, did not yield a clear eight hundred; and the entail, notwithstanding the marvellous facility with which, in our calculating age and country, entailed lairds find both money and credit, had long presented a serious obstacle to the levying of resources, by the usual and regular means. What others were resorted to will hereafter appear.

Sir James had done two things, of which a wiser man might have been proud. Feeling the deficiencies of his own education, he had

given his only son the best his country afforded; and sensible that his own society and pursuits had nothing in them congenial with such a preparation, he had placed Walter, immediately on its completion, in the Guards. The young man had since been rarely at home, and that only for short periods, during which his respectful and affectionate deportment towards parents, to whose failings he could not be blind, had excited general admiration, while his pleasing manners and soldierlike frankness had conciliated universal good-will.

Five years had now elapsed from his last visit, since which his name had appeared in more than one gazette, and more than one proud field in Spain had borne testimony to his determined bravery; and to his former estimation as a dutiful son, a delightful companion, in short, the handsome *enfant gâté* of the whole neighbourhood, was now added the matured reputation of a distinguished soldier and accomplished gentleman. He had, in consequence of a severe wound, obtained leave of absence soon after the battle of Q——, and hopes were entertained that he might arrive in time to grace

with his presence a brilliant ball, with which that decisive victory was to be celebrated at the county town of ——shire.

His father, worn out with pain and sickness, longed, while he half feared, to see his gallant and injured boy; while Lady Hamilton's natural feelings and maternal vanity derived fresh excitement from a scheme of matrimonial ambition, from which she anticipated the removal of all the pecuniary embarrassments of Marknows.

It may be as well, before the arrival of the young soldier, to say a word of the fair object of this golden speculation, one far more dazzling as well as substantial, than that which had formerly promised to endow the family with a precarious wealth, the sport of hurricanes, and subject to all the capricious fluctuations of trade.

Chance had conducted to Scotland, about twenty years before, an opulent London banker of the name of Hawtayne, who, being desirous of investing in land a portion of his immense fortune, and viewing with a prophetic eye the dawning prosperity of Scotland, was easily in-



duced to become proprietor of a large and highly improvable estate, immediately adjoining to Marknows. He lived to see his judicious conduct rewarded by the more than doubled value of his purchase; and, becoming partial to the rising country, with which, on the mother's side, he was connected, he had just finished building a splendid house, with a view to his future residence, when sudden illness snatched him away in the prime of life, leaving an only daughter, still a child, during whose minority Hawtayne-hall, or Heathery-haugh, (as the country people persisted in calling it,) was let to various occupants.

Early in the present summer, the heiress had become of age, and, in compliance with positive directions in her father's will, had come down to take possession of the estate, where he wished, though without absolutely binding her to do so, that she should in future chiefly reside.

The arrival of a young woman thus gifted by fortune, and, report said, no less so in person and talents, created no small sensation in a country neighbourhood; and all were at first

disposed to judge favourably of youth, wealth, and beauty. Three months, however, had sufficed thoroughly to break these usually powerful spells, and except by a pretty numerous class of parasites, both male and female—old ladies who liked Mrs Hawtayne's whist-table, young ones who found her daughter's barouche a luxurious conveyance, and her London fashions a valuable addition to their wardrobe; and a few fortune-hunting younger brothers, who thought Hawtayne-hall a devilish good lounge, and the heiress a d—d good speculation,—Margaret Hawtayne was universally pronounced a cold-hearted, selfish, spoilt child, whom adulation could no longer gratify, nor amusement excite, but who yet retained all the pleasure in display which arises from the mortified vanity of others. This was, however, at first only whispered by the envious, slowly assented to by the candid, and denied by the charitable. She was very young, and for the failings of youth allowance will always be made. She had a desperately silly mother, and flatterers had fanned her very cradle with their poisonous breath. She was indubitably clever, and wanted neither

sense nor discrimination; and from these qualities some augured a favourable change in her manners and conduct.

Among her few warm partisans and ardent admirers, were Lady Hamilton and her daughters, whose congeniality of character might have accounted for the predilection, had more powerful motives been wanting. Lady Hamilton cultivated, as she thought, with consummate address, the intimacy of the heiress, and internally smiled as she contrasted the awkward devoirs of the few young men who surrounded her footstool, with the paramount attractions of her absent son, whose success in achieving this golden enterprise, she considered as certain as his docility in undertaking it. She did, indeed, recollect some tokens of boyish partiality towards his pretty modest cousin, Marion, which had sufficed to exile her from Marknows during the greater part of his last visit, and to reconcile his mother to the abrupt termination of his furlough; but as to their coming in competition, especially in the present state of the family affairs, with L.6000 a-year in land, and as much



more in ready cash, it was too idle to be thought of for a moment.

Lady Hamilton had, of course, paved the way for her son's arrival, by high-flown and not very judicious encomiums, which would have had little weight in Miss Hawtayne's mind, had they not been fully confirmed by general and more unsuspected testimony.

This was sufficiently unanimous and flattering to excite a lively interest in one sated with common-place adulation, disposed to regard with contempt all her present admirers, and heartily tired of the insipid routine of a country life, to the monotonous tenor of which she hoped the intended ball, and the arrival of its Peninsular hero, would prove a welcome interruption.

The day was at length fixed, the arrival of Captain Hamilton, wholly unconscious of the part he was expected to play on the occasion, being confidently calculated on. The evening, however, came, and he had not appeared; and Lady Hamilton half regretted the knowledge of his character, which had prompted her merely to mention the ball slightly and incidentally, in-

stead of boldly assuming her maternal privilege, and making a point of his attendance. Through the town where it was held, he *must*, however, pass on his way to Marknows; and the arrival of the Mail there being at a late hour of the night, she would not resign hopes till that had elapsed.

The ball was extremely brilliant. The proposed charitable appropriation of the funds to the widows and orphans of the victors of Q—— had secured an unusually crowded attendance, and the hopes of seeing one of the heroes of the day lent attraction to the gay scene. The less fashionable part of the neighbourhood, whose object was innocent amusement, and a long dance, arrived early; and Lady Hamilton, fearful lest her son should elude her wishes by driving past the festive assembly to his father's bed-side, was also in good time, attended by her supercilious daughters, and (a pleasure with which, had decency permitted, they could have all dispensed) by her lovely and interesting niece, whose invariable simplicity of costume accorded so admirably with her pure guileless charac-

ter, and its index her serene, and almost celestial countenance.

Marion, to do a selfish and evil world justice, was adequately appreciated and universally beloved. Always gentle and retiring, she disarmed envy and defeated malice, could they have been harboured against so unoffending a superiority. Devotion to her father, and, latterly, the jealousy of her aunt and cousins, rendered her appearances in society rare and transient; and as, on the present occasion, it was some months since she had been publicly seen, the interest of novelty was added to the usual charms of her lovely face and figure. She was becoming, almost painfully to herself, the magnet of universal attraction, when a diversion in her favour was operated by the late arrival of Miss Hawtayne, attended, as might be conjectured, with all the noise, bustle, and disregard of others, which consciousness of innate superiority dictates on similar occasions.

Her train, which in numbers rivalled a royal suite, was, like that, composed of many subordinate personages, beneath the dignity of history; three permanent characters, however, in



the domestic drama, claim, by their importance and prominence, a few words of description.

But for the portly circumference of her person,—whose silken covering varied as regularly as the foliage of certain trees, on the approach of winter, from bright green to scarlet,—and but for the brilliance of her huge diamond earrings, the world would have been in danger of forgetting the existence of Mrs Hawtayne. Indeed her unwearied complacency, and total insignificance of character, rendered her, in all respects, a most convenient *chaperon* for a young lady so determined and independent in all her ways of thinking as her daughter.

But a far more important character in the family, being that called by the courtesy of the French stage, before the curtain, the “*Confidante*,” and behind it the “*Double* ;” and for which, in ordinary life, that polite language has devised the felicitous term of “*Complaisante*,” was sustained by Miss Ingram, the quondam governess of Miss Hawtayne, and now her friend. Ordinary features, a small agile figure, admirably adapted for the prompt execution of those innumerable commissions which it is one of the

sports of indolent wealth to devise, a soft insinuating manner, a convenient laxity of opinion, and truly cameleon-like faculty of instantly reflecting the hue of the moment from her patroness's mind, exquisitely fitted Miss Ingram for her arduous station, and had enabled her to effect the happy change from the despised and tormented governess of an indulged hoyden, to the friend and companion of the accomplished heiress.

Some persons may be found sufficiently sceptical to doubt the existence of friendship between persons so circumstanced; but this can only proceed from mistaking the ordinary foundation of that most interested of all compacts. Miss Hawtayne loved flattery, and hated trouble—consequently she was fond of Miss Ingram. Miss Ingram liked good dinners, company, dress, and idleness; hated teaching—had no other resource, and consequently idolized Miss Hawtayne.

As the most perfect and well-cemented friendships are, however, necessarily subject to transient interruptions, Miss Ingram was sometimes

so far thrown off her guard by a more than common fit of unreasonableness in her principal, as to allow, in a whisper, that her dear friend was rather *particular*; and Miss Hawtayne, when her satirical weapons threatened to rust for want of exercise, was sometimes known to keep herself in wind by quizzing good Miss Ingram.

This latter lady, though by no means deficient in tact or judgment, sometimes laid herself open to these friendly scarifications by too close and injudicious an imitation of some of her principal's amiable eccentricities, which the disparity of their situation might have taught her to avoid. Ten thousand a-year, and a case of fine teeth, entitled Miss Hawtayne to indulge, particularly among her male intimates, in that either absolutely plebeian or exclusively patrician accomplishment, a loud laugh. The absence of both these advantages should have warned Miss Ingram to restrain her mirth within the safer precincts of a giggle. Twelve registered and well-authenticated proposals of marriage, entitled Miss Hawtayne, at twenty-one, to devote to unmitigated ridicule the whole much-injured generation of old maids. Miss



Ingram, with the benefit of thirty-five years' experience, at the end of which she remained unportioned and unwooed, save by a starving curate and half-pay lieutenant, neither of which inviting overtures she was ever heard distinctly to avow, should, in strict wisdom, have quizzed spinsters *sotto voce*. A fine tall person, and white hand and arm, rendered the harp a favourite engine of display with Miss Hawtayne; but, unless from the laudable motive of affording a foil to her pupil, a purpose to which, indeed, the latter was not slack in converting it, Miss Ingram's angular figure and skinny fingers should have shunned the fatal strings: Barring these little oversights, to which the ablest tacticians are liable, Miss Ingram's generalship was, on the whole, such as fully to entitle her to a high rank in the fertile annals of favouritism.

The third permanent functionary at the Hall was one for whose designation recourse must also happily be had to a foreign language. It is well known that the *Cicisbeism* of some southern countries is a triple-headed monster, and that, in addition to the ostensible *Cortejo*, who forms, as it were, the lady's dress of ceremony,

and the more enviable object of private partiality, there is a third hapless modification of the *Cavaliér Servénte*, known by the moving appellation of *patito*, significant alike of the disdain and ill usage which, *ex officio*, he is doomed to bear, and of the proverbial patience and resignation with which he endures it.

This office had been for years sustained at the heiress's feet, by a worthy, but surely degenerate son of Mars, who, invalided by ill health before he could realize a competence, had been cherished by her father with the generous kindness and fond predilection of an old friend and schoolfellow. To Major Nevil, Hawtayne on his death-bed had consigned the guardianship of his daughter, little aware to what an ordeal of hopeless suffering he was exposing the romantic sensibility of his early friend. Nevil, though twice as old as his ward, was not of an age to be insensible to the fascinations of youth and beauty,—invested, too, by fancy with all the additional spells of mind and heart,—though quite disposed to mistake the tender interest they excited for the mere dictates of friendship, or affection for the memory of her father.

Beginning, notwithstanding his simplicity of character, to suspect the nature of his sentiments, he had for some time steadily and successfully avoided their object; but Mrs Hawtayne, utterly ignorant of business, a coward in travelling, and regarding Scotland, like most uneducated English people, as a land of savages,—had made an absolute point of his accompanying her, which Margaret, lest her proficiency in the art of tormenting should rust for want of exercise, or lest, according to the Scottish motto, tampering in that way with thistles might prove a dangerous experiment, enforced with all the fascinations she well knew how to assume.

Poor Nevil, since his arrival in Scotland, had learned to wish himself anywhere else a thousand times, without moral courage at once to burst his degrading fetters, and leave his ungrateful and heartless ward to find other subjects for ridicule than the misplaced partiality of her father's friend. Miss Hawtayne, to whom he was extremely useful, and who would have found it difficult to replace his humble and never obtrusive attentions, lured him to their conti-



nuance by just such private shades of encouragement, and public professions of sisterly regard, as riveted his bondage, and blinded him to its degradation. Had any one charged him with dreaming of marrying the heiress himself, he would have started at the seeming absurdity; yet his feelings toward all other pretenders to her favour, bore an exact proportion to their want of success, though the veil had not yet been rent from his eyes by any declared or positive partiality on her part to a favoured rival.

Leaning languidly on the arm of this pale and pensive satellite, entered Margaret Hawtayne, secure of as completely eclipsing, by the blaze of her jewels and splendour of her dress, the belles of the rustic assembly, as she outweighed most of them in more substantial possessions. She was by this time, however, sufficiently known to make her pretensions understood and disputed; and rural dignity being as much piqued into *nonchalance*, as city arrogance was excited to display, the external symptoms of notice on her entrance were confined to a transient gaze from all, and the prolonged stare of a few novices, who had never

before seen the heiress. Except some young ladies, who, having no hopes of notoriety themselves, were content to reflect the glories of another, and a few young men, who had heard it whispered that there was to be a ball ere long at Hawtayne, no one save Lady Hamilton flew to greet the dazzling party, and her exultation was much damped by the slender chance of exhibiting her son in advantageous contrast with the beaux, whom, in time of war, a country ball-room usually affords.

With none of these did the heiress appear disposed to dance, at least with none by whom the honour was solicited, and she was languidly preparing to stand up with Major Nevil, a pre-engagement to whom was her standing reply to all ineligible proposals,—when a little bustle was heard outside the ball-room door, and amid the confusion of sounds occasioned by the late arrival of a very distant family, one ear, if not more, instantly detected the voice dearest to its heart. Lady Hamilton was in the lobby in a moment. Marion, who had been leaning on her arm, instinctively let it go; there was a little pause of anxious sympathy in the

dancers, just about to begin their country-dance ; it was put an end to by the entrance of the happiest and proudest of mothers, leaning on the handsomest and most gallant of sons. After a few moments given to the prior claims of a parent,—sister, cousins, neighbours, companions, flocked eagerly round the youthful hero, while the few strangers whose recent arrival in the country confined them to the part of spectators, had full leisure to admire the grace, spirit, and modesty, with which Walter Hamilton received and answered inquiries, compliments, and felicitations, all in a breath. There was one who modestly hung back, and took shelter behind the ample person of Lady Hamilton during this storm of welcome ; but there was an eye that sought and found her there ; and bright and eloquent as was that eye at all times, it grew tenfold brighter, yet softer, as it rested on the embellished but unsophisticated playmate of his childhood.

He was not permitted long to gaze on the well-known countenance of Marion Douglas. His mother, the more impatient of delay from seeing by what it was occasioned, hurried him



to the part of the room where Miss Hawtayne was standing, and presented him ere he was aware, with an emphasis of introduction, whose object could be a secret to no one but the unconscious soldier. Had it, as the heiress seemed half to expect, been followed up by an immediate request for her hand, Major Nevil would probably have been awed or smiled into waving his own standing privilege ; but Walter, in reply to a hint from his mother, shook his head sorrowfully, and pointed to his handsome but still weak and imperfectly restored limb, as a bar to his favourite amusement. " This leg, mother," said he, playfully, " has not yet forgotten that six weeks have scarce elapsed since it was stretched out for amputation, and only saved for future reels by the happy obstinacy of one good fellow of a surgeon, who thought I should look very foolish with a wooden leg at five-and-twenty. Thanks to him, it is almost as good as ever ; and if I don't dance now, it is that I may dance for twenty years to come."

So saying, with a slight bow to the party he had been led to, he drew his mother hastily to-

wards various knots of older and far dearer acquaintance; nay, even escaped from her altogether, to shake hands with quizzical old ladies, who had come forth like rare birds to this charity ball, little expecting to be distinguished by the kindly notice of its hero. Taking his disengaged sister on one arm, probably that he might have an excuse for drawing Marion's hand under the other, he walked gaily up and down the room, gazing on the dance with all the excitement of an unwilling spectator, and at length,—suddenly quitting his sister, and whisking Marion into the set,—going down two or three couples, just, as he said, for “Auld lang syne.” Marion, however, shook her head reproachfully, and led the way as quickly as possible to her seat beside his mother, who, foreseeing the near approach of supper, and determined to divide to conquer, declared it was very hard Marion should lose her dance from her cousin's inability, and found a willing candidate for her hand in a modest young man of fortune in the neighbourhood, whom shyness alone prevented from soliciting its permanent possession for life. Walter could not mis-

construe the flush of delight with which the young man seized his prize ; but attributing to any cause but the right one the conscious reluctance of his fair partner, his mother, reading his thoughts, confirmed his error, by softly whispering, " It is an ill wind that blows no one good,—that lucky lameness of yours, Walter, has made two young people very happy."

This speech sufficed to make a third, at least, very uncomfortable, and Walter was just sufficiently piqued by it to hand the heiress to supper with a slight degree of jealous satisfaction, and to discover, during its continuance, that his mother's favourite was extremely handsome, and had, moreover, very polished and captivating manners. Had he not casually learned from some one that she was an heiress, his admiration would probably have been greater ; but this was a genus for which he entertained a wayward aversion, nor could almost any degree of individual merit compensate, in his opinion, for the inevitable drawbacks and disadvantages of the situation. He listened, therefore, to Miss Hawtayne's insinuating small-talk with the well-bred gallantry of one who was



thinking very little about her, and with the natural flow of spirits of a returned soldier, all of which was set down by more than his mother to the account of gratified vanity and incipient admiration. How it was regarded by Marion he had little opportunity of observing, as she was seated so provokingly at the turn of the horse-shoe table, at whose head he was placed between his mother and Miss Hawtayne, that her profile alone was generally visible, and not often even that, from the frequent demands on her attention arising from the renovated hopes and increasing animation of her devoted partner. Lady Hamilton, who marked the frequent direction of her son's eyes, again replied to their language,—“ It will be a capital thing for Marion that match with young Irvine ! He has a good estate in possession, and a better in prospect—no bad catch for a pennyless parson's daughter.”

Lady Hamilton had ample opportunity to observe the effect of her innuendo on the mind of her son, as, long ere it was finished, Walter's eyes were fixed on the pure serene countenance of his opposite cousin, and read there legibly

that she was not the person to make a mercenary or ill-assorted marriage. What he might further have learned from the scrutiny remains to be known, had not its fair object suddenly become aware of it, blushed "celestial rosy red," and turned her head again away. "Bless me," said Lady Hamilton, "I do believe Menie must have heard me ! See how she blushes ! I really hardly believed the thing was so serious till now."

Lady Hamilton perfectly knew that there was no connexion whatever between Marion's blush and her speech ; but to Walter it seemed too evident, and he turned for relief to the chit-chat of his right-hand neighbour.

He was employed in parrying, with true soldier modesty, attacks more direct than delicate on the subject of his military exploits, when a far more serious tax on his feelings was imposed by the unexpected and flattering manner in which they were alluded to by a veteran general, one of the fathers of the county, whom *esprit-de-corps*, and a benevolent disposition, had combined to bring on this evening to the festive scene. It was beautiful to hear the white-head-

ed warrior, whose campaigns had become enrolled on the page of history, yielding the meed of his hard-earned admiration to the triumphs of to-day, and calling for a health to the brave young countryman, whose father he had himself led on to half-forgotten victory. The acclamations with which the toast was received were more overpowering to the young soldier than all the thunders of Vimeira, and to rise to reply was worse than leading the assault at Badajos. The spirit, however, which had braved the one and achieved the other was not extinct, and when Walter spoke, the music of his voice was but softened by the emotions which sought to stifle it, and the fire of his eye but enhanced by the drop which he dashed indignantly away. He sat down amid blessings, "not loud but deep," from all around him. It was well that he had done so before his eye caught a hastily obliterated, but never-to-be-forgotten tear, on the more than ever averted face of Marion Douglas!

The heartless compliments and insipid common-places of a town coquette became now insupportable, and Walter, impatient to carry his



incipient laurels to the feet of his infirm and expecting parent, gladly saw the ladies retire, and unwilling to abridge the pleasure of his mother and sisters, threw himself into the post-chaise which had brought him to V—, rejoicing at his present escape from the heiress, with somewhat of the prophetic feeling with which Aladdin shrunk from the ominous caresses of the African magician.

The impression, however, was very far from being mutual. Reports soon reached Marknows, most flattering to the secret wishes of Lady Hamilton. Miss Hawtayne had been heard to say in public, that the captain was the most gentlemanlike Scotsman she had ever seen; and sundry more private remarks, swelled as usual by the breath of rumour into positive indications of partiality, combined with personal observation, to convince the —shire world, that Walter, like Cæsar, had come, seen, and conquered, and might, if so disposed, add more pacific laurels to those of the Peninsula.

The vicinity of their property, the desirableness of connexions to the comparatively plebeian heiress, and of cash to the impoverished honours

of Marknows, stamped the conjunction with that air of suitableness which often strikes all save the parties concerned, which, however, on the present occasion, one of them was fully disposed to admit. But Walter, who, had his heart been even disengaged, would have shrunk with disgust from a marriage of convenience with a far more congenial bride, affected to misunderstand or disclaim all the prevailing rumours, and determined to sanction them by none but the most indispensable attention to his mother's frequent guest. He found it, however, more difficult to parry that mother's own urgent representations, as to the expediency of the match, and was on the eve of putting a stop to them by the most explicit declarations of his unalterable resolution on the subject, when the increased illness of his father, the consequence of the unusual exertions of mind and body called forth by his son's return, engrossed the attention of both, and suspended all other considerations.

## CHAPTER VII.

SIR JAMES HAMILTON, whose hereditary gout had often of late deserted its out-post in the extremities, and threatened the citadel itself, was one day seized with so severe an attack in the stomach, as to be for some time nearly insensible; and though, by the most violent remedies, temporary relief was procured, it soon appeared that his constitution, long undermined by suffering, and by a course of indulgence, which, if it could not exactly be denominated excess, was equally remote from temperance, was at length giving way. Walter, who felt that, to himself and to his mother, his presence at home at so critical a time must be a peculiar source of comfort and satisfaction, and whose attentions combined feminine gentleness and solicitude with manly firmness, was somewhat mortified to perceive that his father, though fully and even painfully sensible of his



son's kindness, often bent on him looks, in which some acutely distressing feeling seemed to predominate over parental pride and partiality. More than once he seemed on the brink of making some avowal, which as often, from bodily infirmity or mental weakness, expired on his lips. When Walter spoke at times of his profession with the fond predilection of a soldier, laughed at its hardships, and expatiated on its delightful vicissitudes, Sir James seemed to catch at the idea, and uttered ejaculations of thankfulness; but when, at others, the Scotsman predominated, and he would remark how much dearer as well as more beautiful were in his eyes the oaks now waving under his father's window, than the majestic cork-trees and orange groves of Spain, a deep groan was the only echo of a sentiment which would once have been so welcome to a Scottish ear !

Lady Hamilton, who was even more aware than her son of the weight on his father's spirits, besought Walter to avoid all topics which might harass the old man, especially those of a pecuniary nature; and by vague hints, combined with his own observation, prepared the

young man for some considerable incumbrances on his succession. To these, however,—unincreased as they were by any extravagance of his own,—he could look forward with manly fortitude ; and the most scrupulous delicacy taught him not only avoidance of the subject, but an instant change of conversation when the overburdened heart of the old man seemed desirous to relieve itself by confession.

Often did he begin—"Walter ! I wish I had been as gude a guide o' my siller as ye have learned to be !"—or, "I doubt ye'll get a ravelled hesp to wind when I am gane ;" but his son, by some cheerful remark, generally succeeded in diverting the current of his thoughts. When, however, as his end approached, sadder images still seemed to haunt his pillow, and he took his son's hand and feebly said—"Walter ! I doubt there's siller awin' where it canna weel be wanted—Ye'll no let the curse o' women and bairns gang wi' your puir auld father to the grave?"—the young soldier felt it time to speak, and said, "Father, let no thought of worldly affairs ruffle your grey hairs, while you have a

son with youth and health to bear the burden. There shall no stain rest upon your memory that gold or steel can wipe away. When the first fails me, I have my good sword still; and thanks to you, my dear father, for giving me that friend in need!"

The old man grasped his son's hand with a convulsive pressure, cast his eyes upward, moved his lips as if in thanksgiving, and sunk into a slumber of exhaustion from which he never again awoke.

While those indispensable duties which so mercifully divide the attention of the yet more cruelly bereaved, during the first days of mourning, devolved upon the young Baronet, Mr Douglas, whose visits to Sir James's bedside had been truly fraternal and satisfactory, proposed to the overwhelmed and weak-minded widow, a removal to his own cottage, while he took her place at Marknows, to share in and lighten the mournful labours of her son. These few days of sorrowful communion between two congenial spirits, endeared them more to each other than years of previous acquaintance; and at any other time the ever open heart of Walter



would have overflowed at his lips on the subject nearest and dearest to both. But there was too much of genuine filial grief and solemn awe to permit more than gratitude to Heaven for the substitute for a lost parent, which the worthy pastor seemed to promise.

The task, meanwhile, of soothing the clamorous grief of Lady Hamilton was performed with unobtrusive sweetness and deep feeling, by Marion. She had looked up to Sir James as to a second father, from her earliest years, and the remembrance of his uniform kindness and partiality, combined with the compassion his infirmities of body, and little harmless peculiarities, had of late called forth, infused into her sorrow a feeling of tenderness, which a loftier character might have failed to command. She could, in short, have "better spared a better man."

The first topic of consolation which suggested itself to the worldly and flexible mind of Lady Hamilton, was the probable retirement from service, and settlement at Marknows, of her son; and as their necessary consequence, or rather, as she suspected, indispensable preliminary,

his marriage with the heiress; and she was not sorry to embrace the first opening which decency allowed, for imparting to her delicate and disinterested niece, the expediency, not to say necessity, of Walter's forming this brilliant alliance; thereby insuring to herself the most powerful ally against his own possible want of discretion and self-denial. Marion had too much *practical* charity, as well as prudence, to breathe a disparaging word of her cousin's intended bride; but if ever she repeated with fervour the petition against envy and all uncharitableness, it was when the thought of Miss Hawtayne intruded on her devotions; and she sometimes tried to recollect, if the dislike had been as rooted before Walter Hamilton returned to Scotland. The deeper sigh with which the subject was usually echoed, passed unremarked on, but not unheeded by one, whose ambitious views had already more than half turned from the "funeral-baked meats," to the future "marriage tables" of Marknows.

That place, meanwhile, exhibited the nameless desolation which invades with silent and noiseless step the spacious dwellings of the rich,

when the master-spirit which pervaded them is laid low. The old grey-headed servants, themselves past the age of clamorous grief, felt that here it would be misplaced; but they went about with feebler steps and more furrowed aspect than before. Old Elspeth, Walter's nurse, whose twenty years' occupation of knitting hunting-hose for the old knight was for ever gone, sat by the nursery fire in hopeless idleness; not able yet to "knit up the ravelled sleeve" of her waning faculties, so as to look forward to resuming her vocation for her darling Walter. Age cleaves to the past, and death comes home to it with a reality which life cannot always dispel.

The wandering beggar instinctively avoided the gate; the watch-dog had no one to bark at; while the melancholy howling of the hounds, whom Walter visited as a filial duty to the dead, was construed, by the groom and huntsman, into sympathy for the fate of their master.

So passed the time, until, the necessary arrangements having been made for summoning the near neighbours and principal tenantry, Sir



James Hamilton was borne by his afflicted son, and a few other relatives, under the broad oaks, and over the green turf, of his paternal lawns, to his peaceful resting-place in the ruinous little building attached to the Baronial Castle of Oakenshaws, once its domestic chapel, subsequently the parish church, but long since unroofed and resigned to the silent society of the lofty and lowly dead.

The last melancholy duties to the deceased Baronet were no sooner performed, than there arose, among the dispersing attendants of various ranks, discreet innuendoes and charitable surmises as to the state of his family affairs, commencing with inextricable embarrassment, and ending in downright bankruptcy, in so far at least as such a state could be compatible with a strictly entailed estate. It was well known, that the improvidence of the deceased, and the necessities of his immediate predecessors, had long since alienated every disposable part of the once princely property; yet, though many years had elapsed since it had been reduced to the estate immediately surrounding the castle, great part of which, being in demesne, was

less profitable than picturesque, the lavish and ill-regulated hospitality which pervaded every department had never been reduced from an hereditary and traditional profusion, suited to a fortune of three times its present amount. Those who had drank the deepest potations of Sir James's claret, and enjoyed most sport with his hounds, were, as usual, the loudest in blaming his prodigality; while the unworthy parasites who laid under contribution the vanity of Lady Hamilton, gave it its full share in achieving the family ruin.

A good deal of sympathy was, for the honour of human nature, felt and expressed for Captain Hamilton, mixed with considerable curiosity whether he would, as entitled by law as heir of entail, hold himself entirely clear of all responsibility for his father's debts, or whether, as from his honourable character was more probable, he would for some years resign the rents to meet the more pressing claims, and return to the exercise of his profession.

"Let Walter Hamilton alane for doin' right," said an old grey-headed farmer, who gave the law to one knot of plebeian speculators; "he

had aye a proud spirit, and a just ane. Weel do I mind when a wheen o' his sodger comrades, wi' mair mettle in their heels than sense in their pows, rode full drive after a tod through puir Tibbie Dowie's bit acre or twa o' sawn grass, makin' parritch o' the bit saft land that suld hae been milk to her fatherless weans—I gaed to hound the senseless callants out o' the widow's park, and they only laughed at me, and bade me mind my ain business; but Walter let them a' ride forrit, and find or lose the tod as they likit. The laddie,—for he was but nineteen at the time,—lukit as blate as if he was gaun to do ill instead o' gude, and takin' a ten-pund note out of his pouch, said to me, 'Andrew, ye're an honest man, and a kind neibour, will ye tak' that, and let Widow Dowie's cow gang wi' yours, in the best park ye hae, for my sake? I'll be away at the wars, Andrew, and I wouldna like the widow's curse to follow me.' 'Odd, Captain,' says I, for he suld hae been ane, if he wasna, 'I'll no tak' your siller. Tibbie's grass 'll come to something, for a' the misguiding it's gotten, and her cow shall never want a bite as lang as mine has ane;—but I'll



no gie ye back your bit note, neither. It'll be cleading to her bairns, if they dinna need meat, and the widow's blessing will do ye mair gude than the bawbees.' "

This anecdote, which quickly spread, confirmed the early popularity of the young heir among a race long accustomed to look up with reverence to the name of Hamilton, if not the person by whom it had latterly been borne. Sir Walter, meanwhile, had to rouse himself from the dejection consequent on the loss of an indulgent and doating parent, to the at all times painful, but now doubly unpleasant investigations connected with affairs, of which his short stay at home had sufficed to make him guess the derangement, and by the still more hopeless entanglement of which his father's dying anxieties had been so cruelly excited. One of the most revolting features of this necessary duty, was its involving him in closer contact and collision than he had ever wished to experience with Captain Middleton, a man for whom he entertained an indescribable antipathy, and who, under the influence of probably mutual feelings, had hitherto kept as much aloof as his

privileged situation in the family, and the avowed predilection of its late master, would permit.

This man was of too much importance at Marknows, to be dismissed with a bare mention of his existence. Having, by a lucky exertion of physical strength and reckless bravery, for which Sir Walter found it difficult to be adequately grateful, saved the life, or at least the liberty, of the late Baronet, in an engagement in Flanders, the benevolent old man had, with his constitutional easiness, insensibly suffered his disbanded preserver's occasional visits to merge in an habitual residence at Marknows, coloured, indeed, by nominal possession of a lodging in the village, and generally once or twice a-year, by a demonstration of removing thither, always strenuously resisted by Sir James, to whom Captain Middleton's military anecdotes, and powers as an unflinching boon companion, were too valuable to be relinquished.

A more important and dangerous exercise for his talents, which, in their line, were certainly considerable, was soon found; and the fatal facilities which it afforded to an indolent

and reckless prodigality, tended to reconcile Lady Hamilton to an inmate, whom, little fastidious as she was in the choice of her company, she had before found it a tax on her gratitude and civility to tolerate. Middleton needed not half the tact he possessed, to see that the Baronet's expenditure nearly doubled his income; or at the same time to discover, that economy and retrenchment were the last means he was likely to resort to for relief. Lady Hamilton talked of both, without understanding, or really intending either; but never in the presence of her latterly irritable husband, whose athletic frame and buoyant spirit could ill brook the ravage time and disease were making on both, and to whom laying down the hounds he could no longer follow, or the horses he could no longer ride, would have seemed an unpardonable act of selfishness and family degradation.

To extract advances of cash from the long obsequious and complying Johnny Laidlaw first became difficult, and then impossible; and as all discussion on ways and means gave Sir James the gout, and drew tears of vexation and anger



from Lady Hamilton, Middleton began to see, that to raise supplies quietly, without entering deeply on the how or whence, would be to render himself in the highest degree acceptable and necessary at Marknows. As to this how and whence, he was not troubled with any scrupulous nicety of feeling, or inconvenient rigour of principle; and his habits of occasional conviviality among the middling classes in the neighbourhood, leading to a knowledge of their pecuniary affairs, which he spared no pains to improve, his own character as a good jolly fellow, and that vague sense of the dignity of an ancient family, which long survives in the vulgar a suspicion of its decreasing wealth, rendered it by no means difficult for him to borrow, in the Baronet's name, under strict injunctions of secrecy, many an odd and well-saved hundred pounds, from retired farmers, prudent spinsters, and often even the faithfully-hoarded patrimony of the widow and the orphan. The accumulating magnitude, and worse than problematical repayment of these loans, might at length have staggered even the reckless and unfeeling character of the agent, had not accident, some years

before the Baronet's death, enabled him to lay to his hard soul the "flattering unction" of a discovery, by which their liquidation might, under certain circumstances, be effected, which, however, he was far from contemplating.

The poor old Baronet, to do him justice, had many "compunctious visitings," when, occasionally, on signing fresh bonds, names caught his eye, which told him how fatal would be the loss to the destitute and fatherless, or still more pitiable lone and unprotected female; but on these occasions vague and chimerical visions of coal and lime, which, some day at least, were to double the value of the land, and a hint from Middleton, which he always reserved for desperate emergencies, (for at other times it would have been unbearable,) as to the expediency of the young laird's dismounting the squirrels, to discharge these more sacred obligations, generally acted as an opiate to a mind never strong, and now enfeebled by disease.

So matters went on, till Walter learned, on returning from the grave of his father, tidings, which, if distinctly understood, would have sufficed to lay him there long before, viz. that what

with hereditary burdens on the estate—regular advances to which he had been made a party, for the purchase of his commission, and other legitimate purposes—the equally appalling and unintelligible transactions with Johnny Laidlaw, during the last thirty years—and, lastly, the aggregate amount of the scattered loans contracted by the military purveyor aforesaid, the debts on the Oakenshaws' property amounted to within a few thousand pounds of its actual marketable value !

The first shock of this discovery was extreme, and the apparent impossibility of discharging, even by a whole life of penury and privation, the burden on his father's memory, seemed at first, to an honourable mind, the chief aggravation of the blow. "To spend half-a-crown out of sixpence a-day," according to the soldier's adage, had been easier to the unthinking Baronet, than repaying fifty or sixty thousand pounds out of an annual income of not quite a thousand a-year, seemed to his bewildered and mortified heir. To attempt it, however, was his immediate and unswerving purpose ; and retaining, it would appear, the same horror of the



widow's curse which had distinguished his boyish feelings, he resolved that the immediate and painful sacrifice of some of the gigantic oaks, for which he had an almost superstitious veneration, should avert from his own guiltless head, and his father's memory, that portion, at least, of the universal malediction.

To ascertain the nature and amount of these paramount claims, an interview with Captain Middleton was inevitable ; and that personage, who, in the first fit of delicacy he had ever manifested, had betaken himself, since his patron's death, to the village, was summoned accordingly. There was a considerable struggle when he appeared, between his natural and assumed effrontery, and his disagreeable sense of Sir Walter's superiority—between his feelings as the conscious possessor of an important secret, and the detected agent in a series of transactions of very questionable character.

“Captain Middleton,” said the Baronet, with just such a bow as self-respect dictated on the entrance of a stranger, “I am told you can throw light on certain transactions of more intricacy, and less integrity, than I hoped my dear

father's name would have been coupled with. To dissolve the connexion between them as quickly as possible, is my first object in life ; and for that purpose, I shall trouble you to point out such of the more iniquitous bonds granted to widows, females, &c. as may be instantly liquidated by a sale of timber, to the amount of five thousand pounds ; just, in short, what the last surveyor pronounced might be felled by a sacrifice of ornament, without diminishing the value of the property."

Captain Middleton's round eyes grew rounder, and his bronzed cheek redder, as he heard this worshipper of the Dryads—who might literally be said to feel towards trees as if a nymph were to bleed at every stroke of the axe—thus calmly propose such a sweeping offering at the shrine of honour and filial duty. Though an expedient to which he had long looked forward, and to which, indeed, his conduct had inevitably led, he wanted nerves to contemplate its manly adoption ; and feeling himself its utter inadequacy to the end proposed, he hoped to ingratiate himself, by dissuading Walter from the pious purpose. " Eh, na, Sir Walter," ejacula-

ted he; "ye maunna cut down the bonny woods! he could hae dune that langsyne—but it's a drop in the bucket—ye might as weel sell your commission to pay the national debt."

"Sir," said Walter, impatiently, "I love my father's paternal oaks; but I hold my father's honour dearer; and such is my horror of the involuntary injustice with which that memory has been stained by unprincipled advisers, that, could the blot be removed by the sale of the estate itself, I hope I should not hesitate."

"That remains to be seen," answered Middleton, nettled by the Baronet's air of ineffable scorn, and the direct attack on himself contained in the last speech. "I didna mean to tell ye, what no mortal livin' kens but mysell; the Oakenshaws' entail is no worth a bawbee, and ye may bring it to the hammer to-morrow!"

Walter Hamilton was a gentleman, a soldier, nay, more, a thoroughly honest man; but he was human in feelings, aristocratic in principles and education, passionately attached to the home of his ancestors; and, to say that he heard unmoved this astounding intelligence, would belie both truth and nature. It is one thing to



wish an incalculable sacrifice possible, and another to find it suddenly in your power. It is one thing to fancy a romantic surrender of some cherished object of legitimate ambition or undoubted possession, and another to execute the deed which conveys it away for ever. In short, it is one thing to be the proud heir of a long line of distinguished ancestry, and a dweller under their sacred roof-tree, and another to be a soldier of fortune, with little patrimony save his sword, and the consciousness of voluntary beggary to counterbalance the weight of paternal disgrace.

Captain Middleton knew all this, and being but an indifferent judge of the feelings of a gentleman, hastened, as he thought, to heal his rash blow, by the most solemn assurances of secresy, and protestations of his own regret at the accident, a redding up, namely, as he called it, of the charter-chest, which strange professional prejudices induced the late Baronet to intrust to a military rather than legal agent, whereby he had been put in possession of the flaw in the entail. He did not add, that it was by a copy duly made from the deed aforesaid, and trans-

mitted for extrajudicial consideration to a brother of his, an honest writer in Banff, that he had elicited what his own limited legal knowledge would certainly have for ever left in technical obscurity.

Thanks to Walter's innate rectitude, the knowledge of this second motive to act uprightly would have had as little share in influencing his determination, as the fear of the first living witness, who now stood before him, and of whose silence he well knew a few hundred pounds would be the probable price. But Walter would have thought these hundreds a direr sacrifice than the broad lands and waving woods of Oakenshaws, given as a ransom for his father's honour and his own peace of mind.

"I shall signify this intelligence by post to my father's law-agent in Edinburgh to-morrow, Mr Middleton," said he, with a voice of determination, that made the parasite doubt his own identity: "I leave you to make the communication to his numerous creditors."

So saying, he waved his hand, and the Captain, past speaking, hastened out of the apartment. When the door closed on him, and the

necessity for exertion ceased, Walter threw himself down in a chair, and gave way to feelings, which to describe were an insult to the reader. Selfishness, however, could not effect any permanent lodgment in the young soldier's bosom, and he forgot his own destitution, in the probably uncontrollable grief, and perhaps wavering firmness, of his mother. To obviate, therefore, any additional pain to her or himself, which might arise from a struggle between her sense of justice and love to her son and the estate, he gladly profited by her temporary absence, and steeled himself to write, before they should meet, a letter to Mr Gudefallow,—whose early knowledge of the family affairs, and high character for integrity, pointed him out as the fittest person for conducting the delicate task,—containing a guarded yet manly intimation of the supposed discovery, with a request that he would consult the public records, and if the flaw existed, take proper steps for the sale of the estate, the incumbrances on which left no other alternative.

Wholly unable, in the state of feeling which this effort left behind, to trust himself at Mr



Douglas's, where his mother still remained, he wrote to her also a few lines, softening as much as possible the force of the shock, by his cheerful manner of conveying it, and his manly representations of the necessity of the measure, to silence the clamours of the interested, and dry the tears of the injured. Her own jointure, and his sisters' portions, it cheered him to think, would, in law, as in justice, be held the sacred-est of claims on the estate ; and as for himself, he had his good sword, his unblemished character, youth and health, and the world before him. He quoted the well-known words of Francis the First, " Madam, all is lost, except our honour ;" and no man could repeat them with a loftier consciousness of the invaluable possession which remained. A proud smile played across his features as he wrote the spirit-stirring apostrophe, for in the exaltation of feeling which belongs to virtuous sacrifice, a man " may smile, and smile, and be a" beggar !

This Walter was not ; the reversion he might reasonably look for would shield him from individual penury, but that bright vision, already in imagination doubling every enjoyment, could

now no longer be selfishly wooed to a path of privation and exile. This was the hardest thought of all to the young soldier; so hard, that he struggled with it with all the desperate energy with which the hypochondriac shuns the gloomy thought of suicide, or the incipient murderer the dream of blood. It, and it alone, could have made Oakenshaws dearer than honour, and exile worse than disgrace. But he grappled successfully with the bright temptation, and only found a selfish difficulty in stifling his rights, that he had in the hour of prosperity unaccountably delayed securing to himself a prize, which the rudest blasts of adversity would, he was sure, have failed to snatch from him. But he turned from these regrets as unworthy, and trampled on them as victoriously as he did on two successive assaults from a more ignoble quarter, in the shape of notes from Captain Middleton, imploring him to pause, for his own sake and his mother's, and offering to find money to silence the smaller claimants, by means, no doubt, equally crooked and degrading. His motive in these efforts was obvious—with the manly disclosure meditated by Sir

Walter, ended the influence he had hoped to acquire by his purchased secresy ; and the thought of shaking off for ever this detestable *incubus*, lent fresh energy to the pen and hand of his victim.

A persecution of a different and more annoying nature awaited him. No sooner did the extent of the Marknows incumbrances, and the noble resolution of Sir Walter to alienate his paternal estate, and effect an exchange to a regiment in India, become generally known, than fresh, and, it was thought, irresistible hints reached the impoverished heir, of the unaltered dispositions of the heiress to compensate the cruelty of fortune, and apply her wealth to the re-establishment of his affairs. To say that Walter listened, even for a moment, seriously to these flattering overtures, would be doing him injustice ; but to deny that family affection for the hearths of his fathers, and the sad surrender he had already mentally made of all hopes of a dear and more cherished union, sometimes made him echo the syren song of the enchantress with a sigh, would be to know little of the power of the former feelings in the youth-



ful bosom, or of the weakness and void which is left there by the annihilation of the latter springs of hope and joy. Hope, however, defies annihilation, and perhaps it was to her unextinguished taper, that Sir Walter owed a preference of poverty and freedom, to wealth and bondage.

It was to escape from this persecution, from the far more dangerous fascinations of another object, from the hourly vexations consequent on the claims of creditors, and the miserable sensation he felt on wandering like a ghost over those paternal haunts, whence an inexorable fiat was about ere long to exile him for ever, that Sir Walter, on pretence of expediting, by his presence, a negotiation for his exchange into a dragoon regiment in India, had left Marknows shortly previous to the arrival of his uncle in Scotland. It was during this temporary absence, that Buchanan's visit to the place, in the character of a purchaser, and his subsequent arrival at Linhaven in that of an invalid occurred; and he had been a few weeks settled at the latter spot in the immediate vicinity of Dou-

glas and his daughter, when the same wayward feelings which had driven Sir Walter from Scotland, led him to return, ere the purpose of his journey, though entered on, was fully completed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE village of Linhaven, at the period of Buchanan's visit to it, exhibited appearances still more discordant than those engrafted by manufactures on the agricultural simplicity of his native Gairlie. The recent erection of hot-baths, and the consequent resort of a limited number of quiet invalids, had given rise to a range of modern cottages on the brow of the cliff, whose regular architecture, scrupulous neatness, and gay parterres, formed the strongest possible contrast with the crooked and narrow street, the projecting gables, and immemorial filth of the marine village beneath, whose "most ancient and fish-like" smell, the sea-breeze, though apparently excluded from its dingy precincts, sometimes maliciously wafted to salute the noses of the votaries of health above. According to the immemorial usage of the fishing population of Scotland, instead of one row of cheerful cot-



tages, following the circuit of the beautiful little bay, and open to its sunny and salubrious influences, a double lane of two-story houses meandered along the shore, neither of them enjoying the sight of an element, with which the inhabitants were perhaps already too familiar, and evidently constructed so as to husband for home consumption all the precious effluvia proceeding from the innumerable *mussel-middens*, which rendered the High-street of Linhaven a second Strait of Messina.

It was, however, rarely encountered by any but its own amphibious population; but the new village above, by its commanding and cheerful position,—while a grassy slope at its northern extremity afforded almost instant communication with a long line of delightful sand-beach below, and with the beautiful wood-walks attached to the old Castle of Oakenshaws,—was not only a favourite residence with all its summer visitants, but frequently became an object for the walks and drives of the neighbouring families, whose numerous seats and waving woods formed the back-ground of the picture.

It was in this village, and as spiritual pastor

to this highly respectable circle, that Douglas had been many years settled, and as a nearer acquaintance with him and his daughter now formed the chief object of Buchanan's remaining life, no means so readily presented themselves for achieving it, as a temporary residence at Linhaven in the quality of an invalid. It was with extreme reluctance and self-denial that he extended towards these beloved objects that system of innocent deception, which here he felt was alike misplaced and superfluous; but it was now rendered more than ever expedient, by the nature of his designs regarding his paternal estate; and justice whispered, that, by submitting to the same unsuspected ordeal, the feelings and character of his favourite relatives, he should best justify the probable destination of his wealth in that quarter. He therefore proceeded alone to Linhaven, Gudefallow having, however, paved the way by a letter of introduction to the Douglasses, in which he requested them to secure lodgings for an old friend from the East, in whose behalf he ventured to bespeak their sympathy and kindness; dwelling much on his ill health and family misfor-

tunes, without a word of his wealth, of which, indeed, certain hints respecting economy, were calculated to give a very moderate impression.

On driving up to the little village inn,—situated on what, in his youth, had been a rural solitude of braes, tufted with broom and whins,—Buchanan found a messenger posted to await his arrival ; and no sooner had the little curly-headed urchin darted down the grassy slope before mentioned, on the sheltered bosom of which the cottage of Douglas reposed, than two figures were seen ascending, whom the beating heart of Buchanan told him could only be the husband and child of his Marion. The pause which the steepness of the ascent rendered necessary, for one whose majestic figure, beginning to be slightly bent, more by delicacy than age, rested fondly during its continuance on the arm of the sylph-like creature beside him, gave Buchanan time to gain composure, as well as to survey the interesting pair. As he gazed on the dignified aspect and benign expression of his brother-in-law, Marion's choice was at once justified ; and as he saw them blended with her own



dear lineaments, in the airy form and open brow of her daughter, the lapse of thirty years was forgotten, and Marion seemed to stand before him, with only a nameless added grace, and surpassing loveliness, engrafted by their flight on her original infantine simplicity and rustic beauty.

Douglas looked so delicate, and evidently unfit for a *scene*, that Buchanan no longer regretted his incognito, and made a strong effort to answer his winning frankness with only a stranger's courtesy; but the trial became greater, when, after introducing the sweet creature, whose very eyes spoke volumes of sympathy and kindness, he expressed a hope, that, as the only eligible lodging likely to be soon vacant, was yet occupied, Mr Buchanan would not object to being for a day or two the guest of himself and his daughter. "I am sorry to say," continued he, "that I have taught her too well how to make a sick man comfortable; but as the dear lassie has paid for the experience, it will be well if a friend of my worthy Gudefather is the first to profit by it."

Who could paint Buchanan's feelings when

seated between the objects dearest to his heart, in the honeysuckled porch of his brother-in-law's peaceful dwelling, soothed by the murmur of his native waves on their shining and sunny strand below, while the turrets of his ancestors rose through their almost coeval oaks, and caught the last rays of a soft vernal sunset ! The wild and distant east, with its boundless forests and shoreless rivers, its turbaned population, and fantastic rites, seemed all the creation of a shadowy and half-forgotten dream—he gazed on the sands, the braes, the woods before him, on the rooks that sought their evening home amid the mouldering towers of his fathers, and felt as if he too had been the wanderer of a day, and was about to fold his weary wing for life.

It was well for the preservation of a secret which now weighed heavier than ever on Buchanan, while its expediency was enhanced by all he incidentally gathered respecting the state of affairs at Marknows, that the cottage designed for his reception was ready, after two days' sojourn under the roof of his brother-in-law.

A third, of familiar and unrestrained intercourse with a being so engaging as Marion, would have put to flight alike the cold suggestions of expediency, and the livelier excitement of romance, and laid the hand of her uncle in solemn benediction on her fair and innocent head.

To paint Marion Douglas as she appeared to the world at large, would be to borrow the hues in which summer eve fades into twilight; but to describe the effect of her society on the desolate heart of Buchanan, images of simplicity and freshness must be sought in the first note of the long mute blackbird, or the passing perfume of the unseen violet. Born amid pastoral hills and dales, educated by a simple but elegant-minded father, on no models but those of truth and nature, Marion was rural without a trace of rusticity, and graceful because nature had so willed it. Inseparable from her father, she had breathed the atmosphere of religion as we inhale the vital air, and imbibed literature, as unconsciously as the rose opens its bosom to the dew.

Never, perhaps, was there a stronger in-



stance how minds and characters, originally framed in different moulds, will blend and meet half way, under the irresistible influence of affection. Douglas, pensive, studious, naturally inclined to melancholy and abstraction, had been roused by the infant smiles of his daughter to beneficial exertion and habitual cheerfulness; while all that might have been exuberant in the untamed playfulness of an indulged child, had been unconsciously subdued by the mild gravity and occasional sadness of her parent. The studies, which but for her might have been abstruse and unprofitable, became for her sake refined and liberal. The Latin, which he feared it might savour of pedantry to teach her, softened into Italian; and the classics, whom he had long devoured in secret, gave place to the poetry of England, recited by his child.

She, on her part, merely sacrificed without knowing it, all that is essentially frivolous in the tastes and occupations of woman, to share the higher pursuits of her father. She walked more, and worked less, than most girls of her age, and even when she plied the housewife's art, it was her father's comfort that guided her

busy hand. For him her wild-wood notes were cultivated, and her untaught sketches finished. For him she gathered rare plants in the woods, and sought specimens along the rocky shore; and though he neither succeeded, nor even tried, to make her a botanist or mineralogist, she could hear him converse on both topics, without the weariness attendant on total ignorance. A florist he or Nature had certainly made her; indeed the credit of it might be fairly divided between them; and if, next to his daughter, Douglas loved his flowers, they had long enjoyed the same second place in her affections. But somehow they had not this summer received quite their usual share of attention, and, except a certain Spanish jessamine, which, to the prejudice of her health she retained, notwithstanding its overpowering perfume, in her own sunny window, her other favourites might, on the whole, conceive themselves ill used. She sung, on the other hand, a great deal more, and disinterred from amid the dust of an old lady's garret, an antiquated guitar, and book of instructions, which enabled her to accompany *con amore*, a collection of Spanish ballads, sent

home to his sisters and *cousin*, by Walter Hamilton. She sketched a great deal, chiefly about the old Castle and Chapel of Oakenshaws, which, in every imaginable point of view, seemed a favourite object for her pencil.

During the short time which Walter had passed at home previous to his father's death, every disengaged moment, though filial duty and maternal requisitions did not allow him many, had latterly been passed either at his uncle Douglas's, or at the old Castle, where, at glowing sunset, or early morning, Marion was pretty sure to be found. For the first week or two his visits had been rendered somewhat cold and formal, by accidental *rencontres* with young Irvine, whose devoirs the incidents of the ball had fanned into proportional energy and decision. Nothing, however, came of them, and Walter began to hope that his mother had seen matters between the young man and Marion rather as she wished, than as they really were. In the meantime, reluctance to give the death-blow to her far different views for his own establishment, respect for his father's declining health, and still more



pure enjoyment in the unconscious and almost fraternal intercourse their present position afforded, prevented Walter from saying to Marion a word that could put it on a different and more interesting footing.

It was bliss to one who wished to owe nothing to adventitious circumstances, or to aught save the soft voice of Nature whispering in his behalf, to mark that every time they met, Marion expressed less joy, and looked more; and that every time they parted, her step grew more lingering, and her brow more thoughtful. She called him "Cousin," with more emphatic precision, and her hand, though never prudishly withheld, was no longer stretched out with the same sisterly frankness. These were all precious symptoms; how much longer they would have been allowed to usurp the place of certainties, who can tell, had not the death of Sir James, and the overwhelming discovery which succeeded, made Walter alternately bless and deplore the infatuation which had failed to make Marion his "for better and for worse." To do him justice, he never viewed the subject long in the latter selfish light, but rejoiced, or tried

to rejoice, that his cousin was free to accept the now more eligible alliance, which he suspected was but too much within her power.

It was now martyrdom to him to go to Douglas's; but had he known, or even suspected, how deeply his absence was felt, the philosophy and disinterestedness of five-and-twenty would probably soon have given way before the dejection of one, who felt almost indebted to the death of her poor uncle, for giving her an ostensible cause of sorrow. The brief interview or two which succeeded Sir James's death, passed in presence of Lady Hamilton, then a resident at the Cottage, whose watchful eyes, and still more, whose insidious hints of the wealthy alliance which her son's altered prospects rendered indispensable, gave to her niece's conduct a hard-won appearance of calmness, and even indifference, which half awoke in the sensitive mind of the unfortunate, a doubt of ever having been beloved. What it cost Marion to seem less kind to a ruined cousin than to a prosperous one, none can imagine who has not made a similar sacrifice to a double sense of duty—to the aunt, who unfeelingly exacted it, and to the lo-

ver, by whose interest she was taught to believe it to be imperiously demanded.

Walter, therefore, instead of leaving Mark-nows in the full excitement of renouncing, on disinterested motives, a cherished object, carried with him the corroding anxiety of one not quite certain on which side the renunciation had been. Could Marion really feel *less* love towards him for the loss of fortune and splendour? and why would her unamiable rival feel, or at least express, *more*? Shrinking alike from the coldness of the one, and the warmth of the other, Walter fled for relief to the south, as has been already related.

The painful void left by his abrupt and scarcely announced departure, awakened poor Marion to the full knowledge of her hitherto uninvestigated sentiments; and, like her cousin, she sometimes bitterly regretted that they had not been more incautiously betrayed, or more explicitly understood. Now that Walter was poor and unhappy, she would, to have been his betrothed, have even sacrificed somewhat of the maidenly reserve and coyness of more prosperous times. Yet her lips, could they even have



made the confession, of which she felt the impossibility, were now sealed by the ambitious projects of Lady Hamilton, and the more brilliant lot held out to her son by the avowed partiality of Miss Hawtayne. Though his present departure did not augur favourably for those flattering overtures, would they not finally triumph over poverty and expatriation?

The first consolation Marion experienced, during this period of misery and dejection, was the opportunity it afforded of proving her disinterestedness, by a positive refusal of young Irvine, who had been emboldened by the removal of one whom he instinctively regarded as a formidable rival, to hazard his long-intended declaration. This step, though marked by Marion's characteristic gentleness, and concealed with her innate delicacy, failed not to become known through the ill-suppressed disappointment of the amiable rejected—and its recital proved as exquisite a gratification to Walter, as the action itself had been consolatory to Marion.

The second alleviation of which her dejection admitted, had been found in the arrival

of Buchanan, and the inexplicable manner in which she felt attracted by his society, and fascinated by his amiable and benign appearance. His deportment towards her had assumed from the first so parental and affectionate a cast, that she insensibly fell into an almost filial return of his partiality; and sharing her father's delight in a thoroughly congenial companion, frequently half forgot her own sorrows, in those details of Eastern scenery and manners, on which Buchanan was fain to dwell, to the exclusion of all topics of a dearer and more dangerous nature. When he was ill she nursed him, and when he was well she walked with him, without for one moment harbouring a thought of the manner in which these attentions might be construed by the gossips of the village. Her heart was too thoroughly engrossed with a younger and dearer object, to have ever found out that Buchanan was still handsome, or even that it was a certain nameless likeness to that very object, which had tended to endear the old man so suddenly and inexplicably to her. Douglas thought as little as he cared (except in his pastoral capacity) about the little ephemeral

world of Linhaven, and only thanked Gudefallow in his heart for his own cheered existence, and the faint reviving smiles of his child.

That world, however, was far from being equally unobservant. The secluded situation, and total absence of all public amusements at Linhaven, necessarily limited the resources of its summer loungers to speculations on the character and affairs of their neighbours, and the arrival of so handsome and commanding a figure as Buchanan, had not failed to excite a lively sensation. Having, since his brief period of wedded life and the loss of his partner, always retained his sable habiliments, this, and his temporary residence at Mr Douglas's, at first set him down for a dignified English Clergyman, a quondam college friend of the humble pastor. This was quickly and contemptuously put to rights by an *erratum*, importing that the Right Reverend was evidently from the East, and doubtless about to return thither,—after an appeal to the feelings and purses of the little congregation,—on some benevolent mission.

When Sunday, however, passed over without



the appearance in the pulpit of the supposed ecclesiastic, these surmises were universally scouted, and more mundane ideas substituted in their room; especially as the *tall* unknown, though devoutly and edifyingly attentive to all the minutiae of the service, was observed to accept (when once or twice at fault) the assistance of his fair neighbour Miss Douglas; and, moreover, during the sermon, had his eyes frequently, and apparently unconsciously, fixed on the same lovely object. An entirely new train of conjectures sprung like mushrooms from these ominous glances, and Buchanan became on Monday a rich Nabob, who was ere long to lead, or rather perhaps to drag, to that polluted altar, the young creature who had grown up under its shadow. Before, however, the terms of this nefarious compact had been satisfactorily settled by the indignant Presbyterians, and apologizing Anglicans of Linhaven, the removal of the old gentleman to his own lodgings, and the singularly unpretending and economical establishment which he there set up,—viz. one old house-keeper and a foot-boy, overturned, like Alnaschar's brittle visions,

all those parts of the previous theory which had for their basis the supposed wealth of Buchanan. The report died away, and was only revived when the purposes of malice, or want of other topics of discourse, restored it to temporary currency.

Matters were in this state when Sir Walter, with the restlessness of misery, returned to Scotland; and Marknows, in all its summer pride and beauty, burst on the sick heart of its sorrowful heir, in an exuberance of loveliness which seemed to mock the cheerless desolation of the mansion itself. His mother and sisters had left the place, and Douglas, who had his reasons for not encouraging the frequent visits of his nephew at his own house, took an early opportunity of introducing him to Buchanan, as one who could materially forward, by his interest, his views in the East, and whose society might, by its universal fascination, soothe and beguile his solitude. He had soon the satisfaction of perceiving that every meeting only confirmed their sentiments of mutual good-will and regard, and spared no pains to interest in his nephew's

favour the benevolent feelings of his new friend's heart.

How superfluous, had he known it, were these efforts ! How far more necessary those, which, now that their painful goal was at hand, enabled Buchanan to forbear opening his arms and heart to the nephew so dear to both !

One of the first circumstances which rumour conveyed to the returned Baronet, was the entire revolution effected by his continued indifference in the sentiments of Miss Hawtayne; who, despairing of uniting the Marknows estate to her own by marriage, had declared her determination to do so by purchase, at whatever sacrifice. This was a severe blow to poor Walter; and, in natural repugnance to being thus supplanted in the home of his ancestors, he looked round with almost feverish anxiety for a rival purchaser, whose coffers might enable him to contend successfully with the heiress.

Buchanan, who had ascertained from Gude-fallow that the involvements of the estate were such, as to render its redemption by any sum far short of its purchase-money hopeless, had



long determined to adhere to his first intention of presenting himself as an unexpected purchaser, when the time of sale should arrive; thus combining the pleasure of outwitting the heiress, with other more amiable and congenial projects for the ultimate disposal of his paternal estate. Fain would he have relieved his nephew's anxieties, by apprising him indirectly of his intentions; but sufficiently acquainted with human nature, to know that an intending purchaser of Marknows must, however welcome, be in some degree obnoxious to its heir, he contented himself with studying the character of Walter, and endeavouring quietly to ascertain his feelings on a subject peculiarly interesting to both.

He took an opportunity during one of their evening rambles,—for Walter clung with the cordiality of a desolate heart to the benevolent old Indian, who had promised him every facility his long knowledge of the East could afford, to render his exile both profitable and agreeable,—to include in his warm expressions of regard for Mr Douglas, a heartfelt panegyric on his daughter. Its first effect on the hearer could not be misconstrued. His eye kindled, and his cheek

flushed involuntarily ; but the flush as quickly faded, and the eye fell, and Walter looked like one to whom a vague and cruel conjecture has just been horribly confirmed. Buchanan did not know that the day before, when his nephew, at a morning visit, had accidentally met Miss Hawtayne, the latter,—whose only acknowledgment of his presence was a supercilious bow,—had contrived to inflict on his sensitive ear a shock, which, though attributed to the malice in which it originated, failed not to leave some impression. She sat at the window of a lodging-house in the village occupied by an infirm relation of Sir Walter's ; and Buchanan and his niece having chanced to pass below, Miss Hawtayne exclaimed, with a sneer—" There goes Marion Douglas, and the old Bramin her father is going to sacrifice her to. I declare I never look at her without imagining I see her already decked for the funeral pile, and about to perform her *suttee*. Pity there is not even the excuse of wealth for such an unnatural conjunction !"

Walter tried to think this mere wanton mischief, and had nearly succeeded ; but when Bu-

chanan spoke of Marion as a lover or a father alone could feel, again he saw competence, if not wealth, at her disposal, and his vague hopes of distant happiness faded before them. Yet, strange to say, he could not hate Buchanan, nor feel towards him the jealous pang a younger rival might have called forth. There was a warmth in the kindness, and a balm in the sympathy of this new friend, which acted like a spell on the young man's heart; and he felt as if he could even let Marion be unto him as a daughter, during his own hopeless absence.

The day of sale approached, and Walter, eager to escape from a hateful preliminary appraisal of the furniture, rescued from the polluted precincts his cherished family pictures, which he had bought in at twice their value, and set out to request for them an asylum from his uncle George at Glasgow, whose manly and warm-hearted character had always challenged his cordial regard.

His uncle received him with much kindness, but with less of sympathy in his present mood than Walter had expected. It was not in George Hamilton's nature to see despondence on a young



brow without an effort to remove it; and though bound to strict secrecy as to the ground on which they rested, he could not resist hazarding auguries which wore to poor Walter the face of absolute impossibilities.

"Your pictures are welcome, nephew," said he, "for I hope I am a Hamilton in heart as well as name; but no man has more reason than I have to mind the Scots proverb, 'When things are at the warst, they maun mend.' Ye'll be Laird o' Marknows again before these lang wigged lairds and lang waisted ladies have time to weary o' Glasgow—and all the houserent I'll expect is an invite to the wedding."

Walter, in this ominous word, thought he saw the erroneous foundation on which his uncle's fond prediction rested, and shook his head more in anger than sorrow.—"No, no!" said he, apostrophizing the favourite picture, which he had just unpacked to ascertain its safety, of the beautiful Lady Hamilton, the mother of Buchanan; "if ever I am proprietor of Marknows, it must be by some effort less desperate than tearing from my heart the image of her, who, with thy name, inherits all thy loveliness!"

George Hamilton turned aside during this effusion, but it was to hide a conscious smile, and his next letter to Buchanan contained this confirmation of the wish nearest his heart. A chord had been touched which sent Walter, spite of his uncle's hospitality, back a day sooner than he intended, to take his last farewell of his paternal mansion and its environs.

## CHAPTER IX.

THERE was something so venerable in the decay, and so commanding in the position, of the old Castle of Oakenshaws, that while it formed the favourite haunt of the artist, and the delight of the tasteful traveller, it was impossible to have grown up under its lofty shadow, and still more to claim kindred with the noble and martial line who erected its mouldering turrets, without a feeling of reverential idolatry, which rendered the idea of its alienation a sort of sacrilege. The concentrated bitterness of these feelings might be read in Walter's pale cheek and care-worn brow, and in the feverish haste with which he had accelerated his exile alike from the domains and the country of his ancestors. But the gentle spirit of Marion sought relief from fondly lingering, while she could yet do so unmolested, amid the haunts



of her youth, and the scene of her lover's ancestral glory ; and, for the consolation of those future hours, when the site itself might become too painful, she revised with anxious dissatisfaction the many sketches she had drawn of the ruins in happier days, lent to every feature a wilder grace, and retouched with filial partiality every aged bough that waved in rugged majesty over the roofless walls.

Her eye wandered with fond devotion from the almost shapeless desolation of the older and ruder portion of the fabric, whose mouldering arches, and fearfully rent gables, had long forbidden the near approach of all save their winged inhabitants,—along the line of comparatively modern roofs and strangely projecting battlements of that subsequent part of the edifice, in which her kind uncle, Sir James, had drawn his earliest breath, and where his boyhood had witnessed, previous to its destruction by fire, many a scene of festive hospitality. There was something more affecting, though less picturesque, in the recent dilapidation of this extensive and irregular building, where the “voice

of the bridegroom and the bride," the wail of infancy and the laugh of revelry had, within the memory of man, alike resounded ; and where the birds most familiar with him seemed still to invoke his presence and protection.

Shattered window frames, and blackened rafters, spoke of sudden and violent demolition ; and the hand of Time had not been able, in the brief interval of one half century, to banish that familiar look of every-day life, which, while it robs a ruin of vague and mysterious grandeur, lets in a tide of heart-felt associations in its room.

There was one tower, however, which, though probably the oldest part of the whole, had, from its massy structure, defied decay ; and where, notwithstanding its antiquity, such associations could be conjured up in abundance. It was a favourite haunt of Marion's ; and if ever a romance of chivalry, or a tale of the olden time, fell into her hands, thither she resorted to read it, with tenfold interest and effect.

It was called the Baron's Tower, and had evidently, at some very remote period, formed the entire fortalice, and the sole dwelling of its

martial possessor and his family. A staircase, kept in tolerable repair for the purpose, led to its various stories, each of which was occupied by one large square apartment,—from the ample vaulted kitchen, with its gigantic fire-place, which formed the whole basement story, to the equally rude dining-hall above, and the general dormitory of the armed retainers still higher,—opening by little turret stairs on the leads or bartizan, whence could be descried the distant enemy, or the long-expected relief.

The parts of this rude edifice, however, more attractive to Marion, and which furnished her fancy with inexhaustible images, either in its playful or its pensive mood, were the little turret apartments, or *bowers*, as they are termed in old ballads, appropriated to the females of the family; and which, in times of feudal hostility and party rage,—when it may be truly said “the course of true love never did run smooth,”—must have echoed many a secret sigh, and witnessed many an unrecorded tear; yet, where perhaps brief intervals of peace and sunshine, enhanced by intervening storms, might have dif-



fused a joy and mirth more genuine than the monotony of peaceful life can afford.

These little chambers, which, in the vulgar nomenclature of modern architecture, would only be styled *closets*, furnished, from the massy thickness of their walls, in each of their numerous windows, recesses with stone seats, barely sufficient for the accommodation of two human beings, but calculated, far beyond all the myrtle bowers and leafy groves of Arcadia, for the eloquent avowal and blushing reception of sentiments, whose very restraint and confinement, like that of those fair objects, would only invest them with deeper and more heart-felt interest.

Besides the more than probable scope afforded by these recesses for effusions of love and constancy, putting to shame the puny expressions of degenerate modern passion, it always appeared to Marion that there was, in the limited, but often enchanting prospects enjoyed from these loopholes, over either the peopled haunts of men, or the silent solitudes of nature, somewhat more *piquant* or more soothing, than can meet

the unrestricted and often satiated gaze of an observer of our day.

The views from the Baron's Tower were of the most varied and delicious description. From one turret, blue and distant hills stretching along the far horizon, beyond a fore-ground of cultivation and pastures, enlivened with cottages, and graced by the windings of a river that wanted but a poet to rival many a classic stream. From another, nearer hills rising behind and on each side of the Castle, richly wooded, but chequered here and there with sunny slopes, where the presence of herds of cattle lent animation to the woodland scene.

But it was from the western turret that Marion loved to gaze on a prospect, which, familiar as it had been to her eye from infancy, never seemed to her so glorious as when set in the rude frame-work of masonry which encircled this *bower* window. From its height, the grassy slope leading to the platform of the Castle from the little harbour beneath, and the terraces at its immediate base, were foreshortened and lost; and the Baron's Tower seemed to overhang directly the broad expanse of the ever-changeful

Frith, studded with many a white sail. On the one hand, the isolated rock of Ailsa, rising like a gigantic beacon from the waters; on the other, the lofty and fantastic peaks of Arran, towering aloft in the cloudless summer sky, or more frequently surmounted by a gorgeous canopy, behind which the western sun long loved to linger, while all around was sunk in shadow.

When, bounded by two woody knolls, or promontories of the deepest green, this picture thus glowed in all the magic tints of sunset, it must have been a dim eye and a callous heart that refused to swell with admiration!

When, however, Walter and Marion had last sate together, while she attempted to transfer it to paper, there had been few words, and those of casual import; but there had been one eye which rested not on the bright scene without; and Marion now felt, as she gazed with surprise on the faltering lines of her drawing, that it was not the evening breeze which had stirred her paper, or the timidity of a novice which had shaken her hand!

Whatever it was, its influence had not ceased, for she attempted in vain to amend her



sketch ; but it was not till two large unbidden tears had nearly obliterated it, that she felt it vain to proceed in her present state of feeling. She cast, therefore, a lingering look on the gorgeous scene, and, slowly descending the stairs of a tower, which, as the property of a stranger, would henceforth be hateful to her, turned aside at its base towards the little churchyard, whose lowly walls had, in perilous times, sought protection from their stalwart neighbour. There she felt she could relieve her bursting heart, and endeavour to lose, amid the memorials of perished love and hatred, the tinge of bitterness which formed the chief aggravation of her present sorrow.

Among the beautiful and venerable features of the old baronial Castle of Oakenshaws, one of the most touching, even to a stranger, was the picturesque ruin of the family Chapel, converted by the hand of reformation into a parish Church, but long since recalled, by the still more powerful hand of Time, to its primitive vocation of sheltering with its roofless walls the proud monuments of the Oakenshaws, and, with the trees which sprung green and vigorous amid

its decay, the humbler gravestones of the nameless poor.

Its exterior was of simple, but elegant architecture, and just in the state of dilapidation most desirable for a painter's eye ; but the interior, whose graceful arches and slender pillars came into actual contact and comparison with their supposed leafy prototypes, exhibited a rare union of freshness and decay, of the evanescence of art, and the immortality of nature.

One end, protected from weather by the only roofed portion of the building, contained the gloomy vault of the Hamiltons, whose massy iron-studded door served but to seclude the patrician dead from the smile of heaven that played so brightly over the rest of the moss-grown floor. One venerable elm occupied with its fantastic arms the deserted aisle, while vigorous saplings sprung through the side arches, and ivy lent its living buttress to the tottering walls. The little churchyard, whose luxuriance of wild-flowers spoke it rarely trodden by human footsteps, was surrounded with oaks contemporary with the building, and equally venerable in decay, whose broad, though withered

arms, admitted only partial glimpses of the blue waves that washed their base, and of the white sails that gleamed upon their bosom.

It was, in truth, a spot of which the most callous traveller felt the soothing and overawing influence. What then were the feelings of one, who, in stooping to its low-browed and shrub-tangled entrance, mingled the reverence due to the rustic shrine with all the romantic devotion of a lofty mind to the high claims of ancestry, with fond regrets for her early friend and benefactor, and with pity more than "akin to love" for him, who, at the call of duty and honour, was about to tear himself from the hearths and the tombs of his fathers?

To whichever of these sources they might be traced, perhaps to a bitter union of them all, the tears of Marion were almost blinding her, as she put aside the boughs that obstructed the entrance of the chapel, and gazed, through the intervening grove within, on the burying-place at the opposite end. The place, the hour, the previous high-wrought feelings considered, she might be pardoned for starting to see, standing beside the massy door, a female figure, whose



ashy paleness contrasted so strongly with her black, though faded dress, as to give her almost the appearance of monumental alabaster ; while a little blue-eyed creature, whose profusion of flaxen curls were half-buried in her mother's sable cloak, might have served Chantry for the model of a cherub.

There was something so singular in the appearance of both, that Marion's surprise at their unexpected presence did not, as usual, subside ; it was painfully increased, when, instead of timidly retreating, as, from the elder female's dress and station, she had naturally expected, she came forward in a hurried manner, and fixing on Marion a countenance, the general immobility of which only rendered the restlessness of the large hazel eye more remarkable, said, in a wild voice, " It's weel wi' you that can greet for your dead—and so could I, if mine lay under thae bonny light caller leaves. But Charlie !——" And removing the thin hand she had laid on Marion's arm, she pointed wildly and hurriedly towards the sea, and to the white sail that gleamed in the settingsun through the flickering boughs.

Marion at once perceived the state of her companion's mind, and recollected having heard of a sailor's widow, who had recently come to lodge in the village, and feed her soul's malady with the sight of its sad cause. Her fears instantly gave way to the tenderest sympathy, and the music of her voice seemed to act as a charm on the poor bereaved one, who, taking her hand with an air of innocent confidence, whispered, "Ye see I'm come to seek Charlie—and when he casts up, as weel I ken he will, he shanna want duds to make him wiselike, as he was aye wont to be, puir fallow !"

So saying, she grasped more closely a little bundle whence peeped out a sailor's striped shirt, knotted up in a checked silk handkerchief, which she seemed to guard with a wilder look than she had yet assumed. "Ye see, when I sleep—but I'm no gude at the sleepin'—it's aye wi' *this* aneath my head—it keeps awa ill thoughts; and whiles I see Charlie buskit as he was when he gaed to the kirk wi' me on the simmer Sabbath days. His Bible's in the napkin there, for he was aye a weel-livin' lad, and when my head will let me read, it's aye in *it* I

get the bonniest texts. I wad show ye some, to gar ye gie ower greetin'—but this is but a darksome part to read God's beautiful word in !”

Marion was unable to speak, but the tears, which flowed faster, were no longer for herself. The widow clung to her with the instinct of misery.—“ Ye wad ken Charlie ?” said she, quickly ; “ a’body kens about him, puir fallow ! but they winna let me speak o’ him, and it fashes me whiles.”

“ You shall come and tell me all about him,” said Marion, compassionately ; “ perhaps it will do you good.”

“ Na, na—there’s naething does me gude but the beuk there, when my head will let me settle till’t—but it may do *you* gude to hear what grief is, for ye’re young, and sorrow and you can scarce be weel acquaint yet. But ye maun come under yon bonny spreading tree, for I downa speak o’ Charlie wi’ naething aboon me but the lift—for ye see my head’s no a’thegither right, and a’thing mounts whiles—the trees, and the houses, and the very road, rise, rise afore me, and the clouds, oh ! but they sail high—and my puir head’s sae light, that it gaes wi’ them ;



but when I just loot down under a tree or a hedge, and tak my Charlie's wean and his bit bundle on my knee, it a' comes right again, and I gang my ways doucely eneugh."

As she spoke, she seated herself under the impervious shade of a venerable oak, and laying on her lap the luxuriant ringlets of her weary babe, played fondly with them during every pause of her affecting but unconnected history.

"Ye suld say your prayers, Phemie, my lamb," whispered she, "ere ye gae to sleep—wha kens if ye'll waken, or wha kens if your puir father had time to say his yon day?—and he has never wakened sinsyne. But he was aye a God-fearin' man, though he feared naething else, and mony was the time we 'took sweet counsel thegither, and walked to the house of God as friends.'"

"That must be a great comfort to you now," said Marion, soothingly.

"Ay," continued the widow, scarce heeding her, "he was weel respectit by high and low, my Charlie, and a bonny, bonny lad! This bairn that he never saw, is the likest him o' seven—

they're a' wi' him but hersell ; but she's promised to bide a while langer wi' her mammy."

" And have you really lost so many of your family, my poor woman ?" asked Marion, much moved.

" *Lost !*" repeated the maniac, quickly ; " it's no lost that a friend gets, and mine are wi' their ain father, and their Father in Heaven !—But ye maunna think that I was aye sae resigned—for when I was young like you, I grat plenty. Twa bonnie blossoms fell aff my tree or ever it or they were ripe—but I could greet then, and I had Charlie to mind me that grief was sinfu', and three curly-headed laddies to gar me forget it—Did ye ever see my Willie ?" asked she, with wild and affecting energy ; " I dinna think a statelier laddie ever grew at a mither's knee. He was my first-born, and christened the day I was seventeen—I wasna an auld mither then, ye'll say ! He was a grand scholar, and could read amaist as weel as his father, and we had baith an unco pride in the laddie.—Weel," resumed she, after a sad pause, " he cam hame frae the schule ae het simmer day wi' a burning cheek, and a burning brow, and his bonnie head

was never aff my breast till they were baith cauld, cauld enough ! I had nae time to greet for him, weel as I lo'ed him, for aye as his maen grew fainter and fainter, I heard wee Johnny's grow louder and louder ; and, if I mind right,—for I'm wrang whiles,—it was just as the neighbours cam ower the kirk-stile frae Willie's burial, that I laid Johnny's wee cauld corpse aff my knee ! Ye see, Charlie was at the sea then, and no there to lay their heads in the grave, and sair wark the minister had to reconcile me to the want o' their father at sic a time ; but weel my bonnie bairnies kent he was awa to Heaven afore them, and that made them sae keen wha suld be foremost to won till him."

"Good God !" exclaimed Marion, inexpressibly shocked ; "did he never return ?"

"*Return !*" echoed the maniac, almost fiercely ; "do you not read here that the 'sea shall give up its dead?' and shall I not get my Charlie again, and my wee sailor laddie wi' him, that was ower gude, nae doubt, for this wicked warld ?"

Marion's lips refused further inquiry, but her looks probably expressed some ; for the mourner, speaking very quickly, and twist-



ing her fingers almost convulsively in her child's hair, went on,—“ Ye see, I canna tell ye right-ly about the loss o' the Peggy, for naebody would ever tell me; and whiles I dinna believe she's lost yet, but only wanderin' up and down yon wide, wide sea!—And I canna tell ye muckle about mysell either, till ae day that bonny bairn was born, and when the minister came to gie the fatherless wean a name, he opened the Beuk afore me, and I read, ‘ Hath he not left thee a remnant?’ and there it is, sure enough, and a' the dearer for being puir Charlie's very picture!—Phemie, my bonnie woman,” said she, starting up, “ we maun awa' hame, for if your father comes, he'll be thinkin' lang for us.”

Marion's streaming eyes probably expressed anxiety for the widow's safety, and desire to see her on her way; for she shook her head, and taking the hand of the lovely child, rendered more beautiful by the flush of unquiet rest,—“ Phemie 'll take care o' me—she kens the gait hame weel enough, and mony a weary mile she's led me ere now. She has wit for hersell and me, poor forworded lamb! There's Ane aboon that kens she wad need it!”

The little girl shook back her clustering curls from a face of such meek intelligence as justified her poor mother's assertion, and gently led her from the churchyard. Marion pressed the widow's hand, promising to come and visit her, kissed the guardian cherub, and after watching them safely down the path to the village, turned into the beautiful grounds of Oakenshaws, of which she still retained the key, in a mood of chastened submission, which made her own puny griefs fade into utter insignificance !

Marion had not, however, succeeded in stemming the flood of tears which no longer flowed for herself, nor had she proceeded many yards along the narrow and romantic path, which had for its boundary, on the right the silver waves, canopied, as they so often are on the western shores of the island, with a rich fringe of trees and shrubs ; and, on the left, a precipitous bank, tangled with ivy and wild-roses, and crowned with the mighty oaks from which the place derived its name, when, on turning an angle in the rock, she abruptly met the being, whom, of all others, she believed there was least

danger of then meeting in the groves of his ancestors. She uttered a cry of surprise, and felt all that glow of detection which a secret consciousness so frequently sends to the cheek of innocence itself. Nothing could be more natural than this farewell stroll in the haunts of her childhood—nothing more casual and thoroughly unexpected than this meeting with their owner; and yet Marion blushed as if on forbidden ground, and trembled as if the rencontre had been an assignation.

She faltered out some inquiry about the health of her uncle and aunt in Glasgow, and tried, by some allusion to the story of the mourner she had just met, to account for the tears which, at sight of her cousin, had mocked her efforts to repress them; but her voice failed, and she pursued her way in silence.

The path was so narrow, that Walter, who, in simple and natural courtesy, had turned to accompany her, walked necessarily behind, and it became thus more difficult to fall insensibly into that strain of ordinary conversation which would alone have been safe in the present state of their minds. Marion felt as if an intruder



on the private griefs and melancholy musings of her cousin, and would have given worlds to summon courage to propose pursuing a different path; when, on approaching a picturesque rustic seat in a recess of the rock before them, known too by the popular title of the Lover's Bench, she heard her name breathed in a tone so wholly different from the thousand friendly and affectionate modulations it had during many years received from the same lips, that she mechanically stood still, with the feeling of one who, after the startling prelude of the lightning flash, pauses in breathless stillness for the solemn peal which is to follow. On that simple word, "Marion!" hung the destiny of her future life. Thoughts careered through her mind faster than ever clouds before the blast. Duty to her father, and to Lady Hamilton, her lover's happiness, her own, eternal union, perhaps final separation—all these elements seemed let loose in fearful conflict, by that one soft, gentle, never-to-be-forgotten word! How long she might have stood, incapable alike of turning round or moving forward, it were hard to say, had not Walter followed up his whisper with a

gentle violence that placed her by his side on the low seat, and once more uttered her name, but with a firm and resolved accent, calculated to restore her confidence, and worthy of his own frank and manly character.

“Marion!” said he, “I have loved you from a boy, and not as brothers love, though, in the innocence of your heart, you have perhaps seen in me but the playmate of your childhood. A few short weeks ago it was the pride of my heart to think I could give you the scene of our childish pastimes for a home, and the friend of your youth for a protector. I only lingered, in the fond waywardness of prosperity, till I should be able to mark on your pure brow some decisive indication that Walter Hamilton was dearer to you than the heir of Oakenshaws. I was that heir no longer, and the knowledge I would once have given worlds to possess, was now worthless to me. Nay, more, though I read it but too well in your lately doubled tenderness, through the maiden veil in which it was so sweetly shrouded, I had locked it in my breast to wither there, with the rose from your fair bosom, steeped in the first blood I shed in Spain.

Heaven is my witness ! I did not intend to involve you in my poverty and ruin. One day more, and I had gone on my far pilgrimage as free from selfishness as I trust I am from dishonour ; but this place—this meeting—these tears—what do they leave a man to do, but own his selfish madness—own that in all the wide and dark horizon before him, he sees but one ray of future happiness beaming on his path, and grasp it, at the hazard of quenching its mild light for ever ? Marion ! do not think I would take advantage of these woods of our youth, and waves we have both gazed upon so often, to lure you to distant lands, and over stormy seas with an exile ! No—there is a ‘ silver cord ’ at home that must be gently loosed before you could yield, or I claim, a duty elsewhere so sacredly due. Yet I am wilder still, for I would bind you with a tie that death alone can sever, to an outcast who knows not when, if ever, he may return to claim his prize. It is cruel, and my conscience tells me so ; but yesterday I would have shrunk from it—to-day I am a weak selfish creature, and must go on. Marion ! will you cheer the heart of the wanderer with one



soft assurance that he shall not be forgotten, till, perchance, kind Fortune makes a man of him again, or till you find freedom in his grave?"

Marion, whose tears had rained from down-cast eyes like hail, during this impassioned address, the fruit of high-wrought feelings and long-suppressed anguish, answered not a word. Twice she essayed in vain to pull off her glove—succeeded—slowly drew off the mourning ring with Sir James's hair, which she had worn ever since his death, and placing it with sweet reluctant modesty on the finger it was never more to quit, rose and walked towards the gate. A new trial of feeling awaited her. It was late, and the dew fast falling, and her anxious father stood in his rustic porch, eagerly looking out for his child. Her tears and hurried steps alarmed him. She threw herself into his arms, and saying,—“Father, forgive me, if I could not break his heart,” pointed to the pledge of pure and tried affection, and eagerly implored the blessing which alone could hallow it.

“I feared this, and yet I hoped it,” said Douglas, mildly, as a big drop fell upon the precious ring. “Your bridal vows, like mine, Marion,

have been 'sown in tears.' May they 'be reaped in joy,' here and hereafter !"

Buchanan, to whom Douglas every day became more truly "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother," could not resist apprizing him, though without any farther communication, of his intention to purchase Marknows ; and Douglas, in the fulness of his heart, repaid the partial confidence by the secret—he little knew how welcome—of his daughter's betrothment to the heir. He spoke of it as one who had himself experienced how much better is a "little, where love is," than all the treasures of the East ; and his only regret was, that natural ambition and honest pride should dictate Walter's expatriation, and his own infirm health and paramount claims, doom his unrepining child to the long sickness of hope deferred.

## CHAPTER X.

THE day fixed for the sale of the Oaken-shaws estate at length arrived. No purchaser seemed likely to dispute the field with the heir-ess; and already she talked, in her privileged circle, of removing her residence from the bare lawns and unsheltered splendour of her newly-erected mansion, to the shade of the venerable woods of Marknows. Mrs Hawtayne was, as usual, passive on the occasion. Major Nevil, with the inconsistency of a lover, felt as little in charity with Sir Walter for declining, as he would have done for receiving, the hand of his ward; and Miss Ingram, who in the bustle of a removal anticipated increase of consequence, and greater vicinity to the gossips of Linhaven, already congratulated her pupil on her supposed possession.



These feelings of exultation were far from being generally diffused in the neighbourhood. On the contrary, this accession to the heiress's already preponderant influence, at the expense of one of the oldest families in Scotland, was in the highest degree distasteful to most of the neighbouring gentry, and a coalition to outbid her had more than once been proposed, and seriously discussed. The knowledge, however, that, from the pressing claims on the estate, the greater part, if not the whole of the purchase-money, must be immediately forthcoming, presented a serious obstacle to this chivalric project; and to it Miss Hawtayne chiefly trusted for giving her a clear field, by discouraging purchasers at large.

Buchanan, whose delicate health and feelings made him shrink from anything like personal competition, had, some time before, requested Gudefallow to act for him, in the following laconic billet, and had received from his friend the still more characteristic answer subjoined :

DEAR DAVIE,

The heiress is determined to have Marknows.

I cannot attend the sale—fail not to be here on Saturday, and bring a long purse with you.

Yrs.

W. H.

P. S. D—n all heiresses.

Davie, when the above reached him, was in the north, opposing, in behalf of a client, the election of a wealthy Nabob. His parody on his friend's epistle ran thus :

DEAR WILLIE,

Nabobs are kittle cattle. I daurna leave my borough, but I'll send ye my right-hand man, and the Bank of Scotland at his back.

Yrs.

D. G.

P. S. D—n all Nabobs, (yourself excepted.)

The mail of the very morning on which the sale was to take place, deposited from its dusty roof in the inn at V—, the homely and unpretending figure of Gudefallow's old head clerk, whose rusty suit of black, and lank untortured hair gave no intimation of his metropolitan extraction, nor excited any suspicion of a latent purchaser for Marknows.

Johnny Laidlaw, who, since the somewhat cavalier proceedings instituted by Gudefallow at the instance of Sir Walter, to diminish his share of the Marknows spoil, had transferred his allegiance to a new and more flourishing client, attended on the part of Miss Hawtayne, furnished with instructions not only to give the full value of the property, should there be unexpected opposition, but even whatever further advance might be requisite to secure his principal's darling object. Johnny, however, chuckled internally over the good bargain which she was likely to have of his old benefice, and felt a malicious satisfaction in the small reversion, which, even after all deductions from his own exorbitant claims, would remain to the impoverished heir.

The hour at length arrived—the room was crowded to excess, chiefly with well-wishers to the cause of the unfortunate, and way was made with magical celerity for the unexpected metropolitan candidate. Johnny was not only disagreeably surprised by the sight of a competitor at all, but too old a fox to feel any security from his quiet unobtrusive deportment and thread-



bare habiliments. Though personally unacquainted with Gudefallow's deputy, some slight preliminary inquiries bespoke him a brother of the quill, and withal no novice; but as it was unlikely that his unknown principal should have more than a purchaser's usual wish, of value for his money, Johnny expected, by the fancy price which he was authorized to offer, instantly to distance him.

He was mistaken. The estate was set up as usual, considerably below its value; a good-natured friend or two of the family lent it a lift as far as safety warranted. The Gairlie man of law pushed his offer to what he considered the verge of absurdity—and still the metropolitan scribe seemed as fresh as ever. Seeing in his face that look of dogged resolution which made it evident that to outbid him would be no easy matter, Johnny, in sore conflict between his positive instructions to buy the estate, and his internal knowledge that it was already going some thousands above its value, forgot the feelings of the heiress in those of the man of business, and reluctantly gave in—declaring, in the bitterness of his disappointment, that his oppo-

nent must be either *fou* or *fey*. No symptoms of either, however, appeared in the douce demure agent, who, paying down on the spot, as had been stipulated, two-thirds of the purchase-money, received in return the necessary documents, mounted the roof of the afternoon's mail, and was in Edinburgh before the result of his journey was generally known in ——shire.

A large party of habitual loungers had assembled at Hawtayne, to share the heiress's triumph, and offer their congratulations. A luxurious luncheon had already rewarded their devotion, and they only lingered for the confirmation of her success, which the first messenger from the county town should bring. Major Nevil had rode in to be the welcome nuncio, but the easy paces and limited powers of his quiet pony were left far behind by the foaming speed of a horseman, who might be seen, from its utmost length, galloping up the unsheltered approach to the hall.

Had a doubt of the result ever crossed the minds of any of the household flatterers, an evil omen might have been derived from a nearer view of the rider ; for Harry Wellwood was the

intimate friend of Walter Hamilton, and had shared with him the unpardonable offence of not admiring the heiress. As in his case, however, the contumacy was only tacitly implied, and privately understood, he continued on the usual footing of an acquaintance, and visited, though rarely, at Hawtayne. He was a young man more generally feared than beloved; for while his caustic wit and reckless frankness alarmed folly in all its forms, the few alone whom he loved and honoured could appreciate the romantic warmth and generosity of his feelings. He had loved Walter Hamilton since they played together as boys in the woods of Marknows—he had stifled, and that *silently and secretly*, for his sake, an incipient passion for Marion.

He had long honoured Douglas as the pastor and guide of his youth, and under his roof had lately learned to admire and reverence what he had seen of Buchanan. It was a mixture of all these good feelings with the less amiable one of mortifying upstart pride and wealthy insolence, which induced him to turn aside on his return to his father's seat, and give the first intimation of Buchanan's success at Hawtayne.



He was too wellbred to dash at once abruptly on so tender a subject, but it must be confessed his delight in postponing it partook somewhat of that of a cat while protracting the fate of its ultimate victim. He spoke of the roads and of the weather, answered deliberately inquiries respecting his own family, and even the news from V——; suffered the keen eye of the heiress, and the still more intelligible glances of all the circle, to interrogate him unmoved; and it was only when, on being pressed to take some refreshment after his sultry ride, an officious young dangler handed him a glass of wine, saying, “I conclude this is to the health of the *fai*owner of Marknows,”—that Wellwood, with an air of well-feigned surprise, begged to know the meaning of the epithet.—“If ‘handsome is, as handsome does,’ according to the old English proverb,” said he, with provoking simplicity, “my good friend Buchanan is entitled in this point of view to be called *fairly fair*; but as, in common parlance, the epithet could hardly be applied to his honest sunburnt visage, I beg to substitute ‘the health of the *worthy* purchaser of Marknows!’” All stood aghast! Miss Haw-

tayne grew first red, then deadly pale. She looked unutterable things, while the feelings of those less deeply interested found vent in a storm of wonder and indignation, under cover of which Harry Wellwood made his escape. Margaret Hawtayne felt "the curse of every granted prayer," in the bitterness of this her first disappointment, and would have left Scotland immediately, had she not feared thus to betray the extent of her discomfiture. She was reserved for greater mortification.

Sir Walter, who had set off before the sale to visit and take leave of his mother, in a distant part of the country, felt a strange complication of emotions on being apprized by Gude-fallow's agent of its result. Gratitude for the substitution of Buchanan for Miss Hawtayne certainly predominated; while he could not help feeling hurt by the total silence of the former, when he must have known that the confidential disclosure of his intentions would have been so great a relief. Lady Hamilton, on hearing him named, now for the first time mentioned his previous visit to Marknows; and the idea of his having thus for months entertained and con-

cealed the design, appeared to poor Walter alike unaccountable and unamiable. In short, he was human ; and the purchaser of Marknows must have been an angel, to disarm his involuntary hostility.

That of the neighbourhood of Linhaven was soon excited, by the indecent promptitude with which the eccentric new proprietor,—who, strange to tell, had never, either before or since the sale, been known to visit his purchase,—forthwith proceeded to sweep away the innovations of his immediate predecessors. Workmen were assembled in great numbers, and carried on simultaneously the demolition of the dog-kennel before mentioned, and the restoration of the grand flight of steps and princely front entrance to the Mansion. These alterations, though minutely ordered, were not superintended by the proprietor ; nor would he, till they were completed, even talk of taking possession.

He then prepared to do so, and had asked leave to spend quietly with Douglas and his daughter,—in whose feelings towards him the purchase seemed to have made rather an unfavourable impression.



vourable revolution,—the last day of his sojourn at Linhaven, when the apparently accidental arrival at the village of George Hamilton and Davie Gudefallow, added welcome though unexpected guests to the social circle.

Marion half wished, half dreaded the arrival of Walter, who she knew had received intimation that his exchange now only awaited his presence and signature, and whom she hourly expected to spend the last few precious moments of freedom at Linhaven.

He was then on his way thither, after a bitter parting with his mother, who, callous as she was, could not bid adieu to the son she had helped to banish, without floods of “natural tears.” His sisters, common-place and cold-hearted as they were, could not be embraced, for the last time, without a pang; and Walter’s heart was already abundantly softened, when the approach to his native scenes called forth emotions which he felt thankful were buried in the solitude of his post-chaise. So absorbed was he in the throng of “sweet and bitter fancies” which came crowding on his mind, that when the post-boy, already apprized of his destination,

passed, on his way to the village, the well-known approach to Marknows, Walter's hand was on the check-string to rectify the supposed blunder.

Perhaps the sigh with which he drew it back was the bitterest he had ever heaved. The afternoon sun shone with peculiar and insulting brilliancy on the home of his youth, and lingered with still more cruel fascination on the ruined turrets of his forefathers. To get at the village, Oakenshaws, with its mouldering turrets and alienated sepulchres, had to be passed; its green woods bending over the clear blue waves, would have spoke daggers, had they not brought the idea of Marion; and though this was misery in another form, yet there was always sweetness blended with it. In these woods she had plighted her faith to him, in poverty and exile; and in these woods she might now rove unmolested, till he should return to claim her, when their mutual task of filial duty was accomplished.

The sun was fast declining when the traveller reached the Cottage, too late he knew for the usual dinner hour. So much the better—he had

little wish for food, but looked forward, with the feverish eagerness of a wearied spirit, to the soothing converse, and holy stillness of the evening hours, the last perhaps he might be able to spend in Scotland.

It may be imagined, therefore, that a convivial circle, however small and friendly, sitting around a social board, was repugnant to his sick heart. Any addition to Douglas and his Marion would have been at best superfluous ; but when, to the somewhat clamorous greetings of his light-hearted uncle, and never worse-timed jocularly of the honest writer, was added the unexpected presence of Buchanan, the poor young soldier found himself in the situation of one, who, in flying to a supposed refuge from danger and conflict, rushes on an unseen ambuscade.

It cost the quondam heir of Oakenshaws an exertion of truly Christian charity, to hold out his hand to his innocent successor ; but the kindly pressure of the latter had in it something magical, before which the frost of displeasure melted away. Ere a few minutes had passed, Walter could even allude to the subject,



and thank Buchanan for a liberality which had left him a reversion beyond his most sanguine expectations.

Buchanan smiled kindly, and assured him in return, that he only considered himself as the guardian of the property till it should be claimed, as he trusted it would be ere long, by the rightful owner. A sigh from Walter's full heart was the only answer to this benevolent assurance, and it was echoed so deeply and despondingly by Marion, that her doating uncle could no longer deny himself the exquisite enjoyment of a discovery, which he had already, on this eventful morning, cautiously made to her father. He gazed with a swimming eye on the daughter of his Marion, and the grandson of his mother, about, at the call of duty, to brave a separation under which their young hearts were evidently sinking. He felt in all its overpowering and almost superhuman ecstasy, the luxury of conferring happiness; and filling with a trembling hand the gladdest bumper that hand had ever carried to his lips, called for a health to the Heiress of Oakenshaws! The lovers gazed in speechless wonder—Was it

idle jest or dotage that suggested the "unreal mockery?"—Oh! no; for dropping the half-tasted glass, William Hamilton snatched to his bosom the living image of his lost sister; put his hand into that of his bewildered nephew, and said, "Forgive me, Walter, if I cost you some days of pain and suspense. Let Marion's daughter, and the estate of your forefathers with her, make you amends!"——

"Walter, lad," added his uncle George, with an exulting smile, "Did I no tell you ye wad win Marknows by marriage?"

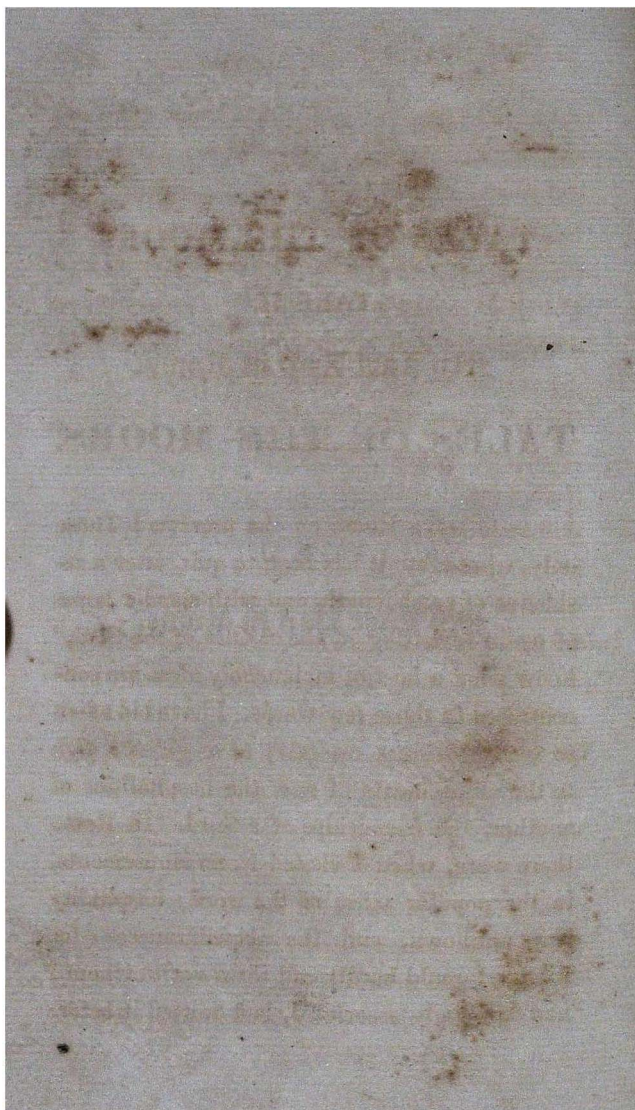
# TALES OF THE MOORS.

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## TALE II.

### *My Last Day in Rome.*





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### *My Last Day in Rome.*

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I WAS to leave Rome on the morrow ! Those only, whose fate it has been to quit, after a residence of some length, and with slender hopes of again revisiting it, the “ City of the Soul,” know what a host of melancholy ideas are concentrated in those few words. I have bid adieu to many brilliant capitals ; have given a sigh to the amusements of one, the hospitalities of another, the friendships of a third. In Rome there were, when I visited it, no amusements, in the popular sense of the word ; hospitality was unknown, and the acquaintances—for friends I could hardly call them—with whom I had sparingly associated, had quitted it before

me. Yet when will the *spectacles* of Paris, the *cercles* of Vienna, nay the society of London itself, call forth such a sigh of indefinable regret, as rises from the very depths of the breast of him, who, in leaving Rome, bids farewell, if not to the home of his birth, at least to that of his education ; to the fairyland of his boyhood, and the scene of his maturer day-dreams ?

But to those who have never made the pilgrimage, words cannot convey the sensation ; and with those who have, words cannot do it justice ; so I will only indulge the fond garrulity of absence, by a rapid sketch of what was to have been, and, as far as any classical or individual feelings were concerned, might still be termed my last day in Rome.

The same principle which makes many a firm but affectionate relative spare himself the pain of an individual farewell to the objects of his fondest attachment, while he yet snatches with avidity a parting glimpse of their dear group, to treasure it in his heart during a long and perhaps eternal separation,—determined me not to disturb the melancholy charm of this eventful day, by separate visits to the chief objects



of my mind's idolatry. Feeling that to him who would carry away one sublime and satisfying *coup d'œil* of the Eternal City, the seduction of details would be fatal, I steadily resisted the mechanical impulse which would have led me, on this loveliest of spring mornings, straight towards the Forum ; and though yielding to the secondary one, which bade me take the well-known route to the Vatican, I left unvisited the shrine of the Apollo, and lifted not, in my waywardness, the ponderous curtain which excluded me, probably for life, from the glories of St Peter's. With efforts, which in a better cause might have been deemed heroic, I forbore to linger on its majestic platform, and beside its ever-murmuring fountains ; and passing out at the Porta Angelica, slowly wound my way up Mount Mario to the delicious Villa Mellini.

A deserted modern villa was perhaps the most natural station from whence to contemplate the decaying grandeur of the city of the Popes ;—I had chosen a yet more appropriate one for my parting gaze on the vestiges of that of the Cæsars. From the lovely green bank, enamelled with a profusion of spring flowers,

and overshadowed by lofty cedars, where I reclined for hours, unnoted, save by the altered position of the lights and shadows on the objects beneath, lay before me in full view the windings of the Tiber, humble as if no poet had ever sung, placid as if no warrior had ever trod its shores. At my feet lay that suburb of Trastevere, which, though excluded from the patrician precincts of ancient Rome, now boasts of giving her only unmingled progeny their plebeian grave. Here, remote from the mouldering ruins of the Palatine, stood the still entire, but scarce less deserted piles of the Vatican; and as I gazed on their lone magnificence and gigantic dimensions, abandoned to the cold and silent society of the gods and heroes of the Capitol, I could not help fancying that these had here rallied to exult over its desolation, while a still-breathing but degenerate population had retired in awe of its impending fall.

No habitations, save those of poverty and wretchedness, skirt the once proud precincts. That papal banner which erst waved defiance alike to Europe and Asia, beneath which monarchs crouched for empire, and vassals for pro-

tection, has long been stirred by the poisoned breath of *Malaria*. The mitred prelate and purple cardinal shun with prophetic impulse the tottering centre of their waning spiritual dominion, and while, by some inexplicable caprice of the unseen foe, the squalid and still persecuted Jew enjoys in his filthy and crowded *Ghetto*, on a level with the muddy Tiber, and subject to its insalubrious exhalations, an exemption from disease, little less miraculous than the rest of his history, the lofty and airy site of St Peter's, shares, with many of the more renowned and elevated of the Seven Hills, the ravages of the encroaching pestilence. *Apropos* of Jews : I never met one in Rome, (living there for aught I know from father to son, since that father adorned the triumph of Titus,) without seeing in him a walking commentary on Josephus, and a memento of the wrath which made Jerusalem a proverb and a desolation ; yet when, while treading the pavement of their humble synagogue, and contrasting its meanness with the magnificence of St Peter's, I remembered that the immutable volume reposing on its shabby pulpit, announced in characters of adamant, the



perpetual destruction of Rome, and the triumphant restoration of Jerusalem, I have been tempted to look upon my squalid conductor, with a strange mixture of veneration and contempt.

Never did similar reflections force themselves on my mind with more painful effect than now, when,—looking down, perhaps for the last time, on the stupendous fabric, which, from most other positions, seems to tower above its subject edifices,—I gazed on its interminable galleries, its vast and grass-grown courts, its measureless extent of roofs, and city-like congregation of domes and pinnacles; and while prompted to exclaim, with the disciples of old, “See what manner of stones and buildings are here!” I felt that the same denunciations were already gone forth and registered against the pride of Christendom, which foretold the more rapid annihilation of the palladium of Judea.

I tried to rouse myself from these melancholy speculations, so hostile to my design of carrying away a pleasing though mournful recollection of the Queen of Cities;—but turn as you will in Rome, there is matter for meditation even

to madness. I descended with hasty steps from Monte Mario, skirted a portion of the decaying wall of Modern Rome, and strove, amid the lovely villas and fragrant gardens of the Janiculum, to foster musings of a softer and more soothing character. I partly succeeded. The cool gush of the Aqua Paolina was welcome to my ear, amid the noontide heat of an Italian spring; and I threw myself down beside this monument of papal munificence, half regretting that its source was for ever dried, till my eye rested, with far different emotions, on the vast deserted monuments of a shameful Nepotism, those cumbrous palaces of the Farnese and Corsini, which neither the dishonourable spoils of antiquity, which disgrace, rather than adorn their exterior, nor the master-pieces of modern art, that decorate their damp and fading halls, can rescue from the wasting hand of merited decay.

There was still too much of bitterness in this to be congenial to my purpose; and I again changed my position, in quest of those ennobling associations, which, from the lone and shrub-grown Palatine, can never be sought in vain. Suffice it, that I sat upon the threshold

of the Cæsars, while the startled fox retreated to his well-known lair, and while the grey lizard, fearless of, nay companionable with man, fixed on me a wondering eye of almost human intelligence. Suffice it, that it was the Forum, the Coliseum, the Capitol, I looked upon, and let Byron, or yet more powerful imagination, picture the rest.

I remained here, spell-bound, as one who gazes for the first or last time upon these things of old—graved them on my mind's eye beyond the possibility of oblivion, and then descended reluctantly to the common-place business and singularly plebeian streets of modern Rome.

It was, however, now a season when even these had acquired a somewhat congenial air of stillness and desolation. I had purposely lingered a few days behind the swarm of foreign travellers to enjoy the calmness of Rome as it is for six or seven months of the year; when Italian pilgrims no longer crowd the precincts of St Peter's, or Russian and German princes the galleries of the Vatican; when English equipages have ceased to roll in endless pursuit of pleasure or information; when groups



of my studious or lounging countrymen no longer people the Forum or invade the Coliseum ; but when, at the already sultry noon-tide hour,—during which, according to the Roman proverb, nothing would venture into the streets but a dog or an Englishman,—the sight of a stray countryman, like an untimely swallow, still haunting the *Via Sacra* with his *Vasi* under his arm, or his *Cicerone* at his elbow, makes one absolutely start, as if the meeting were in some lone desolate region on the other side of the globe.

This is certainly the time to judge of what Rome intrinsically is ; when her worshipper prays unmolested by the idle gaze of curiosity—when her vegetating population spends the listless day in sleep, and only starts into a semblance of life on the approach of night—when not one face is lighted up by keen intelligence, or one step quickened by ardent quest of knowledge—when the emancipated *Valet de Place* suns himself like a released galley-slave on the steps of the *Piazza di Spagna*, and thanks Heaven that his English task-masters no longer

urge him on. When, also, escaping from Tramountane tyranny, the hundred cooks, whose indefatigable toils scarce sufficed to supply the English demand for hyperborean rostbif and pudding, now delightedly relapse into the lighter and more congenial labours of "*Minestra* and *Frittata*;" and when, consequently, the luckless English wight who arrives at this unusual season, runs the risk of starving, if he cannot relish oil and endure garlic.

I had served in Spain an apprenticeship which rendered both these evils, in their mitigated Italian form, very endurable; and felt, therefore, no inconvenience from the revolution in my *Trattoria*, or dismay at the prospect of sharing, on this my last day in Rome, the early dinner of an Italian family, with whom circumstances had connected me, and who knew enough of England,—which some of them had visited,—to be aware that such a mode of testifying hospitality, however rare in Rome, was *there* customary and appropriate.

They were excellent primitive people, and had shown me substantial kindness, nor did I bid them adieu without sincere regret, when

the conclusion of their simple and unprotracted meal left me at liberty so to do.

I had intended to devote the evening, much of which remained before me, to a stroll beyond the walls, in the lone Campagna, which was alone wanting to complete my mental panorama; but on returning to my hotel, I found that business, trifling enough in itself, but important to my character as a true and loyal knight, would require my presence in an opposite and more ignoble quarter. I had been enjoined by my sister, and by one whose behests were perhaps still more imperative, to preserve and bring home a large quantity of the highly esteemed Roman pearls; and, finding that the precious packet had not, as promised, made its appearance, and that my own servants and my *Laquais de Place* were both alike occupied in other indispensable arrangements, I resolved to be my own messenger, and to console myself for other privations by a glance at this manufacture, peculiar to Rome, the fish, somewhat resembling the *Sardine*, whose produce gives it activity, being limited to the neighbouring coast.

I was not sorry to be led once more into a



quarter of the city which I had rarely trod; through streets spacious, and chiefly formed of the deserted palaces before alluded to, adjoining to, nay, even within some of the most decayed of which, a population of the wretchedest description support existence, Heaven alone knows how !

In one of these large waste buildings was the manufactory I sought, and the number of persons whom I found employed in its dilapidated apartments, threw some light on the mystery I had just been endeavouring to fathom. They were of course, chiefly females, but differing as widely in person and manners as the nature of their occupations was powerfully contrasted. In a sort of outer vestibule, some coarse Trasteverine amazons, the very originals from whom Pinelli must have taken his frightfully accurate sketches of a *she* fight in that privileged *Rione*, were characteristically and congenially employed in extracting from piles of the half-decaying fish, the material which communicates to the artificial pearl its truly natural lustre. Here, again, sat a group of ordinary-looking women, mingled with some meagre and emaciated men,

busied in forming the rude bead of alabaster, which, cut while that substance is yet soft, is, when properly rounded, coated over with the lustrous fluid beforementioned. This pearl, though far superior in nature and durability to the compound of wax and glass, which the more volatile Parisian employs to deceive the eye, has yet, especially when worn in any quantity, the disadvantage of such an overpowering weight, that I never looked at my fair friends, fainting in the dance under these very coveted and far-fetched trimmings, without thinking of the fate of Tarpeia, when overwhelmed by the desired reward of her treachery, not far from this very *Fabbrica di Perle*.

My attention was, however, at present soon engrossed by another group of young women, to whom seemed to be assigned the delicate and important task of polishing, and freeing from adhering impurities, the finished pearl; and, while the apologizing master left me to expedite my nearly completed order, I lingered near their table, on pretext of inspecting this last stage of the curious process, but in reality, under the influence of strong sympathy for the loveliest

creature I think I ever beheld, apparently not above eighteen, whose fine *Madonna* countenance was never once raised from her task, while from eyes, whose long silken lashes and noble brows sufficiently told what orbs lay hid below, tears, large and lustrous as the pearls they fell on, dropped silently but incessantly, in seeming unconsciousness of all around her.

I stood before her in heartfelt compassion, till, fearing to add to her distress, should she raise her head, or to have my gaze misconstrued by her companions, I turned sadly away, and encountered the keen glance of one of the *Trasteverine* matrons in the adjoining room. She read my feelings with intuitive quickness; and with the warm-hearted impulse which so often prompts one child of poverty to befriend another, sought to interest me farther.

“*’E la bella Spagnuola,*” said she, in a confidential tone, drawing me aside to the door, “*lei conoscerà sicuro il suo nome.* All the painters in Rome,” continued she, “have gone wild to get her for a model, and the *Cavalieri* and *Milordi* for a mistress; but Isidora is a *figlia di garbo*, and will listen to none of them, though,



Heaven knows, if poverty would excuse such expedients, she has it to plead. She and her mother have long known starvation, and to-morrow are to be sold out of *tetto e letto*, (house and home,) to satisfy their creditors. This makes poor Isidora weep so piteously ; for they are well born, and have Spanish pride to add bitterness to beggary."

"How came they to be so reduced?" asked I, in the same confidential whisper.

"*Lei saprà*," said my virago informant, whose very features I began to think softened by her goodness of heart, "that when *Re Carlo Quarto*, of blessed memory, came from Spain, driven out, as I have heard, by that *Cane di diavolo Bonaparte*, a number of Spaniards, high and low, came with him ; among others the father of Isidora, Bernardo Valdagnez, who was secretary to an old Spanish *porporato*, and sent on before to await the *Cardinale's* arrival in Rome. However, the *Santissimo* died on his journey ; and Bernardo, nearly as old and infirm as his master, found himself in a strange country, without friends or salary, or wherewithal to get back to Spain. As long as the king and

queen lived, their poor subjects never wanted a morsel of bread. But they died also ; and Bernardo, what with grief and old age, and cold which he caught at their '*funzione*,' was not long of following. His illness and funeral brought expenses ; no tidings of any relief came from Spain, where all, they say, has been confusion ever since ; and La Valdagna and her daughter, by little and little, have sold all they had, except necessaries, and subsisted on the bare produce of Isidora's daily labour at the *Perleria*. But the doctor, who attended Bernardo, and some others to whom they owed a trifle of money, have somehow taken it into their heads, that they have still valuable effects, and are determined on a public sale to-morrow of all these wretched women have in the world. It will break La Valdagna's heart to go to an hospital, with all her Castilian pride ; and yet go she must, for who can help her ?—*Scusi*," said she, laying her hand on mine, as it mechanically sought my purse ; " but if money from young *Milordi* would have made all right, it might have rained upon them long since—that will never do."

" Could not you," said I, " manage to con-

vey the necessary sum without my appearing in it?"

"*Non e possibile,*" answered my benevolent amazon, shaking her head. "But," added she, quickly, "I know that there is in La Valdagna's closet an old deal case, with two or three dingy pictures, none of them, I dare be sworn, worth five pauls. Now, if you could send some one to bid a few *Scudi* for them, it would be an act of charity, and no one need know there was a young *Milordo* in the matter at all; that is to say," added she, significantly, "if charity is really your object, and nothing else."

"Amica," said I, looking her straight in the face, "these pearls I am buying are going where my heart is gone before them. Isidora is no more to me than a virtuous girl in distress."

"*Basta, Signore,*" said the good woman, repaying my singular confession with unlimited confidence, "fail not to send some old picture botcher to the *Via Santa Marta* to-morrow morning."

My hand was again in my pocket. "*Lei mi burla?*" (would you affront me?) was the half-angry reply; and ere I could expostulate, the



energies of my vigorous friend were again engrossed by her horrible vocation. That a woman, with the soul of a Howard, should gut fish !—  
“ *Ou la vertu va-t-elle se nicher ?*”

My pearls were by this time packed up ; and, accompanied by a famished-looking urchin who carried them, I hurried back to my hotel, calling, however, on my way, at the post-house in the *Via dell' Orso*, to countermand my horses for the morrow.

During my walk, I pondered on the best means of effecting the benevolent purpose, towards which I felt an impulse for which I could hardly account ; when all my difficulties were put to flight in a moment by the first object that met my eyes on arriving at the hotel ; the person, namely, of all others, best qualified, from country and profession, to act as my deputy in the transaction.

For my introduction to this individual, I had been indebted to circumstances as accidental, as had this evening brought me acquainted with the distresses of his countrywoman. One of my favourite haunts in Rome, as it must be with every one who is an *amateur* in the pri-

mary sense of the word, whether *connoisseur* or not, had ever been that privileged chamber in the Vatican, where, escaping from the torturing variety and dazzling profusion of the galleries below, the eye may calmly rest on about a score of the finest pictures in the world, which need no foils to set off their transcendent beauties; but by their different styles and subjects only enhance each other, and keep the judgment in perpetual and pleasing suspense between their rival fascinations. The Transfiguration—the Communion of St Jerome—the Madonna di Foligno! What lofty names, ay, and what glorious realities, are there assembled! After gazing my fill on the immortal originals, it was no small amusement for an idler to watch the progress of the artists of various nations, some of them my countrymen, employed in copying, and most of them very successfully, those marvels of the pencil. Of these, some, with the ease and urbanity of men of the world, would rest on their pallets, and discourse, even with a novice, on the mysteries of their art; but one intense student, behind whose chair I frequently took my stand, seemed too wholly engrossed

by his gigantic undertaking, a copy of Guido's Martyrdom of St Peter, to look up for a moment, as well as too modest to begin a conversation. From his dark complexion and cast of features, I supposed him to be an Italian, and probably from Naples ; till one day, among the motley groups of English travellers, who generally conclude a morning at the Vatican with a peep into this *sala*, by way of a *bonne bouche*, I chanced to recognise an old Peninsular brother-soldier, who, more fortunate than myself, had witnessed the glorious termination of a contest, in the less prosperous outset of which I was sent home wounded. We had each of course much to hear and to communicate ; and lingered together till the room was cleared of all save the patient labourers at the easel ; and till our conversation, however suppressed in its tone, became consequently audible by them. In the course of it, many Spanish names occurred, and as we passed behind my favourite artist, that of Villa — was casually mentioned. The young man could hold out no longer ; and, starting from his chair, exclaimed, in pure Castilian, " Oh ! my own dear native town,



what would I give to see thee again !"— He blushed, and became quite confused on observing that this burst of simple patriotism had attracted our attention ; yet, on learning that my friend had quitted Villa —— much more lately than himself, his desire to learn particulars relative to his beloved home, conquered every other sentiment. It so chanced, that my friend had lodged with, and received kindness from an aunt of this very Christoval, (for so the young painter was called,) and, being obliged himself to quite Rome in a day or two, he left with me a present for the nephew, and a request to do him any service in my power.

From this day forth commenced a mutual intimacy, and reciprocation of good offices between us. The young Spaniard, whose studious and reserved habits, as well as his slender finances, had long debarred him from all society, soon clung to mine with the ingenuous gratitude of his age, and more than repaid my frequent invitations by his active and intelligent *Ciceroneship* in all matters connected with the arts. He had the knowledge and the enthusiasm, without the jargon of a *Connoisseur*, and I

learned more from his unpretending remarks than I should have done from the whole *Dilettanti* Society.

I soon drew from him his simple history. His mother had been nurse in the family of that once celebrated, but now safely obscure minion of fortune, Don Manuel Godoy, better known as the Prince of the Peace; and Christoval, though almost too young for the office, had contrived, in the quality of a page, to follow the fortunes of the exiled favourite, prompted partly by the love of adventure, so common at his age, and still more by the hope of visiting Italy, which his early love for drawing rendered an object of ardent desire. The ex-minister for some years continued his patronage of the lad, sheltered him under his roof, and fostered his talents by sufficient encouragement to keep him above want; but some difference having arisen between the *protegé* and the sole dispenser of his patron's bounty, a harsh and austere almoner,—which the Castilian spirit of Christoval refused to heal by abject and unqualified submission,—he was thrown on his own slender resources, and consequently, when I first knew

him, nearly starving. His sole dependence for future support, was the large picture I found him engaged on, begun in his days of comparative prosperity, as an altar-piece for his native town, which he had long anxiously desired to revisit, and which he was now finishing with equal assiduity, but far less enjoyment, at the expense of a German nobleman, for a church in Styria. As soon as this task should be completed, and the price, a very inadequate one, received, Christoval had determined to quit Italy, and proceed on foot, should other means be beyond his reach, to his native country. To this resolution, his rencontre with my friend, and the reminiscences of Spain thus conjured up, lent redoubled energy, and I was enabled to make the poor young fellow very happy, while I secured to myself an agreeable travelling companion, by promising to convey him as far as Bagnères, where I intended passing the summer, to meet some invalid members of my family, for whom the air of the Pyrenees had been prescribed.

I thought poor Christoval would have gone wild with joy at the thoughts of seeing all the



difficulties of his pilgrimage removed, and himself set down on the threshold of his beloved Spain, from whence the journey, nearly to its centre, seemed as a thing of nought. The only drawback on his happiness was the time which must yet intervene, as his picture would require at least two months to finish, and, luckily for him, I meant to remain at least as long in Rome. For the first two or three weeks after our arrangement, Christoval counted the days like any schoolboy, and marked each one off, as it "crept like snail unwillingly along," in joyous red, on the back of his canvass.

Latterly, however, it had been quite the reverse. The young artist became first absent, and pre-occupied—then melancholy, at last desponding—and for some days previous to that fixed for our departure, so evidently unhappy, that I frankly inquired if he repented of his purpose, and offered to contribute, to enable him to remain in Rome, at least the same sum which it would have cost me to transport him from thence. A slight ray of hope and joy kindled in his eye at the proposal, and his heart, it was plain to be seen, would be left behind—

but he steadily, though mournfully, adhered to his resolution, and sighing, confessed, "it was better he should go home." I could not bear the idea of abusing our relative situation to intrude on the poor lad's private feelings, though I did all that delicacy permitted to induce him to open his heart. From the tinge of bitterness which his sorrow seemed at times to assume, I conjectured his pride (of which he had a national share) had been wounded, probably by female indifference or infidelity, and for such wounds I sagely concluded absence to be the best cure.

In this state matters remained, till the evening I have already mentioned, when, on my return from the "*Fabbrica di perle*," I found Christoval at my hotel, superintending the packing up of a few of those delightful miniature copies of celebrated pictures, which by their beauty and fidelity,—being chiefly done by artists whose lives are nearly devoted to patient repetition of one subject,—gratify the eye and refresh the memory of him whose fate denies all hope of a second visit to Rome, and whose purse forbids all approach to the inestimable *chef-d'œuvres*

themselves. The "Fornarina"—Guercino's Sibyl, and her rival by Domenichino—a St Lucia of Carlo Dolce—a Magdalene by Guido—a Madonna of Raphael!—six of the rarest combinations of ideal and actual loveliness, of "airs from heaven," and "mortal mixture of earth's mould," that ever human genius conceived, or human pencil executed—and all for a tenth of the cost of one of the matchless and indeed unattainable originals! So much for *amateurship*, (as I have before defined it,) apart from *connoisseurship*, which has little to do with beauty.

When I told Christoval that I had deferred our journey for a day, his eye sparkled with visible satisfaction; but when I proceeded to mention my adventure, and uttered, of course in a tone of blended admiration and sympathy, the name of Isidora, I never shall forget the expression which momentarily crossed his usually open and placid countenance. I had heard—I had read of Spanish jealousy, but now I saw it; and never did aught, save the touch of Ithuriel's spear, effect a transformation so sudden and complete. The flash of the eye, the burning spot on the brow, the pale and trembling lip—



all told the poor boy's secret, and his not unnatural suspicions.

"My dear Christoval," said I, with true Castilian gravity—for, to jest here would have been equally cruel and impossible—"on the word of a *Hidalgo*, I am no rival; nor has Isidora any claim on my sympathy beyond that of virtue in distress. I have neither wish nor prospect of even seeing her again; but *you* may perhaps do so with more effect, as an agent in the little pious fraud I meditate, to rescue her from immediate want, without injury to her reputation. I am like the African magician, who offered new lamps for old. I want you to buy me some bad pictures at good prices; but I have no sinister object, believe me."

Christoval, ashamed both of his unjust suspicions, and unsuccessful love, hung his head and remained silent,—at length his natural ingenuousness triumphed. He asked my pardon for the former, and made what the Scotch novels call a "clean breast," on the subject of the latter.

He told me that some weeks before, on attending the annual funeral service for the late

King and Queen of Spain, in the church of San Jacopo dei Spagnuoli, he had chanced to kneel near Isidora and her mother. The heat and crowd had become so excessive, that the former, already weakened by over-exertion and scanty nourishment, had fainted before the conclusion of the service; and her mother, finding it nearly impossible to get her removed, had been obliged, though with evident reluctance, to accept the proffered assistance of her young countryman, who, bearing the lifeless maiden to the brink of the adjoining fountain of Trevi, found himself, unconsciously, in the same critical situation ascribed by Madame de Stael to the lovers in *Corinne*. The fair damsel soon recovered,—but it was incurably to wound her assistant; and the love thus romantically imbibed, engrossed thenceforward the whole soul of the young painter.

The widow of Bernardo, rendered cautious by age, and suspicious by misfortune, at first repulsed him harshly, as one of the many artists who had persecuted her daughter to profit by her charms; and—though this design was disclaimed with all the energy of innocence,—na-

turally enough forbade Isidora to foster, by encouragement, the passion of one whose poverty nearly equalled their own. Whether this prohibition had been mutually painful, Christoval could not positively tell ; but Isidora's eyes, the few times he had been permitted to encounter them, had looked no cruelty ; and when desired by her mother to thank him for his civility, and put an end to their slight intercourse, her voice had faltered, and she had blushed " celestial, rosy red."

On such a foundation a more selfish lover might have hoped and presumed, ay, and perhaps prevailed ; but Christoval was a beggar, and could only increase by sharing the misery of his beloved ; so he had conscientiously abstained from the attempt, and heard, with silent despair, of the increasing difficulties of the widow and her daughter. The German Baron, for whom he was painting, having gone down to Naples, Christoval had only this evening received the payment of his small balance, the greater part of which he had disinterestedly lodged in the hands of an old Spanish priest of his acquaintance, for the benefit of her whom he might



never see again, but whom, if fortune ever favoured his honest industry, he determined to return and claim.

He was ignorant, till I mentioned it, of the intended sale; but hopeless as he was of personal benefit from the interview, (to which, indeed, I now scrupled exposing his praiseworthy firmness,) he gladly embraced the opportunity of becoming, as my agent, an instrument of good to his beloved. My Trasteverine informant had represented the debts of the widow as amounting to perhaps thirty or forty crowns. This sum, and as much more as would place her above immediate distress, I authorized Christoval to bid, for the dingy daubs aforesaid, which, if they did no honour to my taste, would, I trusted, do credit to my feelings.

Wishing me to be at hand in case of any occurrence requiring a reference to his principal, Christoval, at an early hour next day, procured me admittance at an opposite house in the narrow *Vicolo*, (with the master of which, an oil-seller, he had dealt largely, to catch a glimpse of his idol,) while he himself, to avoid all appearance of collusion, kept away till the hour

of sale should give to idlers and purchasers the privilege of assembling.

It was of too humble a character to attract many of either. A few heads, mine among the rest, appeared at adjoining windows; a few squalid neighbours gathered round the door, while the simple articles of domestic use in the poorest families were exposed at the balcony of the house, and knocked down, with the usual coarse professional wit, by an unfeeling auctioneer. Among the group below, I detected the sharp faces of one or two Shylock-looking creditors, whom it would have been joy to my heart to defraud of their bond, instead of contributing to its payment. Poor devils! they looked blank enough at the produce of their extortion—till, after some delay, and an apparent altercation, heard even across the lane, the auctioneer began to cry, in a tone of mock triumph and importance,\* “*Quadri, Signori, quadri! cosa rarissima, cosa stupenda, opera di Raffaelle! !*”—and other similar ironical puffs.

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\* Pictures! Gentlemen! pictures! wonders of art, works by Raphael!

On this Christoval made his appearance in the field; and the unusual cry from a house of so mean a description, brought together, in an incredibly short space of time, two or three dealers in vertu of the lowest order, desirous of seeing if anything could be had, fit to be repainted for the English market.

Pictures could not be criticised from the street, and Christoval, in the privileged character of a purchaser, dared to enter a dwelling which had till then been to him forbidden ground. Isidora did not appear, though her sobs were audible from an adjoining apartment; and the widow was too completely engrossed in protesting against the continuance of the sale, to have leisure to rebuke the intruder. In vain did she exclaim, and asseverate—the creditors would not listen, and the sale proceeded.

The old deal box which my Trasteverine friend mentioned, was dragged forth from the dust in which it had long reposed. It contained three pictures. The first, dingy and smoky as lover of the antique could desire, had little other recommendation. It was some legendary Spanish Saint, of no note in the Roman Calen-



dar, and the auctioneer put the poor unknown *Beato* in all the ridiculous lights imaginable. No one bid—at length, one of the brokers, who had been calculating what it would cost him to varnish and new-christen it, offered a crown. Christoval doubled the offer. The varnisher looked again at the daub, fancied he saw something in it, and bid five scudi. Christoval doubled again, and the dealer concluding him to be a Spanish pilgrim in a fit of devotion, whom it would be easy to lure on, ventured as far as fifteen. My agent rose to twenty. The creditors rubbed their hands, and the bystanders their eyes, and the next picture was produced.

It was a companion to the last; a Madonna, ugly and black enough to have been painted, as all such scarecrows are said to be, by St Luke himself—and having unfortunately arrived in a country where some eleven thousand fairer virgins had landed before her, no one would take compassion on *Nossa Senhora*. Christoval was ashamed to begin with more than twenty scudi, which was at once accepted. The widow cast a bewildered glance on the young

painter, and shook her head more in sorrow than in anger.

The third picture was at length produced. It had originally been rather large for the box, and stuck fast, with its face downwards, so that it had probably never before been exposed to the view of any one in Rome. With some difficulty it was disengaged, and what were Christoval's feelings, when his practised eye rested on one of the most superb Murillos that ever found its way out of Spain! It was an Adoration of the Shepherds, so full of truth, of nature, of magical illusion, that the rude Trasteverians crossed themselves in admiration, and even the cautious dealers forgot themselves so far as to exclaim.

Christoval, as a distinguished purchaser, easily procured a suspension of the bidding till he flew over to consult me. He told me, in breathless ecstasy, that the picture was well worth a thousand crowns; that he believed even the petty dabblers opposite would speculate thus far, if, (as he hoped might not be the case,) they recognised it for an original; and that he would engage for my being reimbursed to that extent

by Cardinal Fesch, or any other rich collector. I was not rich enough to give a thousand crowns even for a Murillo; but the happiness of three human beings was included in the purchase, and I resolved to run the risk.

The dealers, during Christoval's absence, had prevailed to have the picture set up, and the first sound which saluted him on the staircase was an hundred crowns!—Here, more artifice was necessary, and he made his advances with apparent caution and hesitation. The others again, felt proportionally safe. Though unacquainted with the school to which it belonged, and with the marks of originality evident to a Spanish eye, though even ignorant of its being a Murillo, the picture had intrinsic charms to secure them against loss; so they proceeded, gathering animation from the young Spaniard's flushed cheek and keen eye, till five hundred crowns had been proclaimed by the astonished and sobered auctioneer. Christoval could not resist a glance at the widow. Her eye alone betrayed neither joy nor astonishment; while a louder sob from the inner apartment, spoke of deeper and wilder sorrow. What could be



the meaning of this apathy in the one, and agony in the other? With a trembling voice, and diminished interest, he continued bidding, till he was half dismayed to find himself possessor of the Murillo for seven hundred crowns; the highest sum on which the speculators could hope for profit adequate to the risk.

The creditors were congratulating themselves, and the bystanders the widow, when La Valdagna, with an air of dignity which virtue can alone inspire, came forward, and, now for the first time obtaining a hearing, took the neighbours to witness that the pictures thus advantageously sold, were neither the property of herself nor her deceased husband, but a sacred deposit intrusted to him by the late Cardinal, his master, being part of the furniture of his private chapel, the richer spoils of which had fallen a prey to the invaders of Spain.

What a blow to the avarice of the creditors, the honest good-will of the neighbours, above all, to the love and high-wrought hopes of poor Christoval! No wonder Isidora had wept, as she traced these hopes in her lover's animated

accents, and knew that they were founded in error, and doomed to immediate annihilation !

The poor young man only lingered long enough to hear the disappointed creditors agree on an early application to the College of the *Propaganda*, which takes cognizance of all the affairs of deceased foreign Cardinals, to endeavour to recover the amount of their claims ; and then flew to communicate to me the fruitless expenditure of my seven hundred crowns. This I did not for a moment regret, had the chance of loss from it been even greater ; but, knowing the importance, in some cases, of the *first* as well as the *last* word, I determined to repair forthwith to the *Propaganda* ; state the case of this honest depositary, and see what could be done for her advantage in the affair. I took Christoval with me, to clear up the Spanish part of the story ; and surprised my Roman friend, to whom I had bidden a final adieu the day before, by reappearing to claim his good offices with the *Eminenza* at the head of the College.

We were received, after much formality, and a liberal distribution of *buona-manos*,—without

which nothing can be done in Italy,—in a huge hall, filled up from top to bottom with books, chiefly containing the voluminous reports of the various missions sent forth by the establishment to all quarters of the globe. The dignitary, into whose presence we were ushered, listened to us with gracious attention ; a secretary was employed to search for documents, and it was duly found that Cardinal —— had died beyond the Alps ; and that no application, in the course of seven years since, had been made by any heirs for the property in question ; and, moreover, that on his death six hundred crowns, for his ring of investiture, were due as a perquisite to the Roman College ; the greater part of which reversion the College, in its munificence, generally allots to the servants of the deceased, if otherwise unprovided for. I had no great difficulty in procuring, through the interest of the Italian gentleman already mentioned, a grant of the pictures, whose precise value we did not feel ourselves called upon to specify, to the widow and daughter of the late Secretary, in lieu of arrears of salary, and the pension which they



might some years before have claimed out of the deceased Cardinal's ring money.

This matter thus happily settled, and any counter claim by the creditors being obviated by immediate payment of their demands, the widow and her daughter became undoubted possessors of the seven hundred crowns which I had offered for the Murillo. This was to them a little fortune; and, to La Valdagna's credit, she at once declared her readiness to share it to the last farthing with the generous Christoval; but I had too much English pride to let him come into the family on any but equal terms. I sold the picture for five hundred crowns of profit; and adding, with sincere satisfaction, a couple of hundreds more, the high contracting parties were put on a footing of equality which left nothing to desire.

Christoval's hard-earned pittance from the German Baron, presented Isidora with her wedding dress. I gave her a string of pearls in memory of our first meeting, and her laudable, though humble vocation. I saw her married to my amiable young protégé, in the church where he first received her lifeless in his arms. I saw

them, with heartfelt satisfaction, depart, the happiest of the happy, for their native country ; and the following year, when I crossed the Pyrenees, and visited Christoval at Villa ——, he had painted for me a Madonna and child—from what models I need not say—worthy to be added to my former treasures, and somehow or other, the chief favourites in my collection.

# TALES OF THE MOORS.

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## TALE III.

### Adventures of an Attaché.



# TALKS OF THE MOON

## TALK III

### Experiences of an Alibi

It was many a time when I have held  
myself up to the light of a candle  
and have seen my own shadow  
in the glass of a looking-glass—  
and that, although the eternal flames of things  
is perpetually modified and in many instances  
entirely over-ruled by circumstances, yet  
would have made a very different picture of the  
world, and I am not a little surprised  
As for myself, I can only say that though  
wholly ignorant of the proper education of the

# TALES OF THE MOORS.

## TALE III.

### Adventures of an Attaché.

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AMONG many doctrines which I devoutly hold, without being either able or willing to refute the widely-differing opinions of others,—far less to defend my own on modern phrenological principles,—is the one that most men are born with a decided bias towards some specific vocation ; and that, although this eternal fitness of things is perpetually modified, and in many instances entirely over-ruled by circumstances, Nelson would have made a very militant Doctor of Divinity, and Newton but a heavy dragoon.

As for myself, I can only say, that though wholly estranged, by private education at the

house of my father, an English country gentleman of large estate, from all ideas of diplomacy, more modern than those afforded by Livy or Quintus Curtius, or at latest, by Hume's History, the same early propensity which teaches the incipient alderman to play at feasts, and the budding coquette to dress her doll, inspired me with a passion for enacting the ambassador.

The game of *High Jinks*, so admirably described by the author of Waverley, was as great a favourite in our play-room, as among the sages of Modern Athens, with this difference, that all my embassies, whether from Tripoli, or such *Terra Incognita* as Shakspeare's maritime kingdom of Bohemia, were always marshalled in sober sadness, and conducted with imperturbable gravity. No man, and above all, no child, can bear a joke upon his ruling hobby; and once, I remember with shame, when my little sister Emily so far forgot the decorum of royalty, and the dignity of our stately Queen Bess, as to accompany, with a very pardonable fit of laughing, her reception of me in the quality of Envoy from Muscovy, accoutred for the occasion in the bearskin hammercloth which I



had purloined from the coachman, I am sorry to say I supported the then barbarous character of my supposed country, by very undiplomatic language towards her majesty.

Lord Macartney's embassy to China was the first great book I ever voluntarily devoured ; and I babbled of Palanquins, Pagodas, and Parasols, till my father, to save his only son from degenerating into a gentleman-usher, promised, if I would seriously apply to the study of history and languages, to relinquish his views of putting me into the army, and make interest for my admission into the *Corps Diplomatique*. This promise had the desired effect ; and, reversing the conduct of the dog in the fable, I threw away the shadow of diplomacy to secure the substance. Though no profound scholar, I had a retentive memory, and a facility in acquiring modern languages, and my father had on the whole no reason to regret having humoured my boyish inclination, as, long ere I was of an age to enter on my profession, a maternal uncle of mine had unexpectedly acquired great distinction in its most important departments, and on being pressed to accept, as a compensation for

past services, a congratulatory mission of more *éclat* than utility, readily consented to swell his suite, by taking me with him as an *Attaché*.

This, all the world knows, signifies an idle young man of good family, domesticated in an Ambassador's household, forming part of his dress of ceremony, and knowing generally as little of the *dessous des cartes*, as the copying clerk does of the key to cipher.

I was far, however, from starting with these humble ideas of my vocation. Enough of nursery prejudice yet hung about me, to inspire me with veneration for every twig of the diplomatic tree; and long before I actually *did on* the envied garb of office, I had insensibly assumed a cautious reserve in talking of the weather, and an expressive shake of the head, oracular as Lord Treasurer Burleigh's.

My father, a shrewd English country gentleman, was much diverted with these airs, which he trusted time and good sense would put to flight; my mother, still more amused by the piquant contrast between my boyish consequence and the undiplomatic playfulness of her veteran brother, ironically consulted me on the



politics of the kitchen, and the alliances of the poultry-yard ; and my two sisters, though they looked up to me with a good deal of involuntary respect, scandalized me by curling their hair with the treaty of Westphalia, and cutting up the Convention of Closter-Seven into patterns for baby-clothes.

When the hour of departure, however, fairly came, Nature triumphed. My father said—“ Ned, remember honesty is the best policy.” My mother whispered that diplomacy and duplicity were not the same thing ; and my sisters sobbed out a hope, that pomp and pageantry would not make me forget home and happiness. My father, who had himself served, asked for a word now and then on military affairs, and the scenes of the late eventful conflict ; my mother exacted frequent accounts of my own health and welfare ; and my sisters, smiling through their tears, petitioned for *volumes* of anecdote, fashions, and adventures.

At the northern metropolis I joined my uncle, who, a native of Scotland, and a descendant of one of its oldest families, had, after so many years of expatriation, lingered to the last among



his numerous and admiring friends; and had preferred a somewhat lengthened sea voyage to Holland, with the convenience of the direct removal of a very extensive and attached establishment, to the delay, fatigue, and expense attendant on their transportation by land to Harwich.

The first death-blow to my contracted notions and John Bull prejudices, was struck by quitting a reasonably barren and dreary tract of country on the southern side of the Border, and plunging almost immediately into the *crack* cultivation and teeming fertility of the Lothians. Instead of wild moors and heath-clad hills, I pursued my way to Edinburgh, amid an interminable ocean of golden grain, whose gorgeous autumnal livery might have conjured up a blush even on the callous cheek of the author of the "Prophecy of Famine!" *He*, I knew, was a profligate libeller, and my ideas of Scotland had been chiefly formed from the recollections of my mother, and the writings of the Great Unknown. But the former had left the country a girl, when her paternal estate in the north was but slowly emerging from the state of "sixty years ago;"

and though prepared by the latter, for wild sublimity, and every variety of the picturesque, I confess my preconceived notions of "his own romantic town," were utterly discomfited by its rows of palaces, and its intrinsic, as well as surrounding magnificence.

My uncle, gratified by my enthusiasm, showed me the lines written on an inn window at Montrose, by Aaron Hill, more than a century ago, yet so admirably prophetic of the future state of the sister countries; and if I was still too much of an Englishman to allow the elder to be *un peu passée*, it needed not to be half a Scot to acknowledge, that the younger compensated in freshness for what was wanting in maturity. The lines being now old enough to be perhaps as new to many as they were to myself, I quote them, for the honour of our English Thomas the Rhymer.

Once more, O North, I trace thy winding shores,  
Climb thy bleak hills, and tread thy dusky moors;  
Impartial view thee with a heedful eye,  
And still by *Nature*, not by *custom*, try.  
England, thy sister, is a fair coquette,  
Whom arts enliven, and temptations whet;  
Rich, proud, and wanton, she her beauty knows,  
And in a conscious warmth of fortune glows.

Scotland comes after, like an unripe fair,  
Who sighs with envy at her sister's air ;  
Thoughtless, how soon she'll come to have her day,  
And be the toast, when t'other's charms decay !

If I was pleased with my uncle's country, I was no less delighted with himself; indeed, there appeared to me many points of resemblance between them. If compared in the grander features of their respective characters, his valour and intellect were lofty and commanding as his native mountains; his truth and integrity unsullied as their glassy lakes—but over this majestic outline there played a smile as soft and sunny as ever peeped from the bosom of some fairy glen, and a gaiety sportive as the rills that bounded sparkling down the mountain side.

Sir William Somerville (in plain prose, for I find myself getting Ossianic) was truly one of those rare men, who, endowed by nature with admirable talents, and the sweetest disposition, had been formed by military service and subsequent diplomacy into the very *beau ideal* of a soldier and courtier happily combined; without losing the manly frankness of the one, in the finished urbanity of the other; and, above



all, without forfeiting, either amid the hardships of the camp, or the intrigues of the cabinet, one jot of the playful vivacity of mind and honest integrity of soul, which he inherited from a line of unblemished ancestors, and which rendered him the delight of all his acquaintance.

I had heard my mother speak of him with affectionate admiration, from my very cradle, and had even been indulged with the perusal of letters, in which feeling, sense, and the most sportive wit were delightfully blended; but foreign service, in various climates, immediately followed up by a distant mission, had, for many years, estranged him from his country, and I had not, since I was able to appreciate his rarer qualities, enjoyed more than a transient glimpse of my mother's darling brother—the hero of my imagination, and the object of my ardent emulation, ever since Fortune had placed the distinguished soldier in the equally favourable light of a successful diplomatist.

This latter destination of his talents had come so opportunely for my advancement in the apparently hopeless career I had chosen, that

my vocation for the cabinet began to be considered in the family as a prophetic inspiration. The return of peace, by rendering the military profession an honourable idleness, reconciled my father to the relinquishment of his view for me in that quarter; and, being heir to a large unencumbered estate, my success in my present pursuit was no farther of consequence, than as a liberal and highly eligible preparation for adorning its possession.

With my uncle, I found the future companions of our journey—his wife, a gentle being, whose utmost devotedness of affection he had called forth, by tendering to her, with the chivalric generosity of his nature, in her broken health and fallen fortunes, that hand which modesty had deterred him from offering, when he quitted her in the pride of youth, beauty, and affluence;—and his only daughter Horatia, the darling of his age, who blended in the happiest manner, both in person and character, the best features of both her parents.

She had her mother's slight and feminine person, with her father's nerve and activity; his

bright and eloquent dark eye, and raven hair, with the soft skin and sweet expression of her gentle mother. It was the same with her heart and mind. The first was warm and tender,—this she inherited from both; but her mother's indolent softness of disposition had mingled with her father's energy of soul; and the result was a firmness of decision and principle, sweetly tempered by a timidity of manner, which veiled from strangers the extent of her superiority. I set her down the first day of our meeting—but it was a delusion dissipated by a day's acquaintance—for a quiet, shy, insignificant girl, whom, on a first glance, I half pronounced plain,—but on a second, decidedly pretty.

It was not, however, a beauty to my taste. This, like my turn for embassies, dealt in the gorgeous and the magnificent; and all the heroines of my youthful fancy were invested with the pomp and circumstance of tragedy queens. I had, however, been disagreeably awakened from one fit of boyish idolatry by discovering that the body of a mountain might contain the soul of a mouse; and I was, at the period of



joining my uncle, as heart-whole as any young man of two-and-twenty can hope to be.

Our voyage to Holland was but an unpropitious outset to the *debût* in travelling of so many novices, who suffered severely, while my almost amphibious uncle defied the storm, and laughed at every hardship, yet, at the same time, was ever ready, by kind offices, to mitigate the evils he could not remove. Horatia struggled hard to conquer them, and partly succeeded; but Lady Somerville and I, to our shame be it spoken, lay perfectly passive, until the information that wind and tide were rapidly driving us on the formidable coast of Holland, and that we must perforce, at very great possible risk, cross a sand-bar fatal to thousands of vessels, substituted alarm and anxiety for the despondence of sickness.

The weather was most threatening; the gale hourly increasing, and the danger of a lee shore during the night so evident, that the captain of our merchant vessel, instead of steering for the more ordinary entrance of *Helveotsluys*, consulted my uncle on the expediency of making a dash at the *Brill*, and trusting to the stiff breeze

carrying us over the dangerous bar, though the low state of the tide rendered a deficiency of water, and our consequent going to pieces, by no means an impossible consummation. The vessel, however, though of a larger class than ordinary, was tolerably light, and the captain himself sanguine; and my uncle, preferring, with his usual judgment, a contingent to a certain evil, gave his sanction to the attempt; and instead of any longer struggling with the wind, or exhausting ourselves in vain efforts to stand out to sea, we prepared, in a breathless anxiety, of which it is not easy to give an idea, to rush upon our fate.

There was not a cloud in the clear October sky, and the stars almost supplied the moon's absence to the anxious mariner. We all crowded upon deck to mingle our hopes and fears;—and I shall not soon forget the pale resolved countenance of Horatia, as she stood supporting the head of her almost insensible mother, while a strong light from the compass lantern fell upon her features.

From the moment we had turned her head to the gale, the vessel had darted like an arrow

on her way ; the tremendous rolling had ceased ; the storm no longer howled in the sails, and the deep tones of the man at the lead alone interrupted the stillness of our midnight course. They fell on our ears as a knell, while gradually announcing our increase of peril ; they startled us almost as the last trumpet may be supposed to do, when, by a strange mistake in the agitated spokesman, they gave us less depth of water than we knew to be actually necessary for our existence ; but an instant rectified the bewildering statement, another, deepened the channel as by miracle, and the never-to-be-forgotten—Thank God ! of our brave captain, told us that the peril was past ! Horatia gave me a sign to support her mother, as insensible to joy as she had been to fear—and threw herself with tears of rapture into her father's arms. The first light of morning carried us up the tranquil Maese, and at breakfast, in the clean town of Rotterdam, all was forgotten, save gratitude for deliverance.

The commercial activity and cheerful industry of this bustling place, its spacious canals daily visited by the tide, and along which large



vessels glide gently to the very doors of their opulent owners ; the busy groups perpetually formed in the streets by the raising of the numerous draw-bridges to admit the richly-freighted merchantmen, all contributed to amuse us during our short stay. The red-painted and scrupulously-washed fronts of the houses, with their rows of stiff trees, recalled, by similarity with their wooden prototypes in the toyshop, many a nursery recollection ; but I was disappointed in finding that national peculiarities in costume and manners had, in this part of Holland, almost entirely disappeared. Except a little redundancy in the nether garments of the men, and a liberal allowance of petticoat in the females, there was nothing peculiar ; and, in the teeth of many wise saws and modern instances, I must assert, that from beneath the latter, there generally peeped out such a pair of ankles as no other country except our own could probably furnish. On the whole, I was agreeably surprised with the lively and comely appearance of the Dutch women of the lower and middle classes, who were alone visible in the

streets. Instead of that "most ancient and fish-like" complexion, which one is apt unjustly to attribute to an amphibious population, I found that, even to an advanced period of life, the colour was usually florid, and the eyes bright and sparkling. Had the teeth corresponded in soundness and regularity, the effect would have been complete; but of these "your marsh effluvium is a villainous destroyer."

Of the courtesy or hospitality of Mynheer, on the subject of which I had heard the most opposite reports, I had no opportunity of judging; but his steady passion for traffic, and the sober sadness with which he views every circumstance as tending to its promotion, was whimsically illustrated by a trifling occurrence which befell my uncle's secretary, a good honest Scot, who, wishing to see something of Dutch society, frequented, during our stay, a *Table d'Hôte* chiefly attended by mercantile men. Having, by way of accommodating himself to the taste of his company, and, I believe, with a view of adding to his travelling comforts a bottle or two of his favourite *liqueur*, casually inquired

the selling price of the best Hollands, he was not a little surprised to receive, in the course of the evening, rival invoices from several of his dinner-party, who, construing his vague inquiries into those of a cautious wholesale dealer, offered to supply him with Geneva enough to fill the lake of that name ! He was half ashamed to confess himself an idle man, who dealt in nothing but “ words, words,”—and fell so much in the estimation of his grave and reserved companions on the avowal, that he was glad to change the scene by our departure.

We made the usual tour of Holland, well worth the dedication of the few days it requires, though the monotony pervading alike its landscape and its towns prevents any distinct or vivid impression being made by either. Amsterdam, in particular, is a sort of Cretan labyrinth of precisely similar and interminable streets, from which no clew less steady and voluminous than a Dutch *laquais de place* seems competent to one’s extrication. The sight of its groves of masts, however, only inferior to the forest which our own Thames affords, is always refreshing to an English eye. Haarlem and the



Hague have each more attractions than the generality of Dutch towns; the former in its own neat smiling appearance, and the wilderness of sweets afforded by its innumerable flower-gardens; the latter in its not displeasing irregularity, its venerable shady avenue leading to the fishing-village of Scheveling, (the living and characteristic original of every Dutch sea-piece one ever saw in one's life,) and, above all, that marvel in the eye of all Dutchmen, the *Wood*,—a really pretty spot, reared by Nature for herself, from a land, whose flatness and insipidity render undulations of surface and tangled thickets a perfect treat to the eye. The modest title of *House in the Wood* is with great propriety applied to a palace, which I question if a rich Bristol or Liverpool merchant would be content with for a villa.

If ever I repented exchanging the sword for the pen, it was when standing in peaceful insignificance beside the at all times martial, and now dilating figure of my uncle, on the field of Waterloo. He had himself in early life raised, and a thousand times led to victory, a Highland regiment, and though a Lowlander, never

did plaid encircle a warmer heart to the tartan.

It was, therefore, with intense interest that he listened to the then comparatively recent exploits of the "*Jaquettes plissées*" on the field of their glory, as well as to a thousand anecdotes of their moral worth and superiority, which we had casually heard at Brussels. All men love their country—but the love of an English or Scotchman for his, is to that of a babbling Frenchman or degenerate Italian, as the deep and lofty devotion with which a Briton regards the possessor of his heart and hand, compared with the frivolous gallantry of the one, or the degrading *Cicisbeism* of the other.

The transition from the last field of Napoleon, to the tomb of Charlemagne, at Aix-la-Chapelle, was a brief but striking lecture on human ambition, and the widely dissimilar fate of two of the greatest who ever scaled its dizzy pinnacle. Both had skill and boldness to grasp, but one only wisdom to retain, the sceptre of the West; and as I gazed on the simple but emphatic "*Carolo Magno*," still fresh on the floor of the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. I

doubted whether even the rock of St Helena would half as long retain the record of Napoleon's ephemeral greatness.

It was delightful to go over with my uncle that historical ground, which was his peculiar *forte*, and where the soundest judgment stamped inestimable value on his unrivalled powers of memory. As we advanced up the Rhine, Roman conquest, modern warfare, the legends of a barbarous age, and the poetry of our most civilized one, blended their fascinations; and whatever fell short of high-wrought fancy in the charms of the river itself, was more than compensated by its exuberance of recollections!

It was with deep regret that we turned from even its diminished beauty, to our destination at the Court of X——; a town whose recent origin and almost mushroom rapidity of growth, seemed rebuked into insignificance by the grim but venerable spectres we had left behind of the cities of Drusus and Trajan. It had the advantage over them, however, in regularity of design, and present prosperity, though, like its ancient electoral rivals, subject to all the mutability of royal caprice and court favour. Ori-



ginally a hunting-seat in a forest, only so much of which had been invaded as to give place to the neat plaything of a town, it retained rural attractions superior to most full-grown cities, and the first impression produced on us by its regularity of plan, relieved as it was by considerable variety in details, was highly pleasing. During a residence of some length, however, it produced a directly contrary effect, and we shared, with every inhabitant of X——, the ennui occasioned by the perpetual view of the Royal Palace, in which all the streets terminate, a construction which forms no inappropriate emblem of the situation and pursuits of their occupants.

The rapid revolutions of the last thirty years had given to the face of society at X—— a very amusing and widely diversified character, the delineation of whose shades would require the anatomical precision and minuteness of a Crabbe. The greyheaded part of the Court savoured of what they were pleased to call the good old days of the late Duke, when its military costume and tactics were those of the Great Frederick, when hoops and minuets, queues and ruffles, flourished in unquestioned sanctity; when the women,

had they lived in our land of commerce and combination, would infallibly have been demolished, as a species of perpetual knitting machines; and when the men were content to drink their beer and *Rheinwein* enveloped in a cloud, not of metaphysics, but tobacco smoke.

The French Revolution had come like a whirlwind "*pour changer tout cela*;" but the bloodless torrent of German innovation and reform, by merely whisking off these primitive personages and depositing them in their congenial obscurity, had left them with all the rust of ancient prejudices, ready to emerge on the subsidence of the storm; and they now figured among the generation which had grown up under the new light, like family pictures descended from their canvass, and staring about for their lost places in society.

Among the most curious of this group of historical personages, was the Princess Dowager, a woman highly accomplished for her time, and equally distinguished in her day by a stanch German patriotism, which rendered her the bitter enemy, and subsequent victim, of the French supremacy in X——, and, by a strong tincture

of the romance, so general among her countrywomen, but so rare on a throne, where it appeared not a little ludicrous and *deplacé*. It had, however, enabled her to bear very respectably, if not philosophically, a total loss of influence, and a voluntary seclusion from Court during the ten years of her son's early administration, when a bride of the Napoleon school, and ministers moved by the wires of St Cloud, rendered his government more nominal than was agreeable even to his easy nature, and indolent dissipated character.

His wife had been some years dead, and his mother, whose solitude had been beguiled by a copious perusal of her favourite romances, had resumed her former place at Court, of which the quick succession of her son's ephemeral attachments, and the ample provision of heirs left by the late Princess, rendered her likely to retain possession during the remainder of her life.

The Duke, whose domestic thralldom had powerfully tended to open his eyes to the evils of the *continental system*, was among the first to rally against its head; and had been rewarded for his timely defection by a large accession of



territory, and increased diplomatic courtesies on the part of the great powers of Europe, to which, as well as to some recent domestic relations, my uncle's mission owed its origin. The same facility of disposition, however, which had prompted him to allow his mother to patronise during her retreat, and bring forward on her return, a large retinue of the *vieille cour*, induced him to retain in office all those more efficient children of the new *regime*, whose Gallicism had been gradually and opportunely subsiding, with the waning star of Napoleon, into a very philosophic admiration of the existing order of things. One or two (the most certain to lose their places under any circumstances) had resigned in a fever of liberalism; not a few had substituted the most outrageous Anglo-mania for their previous Parisian aspirations. This was peculiarly the case with the ladies; and Wellington bonnets and *toques à la Waterloo*, formed appropriate coverings for heads full of nothing but Walter Scott and Lord Byron.

The saloon, on a court night, afforded an inexhaustible study for a lover of contrasts and comparisons. The awkward and reluctant ap-

proximations of the year 1792 to the ease and graces of 18—; the painful efforts of French frivolity and folly to ape German gravity and English decorum; the outheroing Herod of *ultras* of all classes; the overstrained attempts of heavy German *Fraus*, and pert Gallic misses to attain the *beau-ideal* of an accomplished Englishwoman, were a source of perpetual diversion to our little privileged and highly-envied circle; the more so, as all its members were, by principle and inclination, singularly disqualified for performing the parts assigned them by age and situation in the motley drama.

The only unsentimental feature in the character of the Grand Duchess was a passion for cards; and at her antediluvian *bassette* table my uncle would have been a nightly victim to etiquette, but for that happy ignorance of all games whatever, which he had been inspired by his lucky stars to cherish through life, and which he could, with a safe conscience, assign as an excuse, undismayed by the exclamations of *inouï ! incroyable !* &c. with which he was assailed by troops of disappointed dowagers, who had anticipated in the gallant chevalier no ignoble

pigeon. My aunt, however, not having the same salvo, was his unwilling though dutiful substitute, and sacrificed herself for him at the board of green cloth with the same placid smile, with which I verily believe she would have laid down her head on the block in the same good cause.

As for myself, a hint from my excellent uncle, combined with somewhat of his constitutional antipathy, sufficed to make me a mere spectator at the *ecarté* table, whose fascinations had survived the *regime* which gave them birth, and where sums were lost and won with a rapidity and *nonchalance* very striking to an English novice.

Horatia, who, without condemning in others the indigenous pastime, never waltzed herself, was also, during the patriotic proscription which had taken place of French dancers, chiefly a spectatress; so that we had all full leisure to make, and communicate to each other, our observations on the state of society at X——.

It was in these little coteries that I had ample opportunities of appreciating the delightful character and sportive wit of my uncle, who added to his shrewd perception of the ridicules



and foibles of those around him, a good-humour in bearing with them, which rendered him as generally beloved, as he was respected for higher qualities. Indeed he walked with his noble military air, and fine open countenance through the crooked mazes of minor German politics at X——, like a being of a superior sphere, too much elevated to feel annoyance from their petty collisions, or to be involved in their paltry intrigues; yet apparently on the best terms with all parties; civilly tolerating, though with the tacit rebuke of irreproachable morals, the profligate inanity of the Prince; humouring with perfect gravity the harmless peculiarities of the Princess; recalling the good old times with his contemporary *ci-devants*; yet admitting with the *parvenus* the many substantial improvements of modern days. In short, the *Chevalier*, as he was always called *par excellence*, was universally looked up to at the court of X——; and his family, of which he always regarded me as a filial member, partook of course in his consideration.

Lady Somerville and I passed, I believe, for very good sort of common-place folks; but there

was about Horatia a sort of English simplicity and straight-forwardness, which a good deal puzzled the beaux and belles. Though unquestionably clever and accomplished in no ordinary degree, she was no enthusiast, and did nothing for effect; she never raved, even about Sir Walter or Lord Byron; she forbore, like Lady Grace, to “*expire* at an Opera, lest she should never go again,” and had, in short, an absence of all affectation and pretension, which, while they professed to admire it, I believe, in my heart, they thought “*tant soit peu* NIAIS.” It is to guard against this terrible *niaiserie*, with which, by the by, the Germans are naturally rather threatened, that such violent efforts are made by all classes of them to overstep the modesty of Nature; that heavy beer-drinking students go methodically mad, assassinate their teachers, and run swords into each other; that poets place their chief merit in being unintelligible, and romancers in being unnatural; and that young ladies, not being able, in these degenerate days, to die for love, display all its wildest extravagances while alive. There are, however, of course, exceptions in both sexes, and had my

time been come, I could have managed to lose a corner, at least, of my heart, to more than one charming girl at X——.

We had not been long settled there, when our society received the agreeable addition of two young people, who came thither to spend the winter at the request of my uncle, whose connexion with them had so much in it of romantic gratitude, as to render them objects of almost equal interest in the eyes of his wife. He had in his youth, according to the fashion of the times, spent a year at a German military academy, during which he formed an intimacy with a young Baron de Vilmerghen, ripened, by mutual good offices in the course of a subsequent campaign,—in which Sir William, indeed, was indebted for his life to the bravery and coolness of his young comrade,—into a warm and unalterable friendship. A correspondence had for many years been kept up, and occasional, though transient meetings, had saved the connexion from yielding to the lapse of time.

Vilmerghen, though only a younger brother, with little patrimony but his sword, had imprudently married, and dying early in life, his



two children, a son and a daughter, with their widowed mother, a French *émigrée* of family, but no fortune, were, on his death-bed, earnestly and pathetically recommended to the patronage and future good offices of his more fortunate brother in arms. The interest of my warm-hearted uncle with the ——— Minister in London, had been effectually exerted to procure for Madame de Vilmerghen a pension beyond her expectations ; and kind letters and frequent presents had testified his parental interest in the children.

Various motives had induced Madame de Vilmerghen, on the repeal of the laws against emigrants, to settle in her native Alsace, where the vicinity of a strong frontier afforded every facility for completing the military education of Ernest, and where Albertine, under an accomplished mother, and with all the advantages a winter residence in Strasbourg could furnish, had, as we heard from all quarters, become, by her beauty and attractions, the cynosure of the whole garrison.

From this post of danger, however, as well as honour, her careful parent was not sorry for the

opportunity of removing her, afforded by Sir William's invitation ; nor was she by any means insensible to the advantages held out by her daughter's introduction to a court circle, under the auspices of a minister so highly distinguished.

We had looked forward for some time with impatience to their arrival, which took place one evening, when, as very rarely happened, we were sitting in domestic ease and enjoyment around the cheerful blaze, which the advancing season began to render acceptable. Our conversation turned as usual upon the orphans, and my good uncle was dwelling, for the thousandth time, *con amore*, on the history of his rescue by their father ; my aunt was speculating on their probable inheritance of personal charms and mental qualities, while Horatia and I were anticipating a pleasing interruption to the monotony of our now somewhat wearisome court circle, when a carriage drove into the yard, and the subjects of our speculation stood before us.

It would not be easy to describe the effect

produced upon any of us by the scene which followed. The features of Ernest, cast in the noblest mould of manly beauty, recalled so forcibly to my uncle those of his friend, as nearly to deprive him of power to welcome his son ; while the embarrassment, mingled with dignity of the widow, rendered him doubly anxious to dispel it by the most cordial reception. My aunt, who, besides entering warmly into all his feelings, was never so much in her element as when in the midst of what may be called a *scene*, amply supplied his place by compliment and caresses ; while Horatia struggled with her natural reserve, to lend courage to the blushing and agitated Albertine ; and I stood perfectly spell-bound by the magic influence of a beauty, of which I had not in my youthful dreams even formed an idea.

How long this tumultuous state of things continued I know not ; but it subsided into a calm infinitely delightful, during which, painful and pleasurable reminiscences were so happily blended, that the former seemed only to enhance the latter. The two elder ladies, whose feelings no previous recollections tended to agitate, first



recovered the tone of ordinary conversation ; and though my aunt was evidently disappointed, that even after near twenty years of widowhood, Madame de Vilmerghen should have discarded the pomp and circumstance of woe, I could see that the impression was on the whole favourable.

Albertine, whose very name, given her as a posthumous child, lent her new interest in my aunt's eyes, sought by the most graceful and winning manners, to recommend herself to her protection, while Ernest, with all the ease of a man of the world, rendered more striking by his youthful appearance, answered my uncle's questions respecting his education and prospects, and assumed towards Horatia and myself a tone of brotherly frankness and cordiality, which soon placed us all on an easy footing.

My uncle settled Madame de Vilmerghen in separate apartments in our vast hotel, with the understanding that we were to form as much as possible one family, without depriving her of the right of seclusion whenever our gayer habits and necessary etiquettes might render it desirable. She was, however, too much of a French-

woman to be inclined to avail herself often of the privilege ; and her reception at court being most flattering, she was soon a distinguished member of its most select parties. My uncle, suspecting that her taste for cards was on these occasions restrained by prudential considerations, availed himself of what he considered a fortunate chance, at once to release his kind helpmate from an irksome office, and gratify another on easy terms. He, therefore, to the great amusement of the few to whom the transaction became known, constituted Madame de Vilmerghen his proxy at the *bassette* table, with a well-filled purse, to be replenished as often as the chances of a tolerably moderate stake should render it necessary.

While the mother was thus alleviating, by her voluntary exertions, the ennui both of the Grand Duchess and of my emancipated aunt, her son and daughter were making the most brilliant debût that ever attended novices in a court circle. The elegant person and fascinating manners of Ernest soon threw into hopeless distance all former aspirants to the Prince's favour, and he became literally unable to live

without him. My uncle, though for a moment dazzled by this partial reception of his *protégé*, soon saw it in its true light, as involving a young and self-sufficient man in a style of society alike unfavourable to his morals and his means ; and he failed not to counteract the evil by parental warnings, which, though listened to with deference, proved as the “ voice of the charmer ” to one, under the influence of the most intoxicating of poisons. No open irregularities, however, characterised Ernest’s conduct ; on the contrary, he was cited as one, who, though no Stoic, knew how to steer clear of all disgraceful excesses, and secure the regard of his patron, without partaking or sanctioning his vices. Those, however, aware of the usual effect of a court atmosphere on the soundest constitutions, looked upon the young man as one of the many destined to yield to its *malaria*.

The situation of his sister, meanwhile, was still more dazzling and perilous. Her beauty was too transcendent, and her talents too brilliant, not to render the Sovereign’s admiration of them a matter of course ; and it soon became



so undisguised and passionate, as to make the cynical predict the ruin of its victim; while the more sagacious asserted, that she had only to play a deep game, to secure to herself at least one of those left-handed connexions with royalty, which so conveniently gratify the inclinations, while they save the dignity of continental crowned heads.

I had been in truth madly in love with Albertine from the moment I first saw her; but, as it was the jealous pang inflicted by this royal rivalry which first opened my eyes to the seriousness of my attachment, so it derived tenfold energy from the admirable manner in which Albertine, evidently restrained by maternal influence and prudential considerations from extinguishing it by unmitigated disdain, contrived to blend the most unequivocal indifference to all the blandishments of her admirer, with the profoundest respect for his courtesy as a Sovereign. This line of conduct, while it rendered it difficult for him to advance beyond general gallantry, gave him an excuse for continuing his attentions, and the whispers of assiduous satellites conspired with those of secret va-

nity in ascribing it to the design above-mentioned, of drawing him into a private marriage, which, had she been so inclined, I verily believe might have been easily accomplished. Perfect and unlimited confidence in Albertine's virtue, seemed to make her mother and brother rather enjoy than discourage her flattering distinction, while the same sentiment, combined with the strongest personal partiality towards her young favourite, induced the Grand Duchess to view her son's present pursuit as a happy interruption to a host of less creditable flirtations, nay, even (with a degree of credulity more pardonable at fifteen than fifty) as a probable means of reclaiming and refining him.

The declared partiality of the Sovereign, while it had the effect (more agreeable, I should have thought, to my own secret wishes than to those of an ambitious mother) of keeping at a distance the few among the nobles of X—who could have afforded to think of so slenderly portioned a bride; secured to its fair object, of course, all the admiration, and indeed adulation, which fashion and favour, superadded to beauty and accomplishments, could command

Had Albertine really aimed at sharing the Prince's throne, nay, had she been already seated there, she could not have received with more dignified equanimity, or rather indifference, the tribute extorted by her superiority. She possessed, in an eminent degree, that imposing style, both of person and manners, which was then to me the *beau ideal* of female excellence. Her figure was so tall, that grace like hers could alone have redeemed it from awkwardness ; but its flexibility and ease were as conspicuous as its faultless symmetry, and ordinary female forms shrunk into insignificance when she appeared. Her features, though perfect, were not modelled upon any usually received standard of perfection. They rather formed a happy modification of the two noblest the world ever produced ; the classical correctness of the almost Grecian contour, was relieved and inspirited by somewhat of the elevation and fire of Rome ; and while the faultless profile and richly parting lip might have belonged to Helen, the dark eyes, whose glance spoke volumes ; and the yet more eloquent brows, which responded to their every movement, were worthy of the mo-



ther of the Gracchi. Her complexion was also the south's best compromise between the dusky hue of its Italian daughters and the unattainable delicacy of a northern climate. There was the transparency, the mobility, the ever-rising blush of the north, with the warmth, the richness, and the softness of the land of the vine and olive. It was doubtful, in short, whether she was the fairest of brunettes, or the most *piquante* of blondes.

When a creature thus gifted by nature sat with a careless wreath of myrtle or laurel twisted in her chesnut hair, unconsciously displaying at her harp every graceful attitude imagination could picture, while the sounds she drew forth might have "created a soul under the ribs of death," is it to be wondered that more than court flatterers saw in her an actual realization of the bright fictions of Mythology, and that its magic pages were ransacked for allusions and compliments to this felicitous combination of the Muse and Grace? From all of them, however, she turned as coldly as the marble statue from its senseless worshippers, and rather seemed to tolerate, for her mother's sake,

the irksome distinction of her situation, than to enjoy it for her own.

Her manners, however, though reserved, were so gentle and conciliating, that she made fewer enemies than might have been thought possible, and the grateful devotion she manifested towards my uncle and aunt soon gained her their fondest affection. This partiality afforded me the liveliest satisfaction, as, though my passion had hitherto been totally undeclared even to myself, and its reception by its fair object a matter of more than uncertainty, yet the chief obstacle I foresaw to its gratification was likely to arise from the dislike of my father to a foreign connexion, which could only, I knew, be overruled by the paramount influence of Sir William.

The only favourable omen I could draw from the conduct of Albertine towards myself, consisted in the relief apparently afforded by my quiet and unobtrusive attentions, to which she frequently had recourse when *excedée* by the unmeaning gallantry of others. That she esteemed me above most individuals at X—— I could not doubt, but it was difficult to detect

partiality in one so reserved, and I had hitherto feared to lose the privileges of a friend, by aiming prematurely at the distinction of a suitor.

To Ernest and Madame de Vilmerghen, it was evident my connexion would be highly acceptable. The want of a title, which I had fancied might, in the estimation of foreigners, have proved a bar, was probably compensated by my present wealth, as well as future expectations; for I had, since leaving England, unexpectedly succeeded to the almost countless hoards of an eccentric godfather. Between Ernest and myself there was too little congeniality of sentiment for intimate friendship; but, as the brother of Albertine, I cultivated his good-will by a mode not the least effectual with one of his expensive habits and dissipated character. He had once succeeded, early in our acquaintance, in piquing me, when a little elevated, into losing a considerable sum at play; but though he could never again entangle me in a similar manner, I freely supplied him from my liberal allowance with the means of concealing from my uncle his own occasional losses. Sir William,



from partiality to his friend's son, as well as the consummate address with which Ernest could assume, in his domestic circle, the most winning deference, and most amiable warmth of heart, was long blinded to his real character; and,—though I had rectitude enough to deprecate the very thought of such a profanation of the hand of my dear and valuable cousin,—it was no small confirmation of my hopes, that my uncle would forward my views on the sister, to observe, that he only wanted fuller confidence in the brother's character and principles, to see in him a welcome suitor to his darling Horatia. This double alliance held out such delightful visions for futurity, that I too tried to persuade myself that Ernest was only vain and thoughtless, not calculatingly and selfishly profligate; but the mask which was worn in my uncle's presence often slipped aside in mine, and I was not sorry that the ocean would probably through life divide me from my specious and insinuating brother-in-law.

Madame de Vilmerghen had never been a favourite of mine, and it required my strong sense of her maternal influence to secure her those

attentions on my part, which were rewarded, on hers, by a decided predilection in my favour. She had the taste for show and expense which distinguished her son, and resembled him in all the principal features of character; moreover, through the winning suavity of her Parisian manners, there flashed at intervals certain stormy indications, which showed the volcano within. Her influence over Albertine was unquestionably great; and though it had latterly failed in inducing her fatigued and harassed daughter to continue any longer even passive endurance of the Prince's insulting devotion, many a look, unobserved by any less interested than myself, roused the languid powers of Albertine to fresh exertions of display, and regulated the tone of her manners towards various aspirants to her favour.

Towards myself I hoped she had not found it necessary to dictate uniform civility and even friendliness in her daughter; on her own part they were so marked and flattering, that, feeling it much easier to make the first disclosure of my sentiments to the lively mother, than to the reserved and dignified daughter, I one day avail-

ed myself of the very favourable opening afforded by her pathetic complaints of the annoyance experienced by Albertine from the royal libertine, who, though he had ceased to hope, had not ceased to persecute, to say, that I should conceive the best termination of this distressing persecution must be the union of its fair object with one able to shield her from its continuance, or remove her from its sphere.—“Ay,” said she, eagerly catching at my last words, “removal is indeed the only cure for my poor girl’s vexations. Could any of those pitiful court minions summon courage enough to offend his master by marrying her, he would probably want spirit to place her beyond his reach. Ah!” continued she, with an air of deep pathos and solemnity, “it is to British principle and steadiness alone that I could consign my child, without a fear for her happiness and respectability!”

I must have been a fool indeed not to follow up this hint; and I poured into her delighted ear such a stream of passionate eloquence, as I would in vain have given worlds to address to her daughter, and as she evidently would have



given much to have had her present to hear. Madame de Vilmerghen, after expatiating fluently on all the advantages of the connexion, except the vulgar one, which probably weighed most in her mind, promised to exert her utmost influence, in paving the way for my declaration to her daughter. She almost ventured to ensure its ultimate success; at the same time referred me to Albertine's own conduct and manners, for proofs of her general coldness and insensibility to tender sentiments, and entreated me not to be rashly discouraged by apparent reluctance in one averse to quitting her mother and her country, and slow in forming, though immutable in retaining, attachments of every kind.

A slight indisposition, which at this time confined Albertine for some days, prolonged in a cruel manner a suspense, of which I yet dreaded the termination. When I again saw her she was paler and thinner than I could have conceived possible in so short a period; and anxiety for her decision was almost lost in apprehensions for her health. The former was soon alleviated, if not altogether removed; for

her reception of me, though totally free from that agitated consciousness so delightful to a lover, was such as I felt sure she was too candid to give, without intending at least to tolerate my addresses. More I scarcely had a right to expect; for I had seen her towards all others decidedly and unequivocally discouraging; and I was too much of an idolater not to feel elated that my flame was permitted to burn before the shrine unextinguished, if not fostered. Madame de Vilmerghen advised me not yet to hazard a direct declaration, but content myself with the favourable sentiments she had found and cherished towards me in her daughter's breast, assuring me, that if her strange disinclination to matrimony *could* be overcome, it would be by her esteem and regard for me. On these consoling assurances I lived for a while, subduing my attentions in the dread of offending their object, till, finding myself set down by the whole court, on what authority I knew not, as the declared suitor of Albertine, and tacitly at least admitted by her in that envied character, I resolved to have, if possible that confirmation from

her own lips, which would justify me in sounding my English friends at home and abroad.

Spring had in the meantime delightfully set in, and summoned part of the Court from X——, to a summer residence a few miles off, in the heart of the forest; when the Grand Duchess, whose enthusiasm for Albertine had been carried to the highest pitch by her steady rejection of her son's addresses, assigned to her and her mother a little fairy cottage, separated only by a shady alley from the wing of the palace which she herself inhabited. The Prince was detained by business or pleasure at X——, and the foreign ministers awaited his motions to remove to Hochberg.

I, however, not being bound by etiquette, accepted an invitation to join the Duchess's circle; and in the few days of hourly contact with Albertine which elapsed before an opportunity presented itself for my purpose, experienced in her usually placid manners fluctuations, which might in another have been ascribed to caprice, but which I more truly attributed to still uncertain and indifferent health. Once or twice,



when, by winning complacency and apparent encouragement, she had almost tempted me to declare myself, she suddenly started up, and pleading indisposition, hurried abruptly from me ; but on our again meeting, this was atoned for with a grace and sweetness that proved the offence to be unintentional and abjured.

One morning, when all the rest of the circle had gone on a pretty distant excursion, to the fatigue of which I had heard Albertine declare herself unequal, I strolled along the alley leading to the cottage, determined to avail myself of the eloquence of Nature, which, on this loveliest of spring days, was pouring floods of the richest melody on the softened ear and heart, to assist that of passion in drawing from my beloved an unequivocal avowal of reciprocal regard.

Long ere I reached the house, the windows of which were open, I heard the tones of the harp, and the rich mellow notes of Albertine, of which those of the songsters without seemed an echo or an imitation. Her voice, at all times plaintive, had now a pathos which must have its source in the heart ; and, trusting that music is

not "the food of love" to the *hearer* alone, I drew a favourable augury from the choice of the song (a simple French *romance*) and its tremulous execution.

My figure, as I passed the window, startled Albertine, and she had pushed aside the harp, and taken up a book ere I was admitted. Feeling, probably, that the decisive moment was come, she stood before me, with what might have been either a conscious blush, or the mere flush of surprise. Whatever it was, it quickly subsided, and she grew very pale.

"You are not well, Mademoiselle de Vilmerghen," faltered I; "my unexpected intrusion has alarmed you."

"Oh, no!" said she, summoning all her native dignity; "I am only a little nervous, and start at my shadow of late. But some music, which I know you like, will put all to rights."

I flew to place the harp, and in doing so, I could not avoid seeing, (an apparently slight circumstance,) that instead of the ballad she had been singing, the desk was now occupied by an unmeaning bravura. She was beginning its prelude, when I ventured to request, that in-

stead of fatiguing herself by its execution, she would favour me with the simple air I had heard without, and which harmonized so well with the external symphonies of Nature. She coloured slightly. "Excuse me," said she, "if I refuse so trifling a request; but that ballad reminds me too much of France to be a good sedative; on the contrary, I believe its long-forgotten tones occasioned much of the nervousness you wish to remove. Germany, though my native land, can never be to me what the home of my childhood has been—and yet," added she, almost shuddering—"I have no wish ever to see it again!"

"I rejoice to hear you say so, Albertine," I replied, catching at the straw thus afforded, "for it is the object of my life's devotion, to offer to your adoption a *third* country, not less worthy of you, and perhaps more congenial to your character and sentiments than either!"

The die was cast—she looked down, and with a steady, though almost sepulchral voice, answered, "I will not affect to misunderstand you; if I can contribute to your happiness in England or elsewhere, I am yours. My esteem



and gratitude you have long possessed; pardon me if I can neither at present feel or express more."

She rose hastily, as I was about to seize her hand, half withdrew, and then seeing my mortification, gently abandoned it to my grasp.

"Mr Vernon," said she, very tremulously, "I am not strong—to this you will attribute my foolish agitation, and the necessity I feel of being alone. When my mother returns we shall meet again."

She glided through a side door, and left me too much intoxicated with her acceptance of my proposals, to be inclined to quarrel at that moment with the singular coldness of her manner and disposition. It would probably, however, have rankled in my mind, had she not in our next interview, for which she was better prepared, exhibited towards me a friendly cordiality and touching gentleness, which, I persuaded myself, promised better for domestic happiness, than the passionate attachment her calm nature denied. I was now wild with joy, and it found vent in the affectionate bosom of my uncle, from whom I flattered myself I had con-

cealed the torturing anxieties which I daily confided to my kind aunt and sympathizing cousin; the former of whom had long encouraged my passion by fond prognostics, while the latter sometimes chilled me by looks, rather than words of dubious import.

My uncle, who, though a stanch Briton, was, from long habit, necessarily somewhat a citizen of the world, saw, himself, no obstacle in Albertine's foreign birth and education, considering the test her principles had lately stood with so much honour to her sex and country. He was aware, however, of my parents' strong prejudices, and immediately set about removing them with benevolent alacrity. He advised me to allow time for the operation of his heartfelt testimony to the merits of my choice, and then to follow up, by my own presence and persuasions, the effect of his encomiums; suggesting, as a powerful auxiliary, the immediate endeavour to procure the picture of one, whose features and expression would plead more powerfully than all our united efforts.

There was no painter of eminence then in X—, but Madame de Vilmerghen, elated far

beyond what I thought the occasion warranted, by her daughter's conquest, presented me with a miniature, which I had never before seen, done at Strasbourg about a year previous to her departure for Germany; and, though it did as much justice as even a lover could hope from mortal pencil to every exquisite feature, I could scarcely have believed it possible that they were ever animated with that expression of brilliant and soul-felt gaiety which was now so completely "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." When I remarked it to her mother,—“Never fear,” said she, “with health and happiness, these smiles and that bloom will return. Albertine has been harassed to death in Germany, but the reviving air of your happy island will make her all, or more than she was at Strasbourg.”

I tried to believe, and in the meantime consoled myself that the picture would convey to my friends at home a more cheering and congenial impression of my beloved, than one taken during her present state of languor and debility.

My uncle's letter was indited with all the



honest frankness of one, solicitous alike for the happiness of parents and child; and I only deferred following to England, for a few days, at the earnest request of the Grand Duchess, to take a part in a little *spectacle*, which, theatricals being at present her ruling passion, she had got up to celebrate the arrival of the Court at Hochberg.

Among the novelties of X——, this winter, was a German translation of the “Bride of Lammermoor,” which, of all Sir Walter’s works, has ever been a prodigious favourite in Germany, from the deep and mysterious horror which pervades it, while its comparative freedom from local allusions and provincial idioms, renders it more capable of transfusion into a foreign language. An amusement much in vogue at X——, as elsewhere, this season, had been what are called *Tableaux Vivans*, or successive scenes of popular works, represented within a large frame, by living persons, forming, in appropriate costumes, such groups as a painter would choose for giving effect to each striking situation.

The Princess Dowager, whose passion for si-

milar *spectacles* may easily be conjectured, immediately arranged one from the powerful work above mentioned; and, by a strange coincidence highly flattering to British talent, while some of her noble relations at Berlin were enlivening a royal marriage, by enacting, at immense expense, and with incredible pomp, the splendid Oriental pageant of Lalla Rookh, she chose to harrow our feelings at X——, by a too lively representation of the sorrows of a persecuted Scottish maiden.

In casting the characters of this still-life drama, the striking beauty of Albertine, as well as her high favour with the Princess, and the latterly increased pensiveness which had stolen over her fine countenance, marked her for the representative of poor Lucy; while the dignified person and carriage of Madame de Vilmerghen, and her somewhat stern expression, enabled her to look to the life the character of Lady Ashton. By way of avoiding the little awkwardness of making me the bridegroom, (a very insignificant personage, by the by, in the history, and discarded in the *Tableau*,) I was invested with the more important part of Lucy's

cruel and vindictive brother ; while that of the unfortunate Master of Ravenswood was given to Ernest, whose majestic and commanding figure gave almost supernatural effect to the wild and negligent costume in which he performed the earlier scenes.

The audience was crowded and brilliant beyond precedent. Every nerve had been strained to give to the pageant a frightful degree of truth and nature ; and the *Tableaux* of Lucy and her lover at the fountain, where her fainting seemed almost painfully real, and that with her father at Wolf's Crag, during the thunderstorm, received the heartfelt applause of breathless stillness, and mute admiration. But the *chef-d'œuvre* of the piece, the grouping of which had cost the Princess many a busy hour, was the *finale*—that scene of truly tragic power, which introduces among the relatives assembled to sign the new contract, the fierce and appalling apparition of the hero of the violated one !

This scene many objected to, as too painful for mimic representation ; and Madame de Vilmerghen did her utmost to have the sensitive Albertine excused from an ordeal too powerful



for her lately delicate health ; but the Princess had the selfishness of sovereignty in all its force, and only internally rejoiced that the probable agitation of the heroine would add effect to her performance.

The scene proceeded accordingly. Within a frame, gigantic enough to have accommodated Holbein's Dance of Death, were grouped in silent sternness, the awful mother, the cruel and sanguinary brother, and the pale and scarcely conscious victim, who, the fatal pen in her hand, sat with her looks bent on vacancy, in an abstraction from all around her, which it was difficult to believe assumed. This *Tableau* continued till the arrival of a new personage threw the whole richly attired group into fresh attitudes of horror, surprise, or defiance.

Ernest, to give effect to his entrance as Ravenswood from foreign service, had privately dressed himself in his French uniform, a remarkably becoming and peculiar one ; and when thus attired, he stood before Albertine, and silently claimed her broken promise—she gazed upon him with a wildness bordering on frenzy, which the spectators admired as the perfection

of acting, but which I, who stood near her, so distinctly perceived to be the result of mental torture, that I forgot my character as a harsh brother, to bend over her with all the agonized alarm of a lover. She recovered by a strong effort—but it was long ere the blood, every drop of which seemed to have been curdled by some inexplicable shock, would revisit her marble cheek, and lips which had exchanged the hue of the rose for that of the violet.

In Germany, sensibility accounts for everything; and many fine *tirades* were pronounced on its omnipotence in highly-gifted minds. The genius of Sir Walter, the heat of the room, the exertion of a constrained and painful attitude—such were the common-place conjectures of the many. The privileged few talked of mysteries beyond mortal ken, and attributed to the untranslateable "*Sehnsucht*" of Albertine for her almost native France, the effect of the national uniform thus unexpectedly brought before her. I have reason to believe there were some who connected this hint with the enamoured garrison of Strasbourg; as for myself, I could not help regretting, as Ernest stood before me, his

singular beauty, heightened by the plumed helm and glittering cuirass, having thwarted, by my pertinacious fancy for diplomacy, my father's intention of making me a soldier—but then I should probably never have met Albertine, and what would have availed my gay trappings and martial air ?

I left Albertine still confined from the vexation and agitation of this ill-judged performance ; but her mother laughed at my anxieties, and I durst not delay longer the dutiful visit to which I trusted for removing my father's deep-rooted prejudices. His brief answer to Sir William had been one of English frankness and sincerity. He owned his strong disinclination to a foreign connexion, however unexceptionable, more than hinted at the deep disappointment of a darling project elsewhere ; but concluded, with his characteristic good-nature, by saying, that my happiness was of course his first object ; and if on personal discussion he could not warn me from my unlucky attachment, he supposed he must try to reconcile himself to it. This hope lent me wings to fly even from X—— ; and I set out, furnished with my picture, which,



notwithstanding its consummate loveliness, I had always some difficulty in identifying with its perhaps more interesting, though less brilliant, prototype behind.

I pass over my joyful meeting with my worthy parents, and my blooming and innocent sisters, whose delicate fairness of complexion and unsullied purity of soul were like verdure to an eye long fatigued with the glare and glitter of a court. My father, like a true John Bull, indulged in a fit of passionate nationality; d—d the French education and German extraction of my beloved; expatiated on his own far more rational and delightful views for my union with Sir William's daughter, an idea, which, strange to say, had never till then crossed my imagination; found, in short, a thousand faults with the unknown seducer of his son's affections; "looked in her face, and then forgot them all!" Yes, parental tenderness certainly had a great share in his relentings; he would have found it hard to say to his only son, "*be miserable*;" but without the lucky auxiliary of the picture, he would never have been worked up to say, from his heart, "*be happy*!" Let no one con-

fine the influence of Beauty to youth and folly ; the grey hairs of my father bowed before it as instinctively as the young heart of his son ; and my mother and sisters hung over the lovely form in such raptures, that I half trembled to think how deep a share so perishable and already fading a possession had in over-ruling their objections. Her heart and principles, however, I trusted no time could change ; and on these I chiefly dwelt, to withdraw their imaginations from what I felt almost as an imposition.

My stay in England was the brief feverish visit of one whose heart is elsewhere ; yet, when loaded with parental benedictions, maternal jewels, and elegant *souvenirs*, from the fairy fingers of my sisters, I departed to fly to my beloved, there hung over my mind one of those presentiments that invest the most ordinary partings with inexplicable solemnity ; and I felt responsible, deeply responsible, for the future happiness of those who had thus cheerfully made every sacrifice for mine !

As I approached X——, this vague inquietude took a new turn ; that peculiar one so proverbially the bane of the fanciful lover, anxiety.

for Albertine's health. Lives there the man, who, returning from a long absence to her he loves, has never said to himself, in the simple words of Wordsworth, "If Lucy should be ill!"—And here there was probability to aid fancy, for I had left her unwell, and had received only a few hurried lines from her mother during my fortnight's stay in England.

I knew my uncle was residing at Hochberg, and consequently drove straight there. Finding, on my arrival late in the afternoon, that all the family were engaged at a dinner-party in town, where they were to remain all night, I naturally followed the impulse of my fears and feelings, by proceeding at once to the cottage. I, however, first inquired of my uncle's servants for the health of its inmates, and was answered by an old privileged Suisse, that "Mademoiselle had been frequently there during my absence—was much better lately—and only wanted the return of Monsieur to complete her recovery."

This welcome intelligence, and the ample credentials of which I was the bearer to both mother and daughter, gave a new turn to my



thoughts, and I set out as unaccountably elated as I had before been causelessly depressed. I presume, somewhat of this triumphant expression was visible on my countenance, for, as absorbed in my pleasing prospects, I hastened mechanically along a narrow lane which separated my uncle's villa from the cottage, I actually ran against a young man, who, in apparently a very different mood, was pacing dejectedly in an opposite direction. The circumstance aroused me, for the lane led only to the cottage, and a visit to it at that untimely hour spoke of privileged intimacy; but whatever feelings of surprise I might experience at the rencontre instantly gave way to those inspired by the frenzied demeanour and gross rudeness of the young officer,—for such, from his *tournure*, though in plain clothes, I instinctively discovered him to be. “Monsieur l'Anglais,” said he, in a voice almost choked with emotion, and with the most concentrated expression of jealous rage I ever remember to have witnessed, “if *la fortune de la guerre* has given you over me the advantage of success, it has neither given you that of birth

or breeding!—You may *supplant*, but shall not insult me with impunity!"

It was quite in vain to disclaim intentional insult to one determined to seek and find a quarrel. His next words would have left no alternative to the calmest and wisest of our sex, which, Heaven knows, I could not pretend to be, even had the irritation of a rapid journey, violent provocation, and a dawning of jealousy, left me the unbiassed exercise of reason. I heard my name pronounced with an emphatic curse—my unknown challenger was gone; but I found on the grass beside me a card with the name of "La Rochecour, Cuirassiers de Rivarol, à Strasbourg."

The name of a hotel in X—— was scratched in pencil on the back; and as I knew he must probably return thither, before dispatching some acquaintance to arrange the inevitable meeting of the morrow, (which the precincts of the Court forbade at Hochberg,) I resolved to pursue my walk to the Cottage, to obtain, if possible, some light on the subject from Madame de Vilmerghen, though I now half hoped that continued indisposition would spare Albertine and myself

a meeting under such dreadfully altered circumstances.

It was a very still sultry evening, and as I approached the cottage, I evidently distinguished low moans and hysterical sobs issuing from the upper story, where, indeed, all the small household seemed so completely engrossed, that I made my way unobserved into the sitting-room. The furniture was in unusual disorder—there was that inexplicable appearance of its having been the theatre of a recent *scene*, which is easier understood than described. The pillows of the sofa had been heaped to support a fainting head—and a smelling-bottle, as if dropped by a powerless hand, lay on the floor.

I stood rooted and spell-bound for a moment; and then rung the bell, with the desperation of one who wishes to escape by whatever means from his present suspense. The French waiting-maid started on perceiving me, and, to conceal her own confusion, ran to summon Madame Vilmerghen, who, after a torturing interval, came down, internal agitation evidently struggling with assumed composure and unnatural joy. She flew to meet me, styled me her



dear son, and volubly lamented that a return of her nervous symptoms, which Albertine had that day most inopportunately experienced, must defer till the morrow the meeting of two now indissolubly affianced lovers.

She had run on a few minutes ere she raised her eyes to my sombre and scrutinizing countenance; she saw there something unusual; and the truth flashing on her mind, she said, with the air of one who suddenly resolves on a frank disclosure, "Monsieur Vernon, you are too near and dear to us to be trifled with or deceived. The young man, whom I perceive you have met on your way hither, is an old but rejected lover of my daughter's. Envy of your superior success brought him here in a transport of jealous frenzy; but he is gone for ever; and you are too well acquainted with love yourself, not to pardon its extravagance in a less fortunate rival."

There was nothing unlikely or apocryphal in Madame de Vilmerghen's statement, nay, it only tallied with the stranger's behaviour, yet it failed to convince me; and, coupling the visit with the symptoms of discomposure in the family, I

could not help suspecting that the intruder had *once*, at least, been privileged. Feeling, however, that whether "sinned against, or sinning," I was perhaps destined to shed his blood, I shrunk from the previous rack of investigation, and, muttering some insignificant phrases, rushed from the house, bearing thence, unopened and undelivered, the letters and presents which had lent wings to my approach. On how many slender hairs is the destiny of human hearts suspended ! A rash word—the revolution of a few seconds, had transformed a confiding lover into a jaundiced misanthrope, a gay bridegroom into a deliberate, though reluctant, assassin !

I found hovering near my uncle's door, a brother officer of La Rochecour's, whom I was quite in a mood to dispatch quickly. As my chief object was to conclude this unhappy affair without the agonizing ordeal of a previous interview with my parental uncle, I fixed on a pretty early hour the following morning, ere he could return from town, and on a spot in the forest sufficiently remote from all danger of interruption. I then arranged my worldly affairs, bequeathing to Albertine an ample portion in

case of my death ; wrote a few penitential lines to my father and uncle ; and after such dubious and fearful commendations of my soul to its Creator, as a duellist can venture to breathe, sunk, from fatigue of mind and body, into a death-like slumber.

I only awoke from it in time to dress, and attend the distant *rendezvous*. I had given orders not to be disturbed, so that a messenger from the Cottage, with a billet which he would not leave, had been sent away.

Being determined (to avoid unnecessary publicity) against having any second of my own rank, I took with me instead, that old-fashioned, but useful appendage of my uncle's establishment, the *Valet de Chambre Chirurgicalien*, an old soldier, who, finding his honest remonstrances unavailing, was at least thankful to have his services accepted till other assistance might arrive.

On reaching the place of meeting, I had a few minutes to spare ; and they were such as I do not love even now to remember. Thoughts coursed each other through my mind, like clouds across a troubled sky, and with as little permanence of impression. Could the young man I



was about to meet in mortal conflict have a rightful claim to the hand of Albertine? Had the word *supplant* in his wild address, a definite and horrible meaning? Again, was I staking my life against that of a madman, whose conduct yesterday augured little of his sanity on any subject?

This last conclusion, had it taken hold of my mind, would have been effectually dislodged by the first glance at my approaching antagonist, whose subdued dejection of deportment and total change of physiognomy seemed the effect of a magician's wand. All traces of ferocious resentment had vanished; and though the dictates of imaginary honour, and apparent carelessness of life, prevented his retracting, it was evident that his sentiments towards me were no longer those of a rancorous enemy. I too felt unaccountably softened towards him; the shadow of an apology would have disarmed me, but none was offered, and we had but to measure our distance, and fire. My aim, though most negligently taken, proved too good; for my antagonist fell, firing into the air his hitherto un-pischarged pistol. This affecting proof of self-

condemnation heightened my remorse, and I hung over him with all the agony of a novice in scenes of blood.

My ball had lodged in his shoulder, and my useful auxiliary, though he could not venture on extracting it, knew how best to afford temporary relief; and gave me hopes of a happy result, though everything must of course depend on the patient's constitution. The poor young man would submit to nothing, till I had promised to shield myself by flight from the disagreeable consequences of an arrest in a foreign country; and then, beckoning me towards him, took with his uninjured left hand from his bosom a letter, which, he faintly whispered, had it been written a few hours sooner, would have rendered the rencontre unnecessary, saved him from brutality, and me from bloodshed.

His head sunk back, and being no longer able to insist on my absence, I assisted in placing him on a litter of twisted branches which my Esculapius had learned to construct in his campaigns, and saw him safely conveyed to within an hundred yards of a village, where ac-

commodation and advice were to be had. I then plunged into the thickest part of the wood, and read, with feverish agony, which, however, gradually subsided into thankfulness for my providential rescue from an abyss, involving three human beings in irretrievable wretchedness, the following letter, which afforded too good a clue to all the inconsistencies of poor Albertine, as well as to the changed and softened feelings of my injured rival. Written with the first dawn of morning, it only had reached him on his way to the place of meeting, and false shame had deferred its production till too late to avert the catastrophe.

“ LA ROCHECOUR !

“ WE have met, I believe, for the last time on this side the grave. The frightful irritation of your feelings during that agonizing interview, the cruel agitation of mine, its abrupt termination by maternal authority, all conspired to prevent an explanation, which, for your peace, I ought perhaps yet to withhold. But I want the power. Though worked upon, by means of which the scene of yesterday may give



you a faint idea, to renounce your hand, and sacrifice our mutual happiness, I cannot give up my claim on your forgiveness, your pity, perchance your esteem. Your forgiveness, Louis, though you may for a while deny it, will soon be mine, for I shall, ere long, claim it from a deathbed—Your pity, which even yesterday struggled so powerfully with just resentment, will be mine, long ere you have perused this letter to the end—but your esteem, though in moments of feverish exaltation I have dared to challenge it, I can but dubiously hope for, since, alas ! I have half forfeited my own. Surely, Louis, filial duty is the first and most sacred of obligations ; yet, since its thorny and devious path has led me to break faith with two beings equally estimable, I have had fearful doubts of its being, indeed, the right one, and conscious integrity has been wanting to support me under a sacrifice, to which martyrdom, in a good cause, must be bliss !

“But though a mother’s arguments might fail to convince, her tears are omnipotent. The peace of mine, her reputation, nay, her very life, as she has told me, with looks that made her

every motion for the next twenty-four hours an object of fearful interest, depends on my forming a wealthy alliance—with one whose reckless generosity will not only overlook an insignificant and squandered patrimony, but prompt him to lavish on me the means of cancelling obligations, the accumulated fruit of years of improvident expenditure—incurred too, Louis, in vain solitudes for the education and establishment of one, who, in the bitterness of her heart, could wish she had never been born, to entail misery on all around her ! Would to God my dear father had lived, to control, as he alone could do, both in my mother and Ernest, habits of luxury and ostentation, according ill with the limited pittance of the widow and the orphan !

“ To Ernest’s frequent involvements, and, I fear, degrading resources, you are unhappily no stranger ; but the errors of a parent, concealed from all the world beside, by my bridal veil or funeral pall, call it which you will, must be dimly glanced at even to you. In the mad hope of retrieving difficulties at an easier price than the immolation of her child, my mother, since

she came here, has played deeply and desperately, and, with brief intervals of delusive success, on the whole, unfortunately. Debts of honour are now making the paradise of Hochberg, to her the hell which Strasbourg long had been, and nothing but the rumour of my approaching splendid nuptials keeps the fiends in both from springing on their prey.

“Do you think I can hesitate? No! the sacrifice shall be consummated. I found strength from despair to bid you the adieu in writing, which brought you from Strasbourg—if my lips could not confirm it yesterday, it was because you found me unprepared. Your visit was a whirlwind, beneath which my resolution quivered like a fragile reed—but it remains rooted as before. I shall find strength to deceive, even at the altar, the generous unsuspecting Vernon; but it will be lent by the strong presentiment of our mutual release. Your glance of mingled indignation and sorrow, yesterday, gave the death-stab to my heart, and every confiding smile from him will drive the dagger home.

“You pity me now, Louis! your tears mingle with those which blind me as I write. *They*



would betray me, were I, in this last moment of sad sincerity, to subscribe myself aught but yours in death, though not in life.

“ A. V.

“ Do not presume, Louis, on this proof of weakness. It is the last—and while I live, every thought and feeling shall be his whom I most injure, by giving him a hand without a heart. Do not exult over him in its fancied possession. It is dead to you as to him, and beats no more on this side the grave.”

The doubtful state of La Rochecour's wound, my own safety, and desire to save my uncle the pain of unavailing interference in my behalf, if arrested, induced me to follow my generous adversary's advice, and retire to some quiet spot in the neighbourhood till his fate should be decided. I chose the little secluded watering-place of Auerbach, in the Schwartzwald, in whose, at this season, deserted shades, I could remain *perdue*, while its vicinity to X—— afforded almost daily opportunities of hearing of the victim of our mutual rashness.

From hence I immediately wrote to my dear kind uncle, enclosing Albertine's letter, entreating him to discharge, with all possible privacy, on my account, the debts of Madame de Vilmerghen, to lend his powerful sanction to the nuptials of Albertine with her former lover, and endeavour, for my sake, as well as hers, to overcome any resentment that lover might cherish towards his faithless bride.

To do Albertine justice, it was on her side that the scruples chiefly arose; and it was long ere my kind-hearted aunt, from whom I had entreated my uncle to conceal the more disgraceful features of the affair, and who carried the drooping girl, for change of air and scene, to the Baths of Baden, could persuade her to listen to the solicitations, or believe in the revived affection of one whom she had tried so cruelly. During the calm of La Rochecour's long confinement, vanished every trace of resentment against a creature the victim of a false sense of duty; and his attachment, which had grown with his growth, and gained deep root during years of reciprocal fidelity, revived in all its pristine warmth.

My passion, on the contrary, the ephemeral growth of a season, the blind offspring of dazzling beauty, brilliant accomplishments, and ideal perfection of character, was effectually sobered by the first drop of life-blood which it drew from the breast of my favoured rival. It vanished before the perusal of Albertine's letter, as a feverish dream fades before some stern reality which morning brings; and if, amid the green solitudes of Auerbach, a female form haunted my musings, to my own extreme surprise, it was soon not that of Albertine!

There had been, during my long, wild frenzy of passion, a silent participation in its vicissitudes, a soft sympathy for its sorrows, an indulgent toleration of its extravagancies, and, latterly, smothered indignation at its inadequate requital, which, though almost unnoticed at the time, were brought back by the mirror of memory, in the same vivid distinctness with which a delirious patient sometimes recollects, at the expiration of his illness, the stealthy step, the noiseless kind offices, and mute concern of his sympathizing attendants, though, during the crisis, neither acknowledged, nor apparently



perceived. I now, for the first time, remembered, that shortly before my departure for England, the animated and expressive countenance of my cousin had been marked by unusual thoughtfulness and gravity, probably in consequence of her then beginning to penetrate with the keen eye of incipient affection, the latent views of Ernest's character, through the real or assumed veil of exclusive devotion to her, which he had for some time been endeavouring to cast over them. I even recollected an apparent coolness between them, which, in my own crisis of selfishness, had excited little of my attention. It would be hard to express how much this presumptive and conjectural evidence of a similarity of situation and feeling added to the interest my cousin had unconsciously inspired! Her great mental superiority had been the chief bar to my cherishing for her a warmer sentiment than esteem, and that barrier seemed broken down by the bare possibility of her having been also deceived, though she probably owed to reason an emancipation for which I was indebted to accident alone.

While I was thus rapidly filling up the void

in my affections by a more congenial object, my feelings were called into yet livelier exercise by a letter from my uncle. Will it be believed, that while I read with somewhat of the *nonchalance* which attends the anticipated *denouement* of the most highly-wrought novel, the account of Albertine's nuptials, my eye caught on a distant part of the paper the name of Horatia, and I actually trembled lest I should find in that paragraph also the ominous word marriage? Its tenor, however, was very different, though somewhat painful. She had joined, at Albertine's earnest request, the party at Baden, to be present at the ceremony; and her mother had thought her so unwell, and out of spirits, as to detain her for a few weeks longer in the country. My uncle was, therefore, left alone, and urged me to return to cheer his solitude, all painful *rencontres* being obviated by the departure of Madame de Vilmerghen for Strasbourg, of la Rochecour and his wife to his regiment in French Flanders, and of Ernest to his at Colmar.

Between my uncle and the latter, there had been

no open rupture ; but Ernest was too shrewd and penetrating not to perceive that it was for his father's sake he was tolerated ; and that, in losing him for a son-in-law, my uncle was aware of the extent of his escape. In his letter he confirmed my suspicions, that Horatia had for a while been dazzled by the specious manners and fascinating exterior of the young man, but gave her full credit for awaking spontaneously from the delusion, at the expense of a few days of regret and self-humiliation. I prepared immediately to quit Auerbach ; but as I felt that, *tête-a-tête* with my kind uncle, I should not be able to conceal my budding hopes of a nearer connexion, I was of course desirous of having some encouragement, however slight, from Horatia, before committing myself. I therefore took Baden in my way to X—— ; and though my unexpected visit seemed to afford both my aunt and cousin great and avowed satisfaction, over my meeting with the latter, her open sympathy for my disappointment, and my occult knowledge of hers, diffused a kind of consciousness very preferable in my present mood, to our former unconstrained familiarity.



I lingered a week at Baden, during which our mutual efforts to cheer and console each other were eminently successful. Those of Horatia, which I feared were as yet the spontaneous growth of purely disinterested friendship, raised my opinion of her warm and affectionate character. Mine were assuming a cast so decidedly selfish and critical, as to render a departure or an avowal nearly indispensable.

The former was necessary; the latter I thought would be premature, notwithstanding a perfectly unconscious hint which my aunt threw out, when confiding to me with her usual good-humoured loquacity, the secret of Horatia's *penchant*, and her completely recovered liberty.—“I assure you, however, Edward,” continued the good lady, “that her little heart has been a good deal softened by it, and a skilful wooer might soon awaken a fresh spark in metal so recently cooled. If you see any very good young fellow at X——, pray send him to Baden; but let him be English, Ned—we have had enough of foreign flirtations.”

This, though a perfectly random shaft of my aunt's, emboldened me to say to Horatia, when

taking leave, "If your father should amuse himself with any negotiations in your absence, cousin, is he a plenipotentiary?"

"Why," rejoined Horatia, after a little pause, "my father is an able diplomatist; but he retains enough of the delightful simplicity of his nature, to think every high contracting party must be as much in earnest as himself. My treaties, offensive and defensive, I can safely leave in his hands; but those of amity and alliance I must manage myself. Neutrality, however, is the state fittest for me at present; and I did not come to Baden to talk of Hugo Grotius."

This little playful sally, which might be interpreted *en bien ou en mal*, was all I could draw forth; and as I chose to construe it in the former manner, I joined my uncle with a tolerably light heart.

I found him conjugating, in all its tenses, the verb "*je m'ennuie*," &c. The petty sphere of a German court had lost all its novelty; the excellent Opera and winter diversions of X—— had ceased to attract their concourse of foreigners; and without his domestic circle, Hochberg

was a desert. What, under such circumstances, could I do but talk to him of his wife and daughter? The topic was ever a welcome one; it grew more and more interesting, and ere its fair subjects returned, the delightful word *son* had begun unconsciously to mingle in the discourse, dependent, however, upon an *if*, which froze its corresponding epithet on my trembling lips. Ere long Horatia returned, with all her wonted bloom of cheek and cheerfulness of disposition; and as I saw my uncle's gaiety revive under their influence, I wondered at the blindness which had rendered me so long insensible to all that could embellish and shed perpetual sunshine over the quiet path of domestic life.

My uncle's mission being happily terminated, we all gladly quitted X—, and devoted our recovered liberty to a summer's ramble in Switzerland, in the course of which I successfully cultivated the rational regard of my amiable cousin, gave a son full of affectionate devotion to her distinguished father, and gladdened the declining years of my own with a daughter after his own heart.



This may be esteemed, by some, a lame and impotent conclusion to a somewhat romantic narrative; but if seven years of uninterrupted happiness to two worthy families—if half-a-dozen fine children, (Britons on both sides the house,) and a wife *comme il y en a peu*, cannot reconcile the reader to the tameness of my *dénouement*, I can only say, he is more difficult to please than one, who, though released from the trammels of diplomacy, yet bound by so many other ties, may still subscribe himself an

ATTACHÉ.

# TALES OF THE MOORS.

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## TALE IV.

### A Day in the Isle of Wight.





# TALES OF THE MOORS.

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THERE are few sayings more trite or more true, than that a good school is an epitome of the world. Not alone of that little familiar everyday world, in which all the young actors are afterwards to move; of village jealousies and college rivalships, and regimental quarrels, and squabbles about roads and partridges—but of that great political game, in which monarchs and statesmen are the combatants, nations and armies the pieces, and crowns and sceptres the stake. There is not a passion that ever stirred a Louis or a Napoleon, a Pitt or a Richelieu, that has not its counterpart in the breast of an Eton or Westminster boy. It is the great pur-

pose of public education to foster ambition where already awake, and excite it where dormant; and prizes and popularity are quite as effectual stimulants at fifteen as at fifty. Avarice, though fortunately rare in youth, has one or two sneaking slaves in every large school; and the hoarder of cakes and pence may, with greater infallibility than attends any other prognostic of character, be set down for an Elwes or a Farquhar.

Pity it is that, amid a host of more noble qualities, amid heroism that conquerors might envy, and generosity that makes monarchs poor, the less amiable passions should also find scope, and that on the threshold of life should be kindled hatreds and antipathies sometimes not to be extinguished on this side the grave. It is not alone that a schoolboy new to life, and open to prejudice, keen, ardent, and misjudging, must necessarily be, as well as the strongest of friends, what some one has called a "*good hater*;" but that unfortunately the likeness of a school to the great world would not be complete without a host of parasites and incendiaries, who bolster their own insignificance and gratify their own

petty malice by fostering the animosities, and perverting the actions of the master spirits who rule the boisterous element in which they move—who magnify a rash word into an unpardonable insult, and nurse a boyish quarrel till it be a life-long aversion.

Let no one wonder if I speak feelingly, and, it may appear, too seriously, on this painful subject; for a school-quarrel thus idly commenced, and thus cruelly fomented, long embittered my boyhood, and threatened in maturer life to cast a dark cloud over its brightest visions and dearest hopes.

I was educated at one of those large private seminaries, which, while they emulate in numbers the greater communities of Eton or Harrow, adopt, as a necessary consequence, an imitation of their reigning customs and popular follies. To hint that everything was not done in the same *style*, that rules and heads were not broken as much *secundum artem* at Arbury as at Westminster, would have been to wake a nest of hornets—and to have supposed *milling*, for it had not in my time usurped *Fancy's* bewitching title, less scientifically conducted at the



latter, would have brought the fists of the whole *corps pugilistique* of Arbury on the scoffer's devoted head.

It was, on the whole, a good school. There was in the master a classical enthusiasm, which made Latin and Greek a favourite pastime with all, save the drones of the hive; and if he was not extreme to mark exuberance of youthful spirits, he was not, on the whole, less generally or cheerfully obeyed. The boys, too, were an average set—perhaps fully more than one. The good fellows among them were a decided majority, and the black sheep not above half a dozen. We had, in their usual rare proportion, bright specimens of fallen humanity; creatures, who, from the cradle, had an instinct towards virtue; who would not have been unjust to gain an empire, and could not have been mean to escape martyrdom, whom we loved, because to do otherwise would have been impossible, and honoured for a superiority too triumphant to be disputed. Of these *raræ aves* it so happened that when I was at Arbury, there were two or three; but one of them too indolent for literary competition, one too good-natured, and one too

young, so that I found myself,—being, as I may *now* confess, without false humility, a capital scholar, and a considerable favourite with both master and boys;—in peculiar and personal rivalry with one boy of my own standing and acquirements, but of a character as opposite as ever held asunder two human beings thrown into inevitable collision.

I was then,—aye, and spite of much to calm and sober me, still am,—one of the rashest and most reckless of God's creatures—not ill-meaning, if I know myself, nor deficient in heart and feeling; but, as far as prudence and deliberation go to form a man, fit only for the nursery. Long, long before I became a soldier, I was “sudden and quick in quarrel;”—indeed, acquaintance with real warfare and scenes of blood, has done more to mitigate my original combativeness than anything save the one unlucky adventure to which I have above alluded.

At school, I was the universal champion, right or wrong, of all who were too wise or too puny, or anything except too cowardly, to fight; nay, sometimes, if I thought the very white-

feathered skulker had right on his side, I contrived, somehow or other, to make the quarrel mine, and defraud the craven of a thing too good for him. The difficulty was often to procure what I reckoned a worthy antagonist, what Scott, in other circumstances, has finely called

“A foeman worthy of my ‘steel,’”

or rather of my *fist*, for sword duels among boys are happily not yet naturalized in England. I was tired of standing to be pounded by huge hulking boobies, whom I only deferred flooring to show my own game, and divert the bystanders; or of encountering novices, whom I had to initiate in the very principles of pugilism before they could do me any credit in a set-to. In short, for I am heartily ashamed of dwelling on my bull-dog propensities, I longed ardently to provoke to combat the one boy already alluded to, who gave my every nerve full employment in the war of Latin and Greek, but who, though in bone and sinew the beau ideal of a pugilist, studiously avoided rows, and was never known to use his fists but once, when he knocked down the biggest boy in the school like a nine-pin,



for saying something about his mother, which nobody very distinctly heard, and which the jester took special care never to repeat afterwards.

On our first meeting at school, I had been extremely desirous to cultivate the friendship of Edmund Penrose, notwithstanding the difference in our dispositions and rivalry in our exercises. Envy was not even then my besetting sin, and though I involuntarily looked up to him as my superior in sense and temper, the palm of literary merit was too alternately awarded to us by the master, to excite any feeling save generous emulation. But the dissimilarity which rather attracts and stimulates a frank open character, operates as a complete check to a proud and reserved one; and Penrose, though flattered by my overtures, sought more congenial associates, and kept me at a distance, which I keenly felt.

Being thus denied the character of his friend, I did not, as some have done, necessarily become his enemy; but these repulses paved the way for subsequent misconceptions, and lent weight to the suggestions of malicious under-

lings, who, in schools as in cabinets, hope to profit by keeping party-spirit alive.

A good deal of the latter feeling was, during the last half year of our stay at Arbury, unintentionally kindled by Dr Y——; who, eager for the promotion of classical knowledge by whatever means, adopted, perhaps somewhat unadvisedly, the practice of certain Scottish seminaries of learning, where some of the prizes, instead of being awarded by the unbiassed judgment of the various professors, are decided by the interested and necessarily partial voice of the students themselves. Some of the latter, with whom I have discussed the matter in after life, maintained that merit on the whole was consulted in these decisions; but until the virtue and rectitude of fifteen shall be proved to exceed that of fifty, I never can believe that boys of the former age will crown a detested school-fellow,—however eminent a Grecian, or mathematician,—at the expense of a popular candidate of nearly equal powers; nor that they have the heart to blackball a good fellow who has saved them many a flogging, or perhaps endured

it himself, rather than betray them in some mutual frolic.

At Arbury, when the prize proposed by Dr Y—— was for an object the most difficult to define, as well as the most ardently to be coveted, viz. for general merit and distinction during the whole term, there was room, of course, for much latitude of interpretation, and much exercise of private judgment. A number of candidates had originally started, but towards the close of the period the great preponderance of prizes gained in various branches by Penrose and myself, as well as the Herculean efforts made by each in his several way for an object, from different motives, so dear to us both, limited the competition to ourselves, and by that very circumstance, lent it indescribable, and, on my part indeed, frightful energy.

Independently of the ambition natural to every ardent temperament, I had been promised by my guardian, my parents having died when I was an infant, that if I finished my studies with eclat, I should have the choice of my own profession; and to be a soldier was so deci-



dedly the bent of my whole soul, that to avoid a possible disappointment, seemed worthy of any effort. Penrose, again, the only son of a widowed mother, whom he idolized the more from having witnessed her unmerited and patiently endured wrongs during the life of a tyrannical husband, knew that his success would be balm to her wounded spirit, and a cordial to her apparently exhausted frame, for the chance of renovation to which, he was to accompany her, as soon as the examination was over, on a voyage to Madeira.

My motives for exertion were, I have thus confessed, of a much more selfish cast than my antagonist's, and as both were known, a natural leaning towards the more amiable side might be expected among boys, to many of whom the word "Mother," was still a talisman of might. Then Penrose, whose habitual reserve gained him few, though unalterable friends,—by his uniform mildness and civility, made no enemies. All respected, all admired, many loved him; while I was more feared than respected by the common herd, secretly disliked by many, whom I had unguardedly offended, though loved by

perhaps a greater proportion of my companions than Penrose.

As to acquirements, I was by no means so steadily and unremittingly successful as he—but my occasional efforts were more brilliant, and my prizes outvalued, if they did not outnumber his. He made fewer blunders—I struck out more beauties. Dr Y—— used to say he could make a first-rate classic between us. When vexed by my incorrectness, he would summon Penrose to put me right; but the mortification, though keenly felt, was more than atoned when I observed a sparkle in his eye, while reading over verses of mine, which I never detected when perusing the tamely correct productions of my rival.

The day of trial at length approached, and nothing could be more equally balanced than the suffrages of our comrades. None of these latter were of course openly declared, but as tacitly and surely understood as the votes of a certain more illustrious assembly, and the numbers on both sides being otherwise equal, intense interest began to attach itself to the voice of a little timid puny West Indian, who had only

been the last half year at school, and who was so frightened and bewildered by the keen canvas of our respective partizans, that he could be brought to no decision, and generally, at all but school hours, hid himself in some inaccessible corner or other of the old-fashioned grounds.

As I, with my natural recklessness, had never taken any notice of this little urchin, nay, had rather joined, though in pure idleness, in the laugh which his uncouth ways and imperfect English called forth—while Penrose, gentle himself, had taken the poor child's part, and had discouraged the laughers by his own mild gravity—I gave myself up for lost, as soon as it became apparent that, insignificant as he was, the fate of the contest hinged on Harry Edwards. However, had I not even observed that Penrose conscientiously shunned all intercourse with the boy, I believe I would have died rather than by one conciliating word or look have sought to bias his decision—unfavourable as I feared it must, if left to itself, inevitably be. But I felt, of course, very uncomfortable and irritable; the more so, that so important a competition



should be dependent upon one so totally incompetent to decide it, and but for whose unlucky existence, recourse must have been had to the far more eligible casting-vote of Dr Y—— himself. The Doctor, again, I imagine, was not sorry to shift on shoulders so little responsible a decision, which would have puzzled him a good deal; so he never interfered, and my friends began to be crest-fallen, and my adversaries triumphant; while the habitual self-possession of Penrose seemed, to my jaundiced eye, the insulting equanimity of assured success.

Two days before the eventful breaking-up, when all was to be settled, I was walking during play-hours, in no very enviable mood, in a retired part of the old neglected orchard, overgrown with rank grass and nettles, which the good Doctor,—who cultivated no fields save those of literature, nor valued any apples save those of the Hesperides,—had gradually permitted to be destroyed by the encroachments of a marshy pond, which a few days' labour would have restored to its original limits. This sedgy uninviting morass, perhaps from some associa-

tion with his native island, was a favourite haunt with Harry Edwards, who, like most quiet beings unfit for human society, delighted in that of the mute part of the creation. With the fish and wild-fowl of this pond he had a familiar acquaintance; and caught many a cold from dabbling for minnows, or pursuing the young ducks within the reedy margin of their parent element.

It happened that this year, from a great fall of snow in winter, the waters had in spring been unusually high; and having deprived the aquatic mothers of their accustomed nestling-places, they had been driven into a slight deviation from their habits, by depositing their eggs in the hollow stumps of some very ancient and long-decayed willows, hardly at all elevated above the winter level of the pond, but now, by its subsidence, left a few feet above its surface. This Harry had observed, and having hitherto failed in his darling object of getting possession of a brood of newly-hatched wild-ducks, he had been watching for days, unknown to any one, the floating egg-shells which were to indicate the entrance into life of his destined

nurslings. A few days of the mother's care had now, he hoped, fitted them for plunder; and, taking advantage of her absence, in quest of food, he was, when I happened to stroll that way, in the apparently easy act of climbing up the pendant willow-stem to secure his prey.

I was on the other side of the pond, separated from him by a mass of brushwood and brambles hardly to be penetrated, when I heard a crackling of branches, a sudden plunge, and a faint shriek; and starting from my reverie, beheld the little arbiter of my fame helplessly struggling in the water, and becoming with every effort more obviously entangled in the ooze and reeds.

To assume the slightest merit for the pure instinct which bade me rescue him, would be an insult to even school-boy virtue; but I had leisure to wish, during my desperate rush through the intervening obstacles, that it had been my lot to peril my life for any one else. Of the incident turning to my advantage, I neither thought nor cared; but I had learned enough during the few last weeks of party conflict, to feel that it might be wrested to my pre-



judice; and while success in the rescue seemed certain, I could have almost regretted it should be mine to achieve it.

Very different, however, were my feelings, when, on clearing the mass of copse with the *impetus* of a young elephant, I found that little Harry had disappeared, and no ripple on the water even indicated a faint struggle with destruction. If I had been selfish, I was abundantly punished by the agony of that moment. I rushed into the pond, and, seizing with speechless horror a pole which Edwards had fortunately left on the bank, began groping amid the reeds and water-lilies for the poor child, on whom tropic suns would probably never again smile. My efforts were too eager to be very cautious, and a faint struggle, which told me *where* I had awakened consciousness, was joyfully hailed. Guided by the ripple occasioned by a convulsive movement below water, I darted to the place indicated, and, with much difficulty, myself rapidly sinking amid slime and quicksand, disentangled the again totally insensible body of poor Harry. Its additional weight bore me down so alarmingly, that I was forced to let it

go, retaining with my teeth a firm grasp of one button of his jacket, on which, for a few seconds, the poor child's preservation was literally suspended.

By a desperate effort I cleared my own limbs from obstruction ; and, dragging the body to land, fell down exhausted beside it on the bank. My recovery was, however, too necessary to his for a kind Providence not to accelerate it. I came to myself in a moment, and was mechanically, and, I feared, unavailingly, chafing the cold limbs, and feeling the still heart of my little comrade, when, with a joy such sound never before communicated, I heard the well-known toll of the bell for school.

It told me we should be missed, and sought for. With the prospect of help, hope again dawned within me. I started up, and endeavoured to carry the child towards the house. In such rugged and tangled ground my progress was, however, cruelly slow ; much time was elapsing, and I fancied my poor charge's cheek colder, as it fell powerless against mine. Voices were now heard shouting and hallooing, and a cross, sallow-faced, detestable usher, who, at-

tended by a gardener-lad, came to apprehend the culprits, appeared in my eyes a radiant angel of light.

He was beginning a lecture on the enormity of transgressing hours, and the additional delinquency of aquatic exploits, when the words were absolutely frozen on his lips by the appalling spectacle of one half-drowned boy, carrying another, whose recovery seemed hopeless. He rang the hand-bell, used for maintaining order in the class, which he mechanically carried, and, as we were now very near the house, out rushed masters, scholars, "little boys and all." The story told itself, and it was lucky it did so, for my voice refused its office—my sight grew dim—I reeled and fell, as soon as a thousand officious hands had relieved me of my burden.

Dr Y—— had the coolness and judgment of one long responsible for many a precious life. He did, without fuss, or undue agitation, exactly what was right; and warm blankets, gentle friction, unremitting efforts—all, in short, that a truly Humane Society has dictated to the inexperienced, was, under Providence, successful;



and while Edwards awoke as from the slumber of death, under their operation, I, whose danger had been chiefly from fatigue and exhaustion, fell into a sound and refreshing sleep.

It was short, however ; and if I woke to bliss on seeing Harry's dark cheek on an opposite pillow, slightly tinged with red, and hearing again that regular breathing, whose ominous suspension had chilled me with horror, I also awoke to misery ; for I seemed already to hear the scornful comments of my companions on so well-timed a rencontre. That the boy, from gratitude, should wish success to his preserver, was in his place natural ; but in mine it was no less indispensable to disclaim any such adventitious title to favour ; and I could scarcely await the poor little fellow's awaking, to release him from all such imagined obligations.

Just then I heard footsteps in the passage, and curiosity to hear what sensation might be excited by the event, made me instinctively feign sleep, as some of the elder boys cautiously stole into the room.

"Thank God, they are both asleep and doing well," burst at first alike from the lips of

friends and foes; but as this party interested in Edwards' recovery consisted chiefly of the latter, they could not altogether lose sight of the bearing of his rescue on the grand question.

"How strange that Sullivan should go to walk by the pond to-day," said one, with peculiar emphasis.

"He could not but know that Harry went often there," said another good-natured Penroseite.

"But how the devil could he know he would fall into the water?" asked one of my warmest-hearted and most stanch supporters.

I was very near starting up in bed to re-echo the question, when I was shocked past the power of utterance, by the remark of one of the most spiteful of the opposite party, who, saying with cool insolence, "Well, I cannot but agree with Penrose, that there was something very opportune, at least, in this melo-dramatic incident," walked out of the room, followed by the others.

All next day, Dr Y—— would not allow me to leave my room. I was extremely feverish; but, Heaven knows, not so much from past danger or exertion, as from present mental torture.

The grateful overflowings of little Harry's affectionate heart were aggravations of my misery ; and my unsuccessful efforts to get him to declare for Penrose, made me so fearful of being suspected of tampering with him for myself, that I begged to have him removed into another room.

Here he was assailed by hosts of visitors, whose sympathy was in many cases but a cloak for their curiosity. Dr Y—— had strictly forbidden his being teased with questions, and indeed was beginning decidedly to reprobate the feelings generated by his well-meant competition, and to meditate taking the matter into his own hands. Harry, backed by the Doctor,—whom, rushing upon Charybdis to escape Scylla, he had made his confidant,—remained resolutely silent ; but his eye sparkled whenever I was named, in a manner which betrayed his heart's feelings too well to the party—but for this unexpected *denouement* — so lately triumphant. They even ventured in their despair, to sound the Doctor as to the equity of allowing private services to bias a public question. His laconic answer, “ Does an act of heroism go for nothing



in your notions of merit?" sent them away as dissatisfied with the master as with the pupil. Many and spiteful were their remarks, aggravated by my sense of their gross injustice, which found their way, with all the unthinking exaggeration of youth, into my bed-room; and by the time I had tossed there another night in feverish unrest, I was ready to have quarrelled, for anything or nothing, with my best friend.

The apothecary, who came in the morning to feel my pulse, put on a face of ominous length and gravity, and decidedly ordered another day of starvation and repose. But as he omitted to enforce his directions, by placing any sentry over the prisoner, I no sooner watched him remounting his pony, than I dressed myself with all the hurry, and much of the disorder of a maniac, and sallied down to the play-ground.

It was the day of days. The decision was to take place in the afternoon; and in the morning it had been out of the question to exact anything like attendance at school, so that the party-spirit of all, and the bad passions of many, gained mischievous strength from idleness and collision. The place in which my companions were

assembled, was an enclosed portion of the park by which the ancient mansion had once been proudly surrounded, cleared by rude and unskilful hands of the decaying timber which had been allowed to rot on its surface, and merely rendered the compulsory scene of our athletic exercises by the encroachments of cultivation on all the more open and profitable parts of the demesne.

On this eventful morning, sports had been as tacitly and universally relinquished as lessons, and knots of partizans sat in busy conclave on various spots of the rugged play-ground. My appearance among them was so unexpected, and my looks, I afterwards heard, so wild and haggard, that many started up to avoid rather than welcome me.

The first group I encountered contained Penrose, surrounded, like the hero of the day, with a whole cluster of obedient satellites. He was going to salute me with, I remember, more of frankness and cordiality than marked our usual intercourse, when I strode fiercely up to him, and said, "I understand you think my rescue of Edwards *opportune*—so shall I, though it

ruins all my hopes of the prize, if it gives me an opportunity of settling much more satisfactorily, whether you uttered or I deserved such an insinuation. I challenge you to fight before our assembled companions, for something more valuable than Dr Y——'s musty volumes, or the partial votes of a parcel of schoolboys about Greek and Latin."

Penrose listened to this burst of temper, and looked gravely up at its close, with the mixture of pity and astonishment which the sane experience and exhibit on hearing the ravings of a madman. He seemed, indeed, for a moment to take me for one, and my flushed brow and troubled eye confirmed the suspicions excited by my words. I mistook the half smile of pity which passed across his fine features—and a handsomer fellow I suppose was seldom seen—for one of contempt, and his calmness had the invariable effect of heightening my irritation in a tenfold degree.

He was beginning an answer, seeing that I still stood and awaited one; but I no sooner gained from its tenor that it did not contain a direct acceptance of my challenge, than I shook



my head in angry inattention, and said, "I did not come down to hear explanations, but to receive satisfaction.—Will you, or will you not, fight?"

Some of our mutual friends had by this time crowded round us, mine crying out, "Are you crazy, Sullivan?" and his answering, "Mad as a March hare."

Penrose calmly replied, "I never fight, and have no satisfaction either to give or receive."

The wiser boys called out, "Bravo, Penrose!" the incendiaries, "Shame! shame!"

The amateurs of boxing began to form a ring, and the lovers of mischief to be in their element. The excitement which the anticipation of a fight never fails to awaken in Britons of all ages, was running like wildfire among us, and its slightest spark was enough to explode the volcano in my bosom.

Penrose's eye alone was calm, and his colour unheightened. He had, indeed, the slight paleness of resolve upon his cheek, and his firmly compressed lips were those of one who mans himself to meet the spring of a tiger. In self-

defence, I had no doubt, he would exert the strength and sinew with which Nature had endowed him; but I wanted to convert an odious aggression into an equal combat. I remembered the "open Sesame" to all his pugnacious properties, and, in an evil hour for my own peace and his forgiveness, revived the hateful slander about his calumniated mother.

This was, indeed, to rouse the sleeping Lion! He turned upon me with such Herculean energy that all my skill and science were nearly annihilated; and the unmanly way in which I had provoked the combat, made me, like the traitors of old romance, feel as if something invisible palsied my arm. It was at length too fatally invigorated. Shame and rage combined to inspire a desperate effort. I aimed such a blow as nothing not made of marble could have withstood; and Penrose, taken at a disadvantage, by the inequality of the ground on which he stood, reeled and fell. A still more disastrous consummation attended the peculiar nature of the arena of this contest. He fell on one of the many rugged stumps which deformed the skirts of this dangerous play-ground. It

inflicted a wound, which on the temple would have been mortal ; it took place over the eye, and irremediable disfigurement and probable loss of sight were its mitigated consequences.

Of all this I knew little at the time, for I was myself, in consequence of the ducking of the day before, in the first stage of a violent fever ; and the exertion of the fight and agitation of the accident, brought on such a paroxysm, that Dr Y——, who had been summoned to the spot by the insensibility of Penrose, found my delirium more alarming still. I was conveyed away with difficulty, in a state bordering on frenzy, to my old quarters in the infirmary.

I remained, as I was afterwards told, in a very critical state for nearly a week, at the end of which the inflammation on my brain gave way before copious bleedings and blisterings, and I awoke from the first sound sleep I had enjoyed since my rescue of Edwards, a weak and confused, but once more rational, and consequently inquiring being.

The old retired housekeeper, who nursed the sick boys, sat knitting with the first light of the fine midsummer morning, her open Bible before



her, combining habitual thrift with higher meditations.—“Deborah!” said I, starting up in bed, and half drawing the curtains; but my voice was so weak, that I had called three times before the somewhat dull ear of the old matron caught the sound.

She turned at length, and fairly started at my ghostlike appearance, attempting to raise my trembling limbs and get out of bed, an effort which I soon found I might save myself the trouble of making.—“Deborah,” cried I more wildly, “where is Edmund Penrose? I must see him immediately.”

I saw by her first anxious glance, that she thought me still delirious; the more so as I assured her I was quite well; but her experienced eye soon discovered that my fever was gone; and fearing to irritate me by refusing to satisfy my natural curiosity, she answered, in a soothing tone, “Lord love you! Master Richard, just lie still and compose yourself. It’s near a week since Master Penrose left, and by this time he’s half way to Madeira.”

“Madeira!” exclaimed I, sceptically, and I shook my head.—“Deborah, he is dead! and

you are trying to conceal it—I must and will see him !”

“ My dear child,” said she, still more coaxingly, “ for God’s sake, lie still and keep your head on the pillow—you’ll bring on another fit ! Ned Penrose was sent for the very night after school broke up, to go to Madeira with his sick mother, who was already on shipboard, and could wait no longer for him. He was not very fit to go, you may believe, but nothing would keep him ; and all he minded was the fright his poor mother would get about his bandaged eye.”

“ And will he be blind, Deborah,” said I, in a lower whisper than before, and half afraid of the sound of my own fearful question, “ as I heard somebody say he would, I don’t know when or where ?”

“ Blind ? God forbid !” said the old dame. “ No ! I hope matters are not so bad, though it was an ugly cut, they tell me. I could not get down to help to dress it, you were so very obstreperous all that day, or I daresay there would have been little or no mark at all—but, as it is, there’ll only be a scar across his eyebrow, and

what signifies that in a man? But go to sleep, do, my dear Dick," added the careful matron, shutting the curtains; "I'm an old fool to be chattering so to one in your condition."

I was too weak to insist on further parley. Another day or two was passed chiefly in the slumber of exhaustion. At length I was myself again, and fully awake to the pains as well as pleasures of renovated existence.

Good Dr Y—— came to my bedside, and seeing it vain to postpone the subject nearest to our hearts, everlastingly won mine, by laying aside the master in the friend, and confessing his own unintentional error in constituting boys judges of each other, and thus sowing the seeds of uncharitableness in a too fertile soil. He mingled, however, wholesome admonition with paternal sympathy, and conjured me to treasure up the warning I had received as a perpetual talisman against ungoverned passion. He assured me that Penrose, though disfigured, would not, in all probability, be more seriously injured, and that the last words of this noble boy had been those of extenuation and compassion towards his aggressor. The state of his mother's



health had become, from the bursting of a blood-vessel, so critical, that nothing but instant removal to a mild climate would avail, and he had been carried straight to Southampton to join her on board the packet.

"You may, perhaps, again meet on the voyage of life, my dear Sullivan," said the good Doctor; "and I am sure, from what I know of you both, it will be as friends. Unlike as you are, you have sterling qualities in common, which may atone for minor differences."

"Do you think I may write to him, dear Doctor?" asked I eagerly—"will he answer my letter?"

"I have not a doubt of it," said the good man. "If he had had time, I daresay he would have left a few lines for you here; but his summons was quite sudden, and at an unseasonable hour. Besides—his head and heart were full of his mother. He is the best and fondest of sons!"

This innocent remark was a death-blow to my returning self-complacency. "Oh! Dr Y——," cried I, "don't say so; for it was by speaking disparagingly of his mother that I provoked

him to fight with me—He'll never forgive me that."

The good man looked grave—"That was a pity, Sullivan, and very, very wrong—but you can say you are sensible of it in your letter."

"No, no! I cannot write at all—his eye he won't mind—but the reflection on his mother!" and I buried my face despairingly in the bed-clothes.

"Don't be so distressed, my dear Dick," said the Doctor, feeling for my boyish agony. "Look here," added he, to divert my attention, "at the duplicate prize I had provided for each of you, as soon as I perceived how equal you were in merit. Harry Edwards voted Penrose his, as he originally intended, for being a good Grecian—and—I give you this, for saving a fellow creature's life. But let it remind you too, Richard, how near you were hazarding that of another. You are born a soldier—study this splendid Xenophon for the art of war—but learn from a greater than Xenophon, the nobler conquest over yourself."

I was sent for home the next day, and my intrinsic merits being, as is too frequently the

case, estimated by my exterior distinctions, my guardian, on the faith of my magnificent prize, pronounced me a fine fellow, and promised me a commission at the end of two years' preliminary study at a military college.

Engrossed as I was by new avocations and new comrades, I did not forget Penrose, or my desire of his forgiveness ; but, like many other moral cowards, I deferred the painful and formidable effort of writing, deterred by the precarious state of his mother, and the hope of hearing by chance somewhat respecting them. I often inquired, and at length learned, that Mrs Penrose had miraculously, though partially recovered ; and that her son had entered, probably on her account, on the mercantile profession, under the auspices of an eminent native merchant, a correspondent of his late father's. This surprised and disappointed me ; for notwithstanding Edmund's calmness and gravity, I always fancied him at heart a soldier, and flattered myself with romantic ideas of fighting by his side, and defending him, if necessary, with my life.

I was now myself appointed to a regiment at



Gibraltar, and before starting to join, I intrusted to a companion embarking for India, my long deferred letter for Penrose; imparting to him its purport and design, and conjuring him to confirm by personal assurances, my continued penitence, and unfeigned desire of reconciliation. This young man's regiment, I long afterwards heard, was diverted from its destination, on an unfortunate expedition, and my letter perished with its youthful bearer on a distant and pestilential shore.

No answer of course reached me, and a second letter, which I wrote by the ordinary channels, some months after, (when aware of the fate of my first,) remaining equally unacknowledged, I at first sorrowfully, and then indignantly, set down Penrose as implacable in his resentment.

Heaven forbid that I should inflict the tedious detail of near twenty years' routine duty in most parts of the world; thinly sprinkled with ignoble captures of West India Islands, and expeditions about which the less is said the better, upon men, whose ears have tingled with the thick-coming exploits of a brighter and more

spirit-stirring period, the resistless tide of which has totally swept away all the minor incidents of a less glorious warfare. Two periods only of my earlier campaigns still retain their hold on my memory, as fraught with misery or delight to a then youthful breast.

If ever I repented being a soldier, it was when engaged in Ireland in the dreadful duty of fighting against my demoralized, but still dear countrymen ; when creatures, whose names were the household words of my childhood, and whose Milesian blood ran in my own veins, I was doomed to see transformed into raging tygers, and, as such, placed beyond the pale of humanity !

I believe I must either have resigned my commission, or gone mad, or turned rebel in my despair, if a change in my destination had not taken place, which converted me from an executioner of my deluded countrymen, into a delighted explorer of the treasures of antiquity, and a wandering pilgrim in the land of the Ptolemies.

The expedition to Egypt had altogether a charm for educated young men, which it is impossible to define. Scripture and mythology,

the Exodus and the Crusades—Moses, Cleopatra, and Cœur de Lion, were all floating in dim and shadowy grandeur down the same primeval Nile, now resounding with the shouts of my countrymen; and the triumph (however dearly bought) of our arms, added the excitement of victory to that of the most ardent curiosity. The Pyramids are too stupendous landmarks in the retrospect of a soldier's life to be ever forgotten, no, nor the brief slumber enjoyed beneath their awful shadow, in that mysterious cradle, whence truth and fiction have alike sprung forth to enlighten or delude mankind!

The transition from the burning sands of Alexandria to the marshes of Holland proved fatal to a large proportion of my gallant comrades. We were, what is emphatically called, a skeleton regiment, when, after hardships innumerable by sea and land, our few survivors disembarked to recruit their shattered frames amid the delicious scenery and British comforts of the Isle of Wight. I was, as major, the only remaining field-officer on its original strength, and the newly appointed ones not having yet joined, I found myself in command of some



scores of invalids, scattered for health and convenience, in the various barns or other buildings, converted by the exigencies of our then prodigious military establishment, into temporary barracks. My own health requiring all the repose and privacy which was consistent with my very limited duties, I took up my quarters at a solitary farm-house, pretty centrally situated with regard to my men, but remote from any of the populous and fashionable villages on the coast.

Here, amid the languor and exhaustion of long service, it was, for a while, luxury to vegetate, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." I shunned even my few brother officers, for I wished to forget the harassing past, and they had almost all, in returning to England, ties and prospects for the future, which I, alas! could not share in. Left in infancy, a solitary orphan, I had no near relations to welcome the war-worn soldier. Of the friendships I had snatched amid the tumults of the camp, many were severed by death—others loosened by distance; I was, in short, with a heart thirsting

for kindness, and overflowing with sympathy, nearly alone in the world.

I soon found myself unfit for the placid tenor of the hermit-like life which had at first appeared so delightful. With returning health I missed the gay parade, the joyous mess-room, the war-fraught rumour of the day, and its proud realization in the field,—and though, Heaven knows, I wished again for none of them,—no, not even the last, for I had “supped full of horrors,” yet I panted for something in their stead—emotions which might supply their place, and heave, though with far softer swell, the frozen ocean of my now passionless existence.

I had never, since the idle age of garrison flirtations, found leisure to be deeply and rationally in love,—and now, that with a soul softened by vicissitudes, and spirits subdued by scenes of blood and misery, and a judgment matured by much communing with mankind, I had nothing to do but lose my heart, nothing appeared less likely than my meeting with a congenial object. I could not mix in crowds for the chance of finding some one too good to be there; and that such a one should drop from the skies into

my solitude, I was too old to expect, though quite young enough sometimes to wish.

I had strolled out one morning, as I frequently did at this interesting period, to meet the boy whom I had dispatched to bring my letters and newspapers from Brading. He was later than usual, and I was beginning to fret, after the manner of an idler defrauded of his morning's pastime; when, on reaching the summit of a rising ground, from whence I could see some way down the lane, I perceived my little delinquent and his pony quietly grazing by the road-side, and himself in the very heart of a hazel bush, while his dispatches (the public part of them at least) were in the hands of the enemy.

The ambuscade into which Jack had fallen, (no very formidable one apparently,) consisted of two ladies in deep mourning, the elder of whom was devouring the contents of my newspaper, while the younger and taller, read in feverish anxiety over her shoulder. Deep anxiety could alone, I guessed, have dictated this invasion of my property, and I was truly desirous it should pass apparently unnoticed;



especially as the hour (seven in the morning) had doubtless inspired the fair transgressors with a feeling of unbounded security.

Unluckily, however, Jack's elevated position in the nut-tree allowed him to catch a glimpse of my uniform on the bank above, and, screaming out, "Master's coming!" he scrambled down from his "bad eminence," and snatched the booty from its astonished occupants. I now thought it best, and indeed inevitable, to advance, and assure the pale, delicate-looking mother, and blushing trembling daughter, that they could not afford me more pleasure than by profiting by the information my paper might contain.

"The outrage we have been guilty of," answered the former, with easy politeness, "could only be justified or palliated by extreme maternal anxiety. My son is engaged in the expedition to Buenos Ayres,—and as we have been too short a time here to establish sources of intelligence for ourselves, an irresistible impulse led us yesterday and to-day, to way-lay your messenger. I trust to your experience in the hazards of a soldier's life, to pardon the

liberty in the mother of an only son, and in his doating sister," added she, gracefully presenting her timid and retiring daughter, who, during the previous apology, had stood plucking the leaves of the briar-roses in the lane, and blushing more beautifully than any of them.

I don't know what there was in that colour which told me it was not altogether British. The features of the lovely girl were cast in the same mould as her elegant English mother's,—but there was a length in the lashes that fringed her downcast eyes, and a depth in the carnation that glowed in her cheek, that seemed to speak of a warmer climate, and more southern origin. My conjectures were soon confirmed.

"We arrived from abroad only two or three days ago," added the elder lady, "and shall probably await here the news from South America, which may be daily expected, and in which we are so deeply interested."

I, of course, made it a point that they should allow my servant to call at their cottage, a few hundred yards from where we stood, every morning on his way from Brading; and only

ventured to add a request, that his master might sometimes at a more seasonable hour, be permitted to exchange the irksome solitude of his lodgings, for the luxury of a more refined and congenial society.

The elder of my new acquaintance bowed acquiescence, and the younger looked it. There mingled with the dignity of the one, and the timidity of the other, a frankness and ease, which, like the latter's complexion, reminded me of a southern climate. I almost fancied, in the language of the young lady, fluent and correct as it was, a slight peculiarity of pronunciation and idiom, such as frequently arises from equal acquaintance and indiscriminate familiarity with two mother-tongues. A corroboration soon followed; for, in the midst of some slight remarks on the scenery, which I encouraged to prolong the interview, the elder lady called out, "Inez! we must be returning home. Our early breakfast-hour has arrived, and we are detaining"—— Here she hesitated, in ignorance of my designation, and I hastened to introduce myself as Major Sullivan, in the hope of receiving similar information in return. It was



thus conveyed:—"Should you, in the course of your walks, accomplish your intention of calling upon us, you will be good enough to inquire at the cottage called Rosehill, for Madame de Castro."

This Portuguese name reduced all my surmises to certainty, and its combination in the younger lady with that of the fair object of many a Lusitanian lay, lent just enough of romance to the meeting, to heighten the usual effects of youth, beauty, and mystery.

There is no one, especially a young soldier, reduced by circumstances to forced and unwonted inactivity, who has not felt the interest of a casual acquaintance extremely enhanced by ignorance of the precise rank, situation, and history of the parties; while the impossibility of obtaining any information on these subjects beyond what may be elicited from their own conversation, adds the stimulus of curiosity to the charms of polished intercourse.

My late forced association with Dutch boors and their Fraus lent to my new acquaintance all the advantages of strong contrast. It was with the ardour of a traveller thirsting from the de-

sert, that I resorted to the fount which had unexpectedly sprung up in my solitude ; and if I soon drank deep draughts of love from the lucid wells of Inez's sparkling eyes, it was but the consequence which all save herself must have anticipated from the introduction.

I will not be so superfluous as to describe her. How could I convey to senseless paper, with strokes of muddy ink, the faintest image of one to whom even painting always failed to do justice, and who flits before my very mind's eye with the soft evanescence of an ever-shifting rainbow ? Some may have seen the happy medium between dark and fair, between tall and short, between grave and gay, which marked her composition—but who that had not, could ever learn it from description?—She had no feature that an artist could have mended, and no thought that an angel could have reproved. Such, at least, was my opinion then ; and if it has changed since, the fault must have been my own.

Several happy weeks glided, I scarce know how, in daily intercourse with this pair of equally interesting women ; for, if I loved the daugh-

ter, I all but worshipped the mother, and felt that much of the spell that bound me to the former, resided in the pale matronly grace, and melancholy smile of the latter. Her year of widowhood had scarce expired; and her sorrow was of that exquisitely gentle sort which refuses not to be comforted, but can depart only with life. Its very meekness seemed a pledge of its duration; it challenged no sympathy, and gained the more, and its very smiles were more touching than a thousand tears.

In the father of Inez she had lost the friend earth could not replace; and, as I gathered from her daughter, the charm of this well assorted union had been enhanced by a previous marriage with a less worthy object. From this former alliance had sprung the brother for whose safety their apprehensions were now painfully excited, but whom, though still eager for intelligence, they yet forbore to mention often, with somewhat prophetic alarm.

It was only one lovely evening, when, tempted by the uncommon beauty of the moon upon the water, Inez and I lingered on the bench before the cottage, after her mother had retired,



and when the declaration which trembled on my lips was always, as it were, instinctively averted, by some fresh strain of exquisite beauty bursting from her guitar, or some topic of peculiar interest hovering on her lips, that Inez talked to me fully of her brother. She told me that he had been from childhood the hope and pride of her mother's widowed heart. That to her comfort, he had nearly made the sacrifice of his darling wish to enter the army, of which he was now one of the brightest ornaments; but that the unexpected succession to a distant relation, whose name and fortune he opportunely inherited, leaving him at liberty to follow his original bias,—his remaining scruples with regard to depriving her of his society had been set at rest by the second marriage of his parent with the worthy man, whose house and heart had, with the proverbial hospitality of his native island, been opened to her from the time she set foot there, a forlorn and apparently dying invalid.

“ Now that this precious bond is broken,” sighed Inez, “ by the sudden death of my dear, dear father, to study my brother's wishes, and

contribute to his happiness, will henceforth form the chief solace of our lives. He is," continued she, with all the sweet garrulity of innocent affection, "the best of human beings, and would be one of the handsomest, but for a blemish, which, after all, only adds to his martial appearance.—See!" said she, drawing from her bosom a black ribband, to which was suspended a picture—"don't you think this a brother to be proud of?"

I took hold of the ribband with an instinctive shudder. It was to see the well-known face of Penrose, slightly affected, or rather embellished, by years; but its whole expression altered, and, spite of the painter's art, to one who had known it before, disfigured, by a scar, the work of my own rash hand!

My first emotion was to fly like a detected and conscience-stricken criminal—my second, to fall down before Inez and confess my boyish crime. To do the latter had been easy, even with the mild features of Edmund arrayed in mute reproach before me. To own that I had put his precious life in jeopardy was little, since he had been spared to peril it for his country—to own

that I had marred his manly beauty, seemed light, when so much yet remained to challenge admiration. But how could I confess, how bear to recollect, that I had slandered his mother?—the being in whose hallowed presence I now trode more reverently, and from whose spotless hand I ventured to look for that of Inez?

Unable to appear before the former, either as her concealed or avowed traducer, incapable of stealing, unpardoned by Penrose, into the heart of his unsuspecting sister, I hastily and abruptly quitted her, feeling an indispensable preliminary to the declaration I meditated, to be an appeal to the generosity of her brother, and his powerful mediation in my behalf.

I spent the night in feverish tumults, little inferior to those our former rivalry had excited; striving to recollect minute particulars of his boyish history, and to draw from these inferences favourable to the success of an experiment, on which I felt all my hopes in life depended. Were he, as is sometimes the case with calm and deliberate characters, to cherish resentment, or even harbour distrust, I felt that were Inez, in the face of these, to give me her



hand, I could not value the boon as alone it ought to be welcomed. The forgiveness, the consent, the altered opinion of Penrose, became the *sine qua non* of all my future happiness, and, backed by them alone, could I ever call his calumniated mother mine, or his doating sister my legitimate bride.

On my sleepless pillow I indited the letter which was to find its way across the Atlantic, or hail his arrival on his native shore ; its eloquence inspired by passion, its humility dictated by remorse. It was, to my excited feelings, triumphant and irresistible ; and in the feverish dream that followed, I saw Penrose, softened and smiling, bestowing on me the hand of Inez, while our mutual parent blest the happy group.

A double motive carried me early in the morning to B——. My letter was written with the dawn, and I wished to inquire personally about vessels proceeding to the scene of war, while my interest in the newspapers now even exceeded that of my fair friends at Rosehill.

“ No vessel as I know of, master, for Buenos Ayres,” said a rough seaman whom I question-

ed ; “ but a convoy gone up Channel last night, and brought baddish news, I reckon.”

I flew to the post-office—Various groups were canvassing the tale of our discomfiture, given, it is true, on private authority, but wearing a face of authenticity that excluded hope. I snatch-ed the papers—saw a second edition with the details—read among the killed the name of Colonel Barnard, (for the first time, too, well remembering Penrose’s change of title)—and reel-ed out of the shop, like one as yet scarce conscious of a mortal wound !

I might have stood till I grew marble, but for the sight of my little messenger, and the idea of his being watched as usual by Inez and her mother ! To let them read the tidings was impossible ; to tell them, on what, after all, was not official information, was anticipating evil so, in desperation, I begged a curious idler to exchange my fatal evening paper for a morning one, destitute in his eyes of all interest, and dispatched the boy, as usual, with this harmless packet.

Painful, agonizing as I felt the blow thus only protracted, I could not stay away from

the cottage. Summoning all the composure I could muster, I paid my usual visit after breakfast; and I think I could have better borne the horrors of their unchecked grief, than the unnatural excitement with which the eyes of Inez sparkled.

“We were waiting for you so impatiently, Major Sullivan,” said she, springing up with childish glee. “Mamma has long promised me a gipsy party to the Undercliff, and this morning was so beautiful that she has let me order donkeys, and we hope you will be our escort. You know the country so well, and can show us all the fine points of view. It will be quite delicious, won’t it? There is something in this day so fresh and exhilarating, I have not felt so happy since I left dear Funchal.”

I would rather have walked up to a breach than have gone on this party of pleasure, with a knell in my ears, and a dagger in my heart; but selfishness gave way, and I began to think it a blessed resource against the danger of a communication from some chance quarter, of the dreadful rumour; and as a means of killing the time that might intervene before the arrival of



dispatches. My gravity, however, which I could not conceal, infected Madame de Castro.

“Inez has teased me into this expedition,” said she; “but my mind misgives me, as if we might lose good news by being absent even for a day.”

“Oh! Mamma,” said Inez, “if you feel this, pray do not go; it was foolish of me to wish it. I am sure I had rather hear an hour sooner of dear Edmund, than see all the beauties of this lovely island.”

It was now my turn to urge the excursion; for hear they must, and too soon, if they staid at Rosehill, tidings with which that side of the island rung. I placed Inez on her saddle, with the coldness of an anchorite, and the gravity of a stoic. If Edmund was dead, and without saying, “Sullivan, I forgive you,” Inez could never be more to me than a fair vision, too beauteous to be realized below; to be met and recognised perhaps in some happier sphere, where passion was unknown and animosities forgotten.

To all the party save myself, the excursion was one of uncommon interest and enjoyment. In no quarter of the picturesque Isle of Wight

is the scenery more striking than in that part of the south coast called the Undercliff, which extends from the village of Shanklin, near to which Rosehill was situated, as far west as St. Catherine's. Imagine a lofty terraced mountain of more than 400 feet in height, so undermined by the waters of the British Channel, as that the part towards the sea should have fallen over upon the beach, leaving a towering cliff towards the north, and the ruins of the mountain lying at its foot, in the wildest and most picturesque disorder. At one part the road skirts the top of the cliff; at another it descends abruptly to the lower level; but turn as you will, the eye is feasted with an inexhaustible variety of new and enchanting prospects.

Often and often during the happy listlessness of my early sojourn in the island, had I strolled along this commanding cliff, lost in admiration of the scene beneath; of the rich foreground sloping to the sea, and the ever-animated waves beyond, gleaming in every direction with light skiffs, and frequently studded with stately convoys returning to their native havens. *Now* the brilliant landscape was to me covered with

a funeral pall, and every gay and gallant ship a harbinger of misery !

These feelings were only increased by the calm unconscious serenity of Madame de Castro, and the exuberant gaiety of Inez ; who, exhilarated by the scene and exercise, gave way to the natural cheerfulness of youth, long repressed by sorrow and anxiety. She was in ecstasies with all she saw, and could have lingered for ever on this first and loftiest part of her pilgrimage ; but with the restlessness of misery, I hurried her forward till the road began to descend to the Undercliff, where, winding along the coast, new beauties present themselves at every step, till you arrive at the village of Bonchurch.

Its little Saxon church, one of the most ancient religious buildings in the island, impresses one, from its very small size and primitive antiquity, with feelings of peculiar sanctity. It speaks of times when Christians were a small and persecuted handful ; when the Cross, now reigning triumphant over the civilized world, was newly planted on our barren shores—and when the scenes around us, now gay with cul-



tivation, enlivened by commerce, and beautified almost to excess by art, were pathless and silent forests, rude as their scanty and savage population.

Besides those reflections, common to all feeling minds, on beholding this humble shrine of our forefathers, there were associations in that of Inez with the small rustic chapels of her Catholic native country, which, though herself a Protestant, early familiarity had rendered inevitable.

The Protestantism imbibed in a Catholic country is always insensibly imbued with romance; and while her mother and I sat in the beautiful little porch of this sylvan sanctuary, Inez slipped into its rude interior, and, unobserved as she thought by any one, breathed a vow at its simple shrine, doubtless for her absent brother's safety. As she knelt in the deep shadow of the little chapel's darkest recess, she would certainly, with her light ethereal figure, and the white veil thrown with her country's gracefulness around her head, have given rise, in the days of our forefathers, to as picturesque a legend as ever rustic fane was graced withal.

This impulse of romantic devotion, which at the time went like a dagger to my heart, might since have given birth there to feelings of more than Catholic superstition ; or rather, viewed in a different and more edifying light, to a delightful confidence in the efficacy of prayer. Her orisons were just concluding, when her mother exclaimed, " See, Inez, how beautiful that noble frigate looks going up Channel ! She is like some stately swan gliding smoothly on an unruffled lake !"

" And look, mamma, at the little black cygnet which emerges from her tall side," replied Inez, as a small boat was lowered from the vessel, and rowed swiftly towards the island, till hidden from our view by one of the promontories we had left behind. " How happy somebody is in that boat !" cried Inez, straining her eyes to watch its progress to the last moment, " coming home perhaps from a long voyage to his wife and children ! Oh, if those he loved should be no more !—if grief and disappointment should be awaiting him !"

" They were the portion of one not far from this spot, on a nearly similar occasion," sighed

I, not unwilling, by one tale of human woe, to pave the way for another. "Though death had not been busy with his household, he found a cold hearth and a dispersed family. I knew an officer who left yonder village a doating husband and a fond father. He returned from toils and perils, panting for the comforts, the smiles, the endearments of home. His wife had left him for unexplained reasons, and for ever; his daughters had adopted her caprices, and there remained to him, of all he had loved, and cherished, and dreamt of, but the graves of his buried children in this little church-yard. Near these he lingered till he lay beside them. That willow marks their peaceful resting-place!"

Inez gazed with subdued spirits and an altered expression on the distant boat; and then, as if the charm which bound her to the spot was broken, started up and proposed resuming our ride. We had settled to take our little collation, one of the most favoured spots of the pilgrimage, an abrupt and picturesque rock rising to a considerable height above the sea, and surmounted by a small octagon temple, whence a



perfect panorama extends beneath the eye. The beautiful villa of Steephill, with its romantic grounds,—the clear and rapid stream, which, winding its way through a labyrinth of rocks richly wooded, forms at length a little fairy cove, where boats may defy the south-wester's fury; in the distance, another lovely marine villa, on a more level part of the coast, and boasting the only vineyard our northern shores afford; every object, in short, which can enliven the fancy, or soothe the heart, lay expanded before us, yet, while the languor of over-excitement began to steal on even my unconscious companions, — my sickening eye could only watch the gradually lengthening shadows which were to substitute a night of agony for a day of ill-feigned enjoyment.

It was with a frame exhausted by bodily fatigue, and a mind quite worn out with dissimulation and anxiety, that I returned from a party of pleasure, which had been to me a mere funeral procession, during which "this fair earth" had been to me but "a sterile promontory," and the gay young creature who frolicked by

my side, a victim unconscious of her approaching fate.

My knees trembled, and a shiver ran through my veins, as we approached the cottage ; and I was thinking how I might contrive to get on before, and possess myself of any letters or newspapers, when the sight of Madame de Castro's old Portuguese servant, hobbling with all the speed he could muster down the rocky path, convinced me my precautions would be fruitless. I tried to motion him back, but in vain ; he only quickened his pace, and began shouting in his native language.

I tightened the grasp with which I was supporting the wearied Inez on her stumbling animal, took the bridle of Madame de Castro in my other hand, and manned myself to act a son's and brother's part in the trial that awaited them.

" Oh, God ! Mother, what does Jozé say ?" asked Inez, wildly. " I cannot hear him for the echo ; but I am sure he named my brother."

" Hush ! hush ! and listen !" cried her mother, scarce articulately. " He speaks of Edmund too surely." Her eye caught mine—she

read it with a mother's quickness,—“ Oh, God ! he is dead ! and you have known it all this time ! ”

I was just beginning to say everything that the deepest feeling could dictate on such an occasion, when a rustling among the underwood which fringed the precipitous bank above us, made me turn round. Old Jozé had disappeared ; but in his place emerged from rock and thicket another,—and, oh ! how different figure !—Penrose, the living unhurt Penrose, clasped his mother in his arms ; and I felt that mine might *now*, perhaps for ever, receive the fainting Inez.

It was a relief, that, amid deeper emotions, I was not instantly recognised. I was no fair and ruddy school-boy, but a sun-burnt toil-worn soldier, with no seal of identity stamped by others' violence on my altered features. Penrose having placed his trembling mother on the bank, was about to give me a brother soldier's casual greeting—when, falling at her feet, I exclaimed, “ Bid your son forgive me for having dared to speak unworthily of one I knew not,—and, oh ! forgive me yourself, for having left my folly's record on that manly brow ! ”



“Sullivan!” exclaimed Penrose, throwing himself into my arms. “Dick Sullivan!” He looked at me, he looked at Inez,—he saw it all—understood it all,—and saying, “There’s a prize we cannot fight for,”—put her trembling hand in mine.

“God bless you, mother!” added he, after a pause. “I must be off again to my little boat. I came up Channel in the frigate that brought the dispatches, and stole an hour or two to put your hearts at ease; but I shall be wanted at head-quarters, and, God knows, on no pleasant errand. Much British honour lost, and British blood wasted! Poor Will Burnet, (set down I believe as myself in some lists,) and many more brave fellows gone, and for nothing!—But, thank God! it is over now, and I have four months leave in my pocket. Time enough, Sullivan, to fight our battles o’er again, and (with a kiss to Inez) to adjudge the Prize!”

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