At this moment he had reached the kitchen, and soon after the tread of Alison's high heels, and the pat of the crutch-handled cane, which served at once to prop and to guide her footsteps, were heard upon the stairs, an annunciation which continued for some time ere she fairly reached the kitchen.

"What were ye pleased to want wi' Mrs. Wilson, sir?—I am Mrs. Wilson," was her first address; for the five minutes' time which she had gained for the business of the toilette, entitled her, she conceived, to assume the full merit of her illustrious name, and shine forth on her guest in unchastened splendour. "Ye said ye ken'd Mr. Henry Morton?"

"Pardon me, madam," answered Henry; "it was of one Silas Morton I spoke."

The old woman's countenance fell.

"It was his father, then, ye kent o', the brother o' the late Milnwood?—Ye canna mind him abroad, I wad think;—he was come hame afore ye were born. I thought ye had brought me news o' poor Maister Harry."

"It was from my father I learned to know Colonel Morton," said Henry; "of the son I know little or nothing; rumour says he died abroad on his passage to Holland."

"That's ower like to be true," said the old woman, with a sigh, "and mony a tear it's cost my auld een. His uncle, poor gentleman, just sough'd awa wi' it in his mouth. He had been gieing me preceeze directions anent the bread, and the wine, and the brandy, at his burial, and how often it was to be handed round the company, (for, dead or alive, he was a prudent, frugal, pains-taking man), and then he said, said he, 'Ailie,' (he aye ca'd me Ailie, we were auld acquaintance), 'Ailie, tak ye care and haud the gear weel thegither; for the name of Morton of Milnwood's gane out like the last sough of an auld sang.' And sae he fell out o' ae dwam into another, and ne'er spak a word mair, unless it were something we cou'dna mak out, about a dipped candle being gude enough to see to dee wi';—He cou'd ne'er bide to see a moulded ane, and there was ane, by ill-luck, on the table."

While Mrs. Wilson was thus detailing the last moments of the old miser, Morton was pressingly engaged in diverting the assiduous curiosity of the dog, which, recovered from his first surprise, and combining former recollections, had, after much snuffing and examination, begun a course of capering and jumping upon the stranger which threatened every instant to betray him. At length, in the urgency of his impatience, Morton could not forbear exclaiming in a tone of hasty impatience, "Down, Elphin! down sir!"

"Ye ken our dog's name," said the old lady, struck with great and sudden surprise—"Ye ken our dog's name, and it's no a common ane. And the creature kens you, too," she continued, in a more agitated and shriller tone—"God guide us! it's my ain bairn!"

So saying, the poor old woman threw herself around Morton's neck, clung to him, kissed him as if he had been actually her child, and wept for joy. There was no parrying the discovery, if he could have had the heart to attempt any further disguise.

There is nothing in that scene which will not bear comparison with the creations of the great masters for depth of feeling and dramatic truth. The description of the old miser of Milnwood's death may be fairly put beside Mistress Quickly's account of the end of Falstaff in Shakespeare. Both the great artists have put an immortal touch of poetry and pathos in what is otherwise sordid and grotesque. Falstaff "babbles o' green fields," and old Morton forgets his hoard for a moment at the thought of the name of Morton of Milnwood "gane out like the last sough of an auld sang."

Of course the situation, the matter and sentiments are old, old at least as the Odyssey and the 'noble swineherd' Eumæus. That is only to say that human nature is at bottom always the same; it is always a new version of an old tale; but this nineteenth century version of Scott's will bear comparison with the versions of most other centuries, and perhaps even, if we except "the father of them all," bear off the palm for sincerity of feeling and the felicity of its art.

And now Scott proceeds to close the eventful history of *Old Mortality* with two scenes from the life of that redoubtable soldier of the Covenant, Balfour of Burley, who in spite of those garments dyed in blood remains virtually the hero of what is fatal and tragic in this story. Burley is not exactly the ideal we could have wished as a leader of the Covenanters. There are dark traits in that strong and concentrated nature; a fanaticism deeper even than Macbriar's, an insanity of hatred more destructive in its hour than Mucklewrath's, for it is combined in an unusual degree with an acute practical judgment and a subtle spirit of intrigue, the unique product of a strongly tempered age and generation. "Look," he says to Morton in that last interview, "at the notches upon that weapon, they are three in number, are they not?" "It seems so," answered Morton, "but what of that?" "The fragment of steel that parted from this first gap rested on the skull of the perjured traitor who first introduced episcopacy into Scotland; this second notch was made in the rib-bone of an impious villian, the boldest and best soldier that upheld the prelatic cause at Drumclog; this third was broken on the steel head-piece of the captain who defended the chapel of Holyrood when the people rose at the Revolution—I cleft him to the teeth through skull and bone. It has done great deeds this little weapon, and each of these blows was a deliverance to the church. This sword," he said, again sheathing it, "has yet more to do—to weed out this base and pestilential heresy of Erastianism—to vindicate the true liberty of the Kirk in her purity—to restore the Covenant in its glory—then let it moulder and rust beside the bones of its master."

A heroically tempered man, and yet his career is to end in the deepest tragedy, for with Burley soul and body alike seem to fall into the abyss. Drawn by his violent nature into rancorous feuds, the Revolution brings him no peace, but disappointment. He is discountenanced by the moderate Whigs, who succeed to power with William III., and assumes in