

himself up to catch a higher one, the branch gave way, and down he rustled among the brushwood and withered leaves.

That was enough, our heroes gave a sudden scream and started off, as if pursued by the famous Alibaba and his gang. Mackay seeing their consternation thought he would make the most of it, and putting two of his fingers between his teeth gave a shrill whistle, when down fell David as if he had been shot, and the lantern hurled to the other side of the road. Samuel picked it up, but the light was extinguished. He assisted his companion to his feet, and they kept on at full pace, till breathless and exhausted they reached the extremity of the wood. They halted and leaned against the dyke for a second or two and listened to hear whether or not they were pursued, but no sounds of footsteps grating on their ears, each ventured to congratulate the other, on the happy escape which they had made; while James Mackay and Sarah Johnson were making the other extremity of the wood resound with their peals of laughter at the sport they had got.

Having breathed a while, our travellers began to think of proceeding; but how were they to proceed when their light was out. They remembered that there was a toll-house not far from the extremity of the wood, and they resolved to face every difficulty till they reached that house, that they might get their light renewed. Trembling and agitated they reached the toll-house, and having by dint of hard knocking gained admission, they were regaled with a little spirits and water. Having retreimmed the lantern and rested a little they at length resumed their journey; but not without having recounted to Mrs. Malcolm the narrow escape they had made from being murdered.

From the toll-house, the road descends considerably for nearly a mile and a half, where it sweeps the base of a steep hill, thickly covered with fern and brushwood from its base. On the other side of the road, Loch Moran, a large sheet of water extending about a couple of miles, is separated from the road by a row of whins and sloethorn.

When nearly approached to this spot, which in daylight is the most picturesque part of the road, displaying in the distance, a line of castle towering majestically over the surrounding scenery, from the summit of a lofty hill; while the fine sheet of water, fringed on each side with a rich profusion of alder and birch, forms as it were a glassy path-way, leading direct to the venerable man-ion. Nearly arrived then at the eastern extremity of the Loch something white was discovered at the edge of the wood. The water reflecting through the firze exhibited the white object, which their own glimmering light only tended to obscure.

They paused, they stared, but could not discover what it was. Slowly they crept forward, and still the object kept its position as if guarding the road. Again the lantern was put in requisition, and while one of them lifted it up to cause it by some means or other to reflect its little light upon the distant object, a hare, or a ferret, that had been scared by the light, darted into a bush within a few feet of where they were standing. Samuel leaped right up off the ground, and the lantern fell from his hand, and its glasses were shivered to atoms. Thus were they again in darkness, beyond the means of recovery.

Reader! if you have never been abroad in a starless night, and by reason of the thick darkness have wandered from the path, and have thought that every succeeding step you were to take might precipitate you into some yawning pit, or plunge you into some slimy rut, furrowed deep by the melting snows of some thousand winters—if you have never been in this position you cannot fully sympathize with the forlorn condition of our two young travellers at this moment. It is all very well for Locke to philosophize about darkness having no necessary terror with it. It is very evident he was never out in a dark night on a

country road, and lost his lantern. Burke speaks more sensibly on this subject. However, our young friends were in a dilemma. On the left hand a closely wooded hill rising abruptly, lent its deep shadow to the surrounding gloom. On the right the lake cast a dim reflection upon—alas! they knew not what. To retrace their steps was now as serious a matter as to go forward, considering the awful encounter they had lately escaped in the old pine-wood.

In faltering accents they ventured to speak, and taking a cursory view of their position, they resolved to wade through the edge of the loch, rather than encounter the ghost, for no other could it be. They therefore lifted the remains of the ill-fated lantern, and having drawn up their trowsers to their knees, stepped into the water, being screened from the object of their dread by the whins and the thickly foliaged sloethorn. Keeping a steady eye in the direction of the spectre they walked gently through the water, until about half way across, where a small drain from the road empties itself into the lake, and is, or at least was then a little deeper and softer in the bottom than the bed of the lake. Into this, our literary traveller unfortunately stumbled, and here he stuck. His companion came to his aid, and while in the act of drawing him out, they saw through the opening in the bushes which the drain naturally occasioned that the object of their dread was a white horse quietly cropping the grass. It turned out, as they learned afterwards, that a band of gypsies had bivouacked in the wood, and had turned out their horse to feed by the road side.

Having made this happy discovery they came up out of the water, reproving themselves for their cowardice and folly; and having dashed the water and the mud from their boots they proceeded on their way.

About a mile from the lake there was at that time a footpath through a field on the right hand side, which led to a coal work on the opposite side of the road. When within about twenty yards of where this foot-path joined the high way, the sound of foot-steps was heard, and our heroes made a dead pause. To their astonishment a tall man without the head, came through the opening in the hedge, and walked on right before them in the way they were to go. This was rather mysterious. It had been currently reported for many years that a man who had been supposed to be murdered and thrown into one of the pits in the neighbourhood had been seen at night walking about without the head. This they at once conjectured must be the man, but while they conjectured, the figure moved slowly forward, and they moved slowly forward also, keeping at a respectful distance. At length the figure came within the circle affected by the fire of the colliery, and they discovered that the man veritably had a head; but his long grey locks resting on the collar of his coat, had exactly the colour of the lurid mist which still prevailed; and the old man's head being otherwise uncovered, their phantasmagoric optics very naturally concluded that the head was not there.

On they went again with rather more spirit, the locality was becoming a little more familiar to them, and the horrid idea of encountering robbers, or hobgoblins had nearly vanished when, in going over a stile, which led by a footpath through a corner stripe of plantation, Samuel, who was foremost, put his foot with some degree of pressure upon an ass, which had been browsing there during the day and had lain down very innocently at the foot of the stile. The animal so suddenly disturbed roared and snorted tremendously; but it would be impossible to say which of the three roared loudest. The hairs of the young man's head actually bristled up, as if they had been porcupine's quills, and his hat was lifted from his head, but he darted scatheless through the cope with the speed of the reindeer. His more unfortunate companion bellowed furiously for him to come to his assistance. At the unexpected yell of the ass, his foot had slipped off the spar of the

stile, and down slid one of his legs, while the other remained outside, and was so twisted up, that to extricate himself was next to impossible. Frequently had they occasion that night to remember the lines—

"Company is eye the best,  
Crossing o'er the heather."

Samuel, after a little, returned, and assisted David out of the stile, and groped about till he picked up his own hat. Wearied and almost worried to death by trepidation they again moved on. Happily the adventures of the night were nearly terminated. They were within sight of the little town they had left so briskly in the morning, living evidences of the truth of the statement, that "even a king when he loses his way is no better than a common man." When they approached the church yard wall which bounded the high road at the outskirts of the town, they saw distinctly a man's head above the wall. They at once concluded that this was a resurrectionist, who was keeping watch while his unholy companions were robbing the graves of their hallowed treasures. To enable the reader to understand this part of the adventure it is necessary to say that this was about two years or so after the disclosures made by the notorious Burke, who killed dast Jamie in Edinburgh, when it turned out that the omnivorous Dr. Knox received subjects for inter-section from various country districts. Strong suspicions were entertained about the security of the little churchyard of Ardmorin, and to make all things secure a society was instituted, called "The Mort Safe Society." This society purchased large cast-iron chests of several tons weight, without bottoms, and with spring lids, which they inserted into the grave's where they remained for eight or ten weeks, and were then withdrawn.—But, although it required four men with a windlass to lift up one of these iron boxes, yet there was a little mischief maker of a blacksmith, who went here and there, and told the people that he could lift one of them with ease, with a small screw which he carried in his waistcoat pocket. Nobody, of course, ever saw the screw; yet many minds were nevertheless unhinged by his consequential statements.

This incidental notice will explain how it was that the fire of poetry, and love, and ambition, and philanthropy, and patriotism, burned with very fierceness in the breasts of our travellers at the sight of the man looking over the church yard wall. They lifted a handful of stones from the road, and, stealing near enough to take an effective aim, that they might get safely past to give the alarm. The third stone hit him about the right eye, and he fell back insensible. Some little dispute arose as to who threw this stone, which was soon settled; and they rushed forward with alacrity to give the alarm; and soon succeeded in collecting together a number of that class of individuals who are always on the outlook for a job. Having got a few lanterns, a couple of pitchforks, a grape or two, and a half dozen pokers, they marched forward. They called at the house of the door-keeper; but he was not at home, which of itself was rather ominous. They however scaled the walls, and searched the gloomy mansions of the dead; but there were no signs of life there, no stir, no newly opened graves. They then proceeded to the corner where the watchman was knocked down. Here they were sure of a prize; but O! how sheepish did they look when, instead of a man groaning in agony from the blow on the head he had received, they found the ball of a tombstone, which had been placed against the wall a few days previously, and had unfortunately projected a little too high, so as to be visible from the outside. This ball had been driven off by the desperate aim of one of the travellers. They stopped not to join in the terrible bursts of laughter which followed the discovery; but slunk off the nearest way to their own abode, dispirited and almost dead with the many mishaps they had had.

When a few weeks had passed over they managed to smile at the eventful excursion to