

remarkable length, and his limbs a union of strength and lightness; his raven hair was mingled with grey, while in his dark eyes, the impetuosity of youth and the cunning of age seemed blended together. It is vain to speak of his dress, for it was changed daily as his circumstances or avocations directed. He was ever ready to assume all characters, from the courtier down to the mendicant.— Like his wife, he was skilled in the reading of no book but the book of fate. Now Elspeth was a less agreeable personage to look upon than even her husband. The hue of her skin was as dark as his. She was also of his age—a woman of full fifty. She was the tallest female in her tribe, but her stoutness took away from her stature. Her eyes were small and piercing, her nose aquiline, and her upper lip was “bearded like the pard.”

While her husband sat at his carousals, and handing the beverage to his followers and the domestics of the house, Elspeth sat examining the lines upon the palms of the hands of the maid-servants,—pursuing her calling as a spae-wife. And ever as she traced the lines of matrimony, the sibyl would pause, and exclaim—

“Ha!—money!—money!—cross my loof again hinny. There is fortune before ye!—Let me see, a spur!—a sword!—a shield!—a gowden purse!—Heaven bless ye, they are there!—there as plain as a pike-staff; they are a’ in your path—but cross my loof again hinny, for until siller again cross it, I canna see whether thcy are to be yours or no.”

Thus did Elspeth go on until her “loof had been crossed” by the last coin amongst the domestics of the house of Clennel, and when these were exhausted, their trinkets were demanded and given to assist the spell of the prophetess. Good fortune was prognosticated to the most of them, and especially to those who crossed the loof of the reader of futurity most freely; but to others perils, and sudden deaths, and disappointments in love, and grief in wedlock were hinted; though to all and each of these forebodings, a something like hope and undefined way of escape was pended.

Now as the voice of Elspeth rose in solemn tones, and as the mystery of her manner increased, not only were the maid-servants stricken with awe and reverence for the wondrous woman, but the men-servants also

began to inquire into their fate. And as they extended their hands, and Elspeth traced the lines of the past upon them, ever and anon she spoke strange words, which intimated secret facts; and she spoke also of love-making and likings: and ever as she spoke, she would raise her head and grin a ghastly smile, not at the individual whose hand she was examining, and again at a maid-servant whose fortune she had read, while the former would smile and the latter blush, and their fellow domestics exclaim—

“That’s wonderfu’—that dings a’!—are queer folk!—how in the world do ken?”

Even the curiosity of Mr. Andrew Smi was raised and his wonder excited, and aft he had quaffed his third cup with the girk, he too, reverently approached the bedded princess, extending his hand, and being to know what futurity had in store for him.

She raised it before her eyes, she rubbed hers over it.

“It is a dark and a difficult hand,” muttered she; “here are ships and the sea, crossing the sea, and great danger, and way to avoid it—but the gowd!—the gowd that’s there! And fyat ye may lose it. Cross my loof sir,—yours is an ill hand spae,—for it’s set wi’ fortune, and danger adventure.”

Andrew gave her all the money in his possession. Now it was understood that he was to return the money and the trinkets which her loof had been crossed, and Andrew’s curiosity overcoming his fears, he ventured to entrust his property in her keeping, for as he thought, it was not every day that people would or could have every thing that was to happen unto them revealed. But when she had again looked upon his hand

“It winna do,” said she, “I canna owre the dangers ye hae to encounter, seas ye hae to cross, and the mountains gowd that lie before ye yet,—ye maun a my loof again.” And when, with a countenance, he stated that he had crossed with his last coin—

Ye hae a chronometer man, said she, tells you the minutes now, it may enable to shew ye those that are to come.”

Andrew hesitated, and with doubt and willingness placed the chronometer in his hand.