

or rather the mortification, of seeing their successful rival in a short while make his appearance, and, after completing his customary search, gain admittance at the door. They had no certain knowledge, however, of the person whom they had seen, for a plaid totally concealed him from the crown of the head to the knees. But whosoever he might be, they were resolved for once to turn the sweets of the courtship into bitterness.

No sooner had the door been cautiously closed, and all within sunk into perfect stillness, than the whole three, with a heavy *tramp*, advanced to the window, and wetting the tips of their fingers and rubbing them repeatedly along the glass, kept up a squeaking noise, so loud as to be heard at a considerable distance. The lovers were by this time seated at the parlour table, with a candle burning before them. A large oaken press, displaying on its front the rude carving of former times, stood behind them in a corner, from which the young and innocent Agnes had taken, in the open simplicity of her affection, a new silk handkerchief, on which with nice art, she had sewed the name of her Robert; and this she had just presented to him; and breathed a wish that he would wear it for her sake. Robert had pressed the sweet lips by which the wish was uttered, and was cradling her head upon his breast, and vowing how much, for her sake, he valued the present, when the sound of the spies without interrupted him. "Do you hear that?" said Agnes, starting. "Can it be the tread of men, or do you think it is some of the cattle that lie without?"

"I saw nobody when I came in. It must be some of the cattle." The loud squeaking upon the glass of the window instantly resolved their doubts. "You have been observed," said Agnes, alarmed; "some men were here before you came, and tapped long at the window without my answering them; and they have no doubt been watching, and now mean to be revenged."

"It can only be me that they wish to molest," replied Robert with an encouraging smile; "and," added he, rising and casting his plaid over the left shoulder, and knotting it beneath his right arm, "if I can only get out to the bent, they'll be fleetier than any person I have yet seen, if they catch me."

"Stay," said Agnes, clinging to his arm; "they may cause a stone, or perhaps a shot, to overtake you, if their feet fail them in the chase. And who knows but they may be ready at the door to seize you, the moment it is opened?"

"But then your father and mother will be awakened: and I would rather run the greatest risk without, than be taken by them within."

"I have many a bye corner where I can hide you till all danger is past. Do stay, I beseech you!"

"No, no. The consequences to you might be worse than you are aware of, and I will never seek my own safety at the hazard of yours. I will make my escape in spite of them."

Agnes had no time to reply, for the noise which the fellows were now making without, had already caused a stir in the bed-chamber of her father and mother. "What's a' this din about?" had been twice demanded in a half-sleeping tone by Mr. Hawthorn, and Mrs. Hawthorn was heard to be out of bed, and rumaging about in search of a candle. Robert pressed the hand of his Agnes in silence, and, snatching his thick hazel staff, proceeded to the door which he quietly and quickly opened, and was out upon the hill-side in an instant. The three spies, who expected no such thing, and who were congregated around the window at a short distance from the door, stood for a moment gazing upon one another in astonishment, before they recovered presence of mind to start in pursuit. "He's out! he's out!" was their first exclamation; when away they darted after him, each casting over his shoulder the end of his plaid, and holding his cudgel horizontally by the middle in his right hand. A low hill, with a gentle acclivity, lay before the house of Mr. Hawthorn, over which was the path that Robert every night trod to visit his daughter; and in this direction he now led out his pursuers in his way homewards. He had gained about twenty paces on first starting, and it was evident, as he ascend-

ed the hill, that he was capable of still increasing the distance.

With what joy did Agnes behold him, as she stood trembling in the threshold of the door, stretching away like a deer before his pursuers, and setting their cries and menaces at defiance! The house looked towards the south; the moon had about an hour previous risen opposite to where Agnes was standing, and by her pale cloudless light the anxious maiden was enabled to mark, with considerable precision, the motions and progress of her lover, and of those who followed him. But as they neared the summit of the hill which formed her horizon, the figures of the whole became more indistinct, and their respective distances less discernible. The hill was level for a short breadth on the top; and as Robert, from the moment of his setting foot upon the edge of this table-land, appeared at a distance to be standing while passing over it, Agnes beheld with inexpressible anguish the forms of his three foes emerging in the weather-gleam, and apparently approaching him, until at last the whole group melted away like apparitions beyond the horizon.

"He's caught! he's murdered!" was her first exclamation, as she sprang from the door, and ran with unconscious speed towards the summit of the hill. Her parents were by this time a-foot, with two shepherds and a female servant, who rushed out also on hearing the wild cry of Agnes, whom they fancied to have been in bed. But their surprise, and the bewilderment of mind which people feel on being suddenly roused from profound slumber, prevented them from perceiving the course which the hapless girl had taken, until distance rendered her invisible. Then a sad and unavailing search through and around the premises, was all they could resolve upon.

Agnes, in the meantime, had run, or rather flown, to the opposite side of the hill, at the foot of which lay a deep linn, with a burn leaping along its rocky bottom, at a depth of many fathoms from the edge of the precipices that on either side overflung it. The water was murmuring solemnly through the stillness of the night; the low breeze was sighing plaintively among the hazels and rowan-trees, that waved like spectres beneath the moonbeams over the hideous chasm which their foliage partly concealed; and as, on reaching the summit, no mortal was visible to the eye of Agnes, the impressiveness of the scene hushed at once the tumult of her feelings, and awakened her to a sense of her lonely situation. Her limbs, which but a little before seemed possessed of more than human swiftness, now felt the palsy effects of their late efforts, and her spirit, subdued by apprehension for her lover's fate, and by the awe which crept upon her in the midst of her solitude, completely annihilated her energy. She fainted and sunk upon the hill side, where nearly half an hour passed over her before recollection returned.

"I will search for him in the linn," were the first words she uttered to herself, as she rose from the spot on which she had fallen, and proceeded feebly to execute her purpose. "Surely," said she in a half audible voice, while descending to the bottom of the chasm, by a steep and difficult path which she had chanced to discover—"surely nothing unearthly will harm me in this awful place, since spirits know the errand on which I am come!"

"Nor nothing human either, my dear girl!" said a person at her side in a low voice, who rose up from a crouching position, and caught her in his arms. Agnes shrieked, but the sound was inaudible; for the unknown, anticipating such a result, had thrown a fold of his plaid over her mouth. "For the love of heaven, my angel, be silent!" said the stranger, whispering in her ear, and folding her in a still closer embrace; "do you not know your Robert? I thought my whispering had been more familiar to you. But how, in the name of wonder, have you come here?" This was a question which Agnes was in no capacity to answer; for this discovery had so wrought upon her feelings, that for a long time she lay utterly speechless upon his breast. At length she recovered so far as to be able to articulate, "I came to seek for you. Oh, let us leave this, and return home! I am dying with fatigue and terror."

"We will, shortly, but we are watched at present; and how you have got in here unnoticed, is perfectly miraculous. Do you perceive the point of that rock opposite, which almost overhangs us here on this side of the burn?" "I do," was the reply. "Well," continued Robert, "one of the fellows is perched there, to trace me, if possible, within the linn, for they saw me entering it, and seem to be perfectly aware that I am at no great distance. The other two are stationed above us on this side; and unless we can find some way of getting out either above or below the place where you entered, we must assuredly be taken. We are safe enough so long as we remain here, however, for they know what advantage I have over them should they offer to descend. This pool at our feet should receive the whole three, were they to approach me."

Agnes was convinced of their danger; but from having got in unmolested, she was of opinion that to get out in the same manner was equally possible, and she therefore urged her lover to the undertaking. "I look upon my own danger as of no consequence," was Robert's reply to this entreaty; "indeed, until you appeared I regarded the whole affair as matter of amusement. But now, with my dear Agnes under my protection, the case is altered. I cannot think of placing you in danger, where the odds is so much against me."

"They will not harm a woman," returned she; "and neither shall they you, if prayers and tears have any avail, should we happen to be caught."

"Before you utter prayers or shed tears for me," said Robert proudly, "I shall be past the power of hearing them. Come! for you are in so faint and agitated a state, that there is as much danger in remaining here, as in facing the mean fellows who have shown so much enmity towards me."

With his arm round her waist to support her, he now left his hiding-place, and with some difficulty reached the brow of the linn. "Ho, watch there!" cried the spy from the opposite side, "I see him; he's beside you." A moment's time was not to be lost. Robert placed the fainting Agnes on the ground, and springing forward upon the two fellows as they started from their lair, he with one push precipitated them both over the precipice into the deep pool beneath.

A loud angry exclamation was heard from their companion across the linn, while the loud plunge of the hapless wights half drowned his voice; "you have killed them! Their blood be on your head!"

"I have only ducked them well, as you should also be," replied Robert, in a half-merry and half-angry tone. Then snatching up his Agnes, who was not yet so far recovered as to know what had passed, he made for the top of the hill with all speed. When there, a cry or two brought the whole of Mr. Hawthorn's distressed family around him, to whom, as they proceeded towards the house, he related the whole of the adventure, and frankly avowed his love for the fond and faithful Agnes. The parents were unable to reprove the romantic pair, while rejoicing at the recovery of their daughter; and though Mrs. Hawthorn once or twice endeavoured to knit her brows, and utter something to each of a "serious and weighty nature," she was obliged to content herself with remarking, "Weel, weel, bairns, young folk maun hae their daffin' out; an' if ye like ane anither as ye say, dianna keep your meeting ony langer secret, to be rintin' ye'rael's into ' this pliskies o' this sort agin." Her advice was gratefully received and faithfully followed; and in a few months more Robert had only to remain by his own fireside when he wished to enjoy the company and conversation of his Agnes.—*Dumfries Magazine*.

INNOCENT ENJOYMENTS.—We have no more reason to be ashamed of innocent enjoyments than we are of eating blackberries, because they stain the mouth.

OUR TRUE NOURISHMENT.—We should imitate trees, which draw their nourishment as much from the heaven above as from the earth beneath them.