

ADAM BLAIR.

CHAPTER I.

SELDOM has the earth held a couple of human beings so happy in each other as were Mr Adam Blair and his wife. They had been united very early in love, and early in wedlock. Ten years had passed over their heads since their hands were joined together ; and during all that time their heart-strings had never once vibrated in discord. Their pleasures had been the same, and these innocent ; their sorrows had been all in common ; and their hours of affliction had, even more than their hours of enjoyment, tended to knit them together. Of four children whom God had given them, three had been taken speedily away, — one girl only, the first pledge of their love, had been spared to them. She was now a beautiful fair-haired creature, of eight years old. In her rested the tenderness and the living delight of both ; yet, often at the fall of evening would they walk out hand in hand with their bright-eyed child, and shed together tears, to her mysterious, over the small grassy mounds in the adjoining village cemetery, beneath which the lost blossoms of their affection had been buried.

Adam Blair had had his share of human suffering ; but hitherto the bitter cup had always contained sweet-