

give Dumfries no little uneasiness. In addition to her usual freightage of rum, coffee, and sugar, the good ship had been charged with a West Indian planter, returning to his native country, to breathe the cooler air of the Scottish coast for the brief space it might be his fate to breathe at all. He had gone out to push his fortune when very young, and, from the meanest offices undertaken by Europeans, had risen to be the possessor of a very considerable plantation, with a sufficient complement of the black cattle, which were then used in that quarter of the world, for its cultivation.

It was easy for a man possessed of so much wealth to secure the good graces of so inveterate a worshipper at the shrine of Mammon, as the baillie; accordingly, as soon as Mr. Snell-drake (such was the name of the interloping planter,) had condescended to vouchsafe a few amorous glances at Jennie, her father went regularly to work, not only to humor and countenance the addresses of the new comer, but to promote by every means in his power, a union, which filled his imagination with visions of future splendor too tempting to be withstood. Snell-drake was invited to the house on all occasions; and so complete was the victory he had won over the heart of the aspiring baillie, that Jennie at last began to entertain serious fears, lest her father should really intend to push matters to extremes, and force her to take a stand repugnant to her own feelings, and at variance with that passive obedience she had ever yielded to his will.—How to get rid of the contumacious Dumfries was now the main source of anxiety with the baillie and the new rival. Every plan had been tried without effect; at last Mr. Snell-drake suggested a quarrel and his dismissal.

This however, was an act easier talked of than executed; the baillie tried it over and over again in his mind, but the difficulty was to manage it so as to have some colour of justice on his side; without this it could not be thought of,—the whole town would cry shame on him. It at last occurred to him, that it would be a very easy matter for him to push some of the disputes, that were of almost daily occurrence between him and his self-willed clerk, but a step or two beyond the point at which they had hitherto terminated. "His blood will then be up," said he, "and, if I am no mista'en in Dumfrie, he'll gi'e me cause enough to pack him about his business,—and may be a ruler if no' a bar at the tail o' him."

Whether it happened that Jennie got some intimation of the line of action determined on

by the confederates, and gave her lover the hint, or whether the honest baillie went too inartificially about it, we cannot very well say; but the next morning, when his employer got into the counting-house with a stately step and a sour visage, and sat himself down on the opposite side of the desk to watch for cause of offence, he found the usually rampant Dumfries in a temper so perfectly angelic, that no Christian man could have said a cross-grained word to him. In vain he tried to start some subject on which they might have the good fortune to differ; Dumfries was of his patron's opinion in everything. He then ordered him to make an entry, which he knew to be wrong, in the books; but Dumfries, without so much as arguing the matter, although on these points he was particularly ticklish, obeyed without a murmur; and when the baillie affected to discover the error, took the whole matter on himself, blaming his own precipitation, and erasing the entry with much apparent contrition. In short the enemy was fairly baffled, and Dumfries maintained his stool in triumph.

A plan for sending him to the West Indies succeeded no better, for as often as the subject of his embarkation for those distant regions was mentioned, Dumfries invariably managed to throw impediments in the way, as the worthy baillie could not well surmount, without exciting suspicions injurious to his character as a christian and a man of probity. At last, desperate with disappointment and impatient of delay, the planter caused Dumfries to be way-laid by a press-gang, who would no doubt have succeeded in spiriting him away, but for the unexpected integrity of the young clerk, which enabled him to make a most gallant escape from their clutches, and fight his way safely back to his house and to his mistress.

Jennie was sitting alone in the parlor, when her lover stalked into the room hatless and shoeless, like an apparition of the drowned;—his face pale with cold and fatigue, and his sandy locks hanging over his brow like a pound of tallow candles. "In His name, Dumfries, what has become of you?" cried his terrified mistress. But Dumfries, without answering, sat down beside her, all dripping as he was, and putting back his hair with his blue fingers, that he might see and hear distinctly, turned himself on the chair so as to front Jennie, and fixed his watery eyes on her face.

"Jennie," said he at length, "do you remember that your father wanted to urn me out of the business, after a long and faithful service,