

at each terminus, formed a strange contrast with the plain and rather insignificantly mansion itself, with its high and pointed gables, its steep roof and dormant windows. This discrepancy was owing to the ultimate designs and intentions of the late proprietor, to rebuild the whole establishment in a style and manner befitting such appendages, never having been carried into effect, in consequence of the unfavourable issue of a long and tedious, and I may add, bitter law-suit, which put an end to all his plans, and, if we might believe the rumours in the neighbourhood, of his life, at the same time, leaving an only daughter, under the care of his aged sister, to inherit the wreck of his fortune, and to mourn over the ruin of his house.

This lawsuit, in its origin, progress, and termination, was attended with the most disastrous consequences.

The cause which indirectly led to it, was to be traced to the losses the Musgrave had sustained, by a foray or inroad upon his sheep-walks on the Fells, headed by the master of Hell-Beck Hall, distant as the two places were from each other, who was a loyal subject of the reigning monarch, while the Lord of Forest Manor, had been secretly, but such secrets are always well known, a determined adherent of the exiled Stewarts.

This event occurred in the early part of the year which succeeded that of the Rebellion in 1715, and before the Musgraves, father and son, had regained their liberty, for they had both been imprisoned, through the instrumentality of the Netherbys, on the very first symptom of the outbreak, for misprision of treason, and therefore, they felt the insult more than the robbery, as their property was thus left entirely unprotected.

There had subsisted, between these two families for many generations, indeed time out of mind, but from what cause no one knew, a bitter and inveterate enmity, amounting to deadly hatred, matured and cherished by many a dark deed of blood; circumstantial and exaggerated accounts of which were handed down from sire to son, as valiant exploits, and achievements of high renown, and served to keep alive a feeling of revenge, long after the strong arm of the law had penetrated these districts, and prevented their recurrence.

There is, however, an old legend, although of doubtful authenticity, concerning the origin of the feud, still preserved among the Fells, according to which, some two or three hundred years ago, the precise period cannot now be ascertained, the heir of Forest Hall went abroad into a far off country beyond the seas, where he remained, whatever was his object, for several years, and on his return was driven ashore, in a tempestuous

night, among the rocks at the foot of a high and bold promontory on the iron-bound coast of Northumberland, called *Duxstanon's Head*, on the summit of which stood the ruins of an old baronial castle, which remain to this day, and, judging from the trifling change they have undergone during the last century, nearly in the same state as at the period to which our tale refers.

It so happened on that fatal night that a party of men under the command of the Netherbys of Dunfell, brought thither to assist in some of those innumerable border wars which were then of such frequent recurrence, had taken shelter in the donjon keep of this old castle, beneath the great tower, which is still nearly perfect.

The vessel, after beating upon the rocks all night, went to pieces, when all the seamen and two of the passengers, there were four in all, were lost, and the other two, Musgrave and his servant, took to the boat, the latter having first thrown into it a valise or portmanteau, containing a considerable sum of money, and made for a small creek about a cable's length from the wreck, where they soon landed among these marauders, for they could not be designated by any milder term, who had come out of their rude and temporary quarters, not to aid the poor sufferers, but to plunder them; and I need hardly add that they no sooner set their foot on shore than they were robbed and otherwise treated with cruel and relentless barbarity.

In the destitute and deplorable state in which these wretches left them, they had no sooner got rid of their persecutors than they started on their homeward journey, wearied and worn out with hunger and fatigue as they were, and many a weary mile they wandered across the moors before they could reach a human habitation where they might perchance find food and shelter. And suffice it to say that, they begged their way from hamlet to hamlet, until they crossed the chain of mountains which separated them from the vale of Eden, where the Musgrave's name was known and could command whatever they required; and—in short the journey they commenced as beggars, ended with an escort of full five hundred men.

Years flew by, and another border war broke out, when the fierce Fell-siders were gathered again as usual; and it so happened that while the Musgrave and his men were quartered at and near Hexham, a long and scattered hamlet near the Scottish territory, the master of Dunfell with his force passed through, and all turned out to see and cheer them on their way, when some trifling relic of what once had been a Musgrave's, was observed on many a trooper of that