

to his master's side, and while we are preparing for a stout resistance, our foes sometimes spend whole days in searching for our retreat! but you care not for this, and far more will you rejoice to know, that a few hours more will bring us to those fair plains, and then our future route lies through a country of surpassing beauty, and soon, I trust, we shall consign our precious charge to him, whom our noble chief thinks worthy of the important trust. But see! our companions are awaiting us! Yes! and they are warning us to observe much caution, I hope we are not in danger of meeting our foes!"

With the utmost caution, he now lead forward the alarmed Isabella, who feared that some new trial now awaited her. She dreaded falling into the hands of a new power, from whom she would not even dare to hope for the generosity of St. Maury and his followers. They reached the rest of the party, and a gesture from one of them, as they approached, enjoined the strictest silence. Not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the scene, and naught appeared to indicate the presence of any being but themselves in that lonely wild; but as they stood there in breathless expectation, suddenly the clear notes of a human voice singing a lively air, broke the silence. The sounds seemed to proceed from a grove hard by, and as they listened, Isabella, in a transport of joy, exclaimed:

"That song is a favorite of my own dear country, that voice is the voice of a son of Scotland, and we have naught to fear! Oh! let us go at once to them, for I would once more behold the face of one from my own loved land!" and with a cry of wild delight, she darted forward toward the spot from whence the sounds seemed to proceed, regardless of the efforts of her companions to detain her. Two, tall, athletic forms, whose torn and soiled garments bespoke the extreme of poverty and wretchedness, peeped forth from amid a neighbouring thicket, but the eye of affection could not be deceived, and the next moment, Isabella was clasped to the heart of her faithful Francis d'Auvergne.

"By our holy faith," cried Malcolm, as he imprinted the fond kiss of a brother's affection on the fair cheek of his sister, "for once, my song, illfated though it oft hath been, hath led to a joyous result, for it hath guided our long lost treasure, safe to our arms, and thus brought to a happy issue, our hapless wanderings.

The followers of St. Maury approached, and briefly related the manner in which the lady Isabella had fallen into their power, and informed them of the intentions of their chief concerning

her, and with messages of kindness from Isabella to St. Maury and his gentle sisters, and many sincere thanks from Malcolm and Francis to the former, for his generous conduct to one so dear to them,—they parted; the robbers returning to their mountain haunt, and the now happy wanderers, with their precious charge, pursuing their route towards Avignon. It was several days ere they reached their destination. And during that period, Isabella was informed of all that they had endured for her sake, and doubly was Francis endeared to her, as she listened to the tale of his constancy. They arrived at length at the proud palace of the Duke of Avignon, and most gracious was their welcome beneath its time-honored towers. Much had the parents mourned for their only son, of whom they had heard no tidings since he departed from them, and as time sped on, and he came not, they almost resigned the last fond hope of again beholding him. And Isabella, the beautiful being in whom was centred his all of earthly happiness, was received by the Duke and Duchess with parental kindness. The bright, rich glow which had ever bloomed on the fair cheeks of Antoinette d'Auvergne, had grown a shade paler, for dear, very dear to her, was Malcolm McDonald, and much of anxious care had she suffered for his sake, but now his presence dispelled each sorrow from her heart, and all at Avignon were blest and happy.

After a few joyous weeks, during which, our wanderers had recovered from the effects of their previous sufferings, they prepared to set out for Scotland, for still were the parents of Isabella mourning over the uncertain fate of their well loved child. Many months had elapsed since the departure of Malcolm and Francis from Glenelvin, and well they knew with what mingled hopes and fears its noble inmates awaited their return. Isabella, too, was all impatience to behold again, her dearly loved home, and to embrace again, the tender parents, from whom, so long she had been separated.

CHAPTER XXI.

AFTER a journey unmarked by any incident worth narrating, they at length found themselves in Ayrshire, the native home of Malcolm and Isabella. With what pleasure did our heroine gaze on every familiar object which presented itself to her view, as she drew near her child-hood's home. The verdant hills, the darkly waving forests, and the vallies now blooming in all the glory of summer. All seemed the same as when one year before she had looked upon them. At length the