

and a few other ladies of rank, she follows the Bruce and his Queen in all their wanderings; and is left desolate and alone, when through the machinations of Edward, the Countess of Buchan and her son are betrayed, and taken away captives to await the doom that their loyalty and daring could not fail to bring down upon them. When the little band is driven from their mountain fastness by the cold, she is one of those who seek an asylum in the old castle of Kildrummie, the only keep that was then left in the hands of an adherent of the Bruce. But it was soon besieged by the English; and though bravely and for a long time defended, famine had begun to tell upon the stout hearts that formed its garrison; murmurs and treasonable speeches would be heard; and it was evident that upon the result of a hazardous battle, the fate of the besieged must depend. Under these circumstances, Lord Nigel seeks his betrothed; and to show that we have neither over-estimated the character of Agnes, or the talents of the author, we refer the reader to vol. I. pp. 230-239.

They are married: but before they leave the altar, treachery has done its work; the castle is set on fire, and the enemy like a flood pour upon the devoted band. Agnes manages to make her escape, but her husband is overpowered by numbers, and taken a prisoner. We must refer our readers to the work itself, for an account of what she endured afterwards to save her husband; how in the disguise of a page, she ministered to him in his affliction, and like one of Scott's heroines journeyed to England when his life was forfeited, to beseech the intercession of the Princess Joan of Gloucester with her father, and have the sentence recalled. As may be imagined, it was all in vain; Edward's hatred was relentless to all who bore the name of Bruce; and spurning his once favorite daughter in her act of mercy and kindness; the fiat was issued, and Lord Nigel must die. Through the kindness of Gloucester, Agnes visited her husband in prison; by an accident that no foresight could have prevented, Stephania like she beholds his death, and then—

"Then sinks the mind, a blighted flower,  
Dead to the sunbeam and the shower;  
A broken gem, whose inborn light  
Is scattered—ne'er to reunite."

She finds her way, however, to the camp of King Robert, and there is indeed loved and cherished as she deserves. She is spared until his arms are victorious, and her mother and brother released from captivity; and having regained her lost reason long enough to recognise and bless them, her gentle spirit is taken to its rest. For her early death we are left to rejoice, rather

than regret; we must feel that it was far happier for the broken spirit to find its home of rest, where the loved had gone before—far away from what to her must have been the heart-withering realities of a wearying world.

To the sufferings of the Countess of Buchan, the brave descendant of Malcolm Cean Mohr,—whose only fault was claiming and exercising the right inherent in her race of placing the crown on the head of her sovereign—and how nobly and heroically they were endured—we have scarcely space to allude. The iron cage on the battlements of Berwick castle, and its occupant, are matters of history, and show how furious must have been the wrath of the King, and how low he had fallen, ere he could thus wreak his rage on the head of a defenceless woman. But when he too slept with his fathers; and the tide of fortune changed; and his weak and imbecile successor, ignobly chased from the field, was glad to recognise the sovereignty of Robert, the veneration in which she was held, and the laurels won by her son, must in some degree have compensated for the bitterness of former days. And of Isoline, the good and gentle niece of the conqueror, whose purity and loftiness of character was formed amid hardships of no ordinary kind, we can say but a few words. Loving, where she thought she was not beloved, her nobleness of character forsakes her not. But happily her fate is brighter, and her lot happier, than those to whom we have referred. She is not doomed to be the victim of unrequited love, but becomes by marriage, a daughter to the Countess of Buchan, and ends her days in repose and happiness.

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### SONNET.

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[From the Italian of Petrocelli.]

TRANSLATED BY AGNES STRICKLAND.

I asked of Time, "Who raised the structure fair,  
Which your stern power has crumbled to decay?"  
He answered not, but fiercely turned away,  
And fled on swifter pinions through the air.  
I said to Fame, "O, thou, who dost declare,  
With lofty voice the glories of the past,  
Reveal the tale!" Her eyes on earth she cast,  
Confused, and sad, and silent in despair.  
Then turned I wondering, where with ruthless  
stride  
I saw Oblivion stalk from stone to stone,  
O'er the fall'n towers—"O, answer me!" I cried,  
"Dark power! unveil the fact!"—but in dread  
tone—  
"Whose it *was* once." He suddenly replied,  
"I know not, reck not—*now* it is my own!"