

His saving grace, to bless the renewed efforts she had made, that very evening, to turn her lover from his evil ways, and bring His lost sheep—not lost, but straying, to His fold again.

Thus, closeted alone with a person I had never seen before, nor ever exchanged a word with, and for the purpose too, of receiving a confidential communication of an interesting and delicate nature, I hardly knew what to say or think.

Poor Fanny's feelings, I saw, were much hurt by her sister's distress, and she appeared to be so much exhausted, as to be hardly able to say what she intended to tell me, and the pause that ensued, became every instant more embarrassing to us both. At last I broke the spell, by speaking to her.

My dear young friend, I said, you're too weak to tell me now, you've talked indeed too much already; I will come in to see you again in the morning.

"Oh, no!" she said, and that so earnestly, "pray let me tell you to-night, I may not live till morning."

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRACELESS.

To spend the daye with merry cheare,
To drinke and revell every night,
To card and dice from eve to morne,
It was I ween his heart's delyghte,
To ride, to runne, to rant, to roare,
To alwaye spend and never spare,
I wott, an' it were the king himself,
Of golde and fee he mote be bare.

THE HEIRE OF LINNE.

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG was the son of a small farmer, who rented about a hundred acres of land in one of those numerous rich valleys, or dales, as they are called in that locality, which intersect the mountains here and there in that district of country called the Border Fells. Whether or not he was a descendant from any of those Armstrongs, so famous in the Border wars, I could not learn. But if strength of arm, from which they derived their name, and a wild recklessness in his air and fight, together with a fondness for a fray or the distinguishing characteristics of the ancient Armstrongs, would entitle him to such an honor if honor it were, he might well claim it. In that age, William Armstrong might, and, most likely, would have been as famous a warrior as any of his namesakes, while in this, such enviable qualities degraded him into a bully, for he was little better.

There was not a cock-fight nor a wrestling match, within twenty miles of where he lived, in which he was not the foremost man.

At a fair or the market, if a row or a fight was heard of, his name was sure to be coupled with the story, and this was not all nor the worst. If an orchard was broken or a nocturnal predatory incursion made into a game preserve, "Big Bill," as he was generally called, was sure to be suspected of the robbery.

He was connected too in some way or other with the smugglers, so at least the rumour ran, and at the time I speak of, all that coast for many a league was swarming with them.

It was said too, though few believed it at the time, that whenever he was short of money, and that, notwithstanding his idle and extravagant habits, was very seldom, he took a trip to Holland.

He was certainly absent from home occasionally for weeks together, and always returned with his pockets full of money, but how he got it or where he had been, no one seemed to know.

Such was the character of William Armstrong. I could tell the reader much more about him, but what I have said, will amply suffice to shew that he was a bad and wicked man.

And it was a pity too, so every one that knew him said, for he was as fine and handsome a looking fellow as could well be found, in the whole circuit of the Fells.

But what tended most of all to ingratiate him into the favour of his neighbours, despite their disapproval of his bad and idle habits, was the noble and generous spirit that reigned within that stalwart and manly frame, and might, if properly trained and tutored, have ruled and regulated his every act and thought and word.

If any thing could have excused or palliated the wild and reckless conduct of William Armstrong, in the estimation of all right-minded people, the want of maternal care and nurture, in his case, would have done so.

It is certainly an undeniable fact, that every boy is moulded into manhood, in whatever shape or form his mother pleases. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." And who so likely or so capable of doing this as the mother, but William Armstrong lost his, before he was old enough to appreciate her worth, or benefit by her instructions, and therefore after all, perhaps, he was as much to be pitied as blamed.

William Armstrong and Isabella Millway had grown up together, like two rose bushes in adjoining gardens with a fence between them. But