

"Walk the waters like a thing of life."

Thus amusing myself, we arrived at Greenock, when I went on shore, and had equal cause to wonder. I wandered about the docks till near dusk, with another lad, with whom I had picked up an acquaintance. Being tired out, my friend invited me to his mother's, assuring me of a good lodging for the night. I went with him and was made very welcome. His mother, a widow, suspecting I was a runaway, gave me some wholesome advice, and advised me to return home in the morning, which I promised to do.

On the following morning when I awoke, I did not feel comfortable. It was the first night I had ever spent from home, and the fact of my parents not being aware of my departure or where I was, rendered me extremely uneasy; I therefore determined to return and ask forgiveness. After I had partaken of some breakfast, I left the good woman under the belief that I was to take the first steambot for Glasgow. Arrived at the quay, I found a steambot about to start for Rothsay, the very place I had left home to visit. I ruminated a little on the course I was to pursue, and in the end found myself, instead of returning home, on my way down the water to Rothsay.

The scenery between Greenock and the Island of Bute, on which Rothsay is situated, is capable of calling up in the contemplative mind ideas of the most sublime character. On the right, towards the North, rise far up, one over the other, the dark mist-covered hills of the Western Highlands,

"Where the clouds love to rest
On the mountain's rough breast,
Ere they journey afar o'er an islandless sea."

On the left you have Gourrock with its beautiful crescent-like bay, and its bold point, opposite to which, at the dead hour of midnight, the fated Comet went down with its living freight, having come in contact with another vessel called the Ayr, at the very moment when the passengers were killing time by dancing to the merry strains of a violin, thinking of every thing save their latter end. What a time to be called to judgment! On the opposite shore again you have Dunoon, with its lightsome dottings of marine villas. Crossing again, and nearer to where "Clutha meets the sea," are seen the white fronts of the houses and cottages of Largs and the Fairlie. Thus I might run on for a length of time, but I must return, for here we are rounding Toward Point, and entering Rothsay Bay; after crossing which, the vessel drew up alongside the quay.

On landing, I had some little difficulty in finding my relation, as all the knowledge I possessed respecting the good lady was my being able to repeat her maiden name; but whether married or single I could not tell. Fortunately for me, it was customary there, as it still is in some small towns in Scotland, to call ladies, even after marriage, by their maiden names, and from this circumstance I at last stumbled upon an old woman who furnished me with all the intelligence I desired. When I found my friend, I had little trouble in making my-

self known to her, and, without suspecting the truth, she gave me a hearty Highland welcome. She felt proud, she said, that the "dear laddie" had come so far to see her. With this assurance I soon made myself at home, and before going to bed, I handed her what little money I had saved, which, however, she only took to let me have again at my departure.

Next morning I was up betimes, and enjoyed the luxury of a sea-bath. Being a good swimmer, I felt proud in showing off before those parties who durst not venture beyond walking distance. Among those who had watched my first performance, was the son of a Glasgow merchant, somewhere about my own age. This young gentleman was anxious to learn the art of swimming. By the time I had got dressed, he had left his own companions, and stood at a little distance, as if waiting for an opportunity of speaking to me.

I trust the reader will bear with me in the little matters I may have heretofore mentioned, or may yet have occasion to notice, as I deem it necessary to state these things in order that incidents of greater moment may be introduced, the one being to the other what cause is to effect. My acquaintance with this young man bears mightily on all I have to say hereafter; and having made this statement, I will now resume.

As I mentioned, John, for so he was named, seemed anxious to enter into conversation with me; therefore, when I reached where he stood, he accosted me by asking if I had learned to swim in fresh or salt water. I answered that this was the first time I had ever been in salt water. Some further conversation passed, when I soon found him to be one of those, who, though like Burns' dog,

"His locket letter'd braw brass collar,
Showed him the gentleman and scholar;"

yet, devoid of anything savouring of pride, he seemed to enjoy himself, and did so, with those whose parents were in less flourishing circumstances than his own, and who, still keeping the dog in view, would

"Stan' as if right glad to see them,
An' stroan on stanes and hillocks wi' them."

We parted at this time under the promise of meeting at a certain hour on the same day, when he was to come under my tutorage in the art of swimming. We met, accordingly, as we also did several times on the following day.

On the third morning after my arrival on the island, I was up, as usual, at an early hour. It was July, and as beautiful a July morning, as ever the sun looked down smiling upon. There was, on the one hand, the music of the morning breeze, as it played lightly over the ripples of the sea; on the other, was the music of the birds from every other bush, as they strained their little throats with their matin songs of praise to the God of Nature. The humble bee had commenced its busy task, and was already dipping into the sweets of the opening blossoms. Afar off on the bosom of that calm and sleeping sea, a few bright specks were visible, which, by gazing awhile, could be distinguished as light skiffs, whose crews were em-