

that it may meet the eye of some one not altogether unacquainted with the circumstances, we subjoin

THE SCROLL.

“Yet was not Conrad thus by nature sent.”

*Byron.*

NAMELESS, and with a dishonoured lineage, a child of lawless passion, I have been, from the cradle, predestined to a life of unfriended misery—illumed, it may have been, with one brief bright spot—Oh! how my brain whirls when memory again kindles that deceitful ray. Taught from infancy to look upon myself as an outcast one—deserted by a mother, who blushed for the offspring of her shame, and consigned to the keeping of an unmannered and hireling nurse, my childhood was unblest with the sunshine of woman’s smile, or the kindly influence of a fond mother’s love. Nurtured amid the jeers of the less miserable children of honest wretchedness, with no monitor save my own unchecked passions,—without restraint, save that imposed by a woman’s careless and capricious lash, which, while it lacerated my back, left upon my mind traces a thousand times more indelible—could the germ of woe and crime have found a fitter soil? With every stripe, my soul drank deeper of the cup of hate for my kind, and I longed for the strength of manhood, that I might wreak my vengeance upon all who had ever thwarted my lightest wish.

As I emerged from childhood, my limbs attained a vigour beyond my years, and the taunts of my boyish tyrants were hushed, in fear of my revenge. Reckless of all danger, nought could check the fury with which I set at all, who dared oppose my will. I grew in years, and battenng on my degraded fate, I learned to hate the father I had never seen, and to curse the mother whose utter selfishness had left her child to suffer the meed of punishment which was her due. Had either crossed my path, the world had rung with a tale of blood, that would have taught the young to shudder, and the old to bless themselves that they had no son like me.

Yet even I, the wretched and miserable outcast, brooding over the bar that crossed my path, blighting all anticipation of an honoured name, had long dreams of a happy world, in which I might never dwell. Dreams, vain dreams, they were, and I soon learned enough of the world’s reality, to know that it was a mart of wickedness, and glutted with hypocrisy and crime—the wretch lordng it over his fellows, rising to power upon the ruin of myriads a hundred times more worthy than himself.

Years crept along with a snail-like pace, and I wondered, though I inquired not, wherefore the old crone, who had been my childhood’s nurse, kept me in idleness, while all around were busy with the daily drudgery which won for them a miserable existence. I asked not of my parents, nor whether

they knew aught of me, nor did she ever say that to them she owed the funds applied to her support and mine.

I grew towards manhood, and my unhappiness —“grew with growth and strengthened with my strength.” Pride whispered that even to feed life from the gifts of hands so hated, with unextinguishable hate, was a degradation unworthy of my nature, and I yearned after independence, and to be dis severed from almost the only link that bound me to my kind. I cared not what the means were, which might disen thrall me from human intercourse. Though my hand was yet unstained, my heart was ripe for guilt, no matter how dark its hue. There were, indeed, times, when the gloom of my soul was less dense, and my wishes turned to a scene where I might rise to power, if it were but to shame the guilty beings, who had left me to the temptation of passions fierce and unmanageable as their own.

Our cottage was situated on the skirt of one of the poorest villages on the sea-coast of England. The country around was generally of a sterile character, with nothing to recommend it to the wanderer in search of scenic beauty. The village site was in the centre of a low plain, that scarcely rose above the level of the sea, but at a short distance, on the eastern side, a natural forest of considerable magnitude covered the commencement of a chain of rocks which looked towards the ocean. Through the forest, and turning off towards the village, a narrow but deep brook, found its way to the sea, and a carriage road led under the shade of the trees from the hamlet to the castle of Loridale—the manor house, as it was more generally termed—a huge pile, that had stood for many years untenanted, save when occasionally visited by a tyrannic steward, on behalf of a careless lord.

The castle was gradually becoming a pile of ruins, and its solitary and decaying turrets, wore a charm for me, beyond what it could have possessed, had it been robed in all its grandeur, when every tower was manned by the willing serfs of its feudal lord. I heard a voice in the rank grass that choked its pathways, which seemed to say, that like myself it was forgotten and uncared for by all who should have had an interest in its fate. Here, when sleep would not be wooed to my flinty couch, I often wandered whole nights among the crumbling ruins of its once splend ed arches, and morning often broke, while I yet lingered sprite-like, among its moss-crowned battlements. It was a fit place for one like me, who had no companionship with my kind, and who shrunk from all human fellowship, with a disgust so marked, that the villagers were wont to speak of me as the “man of gloom.”

Spring, for the twentieth time, since I had inhabited that dreary spot, was robing the earth in her emerald mantle, and the desire for change became daily stronger within me. I had for some days for-