

"By the Lord! here have we found a precious nest of psalm singers—and now I think it—what book is that you hold so lovingly ere, friend?"

"The Lord's book!" the young farmer answered, touching the brim of his bonnet, as he spoke very reverently.

"Oh! the Lord's book, is it?—and this, I fancy, is the sword of Gideon,"—as the sergent made his appearance, carrying in his hand a long and heavy broadsword, with a huge basket hilt of iron.

"That is the broadsword of my father!"

"Mighty well—mighty well—this is audacity—by my soul it is," said Livingstone, the same abominable smile curling his lip, again.

"But I expected it—before the Lord! I did.—Now, master rebel, answer me promptly; you were best; have you not heard the order of the council forbidding all men, under the rank of Laird, to keep edged weapons, or hand-gun, or pistol?"

"I have not, sir. I do profess to you, I have not heard it——"

"Then you were not at church last Sunday, where our worthy curate archdeacon proclaimed it from the pulpit, thus contumaciously and of aforesought malice avoiding—but," he interrupted himself for a moment, and then continued in a low stern whisper, "but it avails not talking—call Hunter back, and Ramsay, Sergent Mackey, we have got other gear—so that is well," he added, as the two privates came up, driving the widow's cows before them—"let the beasts go, we will not rob the widow, for what saith the Scripture anent grinding of widows, and removing of landmarks. Fall in—right face—handle your carbines—prime, load, make ready!—Now, sirrah, kneel down on the green sward, you have five minutes left to make your peace with Heaven. Sergent, remove the woman back there, up in the space, assist your sergent, Ramsay!"

Within a moment, the wretched widow was dragged off, vainly imploring mercy, with bitter sobs and wailings, which called forth mirth alone from the fierce soldiery. Her little grand-daughter was thrust in after her, and the door locked without. Then, in the face of heaven, with the calm summer air waving his perfumed curls, and the whole face of creation smiling and bright before him, the savage Laird stood facing his weak victim, holding a watch superbly set with diamonds, and counting every moment that elapsed with greedy eyes, while calm and fearless the peasant knelt in prayer, and supplicated mercy from on high,

not for himself alone, but for his ruthless murderers.

The time elapsed—the sign was given—the levelled carbines flashed—the volley hurtled through the air—but loud and clearly heard above the full reports rang the heart-broken shriek of the bereaved and hapless parent, yell after yell, shriek after shriek, volumes of hopeless anguish pealed up to the sky, and actually struck a superstitious awe to the cold hearts of the iron soldiers.

They mounted and rode gaily off, their feathers waving joyously, their harness glancing in the blythe sunlight, heedless that where they had found peace and humble happiness, they had left, misery and death and desolation.



THE DEATH BANQUET.

"Come, all, you spirits
That 'tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it!"—*Macbeth*.

IN the year 182—, on finishing my studies, I prepared with much regret to quit Edinburgh, to spend, for the first time, some months in Paris. There is not, in my opinion, a more delightful residence than the Scottish capital, in all Europe. Situated in the very garden of Scotia, surrounded by the most magnificent scenery, noted for the high mental cultivation and frank, open and hospitable manners of its inhabitants, I know no place where life glides away more calmly and happily. Besides, during a sojourn of more than five years, I had formed many ties and associations which it was most painful to sever. Among a numerous circle of friends and acquaintances, I had the good fortune to number many of the artists of which Edinburgh boasts so large and distinguished a list. Passionately fond of the art of painting, I had eagerly embraced every opportunity of cultivating an intimacy with its professors, and many an hour stolen from the confinement of the dissecting room and the college halls, was devoted to the contemplation of my favourite art. On learning that my destination was Paris, the excellent and celebrated A——n, was kind enough to give me a letter to his friend D——a, who with his younger brother, held a high rank among the painters of the modern French school. To this letter was I indebted for many of the most agreeable moments I passed in France. D——a, a de-