

(For the Odd Fellows' Record.)

STORY OF ARTHUR GRAHAM.

CHAPTER II.

At the close of the last chapter, we parted from our hero and his patron, as they were about to proceed on their way to England, mutually pleased with each other—the one, at having at last obtained a protector and friend whom he could love and respect, and the other, at finding a worthy object to take that place in his affections, left vacant by the death of his wife, which had taken place about four or five years before the time that our tale commences.

It is an established law of our nature, that there must exist some dear and cherished object on which to pour out the kindly feelings of the heart. There never was a human being yet but that, at some period of his existence, loved, and was beloved by some creature—it might be but one of the lower orders of creation, yet that was the point round which his affections centred, and which filled the vacuum which nature abhors, and which cannot exist for any length of time, either in the natural system or in that mysterious idea which we call the soul. Mr. Melville had been for a long time without this desideratum; it was then with a corresponding intensity of feeling that he now clung to his foster son, in whom he hoped to find a comfort and support in after years, and with no common interest he watched for every indication of character in his protégé Arthur Graham, or Arthur Melville as we will now style him. However, nothing ever showed itself, which tended in the least to degrade our hero in his esteem, while much every day came to light, which he could love and admire.

Arthur, notwithstanding his early treatment, which would have broken the spirit of most boys, was possessed of great firmness and decision of character, while that very treatment had induced a reflective turn of mind, which, as it was favorable to study, almost compensated for his educational neglect: he could read and write a little—his old friend the soldier, before-mentioned, having done so much for him—and Mr. Melville felt assured, that he only wanted a master for a short time to direct his study in the classics, to enable him to overtake many who had had all the advantages of early and careful tuition. He determined, therefore, having still about a year to remain in England, to place him for that time in one of those public seminaries at Carlisle or York, where, besides the advantage of the best teachers, he would gain a knowledge of the world, and reliance on himself, to be found nowhere else, I am convinced, but in establishments of a similar nature. How he got on at school, and his adventures there, we will, however, describe in their proper place, and in the meantime return to our travellers where we left off.

Travelling, in Scotland, in those days, was a very different affair to what it is at the present time; there were then neither steamboats nor railroads: stage-coaches were few, and from want of opposition their proprietors proportionally independent—paying as much attention to the remonstrances of the victimised traveller, as they did to the symptoms of dissolution

creaked forth at every movement by their delectable vehicles, which never, or seldom at least, started till there was a fair complement, and then, drawn by two decidedly consumptive-looking horses at the enormous speed of five miles an hour! Oh! “tell it not in Gath,” ye thirty-five-thousand-miles-per-second telegraphic operators! Yet such was undoubtedly the existing state of things at that time. Accustomed to the superior speed and business-like arrangements of the south, the reader may guess with what impatience the elder and more experienced of the travellers submitted to each new inconvenience and delay, and with what devout fervour he often wished drivers, horses, coaches, and all, at the bottom of the sea. For some time, he tried alternate menace and persuasion, but finding both ineffectual, he at last resigned himself to his fate, and found equal pleasure and satisfaction in answering the many, and at the same time pertinent, questions addressed to him by his young companion, who felt very differently. To him all seemed perfection; nothing could have been better than the arrangements; and it was not until he had seen the driver “blown up, sky high,” on several occasions, that he could divest himself of the idea that he was some great man, through whose complacency, and in whose private carriage, they rode; but he soon in his own mind reduced him to his proper level, and wisely determined, for his future guidance, never to judge entirely from appearances.

It would only be tedious to the reader to give any further details of their motions, till they got to England; as such a journey has been so well and faithfully portrayed by the greatest of novelists, in his “Antiquary” and other works. We will therefore commence our “traces of travel,” from the ancient town of Carlisle; into the spacious court-yard of one of the most frequented Inns of which, we may suppose their stylish English coach to be now entering.

When the coach had drawn up, which it did close to a range of broad stone steps, our friends got out, glad to stretch their cramped joints on *terra firma* once more. They found themselves in a spacious court, enclosed by buildings in the style of the times of the good Queen Bess, two stories in height, with projecting roofs, and high, ornamented brick chimneys; the windows were many and small—the doorways few and large; and the one immediately behind where they stood, being the entrance to the hostelry, was soon occupied by a smiling jolly-looking landlord—who heartily welcomed his new guests, of all degrees—and ushered them into the interior of his dwelling, at the same time addressing to each such conversation as he thought would be most agreeable.

“How did you find the road, sir?” said he to Mr. Melville, as he bowed him over the threshold, “the recent rains must have made them plaguy heavy and muddy, if I may judge from the coach, sir, which will take my fellows two good hours to clean: hope you met with no accident, sir—no highwayman, or anything of that sort, sir?”

“No, I can’t say we did,” was the reply, “we got on very well after getting this side the Tweed; but