

THE
Canadian Eclectic Magazine

OF
FOREIGN LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

No. 3.

FEBRUARY, 1872.

Vol. I.

(Blackwood's Magazine.)

THE MAID OF SKER.—PART III.

CHAPTER XV.—A VERDICT ON THE JURY.

As to the second inquest, I promised (as you may remember) to tell something also. But in serious truth, if I saw a chance to escape it, without skulking watch, I would liefer be anywhere else almost—except in a French prison.

After recording with much satisfaction our verdict upon Bardie's brother—which nearly all of us were certain that the little boy must be—the Coroner bade his second jury to view the bodies of the five young men. These were in the great dark hall, set as in a place of honour, and poor young Watkin left to mind them; and very pale and ill he looked.

"If you please, sir, they are all stretched out and I am not afraid of them;" he said to me, as I went to console him: "father cannot look at them; but mother and I are not afraid. They are placed according to their ages, face after face, and foot after foot. And I am sure they never meant it, sir, when they used to kick me out of bed; and oftentimes I deserved it."

I thought much less of those five

great corpses than of the gentle and loving boy who had girt up his heart to conquer fear, and who tried to think evil of himself for the comforting of his brethren's souls.

But he nearly broke down when the jurymen came; and I begged them to spare him the pain and trial of going before the Coroner to identify the bodies, which I could do, as well as any one; and to this they all agreed.

When we returned to the long oak parlor, we found that the dignity of the house was maintained in a way which astonished us. There had been some little refreshment before, especially for his Honor; but now all these things were cleared away, and the table was spread with a noble sight of glasses, and bottles, and silver implements, fit for the mess of an admiral. Neither were these meant for show alone, inasmuch as to make them useful, there was water cold and water hot, also lemons, and sugar, and nutmeg, and a great black George of ale, a row of pipes, and a jar of tobacco, also a middling of Hollands, and an anker of old rum. At first we could hard-