

"When we are beyond the hearing of these walls," she exclaimed, "I will place my knowledge in your power."

I only waited a reasonable excuse to confide in her, and followed her at the instant down a slight flight of broken steps at the back of the room. When we reached the bottom, a gust of wind left my guide and myself in total darkness: we were on the high road. Never shall I forget my sensations at that moment. We had scarcely escaped from the house when the sound of a gun-shot rang through my brain; it was rapidly followed by another and another. By the direction and the sudden illumination of the window, they were evidently fired into the room in which I had slept; I involuntarily grasped the arm of the old woman, and uttered I believe, something of imperfect gratitude: but she signed me to be silent, and conducted me cautiously through the valley. As we reached the extremity of it, I turned to look back upon the Black Wolf. It was a huge mass of shadow, rising amidst mountains of snow; but I could perceive a confused flickering of lights through the narrow windows, and an intermittent noise like the sound of voices. The old hag fervently blessed herself, making the sign of the cross upon her forehead, and instinctively bending her knees as she offered that mark of acknowledgment.

At the end of an hour, during which we spoke but little, and that without confidence, we reached a village. It is unnecessary to detail the circumstances which induced the old woman to put me in possession of facts that afterwards became public; and it is only necessary to state here, that at her own request I took her to a magistrate of the county, to whom in private she revealed the series of occurrences related in the following sketch. She was the means of avenging atrocities that power had long concealed; and I became, through the accident of my visit to the Black Wolf, the agent of a just and retributive Providence. From her own lips I had the facts; her connexion with them, and the motives of her conduct will be found in the following

NARRATIVE.

SIXTY-SIX years ago—that is, twenty-two years before the rebellion of 1798—the family of Stanley possessed considerable property in the county of—. The common people, whose impressions are generally produced by strong excitement, entertained towards that family a feeling of dislike approaching to abhorrence. It was said that old Stanley had made his fortune by cruel and rapacious exactions. He had gone through all the gradations of popular odium; he had purchased the titles of the rector, and harassed the tenant-

ry; he had enforced obsolete fines, and driven out his people on quarter day. In fact, the country in the immediate vicinity of his district was furnished and depopulated, or peopled only by wretched and starving paupers, who derived no protection or employment from the furl of the soil. Amidst the curses and bonfires of hundreds, he expired. His race was extinct, save in a son who inherited with the lineaments, the vices of his father. Geruld Stanley was at that period twenty years of age. He seemed not to require the experience of guilt, or the auxiliaries of time and stratagem, for the perpetration of those heartless excesses that marked the time in which he lived. He rushed into the chaos of iniquity at once, and heeded the appeals of justice and religion with the most determined ferocity.

Among the many who had fallen victims to his unbridled depravity was Honor Fletcher. Her father was driven by beggary to the unlawful practises of a poacher. A season of unexampled distress deprived him of the only resource from which he could obtain the means of paying his rent, and he and his child, a girl of eighteen, were hunted off the estate. In his desperation, he violated the laws of his country, and took by force what he could not wring from the mercy of his landlord. He was seized in the act of poaching on Stanley's farm, and was dragged before the young judge, his late persecutor.

"Well sir!" exclaimed Stanley, "you have brought yourself under the law at last. You'll be hanged for your crime."

"Wurrah! wurrah! wurrah!" ejaculated Fletcher.

"The means of escape are within your reach, however; 'tis in my power to give up your blood, or to save you!"

"Och! then, do what you never done before, and send me back with God's blessing in my mouth for you!"

"Where is your daughter?" returned Stanley.

"Honor!—Honor!—Och! then where is she, sure enough? Could I see her starve under my own eyes?—starve!—ay, and die like a dog, without trying with my own life to save hers?—She'll soon be fatherless!"

"Not if you are wise. Undertake to send her to me in an hour: I shall hear her plead your cause; and believe me she can do it more effectually than you can."

"You will?"

"I promise you."

Fletcher could scarcely believe what he heard, and, bewildered at the prospect of escape, was too much overjoyed to suspect the agency by which it was to be accomplished.

Honor was at Stanley Grove within the hour.