

himself was beyond doubt the subject of this nocturnal *conversazione*. Crawling in an agony of apprehension to the pallet where his attendant lay, he awoke the sleeper, intimated his suspicions in a whisper, and desired him to report faithfully the midnight colloquy in the outer chamber.

"What's that they say?" quoth the traveller.

"They want another pint, for they have not had such a prize for the last twelvemonth."

"That's me!" groaned the querist.

"They have *five pikes* already, and expect more before morning," continued the valet.

"Truculent scoundrels!"

"The largest is intended for yourself."

"Lord defend me!" ejaculated the stranger.

"They wonder if you are sleeping."

"Cold-blooded monsters! they want to dispatch us quietly."

"The owner swears that nobody shall enter this room till morning."

"Ay, then they will have daylight and no difficulty."

"And now he urges to go to-bed."

"Heaven grant they may! for then escape from this den of murder might be possible."

Listening with a beating heart until unequivocal symptoms of deep sleep were heard from the kitchen, the unhappy Englishman, leaving his effects to fortune, crawled through the window half-dressed and, with a world of trouble and perilous adventure managed early to reach his original place of destination.

Never, however, was man more mortified than he when he related his fearful story. His tale was frequently interrupted by a laugh which *politesse* vainly endeavoured to control.

"Zounds!" cried the irritated Englishman, no longer able to conceal his rage, "is my throat so valueless, that its cutting should merely raise a horse-laugh?"

"My dear friend," replied the host, "you must excuse me—it is so funny, I cannot, for the life of me, be serious. The cause of all your fears lies quietly in the outer hall. Come, you shall judge upon what good grounds you absconded through a window, and skirmished half the night over hill and dale, with but the nether portion of your habiliments."

As he spoke he uncovered a large basket, and pointed to a huge pike of some thirty pounds weight, which was coiled around the bottom.

"The stormy weather," continued the host, "having interrupted our supply of sea-fish, the peasants who alarmed you had been setting night-lines for your especial benefit. The *peika more* (large pike), which you heard devoted to your services in the shebeen-house, was not an instrument of destruction, but, at six o'clock as good a white fish as ever true Catholics, like you and I, were doomed wherewithal to mortify the flesh upon a blessed Friday."

Perseverance.

King Robert Bruce, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy, being out one day reconnoitring the enemy, lay at night in a barn belonging to a loyal cottager. In the morning, still reclining his head on the pillow of straw, he beheld a spider climbing up a beam of the roof. The insect fell to the ground, but immediately made a second essay to ascend. This attracted the notice of the hero, who, with regret, saw the spider fall a second time from the same eminence. It made a third unsuccessful attempt. Not without a mixture of concern and curiosity, the monarch twelve times beheld the insect baffled in its aim; but the thirteenth essay was crowned with success: it gained the summit of the barn; when the King, starting from his couch, exclaimed, 'This despicable insect has taught me perseverance: I will follow its example. Have I not been twelve times defeated by the enemy's force? on one fight more, hangs the independence of my country.' In a few days his anticipations were fully realized by the glorious result to Scotland of the battle of Bannockburn.

TRUE RELIGION.—What a deal of smoke and noise there is about the religions which men make for God! How generous, gentle, and blessed, is the religion which God makes for man!

FALLING STARS.—WHAT we commonly call 'a falling star,' is believed by the Arab to be a dart, launched by the Almighty at an evil genius; and on beholding one, they exclaim 'May God transfix the enemy of the faith!'