

A NORWEGIAN TALE.

FROM THE EUROPEAN MAGAZINE.

(Concluded.)

Another year passed, but not without event. A tremendous flood bore away the chief part of the hamlet, and swept off the stock of timber on which the good pastor's saw-mills depended. The hunting season had been unproductive, and the long polar night found Claribell's family almost without provision. Her father's strength yielded to fatigue and grief; and a few dried fish were soon consumed. Wasted to still more extreme debility, her miserable mistress lay beside the hearth, with only enough of life to feel the approach of death. Adolphus warmed her frozen hands in his, and secretly gave her all the rein-deer's milk, which their neighbours, though themselves half famished, bestowed upon him. Brande, encouraged by the despairing father's presence, ventured to remind Claribell of their marriage contract.—“Wait,” she replied, with a bitter smile, “till the traveller returns to sanction it.” Moody silence followed; while Hans, shaking a tear from his long silver eye-lashes, looked reproachfully at his daughter. “Have mercy on us both,” said Brande, with a desperate gesture; “shall an idiot woman and a blind boy rob even your father of your love?” “They have trusted me,” she answered, fixing her keen eyes upon him—“and I will not forsake them in life or death.—Hast thou deserved trust better?”

Brande turned away his face and wept. At that terrible instant the door burst open, and three strangers seized him. Already unmanned, he made no resistance; and a caravan sent by judicial authority conveyed the whole family to the hall of the viceroy's deputy. There, heedless of their toilsome journey and exhausted state, the minister of justice began his investigation. A charge of murder had been lodged against Brande, and the clothes worn by the unfortunate traveller, found at the foot of a precipice, red with blood and heaped together, were displayed before him. Still he professed innocence, but with a faltering voice and unsteady eye. Thorsen, strong in benevolence and truth, had followed the prisoner's car on foot, and now presented himself at the tribunal. He produced the gold deposited in his hands, and advanced a thousand proofs of Claribell's innocence, but she maintained herself an obstinate silence. A few silver ducats found in old Holland's possession implicated him in the guilt of his kinsman; and the judge, comparing the actual evidence of Brande's conduct on the fatal night of the assassination, with his present vague and incoherent statements, sentenced the whole family to imprisonment in the mine of Coningsburgh.

Brande heard his decree in mute despair: and Claribell, clinging to her heart-broken father, fixed her eyes, dim with intense agony, on the blind boy, whose face during this ignominious trial had been hidden upon her shoulder. But when the conclusive sentence was pronounced, he raised his head and addressed the audience in a strong and clear tone—“Norwegians—I have no home—I am an orphan and a stranger among you. Claribell has shared her bread with me, and where she goes I will go.”—“Be it so,” said the judge, after a short pause—“darkness and light are alike to the blind, and he will learn to avoid guilt if he is allowed to witness its punishment.”—The servants of justice advanced, expecting their superior's signal to remove the victims, but his eye was suddenly arrested. The lady Johanna, whose chair had been brought before the tribunal, now rose from it, and stood erect, exclaiming “*I accuse him!*” At this awful cry from lips which had never been heard to utter more than the low moan of insanity, the judge

shuddered, and his assistants shrunk back as if the dead had spoken. The glare of her pale grey eyes, her spectre-like face shadowed by long hair, were such as a Norwegian sootier exhibits. Raising her skeleton hands high above her head, she struck them together with a force which the hall echoed.—“There was but one witness, and I go to him!” With these words and a shrill laugh, she fell at the judge's feet, and expired.

Six years glided away; and the rigorous sentence passed on these unfortunate Norwegians had long been executed and forgotten, when the Swedish viceroy visited the silver mines of Coningsburgh. Lighted by a thousand lamps attached to columns of the sparkling ore, he proceeded with his retinue through the principal street of the subterranean city, while the miners exhibited the various processes of their labours. But his eye seemed fixed on a hier followed by an aged man, whose shoulder bore the badge of infamy; leaning on a meagre woman and a boy, whose voice mingled with the rude chant peculiar to Norwegian mourners, like the warbling of an Eolian lute among the moans of a stormy wind. At this touching and unexpected sound, the viceroy stopped and looked earnestly at his guide.—“It is the funeral of a convicted murderer,” replied the superintendent of the mines; “and that white haired man was his kinsman and supposed accomplice.”—“The woman is his widow then?” said the viceroy shuddering.—“No, my lord;—her imprisonment was limited to one year, but she chose to remain with her unhappy father, to prepare his food and assist in his labours; that lovely boy never leaves her side, except to sing hymns to the sick miners, who think him an angel come among us.—While the humane intendant spoke, the hier approached, and the torches carried by its bearers shone on the corpse of Brande whose uncovered countenance retained all the sullen fierceness of his character. The viceroy followed to the grave; and advancing as the body was lowered into it, said, “Peace be with the dead, and with the living. All are forgiven.”

The intendant of the mines, instructed by one of the viceroy's retinue, removed the fetters from Hans Holland's ankles, and placed him with his daughter and the blind boy in the vehicle used to reach the outlet of the mine. A carriage waited to receive them, and they found themselves conveyed from the most hideous subterranean dungeon to the splendid palace of the viceroy. They were led into his cabinet, where he stood alone, not in his rich official robes, but in those he had worn at Dolstein.—“It is the traveller!” exclaimed Claribell; and Adolphus sprang into his arms.—“My son!” was all the viceroy could utter as he held him close to his heart.—“Claribell!” he added, after a few moments of agonizing joy, “I am the father of Adolphus, and the Lady Johanna was my wife. Powerful enemies compelled me to conceal even my existence; but a blessed chance enabled me to save my only son, whom I believed safe in the care of the treacherous kinsman who coveted my inheritance, and hoped to destroy us both. Brande was the agent of his guilt; but fearing that his secrecy might fail, the chief traitor availed himself of his power as a judge, to bury his accomplice and innocent victim for ever. Providence saved my life from his machinations, and my sovereign has given me power sufficient to punish and reward. Your base judge is now in the prison to which he condemned your father and yourself:—you Claribell, if you can accept the master of this mansion, are now in your future home. Continue to be the second mother of Adolphus, and ennoble his father by a union with your virtues.”

THE WEEK.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 29, 1835.

LOWER CANADA.—In the absence of farther intelligence from Europe, we take a passing notice of Canadian affairs. The people of Lower Canada have been for many years embroiled in faction and national animosity. The leading parties assume the names of the “English,” and “French” interest. The latter are by far the most numerous; they are the principal land owners and occupiers—which property they hold on tenures closely allied to feudalism:—they have succeeded in monopolising the representation of the country, and in securing nearly all the offices of trust not in the gift of the Crown. Their religion is the Roman Catholic, and being strongly attached to their ancient Laws and Institutions, which were partially guaranteed to them by the treaty of Versailles, they view with the utmost jealousy the administration of English Laws and Government; hence their manifest uneasiness under every Governor who has had the misfortune to preside over them, and the undisguised enmity and contempt which they show to all their fellow subjects from the British Isles, as well as every thing British. Their leader is Mr Papineau, who has been not inaptly styled the Canadian “O'Connell.”

The English party, though least in numbers, are decidedly the most intelligent, they are chiefly merchants and manufacturers, and hold nearly all the offices in the gift of the Crown. They complain bitterly of the intolerance and tyranny of their more powerful, but less civilized neighbours; they accuse them of disloyalty, and of criminal designs against their lives and property, and hence the appeal they lately made to their fellow-countrymen in the Sister Colonies for protection, in the event of open and sudden insurrection taking place. Both parties have carried their complaints to the foot of the Throne, and maintain credited agents in the British Metropolis, who unceasingly urge their opposite claims, at the Colonial Office. Under these circumstances Governors have found it exceedingly difficult to administer the government; the only one who has done so with any degree of credit to himself and advantage to the country, during the last thirty years, was Sir. James Kempt.

This alarming state of affairs, the Home Government in its late fluctuating and unsettled state, has had frequently under review; various remedies have been proposed by one set of politicians, and as speedily abandoned by another. Committees have been appointed on Canadian affairs, reports made, but never acted upon;—Commissioners have been appointed, and when on the eve of starting for their destination, their commissions were cancelled; others have been appointed, who, upon a survey of the Herculean task assigned them, found means under the pretence of the pressure of domestic affairs, or indisposition, to decline the royal commission. At present, nearly all appears to be uncertainty at the Colonial Office, some of the papers say one Commissioner only is to proceed to Canada, others say a number, for which purpose various individuals are named; one thing is certain, that Lord Aylmer has been recalled from the Government,—but who is to be his successor is not yet known; Lord Gosford, an Irish nobleman has been spoken of, as well as many others. The Canadian Press has, almost without an exception, become enlisted under the banners of the Belligerents, and to a person not interested in their disputes, are exceedingly flat and tiresome. It is not a little amusing, however, to see with what eager avidity they seize upon every little circumstance that seems to have a tendency to forward their particular