

ed him, and when she alone had the will and courage to brave the fury of the 'powers that were.' Yes! an outrage had been committed upon humanity—a parallel to which is scarcely to be found in the pages of history; and well might the people mourn for the degradation of the accuser, and the horrible fate of his victim. With the exception of the judge—the infamous Jeffrey's—the licensed murderer, and a few others, the crowd that attended the trial had sympathised deeply with the unhappy lady, and had given vent to their wounded feelings in a cry of vengeance against the traitor; and it was with the greatest difficulty he had found protection from the soldiery. Mrs. Gaunt had been condemned to expiate her offence—not on the scaffold and by the hands of the headsman: that were too merciful a sentence for so great a crime as hers. Fire alone could cleanse the earth of such a monster; and she was to suffer by the faggot, in accordance with the merciful hope that the magnitude of her punishment might deter others from the commission of similar offences!

During all the morning, a vessel having the appearance of a voyager to distant regions, from her tattered sails and strained rigging, had been seen contending against the tide with the aid of a light wind and a number of sweeps. But little attention had been paid to her by the loiterers on the beach, so interested had they been by the proceedings at Westminster. She had scarcely dropped anchor when a boat was lowered from her side, and three persons seated themselves in the stern-sheets. One of them an old man with snowy locks, looked about him sometimes in wonder, at others, with a look of joyous recognition. The next a man much younger, sat further back, and held the tiller. A bounding heart was his—free and wild, but with him every object seemed familiar. This was the sailor captain of the day, bold and daring, full of enterprise; one of those to whose hardihood England owes her colonies and commerce—a sea chief, whose slouched hat and plume, and slashed and tasselled jacket, and buff buskins—conspicuous alike in courts and in the front of battle—proclaimed his wealth and how lavish he was of it. The other person looked on every passing object—the wharves, quays, bridges, towers, palaces and churches, with wonder and delight. His form was manly, and his face bronzed by the sun of many summers in a foreign clime, beamed with intelligence. His costume, in the choice of which he had not been regulated by the tyranny of fashion, was not unlike his

friend's, with the exception that a light short cloak in place of the jacket covered his shoulders, and was so constructed as to admit of being belted to his waist without interfering with the free action of his arms. He seemed impatient, and bent forward as if to increase the motion of the boat rushing through the dancing ripple with all the speed the strength of four stout men could urge her.

"Hilloa, friend! are you all dead here?" shouted the sailor to a couple of men standing near the beach where the boat grounded.

"Not exactly—don't know how soon we may be, though."

"How's that, my hearty? Got consumption or another touch of plague?"

"Wrong again!--Nay, but on second thought you're half i' the right. Laws and judges all on one side—the people can't say 'aye or no' without being butchered for't. Sad times, neighbour,—sad times."

"Try the sea, then: its cure for all complaints. Try a tack at racing with the whirlwind and boxing with the clouds, and I'll warrant ye'll love life as long as a strand in your cable holds together. But what's in the wind now—what the grievance that keeps the world at home?"

"Why then you must know we've had a rebellion lately; the Duke of Monmouth struck for the crown—it was soon put down, and the partisans of the Duke were scattered. One of them received protection from a lady and afterwards betrayed her, and she's to die a cruel death."

"The wretch!—but who's his victim?"

"A Mrs. Gaunt, of Wiltshire, a—" But a piercing cry from the young man, who stood beside the speakers, cut short the sentence."

"My poor master, is it for this I've brought you home? Alack-a-day!" groaned the old man in very bitterness, stooping over the prostrate form of the youth. But the life-blood was only checked in its course, not chilled—and with prompt assistance he soon recovered and listened to the particulars of the tale, so unexpectedly interrupted.

Mrs. Gaunt was sitting on a ponderous old chair, the only piece of furniture in her prison, besides an oaken table, that bore upon its surface many a caricature and many a quaint inscription, that bespoke the indifference of the artist to his fate. Adown its crazy legs too, for want of room elsewhere, had crept—it seemed as if there had been a mysterious compact between the "pro tempore" tenants and the shades of their departed predecessors, to