

without delay. By some unfortunate oversight, the box containing this precious gift was seized at the custom house, and sold to a Mr. Reid, in whose possession it still remains, though I cannot but grudge him every dinner he eats off it. Mr. Bruce while he lived, lighted a large fire every winter night close to the shore, and had a barrel of meal ready to be cooked into porridge, for distribution among any number of poor sailors visiting those distant shores. They were also allowed clean straw to sleep on at night, when unable otherwise to procure a bed.

The gentry at Lerwick are still so extremely kind to strangers, that our landlord should lock up his guests, as the only chance of keeping any, or he may perhaps be provoked at last to act like the innkeeper at Luss, who, finding himself nearly ruined by the parish clergyman beguiling away all his visitors, at last one night carried his sign to the manse and nailed it over the door.

In conclusion, to all who would spend an hour pleasantly, we could commend this very amusing volume, confident that the time employing in perusing it will not be deemed misapplied.

GLENCOE; OR THE FATE OF THE MACDONALDS—BY SERJEANT TALFOURD.

SERJEANT TALFOURD kept beside him, for twenty-five years, the tragedy of *Ion*, at times, during the whole period, casting his eye over it, and retouching it where it seemed to his fastidious eye imperfect, or susceptible of improvement. The result was a poem which criticism pronounced faultless and "without blemish." But the glory of the author suffered, for it was his first, not his last effort, and the later productions of his pen, wanting the same extraordinary care, were inferior to the standard raised by their own author, and instead of adding to, subtracted from, his fame.

This will be obvious to those who, having read *Ion*, may now peruse the tragedy of *Glencoe*; a play which from any other hand, would justly take a high rank among the dramatic works of the day, but coming from Talfourd, falls short of what is naturally expected.

It will occur to the reader that the "massacre of Glencoe," is an event too terrific—too horrid for representation upon the stage—an opinion, in support of which we quote the following, as the *ideas* of a London reviewer :

The historical incident on which it is based, familiarly known by the appalling, but appropriate, designation of the Massacre of Glencoe, is obviously better adapted for the purposes of melodrama than tragedy. The cold-blooded plot—the treachery of the Campbells—the unsuspecting hospitality of the Macdonalds—the murder of a whole clan at midnight, under their own roofs, by the guests who had just pledged them at the festive board—and the flames of ruined huts in the deep glen at midnight, are highly suggestive of rapid melodramatic action and picturesque effect, but do not contain a single element of pure and lofty tragedy. The physical predominates throughout, and leaves no room for the development of character or passion. We want to see the tragedy with this impression, and the representation has confirmed us in its correctness. The author, aware of the intractable nature of the subject, has employed it merely as the pretext for a plot of a different kind. Glencoe furnishes the scene, but not the business of the play.

The following is an outline of the plot :—

The *Macdonalds* of the tragedy are a divided clan. *Halbert* is the nephew of the old chief, *Mac Vich Ian*, who regards him with some jealousy, as the son of a rival. *Halbert's* brother, *Henry*, had, while yet a youth, joined the *Duke of Argyle's* regiment, and, after many years of absence, returns with the *Campbells* to the home of his fathers. The *Campbells* are armed with the fatal authority, signed and counter-signed by the hand of *King William*, for extinguishing the race of the valiant *Macdonalds*. The two brothers are in love with *Heien Campbell*, who has dwelt from her childhood with their mother, *Lady Macdonald*. The rivalry produces hot blood between them, and the feud is rendered still more furious by the alienation of *Henry* from his ancestral banners. *Halbert* believes his claim to the hand of *Helen* to be stronger, and asserts it vehemently. His whole life has been spent with *Helen*, while *Henry* was absent pursuing the ambition of a soldier. *Helen* yields to his suit, terrified by his earnestness; but she loves *Henry*, and the union promises to be fraught with sorrow. *Halbert*, recovering his self-possession, reflects upon the ruin such an alliance would bring upon her, and generously resolves to sacrifice his own happiness. He surrenders her at the altar to his brother; but at this moment the *Campbells* are performing their unholy work, the *Macdonalds* are surprised and slain in their sleep—the glen is in flames—and, in the midst of the horrors, *Halbert* is shot, *Helen* faints, and *Henry* goes off, sword in hand, to avenge the villainy in which he was, to some extent, an active participator. It will be seen at once that the historical fact from which the tragedy derives its name, supplies nothing more than the canvass on which the artist has painted his picture.