

Now, the number of the Highland party was completed, and they stood, a band of hardy, determined, and desperate-looking men; but the party of the Borderers was one deficient.

"Is there not another," cried the herald, "to stand forth, and maintain with his sword the honour and courage of the Borders?"

"Yes! here am I!" shouted Andrew, and drawing Janet's arm from his; "now, dearest," added he, hastily, "just hae patience; just stand here for ten minutes; and I'll let ye see what I can do."

She would have detained him; but in a moment he sprang into the amphitheatre, and exclaimed.

"Now, Sir Knights, ye that hae been trying yer hands at the tourneyings, will ony o' ye hae the guidness to obleege me wi' the loan o' yer sword for a wee while, and I'll be bound for ye I'll no disgrace it; I'll try the temper o' it in earnest."

Andrew instantly had a dozen to choose upon; and he took his place amongst the Borderers.

When he joined them, those who knew him, said—"the day is ours—Andrew is a host in himsel."

The marshals gave the signal for the onset—and a deadly, a savage onset it was.—Swords were shivered to the hilt. Men, who had done each other no wrong, who had never met before, grasped each other by the throat—the Highland dirk and Border knife were drawn. Men plunged them into each other—they fell together—they rolled, the one over the other, in the struggles and the agonies of death. The wounded strewed the ground—they strove to crawl from the strife of their comrades. The dead lay upon the dying, and the dying upon the dead. Death had reaped a harvest from both parties; and no man could tell on which side would lie the victory. Yet no man could stand the sword-arm of Andrew—antagonist against antagonist went before him. He rushed to every part of the combat, and wheresoever he went the advantage was in favour of the Borderers. He was the champion of the field—the hero of the fight. The king gave a signal, (perhaps because his young queen was horrified with the game of butchery) and at the command of the marshals the combatants

on both sides laid down their arms. Reiterated shouts again rang from the spectators.—Some clapped their hands and cried, "Eye mouth yet!" "Wha's like Andrew!" "We'll carry him hame shouter high!" shouted some of his townsmen.

During the combat, poor Janet had been blind with anxiety, and was supported in the arms of the spectators who saw him rush from her side. But as the shouts of his name burst on her ear, consciousness returned; and she beheld him, with the sword in his hand, hastening towards her. Yet ere he had reached where she stood, he was summoned, by the men-at-arms, who had kept the multitude from pressing into the amphitheatre, to appear before the king, to receive from his hands the promised reward.

Anxious as he had been to obtain the prize poor Andrew, notwithstanding his heroism, trembled at the thought of appearing in the presence of a monarch. His idea of the king was composed of imaginings of power, and greatness, and wisdom, and splendour—he knew him to be a man, but he did not think of him as such. And he said to those who summoned him to the royal presence—

"Oh, save us a', sirs! what shall I say to him? or what will he say to me? How shall I behave? I would rather want the silt than gang wi' ye!"

In this state of tremor and anxiety, Andrew was conducted towards the canopied dais before the Majesty of Scotland. He was led to the foot of the steps which ascended to the seat where the monarch and his bride sat. His eyes were rivetted to the ground, and he needed not to doff his bonnet, for he had been in the conflict.

"Look up, brave cock o' the Borders," said the monarch; "certes, man, ye would ha' an ill-far'd face if ye needed to hide it, aft' exhibiting sic a heart and arm."

Andrew raised his head in confusion; but scarce had his eyes fallen on the countenance of the king, when he started back, as though he beheld the face of a spirit.

"Ha! traitor!" exclaimed the monarch, as a frown gathered on his brow.

In a moment, Andrew perceived that his victor-wrestler—his crony in Lucky Hewitt— the tempter of his Janet—the man whom he had felled with a blow, and whose blood he had drawn, and the King of Scotland— was one and the same person.