

Little Brown Hands.

They drive home the cows from the pasture,
Up through the long shady lane,
Where the quail whistles loud in the wheat
field,
And yellow with ripening grain.

They find in the thick waving grasses,
Where the scarlet-dipped strawberry
grows;

They gather the earliest snow-drops
And the first crimson buds of the rose.

They toss the hay in the meadow,
They gather the elder blooms white,
They find where the dusky grapes purple
In the soft-tinted autumn light.

They know where the apples hang ripest,
And are sweeter than Italy's wines;
They know where the fruit is the thickest
On the long, thorny blackberry vines.

They gather the delicate seaweeds
And build tiny castles of sand;
They pick up the beautiful seashells—
Fairy barks that have drifted to land.

They wave from the tall, rocking treetops,
Where the oriole's hammock-neat swings,
And at night-time are folded in slumber
By a song that a fond mother sings.

Those who toil bravely are strongest;
The humble and poor become great;
And from those brown-handed children
Shall grow mighty rulers of state.

The pen of the author and statesman,
The noble and wise of our land;
The sword and the chisel and palette
Shall be held in the little brown hand.

HUNTED AND HARRIED.

A Tale of the Scottish Covenanters.

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE.

CHAPTER XL.—(Continued.)

TURNING now from the south-west of Scotland, we direct attention to the eastern seaboard of Kincardine, where, perched like a sea-bird on the weather-beaten cliffs, stands the stronghold of Dunnottar Castle.

Down in the dungeons of that rugged pile lies our friend Andrew Black, very different from the man whose fortunes we have hitherto followed. Care, torment, disease, hard usage, long confinement, and desperate anxiety have graven lines on his face that nothing but death can smooth, out. Wildly-tangled hair, with a long, shaggy beard and moustache, render him almost unrecognizable. Only the old unquenchable fire of his eye remains; also the kindliness of his old smile, when such a rare visitant chance once again illuminates his worn features. Years of suffering had he undergone, and there was only a little more than skin and bone of him left to undergo more.

"Let me have a turn at the crack noo," he said, coming forward to a part of the foul, mury dungeon where a crowd of male and female prisoners were endeavouring to inhale a little fresh air through a crevice in the wall. "I'm fit to choke for want o' a breath o' caller air."

As he spoke a groan from a dark corner attracted his attention. At once forgetting his own distress, he went to the place and discovered one of the prisoners, a young man, with his head pillowed on a stone, and mire some inches deep for his bed.

"Eh, Sandy, are ye sac far gane?" asked Black, kneeling beside him in tender sympathy.

"Oh, Andry, man—for a breath o' fresh air before I dee!"

"Here! ane o' ye," cried Black, "help me to carry Sandy to the crack. Wae's me, man," he added in a lower voice, "I could hae carried ye wi' my pirlie ance, but I'm little stronger than a bairn noo."

Sandy was borne to the other side of the dungeon, and his head put close to the crevice, through which he could see the white ripples on the summer sea far below.

A deep inspiration seemed for a moment to give new life—then a prolonged sigh, and the freed, happy soul swept from the dungeons of earth to the realms of celestial light and liberty.

"He's breathin' the air o' Paradise noo," said Black, as he assisted to remove the dead man from the opening which the living were so eager to reach.

"Ye was up in theither dungeon last night," he said, turning to the man who had aided him; "what was a' the groans an' cries about?"

"Torturin' the pair lads that tried to escape," answered the man with a dark frown.

"Hm! I thought as muckle. They were gey hard on them, I dar' say?"

"They were that? Ye see, the disease that's broke out amang them—whatever it is—made some o' them sac desprit that they go through the wundy that looks to the sea an' creepit along the precipice. It was a daft-like thing to try in the daylight; but certain death would hae been their lot, I suspe', if they had ventured on a precipice like that i' the dark. Some women washin' doon below saw them and gied the alarm. The guards cam', the hue and cry was raised, the yetts were shut and fifteen were caught an' brought back but twenty five got away. My heart is wae for the fifteen. They were laid on their backs on benches, their hands were bound doon to the foot o' the forms, an' burnin' matches were putt atween every finger, an' the soldiers blew on them to keep them aicht. The governor, ye see, had ordered this to gang on without stoppin' for three oors. Some o' the pair fellows were deld afore the end o' that time, an' I'm thinkin' the survivors'll be crippled for life."

While listening to the horrible tale Andrew Black resolved on an attempt to escape that very night.

"Wull ye gang wi' me?" he asked of the only comrade whom he thought capable of making the venture; but the comrade shook his head "Na," he said, "I'll no try. They've starved me to that extent that I've nae strength left. I grow dizzy at the vera thought. But d'ye think the wundy's big enough to let ye through?"

"Oo ay," returned Black with a faint smile. "I was ower stout for't ance, but it's an ill wund that blaws nae guid. Starvation has made me thin enough noo."

That night, when all—even the harassed prisoners—in Dunnottar Castle were asleep, except the sentinels, the desperate man forced himself with difficulty through the very small window of the dungeon. It was unbarred, because, opening out on the face of an almost sheer precipice, it was thought that nothing without wings could escape from it. Black, however, had been accustomed to pretences from boyhood. He had observed a narrow ledge just under the window, and hoped that it might lead to something. Just below it he could see another and narrower ledge. What was beyond that he knew not—and did not much care!

Once outside, with his breast pressed against the wall of rock, he passed along pretty quickly, considering that he could not see more than a few yards before him. But presently he came to the end of the ledge, and by no stretching out of foot or hand could he find another projection of any kind. He had now to face the great danger of sliding down to the lower ledge, and his heart beat audibly against his ribs as he gazed into the profound darkness below. Indecision was no part of Andrew Black's character. Breathing a silent prayer for help and deliverance, he sat down on the ledge with his feet overhanging the abyss. For one moment he reconsidered his position. Behind him were torture, starvation, prolonged misery, and almost certain death. Below was perhaps instantaneous death, or possible escape.

He pushed off, again commending his soul to God, and slid down. For an instant destruction seemed inevitable, but next moment his heels struck the lower ledge and he remained fast. With an earnest "Thank God!" he began to creep along. The ledge conducted him to safer ground, and in another quarter of an hour he was free!

To get as far and as quickly as possible from Dunnottar was now his chief aim. He travelled at his utmost speed till daybreak, when he crept into a dry ditch, and, overcome by fatigue, forgot his sorrow in profound, unbroken slumber. Rising late in the afternoon, he made his way to a cottage and begged for bread. They must have suspected what he was and where he came from, but they were friendly, for they gave him a loaf and a few pence without asking questions.

Thus he travelled by night and slept by day till he made his way to Edinburgh, which he entered one evening in the midst of a crowd of people, and went straight to Candlemaker Row.

Mrs. Black, Mrs. Wallace, Jean Black, and poor Agnes Wilson were in the old room when a tap was heard at the door, which immediately opened, and a gaunt, dishevelled, way-worn man appeared. Mrs. Black was startled at first, for the man, regardless of the other females, advanced towards her. Then a sudden light seemed to flash in her eyes as she extended both hands.

"Mither!" was all that Andrew could say, as he grasped them, fell on his knees, and, with a profound sigh, laid his head upon her lap.

CHAPTER XII.—THE DARKEST HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN.

MAN'S DEATHS PASSED AWAY, DURING WHICH

Andrew Black, clean-shaved, brushed up, and converted into a very respectable, ordinary-looking artisan, carried on the trade of a turner, in an underground cellar in one of the most populous parts of the Cowgate. Lost in the crowd was his idea of security. And he was not far wrong. His cellar had a way of escape through a back door. Its grated window, under the level of the street, admitted light to his whirling lathe, aided by dirt on the glass, baffled the gaze of the curious.

His evenings were spent in Candlemaker Row, where, seated by the window with his mother, Mrs. Wallace, and the two girls, he smoked his pipe and commented on Scotland's wae whillie gaiting across the tomb at the glow in the western sky. Ramblin' Peter—no longer a beardless boy, but a fairly well-grown and good-looking youth—was a constant visitor at the Row. Aggie Wilson had taught him the use of his tongue, but Peter was not the man to use it in idle flirtation—nor Aggie the girl to listen if he had done so. They had both seen too much of the stern side of life to condescend on trifling.

Once, by a superhuman effort and with an alarming flush of the countenance, Peter succeeded in stammering a declaration of his sentiments. Aggie, with flaming cheeks and downcast eyes, accepted the declaration, and the matter was settled; that was all, for the subject had rushed upon both of them, as it were, unexpectedly, and as they were in the public street at the time and the hour was noon, further demonstration might have been awkward.

Thereafter they were understood to be "keeping company." But they were a grave couple. If an eavesdropper had ventured to listen, sober talk alone would have repaid the sneaking act, and, not unfrequently, reference would have been heard in tones of deepest pathos to dreadful scenes that had occurred on the shores of the Solway, or sorrowful comments on the awful fate of beloved friends who had been banished to "the plantations."

One day Jean—fair-haired, blue-eyed, pensive Jean—was seated in the cellar with her uncle. She had brought him his daily dinner in a tin can, and he, having just finished it, was about to resume his work while the niece rose to depart. Time had transformed Jean from a pretty girl into a beautiful woman, but there was an expression of profound melancholy on her once bright face which never left it now, save when a passing jest called up for an instant a feeble reminiscence of the sweet old smile.

"Noo, Jean awa' wi' ye. I'll never get thro' parritch-sticks feenished if ye sit haverin' there."

Something very like the old smile lighted up Jean's face as she rose, and with a "Weel, good-day, uncle," left the cellar to its busy occupant.

Black was still at work, and the shadows of evening were beginning to throw the inner end of the cellar into gloom, when the door slowly opened and a man entered stealthily. The unusual action, as well as the appearance of the man, caused Black to seize hold of a heavy piece of wood that leaned against his lathe. The thought of being discovered and sent back to Dunnottar, or hanged, had implanted in our friend a salutary amount of caution, though it had not in the slightest degree affected his nerve or his cool promptitude in danger. He had deliberately made up his mind to remain quiet as long as he should be left alone, but if discovered, to escape or die in the attempt.

The intruder was a man of great size and strength, but as he seemed to be alone, Black quietly leaned the piece of wood against the lathe again in a handy position.

"Ye seem to hae been takin' lessons frae the cats lately, to judge from yer step," said Black. "Shut the door, man, behind ye. There's a draft i' this place that'll be like to gie ye the rheumatiz."

The man obeyed, and, advancing silently, stood before the lathe. There was light enough to reveal the fact that his countenance was handsome, though bronzed almost to the colour of mahogany, while the lower part of it was hid len by a thick beard and a heavy moustache.

Black, who began to see that the strange visitor had nothing of the appearance of one sent to arrest him, said, in a half-humorous, remonstrative tone—

"Maybe ye're a furriner, an' dinna understand manners, but it's as weel to tell ye that I expect men to tak' all their banners when they come into my hoose."

Without speaking the visitor removed his cap. Black recognized him in an instant.

"Wull Wallace?" he gasped in a hoarse whisper, as he sprang forward and laid violent hands on his old friend. "Losh, man! are my een lecin'? is't possible? Can this be you?"

"Yes, thank God, it is indeed—"

He stopped short, for Andrew, about unaccustomed, like most of his countrymen, to

give way to ebullitions of strong feeling, threw his long arms around his friend and fairly hugged him. He did not, indeed, condescend on a Frenchman's kiss, but he gave him a squeeze that was worthy of a bear.

"Your force is not much abated; I see—or rather, feel," said Wullie allude, when he was released.

"Aye, I'm aye," replied Black, "it's little need, do this wi' ye. Hut, man, your force has increased, if I'm no mistak'en."

"Doubtless—it is natural, after having toiled with the slaves in Barbadoes for so many years. The work was kill or cure out there. But tell me—my mother—and yours?"

"Oh, they're both well and hearty, thank the Lord," answered Black. "But what for d'ye hae speer a'fter Jean?" he added in a somewhat disappointed tone.

"Because I don't need to. I've seen her already, and know that she is well."

"Seen her?" exclaimed Andrew in surprise. "Aye, you and Jean were seated alone at the little window in the Candlemaker Row last night about ten o'clock, and I was standing by a tombstone in the Greyfriars Church yard admiring you. I did not like to present myself just then, for fear of alarming the dear girl too much, and then I did not dare to come here to day till the gloamin'. I only arrived yesterday."

"Weel, weel! The like o' this bates a' Losh, man! I hope it's no a dream. Nip me, man, to mak sure. Sit doon, sit doon, an' let's hear a' about it."

The story was a long one. Before it was quite finished the door was gently opened, and Jean Black herself entered. She had come, as was her wont every night, to walk home with her uncle.

Black sprang up. "Jean, my wnmmin'," he said, hastily putting on his blue bonnet, "there's no light enough for ye to be intruded to my friend here, but ye can hear him if ye canna see him. I'm gann out to see what sort o' a night it is. He'll tak' care o' ye till I come back."

Without awaiting a reply he went out and shut the door, and the girl turned in some surprise towards the stranger.

"Jean!" he said in a low voice, holding out both hands.

Black did not scream or faint. Her position in life, as well as her rough experiences, forbade such weakness, but it did not forbid—well, it is not our province to betray confidences! All we can say is, that when Andrew Black returned to the cellar, after a prolonged and no doubt scientific inspection of the weather, he found that the results of the interview had been quite satisfactory—eminently so!

Need we say that there were rejoicing and thankful hearts in Candlemaker Row that night? We think not. If any of the wraiths of the Covenanters were hanging about the old churchyard, and had peeped in at the well-known back window about the small hours of the morning, they would have seen our hero, clasping his mother with his right arm and Jean with his left. He was encircled by an eager group—composed of Mrs. Black and Andrew, Jock Bruce, Ramblin' Peter, and Aggie Wilson—who listened to the stirring tale of his adventures, of detailed to him the not less stirring and terrible history of the long period that had elapsed since he was torn from them, as they had believed, forever

(To be continued.)

Gold and Purple.
Gold and purple—summer dies,
And in royal state she lies;
Maples wear their golden plumes,
Wild flowers leave their last perfumes
At these gorgeous obsequies.

When the lonely woodbird flies
Festal are the canopies,
Sombre glens exchange their glooms—
Gold and purple.

Growing old shall we grow wise,
With the love that beautifies,
And the autumn time illumines,
Richer than the early blooms,
Fading out in royal dyes,
Gold and purple?

— A small boy's definition of a holiday—
"A day to holler in."

"I can't see," said Jimmie boy "why fish have to be cleaned. They're in bathing all the time"

— A Kindness. "I did your book a good turn in last week's paper," said the critic to the author.

"Indeed!" said the author.

"Yes," returned the critic. "I didn't mention it."