

huge gap in the lofty agger of the Roman entrenchment on which they had been standing. The opening effected by the cannon of Cromwell, is still visible, and affords a prospect of the castle and open country.

Leaping their horses over the numerous ditches which intersected the plain, two cavaliers were seen advancing at full gallop towards the dismantled castle. For a moment they halted before its ruined gateway, and one of them, raising his hands toward the rebel standard, appeared to address some conversation to his companion; then, turning their coursers' heads, they spurred onward to the water's edge, through the opening, whence the two fishermen had retreated at their approach. Here again they commenced an early parley, of which, to judge from gestures and significant glances, Gilbert and his companion appeared to be the subject, who, on their side, were no way backward in scrutinizing the bearing of the strangers. The chief of the party, as might be inferred from the respectable deference manifested towards him by the other, who though nearly twice as old, remained uncovered whilst he spoke, was a man of between thirty and forty years of age, about the middle size, robust and well proportioned. His dark, oval countenance was distinguished by an air of settled melancholy, heightened perhaps by the ample mustachios and pointed beard so prevalent in the seventeenth century. He wore a large slouching Spanish beaver, which, like the ample plume that drooped over his face, had once been black; but was changed by the effects of time and the weather to a light russet. A buff coat, miserably torn and discoloured, appeared beneath a suit of rusty disjointed body armour, and, in a word, his whole appearance, like that of his attendant, who displayed, if possible, even a greater degree of wretchedness, when coupled with the uneasy and restless countenances, suggested the idea of men long exposed to peril, fatigue and want.

Their colloquy, however, had not endured many minutes before the younger individual turned his horse's head, and hastily motioning Giles to approach, fixed his large, dark, melancholy eyes upon him, and said:

"Art thou acquainted, friend, with the passage of the river herabouts? Canst thou guide us to the Ferry of the Blackrock?"

"I can," said Gilbert, doffing his bonnet as he spoke.

"And the boats?—we would pass with all speed to the other side—canst thou command them?"

"We are ferrymen here, and will be afloat ten minutes, an' it please your honour."

"Lead on, then," exclaimed the stranger, casting a hurried glance in the direction which they had approached, and putting the horses in motion, in a few moments they stood upon the pier at which the boats lay moored.

Stimulated by the prospect of a reward, impressed with the hope that the occurrence of the day might be the herald of better fortune, the two men used the utmost alacrity in getting the cavaliers and their jaded beasts into the boat; then hoisting sail, they drove rapidly through the surf, and in about twenty minutes ran safely into Chisel Pitt, on the opposite shore.

The air of watchfulness and anxiety which had in the beginning characterized their demeanour, gradually subsided as the two strangers saw themselves beyond the reach of the present danger.

"Helmsman," said he who had before spoken, pointing to the child that lay quietly sleeping in the straw beneath the quarter-deck of the vessel, "is this curly-headed boy thy son?" and, ere the father could reply, he had sprung aft and lifted the child into his arms; "thou more beside?"

"He is the only one remaining out of fifteen," said the boatman, "it please your worship."

"Ah, true, thine is a perilous vocation; red at times, men say, even the broad ocean is less dangerous than these same narrow channels." Then, lowering his voice, he added, while his features assumed that air of deepened sadness which seemed to be their congenial expression: "Died they young? and wert thou near when they perished?"

The father dashed away with his hand the tear that moistened his brow, and weather-beaten cheek; but his voice trembled not as he replied, "My boys, gentlemen, have found the soldier's grave; they fell fighting for the King at the battle of Marston Moor." The strangers exchanged significant glances; but at the same instant the keel of the vessel grated harshly against the landing place, the mainsail was hardly lowered, and Gilbert and his comrade leaping ashore, aided themselves in getting out the horses. The younger of the two cavaliers now drew from his girdle a purse, which he poised for a seconds in his hand, and then said, "Do not think thou art richer than thy master, for these honest fellows will have slight cause to thank us for the trouble we have given them; their generosity, then, is our only resource."