

by the same path in an opposite direction. If Duncan had had a gun no recontre could have been more agreeable ; but as he had not this advantage over the denizen of the wilderness, the meeting was in the highest degree unwelcome. Neither party had the power of retreating, for the stag had not room to turn himself in the narrow path, and if Duncan had turned his back to go down, he knew enough of the creature's habits to be certain that he would rush upon him while engaged in the difficulty of the retreat. They stood therefore perfectly still and looked at each other in mutual embarrassment for some space.

At length the deer, which was of the largest size, began to lower his antlers, as they do when they are brought to bay, and are preparing to rush upon hound and huntsman. Duncan saw the danger of a conflict to which he must probably come by the worst, and as a last resource, stretched himself on the little ledge of rock, which he occupied, and thus awaited the resolution which the deer should take, not making the least motion, for fear of alarming the wild and suspicious animal. They remained in this posture for three or four hours, in the midst of a rock which would have suited the pencil of Salvator, and which afforded barely room enough for the man and the stag, opposed to each other in this extraordinary manner.

At length the buck seemed to take the resolution of passing over the obstacles which lay in his path, and with this purpose approached towards Duncan very slowly, and with excessive caution. When he came close to the Highlander, he stooped his head down as if to examine him more closely, when the devil, or the untameable love of sport, peculiar to his country, began to overcome Duncan's fears. Seeing the animal proceed so gently, he totally forgot not only the dangers of his position, but the nuptial compact which might have been inferred from the circumstances of the situation. With one hand Duncan seized the deer's horns whilst with the other he drew his dirk. But in the same instant the buck bounded over the precipice, carrying the Highlander along with him. They went thus down upwards of a hundred feet, and were found the next morning in the spot where they fell. Fortune, who does not always regard retributive justice in her dispensations, ordered that the deer should fall underneath and be killed upon the spot, while Duncan escaped with his life, but with the fracture of a leg an arm, and three ribs. In this state he was lying on the carcass of the deer, and the injuries which he had received rendered him for the remainder of his life the cripple I have described. I never could approve of Duncan's conduct towards the deer in a moral point of view, (although, as the man in the play said, he was my friend) but the temptation of a hart of grease, offering as it were, his throat to the knife, would have subdued the virtue of almost any deer-stalker. Whether the anecdote is worth recording, or deserving of illustration, remains for your consideration. I have given you the story exactly as I recollect it.