

dismounted, and giving his horse to the attendant, stepped hastily to the door, which he opened with the freedom of an old acquaintance—and before she could leave the room he was in the room. She recognized him at a glance.

"It is Willie, father," she cried, in a voice of joy. "I am so happy to see you again, and all—for we all thought you had been dead."

It was indeed Willie: but he appeared not to partake of the joy of those who greeted him with such fervour: he gazed at Helen, and then at the babe she now held in her arms, in silence—and a deep shade of disappointment clouded his brow: he had stood thus a minute or two in silence, with a hand on each of the old people grasped in his—He felt awkward and abashed at his melancholy and imploring glance—and turning on it appeared busy with her son. Willie rested himself, and seemed as if in a fit of abstraction, his eyes still fixed on the object of his early love, and strong emotion depicted his countenance. The sight of the child awakened suspicions which he was not at a time able to confirm or dissipate by a single question—and his agitation was so extreme that no one present could call up resources to explain to him how or when Helen had changed her situation. The silence was painful to all, but to none more than to William himself—for he could read in the looks of William and Grizzel the reason why they were unwilling to speak. They felt for him; Helen's eye was filled with a tear, as she looked up blushing into the face of one who had claimed the first love offering of her in heart. This state of painful and too silent silence was put an end to by him who had most to dread from a disclosure.—Coming, as if by an effort forcing himself out of a train of thoughts, he held out his finger, pointed to the babe that was looking up into the face of the mother, in whose eye the tear still stood—

"Is it possible, Helen?" said he, in a voice tinged with strong emotion, and unable to finish the rest of the sentence, the meaning of which his pointed finger sufficiently indicated.

Helen was silent—the blush rose higher on her face, and the tear dropped on the face of the child. William and Grizzel looked at each other as if each wished the other to

"Speak, Helen," said Willie, partly recovering himself, "Can it be?" and he again faltered.

His emotion stopped still more effectually the voice of Helen, who hid her face on the breast of her child.

"Indeed, and it is just sae," at last said Grizzel. "That is Helen's bairn, and as bonny a one it is as she was hersel when we found her by the Eldrich Stane, wi' her head restin on the side o' puir auld Colin, who is since dead. Ah, Willie, ye hae yersel to blame—for ye never let us ken whether ye were dead or alive."

Willie drew his hand over his eyes, and was silent. There was another subject that pressed upon his heart, and one which he equally feared to broach by a question.

"And Elizabeth, my more than mother," he ejaculated in a broken voice—what of her?"

"She's in the kirkyard o' Minniegaff," answered Grizzel. "The sods are again grown together, and the grass is hail and green ower her grave."

"Oh, did I expect to meet all this!" muttered the unhappy man, as he held his hands upon his face. There was again silence in the cottage. "But had my dear friend plenty, and was she well cared for in her last moments?" he continued, with the same broken voice.

"Nane o' us had plenty at that dreadful time," answered Grizzel—"death was the only creature that seemed to have aneugh—we killed auld Hawky to save the life o' puir Elizabeth; but her time was come. She died i' the fear o' God; and you Willie, that was her only love on earth, was her last thought, as she left this world for that better ane whar friends dinna forget their auld benefactors."

"You are unkind, Grizzel," said he, "to add to my present sorrow, by the reproof contained in that hint. I have to you the appearance of being undutiful; but I was so situated that it was not in my power to communicate with her by letter—and to visit her in person was impossible. I would have been here years since, if I could have accomplished it—for I can solemnly declare, my heart has been ever here."

"I believe ye, Willie," cried Grizzel—"I