

mistrusted by the government and abhorred by the subdued Jacobites. Gordon's banded marauders had provoked the laws too far, and some sanguinary battles among themselves threatened his own power with a downfall. It was only a few nights after a desperate affray with the Lillithgow gipsies, that the event occurred which begins my narrative. He had been long lying in ambush to find access to his enemy's strong hold, intending to terminate his vagrant career by an exploit which should satisfy his avarice and revenge. Equipped, as I have said in a Cameronian trooper's garb, he returned to the foot of the cliff from whence he had seen the basket descending to convey Gavin Cameron, and remaining up its rough face with the accuracy acquired by mountain warfare, he hung among the jagged and broken rocks like a wild goat, until he found the crevice through which the basket seemed to issue. It was artfully concealed by tufts of heather, but creeping on his hands and knees, he forced his way into the interior. There the deepest darkness confounded him, till he laid his hand on a chain, which he rightly guessed to be the same he had seen hanging on the side of the lake when Cameron landed. One end was coiled up, but he readily concluded that the end must have some communication with the Keep, and he followed its course till he found it inserted in what seemed a subterraneous wall. A crevice behind the pulley and striving to raise himself sufficiently to gain a view through it, he leaned too forcibly on the chain, which sounded the bell. Its unexpected sound would have startled an adventurer less daring, but Gordon had prepared his stratagem, and had seen, through the loop-hole in the wall, that no powerful enemy was to be dreaded. Gavin Cameron was sitting alone in the chamber within, with his eyes fixed on the wood-ashes in his immense hearth. At the hollow sound of the bell he cast them feebly round, but made no attempt to rise, though he stretched his hand towards a staff which lay near him. Gordon saw the tremor of palsy and dismay in his limbs, and putting his lips to the crevice repeated "Father!" in a low and supplicating tone. That word made Gavin shudder; but when Gordon added "Father! father! save me!"—he sprang to the wall, drew back the iron bolts of a narrow door invisible to any eye but his own, and gave admission to the muffled man who leaped eagerly in. Thirty years had passed since Gavin Cameron had seen his son, and Gordon well knew how many rumours had been spread, that the younger Cameron had not really perished, though the ruin of the Chevalier's cause rendered his concealment necessary. Gavin's hopes and love had been all revived by these rumours, and the sudden apparition, the voice, eyes, and figure of Gordon, resembled his son—all else might and must be changed by thirty years. He wept like an infant on his shoulder, grasped his hand a hundred times, and forgot to blame him for the rash disloyalty he had shown to his father's cause. His pretended son told him a few strange events which had befallen him during his long banishment since 1715, and was spared the toll of lamenting many, by the fond delight of the old man, weeping and rejoicing over his prodigal restored. He only asked by what happy chance he had discovered his secret entrance, and whether any present danger threatened him. Gordon answered the first question with the mere truth, and added almost truly, that he feared nothing but the emissaries of the government, from whom he could not be better concealed than in Drummond Keep. Old Cameron agreed with joyful eagerness, but presently said, "Allan my boy! we must trust Annet—she's too near kin to betray ye, and ye were to have been her spouse." Then he explained that his niece was the only person in his household acquainted with the secret of the basket and the bell; that by her help he could provide a mattress and provisions for his son, but without it, would be forced to hazard the most dangerous inconferences. Gordon had not foreseen this proposal, and it darkened his countenance; but

in another instant his imagination seized on a rich surfeit of revenge. He was commanded to return into the cavern passage while his nominal father prepared his kinswoman for his new guest, and he listened greedily to catch the answers Annet gave ear to her deceived uncle's tale. He heard the hurry of her steps, preparing, as he supposed, a larger supper for the old laird's table, with the simplicity and hospitality of a highland maiden. When the hannocks, and grouse, and claret, were arranged, Cameron presented his restored son to the mistress of the feast.

Accustomed to the wild haggard forms that accompanied his banditti in half female attire, ruling their miserable off-spring with iron hands, and the voices of giants, his diseased fancy had fed itself on an idea of something beautiful, but only in bloom and youth. He expected and hoped to see a child full of playful folly, fit for him to steal away and hide in his den, as a sport for his secret leisure, but a creature so fair, calm, and saintly, he had long since forgotten how to imagine. She came before him like a dream of some lovely picture remembered in his youth, and with her came some remembrance of his former self. The good old laird, forgetting that his niece had been but a child, and his son a stripling, when they parted, indulged the joy of his heart by asking Annet a thousand times, whether she could remember her betrothed husband, and urging his son, since he was still unmarried, to pledge his promised bride. Gordon was silent from a feeling so new, that he could not comprehend his own purposes and Annet from fear, when she observed the darkness and the fire that came by turns into the kinsman's face. But there was yet another peril to encounter. Cameron's large hearth was attended by a dog, which roused itself when supper appeared, and Gordon instantly recognised his banished favourite. Black Chieftain fixed his eyes on his former master, and with a growl that delighted him more than any caress would have done, remained sulkily by the fire. On the other side of the ingle, under the shelter of the huge chimney-arch, sat a thing hardly human, but entitled, from extreme old age, to the protection of the owner. This was a woman bent entirely double, with no apparent sense of sight or hearing, though her eyes were fixed on the spindle she was twirling; and sometimes, when the laird raised his voice, she put her lean hand on the curb or hood that covered her ears. "Do you not remember old Marian noome?" said Annet, and the laird led his supposed son towards the superannuated crone, though without expecting any mark of recognition. Whether she had noticed any thing that had passed, could not be judged, from her idiot laugh; and she had almost ceased to speak. Therefore, as if only dumb domestic animals had been sitting by his hearth, Cameron pursued his arrangements for his son's safety, advising him to sleep composedly in the wooden-pannelled bed that formed a closet of this chamber, without regarding the half-living skeleton, who never left the corner of her ingle. He gave him his blessing, and departed, taking with him his niece and the key of this dreary room, promising to return and watch by his side. He came back in a few moments, and while the impostor couched himself on his mattress, took his station again by the fire, and fell asleep, overcome with joy and fatigue.

The embers went out by degrees, while the highland Jaehimo lay meditating how he should prosper by his stratagem's success. Plunder and bloodshed had formed no part of a scheme which included far deeper craft and finer revenge. He knew his life was forfeited, and his person traced by officers of justice; and he hoped by representing himself as the son of Cameron, to secure all the benefits of his influence, and the sanctuary of his roof; and if both should fail to save him from justice, the disgrace of his infamous life and death would fall on the family of his father's murderer. So from his earliest youth he had considered Cameron, and the hand of that

drowned father, uplifted in vain for help, was always present to his imagination. Once during this night, he had thought of robbing Cameron of his money and jewels by force, and carrying off his niece as a hostage for his own safety. But this part of his purpose had been deadened by a new and strange sense of holiness in beauty which had made his nature human again. Yet he thought of himself with bitterness and ire when he compared her sweet society, her uncle's kindness, and the comforts of a domestic hearth, with the herd which he now resembled; and this self-hatred stung him to rise and depart without molesting them. He was prevented by the motion of a shadow on the opposite wall, and in an instant the dog, who had so sullenly shunned his notice, leaped from beneath his bed, and seized the throat of the hag as she crept near it. She had taken her sleeping master's dirk, and would have used it like a faithful highland servant, if Black Chieftain's snarl had not interposed to rescue Gordon. The broad copper brooch which fastened her plaid saved her from suffocation, and clapping her hands, she yelled, "a Gordon—a Gordon!" till the roof rung.

Gavin Cameron awoke, and ran to his supposed son's aid, but the mischief was done. The doors of the huge chamber were broken open, and a troop of men in the king's uniform, and two messengers with official staves, burst in together. These people had been sent by the lord Provost in quest of the Gipsy Chieftain, with authority to demand quarters in Drummond's Tower, near which they knew he had hiding places. Gordon saw he had plunged into the very nest of his enemies, but his daring courage supported him. He refused to answer to the name of Gordon, and persisted in calling himself Cameron's son. He was carried before the High-Court of Justiciary, and the importance of the indictment fixed the most eager attention on his trial. Considering the celebrity, the length, and the publicity of the Gipsy Chief's career, it was thought that his person would have been instantly identified; but the craft he had used in tinging his hair, complexion, and eye-brows, and altering his whole appearance to resemble Cameron's son, baffled the many who appeared as his accusers. So much had Gordon attached his colleagues, or so strong was the Spartan spirit of fidelity and obedience amongst them, that not one appeared to testify against him. Gavin Cameron and his niece were cited to give their evidence on oath; and the miserable father, whatever doubts might have secretly risen in his mind, dare not hazard a denial which might sacrifice his own son's life. He answered in an agony which his grey hair made venerable that he believed the accused to be his son, but left it to himself to prove what he had no means of manifesting. Annet was called next to confirm her uncle's account of her cousin's mysterious arrival; but when the accused turned his eyes upon her, she fainted, and could not be recalled to speech. The swoon was deemed the most affecting evidence of his identity; and finally the dog was brought into court. Several witnesses recognised him as the prime forger of the Gordon Gipsies; but Cameron's steward, who swore that he saved him by chance from drowning, in the loch, also proved, that the animal never shewed the smallest sagacity in herding sheep, and had been kept by his master's side as a mere household guard, distinguished by his ludicrous attention to music. When shewn at the bar, the crafty and unconscious brute seemed unacquainted with the prisoner, and his surly silence was received as evidence by the crowd. The Lord High Commissioner summed up the whole, and the chancellor of the jury declared, that a majority, almost amounting to unanimity, acquitted the accused. Gordon under the name of Cameron, was led from the bar with acclamations; but at the threshold of the Session's Court, another pursuivant awaited him with an arrest for high-treason, as an adherent to the Pretender in arms. The enraged crowd would have crucified him by force, and made outcries which he silenced with a haughty air of command, desiring