

ment he had predicted. The sun of Napoleon had reached its meridian, the fires of Moscow raised a cloud before it, behind which it hastened to its setting. In the events of that memorable invasion and retreat, James Nicholson took an eager and mournful interest. Thoughts of it haunted him in his sleep; and he would dream of Russian deserts, which presented to the eye an unbounded waste of snow; or start, exclaiming, "The Cossacks! the Cossacks!" His temper, too, became irritable, and his family found it hard to bear with it.

This, however, was not the only cause which increased the irritability, and provoked the indignation of James the Leveller; for as the glory of Napoleon began to wane, and the arms of the British achieved new victories in the Peninsula, he, and his brethren in principle, became the objects of almost nightly persecution. Never did the mail arrive, bearing tidings of the success of the British or their allies, but as surely was a figure, intended to represent one or other of the Levellers, paraded through the village, and turned before the door of the offender, amidst his shouts, the groans, and laughter, of some two or three hundred boys and young men. The reader may be surprised to hear, that one of the principal leaders of these young and mischief loving loyalists, was no other than *George Washington*, the only son of an old friend, James Nicholson. To turn him on conduct, and the manifestation of a principle so unworthy of his name, James would receive neither admonition, reproof, nor the aid of correction. But George was now too old for his father to apply the latter, and his silence and reproof in this matter was like pouring water in the sea. The namesake of the great President never took a part in such exhibitions of his father, and in holding his principles up to execration and contempt; on the contrary, he did all in his power to prevent them, and repeatedly endeavored to prevent them—but he entered, with his whole heart, into every proposal to make a mock spectacle of others. The young tormentors knew little or nothing of the principles of the men they delighted to persecute—it was enough for them to know that they were *Levellers*, that *they wished the French to win*; and although James Nicholson was known to be, as I have already said, the very king and oracle of the levelling party in the neighborhood, yet, for his son's sake, he frequently escaped the persecution intended for him, and it was visited upon the heads of more insignificant characters.

One evening, James beheld his son heading the noisy band, in a crusade against the peace of a particular friend; moreover, George bore a long pole over his shoulder, to the top of which an intended resemblance of his father's friend was attached. James further saw his hopeful son and the crowd reach his friend's house, he beheld him scale the walls, (which were but a single story in height,) he saw him stand upon the roof—the pole, with the effigy attached to it, was again handed to him, and, amidst the shouts of his companions, he put the pole down the chimney, leaving the figure as a smoke doctor on its top.

James could endure no more. "Oh, the villain! the scoundrel!" he cried—"the—the"—but he could add no more, from excess of indignation. He rushed along the street—he dashed through the crowd—he grasped his son by the throat, at the moment of his springing from the roof. He shook with rage. He struck him violently. He raised his feet and kicked him.

"What is a' this for?" said George, sullenly, while he suffered even more from shame than his father's violence.

"What is it for!" cried James, half choked with passion; "ye rascal! ye disgrace! ye profligate! how can ye ask what is it for?" and he struck him again.

"Faither," said George, more sullenly than before, "I wad advise ye to keep yer hands to yersel—at least on the street and before folk."

"Awa wi' ye! ye reprobate! exclaimed the old man. "and never enter my door again—never while ye breathe—ye thankless!"

"Be it sae," said George.

James returned to his house, in sorrow and in anger. He was out of humour with everything. He found fault with his daughter—he spoke angrily to his wife. Chairs, stools, tables, and crockery, he kicked to the right and left. He flung his supper behind the fire when it was set before him. He was grieved at his conduct; but he was also angry with himself for his violence towards him.

A sergeant of a Highland regiment had been for some time in the village, on the recruiting service. He was to leave with his recruits, and proceed to Leith, where they were immediately to embark on the following morning. Amongst the recruits, were many of the acquaintances of George and his companions. After the affair of the effigy, they went to have a parting glass with them.