

hung upon his heart and filled him with remorse, and he resolved that in the morning he should solicit for his release. He did so, his suit was fortunate, and before the noon, Donald was at liberty.

That day, according to custom, Lady Alice was seated in the family hall to receive her numerous tenantry who came to pay their yearly rents. In a corner, apart from the others, sat Allan, apparently perusing a book with intense interest, but his mind was otherwise occupied. The mysterious answers of the fiend, the dread of exposure should he not be able to meet the demands of Murdoch, and the gnawings of a guilty conscience, all were busy within him. Tenant after tenant arrived, each producing his stipulated sum to the Lady Alice.—The dark eye of Allan might be seen occasionally to glance to the piles of gold and silver which heaped the table, then quickly return to the page again. "Ah!" thought he, "but a little of that would suffice to set my mind at rest," and device was soon at work in his guilty bosom.

Before the business of the day was closed, the evening had come, and Lady Alice, after bidding her tenantry adieu, who were now enjoying her hospitality, and once more receiving Donald to her bosom, whom in her heart, she had never fairly considered guilty, ordered the books and papers to be deposited in the iron chest, which we have before alluded to, and where was kept the family plate, then collecting the money into a leathern bag, she carried it with her to her chamber for better security till she was able next morning to count it correctly.

To a late hour the guests kept together, and when at last they departed, the only one who remained aloof was Allan. He had retired to his chamber, but his mind was fixed upon the accomplishment of a certain act—an act of crime—the robbery of his aunt. He determined by the deed to evade the commission of murder which the night hag had prophesied would befall him, and he thought that if he could enter his aunt's chamber, as he had already done, and secure the sum that was necessary for the defrayment of Murdoch's tax, from the money yet uncounted, he might escape detection, lull the avarice of Murdoch, and again be happy. Foolish hope—what can cover crime? Nothing!

It was now midnight, and with a silent and stealthy pace he descended from his room, and gaining the door of his aunt's, quietly undid the latch. The low breathing of the worthy ma-

tron fell upon his ear like the accusing voice of justice—his heart beat audibly against his breast—he paused, his resolution seemed to forsake him—he was about to return, but the form of Murdoch stood before his fevered sight, the finger of dishonour seemed to point at him, the angel of repentance fled from his bosom and he was again in the toils of the tempter. He gained the table and passing his hand over it, to his confusion found that the prize was not there. Where, where could she have placed it? At that moment the moon burst brightly from behind a cloud, darting its beams into the apartment with a brilliancy almost equal to that of day. Allan beheld his aunt reclining sweetly in slumber, a smile was playing on her aged features, and he thought that in the breathings of her sleep she murmured a blessing upon his name. From beneath her pillow he saw the sought for treasure, but how to secure it—no matter, it must be done—and cautiously he slipped the wallet from its resting place, but slight as was the motion it was enough to awaken the Lady Alice—she sprang from her pillow and uttered a loud scream. Allan was endeavouring to escape from the room, but the light of the moon revealed his figure.

"Ah! Allan is it you?" she exclaimed, "would you rob your aunt?"

It was plain he was discovered, disgrace was for ever upon him—there was no way left to bury the secret but by her death—murder at once took possession of his heart—he seized his dirk, and the next moment buried it in the heart of Alice!

Her screams had aroused the household, who were now heard to be hurrying towards the chamber. How to conceal himself he knew not—he rushed into the hall, there stood the old iron chest—he knew the secret spring that unlocked it—he touched it, the lid flew open, and springing into it drew the lid down, and thus lay secure from observation.

The first who reached the chamber of Lady Alice, was young Donald, who beheld the wallet laying on the floor which in his terror Allan had left behind him. He seized it, and the domestics entering and finding him there with it in his hand, their mistress murdered, and horror rendering him pale and speechless, at once concluded that he was the assassin. His former crime, which by many had been disbelieved, was now fully credited, and the ill-starred Donald was arrested as the murderer of the Lady Alice.

The authorities of that time were most summary in the execution of the laws, and next