

his guest. She therefore descended to the drawing-room, to do the honours of the house herself.

Here then they met each other.

Nay, gentle reader! we cannot—must not tell thee what transpired. Suffice it, that the five long years they'd passed in mournful separation, were a price you'd deem too cheap, at which to purchase such a meeting.

Another thundering announcement on the court-yard gate again reverberated through the inmost mazes of that ancient Hall. It shook the wild woods of that forest glade, silencing the thrush's morning song—startling the goldfinch from her sweetest strain of melody—and hushing the blackbird's thrilling notes, of loud and long continuous chords—nay, even the eternal cawing of the rooks around the Hall, ceased for an instant; and all nature seemed to listen to the crashing of that iron sound;* when Master Harry's two young friends were ushered in.

They were just in time to stop the explanation. Harry had commenced, to crumble into dust that air-built castle which Alice in her dreams had formed from out the frail materials of their mutual love. Her uncle and Mr. Grassenthwaite entered the room at the same time. The former, with more than his usual cordiality, saluted our hero, saying:

"This is indeed an instance of such noble generosity as I have never met with in my life before. Mr. Grassenthwaite has told me all."

"Oh, no! my dear Sir, you overrate the deed," hastily interrupted Master Harry. "It was, considering all the circumstances of the case, nothing but an act of common honesty; and, I pray you, in mercy to another's feelings, as well as to my own, to say no more about it."

"But I will—I must!" retorted Mr. Winterton, "in justice to your young and generous friend," turning to his cousin and to Charles Moreland. "It is my paramount duty to inform you that Harry Netherby, of Hellbeck-Hall, has renounced, in favour of my niece, the whole amount of that ruinous claim, which the law, after years of litigation, had awarded him. I have just this moment, in consequence of this noble act, reinstated my niece, there, Alice Musgrave, into all the rights and privileges of her ancestral home; so that I myself, as well as you, fair sirs, have now become a guest at will," pointing to his niece, "of the sole Mistress of Forest Hall;" adding, with his blithest smile—"What say you, Alice, are we welcome here?"

* To those who have never seen one of these iron studded court-yard doors, with its huge and ponderous knocker, this description may seem exaggerated; but to those who have seen them it will not. To the former I need only mention that the sound may be heard a mile off.

But Alice could not speak. She rushed into her uncle's arms, and fell upon his neck, and wept aloud. Such ecstasies, however, are easily allayed; tears of joy are soon dried up; and all was peace and joy and pleasure, in that happy circle. And yet, what was it all? The fleeting sunshine of an April day: as transient, too, to more than one.

The next morning, on their departure, Harry Netherby was the lingering last to say that fearful word—"farewell;" and before he could give it utterance, Mr. Winterton and his son had gone out into the court-yard with the other guests, thus affording him a brief opportunity of speaking to Alice alone. He did *not*, however, say one word of what he had intended. He simply took her passive hand in his, and pressed it to his lips, and said, as he relinquished it:

"That hand and heart, I feel, would now be mine, through weal and woe, but for the dire effects of that accursed feud between our ancestors. But there's another state of being, far, far away beyond the reach of others' whims, and wills, and passions, as well as of our own, to which I look with hopes that are denied me here. There,"—and his voice faltered as he spoke,— "there we shall meet again, and yet be happy. Till then, farewell, dear Alice!"

Alice Musgrave, though partially prepared, by hints she had received from Bridget Nelson, for this announcement, yet never pictured to herself the dread reality, until she heard her doom pronounced by his own lips; and then it fell upon her like a thunderbolt; and the scathed and blighted form stood, in the middle of that cold and spacious Hall, as still and motionless, where he had left her, as were the features of her fathers, in the dim and dusty canvas on the walls around.

And there, her uncle, on returning, saw the marble statue stand before him.

"My own dear Alice! why so pale and sad?" he said, astonished and alarmed at her appearance, "when all Ra'stondale will rejoice at your good fortune? The Musgraves are restored to their inheritance again; and though the tenants could not brook the thought of bending the stubborn knee in homage to a new and nameless landlord, they'll all be here tomorrow, on the lawn before the Hall, to feast and revel on your bounty. I have but hinted at your restoration, and all the Fells, I know, will rise, and follow you to Dunfell, if you tell them. As your steward," he playfully continued, in hopes to rouse her from the apathy occasioned, now he thought, by her recent parting, with her true, and favoured, and accepted lover; "as your steward, I've taken it upon myself to order all things for their