

chamber. He threw every thing open with a bold hand, and the uplifting of the window produced a degree of noise, to the like of which the house had for some time been unaccustomed; he looked out, and saw the external world bright before him, with all the rich colourings of a September evening. The sun had just sunk behind the distant screen of the Argyll and Dumbartonshire hills; the outline of huge Benlomond glowed like a blood-red jewel against the wide golden sky beyond; a thick and hazy cloud of mist had gathered over the rich valleys to the westward, through which, here and there, some far-off bending of the river flashed for a moment in a streak of reflected crimson; near at hand, the tall elms that surround the village churchyard stood with all their brown leaves whispering in the faint breeze of the twilight; a fine herd of cattle were passing along the neighbouring "green loaming," in a long deliberate line; the hum of the village sent an occasional echo through the intervening hedge-rows; all was quiet and beautiful above and below; the earth seemed to be clothed all over with sights and sounds of serenity; and the sky, deepening into darker and darker blue overhead, shewed the earliest of its stars intensely twinkling, as if ready to harbinger or welcome the coming moon.

The widowed man gazed for some minutes in silence upon the glorious calm of Nature, and then turned with a sudden start to the side of the room where the wife of his bosom had so lately breathed;—he saw the pale dead face; the black ringlets parted on the brow; the marble hand extended upon the sheet; the unclosed glassy eyes; and the little girl leaning towards her mother in a gaze of half-horrified bewilderment. He drew near to the couch—grasped the cold hand, and cried, "O God! O God!"—a shriek, not a prayer; he closed the stiffening eye-lids over the soft but ghastly orbs; kissed the brow, the cheek, the lips, the bosom, and then rushed down the stairs, and away out, bare-headed, into the fields, before any one could stop him, or ask whither he was going.