

glancing to Jenny, "But, about the cow, depend on it, age destroys youthfulness sooner than real worth; and, loth, woman, what wad a calf o' her no be worth!"

The speaker seemed determined to keep up the price of the cow; and, to make sure of verifying his prediction of the high price she would bring, declared his intention to become the purchaser himself. He invited Walter to drink a mug of ale with him in Rab Watson's tent, whilst they made the bargain.

"Tak care, noo, Wattie," cried Tibbie, as they went away together; "tak care, Wattie. And, Laird, gin ye play ony o' yer Danse market tricks, and bring Wattie back singing, I canna put yersel in reach o' my staff—that's a'."

"Fearna," he replied, likewise assuming a serious air. "To do hurt to you or yours will ay be the ac thought farst frae the heart o' auld Sandy Thompson."

Thus saying, they left the comforted mother and daughter, with a promise to return ere long. The bargain about the cow was easily concluded, when the purchaser was more ready to appreciate the advantages of it than the seller was to extol them.

"Weel, Wattie, I am glad to get a canny crack wi' ye," said he, with the air of a man who has something to communicate. "Put round the stoup, man, and let us forget, for a wee, the changes you and I hae seen o' late years. D'ye ken, I'm thinkin' o' changin' either my quarters or my condition?"

"Changin', Laird," said the other. "Tak my advice, and keep yer present quarters guid. Funtin's nae better than it's ca'ed. But whar wad ye be changin' to?"

"I kenna," said the Laird; "but ye see, sin' ye took awa' Tibbie Dodds frae me, I no'er had heart to seek another for my wife—sae I hae nae to care for me in a way; an' haein' a pickle siller, I hae just been thinkin' to enjoy it, while I can, to mak some sport wi'd, as I say to mysel'."

"Mak sport, say ye, Laird, wi' the labour o' a lifetime!"

"Ay, o'on sae—I'm no yet sae far gane i' years as that I mayna work for enjoyment. Sae I'm a'maist resolved either to hae a wife, Wattie, or gang off to America."

Walter Arnot made no reply to this, and the bargain about the cow being finally arranged, to the great satisfaction of the guidwife, it was agreed that she should be sent to pasture in a park which the Laird rented from the proprietor of Wedderlie, adjoining to Walter's fields. As it was but a short distance from the cottage, Janet was to milk her as usual. This transaction, on the part of the kind-hearted Sandy Thompson, was, in fact, only a delicate method of presenting his old friend with a sum of money which he knew to be needful in his extremity, and, at the same time, securing to Tibbie the use of her favorite cow. It may be thought that there was more than the mere motive of kindness in this act; and it must be confessed that other feelings than those of friendship *did* mingle in it—though nothing was farther from his mind than any conscious intention of forcing himself, by this means, upon his "Jos Janet," as he had long called Walter's daughter. As for the honest family he had obliged, they returned home with hearts not a little relieved; and it was with more than usual fervour that they knelt together that night to offer up their regularly paid thanksgiving at the foot-stool of Him who had dealt so mercifully amid their afflictions. On the following morning, Walter Arnot rose early to enter on his new employment. It was, in many respects, a sad day to them all. Walter could scarcely persuade himself to pass the scene of so many hard days' labour. The scene of his future exertions, the nature of his employment, every step and every movement, reminded him painfully of the change; and even the mild superintendance of the Place steward whispered to him that he was no longer his own master. His wife and his Janet looked often and sadly on to see the fields around tilled by another. Janet could scarcely persuade herself that the homely dinner ought not to be delayed for her father's return; and they sat down at last, sadly and silently, to a comfortless board. Tibbie shed the first tears their misfortunes had ever commanded, when she looked upon his empty place. Their extraordinary attention made Walter feel somehow that he was an object of compassion—a thought he could not brook; all his honest pride was aroused to forbid the comment that they all strove to assume. A few days of such painful experience told upon the health of the aged pair; and, ere a second week had passed away, Janet, in addition to her other duties, was called upon to wait by the sick bed of her mother. Her dutiful affection moved her for every exertion; and, it may be, the necessity of such exertion saved her from the influence of sad and watering thoughts. Anxiety about her wandering lover often, indeed, pressed itself upon her mind, and refused to be quieted. Among the first to offer their condolence, and express an in-

terest in their afflictions, was their friend, Sandy Thompson. He had, long ere now, secured Janet's esteem, by his honest worth; and her warmest friendship, by his uniform kindness to her parents. These sentiments were not diminished by late occurrences; and the frank and hearty expression of her gratitude afforded him, it may be, some ground to cherish his foolish fondness—fondness which, alas! was to prove the destruction of all her earthly peace and happiness. It was a beautiful morning in July, and Janet, having engaged her father to watch by the bedside of her afflicted mother until her return, hastened to the park to milk her cow. When she reached the park, she, to her alarm, found it deserted. The whole herd of cattle had strayed, she could neither imagine how nor where. Her search was soon joined by others equally interested in it; but she was obliged to return without success. Her father joined those who set out to endeavor to trace the stragglers; and, from the route they had taken, the state of the fences, and other circumstances, the poor people were soon convinced that their cows, the support and comfort of so many families, had fallen a prey to a band of ruffians, who had committed several depredations among the flocks in the neighbourhood. Those who know anything of the poor, will easily conceive how heavy a blow this was felt to be by all, and not least by our unfortunate friends.

This, however, was a bereavement which the kindness of Sandy Thompson could readily mitigate. It was his first care, when he heard of it, to offer, in the mean time, the use of one of his own best milkers; and a new expression of Janet's gratitude lent new force and countenance to the foolish passions of the simple old man.

Things went on for some time in this way; but misfortunes always follow in a train; and the composure that Janet was struggling to regain, the hopes she was beginning to cherish, were destined to be speedily blighted. Her father had been employed for some time in *tirring*, as it is called, a steep bank for an intended quarry; and one morning he was carried home from thence with a broken limb and other serious injuries. Janet's feelings may be more easily conceived than described; the sufferings of her parents, her own exertions over-taxed, and the destitution of the family, now that they were deprived even of the scanty fruits of her father's labour, urged her almost to the brink of despair. Their old and faithful friend did not stand aloof in this their hour of need, his aid in pecuniary matters was ever ready, presented in the frankest and most delicate manner; his visits became daily; and the frequent opportunities he thus enjoyed of seeing Janet—of witnessing the devotedness of her filial piety, and of listening to her repeated expressions of gratitude and respect for himself—all assisted in augmenting his passion, and in reviving in some measure, the feelings and emotions of a youthful lover.

"Hoo shall we ever pay back a' yer kindness?" she said, as a tear of gratitude trembled in her eye.

"By ae word," he replied, endeavouring to summon up resolution to make the cherished proposal; "by ae word," Janet said only that ye'll be my wife, an' the debt, as ye ca', though I consider it nane, is mair than can be paid. Yes, Janet, ye'll make my days days o' happiness and peace, which they'll no'er be without ye." And he seized her hand, and gazed upon the bewildered girl with mingled looks of fondness and suspense.

After a minute's silence, she exclaimed—"Can ye be serious! Oh, if ye could but have spared me the feelings with which I say that can never be—for a reason were there nae other—that my heart and hand are promised to another. Yer kindness we can never repay. As for the siller, when Henry comes back"—And she took refuge from the feelings of helpless obligation in the fond hope of her wanderer's return.

Many a fainting step did that hope support; but it failed, too, on the morning when Adam Weir, the Edinburgh carrier, brought the news that the vessel in which he was embarked had perished. His ship was a wreck and all that Jenny cherished and delighted in perished there too. She sat down in black desolate despondency. Afflictions pressed around her and her stay had failed; but hope, faint hope that he might have survived, came at last, and she awoke again to the imperative calls of duty—of the wants of those who depended upon her care. It was gloomy matter to her. Happiness had fled from her experience—her existence was one continued course of listless, almost stupid exertion on behalf of those she still loved with a melancholy tenderness, lighted only by the flickering glances of that affectionate and stubborn hope that looked for Henry back. It may be conceived with what feelings she was still forced to hear the incessantly urged suit of her aged benefactor.

"Ye sat, Janet, when a bairn, on my knee; ye found a place in this lonely heart; o'ery bairn's action o' yours found a place there; and noo ye are necessary to its happiness. Ye speak o' respect and friendship; but then ye blast a' the hope and affections that yet

remain in my breast when ye say ye canna loe me. Be it sae; but still, O Janet, for their sakes, marry me."

This was all grief and distraction to her. The man she could not but esteem; their obligations now pressed heavily on her mind, when she could no longer turn with confidence to Henry's successful return as the period of their existence. She felt, in all its bitterness, her own unprovided situation, and, more than all, the helplessness and destitution of her parents. An impassioned love, for one who might be hid forever from her sight, consumed her energy. She could only listen, in silence and sorrow, to the painful entreaties that were addressed to her. Her father felt her dependence and his own, and saw the uncomplaining partner of all his cares and toils borne down by affliction, and totally unprovided for, in the days when he had hoped to see her in ease and comfort. He gave way to discontent and murmuring, that grieved his pious and affectionate daughter; he saw her union with the old laird to be the only deliverance from all their troubles; and he joined his entreaties to those of his friend; sometimes he was even tempted to give way to reproaches, of what he called the "self will and obstinacy" of his devoted child. Her mother felt all the bitterness of their trials—but she had a woman's heart within her breast, and she knew what was passing in her daughter's mind; at the same time she viewed their destitution in its worst aspect. She spoke not a word on the painful sacrifice, but "she looked in Jenny's face till her heart was like to break."

Sandy Thompson was their last and only stay. And, now the old man's happiness was gone, his purpose was unsettled, and he reverted again to his old notion of seeking a new home and enjoyment beyond the Atlantic. The fear of unrelieved poverty presented itself to the aged pair; and the trials of their daughter were all increased—carried out beyond her own feelings and regards—her hopes of seeing Henry unencouraged by the vaguest report. Urged, entreated, reproached, she gave a reluctant and almost unconscious assent—and was at length to give her hand to one who could never hope to please her heart.

There was no merry wedding party to celebrate the union; privately and quietly they were declared man and wife, and Janet went sadly to her new home. She looked the picture of resignation; but she could not seem happy and cheerful—her mind was weaned from the earth, and she sought not its joys. One of her great objects was now gained—her parents were placed beyond the fear of want; but then it was not, as she had fondly dreamed, by the fruits of her Henry's exertion. No other object of earthly desire remained to her. She endeavoured to discharge the duties of an affectionate wife—she could do no more. She had given her hand but her heart was in the sea. She struggled against thoughts of him whom she could now call her own; but the remembrance of him still hung over her mind like a brooding unfulfilled destiny. No cheerful calm spread around, and the most affectionate and watchful kindness of her guidman, could command no more than a mournful and unnatural smile.

Henry had escaped from the wreck, and he was made rich, in his own estimation, by a reward from the owners of the vessel for his disinterested exertions to save their property. With his little treasure, he hastened to present himself before her who had supported him in every danger and difficulty; and cheerfully and eagerly he hurried along, big with the near prospect of their united happiness. The farm house of Sandy Thomson was on his way; and he only meant to stop there for a moment to ask the refreshment that his parched throat and exhausted frame demanded. He approached the door, and a young woman, with a look of deep and touching melancholy, beckoned him in. As he ascended the steps, she looked upon him fixedly, and, as her cold eye met his, her face grew white as death. Henry suddenly staggered back against the wall—it was Janet! the being who had haunted his memory night and day, dreaming or waking. He flew to clasp her in his arms; but words are altogether inadequate to describe the dismay, the agony of that meeting. The young wife uttered a loud shriek, and sank senseless on the threshold of her husband's door. "His lives—he lives!" were the only words she articulated. The next moment her mother, with streaming eyes, threw her arms around her seemingly lifeless daughter, and, in the most heart-rending accents, implored Henry's pity on one that had become the wife of another to save her aged parents from starvation. Henry stared in her face wildly, exclaiming, "Merciful God, uphold me in this terrible hour of trial!" rushed from the house. The Laird kissed his wife's cheek with a mixture of tenderness and pity, and attempted to infuse balm into her corroding heart; but Janet, through her fast-coming tears and sobs, told the sorrowing group that her peace was gone forever. Her death, perhaps, was nearer than she apprehended; for,