

had not the two leaders chanced to meet—not however, till the conflict had been raging some time with doubtful success to either side—when their swords flew simultaneously from their scabbards, and their followers paused and stood idly looking on, in amazement at the fury of the contest, as if the fierce combatants had agreed, like their prototypes of old, that the battle should be decided by them alone, as if they had said—

“Let thou and I the battle try,
And set our men aside!”

“The result was, that the Musgrave was killed on the spot, and they bore him home on their shoulders as I’ve told you; while the Netherby was taken into his mansion, mortally wounded, and carried up into that room, they’ve called the haunted chamber ever since, for even before he died, strange sights were seen in it, as John the butler can tell you; but I’m forgetting myself, for he has been gone too, these many years. But he used to tell how a tall black figure, (although ghosts are generally white, but this was black,) with eyes fiery red, came and stood at his master’s bedside, the night he died, and said something, but what, he would not repeat, and it will therefore now never be known, as the secret has gone down with him to the grave, although he was solicited to reveal it even on his death-bed, but he shook his head in token of refusal. And awful and unearthly sounds are still frequently heard in that chamber, even to this very day, especially when the helm-wind is up; and no one has ever set foot in it since that fearful night, and the bloody clothes are left lying there yet, just as they were when the corpse was taken away, and laid out, the moment his breath was gone, in another room, when the door was locked and the key lost!

“But I had forgotten all about the helm-wind, the mention of which brought the whole story to my mind, and I have only to remark concerning it, that it never before had been known so fierce and boisterous, nor ever since, nor, I hesitate not to say, now that we are no longer such a lawless race, will it ever be again. The prince and power of the air was doubtless in this mysterious wind that night—at least every body believed so.”

Such was my grandfather’s account of the events which broke down the Netherbys as much as they had reduced the Musgraves some years before, and as both the principals had fallen in the last affray, and as each party, in its turn, had been so severely punished for its ferocious conduct, no apparent notice was taken of the matter by the executive, although it was whispered that the two heirs, for the Netherby had also a son, who had thus so suddenly come to their inheri-

tance, had received some admonition or warning from a high quarter, which they dared not, and did not disregard.

But, however kings and secretaries of state, and courts of law may control men’s actions, their thoughts and feelings are beyond their power, and those which had actuated their fathers were inherited by the sons, in a spirit, if possible, of more rancorous hatred, and a more resolute determination of revenge, notwithstanding they well knew it could only be effected by means within the limits of the law.

Shortly after this melancholy event, the two young heirs married into good families, who, it so happened, were on intimate terms with each other, which brought about, in the course of time, some little intercourse, of a courteous, if not of a friendly nature, as far at least, as meeting each other at the tables of the mutual friends of their wives, might be so considered; and there is little doubt, but that these amiable and saint-like women contributed not a little to soften the asperities of this bitter enmity, and might eventually, by the suavity of their manners, and by the piety of their demeanor, have been the means of accomplishing a perfect reconciliation, which indeed was ultimately brought about by their instrumentality.

I have said, already, that the unfortunate lawsuit which caused the death of the younger Musgrave, had indirectly originated in the losses he had sustained by the foray upon his property; not but that there were other causes; but this was the principal one; for he had a heavy fine to pay, or rather his father had; and then there were lawyer’s fees, and bribes, and gamblers’ fees, and prison expences, &c. &c.—and these etceteras were probably more than all the other items put together. So that when he regained his liberty, and found himself robbed of nearly all his moveable property, he was obliged to borrow a large sum of money on a mortgage upon his estate, the interest of which, with pinching economy, he could barely manage to pay during his life; but on his son’s coming to the estate, which was entailed, some of these claims, which had been constituted before he became of age, and consequently without his concurrence, naturally fell; and as regarded the principal mortgage, he had so arranged with the mortgagee, that he was to pay him by easy instalments, which, from the superior productiveness of the property, he could spare out of his annual income, and still leave him a surplus, over and above his expenditure, sufficient to enable him to carry into effect the plans he had formed, of rebuilding the Hall; but this agreement was, unfortunately, not a legal one; or if it was, for there was some mystery