

continued till within a couple of hours of high noon, when it gradually died away.

The tables, consisting of vessels and loose planks, provided and kept for this grand occasion, on its return with each revolving year, were now set in the little lawn in front of the house, and covered with fine linen cloths, as white as snow, some of them of Margery's own spinning. Then came on the noble Baron and the royal Sirloin.—But I must not weary the reader with a minute detail of that grand dinner. I cannot, however, omit to notice one particular dish in the centre of the table, especially as old dame Mounsey was so proud of it as to have been frequently heard to mention it. This was an enormous fat wether roasted whole. It was resting on its haunches, the fore feet extending out in front of the head, which was raised to almost an erect position, and its ears pricked up, altogether as if alive, and in the act of springing for a leap, or about to do so.

It was something more indeed than an ordinary sheep-shearing, as the motto, in legible characters on the garland, formed of flowers and paper curiously cut, around the neck of the fat wether, conspicuously denoted;

"William Mounsey's 21st Birth-day."

And the health of William Mounsey, son and heir of Wastel Head, the hope and dependence of his parents to hand down their name to posterity, and to occupy that loved spot which had been the home of his fathers during so many generations, was drank, with the most enthusiastic cheers, in ale which had been brewed for his christening.

The cheerful repast was soon finished, when to work the shearers went again with renewed vigour and more uproarious mirth. This continued till the last fleece was shorn.

The sun was still high in the heavens; and now the sports began. The elderly men were engaged with quoits, and the boys with the Border game of prison-bars, while the young men formed a ring and had a royal wrestling match.

Appropriate prizes were prepared for the victors in each. A silver-studded belt for the victor wrestler; a pair of steeled quoits for the quoit players, and a bag of marbles, or some such trifle—auld Diekey could not remember what it was, but something that could be divided among about a dozen boys, constituting each, and of course the winning party at the prison-bars. All were awarded by the heir of Wastel Head, who had that day come of age.

Before these games were half over, they were sadly interrupted, at least that of the wrestlers was, by certain new arrivals. Horses with their riders were again observed on the tops and

sides of the mountains surrounding this usually lonely spot. Wastel Head, I ought to have said long ago, was situated, (I say was, I know not where it's now, those rail-roads have upset every thing!) in a sort of amphitheatre of a horse-shoe form, with the space only between the heels open to the plains below. These were also approaching this grand rendezvous of fun and frolic; but the riders on this occasion were all, or nearly all females, the sisters or sweethearts of the wrestlers, and hence the interruption to their sport on the arrival of every successive little party.

A stream of visitors of both sexes was also observed to be pouring in from the plains below. The men from thence knew nothing about sheep-shearing, but they could join in the revels that succeeded.

The games were over—the sun had set, and the guests had all arrived; no not all—one was wanting, and sadly missed.

A large barn was fitted up with benches, well lighted and decorated, and beautifully too, with the green ling just bursting into bloom.

Here, the merry dance began, and was kept up, with unflagging spirits, until it was broad day light the next morning. It must not, however, be supposed from this, that these simple people kept such unreasonably late hours, as is herent first sight implied. It must be recollected, to do them justice, that day light, at the season of the year here alluded to, comes on by two o'clock in the morning.

At length that busy day and merry night were done, and all the guests went back to their homes again.

All, alas! on this joyous occasion, were not so happy as they seemed. One sad heart at least was there.

Poor Margery! The moment the guests were gone, she hastened to her chamber to give vent to her pent-up feelings, and to throw off the mask off cheerfulness she had so long and so awkwardly worn. She had never acted the hypocrite before; and any one without being a keen observer of the workings of the human mind, might easily have seen through the thin and flimsy veil which maiden modesty compelled her to assume, that all was not right beneath it.

"What can this mean!" she exclaimed to herself as she closed the door and burst into tears. And oh! what a luxury it was thus to be allowed to weep without restraint. "Poor Edward! He must be ill!" she continued, in broken exclamations. "Or, perhaps, he's lost among the Fells. With his gun he cares not where he wanders. And yet, if such a dreadful thing had happened, some one surely would have noticed it. But no! his name was never mentioned. Yes! once it