

the ear of the inquirer. In vain Mrs. Elliot despatched one of her children after another, in quest of their father and brother; they came and went, but brought no tidings more cheering than the moaning of the hollow wind. Minutes rolled into hours, yet neither came. She perceived the prouder of her guests preparing to withdraw, and observing that "Thomas's absence was so singular and unaccountable, and so unlike either him or his father, she didna ken what apology to make to her friends for such treatment; but it was needless waiting, and begged they would use no ceremony, but just begin."

No second invitation was necessary. Good humour appeared to be restored, and silious, pies, pasties, and moor-fowl, began to disappear like the lost son. For a moment, Mrs. Elliot apparently partook in the restoration of cheerfulness; but a low sigh at her elbow again drove the colour from her rosy cheeks. Her eye wandered to the farther end of the table, and rested on the unoccupied seat of her husband, and the vacant chair of her first-born. Her heart felt heavily within her; all the mother gushed into her bosom; and, rising from the table, "What in the world can be the meaning o' this?" said she, as she hurried, with a troubled countenance, towards the door. Her husband met her on the threshold.

"Where hae ye been, Peter?" said she, eagerly; "hae ye seen naething o' him?"

"Naething! naething!" replied he; "is he no cast up yet?" And, with a melancholy glance, his eyes sought an answer in the deserted chair. His lips quivered, his tongue altered.

"Gude forgie me!" said he; "and such a day for even an enemy to be out in! I've been up and down every way that I can sink on, but not a living creature has seen or heard tell o' him. Ye'll excuse me, neighbours," he added leaving the house; "I must awa again, for I canna rest."

"I ken by mysel', friends," said Adam Bell, a decent-looking Northumbrian, "that father's heart is as sensitive as the apple o' his eye; and, I think we would shew a want o' natural sympathy and respect for our worthy neighbour, if we didna every one get a foot into the stirrup, without loss o' time, and assist him in his search. For, in my rough, country way o' thinking, it must be something particularly out o' the common that could tempt Thomas to be missing.—I need na say tempt, for there could be no inclination in the way. And our hills

he concluded in a lower tone, "are not owre chancy in other respects besides the breaking up o' the storm."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Elliot, wringing her hands, "I have had the coming o' this about me for days and days. My head was growing dizzy with happiness, but thoughts come stealing upon me like ghosts, and I felt a lonely sighing about my heart, without being able to tell the cause; but the cause is come at last! And my dear Thomas—the very pride and staff o' my life—is lost!—lost to me for ever!"

"I ken, Mrs. Elliot," replied the Northumbrian, "it is an easy matter to say compose yourself for them that dinna ken what it is to feel. But at the same time, in our plain, country way o' thinking, we are always ready to believe the worst. I've often heard my father say, and I've as often remarked it myself, that, before any thing happens to a body, there is a something comes owre them, like a cloud before the face o' the sun; a sort o' dumb whispering about the breast from the other world. And, though I trust there is naething o' the kind in your case, yet, as you observe, when I find myself growing dizzy, as it were, with happiness, it makes good a saying o' my mother's, poor body!—'Bairns, bairns,' she used to say, 'there is owre muckle singing in your heads to-night; we will have a shower before bedtime.' And I never, in my born days, saw it fail."

At any other period, Mr. Bell's dissertation on presentiments would have been found a fitting text on which to hang all the dreams, wraiths, warnings, and marvellous circumstances, that had been handed down to the company from the days of their grandfathers; but, in the present instance, they were too much occupied in consultation regarding the different routes to be taken in their search.

Twelve horsemen, and some half dozen pedestrians, were seen hurrying in divers directions from Marchlaw, as the last faint lights of a melancholy day were yielding to the heavy darkness which appeared pressing in solid masses down the sides of the mountains.—The wives and daughters of the party were left alone with the disconsolate mother, who alternately pressed her weeping children to her heart, and told them to weep not, for their brother would soon return; while the tears stole down her own cheeks, and the infant in her arms wept because its mother wept. Her friends strove with each other to inspire hope, and poured upon her their mingled and loquacious consolation. But one remained silent. The daughter of Adam Bell