

and heard much, and read much, and though bent with the weight of ninety years, he still retained a memory unimpaired, and feelings that once must have been strong—for the impression was yet vivid. There was no trace of childishness or imbecility in Gerrard Norman; he still performed his duties, as steward for the lord of the adjoining manor, with a precision and judgment that might have belonged to one three score years his junior. I loved to listen to his ancient legends and antiquarian lore—knowledge that had been gathered through a life passing the usual life of man.

At first he evinced considerable reluctance to answer my questions respecting my discovery in the ruin. His silence or evasive answers only aroused my curiosity the more.

The furrowed brow of the old man worked, and his light blue eye was long cast on the ground in deep musing; at last he raised his head, and looked upward with a countenance expressive of much sorrow, as he replied, in a voice of solemnity not unmingled with emotion:

"'Tis a sad tale—a tale of woe and suffering—'twill give you little pleasure to hear it."

"Tell me at least the name of the person who occupies that lonely spot," I said, trusting to hear by degrees a story that appeared likely to interest me.

"I can give you no satisfactory information," replied my companion. "The birth and parentage of the poor maid who lies in the Minster grave are all unknown. Nevertheless, if you will listen with patience to an old man, I will tell you all I know of poor Margaret.

"It is now sixty years—sixty do I say—nay my child but it is full seventy years ago, since there came to our village, at the close of a dark and bitter day in January, a soldier's widow, accompanied by a young girl, apparently not exceeding the tender age of fourteen years.

"The strangers were travel-soiled, and worn with hunger and fatigue, and they sought shelter from the driving showers of snow and sleet which beat rudely on their weary frames; but no hospitable door was thrown open to them—no kind voice bade them welcome to the comforts of the wintry hearth, though they sought it for Christ's sake.

"The widow, in trembling accents, desired to be conducted to the dwelling of William and Alice Drew, if they were yet alive, declaring herself to be the widow of their only son, who had left the parish some twenty years ago. She was told that the persons she sought had long since been gathered to their kindred, and slept beneath the green sod in the church-yard of St. Margaret's, and the farm had fallen into the hands of a distant relative—one who was not likely to acknowledge the claims of the widow and orphan, if such existed.

"This intelligence, for a short time, seemed to

overpower the widow with despair. She had travelled a far and a weary way from her own land and from amidst her own people, to claim kindred with the friends of her deceased husband, and to bear his last farewell to his parents—and now she found herself in an inhospitable place, destitute and lonely, without a roof to shelter herself or her child, and she learned that a stranger held the little patrimony that should have been hers.

"But was not the right on her side? It was; and rousing all her energies, she started from the threshold of the door wherein she had cast herself in the bitterness of her soul, and hastened onward to the dwelling of Maurice Langton, the usurper of her husband's property, that she might shew him the certificate of her marriage, and prove herself the lawful widow of William Drew. But she knew little of the temper of the man she had to deal with. Maurice Langton laughed to scorn her tale of woe and distress, and roughly bade her quit his door, or his dogs should hasten her movements.

"Among the elders of the parish there were some still living that well remembered the only son of William and Alice Drew to have enlisted as a private soldier at a neighbouring village fair, to the great regret and displeasure of his parents. They would have procured a substitute, but the lad was wilful and would not be bought off, so he went away, and they were all draughted into a regiment which had orders to march northward, to quell the rebels who were rising in behalf of Charles Stuart, the Pretender, as he was called. A long year passed over, and no word from the young soldier. Battles—and bloody ones too—had been fought, and the old couple sorrowed for William as dead, when at last a letter came, and it told how the young man had deserted to the rebel army, and been taken fighting for the Prince, and but for one Mackenzie, a Highland soldier, whom he had done a kindness to, he must have been shot; but that he contrived his escape in his sister's clothes—so that he was enabled to gain a safe retreat among the wild passes of the mountains; and that, in gratitude to the lass that assisted in his preservation, he had made her his lawful wife, and hoped, should he ever return to his native village, his parents would look upon his Margaret as a daughter.

"But he never did return, but died, it was supposed, of wounds received at the battle of Culloden. It is probable that had his parents been living at the time the widow came hither, she would have found a home and resting place with the old people; but they were gone down sorrowing to the grave, and he who held the inheritance refused to give credence to the widow's tale, and forthwith sent her to the work-house as a vagrant, lest she and her child should become chargeable on the parish of St. Margaret's. Now the overseers are bound to give a trifling sum, and pass a vagrant on to