

Henceforward that not uninspiring air became the *motif* of our progress. We never tired of it. Whenever our conversation flagged, by tacit consent Mr. Rowley pieced his flageolet together and started it. The horses lilted it out in their gallop: the harness jingled, the postillions tittupped to it. And the *presto* with which it wound up as we came to a post-house and a fresh relay of horses had to be heard to be believed.

So with the chaise windows open to the vigorous airs of spring, and my own breast like a window flung wide to youth and health and happy expectations, I rattled homewards; impatient as a lover should be, yet not too impatient to taste the humour of spinning like a lord, with a pocketful of money, along the road which the *ci-devant* M. Champdivers had so fearfully dodged and skirted in Burchell Fenn's covered cart.

And yet so impatient that when we galloped over the Calton Hill and down into Edinburgh by the new London road, with the wind on our faces, and a sense of April in it, brisk and jolly, I must pack off Rowley to our lodgings with the valises, and stay only for a wash and breakfast at Dumbreck's before posting on to Swanston alone.

"Whene'er my steps return that way,
Still faithful shall she find me,
And never more again I'll stray
From the Girl I left behind me."

When the gables of the cottage rose into view over the hill's shoulder I dismissed my driver and walked forward, whistling the tune; but fell silent as I came under the lee of the garden wall, and sought for the exact spot of my old escalade. I found it by the wide beechen branches over the road, and hoisted myself noiselessly up to the coping where, as before, they screened me—or would have screened me had I cared to wait.

But I did not care to wait; and why? Because, not fifteen yards from me, she stood!—she, my Flora, my goddess, bare-headed, swept by chequers of morning