

merer, would give a sort of significant nod to his fist suddenly clenched upon the open page; and when the teacher stamped his foot, and cried, "Speak, sir!" the trembler whimpered, "I daurna, sir." "Ye daurna!" the enraged dominie would cry—"Why?" "Because—because, sir," was slowly stammered out—"Peter Paterson wud lick me!" Then would the incensed disciplinarian spring upon Peter; and, grasping him by the collar, whirl his *taws* in the air, and bring them with his utmost strength round the back-sides, and limbs of Peter; but Peter was like a rock, and his eyes more stubborn than a rock; and, in the midst of all, he gazed in the face of his tormentor with a look of imperturbable defiance and contempt. Notwithstanding this course of education, when Peter had attained the age of fifteen, the village instructor found it necessary to call at Foxlaw, and inform Robin Paterson that he could do no more for his son, adding that—"He was fit for the college; and, though he said it, that should not say it, as fit for it as any student that ever entered it." These were gladdening tidings to a father's heart, and Robin treated the dominie to an extra tumbler. He, however, thought his son was young enough for the college—"We'll wait anither year," said he; "an' Peter can be improvin' himsel at hame; an' ye can gie a look in, Maister, an' advise us to ony kind o' books ye think he should hae—we'll ay be happy to see ye, for ye've done yer duty to him, I'll say that for ye."

So another year passed on, and Peter remained about the farm. He was now sometimes seen with a book in his hand; but more frequently with a gun, and more frequently still with a fishing rod. At the end of the twelve months, Peter positively refused to go to the College. His mother entreated, and his father threatened; but it was labor in vain. At last—"It's o' nae use striving against the stream," said Robin—"ye canna gather berries off a winbush. Let him e'en tak his ain way, an' he may live to rue it." Thus, Peter went on reading, shooting, fishing, and working about the farm, till he was eighteen. He now began to receive a number of epithets from his neighbours. His old schoolmaster called him "Ne'er-do-weel Peter;" but the dominie was a mere prosier; he knew the moods and tenses of a Greek or Latin sentence, but he was incapable of appreciating its soul. Some called him "Poeti-

cal Peter, and a few "Prosing Peter;" but the latter were downright bargain-making, pounds-shillings-and-pence-men, whose souls were dead to—

"The music of sweet sounds;"

and sensible only of the jink of the coin of the realm. Others called him "*Daft* Peter," for he was the leader of frolic, fun, and harmless mischief; but now the maidens of the village also began to call him "*Handsome Peter*." Yet, he of whom they thus spoke, would wander for hours alone by the beach of the solitary sea, gazing upon its army of waves warring with the winds, till his very spirit took part in the conflict; or he could look till his eyes got blind on its unruffled bosom, when the morning sun flung over it, from the horizon to the shore, a flash of glory; or, when the moonbeams, like a million torches shooting from the deep, danced on its undulating billows—then would he stand, like an entranced being, listening to its everlasting anthem, while his soul, awed and elevated by the magnificence of the scene, worshipped God, the Creator of the great sea. With all his reputed wildness, and with all his thoughtlessness, even on the sea-banks, by the wood, and by the brae side, Peter found voiceless, yet to him eloquent companions. To him the tender primrose was sacred as the first blush of opening womanhood; and he would converse with the lowly daisy, till his gaze seemed to draw out the very soul of—

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower."

It, however, grieved his mother's spirit to see him, as she said, "Just idling awa his time, and leaving his learning at his heels." His father now said—"Let him just tak his fling an' find his ain weight—an' he'll either mak a spoon or spoil a horn, or my name's no Robin Paterson." But, from Peter's infancy, it had been his mother's ambition and desire to love to see him, as she expressed it, "wag his pow in a poopit," or, at any rate, to see him a gentleman. On one occasion, therefore, when Robin was at Dunse hiring-market, the schoolmaster having called on his old pupil, "Ne'er-do-weel Peter," the two entered into a controversy in the presence of Peter's mother, and, in the course of the discussion, the man of letters was dumfounded by the fluency and force of the arguments of his young antagonist. Silent tears of exultation stole into Betty's eyes, to hear, as she said, "her bairn expawtiate equal—ay, superior to ony minister;" and no sooner had