

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 sirloins, 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 fell heavily within her; all her 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 faltered.

"Gude forgie me!" said he; "and such a day for even an enemy to be out! I've been up and down every way that I can think on, but not a living creature has seen or heard tell o' him. Ye'll excuse me, neighbors," 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 a father's heart is as sensitive as the apple o' his ee; and, I think we would shew a want o' natural sympathy and respect for our worthy neighbour, if we didna every one get his 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 amissing. Indeed, I needna say tempt, for there could be no inclination in the way. And our hills," he concluded, in a lower tone, "are not ower 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 came 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 anything happens to a body, there is a *something* comes ower 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 ower muckle singing in your heads to-night; we will have a shower before bed-time.' And I never, in my born days, saw it fail."

At any other period, Mr. Bell's dissertation on pre-sentiments would have been found a fitting text on

which to hang all the dreams, wraiths, warnings, a marvellous circumstances, that had been handed do to the company from the days of their grandfather but, in the present instance, they were too much occupied in consultation regarding the different routes to taken in their search.

Twelve horsemen, and some half dozen pedestrians were seen hurrying in divers directions from Marchl as the last faint lights of a melancholy day were yielded to the heavy darkness which appeared pressing in so masses down the sides of the mountains. The wife and daughters of the party were alone left with the disconsolate mother, who alternately pressed her weeping children to her heart, and told them to weep no for their brother would soon return; while the mother 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 ear the mingled and loquacious consolation. But one remained silent. The daughter of Adam Bell, who sat by Mrs. Elliot's elbow at table, had shrunk into an obscure corner of the room. Before her face she held a handkerchief wet with tears. Her bosom throbbed convulsively; and, as occasionally her broken sighs burst forth, their prison-house, a significant whisper passed among the younger part of the company.

Mrs. Elliot approached her, and taking her hand tenderly within both of hers—"O hinny! hinny!" said she, "yer sighs gae through my heart like a knife. An' what can I do to comfort ye? Come Elizabeth, my bonny love, let us hope for the best. Ye see before ye a sorrowin' mother!—a mother that fondly hoped to see you an'—I canna say it!—an' I'm ill qualified to give comfort, when my own heart is like a furnace! But oh! let us try and remember the blessed portion 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,' an' inwardly pray for strength to say, 'His will be done!'"

Time stole on towards midnight, and one by one the unsuccessful party returned. As foot after foot approached, every breath was held to listen. "No, no!" cried the mother, again and again, with increasing anguish, "it's no the foot o' my ain bairn," while her keen gaze remained riveted upon the door, and was not withdrawn, nor the hope of despair relinquished, till the individual entered, and, with a silent and ominous shaking of his head, betokened his fruitless efforts. The clock had struck twelve; all were returned save the father. The wind howled more wildly; the rain poured upon the windows in ceaseless torrents; and the roaring of the mountain rivers gave a character of deeper ghostliness to their sepulchral silence; for they sat, each rapt in forebodings, listening to the storm; and no sounds were heard, save the groans of the mother, the weeping of her children, and the bitter and broken sobs of the bereaved maiden, who leaned her head upon her father's bosom, refusing to be comforted.

At length, the barking of the farm-dog announced footsteps at a distance. Every ear was raised to listen; every eye turned to the door; but, before the tread was yet audible to the listeners—"Oh, it is only Peter's foot!" said the miserable mother, and, weeping, arose to meet him.

"Janet! Janet!" he exclaimed, as he entered, and threw his arms around her neck, "what's this come upon us at last?"

(To be continued.)