

masters of the craft are too wise to show their noses on such a night as this. It is some young female who has lost her way; but, at all events, she must bear us company till we take a fresh departure; and a drop of something warm within will serve to fend off the cold without."

By this time the whole party had alighted; the door of the barn was thrown open, and each man led in his horse, apparently heavily laden. A few minutes afterwards, Ellen Courtney was compelled to enter, and found herself in the midst of a band of desperate outlaws, whose countenances assumed a more ferocious aspect from their being but dimly seen by the light of dark lanterns, from which the shades were removed. Ellen had heard many extravagant tales of the reckless and hardened depravity of smugglers, and she trembled with apprehension that her life would be sacrificed. Still she replied clearly and distinctly to the questions that were put to her, and the answers were so artless as to carry conviction to the most suspicious mind.

"It matters not," said one of the most determined and desperate of the party; "the girl must go with us, till our own safety is past doubt. Here we must lay upon our oars till midnight, and then every man to his station. Conduct the young lady to the far corner of the barn; there is clean straw for her to rest her delicate limbs upon. And now, lads, let us laugh at the gale, and drive away care."

"Oh, in mercy, in pity," implored Ellen, "do not detain me! I do not fear the storm. Let me return to my only parent, whose anguish at my absence may be fatal."

"You should have thought of that before, young lady," returned the man, "and not have wandered so far from home. All entreaties, all complaints, are useless, now. It is true, mayhap, that you do not mean to inform upon us, but, suppose you should fall in with the Philistines, and they should question you, would you deny your having seen us? You know our profession, I suppose?"

"I do," returned the frightened girl, "but, indeed, indeed I will not betray you. Oh! let me implore you to suffer me to go to my mother!"

"If you know our trade, young woman," expostulated the smuggler, "you must also know the risks we run, and, therefore, we will take good care you do not betray us. Take her away, Teetotum,* to yon corner, as I order you, and take the first spell in watching her, or mayhap she would rather sit amongst a set of jovial fellows, and share our grog. Come, come," continued he, passing his arm familiarly and rudely round her waist; "I dearly love a pretty girl, and you shall be my queen of the feast," and he essayed to press his lips to her's.

"Spare me, spare me!" shrieked the terrified Ellen, as she struggled to disengage herself; "as you are men, do not insult the defenceless!"

"Oh! oh! pretty one!" returned the fellow, "you have let the secret out. If you were not defenceless, then, you would set us at defiance? But, take her away," added he, with more sternness; "and, d'ye hear, girl, no attempts at escape, for"—showing the bright barrel of a pistol—"this will send a quick and faithful messenger after you."

The shrinking Ellen accompanied the man designated Teetotum to the far end of the barn, where she sat herself down on some hard substance that was covered with loose straw, the smuggler placing himself by her side. "The old Badger is too hard upon you, Miss," said the man, "but, he has no young blood in his veins, now; and, besides, that ugly figure-head of his arn't much likely to win a lady's favour. You are hard up in a clinch, that's for sartia; but, still, if you could fancy a handsome young fellow, like myself, why I might be tempted to run a little hazard in releasing you. What say you, my beauty?" And the fellow threw his arm round her neck, indelicately placing his hand upon a bosom as pure as it was fair. Insulted virtue gave strength to the lovely maiden, and indignantly she flung from his embrace. "Is this England?" said she, "the land that protects the desolate, and whose laws are the boast of the civilized world? Keep from me, villain!" for he was again pressing closer to her, "or I shall rouse your master, who will make you know your duty. The base insulter of innocence is generally a coward at heart."

"Oh, well!" returned the wretch, "there's no accounting for tastes! Mayhap you may like old Badger better nor me; but, howsoever, you are my prize, for it was I who first grappled with you, and so I'll e'en have my due. You see they're hard at it bowing up their jibs, and, before they purchase their anchors, there'll be some scrimmaging and black eyes and bloody noses. Now, we hate all laws except of our own making, and how you'll weather it out among a set of drunken desperadoes is for your consideration, any more than I'd wish to serve a pretty girl if she's own'd kind," and again the smuggler attempted the same indecent liberty he had before taken; but Ellen firmly repulsed him, and the fellow threw himself back upon the straw, muttering curses, and swearing that he would have his revenge before they parted.

The building they were in was an immense barn, appropriated to the receipt of grain when no farm-house stood upon the land.

It was substantially erected in the old style to endure for ages, and had a lofty roof, with blackened rafters and stout oak cross-beams. It had long been the occasional resort of smugglers—the occupier, for a handsome consideration, keeping every thing prepared for their reception. Ellen looked upon the groupe of about thirty men, most of them in the dress of country labourers (but there were two or three evidently superior to the rest), as they sat on the scattered straw upon the ground and passed round the liquor. She shuddered at the thought of their becoming intoxicated, and secretly offered up fervent prayers to the Almighty for protection in this hour of peril. The lights shed a dim lustre on their revelry, but every now and then the flashing lightning threw its red glare through the crevices, and gave a brilliancy to every object, whilst the terrified horses pawed with their hoofs, or started from side to side, heedless of restraint. It was a study for the painter.

"I say, Master Coldtoast," exclaimed the leader, who had been designated as old Badger, "if you ever disobey my orders again, as you did to-day, remember, there's fishes in blue water as waists feeding."

"Tut, man," responded the individual addressed, a Hercules-looking being, with monstrous black shaggy whiskers, and features indicative of villany and cunning: "Tut, man, when I strops a block, I does it my own way; and when I handles a musket, I points it at who I pleases."

"You'll get hanged some day for your murderous qualities," returned the first, "and we shall be tarred with the same brush for being found in such blackguard company."

"I'm thinking," said Coldtoast, with a demonic grin, "that there'll be a piece of new rope cut for most of us on the day we slip our wind. But, I tell you, master, to your teeth, that I'm no child to be snubbed and crossed by a waspish nurse. If I am to stick by you, and do my duty, why let me steer by my own compass; and, if not, then give me my discharge, square the accounts, and let's part friends."

"Let us have none of your wrangling, now," said another; "it's ill work quarrelling amongst ourselves, when mayhap the enemy is close aboard of us. If Coldtoast did shoot the fellow, it was more in self-defence than otherwise; but, where's the body?"

"They've stowed it away under the straw, there," replied a fourth, pointing in the direction where Ellen was sitting, and indistinctly catching the purport of their conversation; "but, we must shove it down the hatchway, as soon as we can find a snug spot, for, though they say dead men tell no tales, yet they give strong evidence above ground."

From the language that had been overheard, Ellen became aware that murder had been committed, and her heart sickened at the thoughts of such companionship. It was evident that there were men among them whose unbridled passions were capable of leading them to the perpetration of the worst of crimes. Some of their hands were already stained with blood, and there did not appear to be a single individual to whom she could look for protection.

"Keep sober, all of you," exclaimed old Badger, himself fast approaching to that state of inebriation which renders the hardened drunkard desperate and dangerous. "Keep sober, I say; we shall soon have a pair of eyes upon us that none of you can deceive. Juniper, look out and see what sort of weather it is. These summer squalls are like woman's tears, soon passed away, and dried up by the breath of pleasure."

The man obeyed, and Ellen observed that he stood for some time at the door of the building in conversation with another person, whilst the carousal went on within. At length he returned and reported the subsiding of the storm. The terrified girl determined to make one more effort to regain her liberty, and, advancing to old Badger, she entreated him in the most earnest manner to let her depart; but he was determinately stubborn against all her prayers, and rudely commanded her to return to the place she had quitted through the carelessness of her keeper, who had fallen into a deep sleep. A smart blow from the hoary smuggler roused him to his duty, and Ellen again seated herself in her former position.

"Come, come, young woman," said Teetotum, stretching himself by the side of the trembling maiden, and by the rudeness of the act displacing the scattered straw; "come, come, no more slipping from your moorings, if you please. I must just take the liberty of lashing these pretty feet together, and then in spite of old Badger, I'll have my snooze out." He produced a piece of cord, and was about to put his threat into execution, when Ellen stretched forth her hand to assist her in rising from her seat, and she placed it on a cold clammy substance, which the feeble light showed her was the face of a corpse. A wild, piercing shriek rang through the building; the men started to their arms; the lamps were extinguished or concealed; and Ellen, with horrible sensations, unable to stir, yet sensible to her situation, lay crouching by the side of the murdered man, with darkness all around her. There was for a few moments a dead silence, which was broken by the sound of a shrill whistle outside the building, and the sudden entrance of some one, who immediately closed the doors. Again the loud shriek of the tortured girl was heard, but suddenly she felt the fingers of a rough hand clatching her throat, and there

was a whispering in her ear like the hissing of a serpent, which uttered, "Silence, devil! it was a woman who first betrayed man to death. Another murmur, louder than an infant's sigh, and it shall be your last in this world, if I get scragged for it to-morrow."

A loud knocking was heard at the door of the barn, but all was quiet within. A confused noise of voices in high dispute reached poor Ellen's ear, and in the hope that rescue was near, she would have cried out for help; but the hand pressed heavily on her throat, and its gripe tightened as if the smuggler was apprehensive of her design.

"Move but a limb," whispered he, "and it shall soon stiffen into death. Stir but your tongue, and I will tear it from its roots. One murder has already been committed, and two won't bring a heavier punishment."

The knocking was renewed, and Ellen became sensible of the fact that attempts were making to force an entrance. A slight bustle and whispering took place within the building, and there was that peculiar sound, unlike all others, which was emitted from the preparation of fire-arms by the clicking of locks. "They're here! they're here!" was shouted outside, and then an audible whisper within exclaimed, "Stand steady, lads! 'tis Moody's men; fire by sixes. Juniper, take the first shot; old Badger next. Where is Coldtoast?"

"I am here," replied the wretch, who was grasping Ellen's neck, and instant recollection told her that the hand of the murderer was upon her. "I am here, at my post, and ready to do my office."

"Now, villain as you are, if you commit one act of injury upon that innocent girl, I will demand a fearful reckoning!" returned the first, which was answered by a low, stifled laugh of derision.

"Come out, old Badger!" shouted a voice from the outside, as the party were making strenuous efforts to break open the doors. "Come out, you old varmint; the young Lion is not with you, now; we have him caged safe enough;" and again, amidst curses and hammering, the doors shook with the assault.

"Men! the young Lion is not caged," uttered in an undertone the individual who had issued his directions to the smugglers relative to the order in which they were to fire. "He is here, among you, unshackled and free; be firm, and take steady aim. Do not leave a rascal of the cutter to sup his broth again. We have nothing left but to fight for it."

To be continued.

A DREAM.

[We make the subjoined extract from the tale of "Thalaba the Destroyer," by Dr. Southey. The poet Montgomery thus speaks of it: "For myself I am free to acknowledge, that the effect produced on my mind by its perusal, resembled the dreams of the Opium eater.—Such music, such mystery, such strife, confusion, agony, despair, with splendors and glooms, and alternations of rapture and horror, the tale of "Thalaba," with its marvellous rhythm and original pageantry, produces on the mind of the entranced, delighted, yet afflicted reader—so at least it affected me. I have said that the experiment was victorious—but the author himself has not ventured to repeat it; like a wise man (which poets seldom are, especially successful ones,) contenting himself with the glory of having performed an unprecedented feat, and which may very well remain an unrivalled one."]

"The scene commenced with a music of preparation and awakening suspense; a music like that of a coronation anthem, and which, like that, gave the feeling of a vast march—of infinite cavalades filing off; and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and laboring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where; somehow, I knew not how; by some beings, I knew not whom; a battle, a strife, an agony was conducting, was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music; with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as usual in dreams, where of necessity we make ourselves central to every movement, had the power and yet had not the power to decide it, I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexorable guilt.

"Deeper than plummet ever sounded, I lay inactive. Some greater interest was at stake; some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms, and hurrying to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives; I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and, at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me,—and but a moment allowed,—and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and everlasting farewells! and with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death,—the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells!—and again, and yet again, reverberated—everlasting farewells!—And I awoke in struggles and cried out, "I will sleep no more!"

* Every smuggler is known to his associates by some quaint or peculiar name, and in no instance is the christened or surname of the party used.