

RETRIBUTION ;

Or, the last Lord of Dunraven.

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ON the coast of Glamorganshire, about nine miles south-east of Cowbridge, stands a high rocky headland, projecting a considerable distance into the sea, and forming a point, called by the natives, "*The Witch's Point.*" This cliff, which is very lofty, and broken in a most picturesque manner, is the site of a building of great antiquity, known by the name of Dunraven Castle. The date of its erection is unknown, but many parts of it appear to resemble a religious house, rather than a fortalice, and so many different styles of architecture are to be found in different portions of the mansion, that there can be little doubt of its having received additions from several succeeding proprietors. A large chapel which formerly occupied a wing of the castle, has been converted into lodging-rooms, and beneath it is still to be seen a walled arch, which is said to be the burial vault of the ancient lords of Dunraven.—The elevated situation of the castle, gives it the command of many beautiful views ; and on a stormy day, when the surf dashes over the high rocky cliff, the prospect from the western windows of the house is truly sublime. But notwithstanding its picturesque beauties, Dunraven Castle is a lonely and desolate abode. A part of it only is in habitable order, and a few old servants, whose duty it is to keep it from utter decay, are the only occupants of the place, except during about six weeks in the hunting season, when the present owner usually brings a party of friends to enjoy the sport which his secluded manor affords. The ancient race of the Vaughans—the former Lords of Dunraven, is extinct, and an English gentleman, a stranger to the blood of the original proprietors, now holds the tenure of the estate. But the tradition connected with the extinction of the Vaughan family, is one of strange and almost mysterious interest, while the dark tragedy of which Dunraven was the scene, may well account for its desertion and desolation.

Many years of a wild and reckless life had passed away, when Thomas Vaughan, the last Lord of Dunraven, returned to take up his abode in the home of his ancestors. In his boyhood, his name had been only another word for all that was mischievous and evil ; in his early youth he was an object of fear and dislike, not only to all the tenants of his father's

manor, but also to all the neighbouring peasantry ; and, when, in the first years of manhood, he broke from all the social restraints of life, and fled from Dunraven to plunge into the excesses of London, no one, excepting his broken-hearted parents, regretted his absence from the scene of his youthful vices. From that time, little was known of his career, except from vague and uncertain rumour, but the knowledge of his early habits rendered every evil report probable. The death of his parents soon followed his desertion of them ; and the only evidence which his servants received of his accession to the estate, was to be found in the orders which he gave for raising money from it, by every possible means. The fine old hall was allowed to become dilapidated—the woods were felled—the family plate was melted into coin, and every thing, in short, bore testimony to the wilful waste and prodigality of the heir of the Vaughans. But at length even these resources failed, and nothing was left but the rents of the farms which appertained to the estate. This was too sluggish a stream of wealth to the young Lord of Dunraven. He suddenly disappeared from all his accustomed haunts—his letters to the old steward ceased, and for nearly ten years he was believed to be numbered with the dead.

But, wherever he might have concealed himself, or whatever might have been his course of life during that long period, he was certainly not without the means of communication with his native land ; for, no sooner did the heir-at-law commence legal measures to take possession of the Dunraven property, than Thomas Vaughan re-appeared in England. Vague rumors were afloat respecting his long absence. It was hinted that he had washed from his brow the sign of the cross, or, at least, hidden it beneath the crescented turban, while his hand had become too familiar with the scimitar of a Turkish corsair. But these were whisperings, vague and indistinct as the rustling of summer foliage. He had returned a changed and (as it seemed,) a better man. He now possessed wealth, and while this, in connection with his high birth and prepossessing manners afforded him a passport into the best society of every land, few could be found hardy enough to ask whence he had derived the golden talisman of power. Whatever vices he might now retain, they were at least concealed beneath the veil of decorum, and Vaughan of Dunraven soon became a favourite among the votaries of fashion. His extreme beauty of person, rendered the task of pleasing the gentler sex, one