

agony of extreme want, without either friends or relatives to succour them. He could have borne his own sorrows with firmness; but the sight of his dearest connexions dying from positive exigence, and sinking on their couch of sickness without even a mouthful of bread to eat, and scarcely a torn rag to shield them from the chilly night air, drove him to the verge of distraction. When he saw the fading lustre in the eyes of his aged grandmother—her form slowly sinking in the grave—her wan looks imploring even one solitary meal to comfort her, and her pallid cheeks gradually assuming the cadaverous hue of death, his agony assumed the aspect of determined insanity. He seized the opportunity, when his father, partially recovered from indisposition, had gone to petition the governor of the fort for relief, to station himself by the high-road, with the intention of wresting money from each traveller, for the purposes of future provision. With a brace of horse-pistols in his pocket, he sallied out from the cottage to put his nefarious designs into immediate execution. The night was well adapted to the occasion; it was dark and stormy; and the continued roar of the ocean waves, and the solitary shriek of the sea-bird increased the natural gloom of the scene. The young man in the mean time hastened tremblingly onward, and his mind assumed a stern resolution from the corresponding influence of the night prospect. A tempest had already commenced, the hollow-sounding thunder echoed along the dim arch of heaven, and the lightning flashed with splendour around him. As he passed the lonely gibbet under which the bones of unburied malefactors were yet bleaching, and heard the sullen swing of the chains to which a mouldering skeleton was attached, he imagined his own similar situation in case of detection, and his boasted courage failed him. The storm mean-while raged with unabated violence, and a broad stream of lightning shone dimly through the ghastly skeleton, whose whitening bones hung dangling in the wind. At this instant the noise of approaching footsteps was heard echoing across the heath; the sounds advanced nearer, and a dark figure, wholly muffled in a night-cloak, stood by the side of the robber. He drew the pistol from its hiding place, and the stranger moved slowly on; twice he attempted to pull the trigger, and twice it trembled in his grasp. The courage of despair came at length to his assistance; he thought of his dying grandmother; his own father starving in utter hopelessness; and the thought smote on his prenzied imagination. He fired; and with a deep suppressed groan of anguish, the death-choked voice of which rushed full on his racked brain, the stranger dropped lifeless at his feet. Agitated with a variety of contending emotions, he bore the ensanguined body to his cottage, and placed it on a chair, until he should return with a lantern to despoil it of its money and wearing apparel.

It was now deep midnight: the old lady had long since retired to her bed, and all around was still, but the distant roar of waters, or the sullen sound of the north wind, as it whistled gloomily through the bleak walls of the cottage. After a short interval the murderer returned, bearing a dark-lantern in his hand. He cast a suspicious glance around, locked the door of the apartment, and then with a