

THE GARLAND.

"TO RAISE THE GENIUS AND TO MEND THE HEART."

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POPULAR TALES.

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THE HIGHWAYMAN.

A few years since, when the now populous and fertile Province of Upper Canada was one wide forest, but here and there interspersed with a little settlement, travellers often found themselves unsafe, as there were some miscreant wretches who had come thither to gain a livelihood by theft and barefaced robbery. Among these, one who had made himself the terror of the passing traveller, was known by the appellation of *Wild Robert*—the most daring, sly, artful and intriguing fellow that had ever cried "your money," as he presented his pistol to the alarmed and defenceless stranger. Of his residence no one knew any thing, but a thousand vague conjectures were in circulation respecting it.

"Well," said he, one bright day in August, as the sun was about sinking behind the western hills; "I have found no money to-day—hard times, these. I had better be a beggar and live by asking alms of the poor housewives, than think to live independently in this occupation; but who comes here * * * a lady, by the powers." He was roused from his reverie by the approach of a female stranger, with deep anxiety depicted on her countenance; her hair dishevelled and fluttering in the wind, a few lonely tears on her face and other prominent marks of mental agony about her. She was apparently about eighteen—a lovely girl—and not less so for her dishabille, or emblem of sorrow. *Wild Robert* arose from the moss-covered stone on which he was seated when she approached, and with a low bow, politely inquired what was her pleasure.

"Can you show me the road to Kingston?" said the lady. "I have, by some careless negligence, wandered from my home into this forest, and am lost in its deep ravines."

"I can tell you madam," replied Robert; "but you see it is near sun-set. Lady, it is five miles to your father's house, and your gentle limbs are already fatigued with the burden of the day. Tarry with me this evening; my hut is a poor one, but what it affords you shall be welcome to."

"Thanks for your kindness, sir, but my mother's heart will be chilled with fear when she hears, solemnly over the waters, the toll of the evening bell, and finds her daughter absent, she knows not where; I must return—will you show me the road?"

"No, lady, no! tarry till the morning dawns again, and I will attend you to your father's roof; but go this night, you must not." Her

fatigue and reason at length prevailed, and she consented to remain with him. "Follow me, then!" said Robert, and led the way deeper into the ravine, until a little hut presented itself. "This is my habitation," said he; "I am alone in this wide world; and though my little cottage displays not the gaudy trappings of wealth, yet it is dear to me; dearer than wealth or all its pageantry." Eleanor seated herself on a small bench in one corner, while Robert set upon his rough table, such coarse refreshments as a hunter of the back woods might afford.

"You lead a singular life," remarked Eleanor; "and, kind sir, will it please you to inform me what first induced you to become a hermit?"

"I will madam, with pleasure, reveal to you the secrets of my heart; though they are such as might better be smothered in my own breast, than be exposed to your scrutiny. My father was a man of some property and respectability in England; and of a large family of sons, I was the eldest—consequently I looked forward in my early boyhood to the possession of a comfortable income on his demise. Opposite my father's house, resided a Mr. Edgerton, a man of wealth, with an only daughter—Lavinia; for whom I had conceived an attachment. But when I whispered my sentiments to her, instead of the warm reciprocity of feelings I had anticipated, her reply was, 'where is your estates? you are not wealthy enough for me!' I said no more, but hastily rising from my seat, left her to her own reflections, while I agonized under mine. Shortly after, misfortunes befel my father, which induced me to resolve to be no more a burden to him. I crossed the Atlantic and came to these wilds four years since, where by my depositions, (for I will tell you the whole truth,) upon travellers I have hoarded a considerable quantity of money; with which I intend ere long to return to my father's home, to soothe his declining years and show to the proud Lavinia where my estate lies.—Nay lady, look not so pale at my story; fear not, you are as safe as the innocent lamb that gambols playfully about the generous lion.—It is none worse than *Wild Robert* that speaks to you!"

"*Wild Robert*, said you! are you then he, who has been my terror for these three years past?"

"Yes, I am he! but again I tell you, fear not; you shall sleep as safely under this roof as in your mother's quiet parlor." A momentary tremor passed through her nerves as she gazed silently upon him; but as he seem-