

sister, he found her a corpse ; and there, in the house of mourning, the consoler of the motherless Barbara, he learnt to love her with a sincerity of affection to which she fully responded. Great was his vexation and surprise to receive a stern denial of his suit from the minister, who, although he had never testified any degree of partiality for his wife's nephew, had, nevertheless, evinced no dislike of him. But when respectfully called upon to assign a reason for so unexpected a rejection, he briefly said, that "no child of his should with his blessing wed any man who was not a strict Presbyterian ; and that, moreover, he had other views for his daughter." Nor were the tears of his child, nor the intercession in their favour of his kind-hearted but timid old maiden sister, of any effect. His obstinacy was not to be subdued, nor his will opposed ; and the unrelenting preacher, who taught humility, love, and concord from his pulpit, and who could produce not one sensible reason for thwarting the attachment of two amiable creatures, concluded the scene by flying into a furious passion, in which he gave John Percival clearly to understand, that he was no longer an acceptable, or even permitted, guest.

The young man left the manse immediately, and was not slow in quitting Scotland ; but love, which teaches many things, taught the kinsfolk means of keeping up, though at rare intervals, an epistolary communion—so frequently the one sustaining prop of two divided hearts.

A year or more passed, finding them true to each other. Barbara refused several excellent proposals of marriage, nor did her father persecute her with expressed wishes for her acceptance of any of them ; until, at length, he introduced her to one Mr. Bruce, a wealthy cloth-merchant from Glasgow. He was a man of about fifty years of age, of a well-favoured and portly presence, and accounted a sure and somewhat sour follower of Mr. Comyn's favourite creed. Barbara had frequently heard her father speak highly of his Glasgow friend, but as no warning had prepared her, she was very far from dreaming of the character he was about to perform in her presence ; and, indeed, the wooing of the honest clothier was neither very active nor oppressive—but, alas, for all that, it was steadfast and resolute.

A wonderful deal of what they deemed

"religious discussion" was carried on betwixt Mr. Bruce and the minister during the visit of the former at the manse, which, we have omitted to state, (though for certain reasons we do not intend to give it a name,) was situated out of the town of Aberdeen, in a retired strath or valley, full of hazels and sloe-bushes, with the Dee running through them like a huge silver snake. Although little more than half a mile from Aberdeen, and much nearer the church of which Mr. Comyn was minister, the manse seemed as lonely and quiet as if thirty miles lay between it and a busy, populous town. Now, though Mr. Bruce had hired a sleeping apartment in the cottage of Mr. Comyn's bellman, or sexton, which stood hard by the kirk, he spent all his spare time with his friend at the manse, where his meals were invariably taken ; and in addition to the wonderful amount of polemical palaver we have hinted at, a wonderful deal of whisky-toddy did the worthy minister and his guest contrive to swallow in the heat of their arguments. Many a time and oft did good, innocent Miss Henny Comyn declare, that when the shake-hand's hour arrived, Mr. Bruce, "puir man, seemed to toddle aff to his cosie beddie at Davie Bain's marvellously fu' o' the spirit !" True it was ; but the ancient virgin guessed not in her guilelessness, that the spirit was an evil one, and elicited by man and fire from the unsuspecting barleycorn.

At last, as we have said, Mr. Comyn spoke out his wish—nay, his commands—that Barbara should prepare to receive Mr. Bruce as a bridegroom in six months thereafter.—And now Mr. Bruce himself, a shy and dour man at other times, found courage one day, after dinner, to express his—"love ;" so he really called it, and so we suppose must we, in our extreme ignorance of the precise category of nomenclature to which the feelings that actuated him belonged. Honest man ! bigoted and selfish as he was, he was neither cruel by nature nor cross-grained ; and he was even moved by the pathetic and frank avowal which Barbara made to him of the state of her heart. But, though touched by her tears, he understood them not, treating them but as the natural mawkishness of girlish sentimentality ; nor had her assurances, that she could never love any one but her cousin John, power to dis-