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THE HALLS OF THE NORTH.*

CHAPTER XIV.

AND merrily chimed St. Mary's bells,
 And merrily gathered, from the Fells,
 'The herdsmen blithe and gay,
 Each with his sweetheart blushing fair,
 And matrons too, I ween, were there
 To see that wedding day.

BORDER BALLAD.

THE morning of the 21st of June, 17—, dawned so bright and clear that any child, without an almanac, might easily have known what day it was. The bright sun, as if he knew his beams would be reflected from many a face as fair and shining as his own, came forth from out his ocean bed, an hour earlier, as it seemed, than was his wont. Three o'clock, A.M., had hardly struck, ere a bright and glowing streak along the eastern sky gave note of his approach; and ere the parish clock had tolled, with his iron tongue, another hour, careering, in his morning glory, he was seen, high over the top of Crossfell, giving additional whiteness to the remnant of the drift of snow that lingered still upon that mountain's side; and shedding a lustre on each wild and beautiful flower, that gaily contrasted in its dewy brightness with that winter's wreath.

The next signal of that joyous holiday, St. Mary's steeple gave, in a long and merry peal, from all her bells. Groups of labouring men were seen in every hamlet through all the length and breadth of good St. Mary's parish. They were not hastening to their work as on a common day, but loitering idly round their doors, or waiting on the village green; while the bustling maidens, who had more to do, were hurrying through their busy task, that, they, too, might

have time to put on all their finery, and walk a league or more, (as some were that far from the church,) to see the wedding.

This was the auspicious day appointed to unite, in double bands of holy matrimony, the ancient house of Moreland of Newby Hall, with the high and proud, but generous and noble Stricklands of Strickland Hall, who claimed a still remoter origin. The Stricklands, however, were poor, and hence, perhaps their pride. Or, we might reverse the terms, and say again that they were proud, and hence perhaps, their poverty. Be that, however, as it might, they had commenced their downward road to that oblivion, in which the cycle of a hundred years has buried both their name and race.* The Morelands too, are swept away since then, in name, at least, although in nothing more. The Hall is held even now, by one of their descendants in the female line. How

* This is only intended to apply to that particular branch of the Stricklands here alluded to, and not to those of Sizesh Castle, of Whitestock or Abbot Halls, most ancient and respectable families in the North.

Queen Catherine Parr's bed, and the crimson satin counterpane worked by her own hands, are still to be seen at Sizesh Castle. Catherine's mother was a Strickland of this house.

The amiable and fascinating writers of this name, belonging to the house of Strickland.

* Continued from page 275—Conclusion.