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THE PARSONAGE:
MY FATHER'S FIRESIDE.

After the lapse of about thirty years, I lately paid a visit to what had once been my father's fireside. It was in the month of October I visited the manse of Kirkhall. My father had been minister of that parish; and I received a kindly welcome from his worthy son—one of the warmest hearted and learned men in the church of Scotland, whom I have long known and esteemed as a father. I found myself again seated beside the hearth in the little parlor which was now gladdened with a mother's smile—I was once cheered with the childish prattle of brothers and sisters—which was hal- lowed by the prayers and presiding virtues of my affectionate father. They are all departed to the land of spirits!

When I looked round me, every object seemed to assure me that they were still near me; every thing else was unchanged. On looking through the window from the elbow in which I sat, the old and magnificent tree which, in the days of my youth, had its branches and foliage in wild luxuriance cover the court, and gave assurance of shade and shelter, was still unscathed. Its faded flowers were indeed faded—for the breath of approaching winter had touched the verdure; but its variegated green and yellow leaves were the same as when I had seen them, and attempted, with boyish hands, to pluck them, nearly half a century ago. A little farther off, the "decent church" peered among the majestic ash, elm, and chestnut-trees, with which it was surrounded—the growth of centuries—casting a deep and gloomy shadow over the place of graves.—The humble offices, and the corn yard in which I had rejoiced to mingle in rural occupations and frolic, were near; and nothing wanted to realize the scenes of my youth but the presence of the venerable patriarch and his mother, and their little ones grouped around their knees, or at the frugal

dinner-table. The illusion was short lived. A holly tree in the adjoining parterre, caught my eye. When I knew it of old, it was a little tree in which the goldfinch and linnets used to be protected under my juvenile protection; but now it had grown up to a large tree. I saw in the mirror, over the

mantelpiece, the image of my own visage, in which were lines that time and the world's cares imprint on the smoothest brow and the most blooming cheek. The yellow locks of my forehead were fled, and the few remaining hairs were beginning to be silvered with grey. My son, too, rising almost to manhood stood up before me, unconscious of the recollections and visions which flitted through my mind. These things dispelled my reverie; and my wandering thoughts were recalled to the passing hour.

It was on a Saturday evening that I thus revisited Kirkhall; and my melancholy meditations were soon partially dissipated by the cheerful, but moderate hospitalities of my host; which were truly such as to make me feel that I was as it were, among my own kindred, and at my Father's Fireside.

What a flood of emotions and remembrances spring forth at the mental utterance of these words! On retiring from the parlor, I was ushered into what was, of old denominated in the quaint colloquial language of Scotland, "The Prophet's Chamber"—that is, the apartment for study, was to be found thus distinguished in all the old manse of our clergy. It was now a bedroom, the library being established in another apartment; and I laid my head upon the pillow in a chamber which was consecrated, in my memory, by the recollection that within its walls good men had often thought of "the way of God to man," and prepared their spirits in the depths of silence and seclusion, for proclaiming in the sanctuary the glad tidings of salvation.

It was a tempestuous night; and, though the blast was completely excluded from the manse by the dense masses of trees with which it was surrounded, the wind howled and moaned through their branches and on their summits, and, like the thunder, gave forth a solemn music to the soul. I did not sleep, but listened to the sounds of the tempest with that pleasure which philosophy cannot explain. Ere long, the current of thought reverted to my own former relations to the dwelling in which I reposed; and busy memory, in the watches of the night, supplied, with all the freshness of a recent event,

the circumstances which chequered the life and marked the character of my father.— Though, perhaps, in the estimation of many, these were commonplace, yet, to me they were still full of interest; and, as they seem to afford a true and undistorted picture of a Scottish clergyman's real character and fortunes, I have written them down to fill a spare corner in the *Tales of the Borders*.

William Douglas was the eldest son of a farmer in one of the northern counties of Scotland. The family had been tenants of the farm of Mains for five successive generations: and as far as tradition and the humble annals of the parish could be relied on, had borne an unspotted name, and acquired that hereditary character for worth which, in their humble station, may be regarded as constituting the moral nobility of human nature. Just and devout in their lives—sincere, unpretending, and unaffected in their manners—they were never spoken of but with respect and good will by their neighbours; and were often, in the domestic and rural affairs of the vicinity, the counsellors and umpires, in whose good sense, and integrity, and kindness of heart, their humble friends trusted with confidence. Such characters and families are to be found in almost every rural district of this country; for, "though grace gangs no' by generation, yet there is such a thing as a hawk in a guid nest." I believe in the homely proverb, though some metaphysicians may dispute it, but whether debatable or not in the abstract, William Douglas had the good fortune, as he deemed it, to grow up in the bosom of a family in which the characteristic of worth was cherished and transmitted as an heirloom.

The eldest son of the guidman of Mains showed an early fondness for his school exercises, and acquired, under the tuition of Roaring Jock, the dominie of the parish, a tolerable proficiency in the rudiments of literature. The guidman, being an elder of the kirk, was often at the minister's manse; and the bairns from Mains were occasionally invited to tea on the Saturdays and play days; and Paplay (the minister, was so denominated, from the name of a small estate of which he was the laird) shewed great favor to the 'auldest callant,' and often conversed with him about the subject of his reading. In these circumstances; and considering the religious character of the Mains family, it was

almost a matter of course that Willie should be destined by his parents, and prompted by his own predilections to 'the ministry.' And by the advice of Paplay and Roaring Jock Willie was sent to the Marischal College Aberdeen, where he gained a bursary at competition, and prosecuted his studies with assiduity, until, at length, in the fullness of time he became a licentiate of the church.

The only thing I remember to have been connected with this period of my life was his anecdotes of Paplay's eccentricities which were numerous—some of them personal, and some of them the peculiarities of the old school of clergy in Scotland. He was a pious and orthodox man; but withal had a tincture of the Covenanter about him, blended with the aristocratic and chivalrous feeling of a country gentleman of old family. In the troubled times, about the years 1745 he was a staunch Whig; and so very decided in his politics, that, when "Prince Charles" had the ascendancy in Scotland, he was either in arms or in hiding; and when he ventured to preach, he wore his sword on his pulpit, and a blue coat, girt with a belt in which a pair of pistols were hung—more like a general of war than a preacher of peace! Even on the day of defeat at Culloden, the Jacobites of the north was so strong, and Paplay so obnoxious, by reason of his vehement preaching against Popery, and Prelacy; the Pretender, that he continued long to wear his sword, (in the pulpit and elsewhere,) which was rather a formidable objection to the nonjurors about him, in the hands of a brave and athletic champion of the Whiggery. He assigned three reasons for wearing his sword after it seemed to some of his friends to be unnecessary;—"First, Because I am a gentleman; secondly, Because I can use it; and, thirdly, Because, if I doubt, you may try." Among some of his duties, he had a great admiration of a white spring, a white calf, and a bonny lass; and he never passed any of them in his way without doing homage. Though travelling horseback, he would dismount to bathe his feet in a limpid stream, as it gushed from earth, or to caress a white calf, or to salute a female—all which fantasies were united with the most primitive innocence. And hence, when he ate a meal, even in his own house, or when he was a refugee in a hay stack or kiln, he would without exacting from his wife and family the most urgent pressing.

was under the auspices of this warlike singular apostle, that my father was ushered into the sacred office of a minister of the gospel. He preached his first sermon in the church of his native parish and, according to the fashion of the times, at the close of the service the parish minister publicly criticised the discourses of the day. The young preacher in this instance found favor in Paplay's eyes; and his testimony in favor of the *plant* which had sprung up among them, was so emphatic, and rendered so piquant by his oddness of speech, that William Douglas was distinguished among his friends and neighbors as "Paplay's Plant."

But there was another *plant* that graced the manse which was not unobserved or unnoticed by the young preacher—Jane Malcolm, (the daughter of a clergyman in a remote parish, and niece of Paplay's father) a sweet flower, that had grown up in the wilderness like 'a daisy on the mountain's side.' It was in the nature of things that the fables of the plants' should be illustrated by the juxtaposition of the two flowers of the parsonage. An affectionate but somewhat distant attachment naturally grew out of the frequent visits which Paplay's Plant paid to the manse; and these were multiplied in consequence of William Douglas being appointed assistant to his spiritual patron, whose declining age and the time of years had begun to sap the energy of his character, and to render the assistance necessary. The attachment between the young people might be suspected, but it was not formally made known to Paplay and "the lady," as she was called, according to courtesy of the olden time. Indeed, a formal promulgation would have been idle; the "half reverend" assistant (as Paplay was wont to address the young probationers of the church) had no immediate prospect of a clerical office, although he was an acceptable preacher throughout the bounds of presbyte-rianism. But an incident occurred which facilitated the union of which the preliminaries had thus established.

The Earl of Bellersdale, a nobleman in a neighboring county, who affected to be descended from an ancient family that flourished in the days of good King Duncan, but which had really no more connection with Hercules or the Man in the Moon, had a village and seaport a short but constant distance from his magnificent castle.

Among the other items in the arrangements which were destined to immortalize the munificence of the Earl in the establishment of Bellerstown, a church was deemed necessary for political, to say nothing of moral considerations; and the Earl being a man of a man of taste, thought that a church, placed in a particular position, would make a fine vista from various points in the noble park which surrounded the Castle of Bellersdale. A picturesque chapel was accordingly built on a rising knoll, separated from the pleasure grounds and the castle by a river, over which a handsome bridge made no mean addition to the lordly scene.

The chapel being built, and endowed with a stipend of "forty pounds a year," (the hint I suppose was taken from Oliver Goldsmith,) it was necessary to provide a clergyman to officiate in it; and William Douglas being one of the most approved young men in the district, had the honor to be preferred by patron. The period to which I now refer, was long before the church, in its wisdom, enacted a law for regulating chapels of ease; and not only the amount of stipend, but the continuance of clergymen who officiated in such chapels, depended on the arbitrary and sovereign will of their pious founders. Bellerstown, though a sort of step in William Douglas' professional progress, yielded too scanty a revenue to admit of matrimony; but the talents, respectability, and prepossessing manners of the chaplain, made him a favorite at the castle, and rendered it practicable to eke out the slender living by the addition of a small farm, at what was called a moderate rent. But this appendage, too, was held by the same precarious tenure—Lord Bellersdale's will. The probationer was then inducted as pastor of the Bellerstown chapel, according to the rules of the church; and, after the lapse of a few months, he and Miss Jane Malcolm thought—although no other person thought—that they might venture to enter into the holy bands of wedlock, and, with frugality and mutual love in their humble and unambitious sphere of life. This thought ended in deed—they were married.

The tenor of a clergyman's life is, in general, even and unvaried, consisting of a faithful and regular discharge of his peculiar duties. Such, for some years, was the fate of William Douglas. He acquired the confidence and affections of his humble flock—the

esteem of his brethren—the countenance of the neighboring gentry—and even the patronage of the great man, at whose table he was a frequent and welcomed guest. Mrs. Douglas had presented him with two sons; and his parents, advanced in years, were gathered to their fathers. This bereavement was not unlooked for; but the first trial of life which wrung his heart to the core, was a fatal illness which, in a few days, snatched the object of his most tender affection from him.

Time passed on, and 'brought healing on its wings.' After the lapse of several years, my father felt that it was not meet for man to be alone; and, whilst he cherished the fond remembrance of his first domestic companion, he had too much good sense to go into the affectation of continuing single during the rest of his life 'for her sake;' more especially as he had no female relative to whom he could confide the maternal charge of his boys in their nursery days. He accordingly discerned, in the daughter of one of his flock, a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, those personal attractions and amiable dispositions which awakened his manly sympathies; and, too high minded to stoop to mercenary considerations, he married a second time, without hunting for a *tocher*, as is sometimes imputed sarcastically to the Scottish clergy. Isobel Wilson was lovely and virtuous.

About the time the American war ended I came into this earthly part of the universe; but nothing occurred for several years of my father's life to diversify the peaceful enjoyments of his domestic life, or to interrupt the diligent and zealous discharge of his pastoral duties. At length, however, a cloud gathered in the firmament, which, ere long, burst on his head, in the wrath of his patron, the Earl of Bellersdale.

Local, rather than general politics agitated the district in which his humble life was cast, and there was a vehement struggle betwixt his Lordship and a neighbouring nobleman for ascendancy in the county. The ranks of either party were swelled by the multiplication of freehold qualifications, for the purpose of acquiring votes. One of the expedients, as is well known, for the attainments of such objects, is the creation of nominal and fictitious voters, by conferring on the *friends*

of a political party an apparent, but not real interest in a landed estate; and this practised and justified by a legal fiction, and a little casuistry, with which political ages are quite familiar. The ordinary mode in these cases, is to confer such *parcels* of franchises on dependants and personal connections of the great man who needs their support—and the Earl of Bellersdale, who had the patronage of many churches of greater or less value, found, even among the clergy who had hopes of preferment from his hand, several individuals sufficiently unscrupulous to accept of such discreditable title to a political franchise as freeholders. Amongst others, my father, who was in great odour at the castle, was deemed a *likely* person to be intrusted with so precious a privilege as a right to vote for any tool of the Earl who might be brought forward a candidate for representing the shire in Parliament. The factor was dispatched to Bellerstown to offer this high behest to the parson, whose ready compliance was expected as a *matter of course*. But he calmly and peremptorily refused the proffered bribe, and intimated that he held it derogatory to the sacred nature of his office to poll himself with such politics, and inconsistent with every principle of honour, morality, and religion, to take an oath, as required by the law, that he was possessed of a landed estate, while, in truth, he had no earthly title to an inch of it. This scrupulosity gave me offence at the castle; and the recusant parson was doomed to ridicule as a pious fool, and to ruin. And as, in such cases, even an unoffending individual is completely dependent on the offended party, pretexts never wanting for cloaking the lurking purpose of mischief, these were soon and easily discovered. If the minister of Bellerstown discoursed on integrity and truth as Christian virtues, or on the sacredness of an oath, the Earl's underlings bore the tidings to the castle, where such doctrine was deemed treason against the electioneering moralist, and the faithful and fearless minister of religion having, rebuked from the pulpit, the gross and public enormities and violations of the Sabbath by the canvassers for the Earl's candidate, within the precincts of his pastoral charge, this was a sad and unparliamentary aggravation of his rebellion. Nay, he published a little tract on the duty of attending public worship, of which he was

own author, this was regarded as a direct personal insult to the Lord of the Manor—because his Lordship was so much engrossed with politics and his other affairs, that he had, for some time, ceased entirely to go to church. These little incidents were aggravated by the perfidy of the parson of the parish within which Mr. Douglas' chapel was situated. That gentleman had formed a scheme for transferring his residence from the ancient manse, in a remote part of the parish, to the more populous and flourishing village or hamlet of Bellerstown—intending to officiate in the chapel, (receiving, of course, an additional accommodation applicable to the cure,) and consigning the care of the parish in the parish church to the schoolmaster—a preacher whom he satisfied with a bounty of £10 or 13 a year. And for the accomplishment of this object, it was no difficult thing, as matters stood, to ingratiate himself into the patron's favour, and to accomplish his own personal objects, by whispering into the Earl's greedy ear every remark that would suit his purpose made by Mr. Douglas, in the most unbounded confidence of private intercourse and seeming friendship.

When the wrath which had accumulated in the heart of the Earl was fanned to its height, he issued his orders to the factor in the following decree:—'Rackrent—*Us*'—(a grammatical singularity which his Lordship always used, surpassing even the royal or imperial majesty, indicative of the first person plural)—'Us is determined to root out that rebellious fellow Douglas, and to banish him from our grounds. Rackrent, order the scribe, instantly to serve the fellow with a summons of removing from St. Barn's; and, do you hear, go to Bellerstown, lock and nail up the chapel door, and tell the fellow that he shall never preach against us. Tell him to go to the devil, as us will not suffer rebels against our lord.'

This mandate was instantly obeyed. Mr. Douglas received the intimation from Rackrent with surprise, but undismayed; and, his courage swelling as the danger swells, he accepted the intimation as a testimony of his liberty, and pitied the tyrant who had thus abused his power. The Earl had the unconquerable power—there was no appeal from his

heartless decree. Rackrent speedily promulgated in the burgh the purport of his mission and ostentatiously performed his task of shutting up the chapel—putting the key in his pocket. Consternation, and sympathy with their 'ain guid minister and his wife and bairns,' spread from house to house; and it was not till the shadow of night afforded shelter from observation, that even a few true friends mustered courage to venture into the house of a proscribed man, and to cheer him with their condolence.

Mr. Douglas had an instinctive courage which prompted him to bear Rackrent's message without a quiver on his countenance, save perhaps a momentary expression of scorn on his lip, and a sparkle of indignation in his keen blue eye. But, after the minion of power had retired, and he felt himself alone, a cold and chilling emotion gathered round his heart. He went immediately to the nursery, where his wife was busied in tending and amusing her children; and having, desired Grace Grant (our attached and only servant, who never was in any other service) to look after her matters in the kitchen, he communicated to his dear Isobel, that she and her little ones were thrown destitute. I was too young (being only four or five years of age at the time) to understand the import of what he said. But my mother and the elder children knew it well; and I need not describe the scene. The tears which a brave man sheds are only those of tenderness and affection—but these are, indeed, tears of bitterness. Such scenes of love and agony are too sacred to be disclosed to an unfeeling world; and all I remember of the one now alluded to, was, that my heart was like to break when I saw those around me embracing and embraced, in tears, and in silence, save the sound of sobs which burst from every bosom.

It was a day of sorrow. Even the youngsters forgot, for a time, that they required their wonted frugal dinner; and it was not until twilight succeeded the last blaze of the setting sun, that Grace Grant called her mistress from the nursery, (having heard from a neighbour the adversity which had befallen) to remind her that tea was ready. My mother was now much composed, and invited the minister to go to the parlour. It was a silent procession. My eldest brother carried me in his arms; and my father led his wife

in one hand, while he bore their younger babe on his other arm. On reaching the parlour, we found tea prepared by the careful hands of Grace Grant; but, before sitting down to partake of that comforting refreshment, the minister proposed to offer up a prayer of resignation to the will of God, and of hope and trust in his providence.

'Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,'

The saint, the father, and the husband prays:

Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days;

There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning the Creator's praise—
In such society yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.'

These devout aspirations being ended, an air of calm composure reigned around my 'Father's Fireside.' He seated himself in his arm chair, while my mother busied herself in preparing tea, and each little one took his appointed place around the oval wainscot table. The turf fire burned cheerily on the hearth. The tea kettle gave out its hissing sounds, indicative of comfort; and the solitary candle diffused light on the fair young faces which brightened as the oat-cake and the 'buttered pieces' began to disappear.—But the minister's wonted playfulness was gone: and the decent silence of a Sabbath afternoon was observed even by the younger boys.

The visits of their friends were a solace in the first hours of their unlooked-for adversity. But, after their retirement, the vague, undefined, and gloomy shadows which rose to the contemplation of my parents, with respect to their future prospects, yielded only a troubled and unutterable anxiety. Repining and supineness, however, were not suited to my father's character: for, with mildness, he united decision and even boldness of spirit. He had, for several years previous to this explosion of lordly despotism in the patron of his chapel, corresponded with some of his college friends in the new Republic of America; and had been encouraged by them, and through them, by one of the most distinguished of the American patriots, to leave this meagre benefice and cross the Atlantic.—These invitations he had declined: being warmly attached to his flock, to the Established Church of Scotland, to his friends at

home, and to his country. In his altered circumstances, however—severed as he was by an arbitrary act over which there was no moral or legal control, cast destitute from the altar at which he had ministered with usefulness and acceptance, and having no claim to immediate patronage in the church—he resolved, with a heavy heart, to betake himself to that field of exertion in a foreign land to which he had been so courteously invited. Having adopted this resolution, he did not waste time in idle whining, but prepared to encounter all the inconveniences and perils of a long voyage across the deep: aggravated, unspeakably, by the accompaniment of a wife and six young children, and hampered by the scanty means which remained to him amidst this wreck of his hopes of happiness at home.

But, before his final departure from the cold and rocky shore of Scotland for ever, he wished to take a public leave of his flock. His own chapel had been shut up: but a reverend friend, in a closely adjoining burgh acceded to his request, that he might have the use of his pulpit on the Sunday after the act of ejection which I have already mentioned. The villagers of Bellerstown were speedily apprised of their minister's intention, and they and many others attended to hear his farewell sermon. The church was crowded with an affectionate and even somewhat exasperated multitude and the service of the day was characterised by a more than usual solemnity. All the energy of the preacher's spirit was called up to sustain him on so trying an occasion; and the unaffected, earnest and native eloquence of his pulpit appearances were heightened by the emotions which struggled within his bosom.

His brief but Christianlike and dignified dress, in which the tremulous voice of deep emotion was occasionally mingled with the manly tones of bolder elocution, was listened to in silence deep as death; and when he descended from the pulpit, Mr. Douglas was surrounded by a throng of elders, and young men, and humble matrons, who were eager to manifest their heartfelt reverence for the beloved pastor.

It were tedious and profitless to detail the painful circumstances which intervened betwixt the time now referred to and that of the minister's embarkation. He experienced on the one hand, all the petty vexations

which the Earl's sycophants could devise for annoyance—spontaneous tokens of disinterested good will and of gratitude, even in the poor and humble; but the *mens conscia sibi recti* enabled him to bear the former with composure, and the latter without vain presumption.

The day of departure at length arrived—and, young as I was, I still remember as well yesterday some of the circumstances. The party proceeded from the only home I had ever known towards the harbour, accompanied by some of the most respectable inhabitants of the village.

After passing by the chapel, which stood conspicuously on a rising ground, the party ascended a steep road—like a patriarch of seventy going on a pilgrimage through the world, with his children around him—to the quay at which the vessel that was to bear us away was moored. The sea beach and quays were crowded. The entire population of the burgh seemed assembled. There were shouts; but uncovered heads, and outstretched hands, and old visages glistening with tears of kindness, spoke a language more eloquent than words can utter. I was accompanied with my mother on board the ship. The sails were unfurled, while we were stepped on the quarter deck. Most of the party went into the cabin; but my father on a coil of ropes, and I stood between his arms, encircled by his arm, and looked up in his face, which was occasionally convulsed with marks of strong but suppressed feeling. The vessel bounded over the waves of the Atlantic Ocean. My father spake not. His eyes were still bent on the rocky cliffs (near which stood his church and house of peace) which he could not discern the people that clustered on its summits. He wrapped me in his cloak, and he held me to his bosom; and, for the first time, I felt a sad consciousness that I was without a home in the world.

My first voyage in life was a rough one. The 'Good Intent' of Bellerstown, in which my father and his family had embarked, as he has lately stated, was a coasting trader, and was bound on this for Leith, whence the party of this intended emigration, and his elder, and little ones, were meant to be transferred to Greenock, as the port of final embarkation for the United States. To those who have had occasion to sojourn in such vessels as the 'Good Intent,' ere yet the Ber-

wick smacks and other vessels of a superior class had been established in the coasting trade of Scotland, it is needless to offer any description of a such a vehicle for the conveyance of human beings—and those who have never experienced such a transit, can form no adequate conception of the misery which it exhibits. Let them, however, imagine a small and dirty cabin, into which no one is admitted save by the companion door and a small sky-light that cannot be opened in rough weather—let them imagine, if they can, the 'villainous compound of smells,' produced by confined air, the flavour of bilge water, agitated in the hold of the ship, and diffused through every crevice, and pitch, and the effluvia of rancid salt meat and broth, and the products of universal sea sickness, altogether inevitable in such circumstances—let them figure such a confined hole filled with human beings, crammed into smaller holes all around, called beds, or laid on shake downs upon the floor, or stretched upon the lockers, in that state of despondency which overwhelming sickness induces;—and they have a picture of the Good Intent's cabin and state-room during the voyage to which I refer. Nor was this all. The weather was boisterous, being the vernal equinox; the winds cross and tempestuous; and the waves of the sea rolled so tremendous that the little vessel sunk, and rose, and rolled, as if each succeeding shock were the last ere she sank for ever into the roaring abyss; while each convulsion of the bark called forth involuntary moans and shrieks of distress, which were heard commingled with the whistling of the tempest, and the dash of the waves, that ever and anon burst on and swept over the deck. And thus for the space of fourteen days went the Good Intent and her inmates, tossed to and fro on the German Ocean, with no comfort to mitigate the extreme of such unwonted sufferings, save the rough but hearty kindness of the skipper and crew, when their cares on deck left them a moment to go below, and offer any attention in their power. I have made many rough voyages since the one alluded to; but this only dwells on my memory like the visions in a wild and troubled dream, surpassing all I have since weathered in intensity of horror and dismay.

At length, the expected haven came in sight; and we entered it—safe but sad enough

the *Good Intent* entered the Water of Leith at morning tide, and my childish wonderment was strangely excited by what seemed to my inexperienced eye a forest of masts and 'leviathans afloat,' as we were towed through among the vessels in harbour, until, amidst bawling and swearing on board and ashore, the *Good Intent* got a berth at the Coalhill of Leith. The emigrant party were all speedily taken on shore, and conveyed to a small inn, where soap, and water, and clean clothes and breakfast, revived in no considerable degree, the spirits of the whole party, after the exhaustion of such a voyage; and the youngsters, especially, were very speedily interested in the rude bustle which the shore of Leith usually exhibits.

Leaving the little colony at Mrs. Monro's ship tavern, on the Coalhill, my father proceeded to the residence of his cousin, Mr. Pearson, who resided in one of the western suburbs of Edinburgh, (where he and his were expected,) in order to announce the advent to a temporary home. It was afternoon ere he returned with his cousin to conduct the rest of the family; and the whole party proceeded on foot up Leith Walk, and thro' a part of Edinburgh, towards Mr. Pearson's hospitable abode, astonished and bewildered in a scene so new. There we all received a warm welcome from the good old man and his daughters, and experienced every attention and kindness which good hearts and the ties of kindred could suggest.

Before proceeding to Greenock, to make the necessary arrangements for the final emigration, Mr. Douglas, while his family were refreshing with their relatives, for a longer voyage than they had already encountered, paid a visit to an old friend, a clergyman in the country, in whose parish was situated the noble mansion of Earl H———. The countess of H——— was a near relative of Lady B——, to whom Mr. Douglas had long been known as an exemplary clergyman, and who in the day of his adversity and unmerited persecution, had taken a lively interest in his fate. Amongst other acts of kindness, she had not only given him an introductory letter to the countess of H——, but had written previously, recommending him to her good offices with the Earl, (who was, in all respects, a complete contrast to Lord Bellersdale,) and solicting some one of the numerous benefices in the church of

which the Earl was patron, when a vacancy might occur. Mr. Douglas, visited his friend before delivering his introduction at the gentleman's house, and preached on the Sabbath which intervened during his stay: and the services of the day having been conducted with the simple and unfeigned devoutness which lent to its highest power to pulpit eloquence, the noble family, who regularly attended on religious ordinances in their parish church, were much affected and gratified with the demonstration of the stranger, on this occasion; and this effect was not marred to "ears polite even by the slight "accents of the northern tongue." Next morning, the pastor of the parish received an invitation to dine at H—— House that day, and was requested to bring along with him the friend who had officiated for him on the preceding Sunday. The invitation was, of course, accepted; and, being introduced to the Earl and Countess of H——, and his name being announced, Lady H—— inquired if he were from the north country, when he took the opportunity of delivering Lady B's introductory letter, which showed that Mr. Douglas was the same person of whom Lady B. had previously written. His reception by both the noble personages was more than polite; it was kind in the highest degree, and every way worthy of a generous and also high-minded man, whose good qualities have, in various periods of our history, given lustre to the nobility of Scotland. The day was spent with mutual satisfaction and the Earl, before parting, gave Mr. Douglas a cordial shake by the hand, and assured him that the first benefice that should fall in his gift, should be conferred on him. Thus they parted; but Mr. Douglas returned to Mr. Pearson's, with the unaltered purpose of pursuing his voyage to America—his hopes inspired by the Earl's spontaneous promise being too faint and remote, in their possible accomplishment, to induce protraction in his proceedings. The love of his native country yearned in his bosom, and the perils and privations to which his fireside flock might be exposed, passed through his thoughts as he drove along the shore of the Forth, on his return; but he could find no alternative, save to go onward in the path which he had previously marked out for himself in his present circumstances.

Accordingly, after a few days' repose, he set out to Greenock, to make arrangements for the passage to New York of himself.

olly. He applied to an eminent merchant well remember, was the Cowgate, with its rows of lamps extending beneath the South Bridge, and seen through the iron ballustrades! This was perfect enchantment to some of us; and I don't believe I have ever seen any scene of artificial magnificence, since I first looked down on the Cowgate, that made so strong an impression on me, as a specimen of city grandeur!

He applied to an eminent merchant on the subject, in whose service, as a clerk, a favourite brother had lived and died. From that gentleman he received every courtesy and counsel suited to the occasion, and was offered the passage completed gratuitously. He had spent a day or two only at Greenock, making preparations for the voyage, when, having gone into the vessel in which he was destined to embark, to hold the necessary consultation with the master, a packet was brought to him which had been forwarded by Mr. Pearson to the care of Mr. the merchant. On unsealing it, Mr. Douglas found enclosed a presentation in his favour, by the Earl of H., to a living in one of the southern counties of Scotland.

It were idle in any one who has never experienced a sudden and unexpected transition of the endless vicissitudes of human life—from a position encompassed with doubts and darkness, into scenes and prospects of brightness—to attempt any delineation of Mr. Douglas' emotions on this occasion; for, who can express in language the throb of gratitude to benefactors, which, in such circumstances, swells the heart beyond the power of utterance?—or who can convey any adequate notion of the devout and silent thankfulness which exalts the soul of a good man, when he sees and feels in such an event, the manifestation of that overruling Providence which it his habitual principle to acknowledge and adore?

The American expedition was now abandoned, and Mr. Douglas returned from Greece to Edinburgh, with all the dispatch which the *Flies* of those days rendered practicable. The tidings were soon told, not with exultation, but with the chastened sadness which these were calculated to impart on his own spirit and all around him; instead of packing up for Greenock, and preparing for crossing the wide Atlantic, nothing was now talked of in Pearson's kind style, but *plenishing* for the manse.

The day of departure at length arrived, yet the young folks had recovered from the astonishment which every thing in the northern metropolis presented to them as novelties, and before they had become familiar with the splendour of long rows of lamps dazzling scattered lights over the dusky zone of the 'Auld Toun' in an evening. One of the most startling of these marvels, I

well remember, was the Cowgate, with its rows of lamps extending beneath the South Bridge, and seen through the iron ballustrades! This was perfect enchantment to some of us; and I don't believe I have ever seen any scene of artificial magnificence, since I first looked down on the Cowgate, that made so strong an impression on me, as a specimen of city grandeur!

The vehicle for our conveyance was not as in those latter days, a dashing stage coach and four—for there was nothing of the kind on the public roads of Scotland fifty years ago—but a caravan or waggon, having a sort of rail round three sides of it, and covered over head with a canvas cloth on strong hoops with an aperture behind to let in the travellers, and the fresh air, and the light. Under this primitive pavilion sat ensconced the parson and his spouse, on trusses of straw and with blankets to keep warmth if necessary—the bairns being all paced in and about them, according to their dimensions; and in this fashion on jogged the cavalcade, consisting of the caravan, and another long cart with furniture. Two or three days were required for the journey—the carriers stopping each night at convenient distances in country inns for the 'entertainment of men and horses,' where slight and rough accommodation only was to be had.

At length, on the third day, the caravan-sary reached the promised land—not like that in the Orient, flowing with milk and honey, and glowing in all the richness of natural beauty; but a long straggling village of heath-thatched cottages, with about half a dozen slated houses, including the kirk; and, though placed in a valley on the banks of a rivulet, yet surrounded on all sides for many miles round with the wildest moorlands in one of the most elevated situations inhabited in Scotland by human beings. But, what of all this? It afforded a *home* in our native land—and we soon learnt by experience that its inhabitants were among the most kind-hearted and intelligent of the sons of Caledonia.

The humble parsonage of Muirden was but a Chapel of Ease, yielding an income under one hundred pounds per annum. Yet, with this limited benefice, the Rev. William Douglas was enabled by the frugal housewifery of the mistress, to maintain a decent, and, in his sphere, even a hospitable household, and to

discharge the petty obligations to friends which he had incurred while 'out of bread' and preparing to cross the deep to a foreign land. Until this last, and, in his estimation, sacred duty was accomplished, the strictest economy was observed. The 'muckle wheel' and the 'little wheel' were heard humming incessantly in the kitchen; and the bairns were clad in the good home made clothes of the domicile; while they were early taught practically that plain and wholesome though humble fare at the board was all that they ought to desire, and that luxuries and delicacies, such as load "the rich man's table," were truly a matter of small moment, and utterly despicable when compared with those luxuries of the mind and that superiority of character which are derived from moral and intellectual culture. These latter, accordingly, were day by day pressed on their attention as the proper business of their early life—and all were habituated to regular and constant attention to their 'lessons,' at home as well as in school.

Nor was this remote parsonage destitute of some strong and interesting attractions to a generous mind. Muirden was situated in a region which is consecrated by many events and traditions of "the persecuted times."—There the hill sides and moss hags in its vicinity still known to the peasant as the places of worship and of refuge to the Covenanters in the day of peril and alarm; and some of our Scotland's martyr's were immolated at the doors of their own huts, the foundation of which may still be traced overgrown with the green turf or the heather bell. To a Scottish pastor, such scenes are classic, grand even in a higher sense than those of Marathon or Thermopylæ—for it was the immutable and holy spirit which was there kindled and formed into a flame that finally won for Scotland not only the blessings of civil liberty, but the triumphs of religious truth.

It was an inspiring task to serve at the altar among a people who, though humble, cherished with fondness the memory of their godly forefathers; and was, indeed, a labor of love, in which the teacher and the taught found mutual comfort and advantage. Nor were the exercises of the pulpit the only parts of pastoral duty to which Mr. Douglas directed his attention and his heart. He visited and soon became acquainted with all his flock—not formally and pompously, but frankly

and in unaffected kindness; and ere long became the friend and trusted counsellor of his parishoners, not merely in spiritual, but in their temporal concerns. And, as a proof of the impression which such a truly evangelical course of conduct made among his people, I may state that, within these few years after the lapse of nearly fifty, I had a call from a respectable old man, who, having heard I was in Edinburgh, had found out and announced himself to be Mr. ——— who had taught me the alphabet, and first guided my hand to wield the pen which now records this incident. I have rarely met with an occurrence more gratifying to my feelings, than when the old gentleman (for he was a gentleman in the best sense of the term, though a country schoolmaster) told me that years had not effaced from his heart or his memory the kindly affection which he bore to my father and his children, who were the objects of his careful tuition, and that he had sought and found me to give utterance to that feeling. I need not say he got a warm welcome. He had then retired from the laborious duties of his office, with a moderate competency, and in a green old age. He had since paid the debt of nature. Peace to his ashes! It would be well if our parochial clergy would thus cultivate, not the vulgar arts of worldly popularity, but by acts of kindness, the confidence and the respect of their flocks. It is thus that the human heart is won; and is thus that a Christian parsonage most effectually

"Allures to brighter realms, and leads
way."

There was a peculiarity in the village of Muirden which I must not omit to notice. It was, perhaps, the first locality, in Scotland so entirely rural, that had a library established in it. I do not know precisely the history of that institution; but its supporters were in different grades, employed chiefly in the working of some mines in the vicinity, and devoted a small portion of their wages, periodically, for the purchase of books for the library. The fruits of this establishment were visible, in the decent and orderly habits, in the superior information of the whole population; presenting a moral picture exactly the reverse of that which too often characterises the now liberated 'ascripti glebe' who are usually engaged in such occupations, and who are proverbially the most barbarous

fallen the presentee, and of having a stipend nearly double the salary at Muirden—a consideration of no slight moment to a man with a family, however moderate his wish in regard to temporalities; and it possessed the further superiority over Muirden, that it was situated on the southern shore of the Frith of Forth in a district of country highly cultivated, and within a few hours' ride of the metropolis. It had the charm of perfect seclusion from the great and bustling world—the church and manse being situated in a sheltered valley, embosomed amidst a cluster of ancient trees, which probably were planted here the reformation dawned on Scotland.

The tidings of this promotion, as it may be termed, produced in the humble dwelling of the pastor of Muirden, that measure of gladness which is inspired by the smiles of fortune—varying in degree among the different members of the family according to their intelligence and their years. To the heads of the promised improvement in their condition afforded the calm, yet exquisite satisfaction which the prospect of a competence for their little ones, and the means of educating and preparing them to act their part in the world, naturally awakens; and in the younger members of it, the reported beauties of a new parish, and the approach of a new journey, excited that joyousness and vivacity of hope which even invests what is unknown with the attribute of magnificence.

After a little while devoted to necessary arrangements—after many visits paid to all the dwellings of the humble flock of Muirden—after the interchange of kindly hospilities among the superior classes of all his neighbours—and after a public and affectionate farewell to all—Mr. Douglas once more set out with his family on this, his last mission; and with the aid of caravan and pack, the family partly went on their way from Muirden to Edinburgh, retracing thus their steps, on their journey to Eccleshall. In a few days they were set down in court before the manse of Eccleshall—where two stately lime trees formed a fine shade from the fervours of a summer

ignorant class in Scotland—thus furnishing an example, which is now become pretty general, of supplying an interesting and improving employment of the hours of relaxation from labor, instead of mispending the intervals at the ale house or other houses of debauchery.

The village of Muirden, too, had the advantage of a resident country gentleman in its immediate neighborhood—Mr. Sterling. Such an auxiliary to the clergyman and schoolmaster in a rural district, is generally of unspeakable advantage to the moral condition of the locality, more especially when, as in this instance, he was a man every way worthy of his rank and position in society. He possessed an estate of his own in one of the most beautiful provinces in Scotland; but, being a man distinguished in science, he had a general supervision of the works to which I have alluded; and, being thus clothed with authority, as well as a magistrate in the county he was ever ready to co-operate in every measure which was beneficial, and in the repression of whatever was pernicious in this little colony. The society and friendly intercourse which naturally arose betwixt such a country gentleman and the pastor, formed no slight addition to the enjoyments of the latter, in a sphere shut out by its position from much personal intercourse with well educated men; and, in short, amid mountain and moor all around, Muirden presented one of the most pleasing pictures that this country affords of a rural parsonage.

Mr. Douglas' zealous and faithful discharge of his pastoral duties did not remain unknown to his noble patron. From the time, indeed, of his induction at Muirden, the moral movements of that hamlet were occasionally reported by its guardian, Mr. Sterling, to the family that was interested in its prosperity; and the unremitting but unobtrusive ministrations of the village pastor were not of course overlooked. These were duly appreciated; and, after the lapse of only two or three years, the Earl of H—— spontaneously, and without any previous communication, presented Mr. Douglas to the benefice of Eccleshall, which had fallen vacant by the demise of its minister. This change had the double advantage of being on the regular establishment of the church, beyond the risk of any such casualty as had formerly be-

Whether the reality corresponded with the anticipations of the new comers or I will not pretend to affirm—but the arduous had scarcely been accomplished, ere

every room and recess in the manse had been explored, and the neat and beautiful gardens were traversed, and the glebe surveyed, and the "bonny burnside" visited, and the water laved from its channel. It was, in truth, a new world to its young visitants—and appeared in the superior house-accommation, and rural amenity around, a terrestrial paradise, contrasted with the circumscribed dwelling on the rocky shore of the German Ocean in the north, or in the hamlet of Muirden amid the wilderness on the southern border of Scotland. The sensations and sympathies of that day, and of seven years which followed it, are still fresh within my recollection, and still swell in my heart, as marking the brightest and the happiest period of my existence. Every thing connected with that season of my life, is still invested in my memory with charms which I have never since tasted; and my young imagination clothed the vale of Eccleshall with a brighter verdure and gayer flowers than ever to me bloomed elsewhere on earth; and the heaven glowed in more resplendent sunshine than has ever since poured its golden radiance on my vision—for it was the sunshine of my young spirit still unclouded by a speck on its moral horizon, and undimmed by the tear of real suffering and sorrow. Are such youthful enchantments realities in the condition of man? or are they visions of fancy, which are kindled by a gracious dispensation of Providence, as a solace to the heart in riper years, when the cares, and toils, and anxieties of manhood are strewn thick in our path, and frown heavily in clouds over every stage of our progress?

In a few days after the house was put in order, the induction of Mr. Douglas took place; and although not so impressive as a Presbyterian ordination, it was to all, his family at least, an interesting scene. A numerous assemblage of the parishioners and the reverend brethren was communed; and the arrival of the latter, successively or in groups—their friendly greetings in the parlour, their progress to the church, and their solemn devoir during the service of the day—bore a character of dignity and impressiveness which does not now generally belong to such ceremonials. It may, perhaps, be unphilosophical, and not in accordance with more modern sentiment, to ascribe any efficacy to mere externals of costume. But it

is a principle deeply implanted in human nature, and not to be stifled by any cold reasoning in the matter, that external decorum and suitable habiliments in any one of the solemnities of religion and the administration of justice, have a powerful effect on the great mass of mankind, which it is not wise to deride or contemn.

It were an easy, and would be a pleasant task to paint some of the scenes and characters which presented themselves to my observation even at that early period of life; but it would be foreign to the object I had in view, and would swell this humble narrative beyond the limits assigned to it. That object was merely to delineate some of the features in the character of a faithful Scottish clergyman, and to exhibit some of the "lights and shadows" which cheer or cloud his existence like that of other men. I have traced progress through various alternations of adversity and prosperity, and placed him in circumstances such as usually filled up the measure of a Christian's ambition—a position of usefulness to those within the sphere of influence, and of comfort in his temporal condition. During the space of seven years was the lot of the individual who, in reality, was the prototype of our story, to enjoy health and strength, and domestic felicity, and discharge his duties with zeal and advantage in the parish of Eccleshall; but returning home after nightfall from attending a meeting of synod in Edinburgh, he caught a severe cold in riding during a stormy night which affected his lungs; and a long indisposition assumed all the symptoms of pulmonary consumption.

Our tale of humble life now draws to close. In the course of a few months, indisposition of Mr. Douglas assumed all the symptoms of a settled consumption, which continued to present to his family and friends the alternations of hope and of fear, that the unfailing companions of that subtle ratiocination. A sea voyage, native air, and other expedients suggested by skill or affection, were tried in vain; and in the fifth year of his age the minister of Eccleshall turned to the bosom of his family, with an anticipation that the distemper under which he lingered would, ere long, prove fatal. His eyes sparkled with more than wonted lustre—his benevolent and intelligent countenance glowed with the delicate flush which so often marks the progress of consumption.

and the healthy, but not robust frame of its possessor, became emaciated and feeble—the illness of the year, 179—, brought the chilling gusts of November to quench the flickering spark of life in his bosom.

I was despatched one cold morning on the way for Mr. Blythe, a neighbouring clergyman and friend, to pay my father a visit :— We rode together from his manse to Ecclesfield—and on his arrival he remained alone with my father engaged in those hallowed communications betwixt a dying man and his final comforter which it is unseemly and unphilosophical in any case to disclose to mortal eyes. After a considerable space thus spent with the whole family, including the servants, obeying my father's directions summoned to the bedside of his couch, in the Red Room, where he lay reposed. When all were assembled, he remained, with composure and resignation, and he was conscious of the near approach of death, and addressed a few sentences of affection and affection to them all ; and having done so he requested Mr. Blythe to be with his household in prayer and praise requesting that the last hymn in the beautiful collection of sacred lyrics attached to our family psalmody, might be sung. My father's pulpit psalm book was brought to Mr. Blythe. It is now before me—and I transcribe from its page, with a vivid recollection of the scene now referred to, one of the solemn strains of that touching anthem :—

The hour of my departure's come,
I hear the voice that calls me home ;
At last, O Lord ! let troubles cease,
And let thy servant die in peace !”

Mr. Blythe breathed, rather than sung the hymn, in the notes of Luther's hundredth— and he did it with the accompaniment of tremulous and broken accents from around the couch. The tears of unutterable sorrow were shed by all, save my mother, whose grief could not find a vent in tears. The voice of psalms was quenched by the sobs which burst from every heart ; during the singing of the last portion of the pious man who guided these orisons, I was so deeply in the passion of lamentation which encompassed him, that his words were scarcely audible. The overwhelming scene was closed by a brief and pious prayer to the Most High, that to His faithful servant he would “ stretch out His strong arms,” and “ to the friendless be a friend.”

A few hours more, and the scenes of life had passed away from the mortal vision of William Douglas. There are many occurrences in life which fill the mind with awe ; but I have never been conscious of any emotion so profound and solemn as that which possessed me during the last day of my sire's life. I witnessed the expiring flame of life in those moments when time is blent with eternity, and when the last sigh seems to waft the immortal spirit into a state of existence of which no adequate conception can be formed. After all was over, and the breath of life had fled, I could not believe my senses, that the prop of my affections was gone from my love and my embrace, and that all which remained on earth of my father, protector, and gentle monitor, was a lifeless wreck on the shore of time. The world appeared to my young eye and heart as a wide scene of mere darkness and desolation.

I will not dwell on subsequent events : the funeral obsequies performed, the family councils were of a melancholy description. As to worldly matters, it was ascertained that there was very little debt—not more than could be fully paid by the current stipend and other limited means ; but beyond this, all was a dreary blank. The only means of subsistence to which my widowed mother could look with certainty, was her small annuity of 25*l.* a year ; while one only of the family (the elder boy who had been educated as a surgeon) could do aught to eke out the means of life for the family. In the depth of her affliction she would say, with pious confidence, in the language of scripture, “ I have never seen the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.”

But leaving these painful retrospects, it may be well to note the career of the Earl of Bellersdale. He survived my father many years, and spent his life, devoid of domestic happiness, in the pursuits of sordid ambition. He lived despised of mankind ; and dying unlamented by any human being, he destined the treasures which he amassed to great accumulation ; not to be enjoyed fully by his heirs, but for the creation of a principedom of indefinite extent and wealth. But the bright honours of the Bellersdale family were speedily tarnished. A spendthrift successor squandered all the revenues which he could touch—and the last time I visited that part of the country, the splendid mansion of Bellersdale Castle was stripped of all its movea-

bles—the collections of many years of aristocratic prie—the pictures, the statues, the very board destined for baronial hospitality—were all brought to the hammer, for the payment of a tailor's bill for gewgaws to grace a court pageant—and the nominal inheritor of the wide domains and honours of

his Lordship's house, is an obscure and useless, though good natured dependent upon Hebrew usurers and Gentile pettifoggers—mere cumberer of the ground—a sycophant of the vulgar!

I need not point the moral of my Tale.

THE CURSE OF SCOTLAND.

A night or two previous to the battle of Culloden, three or four gentlemen, retainers of Prince Charles, and who were residing with him in the same house at Inverness, were amusing themselves with a game at cards—during the evening one of the latter suddenly disappeared, and though anxiously sought for, could nowhere be found. "Curse the card!" exclaimed one of the gentlemen very impatiently, after looking for it for some time in vain—"I wish it were in the Duke of Cumberland's throat." The missing card was the nine of diamonds. The gentlemen, however, determined not to be balked of their sport, contrived a substitute for the lost article, and played on till bed time.

Two days after this the battle of Culloden was fought—and as is well known the insurgent army was totally defeated, and the hopes of the unfortunate Adventurer laid prostrate for ever.

One consequence of this event was, that Inverness was thrown open to the Royalists—and thither, accordingly, the victorious general, the Duke of Cumberland, directed his steps after the engagement.

It was a practice of the Duke's, on arriving at any town or village which had been previously visited by Charles, to inquire for the house, nay, for the very apartment and bed he had occupied, and to take possession of them for his own use, alleging, shrewdly enough, as a reason for this conduct, that they were sure to be the best in the place.—

In conformity with this practice, the Duke arriving at Inverness, inquired for the house in which Charles had stopped—and it being pointed out to him, he immediately took his abode in it.

On the day after the engagement it was reported to the Duke, that a great number of the wounded insurgents and others were wandering, or in concealment, in the neighbourhood of the field of battle. The ruthless general—whose naturally cruel disposition and sullen temper seem to have been fearfully excited by the resistance he had met with, and by the trouble it had cost him to suppress the rebellion in Scotland—on being informed of this circumstance, gave instant orders a party of military should be sent out to search, and destroy the unfortunate men when they could be found.

A strong body of troops were accordingly immediately despatched on this sanguinary mission. But the officer in command of the party, after proceeding some way on this dreadful errand, suddenly recollected that he had no written authority for the horrible deliberate atrocity he was ordered to perpetrate, the commands of the Duke being merely verbal. Desirous of being better secured against any consequences which might arise from the shocking proceeding in which he was about to be engaged, he hurried back to Inverness, sought an audience of the Duke, and requested him to give his orders in writing.

"No occasion whatever," said the

ly, and somewhat irritated at the want of confidence which the demand implied. "Do you are desired, sir. I'll answer for the sequences."

The officer, however, continued to press request, and reiterated his desire to be put possession of documentary evidence that he was about to do was done by authority.

Impatient at his importunity, and desirous getting quit at once of the subject and his pertinacious visitor, the Duke hurriedly ran out the apartment for paper on which to write the desired order; but he could see none. While looking for the paper, however,

he accidentally turned up a corner of the carpet with his foot, and brought to view a card which had been lying beneath it. The Duke observing it, hastily stooped down and picked it up, exclaiming, as he did so—"Oh here, this will do well enough for the death warrant of a parcel of rebel scoundrels!" And he immediately wrote the fatal order with a pencil on the back of the card. This card was the nine of diamonds, the same which had been lost a few evenings before; and such is one version, at any rate, of the tradition that has given to this particular card the startling title of "The Curse of Scotland."

THE PRINCE OF SCOTLAND; OR, THE RIVALSHIP OF MARCH AND DOUGLAS.

The character of David Earl of Carrick, better known by the title of Duke of Rothsay, is one of those which nature seems to delight in distributing among nations, at distant periods, apparently with the view of teaching mankind that, however brilliant may be the powers of mind with which an individual is endowed, however captivating the qualities of his physical attributes—his sparkling wit, his graceful manners, and polite conversation.—and, however amiable the generosity, liberality, and feeling of his heart—though all combined with high rank, and even the station of a king—he has no charter of immunity from the obligations of ordinary life, and that if he endeavours, by the aid of these, to turn serious things into frolic, and force a pastime from the sanctions of religious or moral duty, he must pay the usual forfeit of a departure from the rights of nature, and suffer destruction.

This young Prince, is well known, was the son of Robert III. of Scotland, who allowed the reins of government to be wrested from his feeble hands by the cunning and powerful Duke of Albany. The feebleness of the father was not inherited by the son. Rothsay had powers of mind which were equal to the management of a kingdom; and these, there is reason to suppose, he would have displayed for the advantage of his country, if the current of events in which he was involved had not been influenced by the powers of his uncle, Albany, and turned to suit his schemes of ambition. The indications of great talent which, in early youth, he exhibited, were hailed by his father with pride and satisfaction; but by his uncle, the governor, with well-founded fear and suspicion. Unfortunately, it soon appeared that the fertility of the soil did not limit its powers of production to the nobler and more useful plants. Along with the Prince's great powers of intellect, there arose a love of pleasure which could be gratified only—such was its insatiable character—by every species of extravagant sally and wild frolic.—His heart was untainted by any inclination to injure seriously the health, reputation, or interests of any individual, however humble; but, unfortunately, when a love of enjoy-

ment took possession of him, all his intellectual powers, as well as some of his moral perceptions, were abused or overlooked, and a character naturally generous was shaded by the faults of vicious intemperance.

To make all this the more to be regretted, young Rothsay was a beautiful youth. His voice was full and melodious, capable of being exerted—and he had the art to do it—exciting, by the strains of exquisite music the tenderest feelings of the heart. His manner had in it the affability of a free romping girl, with the grace and dignity of a young prince. His hilarity seemed to have no interval, and his good humour was scarce capable of being disturbed. His love of amusement, and his genius in contriving schemes for the promotion of the happiness of his friends and associates, made his company the desire of the aged and the envy of the young. Yet, amidst all this, it was marked as wonderful, that he seldom lowered the dignity of his rank. Even his frolics were those of a prince, and his humblest services were performed with that consummate grace which can lend a charm to what, in other hands, would incur the charge of vulgarity.

But, while these fair features often set off with greater effect, the faults which inevitably flow from the indulgence of unbridled passions, Rothsay had the power of combining his good and evil, and so mixing up passionate sallies of intemperance or vice with traits of generosity, humanity, and feeling, that it was often impossible to determine whether some of his actions were good or bad, or whether the people who had apparently suffered from his unrestrained licentiousness would have escaped the injury had they been deprived of the benefit which it produced from the calm reflection of a generous mind.

The friendship of Rothsay was extended to most of the young nobles of that period, but no one was so successful in securing affection as Sir John de Ramorgny—a Frenchman supposed to have come originally from France, and certainly justifying his extraction by his character. Originally bred a churchman, he was learned beyond the rest of those with whom he associated; and, while he could boast his erudition and knowledge, he still could cope with him in originality.

mind. But these powers were ill directed—for they were used only in base intrigues and vicious projects. A more dangerous friend or fatal enemy could not be found among insidious Freuchmen or the still savage Scots. His dissimulation, address, and elegance of personal appearance and manners, were all used, as occasion required, to cover or aid his designs of ambition, or his base seductions and purposes of revenge.—Able for the weightier projects of war or diplomacy, and admirably adapted for court intrigue, he did not hesitate to descend to the most trifling and vulgar pleasures. He would play the murderer, the insidious betrayer, and the buffoon or mountebank, with equal address and with equal satisfaction. With these qualities, the more wicked and dangerous of which he could conceal, Ramorgny was easily able to recommend himself to the Prince; and the affection with which he was treated by the Prince was no doubt the effect of a similarity in manners and accomplishments, and a congeniality of humour, which the unsuspecting and generous Prince took for an agreement of disposition.

Scotland is said to have been used, from the one end to the other, by these dissolute companions, as the theatre of their amusements. They wandered about in disguise, laying hands on rich and poor, old and young, under contributions for their wild pastime. They were often for weeks associated with bands of wandering minstrels and female dancers, entering into their humors, playing on their instruments, learning the secrets of their wanderer's professions, and imitating their performances. The protean versatility of their powers rendered their extravagant exhibitions of every accomplishment; while their hilarity and serious merriment, recommended by a profusion of money, made them welcome in whatever society of vagabonds they were desirous of entering. Nor was it merely the favors of these tribes that the companions were permitted to join in their pleasures. They were able to stand their ground on equal footing of reckless hardihood, and on occasion required, of pugilistic authority. They could sing and dance, swear and quarrel, get drunk and fight, with the most eligible members of these outlawed associations.

These extravagances soon became known; and Queen Anabella, the young Duke's mo-

ther, was greatly grieved that her eldest son, and the object of her dearest hopes and most anxious solitudes, should act a part which, while it would alienate from him the hearts of the people, would enable his uncle Albany to continue longer his usurped dominion as governor of Scotland. An attempt was therefore made to unite him to the cares and solitudes of office; and he was soon installed into that of lieutenant of the kingdom—a council being, at the same time, appointed to advise with him. This step was not followed by its expected benefits; for the governor did not consider it either as incompatible with the duties of his situation or derogatory to the dignity of his high place, to resort to his old modes of pleasure and amusement. All that was required was a greater degree of care employed upon the habiliments of his disguises; and the lord lieutenant might have been detected joining in a rondeau with a singing girl, acting the fanfaron with a Hector, performing a daring croupade with a rope dancer, or tripping to the sound of an Italian theorbo. In all these things he was still kept in countenance by Ramorgny; who, however, while he was joining him in his revels, was meditating schemes of villany and selfishness.

The affairs of state having thus little power in withdrawing the Prince from his licentious companions and unbecoming practices, it was next suggested by the Queen, that the restraining influence of a wife's affections might overcome his propensity for the outlawed pleasures to which he had become enslaved. The King seconded this measure; and, without consulting the Duke's sentiments, or ascertaining his taste in the choice of a wife, it was communicated to him that the interests of the nation required him to marry and provide an heir to the throne, and that his choice of a wife lay between Elizabeth Douglas, daughter of Archibald Earl of Douglas, and Elizabeth of Dunbar, daughter of the powerful Earl of March. Neither of these ladies had ever been seen by the Prince. It was surmised that he had a special favourite of his own, selected no doubt from a host of willing beauties with whom he associated; and the intelligence that he was called upon to resign his liberty into the hands of a woman he had never seen, could not be expected to be highly relished by a person of his spirit and habits of life.

Seeking Ramorgny, Rothsay communicated to him the intentions of his mother, and the commands of his father and the nation, and asked his advice in so trying an emergency.

'By your father's crown,' cried Ramorgny, 'I see nothing for it but to obey. The difficulty lies in the selection; for, if I am able to appreciate the beauty of woman, thou wilt have to choose between a crow and a rook.—Elizabeth of Dunbar is the descendant of Black Agnes, who defended that old castle, in the days of the second David, against the arms of the Duke of Salisbury; and Elizabeth of Douglas cannot fail to have in her some portion of the blood of the black Earl, who fell in Spain, trusting to the protecting charm of Robert's heart, which he carried with him in a casket. So thou seest the black choice thou hast got; and the matter is not mended by having two in thy option, if the old proverb carries faith, which sayeth that, 'Two blacks will not make a white.'"

"By the faith of a prince," replied the Duke, "it is a black business; but thou hast been talking genealogically, good Ramorgny, while I wished to have thy opinion physically. Blood doth not follow the high law of the mountain stream, by getting more maddy as it descends—neither are men and women of the nature of the gaffled cocks we used to fight at the mains on the inch of Perth, which send down their fighting propensities to the tenth gallinaceous generation. The two Besses may be whiter than their progenitors, and of less pugnacious propensities!"

"Ha! thy argument, good lieutenant," cried Sir John, "hath the goodly property of proving two things:—In the first place, it proves that the two Besses may have white skins; and, secondly, that thou mayest have a white liver; for, if courage hath no descent but in cocks, thou canst not boast of having the heart of the first Robert!"

"Hold! thou art too severe," cried Rothsay, "and not logical. Thou art mixing up actuality with potentiality—for that my liver is not white, is proved by the blue evidences I painted on thy back when, in the gipsy tent at Bothwell, I fought thee for a kiss of the brown morris dancer, Marion of Leghorn, who, having given me the reward of my victory, dressed thy wounds for pity's sake, and then cudgelled thee for mine."

"I could turn thy argument against thee," answered Ramorgny; "for thy courage was so much at fault that thou didst require the aid of an Italian morris-dancer to do that which good King Robert would have done himself. But we have wandered from the two Besses, whom it now behoves us to take up, and treat with more respect. What is thy course?"

"As lieutenant of Scotland, I commission thee Sir John de Ramorgny, to repair to the castle of Dunbar, and, thereafter, to that of Douglas, to examine the persons of Elizabeth of Dunbar and Elizabeth Douglas—to note the height of their persons—the hue of their skins—the colour of their eyes—and the nature of their dispositions—and, thereafter, to report as becometh a trusty and faithful commissioner of the King."

"Thou shalt be obeyed," answered Ramorgny; "but if the commissioner may be allowed to judge of the matter of his mission I would suggest that, in my opinion, thou hast left out the most important part of the instructions."

"What is that?" inquired the Prince.

"The Dowery, to be sure," answered Ramorgny. "What are complexions as dispositions to golden acres? What carest the housewife, who wanteth strong brood for the colour of the capon's tail? ha!"

"We will leave that to the Queen," said the Duke, "Her Majesty wisheth to put me up to sale, and knock me down to the highest bidder. We can bring the Earls to wit in a few acres of each other, and of the pigeons, both equally fat, and brought equally within shot, I, to please my fate may strike the fairest."

Ramorgny was satisfied, and proceeded on his mission. He first went to the residence of March, which, at that time, was in a castle situated near the town of Dunse; the castle of Dunbar having been, during the late wars, so much shattered that it required to be put in a state of repair. Ramorgny's rank procured him admittance to the family of the Earl, and his intimacy with Rothsay was sufficient recommendation to entitle him to the greatest attention and respect. March viewed his visit as one of examination and discovery, and took the precaution to prevent his daughter to treat him as the friend and confidant of her future husband. A grand dinner was got up in honour of the knight,

which Gawin, the Earl's son, and Maitland his nephew, were present, and all endeavored, by every means in their power, to acquire the good will of the Prince's favourite. It was not these, however, that Ramorgny studied to please. The daughter was his subject; and his knowledge of human nature soon enabled him to form an estimate of her character, not far wide of the truth. She was dark, but beautiful; with a fair, burning eye, which occasionally exhibited flashes of the spirit of her ancestor, Jack Agnes. Her temper was clearly that of a demon—her spirit wild and untamed.—When contradicted, her anger, notwithstanding the indications of her parents, burst forth with ungovernable energy. She disregarded the rules of ordinary politeness, by replying to her brother Gawin, indecorous terms. She scolded the servants; and even on one occasion, when she had risen from the table, and thought she was unobserved, she applied her fingers to the ears of a female, and pinched her till she screamed. The Earl, who suspected what was going forward, alluded to her—the lady winked—the son rebuked her by the gown: their efforts were fruitless. Ramorgny was satisfied that Elizabeth of Dunbar was a true scion of the Blackfold Agnes.

The experience which Ramorgny had thus acquired, was completely corroborated by the common report of the Borderers—where the lady went by the name of Black Bess of Dunbar. She was represented as an incarnation of Mahoun—a fiend, whom all the sons of her father and mother, aided by their relatives, had not been able to subdue. Men into the ordinary flexile consistence mortals. The excuses which were made to the knight by the parents, that she was ill, she had a headache, and so forth, only served to corroborate his experience, and the feelings of others. His only wonder was, that the Earl of March could have thought of committing such a female to the arms of a civilized man—to a Prince. No one but a demon could have dared!

Ramorgny next directed his steps to the castle of Douglas, to make his survey and examination in that quarter. He was received by Earl Archibald, who was now an old man, with much cordiality, and in a short time introduced to Elizabeth. The contrast between this lady and the one he had left was remarkable at first sight, and before she had

opened her mouth to reply to the elegantly polished compliments of the most accomplished man of his time. She was fair, with auburn hair, and blue eyes—tall, and elegantly formed—imbued with so much of the spirit of a gentlewoman that her whole figure, in its easy flexile movements, seemed to obey the slightest touch of the presiding genius of grace and beauty. Ramorgny felt and acknowledged with that rapidity with which men of the world can detect the indications of an elevated soul, the power of the mute eloquence of this exquisitely formed complex piece of nature's machinery. But when the spirit spoke, and the combination of so many charms started into new life, responding, in every turn and lineament, to music that seemed to have been formed to give them additional grace, and apparently claiming the voice as their own individual expression; the effect was completed, to the disturbance of Ramorgny's feelings and the flight of his peace: her soft and gentle tones went straight to his heart. The silken cords of love were cast around him by every look, motion, and expression—and the Prince's deputy became in spite of himself his rival.

Ramorgny felt disinclined to leave the castle. Every additional circumstance that came under his observation increased his passion. The prevailing character of Elizabeth's mind and feelings, was extreme gentleness, softness, and sensibility, in which could be discovered no affectation of sentimentality. Her manner was natural and easy—and it was impossible to behold her for a moment without being sensible that she was a creature formed to sacrifice herself and her individual thoughts, wishes, and aspirations, to the happiness of the man who should be so fortunate as to secure her affections.—This softness of manner extended itself to the style of her speech, which was slow, smooth, and natural, seeming to derive its sweetness from the perennial smile that played upon her lips.

Struck with an intense passion, Ramorgny forgot the object of his mission. The Prince was only recollected as an unpleasant object—that came between him and the object of his affections. He resorted to every means of cultivating the good opinion, if not the love, of the lady; but handsome and gallant as he was—invested with the powers of French-love-making in all its details of conversation,

protostation, and badinage—he could not satisfy himself that the gentle and bewitching manners of the lady received any accession from any increase, in his favour, of the regard and attention she seemed to extend to all the visitors who frequented her father's castle. Ramorgny surveyed this equability of enchanting manner, with the pain of one who, fired with a strong passion, sees ordinary companions basking in the sunshine of favour which he wished to be confined to himself. He felt pained, but the pain was an increase of passion with a diminution of hope. His violent temper hurried him into secret cursing of the day on which he entered in so thankless an expedition; determinations to escape from his duty; and vows that he would secure Elizabeth's love, die, or sacrifice his Prince.

Ramorgny's threats were not empty sounds—restrained by no religion—no respect for laws—no terror of punishment—no fear of man—and despising reputation and honour as gewgaws for old women and children—he was fit for the execution of any measure, executed through treachery and blood, to gratify his passions. Chagrined by the manner of Elizabeth, which retained its torturing equability of gentleness and kindness, without any exhibition of partiality, he was ill prepared for a letter which arrived from the Prince, chiding him for his delay; hinting, in his manner, that the rooks of Dunbar and Douglas had flown away with his heart, and requesting him to give up the chase and return to his friend. He added, that he understood that his mother, the Queen, had declared for the Douglas; and that he would take her if she was as black as the good Sir James himself.

"An' thou wilt," ejaculated Ramorgny as he perused the letter, "thou shalt at least have the dowery of Ramorgny's sword!"

The incensed knight saw, in the midst of his passion, that little good would result from remaining at present longer at the castle:—His efforts to produce a corresponding affection in the bosom of Elizabeth were unavailing. He resolved, therefore, to take his departure: and having kissed the hand of his cruel mistress and bid adieu to Lord Archibald, he departed. As he journeyed to Linlithgow, where he was to meet the Duke, he occupied himself in deep meditation. His thoughts reverted continually to Elizabeth

Douglas, whom he pictured to himself the loving and beloved wife of Rothsay, whose success with the fair he envied, but whose openness and generosity he despised as weakness. There already existed a rivalry between them as to the affections of a young lady who had eloped with Ramorgny from her father's house, but who afterwards left him for the more enchanting society of the young Duke. This, Ramorgny had borne with apparent indifference; but though he was satisfied that the love of the damsel had not first been solicited by Rothsay, he could not forgive him his superiority of attraction and imputed to him as a fault what might, with more propriety, have been termed misfortune. To lose another object of his affections, and that, too, by ministering to his own discomfiture, would ill become his character for intrigue, and ill accord with the present state of his love for the lady and his hatred for the rival. He must, therefore, endeavour to prevent the union between Rothsay and Elizabeth Douglas; and if that should fail, he was resolved that the loss the lady would not involve the loss of his victim. His first step was to falsify his account of the two women; and in this he could not do better than reverse their attributes, and substitute Bess of Dunbar for fair Douglas.

"Well, Ramorgny," cried the Prince, as he met the knight in the audience chamber of the palace, "what progress hast thou made in the south? Thy tarrying indicates enjoyment; for when did Ramorgny waver when there was not something to afford him pleasure and amusement?"

"Your Grace is right," answered Ramorgny. "The pleasures of March's castle are indeed intoxicating. But thou it was who didst send me in the way of temptation; and if Elizabeth of Dunbar has, by her enchantment, drawn largely on the time of thy commissioner, thou hast thyself to blame. Lord Salisbury, thou knowest, said, that her predecessor's love shafts—meaning the arrows sent from the old castle walls—were straight to the heart; and as the lieutenant of this kingdom, and the protector of its subjects, it was thy duty to guard me against power which seems to be hereditary in the family of March."

"Oh, then, Black Bess is fair after all!" cried the Duke. "Give me thy hand!"

light glad on't--for I thought I had no choice
the one being fair, the other ugly; and to
have been forced to marry one woman, to the
exclusion of the darling liberty of selection,
would, though she had been as fair as Venus
have made her like the famed daughter of
Phoebus, whose face was as beautiful as that
of the sister of Apollo, but whose hair was
biting serpents."

"Thy choice, I fear, is not extended by
the beauty of Elizabeth of Dunbar," said
Ramorgny; "for what she has, Elizabeth
Douglas wants. March's daughter is a dark
beauty, but her colour is not derived from the
sunny hues of earth; it owes a higher origin
than the beams of the son of Latona himself.
Let the jet eyes from which she sends her
hereditary love-shafts, are the softest engines
of death I have ever witnessed. The fire
that steals from heaven, comes from her as it
does from her cognate thief, Phoebe, as soft
as moonbeams. Her gentleness is that of the
lamb, and the tones of her voice are like the
trains that come from an *Aolian* harp,
making the heart cease them as they steal
away into death-like silence."

"Bravo!" cried the Prince--"a right good
word. I have ever admired softness in a
woman; and I still maintain that there is
the same natural fitness in that ordination,
which existed in the connection between heat
and fire, light and flame, mirth and life,
pleasure and death! What sayest thou now
of the other Bess?"

"Hast thou ever read of Omphale," replied
the knight, "who took from Hercules his club
and gave him a spindle, and when he com-
plained, chastised him with her slipper? It
is well for the nero that he did not live in
Scotland in these days, when brogues, filled
with nails, cover the soft feet of some of our
nobles. Elizabeth Douglas would certainly
imitate Omphale--but I fear her slipper
would be a brogue--and she farther differeth
from her, in being as ugly as she was fair--
it seemeth to me to be a limb of the devil,
which, in its hurry to escape from the region
of fire and brimstone, carried along with it
some of these elements of wrath, of which, I
do not, she would make good use, if a
man dared to say to her nay, in place of
Thou hast said that thou lovest soft-
ness in woman; but I have heard thee say,
thy mad freaks, wherein, doubtless, rea-
son had no part, that thou wouldst rejoice

in an opportunity of taming a shrew. Truly,
thy wish, at least to the extent of making an
attempt, may be gratified by marrying Bess
Douglas; but I would rede thee to consider,
that she might tame thee. Dost thou observe
the difference there? Ha! the noble and
high-spirited Rothsay, pinned, like a silken
nose-cloth, to the skirt of the linsey-wolsey
tunic of a modern Xanti; pe!"

"Never fear, Ramorgny," cried the Duke
impatiently; "thy efforts in my behalf will
save me this degradation: I am obliged to
thee for thy warning, and would repay thee,
according to the measure of my gratitude and
thy desert, by recommending to thee, as a
wife, Elizabeth Douglas, while I wed her of
Dunbar."

The art by which Ramorgny thus sustain-
ed, apparently with good humour, his conver-
sations with the Duke, regarding subjects
which lay very near his heart, and invested
with serious import, was one of his cleverest
but most deceitful qualities. The Duke him-
self treated every thing lightly; the unres-
trainable buoyancy of his mind, cast off with
resilient power everything which partook of
a sombre character; but Ramorgny was na-
turally dark, gloomy, and thoughtful; and
his efforts at frolic, successful as they were,
were resorted to only as a means to accom-
plish an end. In the present instance, he was
necessitated, notwithstanding the intensity of
his passion, his vexation, and disappointment
to keep up his old manner; for where truth
was generally arrayed in the trappings of
frivolity, deceit might have been suspected
in an appearance of sincerity.

Fortunately, however, the Prince was not
left altogether to the advice of Ramorgny;
but such is the fate of Princes, he got coun-
sel otherwise, only in the suspicions he enter-
tained of an enemy, his uncle of Albany:--
having heard that he wished to marry Eliza-
beth Douglas, and to accompany him to
Douglas Castle, to see the lady on a certain
day, the Prince to escape the importunities
of his uncle, and to gall him--a pastime in
which he took some pleasure--rode off pre-
cipitately to March's Castle, to enjoy the so-
ciety of Elizabeth, in whom he expected to
find all the qualities described by his friend,
who enjoyed his absolute confidence.

When Rothsay arrived at the Castle of
March, the Earl was on the eve of setting
out for Linlithgow, for the purpose of seeing,

him. The behaviour of Elizabeth in the presence of Ramorgny, had filled March with solicitude as to the issue of the projected match; and he wished to counteract, as far as possible, the accounts which the favourite would, in all likelihood, give of his self-willed daughter. On seeing the Prince, he began to entertain hopes that Ramorgny's account was not so unfavourable as he suspected;—but his surprise may be imagined, when in a short conversation he had with the Prince previous to his introduction to the ladies, he ascertained that Ramorgny's eulogistic description of Elizabeth had filled him with an irresistible desire to see so beautiful and gentle a creature. March looked askance at the Prince, conceiving that he was making him and his family the subject of an ill-timed flattery—but he saw nothing in the face of the Prince but the gravest sincerity that his versatile temperament could exhibit. It is not difficult to make doubtful facts quadrate with wishes—and March soon became satisfied that the Prince had received a favorable account, and was deeply impressed with a sense of the beauty and merits of his daughter: he immediately introduced him to Elizabeth, according to the request of the Prince; but it was not until he had got a gentle hint, that he shewed any inclination to leave them together—a piece of etiquette reckoned due to a lover who had been proposed as the husband of his daughter.

Pleased with the dark beauty, though unable to observe in her eye the Cynthian beam so elaborately described by Ramorgny, the Prince approached the damsel, and with that air of gallantry for which he was so remarkable, fell at her feet, and seizing her hand, said, in one of his sweetest accents—

"I know not, gentle damsel, whether I have any authority thus to sue for a slight indication of thy favour; but what may be refused by thy goodness to a lover not yet permitted to approach thee with confidence, may perhaps be granted to the Lieutenant of the King? The triumphs of beauty are best celebrated by favour—and condescension, which is the prettiest foil of excellence, is exhibited to the kneeling knight, by extending a hand to grace the act of his rising to receive it."

"Thou may'st e'en rise how and when thou wilt," replied Elizabeth, snatching from him her hand—"or thou may'st kneel there

till brown Marion of Leghorn or Jean Lindsay of Rossie comes to help thee up. I care no more for a general lover than I do for a general lieutenant. The only difference I see between them is, that the one hath many female slaves and the other many male ones: By the soul of Black Agnes, I shall love no man who loveth more than one woman!"

This speech soon raised the Prince to his feet. He stared at the damsel, doubtful if she were serious, or if he had his senses. Her seriousness was clear enough; for she had finished her speech by a stamp of the foot, and a clenching of the hand, ut-able accompaniments of a female's oath.

"Art thou Elizabeth of Dunbar, the gentle daughter of the Earl of March?" said the Prince, hesitatingly.

"They say so," replied Elizabeth, "and it is to that reputation I owe a Prince's visit. I was born shortly after the sacking of Roxburgh by my father; and, if I have any reputation for being gentle, as thou termest me it may be owing to my birth following so close upon that famous occasion, on which mothers mourned the murder of their children, and children hung at the breasts of their dying or dead mothers. There is none of these things in our days: the world getteth effeminate; and in place of women defending castles, and wiping the dust from their battlements with their white handkerchiefs as my ancestor did at Dunbar, they teach the arts of spinning and knitting to the men, who with the Prince of Scotland at their head, sit with each other in the smoothness of their skin and the smoothness of their speeches. How would Black Agnes have answered to thy speech thou didst now address to her descendant, thinkest thou?"

"Very likely," replied the Prince, "in the way in which she answered the English who attacked her castle, or, perhaps, in the gentle way in which thou hast done."

"Would that all men spinsters were answered in the same way!" But I would make a distinction. The men who have the boldness to court women as they would attack a castle, I would speak softly; but the white lipped simperers of smooth saying, who attack the heart with a tempest of sigh and sap its foundations with floods of tears, would open the sally port of my indignation, and kill them with a look."

"Then, I suppose," said the Prince, "I owe my life to thy ladyship's mercy, extended by way of tender exception to my individual case?"

"Say rather that thou owest it to my contempt," replied Elizabeth. "Thou hast not yet experienced one of my looks. I have treated thee tenderly, because of the love I bear to Queen Anabella, thy mother, to whom I would beg leave to commit thee for a further supply of that milk and breadberry, which as thy sallow cheeks indicate, thou hast been cheated in thy infancy. Do not fret that thou art too old; for thy present condition is but an extension of childhood—when now, I have heard thy rattle."

"Women are privileged," replied the Prince with temper.

"So are children," rejoined Elizabeth, "only, when thou hast arrived at maturity, thou mayst claim my indignation; meantime, I recommend thee to the Queen."

And, saying this, she left the astonished man standing in the chamber like a statue. Recovering himself, he left the castle precipitately without seeing the Earl, bringing his head muttering curses against Ramorgny, who had deceived him, and Elizabeth who had insulted him. As he proceeded on his homewards, he bethought himself of the great characters Ramorgny gave the two ladies; and wishing to give him credit for what he confounded the attributes applicable to each, he resolved to see Elizabeth Douglas, and, changing his course, proceeded in the direction of Castle Douglas.

On his arrival at the residence of the old Earl, he had contributed to place his family on the throne, brought into the mind of the monarch some recollections which produced effects which were deeply planted in his heart, and only prevented from producing grand and amiable effects, by lawless habits contracted from dissolute companions. With his mind elevated by noble aspirations, and his hopes of being one day an ornament to his country, which he sincerely loved, he was in an excellent mood for appreciating the virtues and beauty of a woman who, as a consort, make him a better and a wiser man, and, by a consequence a better monarch, and subsequently a good king. He met Elizabeth Douglas at a distance from the castle, and introducing himself in the most elegant manner of which no man

of his time was more capable, was delighted with her conversation and inspired by her personal charms. Proceeding together to the castle, they were met at the gate by the old Earl, who complimented Rothsay, as well as his daughter, by saying that all he had sighed for was that they should meet and be able to appreciate each other's qualities; for he was assured that one hour's conversation between persons so accomplished, actuated by such motives, and inspired with such sentiments, would do more to procure an attachment than a year's diplomacy and court intrigue.

Rothsay willingly remained for some time at the Castle, and had frequent opportunities of conversing with Elizabeth alone, and of appreciating her noble qualities.

"I had got thee misrepresented to me," said the Prince, "but I believe, unintentionally, and by a transposition of names. What would Elizabeth Douglas think if she were informed that she was likened to the wife of Socrates, and the superior castigator of Hercules?"

"I should conceive that the reporter did not know me," answered Elizabeth, "or wished to deceive. I am not an admirer of either of these ladies, of whom I have heard; but I plume not myself upon any other quality than a wish to use my wealth and station for the benefit of those who, though better and holier than I am, have, by the force of divine necessity, been obliged to bow their necks under the yoke of poverty and misfortune. Yet I fear all I can take credit for is a wish to do good. My actions and my wishes have not that accordance I could wish; but, by the blessing of God, I hope to improve in my self discipline; and, in the meantime, I trust no one will be able to accuse me of injuring the humblest of God's creatures."

"How seldom do these sentiments reach the ears of royalty," said Rothsay, whose heart swelled with the genuine sentiments long concealed, "and especially from the lips of nobility! Yet, pleasant as it is to contemplate goodness in mortals born of sin, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the influence of generous sympathy when it is found in the bosom of beauty. Do not pain me by saying I flatter thee. At present, I am not the gay son of King Robert; but by the wand of enchantment changed for a season—would it

were for ever!—into a sober reasoner on the rights and claims of suffering humanity.”

“Report hath not belied thee, good Prince, though it hath me, for I have ever heard that thy sentiments were generous—though, excuse my boldness, they were not allowed to be called forth into action by the common scenes of life. Believe a simple maiden when she taketh the liberty humbly to suggest that royalty itself may be more ennobled by one act of charity than by the most glorious victory.”

“Sweet maiden,” cried the Prince, seizing rapturously her hands, “thou shalt be my counsellor. Thy sentiments shall be enforced by thy beauty, and my heart and my exchequer be equally under the power of thy generous feelings.”

By such conversations, Rothsay gained an insight into the heart of his mistress. He recurred frequently to the report of Ramorgny, and hinted to the Earl that he had found his daughter the very reverse of what she had been represented to him. The Earl paid particular attention to the hint, and seemed inclined to insinuate that Ramorgny might have had some cause to misrepresent Elizabeth. The Duke, having proceeded so far, felt his curiosity excited to get an explanation of the Earl’s remark; and, upon further question, ascertained that, according to the Earl’s opinion, which had been corroborated by his daughter, Ramorgny had been inspired with a strong passion for Elizabeth, which shewed itself in various forms, and was the cause of his protracted stay at the castle.—This discovery changed, in a great measure, all the Prince’s feelings towards his old friend. He had thus convicted him of deception, practised with a view to his injury, and for the purpose of gratifying a passion cherished for the intended wife of his friend and prince. Amidst all their departures from the rules of sober life, the Prince had never himself been guilty, or patronised in his friend, any breach of truth and good faith; and this was the first occasion on which this great cementing principle of mankind had been sacrificed to private interest. Seriously, however, as he felt it, he resolved upon stating it to Ramorgny in such way as might not produce his enmity; for he had seen enough of him to be satisfied that he was more capable of forming a worse enemy than he was of becoming a true friend.

While the Prince had thus been engaged in the south, Ramorgny had been in the north enjoying his favorite pastime of hunting the red deer among the hills around the water of Islay. The friends arrived in Edinburgh about the same time, ignorant of each other’s motions—Ramorgny still laboring under the effects of the passion with which Elizabeth Douglas had inspired him, and for a partial relief from whose engrossing influence he had gone to the hills; and the Duke smarting under the pain of a breach of confidence and friendship in one on whom he had so long placed his affections, and bestowed many favors.

“The hills of Scotland,” said Ramorgny, “are exquisite renovators of a town-worn constitution. The Roes of the Highlands supply the strength which has been wasted on the town hinds. Thou hadst better have been with me, exerting the powers of a hunter over the inhabitants of the forest, than stopping to the counsel of that grave batch of seniors appointed to advise with thee—thou is, to dictate to thee—on the affairs of state. Believe me, Prince, thou shouldst cast these grey-beards. Thy own judgement, aided by mine, is quite sufficient to enable thee to govern this small barbarous kingdom.”

“Thy advice,” replied the Prince, smiling with some indication of satire, “if followed by rejecting the counsel of my constituted advisers, would be an advice to reject advice contrary to thy advice; for my council commend me to marry Elizabeth Douglas and to reject the March. Dost thou think that any of the greybeards—Albany is the most ambitious to marry again—have any private intentions on Bess of Dunbar. If I thought that, I would reject the Douglas, and bestow myself to the March.”

“And thou wouldst act sagely in so doing,” replied Ramorgny, who did not resent the Prince’s satire. “If any one of the councillors act from such a motive—and I am not sure of Arran—he ought to loose his mistress and his head at the same time.”

“Sayest thou so Ramorgny?” replied the Prince. “Is it thy heart that so speaketh thy judgment? Thou hast recommended me to the March, whom I have seen and conversed with, and well know; and he endeavoured to terrify me from the Prince’s

whom I have also seen, and can well appreciate. Art thou quite sure thy advice is purer, sounder, truer, and wiser, than that of my council?"

This question produced an evident effect upon Ramorgny. He endeavoured to escape the Prince's eye; but he found that no easy matter. Rothsay kept looking at him intensely, and plainly shewed that he was master of the secret purpose for which he had endeavoured to precipitate him into a connection that would have made him miserable for life. It was now, however, too late for Ramorgny to retreat; and, boldly facing his danger, he replied—

"Thy question carries with it more than meets the ear. If I deprecated Elizabeth Douglas, and overrated Elizabeth of Dunbar, a spirit of liberal construction would give me credit for having been myself deceived."

"Stop," said the Prince, interrupting him; "I did not say that thou didst deprecate the one and overrate the other. Why take guilt to thyself?"

"By St. Duthos," cried Ramorgny, who saw he was caught, resolved upon another tack, "it is time now to be grave. Will that cursed spirit of devilish frolic which I learned from thee, cling to me, even after the dreadful apparition of the first grey hair, which this morning appeared to me in my glass!—But thou art thyself to blame. A master of mirth, thyself—the prime minister of Momus, as well as of King Robert—and my professor in the science of fun—wert thou unable to discover, in my outrageous and elaborate description of the two damsels, the traces of the pencil—for Momus could paint—of the laughing god? If thou wert not, dost thou not deserve the harmless deception? Say now, good Prince, condemn if thou darest, the scholar of a proficiency which thou hast taught. Struck by thy own sword of truth, wilt thou amputate the offending hand? Say, and if thou wilt, strike. A philosopher would laugh—what shall the merry-making Rothsay do?"

The bold, dashing, laughing manner in which Ramorgny delivered this speech, joined, to a recollection of the high-flown and not serious account he had given of the two damsels, drove out of the Duke's mind the suspicions roused by the communications

of the Earl Douglas, and with it his anger. The boisterous good humour of his friend carried him along with him; and, answering the knight in his own way, he cried—

"Why, laugh too, perhaps, good Ramorgny. Thou hast certainly defeated me in the first instance; but I have conquered thee in the second, I found in the women what thou hast described them; only, I was obliged to substitute the name of Elizabeth Douglas for Bess of Dunbar. That descendant of old Agnes is most certainly the devil, or at least his vicegerent. What dost thou think she recommended to me, to increase the powers of my manhood? 'Why milk and pannel! The only woman, she thought, I would be safe in the keeping of, was my mother Anabgita; the age, of which she considered me a fair example, had retrograded from the days of the sacking of Roxburgh, by her father, into a state of mature infancy; and, as for our talents in war, she would scarcely allow us the mighty power of infanticide. In short, thy description of Elizabeth Douglas applied to her; and, when I say thy description of her applied to the other, why should I say that I was charmed with the fair Douglas? Thou hast painted her better than I can. She must be my wife; and I am glad that my council, my mother, and myself, thus agree on a point which they believe concerns the nation, but which I opine concerns only myself."

Ramorgny was at the moment well pleased to perceive that he had thus got out of the scrape; but to have his snare twisted round his own limbs—to have his description of his own lover adopted by a rival, in describing her perfection—and thus to have, in a manner, precipitated his own ruin; for he could not survive the marriage of Elizabeth Douglas with another—touched him, as an accomplished intriguer, on the tenderest parts of his nature. A second time deprived of the object of his affections by his own disciple in the art of love, he determined that, at least, there should never be a third opportunity for inflicting on him such a degradation. His revenge deepened, but his smiles and apparent good humour quadrated with the increased necessity of concealing his designs. These and their fatal issue are unfortunately but too well known.

Unknown to Rothsay, certain schemes had, in the mean time, been in agitation, by

ween the Earl of March and a party at court, the object of which was to get a match brought about between Rothsay and Elizabeth of Dunbar. These, for a time, wrought so favourably, that March, who never knew what had taken place between Rothsay and his daughter, entertained the strongest hopes of success. He had offered an immense dowery, which the great extent of his estates near the Borders enabled him to pay, as the price of the connection with royalty; and it would seem that he had received from headquarters strong pledges that his wishes would be gratified. Ramorgny secretly joined the March party; but all their endeavours could not prevent the final triumph of the Douglas, who had also offered a large sum with his daughter, and who was, besides, backed by the Queen, and by the secret wishes of Rothsay himself.

The nuptials of the Prince with Elizabeth Douglas were celebrated with great rejoicings at Edinburgh. They were graced by the presence of the King and Queen, and all the principal nobility of the land. Among the rest, were to be seen two persons destined to supply afterwards the materials of an extraordinary chapter in the history of Scotland; the shadows of which, if presentiment had thrown them before, would have wrapped the gay scene of the marriage in the gloomy mantle of the dismal Atreos. The first of these was Rothsay's uncle Albany, who, ever since he was displaced from his governorship by the faction who awarded to the young Prince the regency of the kingdom, had prayed fervently for the death of the royal stripling that had, with precocious audacity, dared to compete with disciplined age in the management of the kingdom. The other was Ramorgny who appeared at the celebration of the nuptials, dressed in the gayest style, and wearing on his lips, the fallacious smile of the treacherous courtier, while his heart was filled with rage and jealousy, and his fancy teemed with schemes of deadly revenge. The picture, to one who could have seen into futurity, would have presented the extraordinary foreground of an apparent universal joy, filling all hearts and making all glad—and close behind the grinning furies of revenge.

Ramorgny, who knew the volatile nature of the Prince, waited patiently until the pleasures of the first moon were experienced and exhausted. He knew the Prince's sentiments

of his uncle—that there existed between the two relatives an inimical feeling—that Rothsay, who possessed a noble and generous spirit, would stoop to any base purpose to get quit of the authority of his uncle. Ramorgny did not suppose—but he hoped so far to implicate the thoughtless Prince in a scheme of his devising as to make his act appear, by misconception, of such a nature to Albany, as would give his revenge the specious appearance of self-defence, and accelerate the fate of his victim.

In accordance with this scheme, Ramorgny continued to fill the Prince's mind with details of his uncle's inimical feelings towards him—which was of the more easy accomplishment, that the Prince was already aware of his uncle's disposition. The choleric youth listened to these tales with impatience, and often allowed himself to be hurried into extravagant expressions of indignation, which a servant of Ramorgny's, a servile creature ready to commit any crime for money, was instructed, when occasion offered to note and remember, for a time, Ramorgny limited his details to such acts as occasionally occurred and which the unrestrainable hatred of Albany furnished in such abundance that he found no great necessity to have recourse to invention, unless it were, indeed, to add the colouring, which was generally of the most extravagant kind, and best suited to reach the heart of the Prince and influence his anger and indignation.

Farther, Ramorgny could not venture so long a time to go. The generous youth sometimes got wearied with the recital of his uncle's indignities; and, willing to leave him to his own heart, kept on in the tenor of his own path, which, however, was none of the straightest—his aberrations, after his marriage, being, as before, the result of every fancy which such men as Ramorgny, acting on an excited and irregular imagination, chose, by their consummate arts, to introduce into his mind. This did not suit Ramorgny. He required stronger materials to work with, and did not hesitate to use them. It is easy to work for evil in a heart originally corrupt; but to corrupt, and then to seduce is a work of time; and it is to the credit of human nature that virtue is often strong enough to maintain its place against the attacks of the most insidious schemers.

It was now Ramorgny's effort to rouse the suspicions of the Prince as to his perse-

safely from the designs of his uncle. He invented a story of a conversation which had been overheard between Albany and a ruffian often employed by him to execute his purposes of revenge. The import of this conversation was, that Albany, having been superseded in his office of governor, had resolved upon acquiring it again, and that he could not succeed in that resolution so long as the Prince was alive—that he accordingly hinted to the ruffian that it would be pleasant to him if he heard that the Duke no longer lived—and that for such information a reward would be given sufficient to stimulate the most scrupulous executioner that ever aided an unhappy man across the Stygian stream. All this was communicated to Rothsay by Ramorgny in a whisper, and with an appearance, tone, and manner, suited to the awful nature of the intelligence. The Duke believed the story, and bursting forth into an extravagant rally of indignation, cried—

"It is time that Princes of the blood royal should exert the power in defence of themselves, which is entrusted to them for the defence of others, when villains, in broad day, lay schemes for their lives. I can plainly see, and have long seen, that this man and I cannot live in the same age. Scotland is too narrow for us—and the vice-royal chair must be polluted with blood! Yet shall age supplant youth? Is it meet that time should go backwards, and that by force and through blood, the order of nature should be changed? It shall not be so. If one is to fall, nature herself points out the victim—and that victim is Albany!"

These words, uttered in anger, and invented merely to indicate the injustice of Albany's scheme, and the necessity of self-defence, in the event of its being attempted to be carried in execution, were carefully noted by Ramorgny's creature, who was in hearing.—They were plainly capable, however, of another construction by a person who did not hear the rest of the conversation and understand their application. They might mean that Rothsay intended to get his uncle out of the way—a construction which did not ill accord with the feeling's which existed in the Prince's mind against the disturber of his peace, if these had been formed in another man, but unjustified by the Prince's noble disposition, which would have despised any underhand scheme to rid himself of his bit-

terest enemy. The words were, however, uttered, and noted, and remembered; and they were not uttered in vain.

Ramorgny having thus procured evidence of the Prince's designs against the life of his uncle, repaired to Albany, and narrated to him the statements made by the Duke, and referred him, for corroboration, to his servant—Albany wished nothing more ardently than this communication; and even without it, he would have been glad to have joined Ramorgny in any scheme for the removal of his rival. Other enemies were brought into action. Sir William Lindsay of Rosste, whose sister the Duke had loved and deserted, and Archibald Douglas, the brother of Elizabeth, piqued by some private feeling, were willing to aid in the death of one who had courted the relative of one of them to desert her, and married that of the other to treat her with neglect. That the Prince was unkind or unfaithful to his wife, who bore a reputation of being so fair and amiable, has been treated by some historians as a mere fable, resorted to by the unnatural Earl, her brother, as a palliative of conduct which it was not suited to render in the slightest degree less revolting. There is reason, however, to suppose that Lindsay had some cause for his resentment, in the desertion of his sister, who loved the Duke, and never recovered from the effects of his unfaithful conduct.

The first project of these conspirators, was worthy of the talents of the individuals who had determined to prostitute the best of the gifts of God to destroy one of his creatures.—It was resolved to work upon the King in such a way as to procure from him some token of his disapprobation of the conduct of his son. It is difficult now to ascertain how this was effected, as there is no doubt that Rothsay still held a strong claim on the affections of his father. The result, however, shews that the means must have been of an extraordinary nature—for King Robert was got to sign a writ for the confinement of the Prince.—It is very probable that nothing more was intended by this than to shew the King's displeasure, which would gradually relax as the slight punishment wrought the expected amendment. It has been doubted whether such writ was ever truly signed by the King—and surely it is not difficult to suppose that the men who, holding the gates of the palace in their hands, could admit or deny whom

they chose to the royal presence, would not stop at forgery, which they could conceal, if they had made up their minds to murder, which has seldom or ever been successfully concealed. But it matters not in so far as regards the fate of the Prince, whether the writ was genuine or not. It was acted upon and the unfortunate son of a King was seized by his enemies, Douglas and Ramornay, lashed in his royal robes to the back of a sorry pony, and hurried through Fife, to a prison adjoining to the palace of Falkland.

The unhappy Prince now saw that his death was determined—but he little suspected what was to be its cruel nature. The work of his enemies was done; but they had delegated what even their hard hearts could not accomplish to ruffians from whose bosoms every humane feeling had been long eradicated. He was put under the charge of two men, brought it is supposed from Aberdeen—a locality as far from the scene of the tragedy they were to perform as possible—called John Wright and John Selkirk, names that remained infamous in Scotland for many a day—the faces of these men, filled with the expression of a determination to resist every feeling of humanity, contrasted strangely with the countenance of the royal youth—formed by nature, and moulded by his sympathies, to speak eloquently the language of affection, and reflect the fair lineaments of the most beautiful of the graces. It required only one glance of the Prince's inquiring eye to see that, if his fate depended upon the feelings of these men, he had no chance of salvation in this world.

The ruffians having thrown the unfortunate youth into one of the low dungeons of the prison, without speaking a word, were preparing to leave him, when urged by feelings of despair, he fell on his knees and beseeched them to tell him what commission they had got from his enemies for the fulfilment of his fate.

"Tell me, good friends," he cried, "in what shape death is to come to the son of a king, that he may prepare his mind to meet his end as becometh a man. Grant me, at least, the privilege of dying by my own hand that the descendant of Bruce may escape the fate of malefactors, or the mangled termination of the devoted victim of revenge.—You are not, you cannot be so bad as the sternness of office makes you appear. Shall

the Prince of Scotland sue in vain to the subjects of his father for the boon of a dagger Merciful Heaven! am I refused this request? Then is cruelty to be added to injustice; and perhaps starvation—dreadful thought! await me with her attendant agonies."

As the unfortunate Prince uttered these words, he fell on the damp floor of the dungeon. His appeal produced nothing but a hollow growl, more like the sound of a mastiff's anger than the voice of a human being. Turning abruptly from him, they left him extended on the ground, and in an instant seemed to be entirely occupied about the manner in which they should secure, with double certainty, the door of the dungeon. On lifting his head, the victim heard nothing but the harsh expostulations of the two men, as they differed about the expediency of riveting the iron bars by which the door was fastened.

The wretched youth had truly anticipated his fate. Starvation was the mode of death fixed upon by his cowardly murderers—what might have been accomplished in an instant was prolonged for many days. Cruelty was indeed, as he had said, added to injustice; and the merciful death of the malefactor on the gallows, was denied to the heart-rending entreaties of a prince. For fifteen days, according to a historian, he was suffered to remain without food, under the charge of Wright and Selkirk, whose task it was to watch the agony of their victim till it ended in death. It is said, that, for a while, the wretched prisoner was preserved in a remarkable manner, by the kindness of a poor woman, who in passing through the garden of Falkland, was attracted, by his groans, to the grated window of his dungeon, which was level with the ground, and became acquainted with his story. It was her custom to steal thither at night, and bring him food by dropping small cakes through the grate whilst milk, conducted through a pipe to his mouth, was the only way he could be supplied with drink. But Wright and Selkirk, suspecting, from his appearance, that he had some secret supply, watched, and detected the charitable visitant, and the Prince was abandoned to his fate.

Such was the death assigned to the son of a king, the most beautiful, the most engaging, the most generous—what pity should be added, the most volatile and irregular that was born to a kingdom, amidst the acclamations of a loving people!

THE WIDOW AND HER SON.

To us there are few things that appear more melancholy or more affecting than the ruins of a deserted dwelling house, which the hand of time has unroofed and laid prostrate. There is, we think, something impressive, sadly impressive, in its cold, desolate apartments, now exposed to the rain and the fogs of heaven, its eyeless windows, and its dilapidated doorway—nay, there is an interest excited even by the traces of the fastenings of the clapboard on the wall, and of the still fire in the chill, gaping, and ruinous chimney. All, all, speak forcibly of decay, and tell of the transitoriness of the things of this ephemeral world:

In contemplating such scenes as this—and once, perhaps, the feelings we have alluded to—the imagination sets to work, and paints all paints the happy groups that once assembled around the then cheerful, but now cold and desolate hearth, or recalls the joyous laugh of the deserted mansion's young inmates, with all the hilarious din and bustle of a numerous and happy family; or, may-be, it may dwell on the hopes and fears of their elders, now both terminated for ever. And the reverie is wound up by the sad inquiry—"Where are they all now?" And the reply is answered by a gust of wind rushing, in its melancholy sound, through the deserted apartments, and waving in its progress, the tall grass and nettles with which they are overgrown.

Nor are we sure that these feelings and associations are confined to the ruins of houses of note alone, to the deserted mansions of the great or the wealthy. In our own country, at any rate, we are certain they are not; we have felt them all and with equal force, when contemplating the ruins of a cottage; and on no occasion were we more under their influence, than when viewing the remains of a humble domicile as that we recalled to, in the course of an excursion, last summer, through the wilds of Nithsdale. But, then, we must confess, there was, nay, an affecting one, connected with the lonely dwelling, which might, nay, which we have added to the interest with which we contemplated its ruins. These ruins, consisting of one gable, and a small portion of the side walls, together with the remains of a low, loose stone dyke, that once formed the boundary of the little garden or 'kail yard,'

which was attached to the house, are situated in a remote sequestered spot in the district above named.

At the period of the story we are now about to relate to our readers, the little cottage of which we have spoken, was inhabited by a widow woman of the name of Riddel, and an only child, a son, of about thirteen years of age.

Mrs. Riddel's husband who was now dead several years, was a poor but most industrious and pious man, who wrought at such country work as the neighborhood afforded. His gains were, it will readily be believed, but moderate; yet a frugal, abstemious, and exceedingly temperate life, enabled him to purchase the cottage he inhabited, with the garden attached to it; and, in time, to add to these possessions a cow. But, beyond this, the poor man was not permitted to increase his store. Death cut short his days, and left the widow and her son to reap the benefit of his prudence and industry; and no small matter was this found, when there was none other to assist them. The cow, the cottage, and the garden, were to them great riches. And thankful to her God was the widow, for the mercies He had bestowed on her; not the least of which was the happiness she found in her boy, who was, to her, all that she could wish. James was, indeed, such a son as a mother might be proud of. He was mild, dutiful, yet bold and active, and gave promise of being more than usually handsome. He loved his mother with the most sincere and devoted affection; and though only in his thirteenth year, earned nearly the wages of a full grown man; and, any who had seen the delight and exultation expressed in his eye, as he poured his weekly wages into his mother's, they would have felt assured that these were the happiest moments of his life.

Thus, what with the little property she possessed, and the earnings of her son, Widow Riddel's lonely cottage presented as pleasing a picture of comfort, in humble way, as might anywhere be seen; nor could two happier beings be found within the county—we might extend it to the kingdom—than the worthy widow and her son. But inscrutable are the ways of Providence—dark and inscrutable, indeed, since they permitted all

his humble happiness to be blighted in an instant, and ruin and desolation to overtake its unoffending possessors.

It was on a fine summer afternoon, in the year 1746, about two months after the battle of Culloden, that Widow Riddel, as she sat knitting stockings on the little rustic seat in the garden, which her son had made for her accommodation; and while the former was busily employed beside her putting some seeds into the ground, happening to look down into the little strath or valley that lay almost immediately below the cottage, saw what was to her a very unusual and alarming sight. This was a party of dragoons.—She had heard much of the cruelties and atrocities that had been perpetrated by the government troops, on the persons and properties of the insurgents, whose hopes had been laid prostrate at Culloden; and she was not ignorant of the military despotism which generally prevailed over the kingdom in consequence of that victory. But she had yet to learn, and the lesson was now to be taught her by fearful experience, how indiscriminating was the vengeance of the ruthless and sanguinary ruffians, to whom the power of inflicting chastisement had been intrusted.

On observing the soldiers, Widow Riddel immediately called her son's attention to them, and wondered where they could be going to. This was soon made plain enough. In a moment after, she herself exclaimed—

“Mercy on us, Jamie! they're comin here: What in a' the earth can they be wantin?”

Next minute, the dragoons were in front of the cottage; when one of them dismounted and advancing towards the widow, inquired if there were any rebels skulking thereabouts.

“Oh, no, sir, no,” replied the terrified woman, “there's naebody o' that kind in this quarter, I assure you.

“Well, well, so much the better, good woman for both you and them; but, I say, we're starving of hunger, : can ye let's have something to eat?”

“Blithely, sir, blythely,” rejoined poor Mrs. Riddel, delighted to find matters taking so amicable a turn. I haena muckle, sirs, ye're welcome to what I hae. And she bustled into the cottage, and, with the assistance of her son, brought out a quantity of oaten cakes,

cheese, and sweet milk, on which the soldiers made a hearty meal.

Now, after this kindness of the widow's, or even without it, into whose head or heart but that of an incarnate fiend, or monster human shape, could it have entered to her a mischief? Yet such a wretch was amongst the troopers who now surround her humble dwelling, and had partak of her hospitality. Just before the party started, the ruffian who first addressed Mrs. Riddel, asked her, with an affected air of kindness, how she lived.

“Indeed, sir,” replied the unsuspecting widow, “the bit cow there,” pointing to the animal which was grazing at a little distance, “an' the bit garden, wi' what the de can earn, is a' that I hae to depend upon; but, wi' God's blessing, it's eneuch, an' are sincerely thanku.”

To this affecting detail of her humble resources, the villain made no reply, but drew a pistol from his holster, and, riding up to the poor woman's cow, discharged it through the head, when the animal instantly fell down dead. Not satisfied with this heartless act, the ruffian leaped the garden wall, with his horse and deliberately trode down every growing thing it contained; and those the feet of his charger could not reach, destroyed with his sabre.

Having committed this unnameable villainy, the monster rejoined his comrades, laughing and shouting out as he went, in exultation at the deed.

“There, you old devil,” he exclaimed, “that will put it out of your power to har any rascally rebels, or, if you do, they may strave.”

In an instant afterwards, the party rode laughing heartily at the mischief done by their comrade, of which they all seemed approve.

It would be a vain task to attempt to depict the distress and misery of the bereaved widow, when she found herself thus suddenly deprived of her all. This scene is better to the imagination of the reader. Wringing her hands in bitter agony, she rushed into her house flung herself on her bed, where she gave way to the sorrow that overwhelmed her. From that bed she never arose. A silent illness, the consequence of dreadful excited and agitated feelings, seized her, and terminated her existence.

during her illness, her poor boy never left bedside. There he remained night and day, endeavoring to cheer the spirits of his poor parent, and to make her look lightly on misfortunes that had befallen them.

"Dinna, mother—dinna tak it so much at heart. Never mind it, mother he would say; I'm strong and able to work for you, and I shall never want so long as I can earn my money; and I'll put the garden into as good a way as ever it was. It's no near sae much as ye think, mother; and what's to be done for me to buy you a cow by and by, as my father did. I'll sune hae as much as he had, and I'm sure I'll guide it for your sake." And, on one occasion the poor boy thinking to increase the value of the consolation he was administered—added—"And wha kens, mother, but I may yet meet the villain somewhere, and be revenged o' him for what he has done to us!" "My son, speak not of revenge!" said the widow. "It is unbecoming a Christian to leave vengeance in the hands of God,

and the boy was silenced by this reproof, but could hardly say cleansed of the spirit of revenge which had been kindled in his youthfulness against the author of their ruin.

The following day, the widow expired; and on the fourth thereafter, her son buried her remains to the grave. He returned not again. At the conclusion of the ceremony he suddenly disappeared, and no one knew whither he had gone. Weeks, months, and years passed away, but no intelligence ever reached the neighborhood of what destiny had befallen the orphan boy.

Sixteen years after this, the famous battle of Minden was fought by Prince Ferdinand against the French. True, but what has to do with the story of the widow and her son? Attention, good reader, and you shall hear. Related with the army of Prince Ferdi-

nand, there was a large body of British horse under Lord George Sackville; and these shared in the dangers and glory of the victory. On the evening of the day on which the battle was fought, a party of these dragoons were assembled in a tavern, where they were boasting loudly, in their cups, of the feats they had performed, when one of them, striking the table fiercely with his clenched fist, swore that when he was in Scotland, he had done a more meritorious thing than any of them.

"What was that, Tom—what was that?" shouted out his companions at once.

"Why starving an old witch in Nithsdale, to be sure," replied the fellow. "We first, you see—for there was a party of us—ate up all she had, and then I paid the reckoning by shooting her cow, and riding down her greens."

"And don't you repent it?" exclaimed a young soldier, suddenly rising from his seat at the upper end of the apartment, and approaching the speaker, as he put the question "Don't you repent it?"

"Repent what?" said the ruffian, fiercely. "Repent such a matter as that! No, I glory in it."

"Then, villain!" said the youth, unsheathing his sword—"know that that woman was my mother; and since you do not repent the deed, you shall die for it. Draw and defend yourself."

The dragoon sprang to his feet—a combat ensued; and, after two or three passes, the latter was stretched lifeless on the floor.

"Had you repented," said the youth, looking towards the corpse as he sheathed his sword, "I would have left you in the hands of your God; but since you did not, I have made myself the instrument of his vengeance."

Young Riddel afterwards rose to the rank of Captain in the British service, and greatly distinguished himself in the German wars.

The writer of the following Verses, lays no claim to originality, or the favour of the Muses. The tantalizing nature of his occupation, (that of "chopping the mind into bits for babes") precludes the possibility of cultivating what small share of mental talent, nature may have allotted to him. If, however, he has succeeded in giving expression to any of those heart-stirring feelings which must, in a greater or less degree, pervade the breast of every son of the mountain, who has had the pleasure of perusing Wilson's beautiful and accurate delineations, of the manners, customs, and scenery, of his native land—all the purpose of his writing is accomplished. He has only to add, that the more immediate cause of his appearing before the public was the delay which took place, either in the printing or forwarding of the 10th number of the Canadian edition of "*The Tales of the Borders*."

Thrice welcome to my woodland cot,
Though long delayed, yet hast thou not
Neglected to appear at last,
Recalling dreams of days gone past.

Though far removed from Scotia's strand,
My oft-remembered native land—
Her fertile meads, and dewy dales,
I see in "*Wilson's Border Tales*."

Her beauteous maids and manly sons—
Her mountains clad with blooming whins—
Her level lawns, bedeck't with green,
Out-vieing "gold or jewels' sheen."

Her heroes who, in days of yore,
For freedom freely shed their gore,
Here, by a master-hand pourtrayed,
Are all before the mind arrayed.

'Tis sweet to bend th' enraptured thought,
On scenes, where youthful fancy wrought
In dreams, the schemes of coming years,
Where no grief-boding cloud appears.

On scenes, where op'ning manhood wove
The ardent lays of early love,
To some fair rustic maid address'd,
Whose sighs requiting love confest.

On scenes where flowed the social glass
"To friendship's growth" unequalled bliss,
When bosom cronies, tried and true,
Could e'en our griefs with joy bedew.

Whose sacred hours to Friendship given,
Fit emblems of the joys of Heaven—

When mind to mind, and soul to soul,
United rose 'bove earth's control.

Though now beyond the Atlantic's wave
In search of Fortune and a grave—
Though now from friends and home exiled
In far Columbia's sylvan wild.

Although within our social range
We see and feel all faces strange;
Although beneath, above, around,
Strange scenes our mortal part surround

'Mid all the changes of the earth,
We love the land that gave us birth—
No other clime, 'twixt pole and pole,
Can wrest our own land from the soul!"

Oh then declare the tribute due
To him, who can those scenes renew—
And make them o'er the soul return
"In thoughts that breathe and words th
burn."

More worthy he, of patriot's name,
Than he who earns a warrior's fame—
More worthy of a laurel wreath
Than he who glory seeks in death.

And "*Wilson's*" name far famed shall be
Where'er the breeze of Heaven blows;
While Scotia's sons can sing his praise
In their own native, artless lays,

Long may he tread his native sod,
Esteemed by man, and blessed by God
And bid adieu to Earth's renown,
To find in Heaven a matchless crown.

Esquesing, Upper Canada, September 17th, 1839.

W. G. S

*" Col'um, non animam mutant, qui trans mare currunt,"