TALES OF THE COVENANTERS

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TALES
OF THE
COVENANTERS

BY

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ELEVENTH EDITION

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INTRODUCTION.

The kings of old have shrine and tomb
In many a minster's haughty gloom;
And green along the ocean's side
The mounds arise where heroes died;
But show me on thy flowery breast.
Earth! where thy nameless martyrs rest!

The thousands that, uncheer'd by praise,
Have made one offering of their days;
For Truth, for Heaven, for Freedom's sake.
Resigned the bitter cup to take;
And silently, in fearless faith,
Bowing their noble souls to death.

Where sleep they, Earth?—by no proud stone
Their narrow couch of rest is known;
The still, sad glory of their name
Hallows no mountain into fame.
No—not a tree the record bears
Of their deep thoughts and lonely prayers.

Yet haply all around lie strew'd
The ashes of that multitude.
It may be that each day we tread
Where thus devoted hearts have bled;
And the young flowers our children sow
Take root in holy dust below.

O, that the many rustling leaves,
Which round our home the summer weaves,
Or that the streams, in whose glad voice
Our own familiar paths rejoice,
Might whisper through the starry sky,
To tell where those blest slumberers lie

Would not our inmost Hearts be thrill'd
With notice of their presence fill'd,
And by its breathings taught to prize
The meekness of self-sacrifice?—
But the old woods and sounding waves
Are silent of these hidden graves.

Yet, what if no light footstep there
In pilgrim love and awe repair.
So let it be!—like him whose clay,
Deep buried by his Maker lay.
They sleep in secret—but their sod,

Unknown to man, is marked of God!

Mrs. Hemans.

Scotland is indeed a land of romance. Her mouldering ruins are linked with legends and historical associations which must ever enhance their interest in the eyes of those who love to gaze on these the

Standing mementos of another age;

and the pages of her history teem with deeds of chivalry and renown that have won for Scotland a mighty name. Thus, while the annals of our country are emblazoned with the deathless names of those mighty heroes who fought and bled in defence of her freedom from spiritual bondage, the nameless mound, or simple cairn of stones, still to be met with on the solitary heath or sequestered dell, marks the spot where rests some humble champion of her religious liberties.

Although three hundred years have passed away—marked in their flight by great and startling events—since the reign of persecution in Scotland, yet the hearts of her peasantry cling with fondness to the remembrance of those hallowed days sealed by the blood of her faithful martyrs. Still is the name of Claverhouse execrated by them, and the story of "John Brown" is related from children to children while seated around the cottage hearth, in illustration of the lawless doings of the Covenanters' foes.

It must strike the mind of every unprejudiced observer, who reads the various histories of that stirring time, that the shocking and barbarous cruelties practised on the defenders of the Covenant by their relentless enemies, will ever remain a stain on the memories of those who countenanced or took an active part in such proceedings. Scarcely is there a churchyard extant in Scotland, laying claim to antiquity, that does not contain one or more stones, the half-obliterated inscriptions of which attest the fact, that underneath lies some poor victim of persecuting zeal.

Having lately visited different parts of Scotland intimately connected with many of the events which took place at that memorable time, I experienced an inexpressible satisfaction in the reception I met with at the different farm-houses in the neighbourhood, and hearing from the lips of their simple inhabitants the story of the cruel wrongs inflicted on the Covenanters in the days of their persecution.

During these pleasant wanderings, I gathered information sufficient to furnish the Tales contained in the present volume, in which the reader will, I trust, find much that is calculated to awaken fresh interest in those benefactors of our

country, whose magnanimity and patient endurance were worthy of all praise, and who, for the cause of Christ and his Crown, laid down their lives on the scaffold or amidst the burning faggots.

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS.

A TALE OF BOTHWELL BRIDGE.

While staying at ——, in the parish of W——, I discovered that a standard, borne by the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge, was still to be seen at the farm of Westcroft. Being very desirous of viewing this interesting relic, I set off one fine morning in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of the time-honoured banner. On reaching the village of H——, which lay on my way, I observed a very portly-looking woman standing by the side of the road, apparently enjoying the grateful breeze, as she looked east and then west, evidently in search of something amusing or exciting. Being now somewhat at a loss in what direction to turn my steps, I crossed over to where she was standing, in the expectation of obtaining from her the requisite information, when the following dialogue ensued:—

"Would you be so kind as to tell me the way to Westcroft?"

"That I will. I'll just go wi' you a step or two and show you the farm itsel'. But what are ye wanting at Westcroft, if I may ask the question?"

"I wish to see Mr. Anderson, as I understand he has got a standard that was borne at Bothwell Bridge."

"He has that—he has that; but it's often away frae hame, ta'en to Glasgow and the like, for ye see it's something to say, a body has seen the like o' that."

"From what I have heard, this seems to have been a great part of the country for the Covenanters to take refuge in."

"'Deed an' it was, but for my part I dinna ken much *aboot* them; my brother, again, was a great *antiquarian*, and rale ta'en up about these auld affairs."

"Does he live near here?"

"Oh! mam, he's dead;" and after a short pause added, "Now, you see that white house forenent the road?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's Westcroft; and if Willie Anderson be at hame, ye'll get plenty o' cracks about the Covenanters, for he has lots o' bees in his bonnet, him."

After thanking the good humoured dame for her information—upon which she replied I was welcome—I turned up the path leading to Westcroft. In answer to my request to see Mr. Anderson, I was informed he was in the fields; but that Mrs. A. was within, upon which a very intelligent-looking woman came forward, and, on my expressing a wish to see the standard, desired me to come ben, and I should have a sight o' the colours.

Following the mistress of the house, I was speedily ushered into a tidy little room, the walls of which were adorned with pictures, the most striking of which was one entitled "The Guardsman's Farewell," representing a gallant son of Mars in a most gorgeous uniform, on horseback, taking leave of a stout woman, attired in a yellow polka-jacket and a crimson petticoat, who was gazing upwards in the face of the departing soldier, with a look of agony impossible to describe.

"Here are the colours!" and, as she spoke, Mrs. A. produced from a drawer on old piece of linen covered with stains as dark as those exhibited in Holyrood—the surface of which displayed unmistakable bullet-holes, and bearing the following inscription in large red letters:—

"For the parish of Shotts,
For Reformation of Church and State;
According to the Word of God, and
Our Covenants."

Above was the thistle of Scotland, surmounted by a crown and an open Bible.

And this standard was borne at Bothwell Bridge! How my thoughts reverted to that fearful time, when the plains of Scotland resounded with the cries of the wounded and the oppressed; when men, embittered by party spirit and misguided zeal, wrought deeds of cruelty and shame, over which angels well might weep; when fathers were murdered in presence of their wives and children; and the widow slain while weeping over the dead body of her husband!

In thought I was traversing the bloody plains of Bothwell, when——but here I must present the reader with an account of that fearful fight, as related by the Laird of Orfort to his brother, while standing on the spot where was fought the last battle against the enemies of the good old cause:—

"On that moor," said the Laird, who, after a long silence, and without being conscious of it, by a kind of instinct, natural enough to a soldier, had drawn his sword, and was pointing with it. "On that moor the enemy first formed under Monmouth. There, on the right, Clavers led on the Life Guards, breaching fury,

and resolute to wipe off the disgrace of the affair of Drumclog. Dalziel formed his men on that knoll. Lord Livingstone led the van of the foemen. We had taken care to have Bothwell Bridge strongly secured by a barricade, and our little battery of cannon was planted on that spot below us, in order to sweep the bridge. And we did rake it. The foemen's blood streamed there. Again and again the troops of the tyrant marched on, and our cannon annihilated their columns. Sir Robert Hamilton was our commander-in-chief. The gallant General Hackston stood on that spot with his brave men. Along the river, and above the bridge, Burley's foot and Captain Nisbet's dragoons were stationed. For one hour we kept the enemy in check; they were defeated in every attempt to cross the Clyde. Livingstone sent another strong column to storm the bridge. I shall never forget the effect of one fire from our battery, where my men stood. We saw the line of the foe advance in all the military glory of brave and beautiful men—the horses pranced—the armour gleamed. In one moment nothing was seen but a shocking mass of mortality. Human limbs and the bodies and limbs of horses were mingled in one huge heap, or blown to a great distance. Another column attempted to cross above the bridge. Some threw themselves into the current. One well-directed fire from Burley's troops threw them into disorder, and drove them back. Meantime, while we were thus warmly engaged, Hamilton was labouring to bring down the different divisions of our main body into action; but in vain he called on Colonel Clelland's troop—in vain he ordered Henderson's to fall in—in vain he called on Colonel Fleming's. Hackston flew from troop to troop—all was confusion; in vain he besought, he entreated, he threatened. Our disputes and fiery misguided zeal, my brother, contracted a deep and deadly guilt that day.

"The Whig turned his arm in fierce hate that day against his own vitals. Our chaplains, Cargil, and King, and Kid, and Douglas interposed again and again. Cargil mounted the pulpit he preached concord; he called aloud for mutual forbearance. 'Behold the banners of the enemy!' cried he, 'hear ye not the fire of the foe, and of our own brethren? Our brothers and fathers are falling beneath the sword! Hasten to their aid! See the flag of the Covenant! See the motto in letters of gold—"Christ's Crown and the Covenant." Hear the voice of your weeping country! Hear the wailings fof the bleeding Kirk! Banish discord; and let us, as a band of brothers, present a bold front to the foeman! Follow me, all ye who love your country and the Covenant! I go to die in the fore-front of the battle!' All the ministers and officers followed him—amidst a flourish of trumpets—but the great body remained to listen to the harangues of the factions. We sent again and again for ammunition. My men were at the last round. Treachery, or a fatal error, had sent a barrel of raisins instead of powder![#] My heart sank within me—while I beheld the despair on the faces of my brave fellows—as I struck out the head of the vessel. Hackston called his officers to him. We throw ourselves around

him. 'What must be done?' said he, in an agony of despair. 'Conquer or die,' we said, as if with one voice. 'We have our swords yet.' 'Lead back the men, then, to their places, and let the ensign bear down the blue and scarlet colours. Our God and our country be the word,' Hackston rushed forward. We ran to our respective corps; we cheered our men, but they were languid and dispirited. Their ammunition was nearly expended, and they seemed anxious to husband what remained. They fought only with their carabines. The cannons could no more be loaded. The enemy soon perceived this. We saw a troop of horse approach the bridge. It was that of the Life Guards; I recognised the plume of Clavers. They approached in rapid march. A solid column of infantry followed. I sent a request to Captain Nisbet to join his troops to mine. He was in an instant with us. We charged the Life Guards. Our swords rang on their steel caps.—Many of my brave lads fell on all sides of me. But we hewed down the foe. They began to reel. The whole column was kept stationary on the bridge. Clavers' dreadful voice was heard—more like the yell of a savage than the commanding voice of a soldier. He pushed forward his men, and again we hewed them down. A third mass was pushed up. Our exhausted dragoons fled. Unsupported, I found myself by the brave Nisbet, and Paton, and Hackston. We looked for a moment's space in silence on each other. We galloped in front of our retreating men. We rallied them. We pointed to the General almost alone. We pointed to the white and scarlet colours floating near him. We cried, 'God and our country!' They faced about. We charged Clavers once more. 'Torfoot,' cried Nisbet, 'I dare you to the fore-front of the battle.' We rushed up at full gallop. Our men seeing this, followed also at full speed. We broke the enemy's line, bearing down those files which we encountered. We cut our way through their ranks. But they had now lengthened their front. Superior numbers drove us in. They had gained entire possession of the bridge. Livingstone and Dalziel were actually taking us on the flank. A band had got between us and Burley's infantry. 'My friends,' said Hackston to his officers, 'we are last on the field. We can do no more. We must retreat. Let us attempt, at least, to bring aid to these deluded men behind us. They have brought ruin on themselves and on us. Not Monmouth, but our own divisions have scattered us.' At this moment, one of the Life Guards aimed a blow at Hackston. My sword received it; and a stroke from Nisbet laid the foeman's hand and sword in the dust. He fainted and tumbled from the saddle. We reined our horses, and galloped to our main body. But what a scene presented itself here! These misguided men had their eyes now fully open to their own errors. The enemy were bringing up their whole force against them. I was not long a near spectator of it; for a ball grazed my courser. He plunged and reared, then shot off like an arrow. Several of our officers drew to the same place. On a knoll we faced about; the battle raged below us. We beheld our commander doing everything that a brave soldier could

do with factious men against an overpowering foe. Burley and his troops were in close conflict with Clavers' dragoons. We saw him dismount three troopers with his own hand. He could not turn the tide of battle; but he was covering the retreat of these misguided men. Before we could rejoin him, a party threw themselves in our way. Hennoway, one of Clavers' officers, led them on. 'Would to God that this was Grahame himself,' some of my companions ejaculated aloud. 'He falls to my share,' said I, 'whosver the officer be.' I advanced—he met me. I parried several thrusts. He received a cut on the left arm; and the same sword, by the same stroke, shore off one of the horse's ears; it plunged and reared. We closed again. I received a stroke on the left shoulder. My blow fell on his sword arm. He reined his horse around, retreated a few paces, then returned at full gallop. My courser reared instinctively as his approached. I received his stroke on the back of my Ferrar; and, by a back stroke, I gave him a deep cut on the cheek. And, before he could recover a position of defence, my sword fell with a terrible blow on his steel cap. Stunned by the blow, he bent himself forward, and, grasping the mane, he tumbled from the saddle, and his steed galloped over the field. I did not repeat the blow. His left hand presented his sword; his right arm was disabled; his life was given to him. My companions having disposed of their adversaries (and some of them had two a-piece), we paused to see the fate of the battle. Dalziel and Livingstone were riding over the field, like furies, cutting down all in their way. Monmouth was galloping from rank to rank, and calling on his men to give quarter. Clavers, to wipe off the disgrace of Drumclog, was committing fearful havoc. 'Can we not find Clavers?' said Haugh-head. 'No,' said Captain Paton, 'the gallant Colonel takes care to have a solid guard of his rogues around him. I have sought him over the field; but I found him, as I now perceive him, with a mass of his Guards about him.' At this instant we saw our General at some distance, disentangling himself from the men who had tumbled over him in the mélé. His face, and hands, and clothes, were covered with gore. He had been dismounted, and was fighting on foot. We rushed to the spot, and cheered him. Our party drove back the scattered band of Dalziel. 'My friends,' said Sir Robert, as we mounted him on a stray horse, 'the day is lost! But—you, Paton; you, Brownlee of Torfoot; and you, Haugh-head, let not that flag fall into the hands of these incarnate devils. We have lost the battle; but, by the grace of God, neither Dalziel nor Clavers shall say that he took our colours. My ensign has done his duty. He is down. This sword has saved it twice. I leave it to your care: you see its perilous situation.' He pointed with his sword to the spot. We collected some of our scattered troops, and flew to the place. The standard-bearer was down, but he was still fearlessly grasping the flag-staff; while he was borne uprightly by the mass of men who had thrown themselves in fierce contest around it. Its well-known blue scarlet colours, and its motto, Christ's Crown and

Covenant, in brilliant gold letters, inspired us with a sacred enthusiasm. We gave a loud cheer to the wounded ensign, and rushed into the combat. The redemption of that flag cost the foe many a gallant man. They fell beneath our broad swords, and with horrible execrations dying on their lips, they gave up their souls to their Judge. Here I met in front that ferocious dragoon of Clavers, named Tom Kalliday, who had more than once, in his raids, plundered my halls, and had snatched the bread from my weeping babes. He had just seized the white staff of the flag. But his tremendous oath of exultation had scarcely passed its polluted threshold, when this Andro Ferrara fell on the guard of his steel, and shivered it to pieces. 'Recreant loon,' said I, 'thou shalt this day remember thy evil deeds.' Another blow on his helmit laid him at his huge length, and made him bite the dust. In the mélé that followed, I lost sight of him. We fought like lions, but with the hearts of Christians. While my gallant companions stemmed the tide of battle, the standard, rent to tatters, fell across my breast. I tore it from the staff, and wrapt it round my body. We cut our way through the enemy, and carried our General off the field.

[#] The natives of Hamilton have preserved, by tradition, the name of the merchant who did this disservice to the Covenanters.

"Having gained a small knoll, we beheld once more the dreadful spectacle below. Thick volumes of smoke and dust rolled in a lazy cloud over the dark bands mingled in deadly affray. It was no longer a battle, but a massacre. In the struggle of my feelings, 'I turned my eyes on the General and Paton. I saw in the face of the latter an indescribable conflict of emotions. His long and shaggy eyebrows were drawn over his eyes. His hand grasped his sword. I cannot yet leave the field,' said the undaunted Paton; 'with the General's permission, I shall try to save some of our wretched men beset by those hell-hounds. Who will go? At Kilsyth I saw service. When deserted by my troops, I cut my way through Montrose's men and reached the spot where Colonels Halket and Strachan were. We left the field together. Fifteen Dragoons attacked us, we cut down thirteen and two fled. Thirteen next assailed us. We left ten on the field, and three fled. Eleven Highlanders next met us. We paused and cheered each other. 'Now, Johnny,' cried Halket to me, 'put forth your metal, else we are gone.' Nine others we sent after their comrades, and two fled.[#] 'Now, who will join this raid?' 'I will be your leader,' said Sir Robert, as we fell into the ranks. We marched on the enemy's flank. 'Yonder is Clavers,' said Paton, while he directed his courser on him. The bloody man was at that moment, nearly alone, hacking to pieces some poor fel-

lows already on their knees disarmed and imploring him by the common feelings of humanity to spare their lives. He had just finished his usual oath against their feelings of humanity, when Paton presented himself. He instantly let go his prey and slunk back into the midst of his troopers. Having formed them, he advanced. We formed and made a furious onset. At our first charge his troop reeled. Clavers was dismounted. But at that moment Dalziel assailed us on the flank and rear. Our men fell around us like grass before the mower. The buglemen sounded a retreat. Once more in the mélé, I fell in with the General and Paton. We were covered with wounds. We directed our flight in the rear of the broken troops, By the direction of the General I had unfurled the standard. It was borne off the field flying at the sword's point. But that honour cost me much. I was assailed by three fierce dragoons, five followed close in the rear. I called to Paton—in a moment he was by my side. I threw the standard to the General, and we rushed on the foe. They fell beneath our swords; but my faithful steed, which had carried me through all my dangers, was mortally wounded. He fell. I was thrown in among the fallen enemy. I fainted. I opened my eyes on misery. I found myself in the presence of Monmouth—a prisoner—with other wretched creatures, awaiting in awful suspense their ultimate destiny." * * *

[#] This chivalrous defence is recorded in the life of Captain Paton.

And this standard had been borne at Bothwell Bridge; borne at early morn by the Covenanters, when hopes of victory animated their souls, urging them on to deeds of daring; and at evening, when the bright rays of the setting sun fell upon the deserted bridge—deserted by all save the dead and the dying—this banner blood-stained and riven, had been borne by some weary, perchance, wounded Covenanter, from the disastrous field, where perished the hopes of the Covenanting party.

I was roused from my momentary fit of abstraction by hearing Mrs. Anderson observe, as if in answer to her own thoughts, "Ay, it's rale dirty! but I was on the point of washing it the other day, when my husband said it was much better to let it remain as it was." Wash the standard stained with the blood of her forefathers! Convert the time-honoured relic into a clean piece of linen which would no longer bear the slightest resemblance to a banner that had been engaged in *such honourable service*! Surely she was joking. But no. There was no twinkle of merriment in those large grey eyes, which were fixed on mine, as if anticipating a glance of approbation for her thwarted intentions; not the slightest approach to a smile at the corners of the mouth, that had given utterance to the astounding

declaration. I repressed a strong desire to laugh, and answered with becoming gravity, that I thought on the whole Mr. Anderson was right; and that it would be better to spare it the cleansing process, upon which she said, "May be ay;" and the venerable banner was replaced in the drawer.

Observing an old sword suspended from a nail on the wall, I inquired of Mrs. Anderson if there was any particular history attached to it? "'Deed there is," she replied, taking it down from the wall and placing it in my hands; that sword was employed in the killing o' two or three Royalists down by M—— yonder in the time o' the persecution. You see, the dragoons were drinking in a public-house that used to stand by the side o' the road near till M——. They were going on the next day to L—— to levy fines frae the Covenanters, a thing they had no business to do. And as they drank, their hearts were opened, and they boasted to the landlord that the wine-stoupa wadna contain the gold they should bring wi' them on their return.

"Now ye must know, that some one who was na' very friendly to their side of the question, happened to be in the house at that time, and heard their foolish talk; and what does he do, think ye, but rins awa' to some o' the nearest farms and collects several others like himself; for ye see people in these days were na' deterred by fear o' the laws frae just doing as they liket; and they all marched to the public-house, with the wicked intention o' killing the soldiers. Some say an old miller, o' the name o' Baird, who lived near here, and who had been a sore enemy to the Royalists, and had obtained a free pardon frae the Government, when aince he fell into their hands, headed the party. Wi' blackened faces, and guns, and swords, in their hands, they rushed into the room where sat the men. One of them, on perceiving their entrance, caught up a chair to defend hinself, but one o' the Covenanters thrust his sword wi' such force through his body, that it stuck in the wall behind him; while the others were finished wi' the butt-ends of their guns. Eh, sirs, but these were wild times. And this part o' the country was in a very disturbed state about that time; for just before the battle o' Bothwell Bridge, the royal army lay encamped all over the Muirhead up on the hill yonder; for it being a high situation, they had a good view o' all the country round; and whenever they ran out o' provisions, the soldiers just gaed to a' the farm-houses round about, and took away cattle, meal, butter, and everything they could lay their hands on without saying by your leave, or thank ye kindly for what they got. Ye must know that that standard belonged to the Telfords of Muirhead; it was one o' them that carried it to the battle o' Bothwell Bridge, and my husband's mother being one o' that family, he kens plenty *aboot* the Covenanters. Well, as I was saying, the dragoons went to all places they could think on to procure provisions for themselves, and provender for their horses, and they honoured Mrs. Telford often wi' a visit at these times—for she was well off in this world's

gear; and I've heard my husband say—he had it from his mother, and she had it again from hers—that whenever the soldiers found there was more meal than they could conveniently carry away, they thought nothing o' tumbling the lave (remainder) a' doon the hill, not caring one straw how *they were to be served* that came ahint them. "However," continued Mrs. Anderson with a laugh, "they sometimes were cheated too, when they came to clear the byres and stables o' them that could ill afford to lose their cattle, as ye will hear by the following story o' the then mistress o' this house, who was sorely troubled by visits frae the thieving dragoons, who were sure never to go away empty-handed. Well, one day they came for the purpose o' stealing her cattle, when, just as they were conveying them away, she ran after them, telling them it was as much as their lives were worth, to take away her cows, as she had an order frae one of their officers, threatening with death the person who should touch them; so saying, she displayed an old receipt. The soldiers, as the woman suspected, not being able to read writing, and afraid of incurring the displeasure of their superiors, allowed the receipt to pass unchallenged, and departed, for once, empty-handed. Another time, they came to take her horses; and after they had removed them out of the stable, all except one old horse, which they did not consider worth the trouble of taking, and left them standing at the door, they entered the house, for the purpose of obtaining some refreshment. The mistress of the farm, on being informed of their intentions, managed, on some pretext or other, to slip away, after she had seen them seated round a loaded table, preparing to discuss the good things set before them, and entering the stable, loosened the sole remaining horse, and, mounting him, dashed off at a gallop, the others following in the rear. The dragoons hearing the noise attendant upon the departure of their stolen steeds, rushed out of the house, but too late to recover possession of the coveted horses, which in the most commendable manner followed their leader until they reached a place of safety. The soldiers returned to the camp highly incensed at being done out by a woman, and fully resolved never to venter near Westcroft farm again."

"Wicked people lived in these times," I observed.

"Ay," said Mrs. Anderson, "and good ones too; for I mind well o' my mother telling me, that even in her youth, people were far more strict and better in their conduct, than they were in my young days—ay," she added, with a shake of her head, "there is mony a strange sect started up now; and if a' are right that think they are, we maun be far wrong. But, as I was saying, my mother told me, that when young and able for the walk, she thought nothing of going ten miles to church. And one day she went to the kirk at O——, accompanied by a man and his wife; and while they were walking along the road, the man was standing pretty often, and looking at the crops, when his wife turned round and said—

my mother told me she would never forget it—'James, are you not ashamed of yoursel', for casting your e'en at'oure the fields on the Lord's-day?' And for my own part, I mind well as a child, never being allowed to be seen out on a Sunday, binna it was when going to the kirk."

"I suppose you have frequently read the 'Scotch Worthies?'" I inquired.

"That I have, often and many a time," replied Mrs. Anderson, "eh, but these were the noble men—it's hard to say who were the best, they were all so good. There's Mr. Peden, what a bright example he gave to his people! Oh, but they were privileged who could hear the gospel preached by such a man! And eh, sirs, but he was sair, sair persecuted. I mind o' my mother telling me, when a little bit lassie, she had been shown a house near here, where that worthy man had a narrow escape for his life. You see he was coming to preach at an appointed place on the moors, and was spending the evening before-hand wi' a farmer who was a great friend o' the persecuted clergy, and never was known to turn one frae his door, even although certain death was the consequence o' its being found out. Well, just as Mr. Peden was seated at his supper, in the best room, the master o' the farm, frae the kitchen window, saw the red-coats advancing in the direction of the house. 'Wife, wife,' cried he, 'Mr. Peden is lost! Here are the dragoons come to take him. What can we do to save him?' Ye see, Mr. Peden was held in great veneration by them a'. 'Oh,' replied his wife, 'whenever the dragoons are within hearing, just you call out, Jock, put on your smock frock, and go off instantly to B—— for coals, and maybe the soldiers winna stop him.' The man did as he was desired, at the same time throwing the smock into the room where Mr. Peden was sitting. The latter perceiving the great danger he was in, instantly put on the carter's frock, and pulling his cap down over his forehead, put on as lubberly an appearance as possible, in order to look like the character he was assuming; and in this way passed his enemies without in the least exciting their suspicions; and very leisurely yoking the horse to the cart, he set off on his expedition. Thus, while the dragoons were searching the house for Mr. Peden, he was, through the mercy of God, far beyond their reach.

After a few remarks about the wicked deeds that were done in those days, the conversation turned upon the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, which Mrs. Anderson allowed was a cruel doing on the part of the Covenanters, although the Archbishop himself had caused the destruction of many of their body. "Ay," she said, "talking about that, I mind well o' a minister coming in here one night, who had just come frae Fife, and he told us that, in the house where he had been staying, the conversation one evening had turned upon the Covenanters, and the murder o' the Archbishop; and as they were speaking about him, the mistress o' the house went till a drawer, and pulling out two letters frae the King to Archbishop Sharpe, threw them on the table wi' a great air of consequence—for

ye must know that she prided herself on her descent frae the Archbishop. The minister read the letters carefully, and having observed the look of importance with which the woman had produced them, he said to her, 'My good woman, I do not see any use in your keeping letters that belonged to that evil man, who did our forefathers such bad service; with your leave I shall put them into the fire.' 'You shall do no such thing!' replied the woman; 'these letters hae been in my possession this mony a day, and it's not very likely I kept them so long to allow them to be burned in the end.' Now for my own part," said Mrs. Anderson, "I think she did perfectly right; for losh pity me! if people were to be condemned for the evil doings o' their ancestors, we might a' hide our heads thegither; and besides, I think it a nice thing to hae these auld relics in one's ain house: there, now, a gentleman was very anxious, a short time ago, for me to send the banner and sword into the Antiquarian Society in Edinburgh; but no, no, says I, I'll just e'en keep them, were it only to show that my forefathers were fighting for the good old cause; but here comes my husband, and he will be able to tell ye plenty about the Covenanters."

Scarcely had Mrs. Anderson finished speaking, when her husband entered. "Here, Willie," she said, addressing him, "I am so glad you have come, for this lady is very anxious to hear some of your stories about the Covenanters."

"Indeed, ma'm," replied Mr. Anderson, taking off his hat on observing me, "it's not much that I know about them, but the little I have came from my forefathers, and you're welcome to it, if you think it would interest you; in the meantime," he added, "I suppose you have seen the standard and sword?"

"Indeed I have; it was the knowledge that you had such things that brought me here to-day."

Mr. Anderson smiled as he observed, that "the standard itself was nothing to look at, being made of such humble materials, but that the silk ones borne by the wealthy farmers and lairds were splendid indeed. Now, for instance, there was Mr. G——, of Green Hill, the standard he had was of the finest yellow silk, with the motto, 'Christ's Crown and Covenant,' engraved in letters of gold; ay, but it was bonnie to see! And I mind well, when the great meetings in connection with the Reform Bill were held throughout the country, that there was one at B——, and the people wished to get all the banners that could be procured, as there was to be a grand procession. Well, as I knew of Mr. G—— having this one, away I went to Green Hill, to see if he would let me have it for the above purpose; and as I was not personally acquainted with him, I got a line from the minister of the parish, testifying that I was trustworthy. Armed with this, I made my request known to Mr. G——, who received me very kindly, saying, that the banner was sadly torn and destroyed, but, if I could manage to get it repaired, I was welcome to it. Accordingly, I brought away the standard, and my wife

having got it patched up a little, I took it to B——; and, oh, had you but seen the people's faces, as I laid before them the venerable banner: there was not a dry eye in the whole assembly. Men, women, and children mourned and wept; while gazing on the standard stained with the blood of their forefathers, who nobly fought and died for the cause of the Covenant."

"And who, pray, bore the standard, now in your possession, at Bothwell Bridge?"

"A young man of the name of Telford, who lived up at the Muirhead yonder. My mother was one of that family, and they had many a thing that belonged to the Covenanters; amongst other articles, the musical instruments they made use of when going to battle. My mother kept them until they fell to pieces with age; and the last time I saw the drum, it was holding rowans that the children had gathered; while the bugles which sounded the retreat at Bothwell were devoted to purposes equally peaceful and innocent."

"Can you give me any account of the young man who carried the standard on that occasion?"

"Yes ma'm," replied Mr. Anderson, and after a moment's pause, as if to collect his thoughts, he furnished me with the particulars comprised in the following story:—

On the evening of the 21st of June, 1679, while the royal army lay encamped on Bothwell Moor, a young man might have been observed stealing round the base of the hill, on which the farm of Muirhead was situated, apparently anxious to avoid being seen by any of the hostile army that lay around. He paused every few moments in his progress, as if to assure himself that he remained undetected, and listened eagerly to catch the least sound that gave warning of impending danger. But all was silent. No sound broke in upon the almost Sabbath stillness of the scene, save the voices of the sentinels as they went their solitary rounds.

Young Telford, for it was he, succeeded in gaining the farm-house in safety, and gently raising the latch, was speedily clasped in the arms of his mother, who had started to her feet, apprehensive of danger, on hearing her house entered at that unseasonable hour.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed the delighted woman, "'the Lord be praised, who in his great mercy hath spared you to gladden my eyes once more; but where is Thomas? Why came he not with you?"

"He could not, mother," replied her son, "else had he flown to see you! He stays to guard the banner committed to his care, and as we expect to encounter the foe to-morrow, he charged me to tell you, that never while he lives shall it fall into the hands of the enemy." The mother's eyes glistened at this proof of bravery on the part of her absent son, and gazing fondly in the face of the one now beside her, she inquired with a faltering voice, "and where have you been since last we

met? For it seems to me an age since you and Thomas departed to join the ranks of the Covenanters."

"I have but shortly returned from Morayshire," replied her son, "where I sped with the fiery cross through moor and valley, terrifying the inhabitants with the false alarm that the Macdonalds were preparing to descend upon them, in order to prevent them from advancing to aid the royal forces. The peasant was aroused from his slumber, when the unearthly glare streamed in at his cottage window, as onwards I sped. Armed forces who were marching thitherward, swiftly returned to their homes, on hearing the appalling cry! "the Macdonald's are coming!" The bold Highlander turned pale with apprehension as I passed with the fatal symbol of war and desolation, and the fond mother pressed still closer to her bosom, the child who might soon be fatherless, on beholding the fiery track of the herald of woe."

"Oh, Willie!" cried Mrs. Telford, clasping her hands as she spoke.

"Still onwards I sped. Terror was visible on the faces of all, as again the warning voice proclaimed amidst the stillness of night the approach of the Macdonalds. At that dread name, the alarm flew from house to house; signal fires flamed upward from each mountain summit; all thoughts of leaving their country were abandoned, and the King may in vain expect men from thence."

At this moment a low tap at the door interrupted young Telford in the midst of his narration. Without one moment's hesitation, he darted towards the entrance, and presently returned with his arm round the neck of a young girl, whose lovely countenance was almost hid beneath the shepherd's plaid which she had hastily donned to protect her head from the cool breezes of evening.

"Jeanie!" exclaimed Mrs. Telford, warmly embracing the blushing stranger, "how fortunate! just to think you should chance to come when——!"

"It was no chance, mother," interrupted her son, "I durst not venture near Jeanie's house, in case the soldiers might send a bullet after me; so I bade a little boy go to the farm, and tell her that there was one she might wish to see in this house to-night, and, as he could remain but a few minutes, the sooner she came, the better for us both."

"Oh, Willie!" sobbed the weeping girl, "could you but know the cruel state of suspense I have been in these three months back, not knowing where you were, or what might be your fate, you would never, never go away again! Oh! say you winna leave me," she implored, gazing upwards in his face with eager beseeching eyes, while tears coursed rapidly down her cheeks; "say you winna go!"

"Tempt me not, dearest," replied her lover in a voice expressive of the deepest anguish, as he drew her fondly to his bosom, "I cannot—must not remain. Tomorrow we may chance to encounter the foe, and I could not endure the thoughts

of entering the field, without again obtaining a mother's blessing, and one more glance from those bright eyes; so I stole from the camp, while my brother remained behind to guard the banner. And now I must return, for I may be missed; and I should not like to be long absent at a time like this. Mother, your blessing on me and my absent brother, that we prosper in the fight," so saying, he knelt to receive the desired benediction.

"May the God of battles, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, be unto you both as a rock of defence in the hour of danger, and restore you once more to me, my beloved son," exclaimed his mother, placing her hands on his lowly bent head, and weeping as she spoke; "the Lord knows," she continued, "the bitterness of my heart this night, and yet why should I grudge you in so good a cause? Rise, my son, rise; and may the Power above, who is able and willing to help us in the time of need, guide you in all safety, and strengthen me in the hour of trial."

Young Telford sprang to his feet, and clasping his betrothed in his arms, was about to comfort her with assurances of his speedy return, when he perceived she had fainted.

"My poor Jeanie!" exclaimed Mrs. Telford tenderly, then pointing to the door, she conjured her son to hasten away ere his betrothed recovered her consciousness, and thus spare her the agony of witnessing his departure.

"Ay, far better it should be so, mother," replied her son, "and yet it is hard to leave my Jeanie thus; but tell her I only went to spare her further pain;" so saying, he placed the unconscious girl gently in a chair, imprinted a kiss on her clay-cold forehead, wrung his mother's hand, and was gone.

Scarcely had he disappeared, ere Jeanie Irving, with a deep-drawn sigh of anguish, opened her eyes, and fixing them with a wandering vacant look upon Mrs. Telford, who had placed her upon her own bed, and was now bending over her with almost maternal solicitude depicted upon her benevolent countenance, inquired where she was, and if she had been only dreaming he had seen her Willie.

"'Deed and it was no fancy," replied Mrs. Telford; "Willie was here sure enough, but don't speak any more about him just at present, like a dear, good girl; he will be back to-morrow evening to tell you all about himself, and where he has been; so just remain quiet for a little while, and I will go to Mr. Irving and tell him that you will stay here a day or two, to comfort me in the absence of my sons;" so saying, and without tarrying for an answer, away she ran to execute her mission.

Early on the following morning, Jeanie Irving, whom no reasoning on the part of Mrs. Telford could induce to remain in bed, posted herself at the door of the cottage, eager to obtain the first glimpse of him she loved, should he return

according to his promise. In the meantime the royal army had advanced towards Bothwell, where the Covenanting party was stationed, and soon the mighty roar of cannon proclaimed to the startled ears of Jeanie that the fighting had commenced. In her wild eagerness to ascertain the fate of her lover. she was about to rush madly forward in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded, and the almost frantic efforts of Mrs. Telford were scarce sufficient to restrain her from executing her purpose. For a few hours the thunder of the cannon, mingled with the firing of musketry, struck terror to the hearts of the affrighted women, who clung to each other, pale and speechless; while pealed forth the death-knell of many a gallant heart. Then came a lull, even more dreadful in its terrific calmness, for it proclaimed the battle was over—that the fate of their loved ones was decided. And now might be seen riderless horses galloping wildly across the plain, and mounted horsemen spurring their jaded steeds beyond their powers of endurance; while more slowly, and dragging his weary steps along, the wounded Covenanter strove to find safety in flight from the disastrous field. With a scream of delight, Jeanie bounded forward on observing the figure of a young man, evidently making towards them; but, on nearing him, she found to her consternation it was Thomas, and not William Telford, who now approached, staggering under the load of the banner, which, soiled and torn, he laid at his mother's feet.

"Thomas!" screamed Mrs. Telford; "but where is Willie? Oh! wherefore so silent?"

"Speak, I implore you, speak," gasped forth Jeanie Irving, "is he killed? Is he wounded?"

"He is a prisoner!" was the sad reply.

"God be praised it is no worse!" fervently ejaculated the weeping girl; "I shall yet save him, or perish in the attempt."

"And you, Thomas, what of yourself?" demanded Mrs. Telford, observing the ghastly expression of her son's face, while traces of blood were yet apparent on his coat and hands. The young man, without a reply, uncovered his head, and displayed, in so doing, a frightful gash on his forehead. "My son, my son!" groaned forth the afflicted mother, "Oh! this is hard—hard to bear. I thought I had taught myself to say with resignation, 'the Lord's will be done;' but, oh my rebellious heart!"

"'I said I should bring it back to you, mother, if life were spared me to perform my promise, and I have done it," proudly exclaimed her son. "I have brought it in safety; but, alas! from a dishonoured field. Treachery has lost us the day, and ruined our cause for ever. But Willie and I did our duty. While a ray of hope still animated the bosoms of our leaders, we would not quit the field. Willie was mad with rage. He fought like a lion. Every soldier he encountered fell beneath his sword. My care was the banner. Three dragoons attacked me. Encumbered

with the standard, I called upon Willie for assistance. He came hewing down all in his way. A musket was upraised to shoot him. I struck it down, and, in so doing, received this wound on my forehead from a cowardly ruffian, who took advantage of my being engaged with another, to inflict the dastardly blow. I fell with the banner beneath me. Then the dragoons, aided by two others, rushed upon Willie, and bore him away. They would have killed him, but for the Duke of Monmouth, who commanded them to spare his life. I struggled to regain my feet; but fainted away through loss of blood. On recovering my senses, I observed a dragoon stealing up to deprive me of my standard; but one blow from the butt-end of my musket despatched him, and, grasping my banner in my hand, I made another effort to rise, and succeeded. Captain Paton advanced. 'My poor fellow,' he said, 'you are sadly wounded; get off the field as swiftly as possible;' so saying, he took some herbs from his pocket, and applying them to the wound, staunched the blood; then, taking me by the arm, he moved onwards a few paces by my side, as though to protect me from further injury—the road in this direction being clear of the Royalists, who were murdering my comrades right and left at the other end of the field. I thanked the noble Captain—whose eyes gleamed with pleasure on observing the uncaptured standard—and proceeded on my way in safety. Having ascended an eminence, I turned to look on the bloody plain. There stood Captain Paton, as I had left him, leaning on his sword, and gazing on the fearful scene around him, apparently overwhelmed with grief. General Hamilton, with a party of officers, was advancing towards him. I looked again. They were slowly quitting the field. And I continued my solitary flight."

Mrs. Telford, at the close of her son's narrative, threw her arms around his neck, and wept aloud. "My poor Thomas," she exclaimed, "grateful should I be to the Lord, who hath spared you to return this day to your home; but, oh! when I think on my noble Willie a captive in the hands of these cruel, blood-thirsty men, my heart feels like to burst with its load of sorrow; and, yet, what can I do to save him?"

"Mother," said Jeanie Irving, "for such you have been to me, do not despair. A voice whispers in my heart that Willie will soon be free—that he will yet live to bless and comfort us all. Do not give way to grief, but trust in God, who, I feel assured, will grant the wishes of our hearts in this matter."

"The widow—for such Mrs. Telford was—soothed and comforted by the earnest assurances of the kind-hearted and hopeful maiden, embraced her warmly, and blessed her for her dutiful resignation to the will of Providence. But a high and noble purpose had filled the loving heart of the simple Scottish girl; and it was the determination to free her lover that caused her eye to sparkle, and her cheek to burn, with the sweet anticipations of hope, as she dwelt on the triumph of obtaining her lover's pardon, even should she kneel at the feet

of the Duke of Monmouth to obtain it. Accordingly, at an early hour on the following morning, when Mrs. Telford and her son were locked in the arms of slumber, Jeanie Irving, acting on a previously adopted resolution, stole gently from her couch and dressed herself hastily; then, kissing Mrs. Telford silently on the forehead, she knelt down and prayed fervently for guidance and protection during her absence; and, snatching a small bundle of necessaries prepared over-night for her journey, and placing a letter—informing Mrs. Telford of the step she was about to take—on the table, she noiselessly opened the door, stood for one moment, while her lips moved as if she was engaged in mental prayer, shut it slowly, and departed. Having been informed by Thomas Telford that the prisoners were to be taken to Edinburgh, thither Jeanie determined to proceed; but on arriving at Linlithgow, she heard no tidings of their having passed that way. Fearful lest some change had been made regarding their destination, Jeanie Irving stood irresolute, not knowing what to do, but, on second thoughts, she proceeded to the house of her aunt, a sister of her mother, who resided in Linlithgow, there to await their coming, lest something might have occurred to delay their progress. Mrs. Johnstone—which was the name of her aunt—received her niece very kindly; but on her expressing her surprise at seeing her enter so unexpectedly, the long-sustained fortitude of Jeanie Irving gave way, and she burst into a passionate flood of tears. Amazed and distressed at the sight of her niece's grief, Mrs. Johnstone soothed and comforted her to the best of her ability, and was rewarded for her kind sympathy by the recital of Jeanie's hopes, fears, and intentions respecting her lover's escape, which she confided to the willing ears of her aunt, when her sorrow allowed her the power of utterance.

"Oh, my dear lassie!" said Mrs. Johnstone, at the close of her niece's narration, "you do not know the difficulty of the course you mean to pursue; you never can succeed. Willie Telford will be so closely guarded that you will not get near him; do not go on, but stay with me at least until we hear something regarding the destination of the unfortunate men."

At this moment a distant murmur of voices was heard, mingled with the trampling of many feet. Nearer came the sounds; louder swelled the tumult, till none could mistake its meaning. Poor Jeanie turned as pale as death; her heart told her the prisoners were approaching. Grasping her aunt by the arm, she staggered towards the window, and what a dismal sight greeted her eager eyes! Onwards came the dragoons—their plumes waving—their horses prancing. Next advanced a body of men, to the number of about five hundred, foot-sore and weary; wounded, and prisoners. Jeanie Irving groaned in agony. The quick glance of affection soon descried the stately form of William Telford. Amidst the motley crowd, he walked erect and proudly, as though he were marching onwards to victory—not to a prison—perchance to death.

The eyes of Jeanie Irving seemed about to start from their sockets on beholding the sad procession; but new horrors awaited her. She beheld some of the sympathising spectators, while advancing with cups of cold water to moisten the lips of the wounded portion of the prisoners, and a morsel of bread to comfort their weary hearts, beaten back with oaths, and contumely by the rude soldiers, who, insensible to all the softer emotions of humanity, seemed determined to make their captives feel the wretchedness of their lot. She saw her beloved William stunned by a blow from the butt-end of a musket, while endeavouring to procure nourishment for a sinking comrade.

On beholding this outrage inflicted on the object of her affections, Jeanie Irving screamed and struggled to free herself from her aunt's grasp, as if for the purpose of springing out into the street, in order to join her lover. Indeed, so excited did she become in her endeavours to carry out her wishes, that her aunt, fearful of the consequences that might ensue, should she be permitted to retain her station at the window, seized her in her arms, and dragged her away from beholding the dismal spectacle. On the disappearance of the melancholy cavalcade, Mrs. Johnstone placed Jeanie Irving on her bed, and would on no account hear of her attempting to rise until she had partaken of some repose; and, indeed, poor Jeanie, overcome as she was with fatigue and anxiety, felt the necessity of obeying her aunt's wishes in this respect. Shortly after lying down she fell into a sleep, apparently broken at first by the agitating thoughts that chased each other through her mind, for she moaned and shivered in such a manner that Mrs. Johnstone grew apprehensive lest the distress under which she laboured might yet throw her into a fever. Gradually, however, she grew calmer, and at length, to her aunt's delight, all the sad events of the day seemed forgotten in a tranquil slumber. On her awaking, refreshed and strengthened from her long repose, Mrs. Johnstone, who now perceived the danger of thwarting her in her intentions of endeavouring to free William Telford, represented the strong necessity there was of her remaining quiet, for a few days longer, as, should she set off instantly on her journey, she might get herself into trouble, and thus by her rashness lose the only chance of saving her lover. This last argument, skillfully introduced by Mrs. Johnstone, had great weight with her impatient niece; and she accordingly remained with her aunt five days, during which period she carefully abstained from alluding to the topic which so entirely engrossed her thoughts. But on the morning of the sixth day she again expressed her intention of proceeding to Edinburgh, in order to learn the destination of the prisoners. This time Mrs. Johnstone threw no obstacles in the way of her niece's departure, but going to a closet she took from thence two bundles, one of which she handed to Jeanie Irving, while the other she retained in her own possession. Jeanie eyed her aunt with astonishment, while that worthy person proceeded very leisurely

to donn her bonnet and shawl, and at length ventured to inquire the meaning of such preparations.

"It is just this, my dear lassie," said Mrs. Johnstone in answer to her niece's inquiry, "I am a lone widow with no one here to care for me, or to mind whether I go or stay, so I have determined upon accompanying you to Edinburgh, in order to protect and assist you as far as lies in my power. When you came here and told me your sad story, I resolved upon going with you, and laid my plans accordingly. Two days ago a boy was dispatched to tell your father and Mrs. Telford where you were, and that they need not feel anxious about you, as I should tend and love you as though you were mine own child. Now, don't say one word against this, Jeanie, for my mind is made up on this subject."

Poor Jeanie Irving, quite overcome with this proof of affection and kind interest on the part of her aunt, threw herself into her arms, and sobbed aloud, thanking her through her tears for her promised protection, which she assured her would prove invaluable, as she should require a faithful guide and counsellor to cheer and advise her 'mid all the trials and disappointments she was prepared to encounter. All being thus satisfactorily arranged, Mrs. Johnstone proceeded to settle some little household affairs prior to departing with her niece—such as stopping the clock, locking up closets, throwing water on the fire, and sundry other little arrangements which all careful housekeepers know to be essential before leaving home. The rays of the setting sun were gilding the towers of the ancient fortress of Dunedin, as Mrs. Johnstone and her niece entered the Scottish capital. All was terror and confusion. Dragoons marched along the streets with all the insolence of petty power which subordinates know so well how to assume;—members of the opposite faction stole noiselessly on their way, as if afraid of attracting the notice of the swaggering soldiers, who seemed fully aware of, and to enjoy the terror they inspired; while aged citizens, whose care-worn faces betrayed the anxiety under which they laboured, stood together in groups as if discussing the events of the day. Jeanie, with the natural modesty of her sex, drew the shepherd's plaid still closer around her, to screen her face in some measure from the insolent gaze of the dragoons, some of whom peered underneath the covering as they passed in the hopes of obtaining a glimpse of the carefully-shrouded face.

"Pull it off her, George," said a soldier to his comrade, one of these who failed in their attempts to get a look of Jeanie Irving, "pull it off her, and let us see what she's like; what in the name of wonder makes her hide her face in that manner? Pull it off her, I say."

"No, no, don't do that: let the woman alone," exclaimed another of the party, observing that the one named George was about to obey his friend's instructions; "she is not annoying us; and see that party of men, yonder, watching us with

threatening looks, as if eager to take advantage of the slightest provocation on our part, to commence an affray. Come, let us be peaceful." The soldier thus admonished abandoned his purpose, and allowed Jeanie and her aunt to pass on their way unmolested.

"Thank God!" inwardly ejaculated the trembling women on finding themselves freed from the rude grasp of the dragoon, and quickening their steps, they turned into a less noisy and crowded street. But soon a new alarm struck fresh terror to their trembling souls, for the deep roll of a drum was now, distinctly heard. Onwards it came; and Jeanie Irving, trembling in every limb, fearing, she knew not what, grasped her aunt by the arm, as she stood breathless and agitated, waiting the result. Soon a large party of soldiers appeared in sight, one of them bearing a huge drum, which he beat at regular intervals; while another read aloud a proclamation, warning the citizens of Edinburgh, under pain of death, to abstain from visiting the prisoners at present stationed in the Greyfriars Churchyard, save when bringing them provisions, such as should be approved of by the sentinels. Jeanie's heart beat wildly with renewed hope on hearing that the prisoners were merely confined in an open churchyard, and that their friends would be permitted to take them food at stated intervals. It was true that sentinels were stationed there, who would no doubt keep a strict watch over all comers; but what can youth and ingenuity not achieve? Thus full of sanguine anticipations respecting the ultimate success of her scheme, Jeanie Irving accompanied her aunt to the house of a mutual friend, with whom Mrs. Johnstone meant to stay during their sojourn in Edinburgh, which she now devoutly hoped might prove a short one. Mrs. Hamilton received her visitors very graciously; expressed her satisfaction when Mrs. Johnstone informed her that their visit was likely to prove a longer one than she, under present circumstances, could have wished; and steadfastly refused all offers of remuneration, which Mrs. Johnstone was anxious she should receive, to compensate in some measure for the trouble they were likely to occasion her.

"No, no, my dear friend," said Mrs. Hamilton, while she proceeded to make preparations for her evening meal, "don't—if you please, say any more on that subject; it's little I have, but, please God, that little shall always be at the service of the few friends I have now remaining; losh pity me, are you not my cousin, thrice removed on my mother's side, and just to think o' one relation taking money off another? I never heard tell o' such a like thing; no, no, stay wi' me as long as you like, and welcome;" so saying, Mrs. Hamilton proceeded leisurely to put one of her best damask cloths on the table, which she soon covered with plates of bread and butter, some newly-made jelly, etc; in short, the best of everything the house could afford, was brought forth to do honour to her welcome guests. "Now, sit your ways down," said Mrs. Hamilton, after she had completed the arrangements

to her own satisfaction, and, taking Mrs. Johnstone by the arm, she seated her at the head of the table, motioning Jeanie to sit beside her, "sit your ways down, and partake of what is before you." Mrs. Johnstone proceeded, greatly to the delight of Mrs. Hamilton, to make an active onslaught on the good things with which the table was abundantly supplied. "That's right, my dear," exclaimed the hospitable widow, her eyes beaming with pleasure, "but, Jeanie Irving, what has come over you, lassie?" she enquired, astonished beyond measure on perceiving that the maiden in question evinced not the slightest disposition to assist her aunt in the arduous undertaking of demolishing the huge pile of bread and butter placed so temptingly within her reach. Jeanie, by way of answer to this anxious inquiry, hastened to assure Mrs. Hamilton that she was indeed making an excellent meal; and wishing to turn the conversation into another channel, she expressed a desire to know whose was the sword hanging on the opposite wall. Mrs. Hamilton's good-natured face lengthened considerably as she replied with a faltering accent, that it had belonged to her husband, who perished at the battle o' Pentland Hills. "Indeed," said Jeanie Irving, greatly interested in hearing that her kind hostess had also been a sufferer from those sad religious differences; "and pray"—here she suddenly stopped short, on observing Mrs. Hamilton raise her apron to her eyes, and apparently wipe away an unbidden tear. After a pause of a few moments, during which time Jeanie Irving remained mute, with her eyes fixed on the sword, Mrs. Hamilton inquired of her friend what it was that had brought her to Edinburgh in these stormy times. In reply to this rather confusing question, Mrs. Johnstone pressed Mrs. Hamilton's foot under the table, at the same time darting a glance in the direction of her niece, who entirely engrossed by her own sad thoughts, did not overhear the question, as if to warn Mrs. Hamilton against alluding to that subject in her presence.

Shortly afterwards the eyelids of Jeanie Irving displayed symptoms of closing, observing which, her thoughtful hostess offered to conduct her to her sleeping apartment; a proposal which poor Jeanie, overcome as she was with a load of anxiety and grief, but too gladly accepted; so, bidding her aunt an affectionate good night, she followed Mrs. Hamilton, who led the way into a small but neat bed-room, &c. After expressing her wishes for the comfort of her guest, left her to repose. On Mrs. Hamilton's return to the parlour, both she and Mrs. Johnstone drew in their seats considerably nearer the hearth, with the evident intention of enjoying a nice, comfortable gossip over the glowing embers; and Mrs. Johnstone, as the reader will be prepared to hear, regaled her friend with a long and circumstantial account of her niece's love-affair, together with the sad circumstances attending it, which had occasioned their sudden visit to the Scottish capital. "Wae's me," exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, at the close of her friend's sad recital; "to think o' a bonnie young creature having gone through sae much sor-

row already, and likely to suffer a hantle more ere she's by wi' it! Oh! are'na the ways o' Providence dark and unscrutable to the like o' us, poor blind mortals as we are? Dearie me, Mrs. Johnstone, but I sadly fear your niece winna get much to comfort her here. I fear it's a doomed boat she's embarked in. Willie Telford will never be able to escape from his cruel captors. Oh, but my heart's wae for the poor sweet lassie; and ye say her life's bound up in his?" Mrs. Johnstone replied in the affirmative, adding, "that it would be much better not to damp the bright hopes entertained by Jeanie Irving regarding her lover's escape." "Don't be afraid o' me saying anything that would harm the winsome bit lassie," interrupted Mrs. Hamilton, raising the corner of her apron to her eyes, "no, no; I know too well what it is to suffer, ever to add to the distress o' a' fellow-creature. Well do I mind the day when my husband gaed awa to the Pentlands. 'Jeanie,' says he, 'I feel uncommon sad at leaving you this day, my woman,' says he; and says I, 'Why John?' for ye see I didna quite take up his meaning, 'why should ye be so grieved, when ye're going to fight a good fight for the Covenant?' says I. 'Oh,' quo' he, 'I feel as if I never should see you again,' says he; and wi' that I took to the shivering all over. 'If that be your thought,' says I, 'John, do bide wi' me, for I've many a time heard people wiser than me say, it's ill going away frae hame wi' sic gloomy thoughts in one's mind.' 'Ah, na, Jeanie, my woman,' says he, 'may be it's a foolish fancy on my part, an' it wadna do to yield to it;' an wi' that he gaed awa, an' I never set my eyes on him since syne. Was'na that a sad, sad thing! an' many's the time I've blamed mysel' since then for not making him bide at hame, but ye see, it was a' in the cards, an' what will be maun be." Thus having testified her submission to the stern decrees of fate, Mrs. Hamilton turning to Mrs. Johnstone, abruptly demanded of her if she was a believer in dreams?

"Well," said Mrs. Johnstone in reply, "I really do not know what to say on that point, for I have had one or two very strange dreams in my lifetime, which have been fulfilled to the very letter; but whether it was that my mind had been running so much on these matters during the day-time, and that this caused them to form the subjects of my dreams by night; or, that they were sent to me as warnings of what was to happen, I cannot tell; but what makes you ask that question, Mrs. Hamilton?"

"Oh, nothing, but just that I had a most extraordinary dream the night before I heard tell o' my husband's death, which, if you will not laugh at me for relating such a thing, I should like to tell you."

On Mrs. Johnstone assuring her that the opinion she herself entertained on the subject of her own dreams was much too serious for her ever to ridicule those narrated by other people, Mrs. Hamilton commenced as follows:—

"Well, as I told you before, it was the night preceding the day on which I

heard tell o' the death of my husband, and I could not well account for it; but the whole o' that day I had been rale douie and dispirited, just as one often feels before hearing bad news o' some sort or other; so much so, that I gaed away early to my bed, in hopes that a good sleep would do me good. For a long time, not one wink o' sleep could I get, do what I could, until at length, in a fit of desperation, I sprang out of bed, and took a turn or two up and down the room, to see if that would cool the fever of my blood. It did so, and shortly after I fell into a deep slumber. Well, Mrs. Johnstone, during that sleep I had the following dream, which even yet impresses me more than I should like to tell. Methought the door of my room suddenly opened, and in stepped a figure all clad in white, and o' a fair and beauteous countenance, which, approaching the side o' my bed, said in a sweet mournful voice, which sounded just like the sighing wind, 'Jeanie Hamilton, you must this instant rise and follow me!' Upon which I replied, 'And wherefore am I to follow you?' 'Ask no questions,' said the beautiful vision, 'but come away.' Well, wi' that I raise out o' my bed, almost as it were in spite o' myself, and away I gaed after the figure, which seemed to me to flee swiftly as a soul, when freed from its mortal coil, would cleave the air in its passage to another world. Onwards we went, until we came to a dark dismal plain; and never did I see anything so dreary as the aspect o' that place! Then my guide stopt, and taking me by the hand, said, 'now I must lead you; our way lies through this moor;' and I thought in my sleep that I trembled all over, as hand in hand with the radiant figure I traversed the desolate-looking plain, which to my horror I perceived to be thickly strewn with dead bodies. Oh, how my heart sickened at that fearful sight! there they lay, the old and the young, all huddled together, sleeping the last long sleep of death. 'Stop, stop,' I said to my guide; 'oh, do let me turn back—I cannot go onwards; what means this? why have you brought me here?' The vision smiled sadly, and without a reply, still motioned me onwards. I could not resist. A mysterious indescribable power, as it were, impelled me to follow, until at length it paused, and pointing to the prostrate form of a man, whom to my horror I discovered to be my husband, lying cold and stiff, with a deep wound on his forehead, said, 'It was to take a last look of him you loved so well that I brought you here,' and with that it disappeared. The cry of anguish which I uttered on hearing this awoke me from my slumber: and oh, Mrs. Johnstone, you cannot think what I suffered from the remembrance of that dream, for, from that moment, I felt convinced that my husband had perished on the battle field. Well, in the course of the following day, when a near neighbour, who had been at the Pentlands, came to apprise me of John Hamilton's death, I told him, so convinced was I of the truth of my dream of the previous night, before ever he had spoken a word, that I knew he had come to tell me o' my husband's death. The man stood staring at me in breathless astonishment, apparently at a loss to

comprehend my meaning, until I told him o' the strange dream I had had; and what do you think, Mrs. Johnstone," added Mrs. Hamilton, sinking her voice to a whisper, "my husband had been killed on the previous day, and by a sabre wound on his forehead."

"Bless me," exclaimed Mrs. Johnstone, at the close of her friend's narration, "that is the most singular thing I ever heard; undoubtedly it was a warning sent to prepare you for the sad news you were about to hear."

"That is just my own opinion on the matter," said Mrs. Hamilton, as she proceeded to put a huge piece o' coal on the top of the smouldering embers; after which signal of preparation for departure, the friends retired to rest.

Immediately after partaking of breakfast on the following morning, Jeanie Irving expressed her intention of at once proceeding to the Greyfriars' Church-yard, to see if she could by any means obtain admittance to William Telford. Accordingly, accompanied by her aunt, who would on no account permit her to go forth alone—and carrying in her hand a small basket of provisions, which the kindness of Mrs. Hamilton supplied—she set forth on her mission. The nearer they advanced towards their destination, the more did poor Jeanie Irving's heart sink within her; for the first time since leaving home she dwelt cooly and calmly on the arduous undertaking before her, and realized the real difficulty of the task she had determined to achieve. Mrs. Johnstone perceiving how much her niece was engrossed by her own thoughts, abstained from addressing her until they arrived at the Greyfriars' Church-yard, the gate of which was surrounded by a numerous crowd of men and women clamorous to obtain admission to the prisoners.

The sentinels apparently took advantage of their situation to annoy and insult the trembling petitioners, many of whom they bade go about their business, after having deprived them of the provisions they carried; others, again, they permitted to enter, but not until they had taken from them the greater portion of the food and clothing they had brought to comfort and assist their friends. With a trembling heart and faltering steps, Jeanie Irving was advancing towards the sentinels, when a sweet feminine voice whispered in her ear, "For God's sake! leave that worthy woman behind, and take me with you; three going in at once would excite suspicion, and there is one in that church-yard I must see to-day, yet I lack courage to venture in alone." Jeanie Irving turned and looked on the speaker, whom, although clad in the meanest attire, and having her face concealed beneath a coarse woollen shawl, she perceived by her graceful bearing to be some person of consequence, and being of a kind sympathising nature, she at once acceded to the wishes of the stranger, and turning to her aunt, explained the necessity there was of her remaining without until she returned. Mrs. Johnstone, who had also arrived at her own conclusions regarding the individual who was

addressing her niece, expressed her willingness to comply with her request; accordingly, Jeanie Irving, whose arm was instantly grasped by the trembling hand of her new acquaintance, continued her way towards the gate. Fortunately, the sentinel who stood nearest the shrinking maidens proved to be less strict than the others, and allowed them to enter the church-yard without interruption. With eager eyes did Jeanie Irving and her companion scan each group of men as they passed, in order to discover the faces of those so fondly loved. Apparently the stranger soon discovered him she sought, for suddenly disengaging her arm from that of Jeanie's, she bade God bless her! for her kindness, and darted towards an elegant young man, evidently of high birth, who stood a little way apart from the others. Jeanie Irving paused for a few seconds to witness the rapturous greeting exchanged between the pair, and again continued her wistful search.

In the meantime, William Telford was standing in a remote corner of the church-yard engaged in earnest conversation with three others, when the trembling shrinking form of a young girl advancing towards them caught his eye. One glance was sufficient; and Jeanie Irving was that instant clasped in the arms of her lover.

"Jeanie," gasped forth William Telford, as again and again he kissed the cold lips of her who lay speechless on his shoulder. He could say no more. Both were overcome with an excess of joy almost painful in its intensity, but hearts and eyes were busy during the time that speech was denied them.

Those individuals who were standing near them, respecting the feelings of the lovers, withdrew a little aside, in order that they might enjoy uninterrupted intercourse.

"Willie!" at length Jeanie Irving found voice to say. "is it only a dream, or am I indeed gazing once more on your dear face, which has never for one moment been absent from me? it has haunted my thoughts by day, and my dreams by night; but oh, Willie," she continued, "I must and will get you from hence; my heart will break in twain should you remain much longer in this damp unwholesome place; but how can it be managed?"

"Think not of such a thing, my dearest girl," replied William Telford; "any efforts on your part would only entail destruction on your own head, and add fresh misery to that I am called upon to endure."

Perceiving an expression of intense anguish pass across the face of the disappointed maiden, as he attempted to dissuade her from her purpose, William Telford forbore saying any more on the subject, but turned the conversation into another channel, by demanding of Jeanie Irving how she had been since last he saw her, and whether his mother and brother were well. To these inquires on the part of her lover, Jeanie replied, by giving him a detailed account of all that had happened since his departure; dwelling on the grief she experienced on behold-

ing the sad procession pass along the streets of Linlithgow, and how she longed to spring from the window to embrace him again, and, if need be, share his imprisonment. To all of which proofs of love on the part of her he idolised, William Telford could only reply, by straining her still closer to his bosom, and imprinting a dozen kisses on her forehead and lips.

"My poor Willie, how thin and pale you are!" said Jeanie Irving, gazing tenderly in her lover's face, while tears ran down her cheeks as she spoke, "but sit your ways down and partake of what I have brought you, for it is easy to see from your appearance that many suns have risen and set since you have eaten a good meal;" so saying, she uncovered her basket, and making William Telford seat himself on a neighbouring mound, supplied him with eatables from her store. "And now," she said after her lover had finished his repast, "you must in your turn inform me how you and your companions have been treated since you came to this horrid place."

"Like brute beasts," was the indignant reply, "and not like men possessing immortal souls. Night after night have we been forced to lie in the open air without a covering of any kind to protect us from the rain or the unwholesome dews of evening. And should any of us chance to raise our heads, in order to change our position, or to look about us, we are fired at immediately. Only last night there was a poor fellow shot beside me for merely raising his head, forgetful for a moment of the savages who were near him watching with lynx eyes his slightest movement."

"Oh, Jeanie," continued her lover, "many and many a time have I lain down cold and supperless, with nought in the world to comfort me but thoughts of you; when the calm cold stars shone above my head like so many bright spirits watching over and pitying us in our loneliness and misery. Oft have I for hours gazed and gazed, while my companions around me were locked in slumber, wishing myself an inhabitant of the brighter world beyond. But now, dearest Jeanie, the sight of your sweet face has in a great measure restored me to myself, and I would fain live for your sake."

"And you shall live," passionately exclaimed the enthusiastic girl; "I will throw myself at the feet of the Duke of Monmouth, nor rise from that posture until he has granted my request."

"You would never be allowed to see him," sadly replied her lover; "there are those around the Duke's person who would jealously exclude any of our party from the presence of his Grace. He is a noble fellow," continued William Telford, "and were every one like him, we should not have been pining here like so many cattle in a pen."

"Promise me, Willie," suddenly interrupted Jeanie Irving, "that should I contrive means of escape from this horrid place, you will take advantage of them."

William Telford paused one moment ere he replied, but at length he said, placing his hand in hers, "For your sake, clearest, and that of my widowed mother, I will; but oh, take care, Jeanie, both for your own sake and mine, what you do; consider how precious you are to me; plunge not yourself into difficulties on my account; it may be that our captors may relent, and and I may yet be free."

"Trust them not," replied Jeanie Irving, "they resemble the tiger, which once having tasted blood, thirsteth for more; no, no, my Willie," she continued, "a woman's wit must save you here; so trust to me for speedy deliverance—but in the meantime I must be going, for I left my kind aunt at the gate, who will necessarily feel anxious should I not return soon."

"Why came she not in with you?" inquired her lover.

Whereupon, Jeanie Irving recounted to him the singular adventure she had met with at the gate, and asked of him who the handsome young man was the stranger had flown to, on entering the church-yard, but William Telford could afford her no information on the subject.

After a warm embrace, and an assurance on the part of Jeanie Irving that she should, without fail, return on the morrow, the lovers parted, and hastening past the sentinels, who did not seek to detain her, Jeanie rejoined her aunt, who was awaiting her return with the utmost impatience. On the following morning. Mrs. Johnstone and her niece again set off for the Greyfriars' Church-yard, the latter with a heart lightened of half its former load of grief, and indulging in sweet anticipations respecting the approaching interview. On nearing the gate, they observed groups of people standing conversing together, evidently discussing some important piece of news, many of them with smiles of satisfaction on their faces, while the sentinels walked their rounds with gloomy dissatisfied countenances, as if something had occurred to make them more than usually sullen. Mrs. Johnstone having inquired of a bystander the reason of the prevailing excitement, was informed that, on the previous evening, young Lord C—— had escaped from the church-yard, disguised as a female, and that the sentinels were dreadfully annoyed at the occurrence, as they had received particular directions regarding his safety. The thoughts of Jeanie Irving instantly reverted to the interesting couple of the preceding day; and she fervently thanked the Almighty that she had in some measure been instrumental in the young man's escape, while the idea, instantly occurred to her, that in a similar manner might William Telford be conveyed from thence. This time, on advancing to the gate to seek admittance, the sentinels gathered round them, uncovered the basket, helped themselves pretty largely to a portion of its contents, and examined both women closely in order to as certain that they carried no disguises about with them after which precautions they permitted them to pass. Jeanie Irving immediately made her lover acquainted with the escape of Lord C——, and informed

him as to her intentions, of taking him from thence in a similar disguise. Sick and enfeebled from his close confinement in the damp church-yard, William Telford listened eagerly to Jeanie's proposals, and it was finally agreed upon between them that she should watch well her opportunity when the attention of the sentinels was otherwise occupied, to steal in with a bundle of women's clothes, array her lover in the feminine garb, and embrace a favourable moment to lead him forth. In pursuance of this arrangement, each morning beheld Jeanie Irving stationed near the gate watching with eager eyes the least symptom of abated vigilance on the part of the sentinels to venture in. During the space of five days no suitable opportunity presented itself, but on the morning of the sixth the sentinels being attracted from their posts by a street broil, Jeanie darted past them with the rapidity of lightning, and flew towards her beloved William, bearing the precious burthen. Withdrawing a little apart from his companions, young Telford was speedily arrayed in his disguise, and many of those who witnessed the proceeding bade God bless and prosper him in his attempt. All being now in readiness, Jeanie Irving, whose nerves were strung up to the highest degree of tension, took the arm of her lover and advanced toward the outer gate. Oh, what a moment was this! They had passed two of the sentinels in safety, but just as they arrived within reach of the other, whose back was at that moment turned towards them, he wheeled suddenly round, and staring Jeanie full in the face, advanced towards her, exclaiming, "So, ho, my pretty maiden, you would fain retreat without paying toll; come now, don't be in such haste, but just tarry a moment, and let us become better acquainted." So saying, the soldier put his arm around her waist and attempted to snatch a kiss. At sight of this indignity offered to the woman he loved, the blood rushed to William Telford's brow, and darting on the brutal fellow, he dealt him such a blow on the head as felled him to the ground.

"What, ho, treachery, treachery!" shouted the other sentinels, suddenly apprized of the real state of affairs, and darting upon William Telford, they tore off his disguise, and dragged him back to the church-yard, kicking and swearing at him the while. Pale and speechless, with horror at the failure of her scheme, Jeanie Irving attempted to rejoin her lover, but was rudely pushed back by the infuriated sentinels, who threatened that, if she ever dared to show her face there again, they should tear her limb from limb. In an agony of feeling impossible to describe, Jeanie Irving dragged her fainting steps to her temporary home, and scarcely had she crossed the threshold ere her trembling limbs gave way, and she fell senseless on the floor. With a cry of grief, Mrs. Johnstone flew to her side, and raising her tenderly in her arms, with the assistance of Mrs. Hamilton, conveyed her to her bed, and strove by every means in her power to soothe and comfort her in her distress. But the fearful excitement the poor girl had undergone during

the last few weeks proved to have been too much for her delicate nature to sustain; reason forsook her throne, and for weeks her life trembled in the balance. We must now leave Jeanie Irving stretched on her bed of sickness, and return once more to her unfortunate lover, whose situation was rendered even more wretched than before on account of the brutal treatment of his captors, who incensed beyond measure at his attempted escape, strove by every possible means to embitter his already unbearable lot.

About this time a bond, by permission of the king, was presented for the prisoners to sign, certifying that they should under no pretext whatever take up arms in future against His Majesty; and those who appended their names to this document were instantly to be set free. Many of the poor men pining for their homes, and weary of their long confinement, signed it readily, in order to obtain their freedom.

Yet a numerous body, amongst whom was William Telford, refused to sign the paper, and, indeed, many of them were denied the opportunity of doing so. Then an order arrived from King Charles, to the effect, that thirteen of the ringleaders of the rebellion, and who approved of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, were to be placed in prison for a time, and then executed. Twelve had been already selected from amongst the prisoners, and either accidentally or designedly, the fatal paper was placed in the hands of young Telford; he took it with an untrembling hand, and with the fear of death before his eyes, wrote, that he could not on his conscience declare that he esteemed himself wrong in taking up arms in the cause of the Covenant, or, that he considered the killing of the perjured prelate, Archbishop Sharpe, a murder; and this done, he was marched off with his companions. The determination of these devoted men to suffer death in support of their opinions created a great sensation among the more moderate portion of their party; and immediately on their arrival at the prison, they were awaited upon by several of their clergymen, who impressed upon them the folly, not to say criminality, of sacrificing their lives, when, by merely signing the required bond, they might long be spared to comfort their weeping friends. Eleven of them, persuaded by their ministers, appended their names to the document, but the remaining two, one of whom was William Telford—whose pride would not allow him to retract his opinions—remained firm in their determination to suffer death rather than yield the required submission.

These two prisoners were supported in their inflexible resolution by their companions, who while visiting them in prison, expressed their sorrow and repentance at having signed the bond, stating that since then, they had neither known peace nor happiness as their inhuman adversaries treated them, in consequence of their having done so, with the utmost cruelty and contempt, styling them turn-coats, and doing all in their power to render them wretched at the

thoughts of what they had done.

Shortly afterwards, the companion of William Telford was publicly executed, while he himself, from some unknown cause, was led back to his old quarters in the Greyfriars' Church-yard.

Months rolled on, and as the winter advanced the prisoners began to experience the bad effects of their long exposure in the open air; indeed, so sick and enfeebled did they become, that the public authorities at once saw the necessity of adopting means for their removal. A memorial to that effect was despatched to the King, who gave orders that a ship should immediately be provided to transport the prisoners to Barbadoes, where they were to be sold as slaves; yet so little were His Majesty's orders obeyed in this respect, that it was the fifteenth of November ere the captain declared the ship in readiness to receive them. In order to get the prisoners removed to the ship without the knowledge of their friends, they were conveyed away at an early hour in the morning, and on their arrival on deck they were instantly stowed away under the hatches, which were carefully chained and locked, in order to prevent their escape. Twelve days was the ship detained in Leith Roads, and during that time the poor men were treated with the greatest inhumanity.

The narrow space in which they were enclosed was scarcely of size sufficient to contain a hundred men, and yet nearly thrice that number were thrust in by their unfeeling jailors; men, regardless alike of the safety and misery of those entrusted to their care. Several of the poor fellows were so dreadfully ill, that their more robust companions were obliged to stand upright, in order to afford their sick companions room to stretch their tortured limbs. The prayers and entreaties addressed to the captain by the almost stifled prisoners that some of their party might be allowed to go upon deck, were for a long time unheeded, until at length he was obliged, from the continued indisposition of the men, to accede to their request. Accordingly, about fifty of the strongest were removed to upper deck, where they soon recovered from the sad effects of their late confinement. The weather hitherto had been favourable for their voyage, but soon a succession of fearful storms arose, and the ship seemed entirely at the mercy of the waves. On the tenth of December the crew found themselves lying off Orkney, a coast dreaded by sailors, on account of the stormy sea surrounding it. Perceiving for the first time the full extent of their danger, the captain, as the ship was already within reach of the shore, ordered the sailors to cast anchor, which being done, they awaited with impatience the abating of the storm. But towards evening the hurricane increased in intensity, and about ten o'clock at night the sea, lashed into fury by the terrific violence of the wind, forced the ill-fated ship from its anchor, and dashed it in twain on the rocks. Hearing the dreadful crash, the wretched prisoners, fearing shipwreck, implored to be put on

shore, wherever the captain pleased, but their request was denied; and the sailors in terror and dismay tore down the mast, and laying it between the vessel and the rocks, prepared to save themselves from impending shipwreck. "My God," exclaimed William Telford, who was one of those placed upon deck, horrified on seeing that the crew made no attempts to open the hatches, which, chained and locked, confined the suffering inmates in a living tomb, "are you going to leave your prisoners thus?" At this instant a huge wave dashed over the ship, and overwhelming several of the men exposed to its fury in its fearful embrace, consigned them to a watery grave. "Men, fiends!" reiterated young Telford, making frantic efforts to break open the hatches as he spoke, "there will be a fearful reckoning to pay for this night's work." With shouts of derisive laughter, the sailors crossed the prostrate mast, and reached the shore in safety. Some of the poor fellows who imitated their example were thrown back by them into the sea, but about forty, in spite of all efforts made to destroy them, wore successful in their attempt.

Perceiving the imminent danger in remaining where he was, William Telford, having abandoned all hopes of freeing the prisoners, prepared to follow his companions along the mast. On his reaching the beach, one of the sailors strove to prevent his landing, but greatly his superior in strength and agility, young Telford seized the ruffian by the throat, and dashed him senseless on the ground. And now was accomplished one of the most fearful tragedies ever recorded in history. The storm at this moment seemed to have reached the climax of its fury; the thunder rolled, and the blue lightning danced around the sinking vessel, while foam crested waves rose mountains high, and then dashed with terrific violence over her yielding spars. But louder than the crash of the pealing thunder—far above the roaring of the mighty billows was heard the death-wail of the wretched prisoners, as they sunk beneath the heaving tallows; there to remain until that dread day when the murdered and their murderers shall stand before the great white throne—when the sea, at the command of its Creator, shall yield up the dead which have slept for ages in its mighty depths.

Months have elapsed since the fearful event we have just narrated took place, and Jeanie Irving is once more seated by her father's fireside, still pale and exhausted from the effects of her late severe illness. She has heard of the fatal shipwreck—she knows that her lover is no more, and has learned to say with resignation, "Not my will, but thine be done!" It is Sunday evening, and the grey-haired father is seated at the table with the Bible before him, from which he reads aloud words of joy and consolation. It is the fourteenth chapter of John, and Jeanie, her eyes filled with tears, is listening with breathless attention to the beautiful words of inspiration, when a low tap at the door arrests their attention. No answer is vouchsafed in return to the invitation to enter, but a quick step is heard in the passage, it approaches nearer, the door opens, and Jeanie Irving falls

fainting into the arms of William Telford.

Now, added Mr. Anderson, at the conclusion of his story, you must not imagine, although I have dwelt at a considerable length on the sufferings causelessly inflicted on the Covenanters, that I altogether take their part, far from it; as I think in some instances they were much to blame. For instance, when they assembled together for the purpose of having divine worship, instead of going quietly and respectably with only their Bibles in their hands as beseemeth Christians, there they were armed with swords and guns, only too ready to use them should occasion require, that was entirely going against the doctrine of St. Paul, who says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.") Why, if we were to assemble in that way now-a-days, singing psalms of defiance in the glens, with fire-arms beside us, wouldn't the present government be down upon us in no time? and quite right too, say I; for I am quite of opinion they were as much to blame as the royalists, and if they could, would have been quite as cruel. Look, for instance, at the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, although there can be no doubt he was a cruel, relentless foe to their cause, yet they should have respected his grey hairs, and spared him at the request of his daughter. And, again, I do not believe all the stories told in the Scotch Worthies, such as that one of Peden and some of his friends being saved while on the moors, just at the moment the dragoons were coming down upon them, by his praying that a mist might surround them to the discomfiture of their enemies, and that instantly, on his ceasing to pray, they were enveloped in a fog. I do not mean to say that a mist did not conceal them from their enemies, but that it was chance, and not a miracle, as they pretended. For many a time, when on the heights myself, have I been overtaken by these fogs, which come down so suddenly that there is no escaping from them, and very disagreeable things they are when one is far removed from a house of any kind, and there is not light sufficient to guide one on one's way.

"Ay, ay," said Mrs. Anderson, addressing her husband, "but for all that ye say, Mr. Peden was a great prophet;" then turning towards me, she continued. "when I was a little girl I resided for some time wi' a farmer who lived on the celebrated farm of Wellwood, near Airdsmoss, and used to hear a great deal about Mr. Peden. You must know that he is buried at Cumnock. He was first interred in the Laird of Affleck's aisle (Auchenleck), a mile distant, but was lifted, as he predicted, by soldiers, and conveyed to the foot of Cumnock gallows, which stands near the village. That spot soon came to be used as the public burying-grouud, and, in my younger days, was a very pretty rustic graveyard. But it is said that before his death, Peden stated that after his second burial a *thorn bush* should grow at his head, and an *ash tree* at his feet; and when the branches of each met,

there should be a bloody battle in Shankson wood (about a mile distant), where the blood would be up to the horse's bridles. The thorn did grow, and is there yet, I believe, and many slips have been taken from it by strangers, but the ash is said to have been pulled up ere it was large enough to touch the thorn, so the battle never took place. And I mind weel o' a strange epitaph that was on an ancient tomb-stone beside Peden's grave, which, if I remember rightly, was something like this:—'Here lies David Dun and Simon Paterson, who *was* shot in this place for their adherence to the word of God and the covenanting work of reformation, 1685,' (the black year.) There was also another stone, just in front of Peden's grave, but I forget the precise words; they ran, however, nearly as follows:—

'Halt, passengers, and I will tell to thee
For what and how I here did dee,
For always in my station.
Adhering to the work of reformation,
I was in on time of prayer
By Douglas (Colonel) shot;
O, cruelty, ne'er to be forgot.'

Now ye see," she continued, "there are no less than three poor men, there may be more for all that I mind o', lying in Cumnock burying-ground who were shot by the royalists, and I think, Willie," she said, again addressing her husband, "seeing that your own forefathers all fought in the good cause, you need'na say just sae much in favour o' their adversaries."

"Dear me," said Mr. Anderson, in reply to this rebuke, "I am not denying that there were many cruel actions done in these sad times, but I am just saying that I don't believe all the stories told in the Scots' Worthies: do you imagine for one moment that I can credit that one about open, open to the Duke o' Drumlanrig? No, nor any other sensible person."

"What one was that?" I inquired.

"Oh, just some idle tale not worth repeating——"

"Here it is; let the lady read it," interrupted Mrs. Anderson, taking as she spoke a book from the shelf, which, after cleansing off a vast accumulation of dust she handed to me, saying as she did so, "maybe it is true, and maybe it is no, but the like o' us canna pretend to ken onything about it."

After a little research, in which I was aided by Mrs. Anderson's directions, I at length came to the following:—"Concerning the death of the Duke of Drumlanrig *alias* Queensbury, we have this curious relation—that a young man, perfectly well acquainted with the Duke, (probably one of those he had formerly banished,)

being now a sailor, and in foreign countries, while the ship was upon the coast of Naples or Sicily, near one of the burning mountains, one day espied a coach and six all in black going towards the mount with great velocity; when it passed them they were so near that they could perceive the dimensions and features of one that sat in it.

"The young man said to the others, 'If I could believe my own eyes, or if ever I saw one like another, I would say, that is the Duke.' In an instant they heard an audible voice echo from the mount, 'Open to the Duke of Drumlanrig!' upon which the coach, now near the mount, evanished.

"The young man took pen and paper, and marked down the month, day, and hour of the apparition; and upon his return, found it exactly answer the day and hour the Duke died."

THE LAIRD OF CULZEAN.

"I think," said Mrs. Anderson, as she carefully restored the Scots' Worthies to its late position on the book-shelf, "that whoever got the disposal of the souls and bodies of these persecutors after their death seems to have treated them wi' a' the respect becoming their high station in this world, for it was always coaches and six, and coaches and four that came for them. You see, it was a coach and six that came for the Duke o' Drumlanrig, and there was the Laird of Culzean, a wickeder old fellow never lived, and just the same kind o' thing occurred at the time o' his death."

"Tush, nonsense, wife," interrupted Mr. Anderson.

"But it's no nonsense," rejoined the dame, "for my forefathers lived a long time near Culzean Castle, and many and many a time have they told me when a child of what was seen the night the Laird died; and as the lady seems to wish to hear all she can about these things, I'll just give her the account given me by my grandfather, who was as decent an old man as ever lived, though I say it that shouldna' say it."

Having expressed the pleasure I should feel in listening to her story, Mrs. Anderson put away her sewing, and, resting her arms comfortably on her knees, related the following wild tale, which, illustrating as it does the strange superstitions of the times in which these men lived, I here render as nearly as possible in the words of the narrator:—

The old Castle of Culzean, standing as it does on a rock rising two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea, is probably one of the finest marine seats in the kingdom. At the foot of the rock on which the castle stands, there are some romantic caves, more familiarly known as the "Fairy coves of Culzean." Many and many a night have I played about there, when the setting sun caused the dancing waves to glitter like gold, as they rippled over the pebbled beach towards the entrance to the caves. It was said that King Robert Bruce and his followers took refuge there, after landing from Arran, until all was in readiness for their enterprise. They are also particularly mentioned by Burns in his well-known "Hallowe'en." But still, for all that they were so beautiful, there were few o' the country people that cared to venture near them after it was dark, on account of the many strange things that were said to have been done there during the time of the wicked Laird of Culzean. Ay, but it was he that was the cruel man! It would make the very hairs on your head stand on end could ye but hear tell of all the cruelties he practised towards the Covenanters, while permitted to remain on earth. Oh, dearie me, how people in these days could dare to ask the Almighty's blessing on their dark deeds beats my comprehension altogether; but now to begin wi' my tale:—In the parish of Kirkmichael there lived an aged widow, called Mrs. M'Adam, who had an only son named Gilbert; and a nice quiet young man he was, and greatly beloved of his mother, for she was a lone woman, and had no one in the world to look to but him; and well did he repay her affection, poor lad, for there was nothing he thought too good for his mother. When these dreadful religious disturbances broke out, like many other young men who were at all given to think seriously about their spiritual welfare, Gilbert M'Adam was a Covenanter; but he did not join the body, as numbers did, merely for diversion, or from a hatred to the higher authorities, but simply from a sincere belief in the soundness of their doctrine and sympathy for their wrongs. His mother was also o' that way o' thinking, and, being a godly living person, she was greatly respected in the neighbourhood where she resided. Well, one wild stormy night, as Mrs. M'Adam and her son were seated by the side of the kitchen fire, the door opened and in entered their minister, a most worthy man, who had been forced, like many others, to leave his church, and wander up and down the country, teaching and ministering to the spiritual wants of his people whenever an opportunity presented itself. Greeting them with the blessing of peace, Mr. Weir—I think that was the minister's name—proceeded to encumber himself of his dripping cloak, while Gilbert flew to place a chair for him near the blazing hearth, and Mrs. M'Adam proceeded to put on the table the best her store afforded, to succour her esteemed guest. After having partaken of the eatables set before him, Mr. Weir informed his kind entertainers that he intended holding a prayer meeting on the following morning, in a retired glen near Kirkmichael,

where he expected a numerous attendance, as the inhabitants of the surrounding districts had been apprized of his intention, and expressed great joy at the intelligence, as they had lately been like sheep without a shepherd. In reply to some anxious inquiries on the part of Mrs. M'Adam, regarding the aspect of affairs throughout the country. Mr. Weir informed her that as yet the hand of the smiter was not stayed, but rather on the contrary, as their persecutors seemed more than ever zealous in their bloody work; and that, in the course of his wanderings in Dumfriesshire, many cruel murders had come under his knowledge, two of which, from the melancholy circumstances attending them, had made an indelible impression on his mind. At the request of Mrs. M'Adam, Mr. Weir related the following:—

"Late one evening, during the month of last February, while an aged woman of the name of Martin, who resides in the parish of Barr, was sitting by her hearth conversing with her son David, and a young man named Edward Kyan, who had but recently come from Galloway, a party of dragoons, under the command of Lieutenant Douglas, surrounded the house. Kyan, on being made aware of their approach, leaped through a side window, and took refuge behind the wall of the cottage. But his retreat being discovered by the soldiers, they dragged him forth into an adjoining yard. After being asked where he lived, without any further questions, or even being allowed to prepare for eternity, the said lieutenant shot him through the head, and then discharging his other pistol, shot him again as he lay on the ground quivering in the agonies of death. Not contented with this, one of the dragoons, pretending he was still alive, shot him again. After having glutted their vengeance on this unfortunate youth—whose only crime was that of concealing himself—the dragoons rushed into the house, and, bringing forth David Martin, tore off his coat, and placed him beside the mangled body of his friend. One of the soldiers more compassionate than the others, and moved at the sight of the mother's tears, besought his officer to spare him another day, and stepped in between the kneeling man and his executioners, who stood with their pieces levelled, awaiting the signal of destruction. After much entreaty, the lieutenant was prevailed upon to spare his life; but so great was the terror of the poor man, that he lost his reason, and is now a helpless bed-ridden maniac. And now," continued Mr. Weir, "the other sad affair I am about to relate—the particulars of which came under my own observation—will serve, in some measure, to enlighten you as to the manner in which these cruel men perform their bloody work:—

"In the course of the same month, I went with a friend, in whose house I was then staying, to attend communion service in a secluded part of the parish of Irongray. The morning was cold and damp, and a dull leaden mist overshadowed the landscape, as if nature had donned her saddest garments on this melan-

choly occasion—still the meeting was numerously attended. It was indeed an impressive sight to witness these poor people—many of whom seemed overcome with fatigue from the distance they had travelled—assembled on this sequestered heath, to hear the word of God, and partake of his blessed ordinance.

"The service had just commenced, when the sentinels stationed on the heights gave notice that a party of dragoons were approaching.

"On receipt of this warning, the meeting instantly dispersed. Some fled towards the banks of the Cairn, and others towards the moor of Lochen-Kit, in the parish of Uir. Here the six poor men who suffered on this occasion were captured by their pursuers. Four of them were shot dead on the spot. The other two, whose names were Alexander M'Cubbin, of the parish of Glencairn, and Edward Gordon, from Galloway, were taken by the captain to the bridge of Orr, where the Laird of Lag was busily employed in carrying on the work of persecution. Immediately on their arrival, Lag wished to pass sentence of death upon them, because they refused to swear; but the captain insisted that, as four of them had been summarily despatched, an assize should be called to judge and condemn them. Lag swore fiercely that he should call no assizes, still the captain got the matter deferred till another day. On the following morning they were conveyed to the parish of Irongray, by Lag and his party, and hanged on an oak tree near the church of Irongray, at the foot of which they lie interred. When about to suffer death, an acquaintance of M'Cubin's inquired of him if he had any message to send to his wife, upon which he answered, that he commended her and his two children to the care of a merciful God; and, having bestowed his forgiveness on the person employed to hang him, he, with his companion, suffered death with much cheerfulness.

"Immediately on the departure of the soldiers, the bodies of these martyrs received Christian burial, and a simple stone was erected on the solitary heath to mark the spot where they fell."[#]

[#] Epitaph upon a stone in a moor near Lochon-Kit, on the grave of John Gordon, William Stuart, William Heron, and John Wallace, shot by Captain Bruce:—

"Behold here in this Wilderness we lie,
Four Witnesses of hellish cruelty.
Our eyes and blood could not their ire assuage
But when we're dead they did against us rage,
That match the like we think ye scarcely can;
Except the Turks, or Duke de Alva's men."

Epitaph on the grave-stone lying on Edward Gordon, and Alexander M'Cubin, executed at the Church of Irongray, at the command of the laird of Lag and Captain Bruce:—

"As Lag and bloody Bruce command,
We were hung up by hellish hand,
And thus their furious rage to stay,
We died at Kirk of Irongray.
Here now in peace sweet rest we take,
Once murder'd for religion's sake."

"Puir murdered things," sobbed forth Mrs. M'Adam at the close of the minister's narration, raising her handkerchief to her eyes as she spoke. "Oh dear, dear! is'na it sad to think that religion, whilk ought to make men sae peaceful and godly in their lives, should, in many cases, just hae the contrary effect. See now at the present time, a' men are set by the ears, and what is it all about?—a mere trifle—just a difference o' opinion. How true are the words of Him that knew all things, 'I am come not to bring peace on earth, but a sword!'"

"Yes," was the reply, "but I am afraid religion is often made a cloak to cover bitter feelings engendered by party strife. No one possessing the meek Christian feeling of brotherly love and charity towards all men, could thus wantonly imbrue his hands in the blood of a fellow-creature."

"'Deed no, Mr. Weir, you say very true; they are no' the richt sort o' Christians who delight in bloodshed and warfare; a wheen apostates are they; wolves in sheep's clothing, whom we are expressly warned against——"

Here Gilbert, who knew from experience that whenever his mother got upon these topics she could continue, without pausing to draw her breath, until pretty near midnight, suggested to her the propriety of Mr. Weir retiring early to rest, as he would need to rise betimes in the following morning. The worthy minister, homeless and ill-provided for as he was, accepted with gratitude the humble accommodation offered to him by the poor but hospitable widow, and shortly afterwards withdrew to his sleeping apartment. By the early hour of six o'clock, Mr. Weir, accompanied by Mrs. M'Adam and her son, was on his way to the place of meeting. The morning was fine, and a numerous concourse of people, many of whom had come from a great distance, were assembled to hear their beloved Clergyman. The incense of praise had been offered up, and Mr. Weir was about to commence his sermon, when a party of soldiers appeared in sight. These proved to be a body of militia, under the command of Sir Archibald Kennedy of Culzean, then scouring the country in search of prey. Mr. Weir on

perceiving their approach, closed his Bible, and exhorting his hearers to remain quietly in their seats, went forward to meet the hostile band.

"Why come ye thus to interrupt us in our devotions?" he inquired, when the rapid advance of the soldiers brought them within hearing.

"You shall soon see that, you old canting hypocrite," thundered forth Sir Archibald Kennedy in his fiercest tones. "I'll teach you to come here with your psalm-singing, dismal faced companions. Come, be off with you, or I will this instant send a brace of bullets through that thick head-piece of yours!"

"Not at thy command, thou man of Belial," said Mr. Weir, "shall I abandon my post in the hour of danger! These are the souls the Lord hath committed to my charge, and woe be unto me or any other of my brethren who shall neglect their sacred trust——"

"Cease your prating, you old dotard: soldiers, do your duty;" so saying, the fiery leader wheeled his horse round, and stood with his back purposely placed towards Mr. Weir, who, seizing him by the arm, exclaimed, "Do unto me even as ye list, but let these go their way. Oh, slay them not!"

"Men, do your duty!" was the only answer vouchsafed to this request; and Sir Archibald Kennedy, as if to set an example to his followers, drew his sword from its scabbard, and advanced towards the Covenanters, who, in accordance with their minister's wishes, had remained quietly seated, awaiting the issue in breathless suspense.

"Fly, my children, fly!" cried Mr. Weir, perceiving that offensive measures were about to be taken by the soldiers. "Oh God! it is too late," he exclaimed, as the blood-thirsty men rushed eagerly on the helpless group; and covering his face with his hands, to shut out the bloody scene about to ensue, he remained for a few moments motionless as a statue, while his lips moved, as though he was engaged in prayer.

In the meantime, Gilbert M'Adam, armed with a stout walking-stick, prepared to defend his aged mother, who clung to his arm in an agony of terror; but just as he raised it to ward off a blow from the butt-end of a musket, it was stricken from his grasp, and he was left at the mercy of his foe. Fortunately for his safety, a man stationed near him that instant darted on the soldier, and wrenched the gun out of his hand, which went off in the struggle, wounding a woman standing near the combatants. Perceiving the folly of attempting self-defence, Gilbert M'Adam seized his mother in his arms, and, making his way out of the affray, ran hastily towards a hill, situated a little way off. He had gained the foot of the eminence, when the clatter of a horse's feet behind them causing the young man to turn round, a pistol bullet, discharged by the advancing horseman, entered his brain, and Gilbert M'Adam fell dead at his mother's feet. With a loud laugh of insolent triumph, Sir Archibald Kennedy—for it was he who fired the deadly

shot—was about to return to the scene of action, when, with a scream that in its agony resembled nothing earthly, the frenzied mother, with a strength almost supernatural, seized the horse's bridle, and compelled him to remain stationary, while she burst forth thus:—

"Hence to your stronghold, you cruel bird of prey! Back to your proud towers, ye accursed of the Lord! but think not, in the pride of your heart, that this day's work will pass unavenged, for a day of retribution awaits you. In the silence of the night, when the meanest hind in the land is locked in slumber, shall a mother's curse ring in your ears till ye madden at the thought. From this day henceforward life shall be a burden to you: then—then, when the hour of death approaches, shall your horrors be redoubled ten-fold. No priest will be able to quench the ceaseless flames which burn in your bosom, and no words of affection soothe your dying pillow; for the torments of a lost soul will be yours, and in your last moments let the thoughts of this day's work add another drop to your cup of misery."

Having given vent to these terrible maledictions, Mrs. M'Adam withdrew her hand from the horse's bridle, and motioning Sir Archibald Kennedy to begone, threw herself sobbing and screaming on the corpse of her son. It was noticed by many then present that Sir Archibald looked scared and discomposed on his return to join his men; and that, contrary to his general mode of acting, he contented himself with taking a few prisoners, and rode off at a much slower and more thoughtful pace, than was his wont. Well, the persecuting work went on with unabated zeal, and Sir Archibald Kennedy, or, as he was more commonly styled, the Laird o' Culzean, was a noted man among them all. Wherever blood was to be shed, there was the Laird, grim and dark, wi' the marks o' an evil conscience on his face. (Some people said that the older he got, the more crimes he committed, just to drown his remorse for some cruel deeds he had done in his youth; but if that was the case, it was a queer way he took to do it, for as the old proverb has it, "every single stick adds to a burden.") Although the Laird was, to all outward appearances, as bold and daring like as ever, yet the servants about the house said it was a very different thing wi' him when alone; for many and many a time in the long winter nights, did they see him pacing up and down his hall, as if he would fain, by the loudness of his step, drown the voice of conscience within; and often, when the wind rose louder than usual, and moaned and shrieked through the passages, he would start hastily from his seat and demand in a furious tone what woman it was who dared to scream so within the walls o' Culzean Castle. These are the kind o' things his servants told about him, so my grandfather said; but whether they were true or false, I canna pretend to say. Well, time rolled on, and the decree was sent forth that the wicked Laird o' Culzean must prepare to meet his Maker—a summons which the now aged per-

"Having given vent to these terrible maledictions, Mrs M'Adam withdrew her hand from the horse's bridle, and motioning Sir Archbald Kennedy to begone, threw himself sobbing and screaming on the corpse of her son."

secutor seemed in no way anxious to obey, for them that were near him declared that he threatened to knock off the doctors' heads, because they couldna promise him that he should get better. The people who went about his room at that time, recalled to mind the curse of the bereaved widow, for, somehow or another, the story had got about, and many wondered when it came to the push, how the Laird would meet his end. Sir Archibald, as Mrs. M'Adam prophesied, seemed in his last moments to derive comfort from nothing. In vain the physicians exercised their skill to the utmost; in vain the attendant clergymen whispered words of consolation and hope, he scorned them all, and drove them from the room because they could not quench the flames which burned in his breast. (You see the widow's curse was beginning to work.) As the hour of death approached his agony was fearful. The drops of perspiration stood like beads on his brow; and his eyes which seemed like to start from their sockets wi' mortal agony, were fixed wi' a horrible stare on the foot o' his bed. Some who were present at that time said they were convinced that something, not meant for other e'en to see, was standing there, for every now and again he pointed wi' his finger and laughed; but the laugh was like that o' ane in despair. At length he died, and the night o' his death was one of the most fearful that ever occurred in the memory of man. The wind roared round the castle wi' a force that threathened to lay it in ruins; while the thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed in a manner awful to witness. The servants always maintained that the powers of darkness were let loose that night; for at the moment the Laird died, such shrieks of laughter, mingled with wild screams of agony, rang through the whole house, that overwhelmed with fear, they fell on their knees and prayed for protection against the horrors which surrounded them. Then came the day of his funeral; and, by all accounts, sair, sair work they had to get the hearse from the door. First there were four white horses put to the bier; but no sooner were they yoked-to, than one of them fell dead on the spot, and the others kicked and plunged so, they had to be taken out. Then four black ones were put in their place; but still they wadna go, until the coffin was taken from the hearse, and the priest muttered some prayers over it. Then, when they had proceeded a few steps wi' their burden, a dreadful tempest of thunder arose to the terror and amazement of all present—many of whom talked of returning; but the storm having now ceased, they were dissuaded from doing so. However, on nearing the place of interment, it again burst forth in such a fearful manner that the flashes of fire seemed to run along the coffin. Owing to the extreme lightness of the bier after this terrific outburst of the elements, it was conjectured, either that the body had been consumed by the lightning, or that it had been taken away by the master whom the Laird served so well while on earth, from among their hands, ere ever they got to the church-yard.

But now I must tell you o' what took place on the night o' the Laird's death,

to the great horror of a ship's crew who chanced to be at sea. Just as they were sailing past the coves of Culzean, the fearful tempest, I mentioned before, arose, and the ship was tossed by the waves in such a manner, that the sailors gave themselves up for lost. Well, in the very midst of this awful turmoil o' the elements, when even the mightiest vessel was in danger of perishing, the man at the helm cried aloud, "a boat, a boat!"

"Nonsense," replied the Captain, "what boat could live in a night like this?"

Just as they were speaking, a fearful flash of lightning lit up the darkness, thereby permitting the terror-stricken crew to perceive a coach and four coming along the sea. Again the blue lightning flew down the mast, while onward pranced the horses, whose black plumes waved, as the ghastly-looking driver urged them onwards. The hair of each individual sailor stood on end as he gazed on the appalling sight; when, just as they were passing the side of the vessel, the Captain hailed the spectral-looking coachman with, "From whence to were?"

And the answer was, "From h—ll to Culzean's burial!"

"Well done," said Mr. Anderson, at the close of this harrowing narration; "this is indeed a most probable story, and quite in keeping with 'open, open to the Duke of Drumlanrig.' Surely," he added more seriously, "you do not believe any such nonsense?"

"Never you mind whether I do or not," replied Mrs. Anderson, evidently enjoying her husband's look of astonishment; "but just go your ways to that small drawer on the left there, and bring me the little box tied round wi' red tape, which you will find in the farthest back corner."

Mr. Anderson, in obedience to his wife's request, proceeded to the drawer, and in a few seconds placed in her hands the wished-for article.

After fumbling for a short space of time amongst its varied contents, Mrs. Anderson succeeded in fishing out, from its mysterious depths, a sheet of paper carefully folded up, which she opened and placed in my hands, saying, "there now, that was written by a friend of mine while studying at the College of Edinburgh." Glancing my eyes over the verses, I perceived that they bore immediate reference to the legend Mrs. A. had just been narrating, and so wrote them down, as an appropriate finish to the Legend of Culzean:—

THE LAIRD OF CULZEAN.

Around Culzean Castle the wild winds did howl,
And the trees bent like leaves to the blast;
Whilst the heavens looked black with an angry scowl,
The wild clouds were careering on fast.

Dark, dark was that night, and yet darker the hour
When Culzean's lord did yield up his breath;
You'd have thought that the fiends of hell had power
To preside o'er the wizard's death!

The thunder roll'd loud, while the lightning flashed,
And by tempest the Castle was shook;
Wild shrieks of despair echo'd loud in the blast,
And from fear none dared upward to look.

The dying man toss'd, and oft did he turn,
But for him was no rest or sleep;
Fierce flames of remorse in his breast did burn,
And his curses were loud and deep.

When reverend fathers sought to cheer,
And smooth down the way to heaven,
He mocked them all with a taunt and jeer;
They from the room were driven.

He died—though for him the black banner wav'd
And nodded the sable plume;
By no rich nor poor was a blessing craved
For him who that night met his doom.

* * * * *

The wild winds rag'd and the lightnings flashed,
While the sea ran mountains high;
And the good ship's crew all stood aghast
As they gaz'd on the stormy sky.

"Haste haste, my men," the bold Captain cried,
"Haste, haste! make no delay!
We'll bravely steer through the foaming tide,
And trust in God our stay."

The death lights do burn this night in Culzean,
The old lord is dead at last;
And the powers of darkness are there I ween.

Careering on the blast!

With a crash the thunder o'er them peal'd,
And its harsh and sullen roar;
Though to fear the sailors hearts were steel'd,
Caus'd them tremble more and more.

"A boat! a boat!" the steersman cried,
"I see by the flashes bright."
"NO BOAT," the Captain quick replied,
"Could live on this awful night!"

Then the heavens burst, and a flood of light
Lit up all with its ghastly glare;
And the ship's crew gaz'd on a fearful sight,
For a funeral train was there!

Four coal-black horses drew each coach,
And they pranced upon the sea;
As each driver caus'd them swift approach,
What a ghastly look had he!

Soon as they reach'd the vessel's side,
That awful train funereal,
"FROM WHENCE—to where?" the Captain cried
"From H—ll to Culzean's burial!"

PEDEN'S STONE.

Having been informed that a stone, familiarly known throughout the country as "Peden's Stone," from the fact that that prime favourite of the Scottish peasantry used there to delight his hearers with his eloquence, was still to be seen on the moor, I determined upon paying a visit to this sequestered spot. It was on a lovely morning in the month of September that I started on my expedition. The sun was shining brightly, and the air was of that exhilarating nature which blends

the softness of summer with the least possible tinge of autumn coolness. The Robin red-breast, sole remaining songster of the grove, poured its gushing notes of melody from hedge-row and tree, while, with each motion of the breeze, the now yellow leaves fell trembling on my path.

The reapers, in many places, were yet busy in the fields—the harvest being generally late in this part of Scotland—and their merry bursts of laughter sounded gaily from amid the fields of waving corn. My way again lay through H—— village, near the entrance of which, on precisely the same spot as formerly, stood the previously mentioned pleasant-looking dame, but not alone. Two little olive branches clung for protection to the parent stem, in a manner beautiful to witness. I could not resist a smile as my quondam acquaintance came forward with outstretched hand, exclaiming, while a broad laugh sat upon her honest features, "Losh me, isn't it funny we twa should always foregather on the same bit?"

"Indeed it is!" was the reply.

"And you are still gaun about here?"

"Yes; and picking up all the information I can get about the Covenanters."

"Oh, mam!" was the pathetic response, "had my brother only been living!—but that's by; eh sirs me, but that makes an unco difference wi' us a'! And where may ye be gaun the day?"

"To visit Peden's Stone; likewise to call on a Mr. Brown, who, I understand, is able to give me some information regarding it."

"Peden's Stone," re-echoed Mrs. Black—such she afterwards informed me was her designation—"a weel, mam, it's just up by there, an' a solitary bit it is. Many a one has gone to visit Peden's Stone. There's my daughter; a few weeks ago she was spending the day with some friends that live near there, and they took her away to see it. On her return home, she says to me, 'Oh, mother! just to think o' my being twenty years old, and never to have been at Peden's Stone afore.' 'Hoots, lassie!' says I, 'I'm a hantle mair than that, and I have never seen it! ha, ha, ha!' And so you're going to Sandy Brown's to get information; weel I'll no say but he'll be able to tell you something canny, for folks say that he speaks like ony minister. Aweel, aweel, I mind the day when I could have told you lots o' stories mysel'; but that's a' by! And you're rale ta'en up about the Covenanters, are you?" demanded the loquacious dame, and, without waiting for an answer, away she went on. "Ay, weel, so was I at ae time o' my life; for when I was at the sewing-school in Strathaven, I was rale anxious to see Loudon hill—may be you'll ken Loudon hill, where the battle o' Drumclog was fought? Ay, I thought sae; it's a queer-looking place, I fancy, and I was many a time going to see it, but I never could win, and the time just gaed by. Losh me, but there was a curious story told about that hill—a most ex-tre-orner thing indeed; for, when I was at the sewing-school, many and many a time ha'e I heard tell o' a heap o' siller being

buried there; and when any person went to dig it up, an awful voice ahint them cried—'Clog's in a low!' and on their turning round to see what was wrong, the sight o' a great bull rushing at them gar'd them rin, and the hole instantly closed, so that they couldna win at it again. But maybe you'll think that's a lee; and I wadna say but it is."

"Is it true," I inquired, "that your brother, who lives near here, has a sword that belonged to Captain Paton?"

"He has that, he has that! but stop noo, I'm foolish to say sae"—here Mrs. Black put her finger into her mouth and appeared to reflect a little—"Did you say Captain Paton?"

"Yes."

"Weel, I'm no sae sure about that; but I ken brawly he has an '*Andrew Ferrara*' that belonged to some o' thae fechting folk. However, ye should just gang and ask him about it, he'll be blythe to see ye, and I'll show ye a heap o' curiosities, for he is rale ta'en up about auld-fashioned things. And ye can just say I sent ye."

Thanking Mrs. Black for her instructions, I proceeded towards the house indicated, and Mr. Graham being within, I was ushered into a room, where a huge sword lay upon the table. From its appearance, I should have judged it rather to be a relic of the forty-five than of the days of persecution. Mr. Graham, in answer to my inquiries, stated that it was said to have been one of Captain Paton's swords, but that he could not give me any true account of it, as it had formerly belonged to his brother, and at his death came into the hands of its present possessor. Amongst other curiosities, Mr. G. produced two coins of the reign of David the First, which had been found with a great many more at the foot of a hill, about a mile or two on the moor at the back of his house. The tradition told concerning them in the neighbourhood is, that a man, whose Christian name was Tom, while returning at that remote period of time from a marriage party, missed his footing, and fell over a quarry which lay in his path, and was killed on the spot, the money falling out of his pocket during his too rapid descent. In consequence of this sad disaster, the spot is known as "Tam's leap" to this day.

While speaking about the persecuting times Mr. Graham informed me that a particular part of the moor was known by the name of the "Headless Cross," and that the circumstance which gave rise to its singular designation was this:—A persecutor of that name, who had rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the Covenanting party, on account of his many cruelties, took refuge from their anger in this part of the moor. The Covenanters, having been apprised of his whereabouts, set off instantly in pursuit of their intended victim. On arriving at the place where they expected to find their enemy, their astonishment may be conceived on seeing him without his head! It appeared that the unfortunate man

had fallen into the hands of another hostile party, who, depriving him of his head, rendered him in truth a "Headless Cross." A large stone, likewise on the moor, familiarly known as "Pack Stone," was said to have been thrown down there by the celebrated wizard, Michael Scott, when in4 company with his Satanic majesty. These worthies, it is believed, were employed in carrying stones suitable for the erection of a bridge over the Firth of Forth. During this benevolent employment, a dispute took place between them—words ran high; and Michael Scott, in a fit of rage, threw down the stone then borne on his back, declaring that not one foot further should he carry it. How the quarrel ended is not related; but the stone, which is of an immense size, still remains in confirmation of the truth of this legend. The most probable version of the story is, that there the wearied pedlar used to rest with his pack while journeying between Glasgow and Edinburgh, as the wheel tracts of the old Glasgow Road are still visible near the spot.

After a minute inspection of Mr. Graham's little museum, I set off to visit Mr. Brown. The farm towards which I directed my steps was prettily situated near a "gleaming wood," the trees of which, now clad in autumn's russet brown, peacefully waved over the cottage roof, before the grateful breeze, as it sped along the moor on its trackless way; while a few plants of Indian cress, trained up against the wall evinced a greater predilection for neatness than is generally to be seen in the farm-houses of Scotland. A cleanly-dressed, pleasant-looking woman—whom I afterwards ascertained to be Mrs. Brown—was standing near the entrance; and on my inquiring if Mr. Brown was within, she invited me to take a seat, as he was in the fields, and should be in presently. Availing myself of the kind invitation, I entered, and taking possession of the proffered chair, I amused myself with inspecting the cottage interior, until the arrival of Mr. Brown. It presented the nicest little picture of a moorland farm I had ever seen. Rows of nicely-cleaned dishes, bright pewter plates, and spotless chairs, all indicated the careful housewife.

In a few minutes Mr. Brown entered; and on my informing him of the nature of my visit, he said, with a smile, that he did know a little regarding these times, and should only be too happy were it in his power to give me any information that might chance to be of service. This was encouraging, so I at once began the conversation by remarking, "that this seemed to have been a great part of the country for the Covenanters in former times." Upon which he replied that it was, more particularly the west end of the parish, where Peden and Cargill used to preach, adding, "I suppose you have seen Peden's Stone?" On my informing him that I was then on my way to visit it, he said it was not above a mile distant.

On my inquiring if there had been many conventicles held about there, Mr. Brown informed me of several, more particularly mentioning one held near Bathgate, where a Mr. Riddel officiated. There was a large assemblage present,

and just as they were in the middle of their devotions the cry arose that the dragoons were upon them. The soldiers, however, not making their appearance, the Covenanters thought it had been a false alarm, and continued their religious exercises in fancied security. Scarcely had a few minutes elapsed ere a large party of red-coats, under the command of Lieutenant Inglis, then stationed at Mid-Calder, galloped swiftly up to the place of meeting. On perceiving their approach, many of the Covenanters fled through a moss where no horse could follow. But not to be outwitted, the soldiers remained on the opposite side, and fired promiscuously amongst the helpless group, thereby wounding many. One of their bullets pierced the head of an heritor in the parish of Bathgate, named John Davie, and killed him on the spot. Then they carried a great many men and women as prisoners, with an immense quantity of booty, back with them to Mid-Calder, the same as if they had been attacking a foreign enemy, and not men born on British soil.

"Oh, dear me! but the Covenanters were hardly used in these times—were they not, mam?" inquired Mrs. Brown, appealing directly to me, "for you see, a very great number of those who suffered were poor bits o' innocent creatures who had neither the power nor the inclination to do harm to any one. And the power with which Dalziel, Claverhouse, and many others of these cruel men were invested was really dreadful. No person was safe while in their hands. There are men who think that some of the Covenanters were too strict in their opinions, still, as I have often read, it was then that Scotland earned for herself a distinguished name; for at the King's return, every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible, and all children of age could read. Now, that was just as it should be."

"I fancy you will have heard all about the murder of Kennoway and Stuart, two of the lifeguard's-men, at Swine Abbey, just down by yonder?" inquired Mr. Brown, at the conclusion of his wife's remarks.

I replied "that I had heard it slightly mentioned, and should be very glad to hear a more lengthened account of the affair," upon which he commenced thus:—

"About Stuart very little or nothing is known, but Kennoway was universally detested on account of his horrid cruelties and shameless exactions from poor people who could but ill afford to pay his unjust demands. Kennoway had displayed great activity under General Dalziel at Pentland, and he it was who captured that zealous preacher Hugh M'Kail, who was executed at the cross of Edinburgh in the twenty-sixth year of his age. He likewise surprised numerous conventicles, and treated the Covenanters with great barbarity. On one occasion he attacked a party of unarmed people who were quietly hearing sermon in a field near East-Calder, and shot one through the leg, beating and robbing several others. At the meeting which took place near Bathgate, his was the hand

that shot John Davie; in short, so zealous did he show himself in the cause of persecution that the government showed him great favour, and gave him several commissions to execute. Each day he scoured the country in search of prey, and those unfortunate enough to fell into his hands were treated with such brutality that several people went into Edinburgh to complain to the General of his cruelty. On receipt of a letter from his superior officer threatening him with punishment for his illegal acts, he forced an aged man, whom he had abused most shamefully, under pain of death, to sign a paper, stating that Thomas Kennoway had never injured him in any way whatever. Being greatly addicted to liquor, he would remain for days at the public-house, called Swine Abbey, indulging his evil propensity until all the money he had was spent. On one occasion having imbibed more than he had money to pay for, and the landlord pressing him for a settlement, he went out to the road, along which an old man was coming with a heavy load of oats on his back. Kennoway at once seized on the bag, and threatening the bearer with all manner of punishments if he dared to look after his property, returned to Swine Abbey, and discharged his bill with part of the proceeds, reserving the remainder for the further indulgence of his favourite vice. In the month of November he went into Edinburgh, from whence he returned bearing with him a roll which contained the names of one hundred and fifty persons he was commissioned to apprehend. On alighting at Livingstone he encountered his ill-fated companion, Stuart, to whom he displayed the roll, boasting that in a few days he should be as rich as any laird in the country. On their way to Swine Abbey, he pointed out to Stuart the lands he meant to possess. Arriving there, they commenced drinking, and continued doing so until pretty near the end of the month, when they were killed one night as they were leaving the house. Some thought they had been slain in self-defence, but it was generally supposed that, roused to madness by the continued persecutions of Kennoway, a party of people in the neighbourhood had planned his destruction. So violent were many of the blows exchanged on this occasion that the stone above the door was almost cleft in twain. I have heard it said," continued Mr. Brown, "that one or two persons suspected of having had a hand in the murder were openly rebuked by others of the Covenanting body, for thus having sent a man laden with such crimes into the presence of his Maker without one moment's warning, when long years of penitence would scarce suffice to atone for the evil he had wrought."

"It was a cruel deed," I said in reply to Mr. Brown's inquiry as to what I thought of the affair, "and one of those blameable acts on the part of some of the Covenanters which made their enemies say that a suitable opportunity would have found them only too ready to shed blood."

"Oh, no," was the reply; "that would never have been the case! The thoughts of the Covenanters did not dwell much on the shedding of blood; but rather on

the restoration of their rights. No doubt, as there are good and bad in every class, so the Covenanters were not exempted from the rest in this respect; but had amongst them men who thought it no sin to pour forth the blood of the wicked. But still, as a whole, they were a harmless suffering body of Christians."

"Don't you think, mam," said Mrs. Brown, "that some of the clergy did not conduct themselves altogether with the meek Christian spirit becoming their high vocation? for I have often heard it said that, had they evinced a more forbearing disposition towards those—whose only fault consisted in their preferring to hear their own ministers—things would not have gone so hard with the Covenanters. Now, for instance, take Mr. Honeyman, who was at that time curate in Livingstone; what kind of example did he set those who were neither so learned, nor pretended to be so good as himself? one which no real Christian would ever seek to follow."

"Did you ever hear," inquired her husband, "an account of the manner in which he treated some of his parishioners who came to him for assistance in the time of their distress?"

Replying in the negative, Mr. Brown related the following:—"Mr. Honeyman, the then curate in Livingstone, was in truth a terrible scourge to those of his hearers who did not attend his meetings as he could have wished. Whenever any of his flock came under his displeasure, away went an order to Bathgate, and out came, in return, a troop of dragoons, who apprehended all marked down in the curate's black book, as it was styled. The parishes of Livingstone, Calder, Carnwath, and several others, were diligently ransacked by these men; and many remarkable instances occurred in which the Lord heard the prayers of the oppressed, and delivered them from their persecutors. I have heard tell of one young man who escaped from among their hands, for whose apprehension Honeyman had offered a large sum of money. Well, amongst others upon whom Mr. Honeyman sent down the soldiers, the Russels of Fallhouse—whose descendants are still living there—were particularly mentioned in the black book as being worthy of stripes. Fortunately, their horses contented the fierce Highlanders, and they themselves were uninjured. In great distress at the loss of their valuable cattle, the Russels came to Mr. Honeyman, who was their minister—indeed one of them was an elder in his congregation—and besought his interference in their behalf. At first, Mr. Honeyman abused and threatened them most dreadfully for their not appearing at courts, or taking the oath, thereby setting such a bad example to others. The suppliants bore this tirade with great patience; but insisted that he should use his influence for the recovery of their property. After a little while he appeared to yield, and wrote a letter to the commander of the forces stationed at Lanark, which, he gave to them, desiring that they should themselves deliver it. Overjoyed at having succeeded so well with their minister, the

Russels set off immediately for Lanark; but, on arriving at Carluke, they chanced to encounter some acquaintances, and adjourned with them to a public-house, in order to procure some refreshment. Having informed their friends of the nature of their errand, these men, being rather suspicious as to the good intentions of Mr. Honeyman, advised the Russels, before proceeding farther, to open the letter. They did so, and found to their consternation, that instead of containing what they expected, namely, an order for the restoration of their horses, it was an injunction to the General to hold the bearers fast, as being two notorious rebels, from whom all that was taken was too little. In a mighty rage against their perfidious minister, and yet thankful to Providence that they had escaped his snare, the Russels speedily returned home, nor did they ever again enter Curate Honeyman's church, except on compulsion."

"Eh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown at the conclusion of this amusing anecdote, "wasna that an unco like thing for any minister to do, more especially one living in a Christian country; but 'deed these werena' Christian times, so that they may serve as some excuse for the man!"

"By all accounts, the district about Linlithgow seems to have been a great part of the country for conventicles," said I, addressing Mr. Brown, who replied—"Ay, but Linlithgow itself hadna much to boast of in these days; that was indeed a sad falling away!"

"How?" I inquired; "what occurred to distinguish Linlithgow from the other parts of Scotland?"

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, staring at me in amazement, "have you never heard of the disgraceful ceremony of the burning of the Solemn League and Covenant which took place within its walls on the 29th of May, 1661, it being the anniversary of King Charles the Second's birth-day?"

"Never," I replied; upon which Mrs. Brown at once proceeded to the bookshelf, and taking from thence a little old book, she placed it in my hands, saying, "there now, mam; read the two last pages of this work, and see if you can approve of that proceeding."

The book was entitled, "A Cloud of Witnesses for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ." And turning over to the part indicated, the following description of the affair mentioned by Mr. Brown met my gaze. It was headed, "A Dismal Account of the form of Burning the Solemn League and National Covenant with God and one another, at Linlithgow, May 29th, 1661, being the Birth-day of King Charles the Second," and ran as follows:—

"Divine service being ended, the streets were so filled with bonfires on every side, that it was not without hazard to go along them. The magistrates about four o'clock in the afternoon went to the Earl of Linlithgow's lodging, inviting his Lordship to honour them with his presence at the solemnity of the day. So

he came with the magistrates, accompanied by many gentleman, to the market-place, where a table was covered with confections. Then the curate met them, and prayed, and sang a psalm, and so eating some of the confections, they threw the rest among the people; the fountain all that time running French and Spanish wine of divers colours, and continued running for three or four hours. The Earl, the magistrates, and gentlemen, did drink the King and Queen their good health, and all royal healths, not forgetting His Majesty's Commissioner his health, Lord Middleton, and breaking several baskets full of glasses. At the market-place was erected an arch standing upon four pillars, on the one side whereof was placed a statue in form of an old hag mare, having the Covenant in her bands, with this superscription, 'A Glorious Reformation;' on the other side was placed a statue in form of a whiggie mare, having the Remonstrance in her hands, with this superscription, 'No Association with Malignants;' within the arch, on the right hand, was drawn a Committee of Estates, with this superscription, 'An Act for delivering up the King;' upon the left hand was drawn the Commission of the Kirk, with this superscription, 'A Commission of the Kirk, and Committee of Estates, and Act of the West Kirk of Edinburgh;' and upon the top of the arch stood the devil as an angel of light, with this superscription, 'Stand to the Cause;' and on the top of the arch hung a tablet with this—

'From Covenantors, with their uplifted hands;
From Remonstrators, with their associate bands;
From such Committees as govern this nation;
From Kirk Commissions, and from their possession.
Good Lord deliver us.'

"On the pillar of the arch, beneath the Covenants, were drawn kirk-stools, rocks, and reels; upon the pillar, beneath the Remonstrance, were drawn brechams, cogs, and spoons; on the back of the arch was drawn a picture of rebellion in a religious habit, with turned up eyes and with a fanatic gesture, and in its right hand holding *Lex Rex*, that infamous book maintaining defensive arms, and in the left hand holding that pitiful pamphlet, 'The Causes of God's Wrath,' and about its waste lying all the Acts of Parliament, Committee of Estates, and Acts of General Assemblies, and Commissions of the Kirk, their Protestations and Declarations during these twenty-two years' rebellion,' and above with this superscription, 'Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft.' Then, at the drinking of the King's health, fire was put to the frame, which gave many fine reports, and soon burnt all to ashes; which being consumed, there suddenly appeared a table supported by two angels, carrying this superscription—

'Great Britain's Monarch on this day was born,
And to his kingdom happily restored;
His Queen's arrived, the matter now is known.
Let us rejoice, this day is from the Lord:
Flee hence all traitors that did mar our peace;
Flee hence all schismatics who our church did rent;
Flee hence Covenanting, Remonstrating race;
Let us rejoice that God this day hath sent.'

"Then the magistrates accompanied the noble Earl to his palace, where the said Earl had a bonfire very magnificent. Then the Earl and magistrates, and all the rest, did drink the King and Queen and all royal healths; then the magistrates made procession through the burgh, and saluted every man of account, and so they spent the day rejoicing in their labour."

"Surely," I said, after having perused the above account, "the people of Linlithgow were anything but friends to the cause of the Covenant."

"That they were not," replied Mrs. Brown; "but is it not an extraordinary thing that, some years afterwards, Linlithgow should lose its liberties as a burgh, entirely on account of some of the poor prisoners, while passing through the town on their way from Bothwell to Edinburgh, having been treated with some degree of kindness by the more tender-hearted portion of its inhabitants."

"That was indeed very cruel."

"It was that, mam," replied Mr. Brown, "and just shows the terrible degree of animosity entertained by the government towards the Covenanting party and all inclined to be friendly to it, which is not a thing to be admired."

"Ay, you see," replied her husband, "the Presbyterians made themselves enemies among the great of the land, and there's no doubt but that they were represented to King Charles, who was himself an easy tempered man, as being much more unmanageable and rebellious than they really were, so that he fancied the more severe his measures were, the sooner would all things be put to rights."

After a few general observations, the conversation turned upon Peden, who seems to have retained a strong hold on the affections of the Scottish peasantry. It is universally allowed by them that he possessed, to an uncommon degree, the spirit of prophecy, and many anecdotes are still current of his wonderful foreknowledge of things, either occurring at a considerable distance at the time he was prophecying concerning them, or which were to take place at some future period. As an instance of his extraordinary gift:—In the year 1684, he spent a few days in the house of one John Slowan, who resided in the parish of Conert, in the county of Antrim. One evening while seated by the fire-side conversing

with some friends, he suddenly started to his feet, exclaiming—"Go hide yourself, Sandy, for Colonel —— is coming to this house to apprehend you; and I advise every one here to do the same, and that speedily, for they will be here within the hour." Which accordingly came to pass. After the soldiers had made a most diligent search without and within the house, actually passing in their eagerness the very bush where he was lying praying, and want off without their prey, Mr. Peden came in and said, "And this gentleman giving poor Sandy such a fright; for this night's work God will give him such a blow within a a very few days that all the physicians on earth shall not be able to cure." Which also took place, for Colonel —— soon afterwards died in great misery.

Likewise, on the 22d of June, 1679, that day so fatal to the Covenanting party, Mr. Peden was at a place near the borders, distant about sixty miles from Bothwell Bridge. While there, some one came to inform him that vast crowds of people were collected in the hopes of his preaching, it being the Lord's-day, upon which he gave utterance to these remarkable words:—"Let the people go to their prayers; for me, I neither can nor will preach any this day; for our friends are fallen and fled before the enemy at Hamilton, and they are hashing and hagging them down, and their blood is running down like water."

Peden is likewise regarded by his humble admirers as having been peculiarly favoured by the Master whom he so zealously served on earth; and they relate, with sparkling eyes, how the Lord was pleased, at his earnest entreaties, to fill the lagging sails of a boat, which was destined to convey him and several of his companions from Ireland to the then bloody shores of Scotland, with a favourable breeze, whereby they arrived at their destination in safety; while, on his cry to the Lord that the cloak of his almighty power might once more be thrown around him, and those who were then listening to the voice of his petition, when about to fall into the hands of the dragoons, who were rapidly advancing towards them, a thick mist descended on the face of the mountains, and effectually shielded them from their enemies.

Having received from Mr. Brown the necessary directions for finding my way to Peden's Stone, I once more resumed my walk. After leaving the high-road, my way lay along a wide extent of moor, whose only inhabitants were the curlews and pee-wits which flew around my head in rapid circles, uttering their wild and solitary cries. I experienced an indescribable feeling of nameless horror, although it was broad day-light, on arriving at a post stuck in the centre of four cross roads which marked—a suicide's grave. There is something revolting in the idea, that there lies a human being, one like ourselves, who, by the commission of an act, perhaps executed while labouring under a temporary fit of insanity, is put as it were without the pale of humanity. The wretched woman thus consigned to a nameless, dishonoured grave, was the wife of a smith who resided a few miles

distant from the spot where she was interred. For a few days before the sad occurrence, which took place some thirty or forty years ago, she was observed by those around her to be rather drooping in spirits, but on the morning of her perpetrating the rash act, she seemed restored to her former cheerfulness, and set about putting the house in order. Towards the middle of the day, one of her children came running into its father's workshop, exclaiming, "Oh, father! come and look at mother, she's standing on the kirn." The smith immediately ran to ascertain the truth of the child's statement, and to his unspeakable horror found his wife hanging suspended by the neck, with her feet resting on the churn. Immediately in the vicinity of her lonely grave, there resided a doctor, who, for the benefit of science, caused her bones to be dug up and conveyed under the cloud of night to his residence, in the garden of which they lay bleaching for days. This circumstance was of itself quite sufficient to excite the superstitious fear of the country people, and immediately that place was invested with "shadows wild and quaint." Indeed, the woman from whom I had the above account, assured me most solemnly that while residing in that neighbourhood, she had frequently observed strange lights dancing about in the woods, when the more natural light of day had departed. Hurrying past the spot with a nervous shudder, I proceeded as swiftly as possible across the moor. The day, as is often the case at this advanced period of the year, had changed considerably since the morning; dark clouds now scudded along the face of the sky, and wild gusts of wind careered over the heath. Not one human being appeared in sight, save a solitary figure clad in the now almost obsolete scarlet mantle of Scotland, who, considerably in advance of me, walked briskly onwards, looking peculiarly witch-like as the voluminous folds of her cloak swayed backwards and forwards in the wind. Had it been Hallowe'en, I should certainly have mistaken her for one of those merry old ladies, who, wearied of the monotony of walking, cleave the air on broomsticks in a manner wonderful to behold; but as that (to children) enchanting day had not yet arrived, I concluded that it was some aged dame either returning from her market-making in H—— village, or bound, like myself, on a pilgrimage to Peden's Stone. The rapid pace at which she was walking soon carried her beyond the range of my vision, and I pursued my way lost in conjecture as to who or what she might be.

Nothing more than an incident of this kind serves to illustrate the startling difference between town and country. Hundreds of such beings might pass and re-pass along the crowded streets of a great city unnoticed and uncared for, and yet one such individual, seen on a quiet country road or solitary heath, often affords matter for speculation and amusement during an entire day. Having now arrived at the farm-house to which I was specially directed as being near the spot where stood the memorable stone, I requested of a female, then busily en-

gaged in farming operations, that I might be shown the precise locality of this venerable relic. Being kindly invited to take a seat until a guide could be procured to conduct me thither, I entered, and certainly was not a little astonished at the unwonted aspect of the interior. The roof of the kitchen consisted entirely of huge beams of wood placed across each other while the chimney, also built of wood, reminded one forcibly of those now seldom seen, save in the ruined halls of bygone generations, so capacious were its dimensions; and on one side of the grate, which was sufficiently distant from the chimney to prevent the catastrophe of ignition, was placed the settle, one reads of in Scottish story. It was indeed a veritable "inglenook." As if in answer to the look of astonishment with which I was regarding the enormous chimney, the female who had followed my footsteps said, with an air of complacency, "Ay, it's no every day ye'll see sic a hoose as this; it's rale auld-fashioned!" Shortly afterwards the young woman who was to act as my conductor on this occasion made her appearance, and we set off on our expedition. Having pointed out to me the locality where lay the object of my search, she returned to the farm, while I pursued my way along the side of Benharr Burn, on the banks of which stood Peden's Stone. It was indeed a solitary spot, and one well suited for the secret meetings of the persecuted Covenanters. No sound broke in upon the almost oppressive silence that reigned around, save the rippling of the water, which washed the base of the huge piece of rock on which formerly stood the mighty preacher. Surrounding heights concealed this sequestered dell from the observation of those seemingly intent on their destruction, and there would the sentinels be stationed who were to apprise those engaged in this forbidden mode of worship of the approach of their foes. There is something in the aspect of this little ravine which must speak forcibly to the imaginations and feelings of those who love to contemplate aught that is connected with a vanished time. The cold grey stone on which I was now gazing seemed to me a link uniting the remote past and the present, over the mighty gulf that intervened. Nearly two hundred years have passed away since this green turf was pressed by the foot of one who stood foremost amongst the champions of the Covenant. Here, as we are told—it might have been on a lovely summer's morn, when even to breathe the free air of heaven seemed happiness too exquisite for sinful man to enjoy—when the blue vault of heaven formed a glorious canopy over their pastor's head, and all nature breathed sweet harmony around; or it might be in the more sober season of autumn, when the deepening russet of the surrounding moor, the falling leaf, and the stillness of the atmosphere—so often perceptible in that season which harbingers the coming winter—seemed more in unison with the gloom which pervaded the Covenanters' souls, there assembled a mighty crowd to listen to the truths which fell from the lips of Peden. And what spot more suited to their holy purpose! On all sides

were they surrounded by scenes famous for their connection with the stirring events of that stormy period. Directly opposite, the mighty Grampians towered majestically in the distance, amid whose solitudes, according to the traditions of the times, the Covenanters, while listening to an impassioned discourse of the zealous Wellwood, were protected from their enemies' bullets by a man of lofty stature, who stood in the air with his drawn sword extended over the heads of the panic-stricken hearers of the Word of God; while, stretching away on their right hand, the blue range of the Pentlands, so linked with the misfortunes of the devoted party of the Covenant, stood out in bold relief against the sky; and on their left lay the disastrous plain of Bothwell. The whole scene was pictured as though in a mirror before me. Here stood the dauntless preacher of the Word, his grey hairs floating on the breeze, his eye bright with sacred enthusiasm, and his hand, which clasped the sacred Scriptures, raised aloft to heaven as though invoking the presence of Him who hath promised to bless the assemblies of His servants, while the surrounding heights were peopled by a dense mass of human beings, hushed into breathless silence, save when aroused to passionate bursts of sorrow, as the speaker brought home to their hearts the sufferings of those who fought and bled in defence of the Church of Scotland. While indulging thus in reminiscences of the past, I was somewhat startled by the pressure of a hand on my shoulder, and, turning suddenly round, to my no small astonishment I found myself confronted by the wearer of the scarlet mantle, who, coming from what direction I knew not, proceeded to inquire, while she peered up in my face with two small penetrating eyes, "Whether I had come any great distance that morning?"

Having satisfied her curiosity upon that point, I proceeded to make some reflections on the subject of Peden, evidently to the great delight of the antiquated-looking stranger, for, seizing me by the arm, she exclaimed, with kindling eyes—

"O, mam, it does my old heart good to meet with one in these degenerate days who professes an interest in the old Covenanting stock; for, alas! newfangled notions are rapidly taking possession of people's minds, old customs are abolished, a love for those sacred rites, so revered by our forefathers, is entertained now but by few, and (a deep sigh) times are changed in Scotland.

"What!" I said, "do you not esteem it an unspeakable blessing that in these days each one is permitted, nay, invited, to enter the house of God, there to worship Him without incurring the risk of imprisonment, ay, even death for doing so?"

The old woman shook her head as she replied, "To say truly, liberty is indeed granted to all who choose to accept of the gracious invitation to hear the Word of God, but few, few there are who avail themselves of the gracious priv-

ilege afforded them. Look at your mighty cities; see the multitudes there who never enter a church-door. And of those who do attend, note the very few attracted thither by sentiments of real devotion. No, no; the old spirit of religion is fast dying out of Scotland, and when it becomes extinct, then may we weep for our country. Far different was it thirty years ago," continued the old woman. "Oh, well do I mind one bonnie summer's morning, when the sky was without a cloud, and the caller air cam' blithely over the heather, while the lark was singing sae cheerily aboon our heads, as if it too was joining in the hymn of praise, at that instant ascending from the lips of three thousand people then assembled on this very spot to hear a sermon preached in remembrance of Peden. Oh, that was indeed a glorious sight, and one never to be forgotten. There was the minister, the saut tears trickling down his cheeks as he spoke of him in honour of whose memory they were that day gathered together—of his zeal, and his love for the mighty cause he had espoused; and there were the hearers, so absorbed in listening to his pious exhortations, that a pin might have been heard to fall in that vast assemblage." Here the old woman paused for an instant, and then continued: "Ay, ay, there was mair religion in one's thoughts when seated on the bonnie hill-side, or aneath the shade o' a nodding beach, imbibing the pure gospel truths as given them by some persecuted servant of God, than when seated between four walls of stone and lime, the perishable work o' men's hands."

Here I broke in upon the stranger's half-muttered observations by inquiring of her "if she belonged to that part of the country?"

"Oh, no!" she replied, "I come from Fifeshire, (I no longer wondered at her resemblance to a broomstick lady,) but am at present on a visit to some friends who reside near here."

"Indeed," I said; "yours was a noted part of the country in the time of the Covenanters; no wonder you still retain a strong predilection for aught that savours of the Covenant. And, pray, to what district of Fifeshire do you belong?"

"To the parish of Kinlassie," was the reply.

"Then you will know Inchdarnie?"

"Do I not," replied the old woman, her eyes sparkling with pleasure; "that name recalls to my remembrance all that was pleasing in the time gone by. It is linked with the sweet days of childhood, and the faces of those long vanished from my sight; ay, many and many a day have I roamed along the winding banks of the Lochty, and listened to the songs of the birds in the woods of Inchdarnie; oh, it is a bonnie, bonnie spot!"

"Was there not," I inquired, "a young gentleman of the name of Ayton, who was implicated in the murder of Archbishop Sharpe——?"

"He knew nought of it," interrupted the stranger. "Andrew Ayton was as innocent of that deed, or of any circumstance connected with it, as the babe

unborn; no, no," she continued; "poor young man! he hadna the weight of blood on his soul when he gaed to his long account; oh but his was a cruel death!"

"In what light is the memory of Archbishop Sharpe regarded in Fifeshire?" I inquired.

"As that of a Judas; as that of one who was a traitor to the very cause he swore to protect."

"Then you approve of his death?"

"No," said the stranger, "I winna say that; for it is a fearful thing to shed blood. And although he merited but small mercy at the hands of those he would fain have crushed and trampled under foot as one would a poisonous reptile, yet they should have spared his grey hairs and left him to his God; but ye mauna think," she continued, "that those who suffered on account of his death had in reality anything to do with the perpetration of the crime; no. The stone which is still to be seen on Magus Moor covers the bodies of four murdered men, whose souls will yet cry aloud for vengeance on their murderers, for they were indeed innocent. My great-grandfather," pursued the old woman, "was one of the number, and until very lately I had in my possession a letter which effectually cleared his memory of the stain of having shed the blood of the treacherous prelate. Have you ever seen the stone?" she abruptly demanded after a moment's pause.

"No."

"Then you'll not know the epitaph inscribed thereon?"

I answered in the negative, upon which she recited the following:—

"'Cause we at Bothwell did appear,
Perjurious oaths refused to swear;
'Cause we Christ's cause would not condemn,
We were sentenc'd to death by men
Who rag'd against us in such fury,
Our dead bodies they did not bury,
But upon poles did hing us high,
Triumphs of Babel's victory.
Our lives we fear'd not to the death,
But constant prov'd to the last breath."

"And you say these men are buried in Magus Moor?" I inquired, while noting the inscription down in my pocket-book.

"They lie in an adjacent field," replied the old woman; "and many's the time I have stood by the stone when the winter's wind was howling along the heath in such a wild key that I could almost have fancied the spirits of the dead were

murmuring around me, and conversing——"

"Probably with the murdered Archbishop!" I ventured to remark.

"May be," said the lady in the scarlet mantle, quite seriously; "there is no saying what takes place in the unseen world!"

I then inquired "if she was at all acquainted with any stories relating to the persecuting period?"

"That I am," said the old woman in reply, then passing her hand thoughtfully across her brow, she exclaimed sadly, "No, no, I daurna trust to my memory—that too has deserted me. Come to Fifeshire," she added after a moment's pause, "and you will gather much information about young Inchdarnie, that may chance to prove interesting!" On a subsequent occasion, I acted on the old woman's suggestion, and the following story is the result of my gleanings.

THE MURDER OF INCHDARNIE.

It was evening, and the rays of the setting sun were gilding the lofty spires of the ancient city of St. Andrews, causing the windows of the venerable university to glance like diamonds in the golden light; while the huge waves, gradually decreasing as they rolled along, broke with a gentle murmur on the shore, creating a harmony in unison with the pensive beauty of the hour. Apparently enjoying this interval of calm repose, a young man—whose extreme youthfulness of features contrasted strangely with the dejection seated on his brow—might have been observed seated in a musing attitude amongst the rocks on the seashore. The eyes of this solitary being were fixed with a melancholy earnest gaze alternately on the setting sun, which, having completed its appointed journey, descended rapidly into the empurpled west, and on the swiftly gliding vessels as they passed proudly on their way, their white sails flapping in the evening breeze. This dreaming youth—for he numbered only seventeen years of age—was Andrew Ayton, younger of Inchdarnie, then studying at the ancient university of St. Andrews. He was a young man possessed of graceful and winning manners—upright and honourable in his conduct; while his constant attention to his studies, and fervent, unobtrusive piety, endeared him alike to his instructors and to his fellow-students. His thoughts, at the moment of his being introduced to the reader, seemed not of that gentle kind which one might have expected from the soft serenity of the surrounding scene, for alternately his face flushed,

and then waxed pale as death, according to the nature of the images presented to his mind.

"Oh, my unhappy country!" at length he exclaimed aloud in impassioned anguish, "how long are thy saints called upon to endure the miseries heaped upon them? How long must they continue to fall beneath the oppressor's rod——?"

At this moment a loud derisive burst of laughter grated harshly on his ear, interrupting him in the midst of his reverie. Starting hastily from his seat—his face covered with blushes in being thus detected in his solitary musings—young Ayton turning an inquiring eye in all directions in order to spy out the mocking intruder. For some little time his endeavours proved fruitless, and he was on the point of giving up the search, when a head cautiously protruded from behind a jutting piece of rock disclosed to view the laughing face of his cousin, William Auchmutie, who, perceiving himself detected, came forward and addressed young Ayton thus:—

"Come, come, my gentle coz; art not done dreaming yet, that thou starest so strangely on me, thy well beloved and right trusty cousin, as if forsooth I had indeed come with the intention of shedding some of the precious blood thou wert raving about, as I chanced, so opportunely, to stumble upon thy secret lurking-place? for I am certainly of opinion that another instant had seen thee plunge thyself in the boiling waters, in order to obtain an effectual remedy for thy hapless state of mind. Why, what new crotchet is this that has taken such forcible possession of thy most worshipful brain, that thou seemest so utterly prostrated in soul and body? Art thou rehearsing some bloody ode to excite the commiseration of thy lady-love? or has she turned a deaf ear to thy tenderly-urged suit? Speak, most valiant sir, and——"

"A truce to thy nonsense, William," interrupted his less volatile cousin; "thou knowest right well the reason for my clouded brow—look on this unhappy land——"

Here William Auchmutie gave utterance to a loud laugh, at the same time exclaiming, "and what hast thou got to do with this unhappy country? Dost thou imagine that thy single arm can in any way stay the course of bloodshed, or turn aside the inevitable shafts of fate? Pooh, pooh; give up thy day-dreaming—join in the sports of other young men, and leave thy countrymen to fight it out as they best can."

"Thou talkest foolishly, William," said young Ayton mildly, "can any one possessed of the least spark of religious feeling stand by a careless and unmoved spectator of the fearful scenes daily enacted around him? Look at the sufferings of the poor Covenanters; see how nobly they stand up in defence of their rights and liberties; behold them, as it were, with one voice, one heart, declaring their mighty purpose of suffering death rather than yield submission to the cruel

laws imposed upon them. Oh, how I admire and venerate such noble heroism! Trusting in a strength not their own, the brave defenders of a national Covenant go forth from their homes rejoicing in the race set before them, and committing their weeping wives and helpless babes to the care of One who has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow; relying, I say, on His gracious promise, these soldiers of the cross go forth to fight beneath the banners of the Covenant, and woe be to the man who shall despise them, or the cause for which they fight!"

"Andrew," exclaimed his cousin, scornfully, "thou an what I have long suspected thee to be—a heretic! No true churchman would ever espouse the side of these canting hypocrites, men whom, for my own part, I utterly despise. I have spent too many years in merry England not to have arrived at pretty correct notions regarding the Puritans, and should feel delighted beyond measure were the whole race exterminated from the face of the earth."

"I speak not of the English Puritans," replied young Ayton; "with Cromwell and his party I have little or no sympathy; it is of the poor simple peasantry of Scotland, than whom a more peaceable and orderly class of men does not exist, and yet they are represented by some knaves in office as being all that is vile and despicable, for whom hanging is too good. It is of such wanton cruelties as are now being perpetrated that I complain, outrages which must yet bring a fearful retaliation on the heads of those who so mercilessly use the lash of power——"

"Lash of power," re-echoed William Auchmutie in a deriding tone, "I would it were in my hands for a few short hours, then I would show thee the esteem in which I hold all such rebellious hypocrites. What business have they, I should like to know, with laws and regulations of their own! Anything which the King proposes for their benefit is only too good for the like of them; a set of cropped-eared malignants, whose long dismal faces would sour all the cream in the country——"

"Hold!" cried young Ayton warmly; "use not such intemperate language in my presence; if thou canst not respect the privileges of dear old Scotland, which if not the country of thy birth, is entitled to thy esteem as being the land of thy forefathers, decry them not for love of me. William Auchmutie," continued his cousin, "thou wert born and reared for some few years in England, during which time thou hast imbibed notions and adopted opinions at variance with the more simple manners and customs of our northern clime; but for me—I glory in the land of my birth. Every breeze that is wafted over her heath-clad hills breathes but of freedom and renown. As I gaze on the wild emblem of my country, surrounded by its glorious motto, and reflect, that in defence of that country heroes and patriots died, my heart swells and throbs within me exulting in the thought. Wallace, that mighty chieftain of old, who perished in defence of our civil liberties, has left a glorious example for us to follow. He rose as a giant in his strength, and,

under the guidance and protection of a far mightier arm, burst asunder the iron shackles of slavery, which till then had crushed the souls and weighed down the heads of his wretched countrymen. In like manner shall the present defenders of the Covenant, trusting in the righteousness and justice of their cause, trample once more on the tyrant's chains."

"Whom term ye a tyrant?" demanded William Auchmutie haughtily.

"Charles the Second," replied his cousin firmly.

"And wherefore?"

"On account of his base desertion of a party whom he had sworn to protect and maintain to the best of his ability; and for the cruel and heartless measures he has adopted for their destruction. Oh, William," pursued his cousin eagerly, "do not defend such iniquitous proceedings as are now taking place at the instigation of the government! What has Charles' conduct been throughout but one mass of treachery and deceit? Look how the poor Presbyterians rejoiced at his return to the throne of his fathers; who more than they were eager to testify their love and loyalty, trusting as they did in his specious promises; and how were they repaid? by foul treachery and calumny!"

"Thou ravest, Andrew," was the cold reply; and after a short pause, during which each seemed engrossed with his own thoughts, William Auchmutie continued: "And I, as thou sayest, not having been born on Scottish soil, cannot boast of that mighty love for her glorious institutions—since thou must needs have them termed such—which seems to animate thy bosom; no, I was born in a more kindly, liberal land, and feel that, to me, the fertile plains of glorious old England are fairer and dearer than the barren hills of gloomy, fanatical Scotland. But hark ye, Andrew," added his cousin, laughing gaily, "a truce to this nonsense; it was not to argue on the merits of either country or cause that I sought out thy tragedy face, O most wise philosopher! but to acquaint thee with the glorious news that my father hath at length consented to my becoming a soldier, and next year I am to don the buff-coat, the lengthy rapier, the steel helmet, and the waving plume of a Scottish cavalier! Ha, there's for you!" exclaimed the exulting youth, tossing his cap up in the air and catching it on the point of his foot as it fell; "oh, won't I make my good sword rattle on the backs of these sour-faced loons, till they bellow, like so many pigs in the shambles, for quarter, but none shall be given them, no; and if I chance to encounter thy worthy self some of these odd mornings, cousin Andrew," pursued the thoughtless boy, "I shall kill thee just for thy having espoused so rascally a cause."

As William Auchmutie gave utterance to these heedless words, a strange, unaccountable feeling took possession of young Ayton's soul, while a cold shiver passed through his frame, and he remained motionless and unable to speak. His emotion was not lost upon his companion, who instantly exclaimed—

"Good gracious, Andrew, what is the matter with thee? thou lookest as scared as though I had spoken in good earnest."

Young Ayton smiled faintly, and muttered some few words by way of a reply, but they were unheard and unheeded by his thoughtless cousin, who at that instant was threading his way up among the rocks, humming some popular cavalier song.

Andrew Ayton remained stationary a while, gazing after the retreating figure of William Auchmutie, until rousing himself, as with a mighty effort, from his momentary fit of abstraction, he murmured, half aloud, "and now for a bitter task;" then pulling his cap still lower over his forehead, he strode off rapidly in a contrary direction to that pursued by his cousin. After proceeding a short distance along the sea-shore, he struck into a narrow path amongst the rocks, which led towards a fine old avenue surrounded by aged elms, whose dusky foliage lent an air of sadness to the scene, in keeping with the impressive silence which reigned around.

The house approached by this avenue was an ancient, venerable-looking edifice, which, during the time of the haughty Cardinal Beaton, had been the residence of one of the popish dignitaries then holding office in the cathedral of St. Andrews. There was an air of monastic seclusion about the mansion which accorded well with the gloomy nature of the approach. The walls were overgrown with ivy, whose luxuriant growth almost concealed from view the windows designed to impart light to its inhabitants, while the dreamy murmurs of a fountain stationed near the entrance attuned the heart of the listener to melancholy yet pleasing reflection. Andrew Ayton stood still a while beneath the shade of one of the lofty elms, to gaze unseen on this picture of peaceful seclusion, until finding his thoughts too painful for long indulgence, he walked hastily onwards, and opening a wicker-gate which stood at some little distance from the mansion, was admitted into the old-fashioned garden belonging to the place, where a youthful maiden was seated, working embroidery, under the umbrageous boughs of one of the apple-trees with which the garden abounded. At sight of the intruder the young girl uttered a cry of joy, and bounded eagerly forward, exclaiming—

"Why so late, Andrew, why so late? Here have I been seated all alone for hours in this dreary old garden, which, with its quaint devices, reminds me so forcibly of the one attached to the convent where I resided in France, only"—but here, for the first time, observing the sad, troubled expression of young Ayton's face, she paused in her description to inquire what ailed him, adding, "I am sure you study far too closely at that nasty university; aunt says so too, but she has been noticing how wretchedly out of spirits you have been for some time past, and wonders what can be the reason of it; do tell me, Andrew," she implored, placing her hand confidingly in his, while two of the loveliest eyes in the world

were fixed on his face with a look of tender entreaty impossible to withstand. Andrew Ayton smiled faintly, and pleading some slight excuse for his apparent depression of spirits, passed his hand caressingly over her luxuriant black tresses, which hung in massy folds over her swan-like neck, while he led her towards a seat placed beneath an old yew-tree, whose mournful hue harmonised well with the nature of the communication he was about to make.

"Oh, not there, not there!" exclaimed the young maiden shudderingly, dragging young Ayton away from the tree as she spoke.

"Wherefore?" was the inquiry.

"O, it is so gloomy, and there is a strange tradition told in connection with it which makes me shudder whenever I look on it."

"And pray what is the tradition?" inquired Andrew Ayton, endeavouring by every means in his power to delay the moment of explanation.

"I know not the circumstances which gave rise to the prediction," replied the maiden, "but it bodes approaching death to one or both of those who beneath its venerable boughs breathe of aught save of that pertaining to holy things."

"Why, then, have a seat placed there at all?" said young Ayton, smiling at the strange superstition.

"It has been there from time immemorial," was the reply, "and no one would be found hardy enough to attempt its removal." Then evidently with a wish to change the subject, she said, in a livelier tone, "but come hither, you lagging knight, and see what I have been doing for you in your absence." So saying, she led him by the hand towards the tree where she had herself been seated, and holding up for his admiration the piece of embroidery she had just finished on his entrance, representing a Venetian lady singing her evening hymn to the Virgin, said laughingly, "I have worked this at the request of my worthy aunt, who desires that you will immediately hang it up in your chamber at the university, in order that, by feasting your eyes on this holy subject, and your mind with the thoughts it must give rise to, you may be preserved from the fatal errors of Protestantism."

The lips of her lover—for that Andrew Ayton was such the reader must by this time have discovered—became ashen white during this playful sally of the merry-hearted girl, and, seizing her by the hand, he constrained her to seat herself by his side, while he exclaimed, in a voice rendered husky by intense emotion—

"Mary Cunninghame, is it not true that we have loved each other since the days of our childhood?"

"Yes," was the faint reply of the startled maiden, who sat with her eyes rivetted on the pale face of the inquirer, awaiting the issue of this strange address, in speechless anxiety.

"Ere ever you went to France," continued her lover, "when we roamed hand

in hand through the bonnie woods of Craigeholm, seeking for wild flowers with which to adorn thy curling tresses, I sighed for the day which I hoped would see us united. I thought of it—dreamed of it. When you left me to go to France, then was I miserable indeed. My only happiness consisted in re-visiting the old familiar haunts of my happier hours. And yet they seemed changed to me, for the angel presence which diffused a charm around these hallowed spots was gone; and I fled with an aching heart from those scenes which reminded me so forcibly of you. Every trifle bestowed by you on me in these halcyon days was treasured up by me as a gem of the most priceless value. They were watered by my tears—they were the confidants of my sorrows; and look, Mary, I have worn this even till now." So saying, young Ayton took from off his neck a narrow piece of blue ribbon, to which was attached a small amber cross. Mary Cunninghame gazed on this small token of affection with eyes suffused with tears, and, unable to speak, motioned her lover to proceed with his disclosure, which he did as follows:—

"Such being my constancy during your absence, you will in some measure be able to guess the intensity of my happiness on your return. You were restored to me more beautiful than ever—my wildest dreams had never dared to picture aught so fair; and oh, what pleased me more than all, was the knowledge you were still unchanged towards me. I read your affection in one glance of those sweet truthful eyes, and I was overwhelmed with joy. As you may remember, shortly alter your return I came hither, and you—from a desire to be near me, and to enliven with your bright smiles the hours not devoted to study—accepted your aunt's invitation to stay with her during the absence of your parents in England. You came, and expressed your surprise at the change which had taken place in me in the space of the few months we had been separated; then, Mary, was the commencement of the struggle between duty and my love for you. Formerly I was a sincere believer in the doctrines of the Romish Church, and would have repelled the charge with indignation had any one ventured to assert that I should yet be a Protestant. But now things are altered. I chanced one day, during my leisure hours, to take up a pamphlet entitled, 'The Sufferings of God's Children,' and opening it carelessly, I read one or two pages, without reflecting on what I was reading; suddenly a passage struck me with overwhelming force, and becoming then deeply interested, I went on and on, and the farther I proceeded, the more I was convinced of the truth of the statements therein contained. I read of the dreadful cruelties inflicted on the hapless members of the Church of Scotland; how her children are driven to the wilds and fastnesses of their native country, there to worship, in silence and in solitude, the God of their fathers. I wept over the numberless atrocities that have been committed, and I arose from the perusal of the book with the firm resolution of inquiring farther into the doctrines of the Protestant Church, persuaded, as I then was, that they must be of a truly

elevating and comforting character thus to render their holders superior to all attempts made to torn them from their revered yet simple faith. Mary," continued young Ayton, "from that day I have been an altered being. At first I was torn with doubts and apprehensions as to the line of conduct I should pursue, knowing, as I did, the love you entertained for the Romish religion; but a voice kept always whispering in mine ear—search, search, and I did search until I found peace and consolation in the blessed light of Protestantism. Mary, I am now a Protestant; are we to part?"

With a sharp cry as though an adder had stung her, Mary Cunninghame darted from her lover's side, her lips quivering with emotion, and her face white as marble, so overcome was she by the shock she had received on hearing this communication.

"Oh!" she wildly exclaimed, pressing her hand to her heart as though to still its beatings, "tell me anything—anything but that. Say you are a beggar; convince me, if you will, that you are no longer worthy of my affection, my esteem, yet I should regard you as I have ever done, but oh! not that you have abandoned the only true Church. Tell me," she continued, the rapidity of her utterance attesting the intense excitement under which she laboured, "that it is false—that you have wilfully, cruelly deceived me, and I shall bless you for the words—speak!"

"Mary," said her lover, calmly and sorrowfully. "I have indeed told you the truth: I am now a convert to Protestantism; and God alone knows the agony I have endured while telling you this, knowing, for I see it in your eyes, that we must part. But Mary, ever fondly-beloved Mary, we are both young; let us therefore pray to God that he may grant us time, and a portion of his Holy Spirit, to do that required of us. You"—here he paused for a moment overcome with emotion—"will be courted by the rich and the great of your own faith, and may soon find one to console you for the lover lost, while I——"

"You!" scornfully interrupted Mary Cunninghame, her eyes flashing with indignation as she spoke, "will, I suppose, comfort yourself in a similar manner; the recreant in religion will soon prove a recreant in love; but learn this, fair sir, that from this day henceforward, Mary Cunninghame ceases to regard Andrew Ayton in any other light than that of a base apostate, and will tear him from her heart as easily as she now tramples under foot what hitherto she had valued above anything in her possession." So saying, the indignant girl hastily withdrew from its hiding-place a ribbon similar to that worn by her lover, to which was attached a small gold heart, a present from him in younger and happier days, and dashed it with violence on the ground.

The lips of Andrew Ayton trembled with agitation during this proceeding on the part of her he loved so fondly, and more than once he was on the point of throwing himself at her feet and surrendering all save his hopes of her, but a

higher power restrained him, and he muttered half audibly, "far better thus; if she deems me so faithless she will forget me all the sooner. Poor Mary, she knows not what I suffer; God grant me strength to bear the burden imposed on me." Then turning to Mary Cunninghame, who, more than half repenting of what she had done, stood gazing on the beloved and till that day cherished ornament, as it lay bruised upon the ground, addressed her thus:—"God bless you, my darling Mary, and grant you a lighter heart than I bear away with me this night; and oh! if in his great goodness and mercy he sees fit to turn you from that Church to which you now so fondly cling, send for me, should you feel your heart in any degree softened towards one whose only grief at this moment is his losing you;" so saying, he darted towards her, and seizing her hand ere ever she was made aware of his intention, he pressed it again and again to his lips, gazed for a moment wildly in her face—and tore himself away. For days after this occurrence, Andrew Ayton remained shut up in his chamber, permitting no one to intrude on his privacy save William Auchmutie, who came to take leave of him before quitting St. Andrews. This latter personage was as gay and lively as ever, but not even his brilliant sallies of wit could extract from his cousin the faintest shadow of a smile, so that he soon withdrew in indignation at his failure. Young Ayton was indeed almost broken-hearted at what had taken place. He felt as many others do when similarly situated, that he never knew the real extent of his love for Mary Cunninghame until she was lost to him for ever. The circumstance of her having so carefully preserved the little golden heart he had placed round her neck on the morning of her departure for France, affected him deeply, and the look of indignant grief with which she tore it from its sanctuary during their last interview, was indelibly engraven on his imagination. His only resort now was the sea-shore, where he would sit for hours gazing with vacant eyes on the mighty waves as they dashed with violence against the rock on which the ancient castle of St. Andrews is situated.

One day, while indulging in his wonted reverie, he observed an aged man coming swiftly down amongst the rocks who, when he had seated himself on a neighbouring stone, fixed his eyes with a melancholy gaze on the brilliant sunbeams as they danced on the heaving waters. There was something in the appearance of the stranger at once striking and commanding. In figure he was tall and slender, while a slight stoop at the shoulders indicated a tendency to constitutional delicacy, in some measure counteracted by the bronzed hue of his cheek, which betokened constant exposure to the elements; while the vigorous strides with which he had descended the tortuous path leading to the shore, proved his capabilities for undergoing great and enduring fatigue. Andrew Ayton felt as if attracted by some invisible power towards the venerable stranger, and he gazed on him with a feeling of awe and reverence for which he was in some measure

unable to account. After the lapse of a few moments spent thus in meditation, the stranger turned his mild yet penetrating eye full on the face of his companion, and pointing with the stick which he held in his hand towards the glittering sunbeams, addressed him thus:—

"Young man, these sparkling messengers resemble the hopes and joyful aspirations of youth, gladdening with their presence the dull waters of life. The spring-time of existence beneath their bright influence is indeed as a beautiful dream, but ah! how different the awakening. The youthful traveller goes forth into the world eager to run the race and win the goal. All nature seems to rejoice with him in his sweet anticipations regarding the future. The blue sky smiles above him—the green earth teems with glowing beauties around him—the song of the birds is more thrilling and tender; all serves as it were, to feed the fond delusions of youth. But soon there comes a change. Dark threatening clouds obscure the bright sunbeams. The aspect of the heavens is changed; fierce storms arise, the smooth waters swell into mighty billows, and man awakes from the dreams of his youthful hours to arm him for the combat—is it not so?"

"Yes, father," said young Ayton with a deep-drawn sigh, for he felt the full force of the simile.

The dejected air with which these simple words were uttered did not escape the observation of the stranger, for he quickly resumed, eyeing his companion keenly as he spoke: "But, on the other hand again, youth is prone to be easily dejected. According to the bright and sanguine anticipations of that season of hope, so is there a corresponding amount of depression, should anything occur to mar or lessen the amount of happiness we expected to enjoy in our progress through life. But he is not worthy of the prize who thus faints and succumbs at the outset of his career; no, the youthful warrior, like the Christian of old, must arm him for the fight. He must rise superior to all the crosses and afflictions he is called upon to endure. He must fix his thoughts on the mighty end to be achieved, which will guide him as a beacon through the darkness and difficulties which surround his path; and although the object to be attained may seem far beyond his reach, yet assuredly he will triumph in the end."

Andrew Ayton recognised the justice of the stranger's observations, and being desirous to repose implicit confidence in one who seemed, from the wisdom of his counsels, to be able to direct him as to his future walk in life, he recounted to him the history of his love and subsequent conversion to Protestantism.

"My son," exclaimed the stranger, warmly grasping the hand of his companion, "God has indeed been gracious to you in bringing you thus early in life to a knowledge of what is to be desired above all earthly things, and although the sacrifice of your youthful affections may appear at first a burden hard and grievous to be borne, yet He is faithful who promised we will not be tempted

above that we we able to bear. We are all called upon to suffer; and it is the duty of the Christian to say with resignation, 'The Lord's will be done.' None of us are exempted from sorrow and trial, and it is wisely ordained that it should be so, in order that we may be prepared for another and a brighter world."

Here the stranger paused for a moment, and then resumed with inquiry, "perhaps you are not aware, my son, that I am a minister of the suffering Church of Scotland?"

"I deemed, father, that you belonged to the Covenanting body," said young Ayton, "from the air of deep sadness seated on your brow."

"Yes," said the stranger sadly; "every true member of the Presbyterian religion must, in these fearful times, bear on their countenances the tokens of a sorrowing heart within. Oh! my son," continued the aged man, "unite with me in prayer that the destruction which at present menaces our beloved Church may be averted, and that God in the greatness of his strength may visit and relieve his people."

Andrew Ayton, deeply overcome at sight of the old man's sorrow, knelt with him on the sand, and prayed that He who had promised grace to help in every time of need might look down from his throne on high, and strengthen those about to go forth in defence of their Covenants.

"O God of Battles," exclaimed the venerable stranger aloud, in the fervour of his devotion, "behold and visit us in our affliction; stretch out thy right hand and save us from the dangers which threaten us, that a remnant may be saved to worship thee according to the ways of our fathers. O heavenly Father, the mighty ones of the earth are arrayed against us, but if thou, our Father, art with us, what have we to fear from the hate and malice of our enemies." The petitioner then went on to pray for those appointed to suffer martyrdom in the cause of their religion, that their faith might be strengthened in the last hours of their sojourn on earth, that no tortures inflicted on them by their merciless persecutors might have the power of inducing them in their agony to yield up their glorious privileges; that those ministers unjustly deprived of their churches might be enabled to preach the blessed doctrine of salvation with comfort and edification to those who hungered and thirsted after the truths of the gospel amongst the mountains and valleys of Scotland; and that the Almighty would be graciously pleased to hear the prayers and petitions of his children. Towards the conclusion of his supplication, he besought the blessing of the Lord on the head of him who had so recently become a convert to Protestantism—that he might long be spared to labour in the Lord's vineyard, and his hands be strengthened for the work he had yet to perform; but if the Almighty, in his wisdom, was pleased to remove him from thence in the spring-time of life, that there might be laid up for him a crown of glory, such as is promised to those who have fought the good fight.

Thus prayed the venerable stranger; and it was an affecting sight to view the grey-haired soldier of the cross, who had grown aged in the battles of the Lord, and the golden-haired youth, who had newly donned his armour for the fight, kneeling side by side on the solitary shore, with no ear to hearken to the voice of their petition, save His to whom all hearts are open—all desires known; and no sound to disturb the tenor of their thoughts save the wild roar of ocean, as it rolled along, obedient to the commands of its creator—"Thus far shalt thou come and no farther."

"By what name shall I for the future address one with whom I have become so singularly acquainted?" inquired the stranger on rising from his kneeling posture.

"I am Andrew Ayton; and you?"

"Am styled Walter Denoon."

Young Ayton was delighted beyond measure at having formed a friendship with one whom he had so frequently heard, and expressed an earnest desire that the acquaintanceship so auspiciously commenced might be continued during their lifetime. Mr. Denoon save utterance to a similar wish, adding that he had but a few days to remain in St. Andrews, whither he had come for the purpose of visiting some near and dear friends, before proceeding to Morayshire, where he had much labour to accomplish. In the course of conversation, Andrew Ayton ventured to express a hope that the cause of the Church of Scotland was not so desperate as they had been led to imagine; but in reply to this, Mr. Denoon informed him that, instead of the accounts they had received having been exaggerated, they had in many cases come far short of the sad reality; and the sanguinary acts on the part of the government had everywhere filled men's minds with terror and consternation. As an example of what he alluded to, Mr. Denoon proceeded to make his companion acquainted with much that had taken place during the time he had remained in retirement; how government had placed the price of four hundred pounds sterling on the heads of the most celebrated field-preachers, and issued letters of intercommuning against all those persons who had neglected or declined to appear in court and take the oath of abjuration. How the father was forced to give evidence against the son, and the son against the father—the daughter against the mother, and the husband against the wife; and that driven to madness by the inveterate persecution of the government, the people had forsaken their homes and fled to the wilds and solitudes of their country, or sought in a foreign land that peace and safety no longer to be found in Scotland; preferring to encounter any degree of hardship, even death itself, to the horrors of miserable incarceration in dungeons, or the tortures of perpetual apprehension. "The King," continued Mr. Denoon, "is evidently dreadfully embittered against the Covenanting party, regarding them as morose, sullen, blood-thirsty fanatics,

on whom all his benefits are entirely thrown away. He has been led to believe by the prelatic body that the hierarchy is in danger, and is therefore determined to bear the Presbyterians down by every means in his power. They are, as he terms them, the enemies of his unhallowed pleasures, and must needs suffer for being so."

Young Ayton sighed deeply on being made aware of the gloom and dejection which pervaded his beloved country. "Alas!" he cried, "that such things are permitted to take place; but surely," he continued, "sooner or later there must come a day of reckoning."

"There will come a day of retribution," said Mr. Denoon solemnly, "and the consequences thereof may be dreadful. The persecuted adherers of the Covenant may indeed suffer long, but in the end they will turn on their oppressors, and a general rising take place throughout Scotland to repel the invaders of their rights; but God grant that such a fearful alternative may be avoided, and Scotland spared the horrors of a bloody civil war."

"Amen," said his companion; "but should necessity require it, may every true Scotchman be found enrolled beneath the banner of the Covenant!" then he quickly added, while the faltering tones of his voice betrayed his agitation, "Reverend father, I would to heaven you could ever meet with Mary Cunninghame, so persuaded am I that you might under the mercy of God, be the instrument of her conversion. She is young and enthusiastic; ardent and zealous, it is true, in favour of her religion, but then, what other has she ever known? All her friends are Roman Catholics, and have early inculcated in her youthful mind the doctrines of their Church, to the exclusion of all others: but were she instructed by some sincere and devoted servant of God in the pure and glowing truths of our simple faith, she might indeed become a sincere Protestant. Oh, father," he continued, "do this, and you will overwhelm me with gratitude, for every moment that passes over my head is fraught with sweet remembrance of her!"

"My son," said Mr. Denoon in a tone of tender sympathy, "you are very young, and your heart and affection still retain all the exquisite tenderness of one's early days, while the generous feelings of your nature are aroused within you at the thought that she whom you so deeply love must regard you as faithless, and unworthy of the confidence formerly reposed in you; but who amongst us have not, at some period of their lives, been liable to misconception? In many cases all has been made right in the end; and please God, should I have an opportunity, Mary Cunninghame shall not remain long in ignorance of your real worth and steadfast devotion towards her. Remember, however, as I told you before, affliction falls to the lot of every man on earth; and as for me, sorrow has been my companion since childhood. I too loved a maiden with all the fervour of youth, but it pleased the Almighty to remove her from this scene of trial ere ever I had

called her mine; while one by one my parents and brethren fell around me, until I stood alone, even as the oak survives the stormy blast which laid its companions prostrate in the dust. But," continued the venerable patriarch, raising his hat reverently as he spoke, and allowing his grey hairs to float in the breeze, "even in the midst of my afflictions I recognised the wisdom and goodness of the hand that smote me; for, deprived at one fell stroke of all whom I loved, perchance too well, on earth, I but clung the more closely to Him who sticketh closer than a brother. Yes, my son, it is when bowed down beneath a load of sorrow, such as seemeth to mortal eyes too grievous to be borne, that the real confiding Christian experiences the unspeakable blessings to be derived from a firm belief in the doctrines of Christianity. Amid the darkness and gloom which surrounds him, he beholds his Father's face bright with pitying love; he recognises the benevolence of the motive even while smarting under the weight of the infliction, and is supported amid the dangers and difficulties which encompass his path through life by the comforting assurance to be derived from the gracious words, 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'"

Just at the moment Andrew Ayton had framed a suitable reply to this address on the part of his companion, the hour of three rung out from the city churches. Uttering an exclamation of regret at the arrival of the hour when he must return to the university, he darted hastily from his seat, and expressing his disappointment at this unseasonable interruption to their conference, ventured to express a hope that it would be resumed on the following day. Mr. Denoon having cheerfully responded to the wish, they shook hands and parted.

At an early hour on the following morning, Inchdarnie once more retraced his steps to the sea-shore, where he was shortly afterwards joined by Mr. Denoon. In the course of conversation, Andrew Ayton informed his companion that it was his intention at once to quit the university of St. Andrews, and to endeavour, by every means in his power, to aid those whose cause he now so warmly espoused; adding that it was his most earnest desire that Presbyterian ministers might be induced to visit Fifeshire, in order that those poor people who were deprived of all opportunity of hearing Episcopalian clergymen, might not be altogether left without a preacher. Mr. Denoon replied to this wish on the part of his young friend, by placing in his hands a letter that morning received from the Rev. Mr. Blackader, in which he made known his intention of presiding over a meeting shortly to be held at Divan.

"Oh, merciful Father!" cried Inchdarnie in a transport of joy, "and shall I then have an opportunity of seeing that good and holy man whose noble bearing during his great and unmerited misfortunes has already filled my soul with admiration and esteem, and awakened in my breast the most ardent desire to know him, and if possible receive from him some counsel necessary for the guidance

of my own steps through the dark and tangled mazes of life?"

"Yes, my young friend," said Mr. Denoon; "he has indeed given us a bright example to follow. Never shall I forget the holy, pious resignation depicted on his countenance that morning when, with many others of his brethren, he was constrained to abandon the flock the Lord had committed to his care. It was on a Sabbath morn—the last on which he should ever address his parishioners from the pulpit of Traquair Church. Saddened but not utterly cast down, he entered his little garden, there to strengthen himself to bear the burden imposed upon him by private communion with his Maker. In a little while I ventured forth to join him. He was standing in a contemplative attitude, his head leaning on his hand, and his eyes rivetted on the ground. My dear friend!" I exclaimed.

"Hush, hush," he said; "list to these bells—these sacred bells now inviting those to enter the house of God who may never again worship within its walls."

I stood and listened. There they came pealing through the air, these hallowed chimes, the heavy stillness of the atmosphere rendering them painfully distinct, as they knelled forth the expiring liberties of the Church of God. Mr. Blackader remained mute and motionless while they lasted, and then when the last faint note died away on the passing breeze, he started suddenly from his reverie, and ringing my hand convulsively, withdrew to his chamber, there to fortify himself by earnest prayer for the coming trial.

"All the surrounding heights," continued Mr. Denoon, "were thronged with people, eager, and yet afraid to press into the church, lest it might chance to hurt their minister, as it would be termed by their enemies a breach of good order. At length many of them gathered together in small groups in the church-yard, and conversed in whispers, while they anxiously awaited the appearance of their beloved pastor. The object of their solicitude soon came forth from the manse, his step firm, his bearing erect, as that of one who had nought to fear from the malice of men. True, there was deep sorrow written on his brow, but it was mingled with an expression of almost cheerful serenity, for he had placed his faith and hopes in Him whom he had chosen as his guide and ruler even unto death. He ascended the pulpit; he gave forth the psalm in a loud clear voice, and his prayer was delivered with his wonted firmness and composure. As he proceeded with his discourse every eye was moist with tears, and many gave way to involuntary bursts of sorrow. In the midst of the sermon an alarm was raised that a party of soldiers were on their way from Dumfries to seize him, and that already they had crossed the bridge. Upon receipt of this intelligence, Mr. Blackader hastily pronounced the benediction, dismissed the congregation, and withdrew to his manse, there to await the arrival of the soldiers. They came, but contented themselves with merely taking down the names of those who were absent from their own churches, and then returned to head-quarters. After their

departure, Mr. Blackader collected the remains of the congregation in his own house, and finished the sermon. The people remained lingering about the door, unwilling to leave their pastor while in danger of being arrested. Some of them implored his b;essing, while others again expressed their willingness to die in his defence. Mr. Blackader thanked them for their ready zeal in his behalf, but conjured them to avoid giving their enemies cause of offence."

"Go," said he, "and fend for yourselves: the hour is come when the shepherd is smitten, and the flock shall by scattered. Many are this day mourning the desolations of Israel, and weeping, like the prophet, between the porch and the altar. God's heritage has become the prey of the spoiler; the mountain of the house of the Lord as the high places of the forest. When the faithful pastors are removed, hirelings will intrude whom the Great Shepherd never sent, who will devour the flock, and tread down the residue with their feet. As for me, I have done my duty, and now there is no time to evade. I recommend you to him who is able to keep you from falling, and am ready, through grace, to be disposed of as the Lord pleases."

"During the following week," continued Mr. Denoon, "a party of rude soldiers attacked the manse of Traquair, and Mr. Blackader was forced to seek safety in flight; since which time he has been wandering through Scotland, preaching the gospel of peace, and everywhere exhorting the people to sobriety and gentleness of conduct."

Young Ayton's face flushed, and he enthusiastically exclaimed, "O that I were accounted worthy to stand at the helm with those mighty leaders who present so dauntless a front to the furious waves which threaten every instant to overwhelm them in destruction!"

"Courage, Inchdarnie," replied his reverend friend; "there is that in you which, through the grace of God, must yet render you distinguished; but be watchful and diligent, and follow the counsels of those who possess knowledge and wisdom sufficient to guide you in the way everlasting."

After much interesting conversation regarding the disturbed aspect of affairs, it was finally agreed upon between them that Mr. Denoon should, on the following Saturday, proceed to Kirkcaldy, there to meet Mr. Blackader and conduct him to Inchdarnie, where young Ayton should be in attendance to receive him. All being thus arranged for their future meeting, the two friends bade each other farewell for the present, as Mr. Denoon was about to proceed to Cupar, there to meet with some other devoted friends of the cause.

While on his way hack to the university, Inchdarnie encountered a young man whom he had frequently seen in the house of Mrs. Cunninghame, the aunt of Mary Cunninghame, and who immediately inquired if he could afford him any information respecting their mutual friends, who had suddenly quitted St.

Andrews, and gone, no one knew whither. Young Ayton stammered forth some incoherent reply, and greatly to the astonishment of his friend, who stood staring after him in speechless amazement as if utterly at a loss to comprehend such extraordinary conduct, he broke from him and darted into an adjoining street, where he stood for some minutes leaning against the wall, pale and motionless as a statue. Having at length summoned up strength sufficient to proceed on his way, he regained his apartments, where he gave way to a passionate burst of grief. Mary Cunninghame was gone—gone from him for ever. She had willingly deserted him, and cast him from her thoughts as a thing too worthless to be remembered. It was indeed a bitter pang to hear. He felt his own weakness, and offered up an earnest supplication, in the deep solitude of his chamber, that grace might be given him from above. The hours flew on in their rapid flight, unmarked, unheeded in their progress, for he was seeking for comfort where it alone may be found—at the foot of the cross of Christ.

At a late hour on the same evening a young man, whose form was closely enveloped in the folds of a large cloak, and his cap drawn over his brow, so as in some measure to conceal his features, might have been seen slowly wending his way up the long dark avenue which led to the Priory, the late residence of Mary Cunninghame. This, as the reader may have already conjectured, was no other than Andrew Ayton, who had come in order to take a farewell look at a place linked with so many sad and tender memories. The hour and the scene were alike attuned to melancholy. The rays of the sun, now rapidly sinking behind the distant hills, were transmitted through the leafy boughs of the aged elms, and threw a dim cathedral light over the otherwise darkened avenue. On approaching the house, Inchdarnie was painfully struck with the air of desolation which reigned around. The Naiad still threw upwards a silvery shower of crystal drops from each uplifted hand, but the flowers which once bloomed in rich and grateful profusion now hung their graceful heads disconsolate and forlorn, as if they too were aware that the kind hand which formerly cherished them was gone. The casements were no longer open to admit the grateful breeze which wantoned amongst the ivy-clusters clinging to the walls, and an ill-omened magpie, rendered bold through long possession, now croaked forth a fierce defiance at the unwelcome intruder, from the jessamine bower where formerly he had held sweet converse with Mary Cunninghame. His heart wrung with untold anguish. Inchdarnie advanced with faltering steps towards the little gate which led into the garden. He opened it gently—he entered. All was unchanged, and yet, to him, how changed. Although the garden lay bathed in the glorious light of sunset, it seemed as though light had in reality departed, no more to cheer him with its gladdening beams. There was the seat from which Mary Cunninghame had started with a joyous exclamation to greet him on his entrance that fatal night.

The chair remained, but the occupant—where was she? The funereal boughs of the old yew-tree waved noiselessly in the breeze, and seemed, to the excited imagination of young Ayton, like so many demons tossing their great arms to and fro, as if inviting him to enter within the charmed circle of the traditionary yew. At this instant the noise created by the opening of the gate caused Inchdarnie to turn suddenly round, when his eyes fell on the stooping form of an aged woman, who had evidently came with the intention of making all secure for the night.

"Holy Mary!" she exclaimed, crossing herself devoutly on observing the tall shrouded form of Andrew Ayton, who, recognising in her a retainer of the Cunninghames, advanced towards her for the purpose of making inquiries regarding her absent employers.

"The saints above he praised!" cried the aged domestic, "that it is you, Mr. Ayton, and no midnight marauder; oh, how you did startle me! When first I saw you standing beneath the shade of the trees I took you for some robber, who being made aware of the absence of the lady of the house, had taken advantage of the circumstance to steal into the garden with the intention of making his way into the priory. Holy St. Jerome,——"

"Whither has Mrs. Cunninghame gone?" impatiently interrupted Inchdarnie.

"Have you not been made aware?" exclaimed the old woman with an air of astonishment; "but I forget," she added; "you had ceased coming about the house for some little time before Miss Mary took so badly——"

"What!" cried young Ayton in an agonised tone of voice, "was Mary—I mean Miss Cunninghame—ill before she left the priory?"

"Holy mother! yes," was the reply; "so much so, that at one time we feared she never should have been able to quit the house alive."

Inchdarnie smote his hand on his forehead, and paced hurriedly to and fro for the space of a few moments. When he returned, he was, to all appearance, calm and collected, but his voice was husky with emotion, and sounded deep and hollow as he again demanded "whither they had gone?"

"To England," replied his informer, "there to join Miss Cunninghame's parents, who propose taking her to Italy on account of her weak state of health. I this morning," she continued, "received a letter from her aunt, which contained this intelligence, as also that poor Miss Mary was still very weak and languid."

"O God! and have I then killed her?" groaned forth young Ayton, almost frantic at the thought. At this instant he raised his eyes; they encountered the dark green boughs of the sepulchral-looking yew; he started, for the sight of that tree recalled to his memory the doom which, as Mary Cunninghame had informed him, was denounced on the person who ventured within its sacred precincts, or vowed aught save holy vows beneath its hallowed shade. The old

woman perceived the steadfast gaze with which he was regarding the gloomy-looking tree, and again she crossed herself devoutly and mumbled over some half-dozen Paternosters, as if for protection against some unseen foe.

"Knowest thou aught concerning the legend told in connection with that yew?" at length inquired young Ayton.

"The saints be between us and harm! for it is not good to speak of things above our comprehension, but still——" Here the old woman paused as though in doubt as to whether she should proceed or not. At length her love for relating aught pertaining to the marvellous overcame all prudential resolves, and she commenced thus:—"You must know that once upon a time it pleased the blessed Mary to appear in a vision by night to St. Regulus, a holy man of Achaia, and inform him that he must instantly set sail for this then benighted country—bearing with him the arm-bone, three fingers, and three toes of the most holy apostle St. Andrew—where work should be given him to do. Delighted beyond measure at having been the instrument chosen by his most blessed patroness to execute so mighty a mission, St. Regulus set sail with some chosen companions in obedience to the celestial mandate. For some days," continued the narrator, "they were wafted on their way by a favouring breeze, but during the latter part of their voyage the foul fiend (jealous no doubt of the devout saint and his precious relics) caused such a hurricane to sweep over the deep that all on board speedily gave themselves up for lost, with the exception of St. Regulus, who again in the watches of the night, was visited by our holy mother, who addressed him in the most comforting terms, and assured him of her gracious protection, adding as she touched the three fingers of the martyred St. Andrew, which glowed at the contact with a lambent flame, 'I have much labour for these to accomplish.' Overcome with joy at this renewed proof of his favour with heaven, St. Regulus lost no time in making his companions aware of his second visitation, who immediately thereupon regained their ancient courage and faith in their leader's mission. After being tossed for many days by the winds and the waves, the ship at length struck on these shores, then named Otholania, but all on board were saved. The then King, on being made acquainted with the arrival of these holy men with their precious relics, instantly gave orders for their being received with all possible honours. Indeed he afterwards bestowed his own palace, which then occupied the present site of the priory, on St. Regulus, and built the church which still bears the name of the saint. Perhaps you are not aware," she continued, "that at that remote period of time all round here was one vast forest, abounding with boars, noted for their immense size and uncommon ferocity. Well, one night as the blessed St. Regulus (Holy Mary protect us!) was walking in the garden which surrounded the house, praising the saints with a joyful voice for their watchful care in bringing him through so many dangers into so safe and comfortable a

haven, all of a sudden he was started by observing two large fiery eyes gleaming on him from among the trees. Unable to seek for safety in flight, and no one being within call, the reverend father gave himself up for lost, when, just as the boar was about to spring forth on him, there rose up from his very feet (so the tradition says) this miraculous yew with branches growing down to the ground, so that the saint, recovering his presence of mind, was enabled to ascend the tree, where he remained seated in safety, while an armed warrior, hitherto invisible, darted forth as it were from the root of the tree, at once finished the enraged animal by a stroke from his spear, and then disappeared ere ever St. Regulus had time to recover his astonishment; so sudden had been the whole proceeding. On that same night the blessed Mary again visited the reverend father in a dream, and warned him that that tree must be consecrated and dedicated to the most holy St. Andrew, who had himself appeared in his defence and slain the boar, adding that the yew was possessed of the most miraculous qualities; and that by applying a small piece of one of its branches to any wound or bruise, the sufferer, after having fasted two days and two nights, and given to the Church a portion of his worldly goods, should immediately be cured; but that whenever aught but holy vows had been breathed beneath its hallowed shade, its virtue should depart. St. Regulus, as legends tell, rose in an ecstacy of delight, and lost no time in proceeding at the head of a splendid procession to the tree, which was at once consecrated and dedicated to St. Andrew, who thereupon testified his gratitude by causing the yew to perform the most miraculous cures; indeed to such celebrity did it afterwards attain that pious pilgrims traversed sea and land to obtain evidence of its virtues, having heard in far distant countries that the good and pious King Hergustus had himself been cured, through its wonderful properties, of a malady hitherto deemed incurable. Well, centuries after the blessed St. Regulus had received his heavenly crown, the prior of the holy establishment founded here by order of the departed saint, was one night aroused from slumber by a terrible cry proceeding from the garden. Lost in amazement, he listened for a few seconds in order to hear if it would be repeated, but no, all continued silent; and fancying himself the sport of some evil dream, he returned to his pallet, from whence he was summoned at the dawn of morning by a loud knocking at the door of his chamber. In answer to his invitation, a pious brother entered, apparently overcome with horror, for he remained motionless and unable to speak. The heart of the prior misgave him, and he eagerly demanded what had happened. Father Anselmo said nought, but pointed with his finger to the garden. Fearing he knew not what, the prior rushed forth, in his anxiety oblivious of the fact that the wind was cold and his shaven head defenceless. Holy Mary! and what a sight greeted the eyes of the aged prior! There lay his own nephew, a youth of great promise, and hitherto deemed possessed of superior sanctity, cold

and stiff, his hand clasping that of a young and beauteous lady who had shared his fate under the boughs of the sainted yew. The pious men, who then crowded round the sorrow-stricken prior, informed him that when found they were standing upright, and seemed as though they had been struck by a bolt from heaven, as all around the ground was blackened and scorched. Since that sad day," said the old woman with a sigh, "all sacred virtue has departed from the tree; but it is still affirmed and believed that some terrible doom awaits those who dare to murmur vows of earthly love within its consecrated precincts."

"Truly a gloomy enough tale," said young Ayton at the conclusion of the legend, the bare narration of which had chased all colour from the cheeks of the old woman, who again made the sign of the cross, as if in atonement for having yielded to the temptation of relating so horrible a story. Both remained silent for a little while, each being busy with his and her own individual thoughts, until at length the silence was broken by young Ayton's inquiring, in a low tone of voice, "if Miss Cunninghame seemed sorry on leaving the priory?"

"Oh, yes! the poor sweet creature," said the garrulous dame, "she was indeed overwhelmed with sorrow; and just before setting off she came hither and wept, and sobbed most bitterly for longer than I can remember, and always kept exclaiming, 'Farewell happiness! Farewell to all trust and confidence in mankind.' Then she would take something that hung from her neck—probably some sainted relic—kiss it passionately, and then weep more bitterly than before. (This was when she thought no one was observing her.) On her return she seemed crushed-like and broken, but still calm and collected, until entering the carriage, when she again gave way to tears. All this time Mrs. Cunninghame endeavoured to soothe and comfort her to the best of her ability, and whispered words of consolation, but in vain; she seemed deaf to them all. Never while I live shall I forget the look of agony with which she gazed on the house; it was like that of one who should never more behold it."

Here the feelings of Andrew Ayton overcome him; he could listen no longer, and dashing away the tears which almost blinded him, he fled from the spot, greatly to the astonishment of his informer, who gazed after him as if in doubt whether he would return or not. At length she exclaimed, "Holy Mary! could it be that——"

Here she paused for a moment as if lost in thought. Whatever was the result of her cogitations to this day remains a mystery, for on recovering in some measure from her surprise, she simply shrugged her shoulders, and muttering an ave, proceeded leisurely to lock the gate, and with many a weary sigh retraced her steps to the house.

Early on the following morning young Ayton quitted St. Andrews and repaired to Inchdarnie, there to await the coming of Mr. Blackader, who arrived on

the day appointed in company with Mr. Denoon. On the ensuing morning (Sunday) they set out for Divan, distant about eight miles, where a great concourse of people were assembled to greet one of whom they had heard so much. Greatly to the astonishment of Mr. Blackader, on arriving at the place of meeting he perceived a large pile of arms lying ready in case of necessity. On demanding the reason for such unusual preparation, he was informed that Prelate Sharpe—at the mention of whose name a groan of execration passed through the assembly—had ordered out a band of militia to apprehend any minister who had the temerity to venture within his bounds. The service then commenced, and while Mr. Blackader was dispensing the holy communion, there arose a cry that the militia were upon them, upon which Balfour of Burly placed himself at the head of a small party of horse, and went forth to obtain a view of the soldiers, who, apprehensive of the Covenanters being armed, kept themselves aloof with the intention of capturing some of the people on the dismissal of the congregation. When the service was finished, and the hearers dispersed, with the exception of the body-guard headed by Inchdarnie, who remained to protect Mr. Blackader, a new alarm was raised that the soldiers were again advancing upon them. On receipt of this intelligence, the Laird of Kinkel and Balfour of Burly, with some few horsemen, rode up the face of the hill where the militia were pouring down in the expectation of making an easy prey of those remaining. The alarm having reached the ears of the young men, who, fancying all danger at an end, were quietly wending their way homewards, they instantly returned and joined themselves to the party commanded by Andrew Ayton, who earnestly entreated Mr. Blackader to be allowed to pursue the soldiers, who had immediately taken to flight on perceiving the preparations made to receive them, which, had he agreed to, the Covenanters must have gained a complete victory, as the militiamen had resolved, if overtaken by their enemies, to throw down their arms and surrender at discretion. But Mr. Blackader strongly opposed all hostile measures, and at length dissuaded them from it. "My friends," said he, "your part is chiefly to defend yourselves from hazard, and not to pursue: your enemies have fled—let their flight sheath your weapons and disarm your passions. I may add, without offence, that men in your case are more formidable to see at a distance than to engage hand in hand. But since you are in a warlike and defensive posture, remain so, at least till your brethren be all dismissed. Conduct them through their enemies, and be their safeguard until they get beyond their reach; but, except in case of violence, offer injury to none." On receiving assurance that the soldiers had fled towards Cupar, the armed Covenanters quietly retired to their homes, with the exception of nine, who remained to conduct Mr. Blackader, to his sleeping quarters, at an inn situated in the parish of Portmoak. Here the three friends parted. Mr. Blackader returned to Edinburgh, Mr. Denoon, after an affectionate

farewell with his young friend, set off for Morayshire, and Andrew Ayton, sore distressed at having lost his kind preceptor, once more retraced his steps to Inchdarnie. His parents soon afterwards returned from Perthshire, where they had been visiting some relations; and grieved as they were at the step their son had taken, they forbore addressing him on the subject, being convinced that he had done so from a sincere belief in its rectitude. He was, as his amiable dispositions merited, fondly beloved by them, and in return he strove by every means in his power to testify his filial love and reverence towards the authors of his being. But their domestic happiness was soon to be invaded. The names of those present at so celebrated a conventicle as that recently held at Divan could not, nor was it wished that they should, long remain a secret; and young Ayton was specially mentioned as having been foremost among the hearers on that day. Since then he had made the most strenuous efforts to bring other holy men to Fifeshire, firmly persuaded of the incalculable benefits it would confer on the people in whom he took so deep an interest; consequently he must be punished. One evening on his return from his accustomed ramble in the romantic woods of Inchdarnie, a packet was placed in his hands. He opened it; it contained one of those letters of intercommuning then so fearfully common throughout Scotland. He must therefore fly; the doors of his father's house must henceforward be closed against him—the light of his mother's countenance openly withdrawn from him for ever; for according to these terrible missives, not only the individuals mentioned therein, but those of their relations who showed them the least kindness, or sheltered them when oppressed, were treated with equal severity. In one letter alone, as we read in a book written on these times, "above ninety clergymen, gentlemen, and even ladies of distinction, were interdicted from the common intercourse of social life. All who received them or supplied them with sustenance, intelligence, or relief—who conversed or held communication with them—were made equally criminal." In order to procure evidence of the guilt of those they wished to criminate, all persons were forced, under the highest penalties, to inform against offenders, and made to swear upon oath whatever they knew regarding them. If they refused to do so, they were subject, at the pleasure of the counsel, to fines, incarceration, or banishment to the American plantations. Immediately on receipt of this letter, Andrew Ayton determined upon setting out for Morayshire, where he thought he should be safe from pursuit. In an agony of grief his mother clasped him in her arms, and besought him, for her sake, not to expose himself to needless danger. This be faithfully promised, and after a sad farewell, set out on his journey.

The friends with whom Inchdarnie resided during his sojourn in Morayshire lived near Pluscardine, a ruined priory founded by Alexander the Second in the year 1230. It was dedicated to the honour of St. Andrew, and

named Valles St. Andrea. Amongst its sacred ruins did young Ayton love to wander, when the moon's bright beams sparkled like diamonds on the bosom of the river Lossie, which seemed like some silver mirror, so still, so placid were its waters. One lovely morning, while rambling along the soft green walks which surrounded the ancient gardens attached to the priory, he was startled by hearing a footstep behind him. He turned hastily, and perceived Mr. Denoon advancing towards him. Overcome with joy on again beholding his reverend friend, Inchdarnie eagerly advanced to meet him, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, and his hand extended to grasp the one outstretched to meet it. After an interchange of warm and affectionate greetings, Mr. Denoon informed Andrew Ayton that he had been apprized of his arrival in Morayshire while visiting in Elgin, and had lost no time in coming to see him, as he had longed much to converse with him again on the subject that lay nearest his heart; whereupon he gave Inchdarnie a long and circumstantial account of all that he had done and laboured to do since his arrival in Morayshire. How he had frequently preached, both in rooms and on open moors, greatly to the delight of the poor people, who had assembled in crowds to hear him; and that everywhere much sympathy had been expressed and felt on behalf of those of their brethren who had been called upon to suffer for their adherence to the Covenant; and prayers were daily offered up that the Lord might strengthen their hearts and hands, adding, "that both in Cromarty and Morayshire many of the inhabitants evinced a fellow-feeling for the persecuted Covenanters, and that he trusted they would not be backward when the time came for their testifying their faith and determination to do that which was right."

In answer to an inquiry on the part of Mr. Denoon as to how things had fared with himself since last they met, Andrew Ayton informed him regarding the letter of intercommuning which had forced him to visit Morayshire much sooner than he otherwise would have done, being desirous of remaining in Fifeshire some little time longer, in order that he might, if possible, labour in conjunction with others in behalf of those who desired to have the pure gospel preached unto them.

"You are now," said Mr. Denoon with a sigh, "called upon to share in the trials and sorrows of those who have as it were cast the world behind them. But fear not; there is One who will guide thy bark upon the waters, and still the waves which threaten to engulph thee. Cast, therefore, thy care upon Him, and should thy path through life be compassed with thorns, yet thy reward hereafter will be great."

As they walked to and fro amongst the venerable ruins, Mr. Denoon attracted the attention of his youthful companion towards the beautiful and elaborate carving with which the walls of the interior were adorned. "See," said he,

"that exquisite tracery on yonder cornice; mark that curiously-defined cross; how strange that such things should still exist, when those who grudged not the time and labour bestowed on perishable works such as these have long been mouldering in the dust. What changes are produced by the flight of years! At no very distant period," he continued, "this priory was inhabited by a body of monks, who, according to their constitution, were obliged to lead a lonely and austere life. For some time they religiously adhered to the rules of their order, until at length grown weary of so restricting themselves, they gave way to riotous excesses, and from being an independent house, Pluscardine was degraded to a cell dependent on the Abbey of Dunfermline. Years rolled on, and the tide of Reformation resistlessly rushed over the hills and valleys of Scotland. All gave way before it. The walls of the monasteries and cathedrals then existing in our country were razed to the ground, the monks fled to less hostile shores, and now"—here Mr. Denoon paused for a moment, as if overwhelmed by painful thoughts—"this green turf once pressed by the sandalled foot, is trod by the feet of those who are at this moment trembling for the safety of that Church our fathers strove to establish in our land."

"Was it not," said Andrew Ayton, "in reference to the gay doings of the monks of Pluscardine that the verses I am about to repeat were written?" So saying, he recited the following:—

A right merry set were the monks of old,
They lived on the best of cheer;
They drank the red wine out of cups of gold,
And hunted the fallow-deer.
Quoth father Anselmo, "I wot that we,
Thrive right well on the faithful's charity."

As they gazed on the walls of their Abbey,
All fair with carved work within,
"'Tis better to live where one may pray,
Than dwell in proud tents of sin."
Quoth father Anselmo, "Yes," said he,
"And thrive on the faithful's charity."

The Prior he raised his glass on high,
With the grape's juice mantling o'er;
He view'd the red wine with a critical eye.
And laughed as he call'd for more.
"Yes, Brother Anselmo, yes," said he,

"We thrive on the faithful's charity!"

Mr. Denoon could scarcely forbear smiling at the satirical nature of the song, as he answered, "that they might indeed be so; the monks no doubt having afforded, by their luxurious style of living, much cause for censure amongst those who were in some measure acquainted with the revelries held within the walls of Pluscardine;" adding, "ay, even within the walls of a sanctuary such as this, where men profess to devote themselves exclusively to the service of God, worldly thoughts and human feelings will intrude."

Inchdarnie, while gazing on the remains of former grandeur, could not help expressing his admiration of the buildings these men erected in honour of their God, and his regret that such splendid cathedrals as existed in Scotland at the time of the Reformation should have been so recklessly destroyed.

"It is certainly to be regretted," said Mr. Denoon in reply; "but at that time strong measures were deemed necessary for the expulsion of the Romish faith from Scotland, and the destruction of all connected therewith was deemed a proceeding requisite for the safety of the people. But, my son," he continued, "it is not the place where one worship, but the heart of the worshipper that God values. Believe me, a heart-felt prayer uttered by a soldier on the bloody field of battle, a few words of earnest supplication breathed on the solitary moor or sequestered glen, are more acceptable in his sight than the prayers of those kneeling in the lofty cathedral aisle, if their souls are not in unison with the scene around them."

In company with his reverend friend, Andrew Ayton visited numbers of the poorer class of people inhabiting the shire of Moray, and attended several meetings where Mr. Denoon officiated as clergyman. Before quitting Elgin, the latter, in accordance with a wish expressed to that effect, made known his intention of holding a conventicle in the ruins of Pluscardine. The morning of the day appointed for the meeting having arrived, Mr. Denoon and Andrew Ayton set off for the ruined priory. The day was beautiful, and on their arrival they found the interior of the ruins thronged with an eager multitude in readiness to receive them. Inchdarnie was impressed beyond imagination with the touching solemnity of the scene, as Mr. Denoon, taking his stand on a huge fragment of stone dislodged from the building by the relentless hand of time, proceeded to address the congregation. The rays of the sun at this moment penetrating through the ivy-clad windows, tinged with a golden lustre his venerable locks, and imparted an air of majesty to his countenance, in harmony with the heavenly messages he was entrusted to deliver. He spoke, and as his voice resounded through the vast space with the force of a trumpet, arousing his hearers to a sense of their danger, young Ayton felt the incapacity of the most gorgeous pageantry to add to the

grandeur of words like these. While all eyes and ears were fixed on the preacher with an earnestness that precluded all other sights and sounds, Inchdarnie was startled on observing a strange face, almost shrouded beneath a brass helmet, gazing in at one of the windows. Unable to credit his senses, he kept his eyes fastened on the spot with an eagerness that was almost painful. His suspense was not of long duration. Again the same form presented itself, but this time accompanied by several others, who stationed themselves near every possible outlet, so as to shut out all hopes of escape. His worst fears realised, Andrew Ayton sprung from his seat, and shouting, "Betrayed, betrayed!" he drew his sword, and dashing through the midst of the terror-stricken congregation, placed himself by the side of Mr. Denoon as though determined to share his fate. The latter stood calm and resolute, while those by whom he was surrounded evinced their readiness to fight in their own and his defence. At this instant a soldier, who from his proud bearing and superior style of dress appeared to be the leader of the party, entered, and approaching Mr. Denoon, politely uncovered his head, while he expressed his regret that so unpleasant a duty as that of arresting Mr. Denoon should have devolved upon him; but that, however repugnant it might be to his own feelings to do so, yet his orders must be obeyed, and Mr. Denoon must therefore prepare to accompany them, adding that no harm was intended to any of the congregation, who were at liberty to retire if so inclined.

"Arrest Mr. Denoon!" cried Inchdarnie, "never!" so saying, he raised his sword on high, and was about to rush on the officer, when Mr. Denoon, throwing his arms around him, besought him to forbear; then turning to the commander, he demanded of him whither he had orders to take him?

"To Dundee," was the reply, "there to await further instructions."

"The Lord's will be done!" piously exclaimed Mr. Denoon, raising his hands and eyes to heaven as he spoke; then turning to the people, who loudly expressed their sympathy, he bade them be of good cheer, as the Lord would soon find them another and more zealous pastor.

While parting with Inchdarnie, many tears were shed on both sides, but to all his young friend's entreaties that he would permit him to strike one blow in his defence, he simply replied: "My son, it is the duty of a Christian to suffer, and to suffer meekly; if it please the Lord we shall meet again, and till then farewell;" so saying he expressed his readiness to depart, whereupon the officer, his head still uncovered, courteously led the way to the spot where his men stood armed to receive the prisoner.

For some little time after the departure of the soldiers, Andrew Ayton remained motionless, and apparently overwhelmed with grief. He had lost his kind, sympathising friend, and that at the very moment when he stood most in need of his assistance. What was to be done? At this moment the thought darted through

his head, could he not be rescued? Regarding the suggestion as a sunbeam sent by the Almighty to comfort him in the midst of his affliction, and heedless of the numbers who stood around watching his every motion, Inchdarnie knelt for one moment in silent prayer, and then starting to his feet, hurried from the ruins. His resolution was taken; he would follow the soldiers until such time as he could meet with some friends who would aid him in the attempted rescue. Having informed the relations with whom he had been staying, of his intentions, Andrew Ayton threw himself on horseback, and galloped off in the direction pursued by the dragoons. He soon came within sight of the party, and observed, to his great satisfaction, that they were few in number, and evidently not over-anxious regarding the safety of their prisoner, whose venerable form young Ayton could plainly descry stationed in midst of the dragoons. As an Indian unceasingly follows in the track of his intended victim, so Andrew Ayton kept in the wake of the soldiers, riding when they rode, halting when they halted, until at length they arrived at Dundee. After having carefully marked the house, to which Mr. Denoon was conducted, Inchdarnie put spurs to his horse's sides and galloped straight to Cupar, where he expected to obtain the necessary assistance. Having speedily collected together a number of young men eager to undertake anything that promised them some amusement, he retraced his steps to Dundee. All remained the same as when he had left. The two soldiers still kept guard before the house in which Mr. Denoon was confined. Leaving his companions in a little wood near the entrance to the town, Andrew Ayton, having disguised himself so as to preclude all possibility of recognition, proceeded to reconnoitre the premises, in order to discover the most feasible plan for effecting Mr. Denoon's escape. He soon satisfied himself that the back part of the house, which looked into a little garden, was totally defenceless. No soldier was stationed there to keep watch, and the windows were easy of access and without protection of any kind. Having made himself acquainted with these particulars, Inchdarnie rejoined his friends in the wood, where they determined to remain until night should further their scheme. When the shades of evening had closed around them, the party issued from the wood, and advanced singly, so as to excite no suspicions of their real purpose in the breasts of those they might chance to encounter towards the back of the house indicated by Inchdarnie, which, standing as it did a little apart from the others, occupied a position highly favourable for their purpose. Having stationed all his companions save one at the foot of the garden, so as to be ready in case of danger, Andrew Ayton advanced towards one of the lower windows, and with the assistance of his friend succeeded in reaching it. After pausing a moment to recover breath, he gently endeavoured to raise the sash. This was an anxious moment with them all, and the beatings of Andrew Ayton's heart were painfully audible, so fearful was he lest their plan should prove a failure. To their

inexpressible delight, however, it yielded to his touch. The first step was now gained, but the worst remained behind. He entered and found himself in a small unfurnished room, having a door at the extreme end; this he also perceived to be open, and marvelling much at the carelessness of those in charge, he threaded his way along a narrow passage, on both sides of which were stationed doors. This was rather puzzling to one unacquainted as young Ayton was with the geography of the house, but summoning up all the courage of which he was possessed, he placed his hand on the handle of the one nearest him; it opened, and he saw at one glance that it was also uninhabited. In like manner he tried another equally yielding to his touch; he entered, and seated by a small wooden table, on which burned a solitary candle, he beheld his venerable friend. With difficulty suppressing a cry of joy at sight of one whom he almost feared was lost to him for ever, Andrew Ayton rushed forward, while Mr. Denoon, equally delighted and astonished at the unexpected appearance of one whom he regarded in the light of a son, started from his seat, and clasping him to his bosom, mingled his tears with his.

"Father!" at length said young Ayton in a whisper, "you must this instant fly with me—all is in readiness; I have faithful friends, who are at this moment waiting my return with anxious impatience. Oh, do not delay, but hasten to gladden their eyes with your presence!"

Mr. Denoon sadly shook his head while he replied, "Would it not be a cowardly action, and unlike that of One who gave up his own life as a ransom for many, were a minister to fly from his earthly foes? Would it not seem as if——?"

"Oh, do not say no, reverend father!" interrupted Inchdarnie: "do not neglect the opportunity God hath given you of making your escape from the hands of your enemies, in order that you may yet preach to those in need of a shepherd. Of what use are you here?" he continued. "What lost souls are there you can reclaim from perdition? and were you once to regain your liberty, what unspeakable comfort might you not be able to render those who require consolation?"

"My son, in that you say truly; there may be much for me to do, and the word liberty soundeth sweet in the ears of a captive;" so saying, Mr. Denoon expressed his willingness to depart.

Rejoicing in the success which had hitherto attended his plan, Inchdarnie conducted Mr. Denoon to the window where his friend was stationed, who received the aged man in his arms and placed him in safety on the ground. Treading as noiselessly as possible, the party, employing the same precautionary measures in their retreat as during their approach, retraced their steps to the wood where horses were ready saddled and bridled to conduct them to Cupar, whither Inch-

darnie determined at once to proceed. On their way thither Andrew Ayton apprized Mr. Denoon of all that had taken place since the morning of his capture in the priory, and in his turn was made acquainted with what had befallen his reverend friend since his imprisonment.

"How fortunate," said Mr. Denoon in continuation, "that you should have fixed on this night for effecting my deliverance. Had you delayed another day, I should have been removed from Dundee, to go I know not whither; and to that circumstance is to be attributed the fact of there being so few precautions taken as regarded my safety; for in general every door and window was carefully fastened ere night had closed in."

Inwardly returning thanks to the Almighty for the kindness he had evinced towards them in thus disarming the soldiers of all suspicion of danger, they pursued the rest of their journey in silence. On arriving at Cupar, the two friends deemed it essential for their safety to part. Mr. Denoon determined upon going to St. Andrews, where he had some trusty friends; while Inchdarnie, fearful of remaining longer in Fifeshire, expressed his intention of at once proceeding to Perth, there to visit Mr. Wellwood, whose acquaintance he was most anxious to make.

"God bless and prosper you! my dear young friend," said Mr. Denoon, warmly grasping Andrew Ayton by the hand as he bade him adieu; "under the providence of God I this night owe my life to you; and oh, that I may spend it in the service of Him to whom it by right belongs!"

"Farewell, my noble, kind preceptor," replied Inchdarnie, "and should we never meet again in this valley of time, God grant I may so follow in your steps that we may spend eternity together;" so saying, they parted—and for ever. As Andrew Ayton pursued his solitary way towards Perth, he was attracted by sounds of lamentation which appeared to proceed from a house situated at a short distance from the road along which he was proceeding. Always ready to hearken to the voice of suffering—and judging that in this case some assistance might be necessary—he leapt from his horse and knocked gently at the door. Finding that no notice was being taken of his repeated demands for admission, he fastened the impatient animal to a ring in the wall, and, raising the latch, entered the house, where he beheld a sight that made him tremble. Stretched on the cottage floor lay the apparently lifeless body of a man bathed in a pool of blood, while at his head sat an aged female ghastly with despair. No wail of sorrow burst from her bloodless lips, but her eyes were fixed on the face of the dead man with that stony gaze which bespeaks the bitterest anguish, and near her was seated the wife of the deceased, whose passionate bursts of sorrow had first attracted the notice of Andrew Ayton.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, on beholding this terrible spectacle; "what

means this?"

On hearing the voice of a stranger, the younger female lifted her head, but unable to speak, she merely pointed to the deceased, and then burying her face in her hands, gave way to fresh bursts of sorrow.

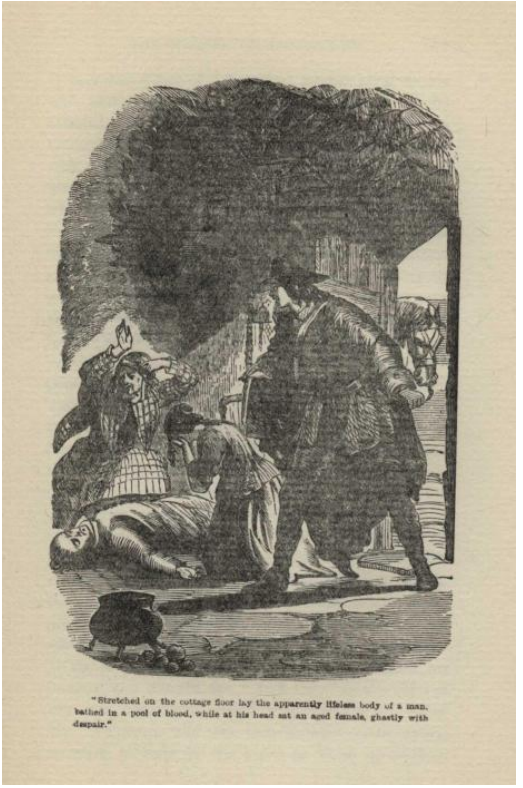
"O do not grieve thus," said Inchdarnie, "but tell me, in heaven's name, who has been the author of this bloody outrage; and if it should be in my power to render you any assistance——"

"Assistance!" screamed the old woman in a shrill voice of agony, and starting to her feet as she spoke, "can you restore us the dead? Can you bring back light to the eyeballs, and life to the stiffening frame? Can you blast with heaven's lightning——?"

"Oh, hush mother, hush! use not these awful words!" exclaimed the anguished wife; "it is not for us to curse our——"

"Interrupt me not!" cried the aged matron. "Can you blast with heaven's lightnings," she continued, "the mitred head of him who ordered the deed to be done—that rendered me childless in my old age? O may the curses of a bereaved mother cling to his soul, and drag him down—down! But I will be avenged," she continued, the frenzied light of madness blazing in her sunken eyes, "I will be avenged, and that right soon; God has promised it; the heavens frown not in wrath when I cry for revenge! And when that day comes, when he, the bloody prelate, kneels in the very dust begging for that mercy he this day denied to me, then—then will he know the bitterness of kneeling at the foot of man, and kneeling in vain." Here, thoroughly exhausted by her own violence, the heart-stricken mother threw herself on the body of her child, screaming aloud, "My son! my son!"

Overcome with horror at the wretched scene, and perceiving that assistance could not be of any avail, Andrew Ayton, after he had thrust some money into the passive hand of the more gentle mourner, quickly regained the door, and mounting his horse, which stood pawing the ground with impatience to be gone, galloped hastily onwards to Perth. Now that the excitement which had hitherto sustained him had in some measure subsided, Andrew Ayton began to experience the effects of the fatigue arising from the scenes through which he had passed, and to realise the necessity there was of his obtaining some repose; accordingly he alighted at the first public-house that afforded hopes of entertainment for man and beast. In the course of the following morning he resumed his journey, and entered the "Fair City" as the light of day was departing. Being very desirous of seeing Mr. Wellwood, who was then thought to be dying, he made at once for the house in which he resided. It was a humble apartment into which he was ushered; no signs of luxury, barely of comfort, greeted the stranger's eye. The ceiling was low and dark, and the casement small; yet through that



"Stretched on the cottage floor lay the apparently lifeless body of a man, bathed in a pool of blood, while at his head sat an aged female, ghastly with despair."

narrow aperture the sun's rays entered wooingly and kissed the pallid brow of a young man—sole tenant of the solitary apartment—who instantly rose from his chair and advanced a few steps, although with apparent difficulty, so much was he wasted by sickness, to welcome Andrew Ayton. As each of the young men had heard frequent and favourable mention made of the other, both paused for one moment as if by mutual consent, and earnestly gazed in each other's face. What a contrast did they at this moment present! There stood young Ayton, his long fair hair hanging in waving masses on his shoulders; youth written on his brow—his blue eyes bright with enthusiasm, and his tall elegant figure erect and bold; while opposite to him was one on whose forehead the cold band of death had set its seal. Although comparatively young in years, he was old with anxiety and suffering; his flushed cheek and lustrous eye, his damp forehead and short dry cough, all attesting the fatal presence of consumption. To gaze on them thus was to imagine a meeting between life and death, or that between two warriors; the one bravely arming for the coming fight, and the other, weary of the strife, about to repose after having borne the burden and heat of the day. At length Mr. Wellwood spoke, and his voice was low and sweet as he expressed the pleasure it gave him to see Mr. Ayton; while the latter grieved beyond measure on beholding Mr. Wellwood so feeble and attenuated, could scarce command his voice sufficiently to make a suitable reply. After the lapse of some little time, during which both sat silent, Mr. Wellwood, who had been gazing in a dreamy manner on the few blighted flowers adorning his window, emblems of his own untimely fate, demanded of Andrew Ayton if Archbishop Sharpe had committed any further outrages on the Presbyterians.

"Oh! Mr. Wellwood," burst forth Inchdarnie, "words cannot paint the deep hatred that haughty prelate bears towards us; he would, if possible, blot our names from the book of life; the wholesale murders committed by his orders are terrible beyond imagination; and not contented with what has been already done, he daily devises fresh means of torture. Had you seen what I witnessed while coming hither, it would never have been effaced from your memory; the lifeless corpse, the bereaved wife, and the maniac mother—all are before me even now. That such men are permitted to live only to commit crimes revolting to humanity is indeed strange!"

As Mr. Wellwood gazed on the countenance of the noble youth, which glowed with a beauty almost unearthly in its brightness, and marked as it was by an expression of melancholy sometimes seen on the faces of those who are not destined to remain long in this world, the mysterious veil which conceals the future from our sight was for one moment drawn aside. His dying eyes beheld what was soon to be accomplished, and he exclaimed, "You will shortly be quit of him; he will get a sudden and sharp off-going, and you will be the first to take

the news of his death to heaven."

Inchdarnie reverently bowed his head in token of submission to the decrees of the Almighty. So pleased was he with the gentle bearing and pious exhortations of Mr. Well wood, that he remained with him until pretty near his decease, which occurred not long afterwards, when he was obliged to return to Inchdarnie, there to comfort with his presence his beloved mother, then labouring under severe indisposition. In danger of being imprisoned should his presence be discovered in the neighbourhood, Andrew Ayton durst not continue long in his father's house; but during the winter months and the ensuing spring he kept himself concealed in one of the cottar's houses, where he ran little risk of being detected.

It was now the fifth of May, 1679, and Andrew Ayton still lurked in the neighbourhood of Inchdarnie. On the morning of the day in question, a letter was placed in his hands; he glanced at the superscription, turned pale as death, and tearing it open, perused its contents with eyes whose wild expression would have terrified the beholder, while the trembling of the paper attested the agitation under which he laboured. The contents were as follows:—

MY DEAREST ANDREW,—I have struggled, and struggled in vain, to banish your image from my heart; wherever I have been, in England or in Italy, still you were present, and the words you last uttered on that fearful night have rung in my ears till they almost maddened me. All this weary time, in spite of my better judgment, I indulged in the fond delusion that you would endeavour to find me out, and that all should be made right again—vain hope. Months rolled on without any proof on your part of continued affection, and at last I was constrained to believe you had indeed forgotten me. In spite of all my assumed composure, despair took possession of my heart. Numberless suitors addressed me in all the glowing language of the sunny south, but I turned a deaf ear to their honied vows, and sighed in secret over the remembrance of one still too dear to me. At length, greatly to my delight, we returned to Scotland; and in the expectation of seeing you, I accompanied my aunt to the dear old priory. You were gone, but I heard from Deborah of your grief in the garden, and my heart melted within me at the recital. Again, I encountered one day during my accustomed walk a dear friend of yours, named Mr. Denoon (here Andrew Ayton's face glowed with delight); he seemed to know me—how I cannot tell—for he stopt and spoke to me of you. O! what sweet words of comfort he breathed to my anguished soul! He did not seek to undermine my faith (and for that I love him), but he told me of your love, your sorrow, and unaltered constancy, and prayed me to relent. Dear old man; he said although he grieved for my sake that I was not a Protestant, yet that should

not prove an obstacle to our earthly happiness, for (and this rejoiced me more than anything) although the outward forms of our religion were so wholly at variance with each other, yet if our hearts were right in the sight of God, and we were sincere in our love towards him, they should always be acceptable in his sight. O Inchdarnie! whether it was that I really believed him or wished to do so for your dear sake, I know not, but I wept from joy; and he, dear, kind old man, was almost as much affected as myself. He then told me of your having aided his escape, and I listened with pride to the narration. We parted, soon to meet again. With the knowledge of my friends, I flew to your dear, venerable aunt, the Lady Murdocairnie (in whose house I am now residing), and told her of all that had passed between us, upon which she took me in her arms and blessed me, and advised me to write you, stating my unaltered love and anxiety to behold you. Come then, Inchdarnie; gladden me once more with your presence, and tell me with your own lips whether you will forgive, your loving

MARY CUNNINGHAME.

With a cry of joy Andrew Ayton started to his feet, rushed to the stable, and too impatient to wait for the tardy groom, he saddled his horse, sprang on its back, and darted off as if on the wings of the wind. Away he sped on his errand of love. The birds sung sweet above his head, he felt as blythe as they; he was going to join his Mary—his darling Mary. On, on, on; mountains, streams, and fields seemed to rush madly past him, so rapid was his course. All grief for him was at an end; Mary had forgiven him—Mary still loved him—they should yet be happy—alas!

Andrew Ayton, while lurking in the peaceful shades of Inchdarnie, was not made aware of the late fearful event, news of which at that instant was resounding through the land, convulsing England with horror, and ringing at the gates of heaven. Andrew Ayton knew not that two days previously Archbishop Sharpe had been slain—murdered on the lonely Magus Moor. Wholly ignorant of the affair, and of the pursuit to which it had given rise, young Ayton dashed onwards full of hope and joy, when an abrupt turning of the road revealed to his gaze a party of dragoons riding furiously towards Cupar. Anxious if possible to avoid encountering so numerous a body, Andrew Ayton quitted the high-road and galloped briskly through some fields, hoping thereby to escape notice; when suddenly a horseman detaches himself from the party and darts across the plain in pursuit of him. A flash, followed by a report, and the horse which bears young Ayton rears in the air; another and another, and he himself is mortally wounded. This done, the soldier without question or challenge of any kind, rejoins his com-

rades, exulting in the success of his exploit. The poor young man thus stricken down at the very moment in which life seemed most desirable, in spite of his dreadful wounds, managed, although with great difficulty, to preserve his seat on horseback until he arrived at the nearest house, where he alighted and begged that he might have a bed, also that his uncle, Sir John Ayton of Ayton, whose house was in the immediate neighbourhood, might be apprized of his condition. Deeply grieved on beholding the fatal injuries he had received. the mistress of the house supported his fainting form, and conducting him to her bust bedroom, made him as comfortable as circumstances would permit, until his uncle should arrive. On receipt of this sad intelligence. Sir John Ayton lost not a moment in hastening to his nephew's bedside; and so shocked was he at the appearance he presented, that he ordered a man-servant whom he had brought with him to start instantly for Cupar, and fetch a surgeon. The man returned with the intelligence that the dragoons had given positive orders to the effect that no medical man was to leave Cupar on any pretext whatever; upon which Sir John Ayton, frantic at the delay, despatched another messenger to appeal to the dragoons in behalf of the dying man. In answer to this, a party of soldiers was sent with instructions to convey him to Cupar. In vain Sir John Ayton protested against the cruelty, not to say impossibility, of removing a man in his condition to Cupar, which was distant three miles; in vain he offered them bail, or to entertain them until surgeons were brought who could advise them what to do. Deaf to all his entreaties, and utterly regardless of the consequences, they placed the unfortunate young man on horseback and hurried him away to Cupar. Four times during the journey Andrew Ayton fainted through loss of blood, but still no emotions of pity were excited in the breasts of his conductor. On arriving at their destination, the magistrates, in consideration of his enfeebled state of health, permitted him to be conveyed to an inn, instead of a prison. Mr. and Mrs. Ayton, who had also been made aware of what had happened, set off instantly for Cupar. On entering the room where her son lay apparently in the agonies of death, Mrs. Ayton's fortitude gave way, and she threw herself on his breast, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Do not grieve, dearest mother," said Andrew Ayton; "my time on earth has indeed been short, but God has willed it so, and we must not repine."

"My son! my beloved son!" was all the anguished mother could utter, while his father stood the image of mute despair.

"And must I then die without seeing Mary Cunninghame?" continued the dying man, "her whom I was flying to rejoin when the cruel ball penetrated as it were to my very heart? ..... Oh, it seems hard, hard to be thus cut off in early youth, when hope shone the brightest, and happiness seemed within my reach. Mother, mother!" he gasped, "I must see her once more; methinks I could close

my eyes in peace could I but gaze for one short moment in her sweet face, and tell her we should meet again."

"Oh send for her!" cried the distracted mother; "lose not one instant in bringing her hither;" and the messenger, having received the necessary directions, galloped furiously away.

It was a solemn scene that chamber of death; and beautiful to witness was the dying youth's resignation to the decree of God, while he strove with all his accustomed gentleness to soothe his mother's sorrow.

"Oh do not weep thus," he said; "our parting will not be for long. Consider, dear mother, the shortness of time and the duration of eternity. It is, indeed, a solemn thing," he continued, "to be standing thus at the portals of an unknown world, and yet not unknown; God having in his goodness revealed to us hidden glimpses of that lovely shore——"

At this instant the chamber door flew open, and to the consternation of all present a young man, in the garb of an officer, rushed into the room.

With a scream of terror Mrs. Ayton started to her feet. "Intrude not your presence in the chamber of death," she said, addressing the dragoon; "what more would you have? you have killed his body, would you also destroy his soul?"

Heeding her not, the stranger stood for one moment gazing on the sufferer, with horror depicted on his countenance; then dashing his helmet on the ground, he threw himself on his knees by the side of the bed, exclaiming in a voice broken with sobs, "Andrew, Andrew, can you forgive me? can you forgive your guilty cousin? mine was the hand that did the deed."

The voice was that of William Auchmutie. Inchdarnie was silent. His thoughts were far away. The venerable city of St. Andrews rose up before him. He marked its glittering spires—the waves which dashed on the rocky shore, and the stately vessels gliding to and fro. Again he is standing there with his thoughtless young cousin, he who is now kneeling as a suppliant by his bed-side. Again the words ring in his ears, "I will kill thee, just for thy having espoused so rascally a cause;" and he remembers the strange unaccountable feeling which then passed through his heart as the words were uttered; and now all was fulfilled. Little more than twelve short months had rolled over their heads since that sad night; he was lying on a bed of death, and the hand that had inflicted the fatal wound was that of his cousin.

"Then you won't forgive me?" groaned forth William Auchmutie, fearing from his cousin's silence that he could not extend pardon to the man who had inflicted a mortal injury; but he knew not the gentle, loving nature he had to deal with.

"Forgive thee, William!" said Andrew Ayton, recalled by the question to what was passing around him; "yes, from the bottom of my soul, and may He

above blot it out of the book of his remembrance, and lay it not to thy account. But O, William!" he continued, "withdraw thyself, while there is yet time, from the bloody course thou art pursuing; let this thou hast done serve as a warning to thee. It may be that the Almighty has permitted it that the arrow of conviction might pierce thy heart."

Here the dying man paused for a moment, apparently overcome with emotion, and then continued, grasping his cousin's hand while he spoke, "My dear cousin, thou art very young, and this scene may soon cease to be remembered by thee; but when old age comes upon thee, when thy strength fails thee, and thou art no longer able to pursue thy accustomed employment, then in the solitude of thy chamber will the evil deeds of thy youth rise up in judgment against thee, and remorse, like an avenging angel, sit scowling on thee from amongst the ruins thou hast made of the talents God committed to thy care."

Overcome with exhaustion and loss of blood, Andrew Ayton sunk back on his pillow, and William Auchmutie, overwhelmed with despair, staggered from the chamber. It was now evident that the few remaining hours Andrew Ayton was to spend on earth were rapidly drawing to a close. He lay in a sort of stupor, with his eyes fixed on the clock, as if counting the moments till the arrival of Mary Cunninghame; and the slightest move caused him to turn his eyes to the door in the expectation of seeing her for whose presence he longed. At length the sound of carriage wheels is heard rolling rapidly along the street; they pause before the inn; footsteps are heard on the stair, the door opens, and almost as death-like as himself, and supported by his aunt, enters Mary Cunninghame.

"Mary, my darling Mary!" gasped Andrew Ayton as he clasped her to his breast, "God is good—he has heard my prayer—we meet again——" His head fell back on the pillow.

"Help, help!" screamed Mary Cunninghame, "he is fainting—he is dead!" and fell senseless on the couch beside him.....

No uncommon event in Paris—a novice is about to take the veil. But in this case curiosity is excited to the highest pitch, for the young lady about to be professed is a native of the cold north, and remarkable for her extreme beauty. The day appointed for the ceremony at length arrives, and the Church of St. Genevieve is crowded to the very doors, every inch of standing room is occupied, and hundreds are obliged to depart murmuring and dissatisfied. The organ peals forth its grandest music, but all ears are inattentive; ladies are there attired in the most costly dresses; but on this occasion their beauty and elegance are unheeded; all eyes are turned towards the door; every ear is on the alert to catch the faintest murmur which tells of her approach. Still she enters not, and murmurs of impatience are beginning to be heard, when cries of "she comes, she comes!" arrest all other sounds, and a general movement takes place through-

out the stately edifice, as each individual, heedless of obstructing his neighbour's view, stands on tip-toe, or mounts the seat, in order to obtain the first glimpse of the procession. The words, "beautiful, how beautiful!" are uttered by many as onward comes the youthful novice arrayed in the most costly bridal attire. Jewels flash from amongst her braided hair; magnificent the veil which shrouds her slender figure; but conspicuous above all is the deep air of sadness impressed on her lovely countenance.

The vows are uttered; the bride, not of man, but of heaven, retires, and many are the sighs which accompany her. When next she enters, she is arrayed in the dismal garb of a professed nun, and is greeted by those who kneel around as a sister. And hath she then left all which breathes of the past behind her? no; she still retains, and oft bedews with her tears, the little gold heart, now suspended from a black ribbon, placed by the boyish hands of Andrew Ayton around the neck of sister Agnes—when Mary Cunninghame.

THE LAIRD OF LAG.

One fine morning in April, as I was sauntering along the high-road leading to Dumfries, I observed a little way on the right-hand a small burying-ground, jealously protected from intrusion by a high wall and shaded by trees, whose boughs drooped in a half pensive manner, as if in sympathy with the memorials of the dead which were scattered around. Struck with the singularity of the situation, and the fact of there being no church within view, I turned my footsteps in the direction of the solitary burying-ground. Fortunately for the gratification of my curiosity, the old sexton—all sextons are old—was busily employed in digging a grave. While inspecting the various tombstones, some of which seemed very ancient, my attention was attracted towards a mass of ruins—apparently the remains of what had been a family burying-place. Unable to derive any information from the broken fragments that lay strewn around, I advanced towards the sexton, in order to have my curiosity gratified.

The old man raised his head at my approach, and in answer to my inquiry as to whose resting-place it was that was lying in ruins, whilst those around seemed in a state of good preservation, replied—pausing in the midst of his work and wiping his face with a handkerchief—"you must be a stranger in this part of the country, not to know that that is the grave of the Laird of Lag."

"The Laird of Lag!" I exclaimed; "what! is he buried here?"

"O yes ma'm," replied the sexton, "the Laird lies here."

"How comes it?" I inquired, smiling at the old man's sagacious look and still more mysterious shake of the head, "that his grave is in such a ruined state, whilst those around, bearing dates anterior to Lag's time, are still in good repair?"

The sexton remained mute for a moment or so, then approaching nearer, inquired of me in a confidential whisper, "whether I had observed the violence of the wind in the burying-ground, when elsewhere there reigned a perfect calm?"

I replied, "I had indeed remarked the circumstance, but supposed it was owing to the exposed situation in which the burying-ground was placed."

The old man shook his head as he answered, "Oh, no! that cannot be the reason; for even up amongst these hills, when not a leaf is stirring in the breeze, the wind there howls and tears along in the most boisterous manner." Then after a pause he added, "no, no; that's not the true explanation!"

"Well, then," I said, "but what has your theory of the high wind to do with the ruined state of Lag's grave?"

"Everything," he replied; "and if you will just have a little patience I'll explain it to you; but you must excuse my homely way of speaking, for I'm not good at the story-telling." Then sticking his spade into the ground and seating himself on a neighbouring stone, he supported his arm on the handle of his spade, in the attitude of one about to make some mysterious communication, and began as follows:—

It was in the winter time that Lag's grave was destroyed; and the night on which the occurrence took place was wild and stormy enough, but nothing to the like of me, who have seen many a fearful night in my young days, when—but let that pass, as it has nothing to do with my story. Well, as I was saying, it was rather a stormy evening, and the wind had an eerie sound as it moaned in the chimney and caused the window-frame to rattle in an odd sort of way; and my wife observed to me, just as I was on the point of falling asleep, "Oh, John, but this is an awful night for ony puir body to be out in!"

"Nonsense, wife," I replied; "I trust they may never be out in worse weather; it's a mere capful of wind, as the sailors say."

"May the Lord forgive ye, John, for you livity (levity);" so saying she gave me a push with her elbow, as a kind of rebuke for my light way of speaking.

Well, mim, I was awoke about the middle of the night by my wife giving me a pull of the arm, whilst she exclaimed in a voice almost inaudible through fear, "Oh! John, hear till that in the auld grave-yard; isn't that awful? what can it mean?"

I listened for a moment, and never in the whole course of my life had I heard such strange sounds—they were like nothing earthly. Up I got and ran to

the window, which commands a view of this place, and suoh a sight as I then saw! May the Lord forgive me for the thought, but I was convinced all the devils were let loose that night. It was perfectly dark, and the trees were shaking and groaning in the blast, in a manner awful to hear; and every now and then a glimmering light appeared, as if some one was carrying a light in the grave-yard. You must know there's an idle story in the country, that Lag walks about in the night-time with a lighted taper in his hand, but I don't believe the like of that. Well, as I told you before, every now and again that strange light, which I took to be a "will-o'-the-wisp," appeared dancing about, and the flashes of lightning were bright and frequent; whilst strange wild sounds seemed borne on the blast, that shook the cottage to its foundation. Overcome with fright and amazement, I went back to my bed; but not much sleep did I get that night—neither did my wife; and mighty glad were we when the bright rays of the morning sun streamed through the window shutter. The first thing I did was to come here, in case any damage had been done in the course of the night; and sure enough, when I arrived, I found everything as I had left it on the preceding day, except Lag's burial-place, which was thrown to the ground, and the stones lying about just as you see them. Ever since that fearful night, the wind has never ceased blowing in this place; but, even in the calmest summer's day it howls and rushes along, as if rejoicing over the ruin it had made of the wicked persecutor's grave.

There was a pause after the sexton had finished his wild tale; the old man apparently was overcome at the remembrance of the horrors of that night, and I more than half-puzzled to account for the strange circumstance, supported by the evidence which the wreck around me attested in favour of the sexton's recital, at length inquired, after expressing the pleasure his narration had afforded me, "Why there was no church attached to the burying-ground, and what was its designation?"

To which he replied, "That the old parish church of Dunscore formerly stood here, but the heritors of the parish had found fault with its situation, it being too far removed from the more distant parts of Dunscore parish; consequently, it had been taken down, and a new church erected in a more convenient position."

I again demanded if he was acquainted with any old legends told in connection with the Laird of Lag, thinking there must be a good many extant which treated of his wild doings.

The sexton shook his head, and replied, No, ma'm, I cannot say that I do know anything of him in particular, not having paid much attention to the idle stories told in the parish; but, as I seemed fond of these kind of tales, he recommended me to visit an old woman, named Mrs. Walker, who was about ninety years of age, and who might be able to afford me some information on that subject.

After thanking the old man, and expressing my regret at having interrupted his labours, I turned to depart, when he called me back, for the purpose of attracting my attention to the fact that nothing but nettles and the rank weeds were growing around Lag's grave; and, said he, with emphasis, "Nothing in the shape of flowers ever would grow there, do what I could." After expressing my surprise at this singular occurrence, I bade him good morning, and directed my steps towards the habitation of Mrs. Walker. I found the old woman very comfortably seated in her arm-chair, by the kitchen fire, watching a piece of bread undergoing the process of toasting. This, and the fact of a brown delf tea-pot standing upon the hob, satisfied me that Mrs. Walker was about to regale herself with a comforting cup of tea.

Before proceeding further, I shall relate rather an amusing circumstance told in connection with a Mr. G——, who came to this part of the country for the express purpose of making good his claim to be one of the descendants of the Laird of Lag. Being very desirous of collecting all the information he could concerning his progenitor, he called upon all the old people whom he thought likely to assist him in his endeavours. Amongst others, he honoured Mrs. Walker with a visit. After having made a few inquiries concerning the object of his call, he abruptly demanded of her, "Well, Mrs. Walker, and what do you think of Lag?" "Oh, dear sirs!" she replied, "I never saw him!" "I am quite aware of that; but what have you heard of him?" "Nae gude, sir—nae gude!"

On entering the kitchen, I accosted Mrs. Walker, and informed her that, as I was desirous of hearing some of the wild tales that were told about the Laird of Lag, and understanding she was acquainted with many of the stories told in connection with that famous persecutor, I had taken the liberty of calling upon her, hoping she might be induced to relate one or two of the many with which her memory was stored. The old dame smiled complacently, at the same time observing, "That she was now an aged woman, entering upon her nineteenth year, consequently her memory was rather failing, and many of the tales she had heard regarding Lag in her youth had faded from her remembrance, like a vanished dream; but," she added, "if you will only wait until I have had my cup of tea, something may come across my mind that may chance to interest you." Cordially agreeing to the old dame's proposition, and refusing a cup of the exhilarating beverage, I amused myself with gazing at the numerous prints adorning the walls, which had evidently been chosen more with an eye to gaudy colouring than artistic merit.

Mrs. Walker, after having finished her meal, replaced the tea-pot near the fire, and arranging her dress—as is often the custom with story-tellers—commenced the following account of the Laird of Lag:—

"Well, ma'am, you see, Sir Robert Grierson, commonly called the Laird of

Lag—more briefly Lag—was a noted persecutor, and dreaded by all who espoused the side of the Kirk and Covenant. A bad cruel man was he, and many were the bloody deeds he did in his day. Some said he wasn't so bad as people said, and others, again maintained he was worse; but let that pass, he did enough to win himself a bad name, and he got it, as was but justice. Well, Sir Robert married a daughter of the second Earl of Queensberry, who rejoiced in the appellation of the 'Deil o' Drumlanrig;' and what good could be expected from Sir Robert after forming a connection like that? If the laird was bad, his father-in-law was counted worse, as along with other bad qualities, he was a mad gamester, and it was not very long ere he made Sir Robert as noted as himself in that respect. Many were the nights they spent over the 'devil's books,' as they are justly called. In the end, the Laird was cleared out of all his property, except Rockhall, which, being strictly entailed, could not be touched."

Here Mrs. Walker paused for a moment, drew a deep breath, and then inquired, "If I had ever seen the account given of Lag in the 'People's Edition of the Scots' Worthies?'" Upon my answering in the negative, she immediately rose from her seat, and proceeded towards another apartment, when she presently returned with one or two numbers of this much-relished work, and once more seating herself in her comfortable chair, she donned her spectacles, and read aloud the following:—

"Sir Robert Grierson of Lag was another prime hero for the promoting of Satan's kingdom. We think that it was some time after Bothwell that he was made sheriff or sheriff-depute of Dumfries. But to relate all the fining, spoiling, oppression, and murders committed by this worthy of Satan, or champion of his kingdom, were beyond our intention. Besides £1200 of fines exacted in Galloway and Nithsdale shires, he was accessory to the murdering, under colour of their iniquitous laws, of Margaret M'Lachlan, aged sixty-three years, and Margaret Wilson, a young woman, whom they drowned at two stakes within the sea-mark at the water of Baldnook. For his cold-blood murders, he caused hang Gordon and Mr. Cubin on a growing tree near Irongray, and left them hanging there, 1686.

"The same year he apprehended Mr. Bell of Whiteside, D. Halliday of Mayfield, and three more, and without giving them time to pray, shot them dead on the spot. Mr. Bell, whom Sir Robert Grierson knew, earnestly entreated but a quarter of an hour to prepare for eternity; but this was refused.

"The reply was, 'What the devil, have you not had time to prepare since Bothwell?' (Here Mrs. Walker shook her head.) He was, therefore, instantly shot with the rest; and so far did this persecuting renegado push his revenge, that he even denied interment to their lifeless dust![#] Shortly after this, Lord Kenmuir happening to meet Lag with Claverhouse in Kirkcudbright, called him

to account for his cruelty to Mr. Bell, and more especially for his inhumanity in refusing burial to his remains. Sir Robert answered with an oath, 'Take him, if you will, and salt him in your beef barrel.' The insulted nobleman immediately drew his sword, and must have ran him through the body, had not Claverhouse interposed. And surely such a death had been too honourable for such a villain.

[#] This epitaph engraved upon the tombstone in the churchyard of Anwith lying on the corpse of John Bell of Whiteside, who was most barbarously shot to death at the command of Douglass of Morton and Grierson of Lag, in the parish of Tongland, in Galloway, anno 1685.

"This monument shall tell posterity
That blessed Bell of Whiteside here doth ly;
Who by command of bloody Lag was shot,
A murther strange, which should not be forgot.
Douglass of Morton did him quarters give,
Yet cruel Lag would not let him survive,
This martyr sought some time to recommend.
The tyrant said, 'What devil? ye've pray'd eneugh,
Those long seven years on mountain and in clough,
So instantly caused him and other four
Be shot to death upon Kirkconnel Muir.
So this did end the lives of these brave saints,
For their adhering to the Covenants."

"The same summer, Annandale having apprehended G. Short and D. Halliday, and having bound them, after quarters granted, the monster Lag came up, and as they lay on the ground, under the cloud of night, caused shoot them immediately, leaving their bodies thus all blood and gore; nay, such was their audacious impiety, that he, with the rest of his boon companions and persecutors would, over their drunken bowls, feign themselves divils and those whom they supposed in hell, and then whip one another as a jest upon that place of torment. When he could serve his master this way no longer, he wallowed in all manner of atheism, drunkenness, and swearing, for which he was excommunicated by the church after the Revolution; and yet by the then powers was made Justice of the Peace, some time before 1714, a disgrace to any civilised nation, not to mention a Presbyterian profession. Death's pangs at last arresting him, and all other refuges failing him, under the views of his former wicked life, in imitation of his mas-

ter Charles, he feigned himself of the popish profession, because a popish priest made him believe for money he could pardon his sins, and even when in purgatory for them he could bring him to heaven. He died December 23, 1733, and there is little doubt went down to Tophet with a lie in his mouth, and so remains in spite of all the priest could mutter over him, as the author of his elegy in his master's name well expresses it:—

"For when I heard that he was dead,
A legion of my den did lead
Him to my place of residence,
And there he'll stay and not go hence.
This Lag will know and all the rest,
Who of my lodging are possesst;
On earth no more they can serve me,
But still I'll have their company," etc.

"This is what is said of him in the 'Scots' Worthies,'" said Mrs. Walker, as she placed the numbers on a table beside her, "and it's not much in his favour as you will perceive. I suppose," she continued, "you will have heard of many other cruelties he committed—such as putting the poor Covenanters into barrels stuck round in the inside with knives, dagger-points, etc., then causing the barrels to be rolled down a steep hill, so that the persons inside were all cut to pieces in the descent; and shooting and stabbing others, so that his name became a by-word in the country."

Answering in the affirmative, I then inquired of her "if there had been any picture taken of the Laird?"

"Oh! yes," she replied, "there was one at Rockhall, but it was stolen from thence by some person in the time of one of the late baronets."

"Did you ever hear any description of his personal appearance?"

"Well," she replied, "I have heard it said that he was a fair man with long yellow hair which hung in ringlets down to his shoulders, but I cannot believe that any fair person ever possessed such a black soul as he must have had. However, he might have been a bonnie man for all that."

Begging pardon for the interruption, I prayed her to continue, which she did as follows:—

"Well ma'm, as I told you before, my memory is not so good as it was, and there are many things told of the Laird of Lag that I have quite forgotten; yet one thing I still remember, and that is the account of what took place at the time of his burial. My Thomas told me his grandfather remembered that day well,

and such a one he never saw. It was in the winter time and bitterly cold; yet notwithstanding, there was a storm of thunder and lightning the like of which never occurred in the memory of man. As Lag died in Dumfries, horses were brought from the Kings' Arms Inn in order to bring his body to Dunscore. I suppose you have seen his grave?"

"Yes," I replied, "and very sorry I am to see it all in ruins!"

"Ay," she, said, "Lag is in a sad state!"

After this sage remark, Mrs. Walker continued: "As I was saying, horses were brought from the inn at Dumfries, for the purpose of driving the hearse to the burial-ground; but when they were yoked, and the driver endeavoured to set them in motion, not one foot would they stir. All this time the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed in an awful manner. Half-blinded by the vivid flashes that played around, and smarting under the furious strokes of the driver's whip, the poor horses trembled in every limb; yet no power on earth was capable of causing them to proceed with their burden. Well, Sir Thomas of Closeburn was there, and he swore a great oath that he would drive Lag to his grave, although the devil was in him. So, unyoking the horses from his own carriage, he fastened them to the hearse, and mounting himself on the driver's seat, prepared to urge them forward. At this moment, a large black rook, that had been seated on one of the housetops, apparently watching the whole proceedings with the deepest interest, flew down from its elevated situation, and, with a loud caw, seated itself on the top of the hearse. Strange to say, whenever it placed itself there, the horses set off at a gallop; and the roads being rough and heavy with the recent rains, the hearse was jolted about in a fearful manner; still the rook kept its seat, and cawed every now and again. Whenever it did so the horses went faster and faster, until at length on arriving at the churchyard, they fell down dead, from sheer exhaustion. Then the strange bird rose up from its seat, and, with a loud scream and a flap of its wings, flew away and was soon out of sight. The people about maintain to this day that it was the devil who had come in person to superintend the funeral of his colleague. At the time I speak of there were copies of an elegy on the Laird of Lag—a verse of which I read to you from the 'Scots' Worthies'—distributed throughout the country; and as no one knew the composer, it was universally believed that the devil himself wrote it, as a lament for having lost so good a servant as Lag had been to him while on earth. All the copies that could be procured were bought up by by Sir Robert's granddaughter, who could not bear that her grandfather's memory should be held in such detestation, and I doubt if there is a copy now in existence."

"How far is Lag Tower from here?" I inquired, after thanking her for the tale.

"About four miles," replied Mrs. Walker, "and an easy road it is to find

out. You go past the Free Church Manse, and turn up the Barjarg Road: then go through Glen Midge, and you will soon see the old tower. It is a wild place, and well worth visiting."

Whilst pursuing my way along the path which led to the ancient residence of the Laird of Lag, a sudden turning in the road revealed to my gaze the form of an aged man, who pursued, with praiseworthy assiduity, his laborious employment of stone-breaking. There was something at once pleasing and impressive in the physiognomy of the venerable labourer. From beneath the Kilmarnock bonnet which surmounted his grey hairs, his blue eyes sparkled with yet unsubdued fire and animation; while the ruddy glow on his weather-beaten cheek, and the vigorous strokes with which his hammer descended on the stony pile before him, betokened energy of character and a total absence of those ailments so often attendant on the footsteps of age.

Being now somewhat at a loss how to arrive at the object of my wishes, the road at this point branching off in different directions, I inquired of the labourer whither I should direct my steps, so as to avoid losing my way amongst the surrounding morasses. The old man, thus accosted, paused in his labour, and replied to my inquiry, in the usual Scotch fashion, by putting another, "And so you are going to visit the old Toor o' Lag?" I answered in the affirmative. "Ay ay! well it's a queer solitary place." "From all accounts, the Laird must have been a very extraordinary man," I observed. "You may well say so," said the old stone-breaker, as ceasing from his arduous task, he stood with one hand on the handle of his implement, while with the other he uncovered his head, to allow the cool breezes to refresh his heated temples, "he was just a most ex-tre-or-nary man, if all be true that is said about him." "Are you inclined to doubt the truth of those stories told concerning him in Dumfriesshire?"

"No," was the reply, accompanied by a sagacious shake of the head, "I cannot say that I do. Many of them may be enlarged on, for, as one knows, a story always gathers in the telling; but still in the main they are true enough, and certainly reflect little honour on him about whom they are told. A-well-a-day!" he continued, "these were indeed sad times when men, left to their own inventions, played such a cruel and unworthy part; the persecutors were, in general, a cold-blooded, relentless sect, and at the head o' the tribe you may put the Laird of Lag, for none of the others, in my opinion, were fit to hold a candle to him for pure malice and steadfastness of purpose in the shedding of blood. There was Claverhouse, evil spirit as he was, it is well known he felt some compunction of consciences for having murdered that godly person, John Brown, and seldom or never refused his intended victim a few moments to commend his departing spirit to Him who save it; but, as related of Sir Robert Grierson, he laughed to scorn the tearful entreaties of the captured Covenanter, and turning a deaf ear to

all the poor man's agonised appeals for only one moment to make his peace with God, or to implore a blessing on his country, sent him straight to that bourne from whence no traveller returns."

There was a pause for a few moments, which was at length broken by the old man.

"This was a great part of the country for the Laird's exploits: the militia, with him at their head, were constantly riding up and down Dumfriesshire and Galloway, and woe to the unlucky wight who fell into their hands: guilty or not guilty, it was all one—shot or hanged he must be. The Laird sent forth the iniquitous decree, 'Soldiers, do your duty! Prisoner, prepare for death! not one word!' Bang, bang! he is dead; and away rides Sir Robert, priding himself in no small degree on his strict adherence to the laws of vengeance, and taking no pains to conceal his exultation at the summary punishment he had inflicted on one of the canting rebels, as he was pleased, in common with his fellow-labourers in the vineyard of iniquity, to designate the hapless body of men he had sworn to exterminate."

"Have you read much about the Covenanters?" I inquired of the labourer, whose eyes burned like coals of living fire while dwelling on the misfortunes of those whose cause he evidently espoused with no small amount of zeal.

"Every book that I can lay my hands on, from the 'Scots' Worthies' down to 'Helen of the Glen,' and not only once, but over and over again, until I could repeat the most of them off by heart. Next to the lives of these good and holy men, whose names are an honour and glory to Scotland," pursued the labourer, "James Renwick's sermons is the book most prized by me—ay! there are no preachers like him now-a-days! What would I not have given to have been with him on some bonnie hill-side when he was holding forth to the faithful few privileged to hear him! Have you ever read his sermons?" he inquired.

I replied in the negative.

He then continued, "Well, all I can say is, you have missed something good, so full are they of sound, wholesome doctrine and Christian principles; how he must have been inspired by the cause he espoused, to be able to preach such truly comforting doctrines!"

"It is a pity," I said, "but Sir Robert Grierson had heard him, he might have been converted——"

"Him!" interrupted the old man; "no, no; he was a brand reserved for the burning; no sermons, however forcible, would have had the slightest effect on his black nature; his heart would have resisted the knocks of the minister, as the stone resisteth the hammer."

Here the labourer, by way of illustration, inflicted with his implement a vigorous stroke on an obdurate piece of rock, which effectually resisted all his

attempts to reduce its dimensions.

"That hill," I observed, alluding to the one previously mentioned by Mrs. Walker, "seems to have been the theatre of many an evil deed; was it not there that the Laird executed judgment on many of the poor men who chanced to fall into his power?"

The old man gazed for a moment on the hill in question, then with a shake of the head, accompanied by a deep-drawn sigh, confirmed Mrs. Walker's statements to their fullest extent, dwelling at considerable length on the many acts of butchery perpetrated on the summit of the eminence, which, covered with a sombre mass of dark firs, frowned gloomily upon us.

"Is there no story you can recall to remembrance connected with some of Sir Robert Grierson's wild exploits?" I inquired, fully persuaded from the old man's garrulity that his memory was like a well-stored garner in respect to these matters, and that a little time and leisure were all that was necessary to produce some thrilling narration of horror—some marvellous tale still treasured up in the breasts of a few, relating to the days of persecution. I was not disappointed. The old man, thus appealed to, stood silent for a moment, as if buried in deep thought, then throwing his hammer carelessly from him, he leisurely seated himself on the pile of stones beside him, and after a few preparatory hems, commenced the following tale, which clothed in my own language is now presented to the reader.

On a fine spring evening in the year sixteen hundred and eighty-five, that year so fraught with gloom and disaster to all espousing the Covenanting cause, a young man, who, judging from his military garb and martial appearance, belonged to one of those militia regiments then scouring the country in search of those they were commissioned to kill or make captive, came riding slowly along the road leading from Irongray to Dunscore. He was evidently in a thoughtful mood, for his forehead was contracted by a deep frown and his eyes were bent steadily on the ground so as to render him oblivious to the motions of his charger, which, finding from the slackened rein and idle spur that his former impatient master had ceased to hasten his onward progress, speedily took advantage of this discovery to snatch a few mouthfuls of grass which grew in wild luxuriance along the sides of the road. This little indulgence of his inclinations being allowed to pass unpunished, the poor animal, apparently worn out by his previous hard work, finally came to a stand-still and proceeded leisurely to crop the tempting herbage presented to his view. This sudden stoppage on the part of his charger, speedily aroused the soldier from the absorbing reverie into which he had fallen, and snatching up the neglected reins, he thrust his rowels into his sides and forced him into a hand-gallop. For some little time he pursued his rapid career, until his horse, accidentally treading on a stone, stumbled, and being unable to recover his lost footing, fell heavily on the road, bearing his rider

with him. For one moment, the horseman lay stunned and motionless from the force of the shock; but speedily recovering his scattered senses, he extricated his feet from the stirrups, and proceeded to raise his fallen charger. Greatly to his annoyance, the soldier perceived from the halting gait of his faithful steed that further use of his services was for the present impossible. Uttering an exclamation of disappointment, he gathered the reins in his hands, and leading the horse off the highway, struck into a wild, solitary path, winding away amongst the hills which lay to the right hand of the road leading to Dunscore. The gloaming was now advancing with rapid strides; and anxious to reach his destination without further delay, the young man pressed onwards as swiftly as the disabled state of his horse would allow; but soon the lameness of the poor animal increased to such a degree that he was fain to pause for a few moments, in order to discover, if possible, the extent of the injury inflicted. The horse, with the natural instinct of its race, seemed at once aware of the nature of the service about to be rendered, and placing his swollen foot in the outstretched hand of his master rubbed his head against his shoulder, as if to evince his gratitude for the kindly feelings which prompted the examination. Whilst inspecting the bruised leg, the natural buoyancy of the soldier's spirits, which had been in no small measure disturbed by the untoward events of the day, returned in full vigour; and with all the joyous gaiety of youth, which rises superior to the frowns of adversity, he commenced singing the song so popular with his party, namely, that which related to King Charles' return. He had not proceeded farther than the words—

"Oh, the twenty-ninth of May,
It was a glorious day
When the king did enjoy his own again!"

when a slight cough behind made him pause in the midst of his ditty, and, greatly to his surprise, on turning round he perceived an aged man, whose broad, blue bonnet and dress of hodden-grey betokened his adherence to the cause of the Kirk and Covenant leaning on the butt-end of a musket, and regarding him attentively with a look of stern displeasure, which seemed rather to amuse than terrify the object of his scrutiny, who, noways daunted by the ominous-looking weapon upon which the stranger leaned, returned his scowling glance with one of haughty defiance for he instantly exclaimed, "How now, old wiseacre! wer't nourished on vinegar, that thou lookest so sour? Why, man alive! one would fancy from thy rueful visage that things are not so well with thee as thou fain wouldst wish; speak out, man, and tell us at once the cause of thy disturbed aspect."

The aged wanderer smiled grimly, but vouchsafed no further reply to the

scoffing inquiries of the soldier, who, somewhat nettled by the contemptuous silence maintained by the stranger, burst forth into one of the many songs then so much in vogue amongst the cavaliers, and which consigned to (in their eyes) condign punishment all those who ventured to differ from them so essentially as did the Puritans. The eyes of the Covenanter flashed sparks of fire on hearing this scornful ballad, and grasping his musket, he seemed as if about to rush on the object of his wrath, then, apparently by a mighty effort, conquering his disposition for violence, he regained his original position, and continued gazing with a gloomy brow on the performer, who heedless of its effects on the person before him, pursued his ditty with admirable coolness, repeating over and over again with marked emphasis, the verses he thought most likely to annoy and irritate the grey-haired Covenanter.

"Young man," said the stranger at the conclusion of the song, "you have verily moved me to anger by your unwarrantable attack on our poor, afflicted body; and yet fain would I argue with you in all soberness and good-will on the evil doings of the party with whom you consort, for that you are one of these cruel persecutors of our church, now ranging the country, I make bold to believe, therefore——"

"Now, cease your fanatical jargon," interrupted the soldier, "I care not to bandy words with one pertaining to that rebellious sect I am bound to molest by every means in my power, and to despise as being utterly incapable of listening to a word of sense, even although delivered in season," (this was said by the soldier in a snivelling tone); "so leave me in peace to attend my good steed, which well merits all the attention I have to bestow."

"The horse," rejoined the old man, "has more sense than its master, and faints in the bloody service to which you have doomed it; but since you despise the good counsel I would bestow, even on an enemy, I will content myself by simply inquiring from whence you come and whither you are bound?"

"I do not see," was the reply, "by what right you presume to question me as regards my movements; but still I will not refuse to satisfy you on that point, so make answer that I have come from Drumlanrig, burdened with a special message from the Earl of Queensbury to Sir Robert Grierson, whom I serve, as in duty bound, having been born on his estate, and whom I am willing to follow to the death should he please so to lead me."

The brows of the stranger contracted into a frown of fearful import, and, grasping his gun with frantic violence, he hissed through his clenched teeth, "You are a servant of his, are you? Then, you belong to one whom I have sworn to dispatch should he cross my path—he, the inhuman monster!" (here the soldier started to his feet, and drawing his sword, sprang towards the Covenanter, but waving him off with his hand, the stranger continued), "he, I say, has this day

deprived me of my faithful and loving brother—one who had never injured him in thought, word, or deed. He lived in his secluded home—peaceful and happy in the bosom of his family. Fortune smiled upon him. He was rich, yet he was humble; he was prosperous, yet no one envied him; and why? because of his abundance he gave to them who were in want, and never said to the hungry—Depart; I have nought for thee. In midst of these religious grievances which have racked our native land, Elias Henderson displayed no symptoms of fear and dismay. Claverhouse, with his bloodhounds, overran Galloway; Johnstone of Westerraw, with his myrmidons, scoured the plains of Annandale; Grierson of Lag, the worst of them all, traversed the hilly country of Dumfriesshire; yet was he tranquil. 'I have harmed none of these men,' was his reply, on being questioned as to the reason of his undisturbed serenity of countenance, when all around him were tortured with gloomy apprehensions; 'It is true I espouse the side of the Covenant, but what of that? is not liberty of conscience the prerogative of every British subject? then wherefore injure one for worshipping the God of his fathers in the way that seemeth him best?' Ah, my poor Elias! little recked he of the awful fate which awaited him. This morning," here the speaker paused for a moment overcome with emotion, "my brother was walking in the vicinity of his farm; suddenly a band of horsemen appeared in sight, with the redoubted Sir Robert Grierson at their head; they approached the spot where my brother stood. Unconscious of fear, Elias walked bravely forward, and uncovering his head, inquired of the fierce baronet the reason of his coming."

"You shall soon learn that," was the mocking reply; and without further parley, the cruel relentless demon drew from his pocket a loaded pistol, and levelled it at the head of my unsuspecting brother.

"'Mercy, mercy!' he cried, perceiving the cruel intent with which Sir Robert had visited his farm; 'only five minutes to make my peace with God, to beg a blessing on my wife and children!'

"'Not one second,' was the stern rejoinder; and that instant my brother—my poor brother, fell a lifeless corpse; he is dead, but I live to avenge him!" so saying, the wanderer leant his head on his gun and sobbed aloud. There was a momentary pause, during which the soldier stood motionless, gazing on the speaker, apparently astonished at the wild frenzy which so powerfully characterised his every movement. He seemed as if about to speak, when, dashing away the tears which almost blinded him, the stranger, or, as we may now term him, Walter Henderson, started from his drooping posture, and raising his hands and eyes to heaven, thundered forth with vehemence, "Before God I swear that I live for nothing but revenge on him who has rendered my brother's house desolate and forlorn; who has transformed the happy wife into a bereaved widow, and smiling children into wailing mourners. From this day henceforward shall Walter

Henderson be an alien to his house and kindred, until he has gratified his thirst for vengeance, and the bones of his enemy are left to bleach beneath the wasting winds of heaven!"

"Come, cease your foolish bragging," replied the soldier, "Sir Robert Grierson may not be accountable to you or any man for the justice he pleases to administer to these bog-hunting fellows, who have thrown the whole of Scotland, ay, and England to boot, into a state of uproar and confusion by their fanatical nonsense. I doubt not but that he had some powerful reasons for dispatching your brother a little before his time, indeed, according to your own reasoning, that the day of a man's death is appointed at the instant of his birth—my most worshipful leader was merely an instrument under Providence to fulfil the verdict that had gone forth against your brother, therefore——"

"And does that lessen his guilt?" sternly interrupted Walter Henderson; "think you that Pontius Pilate will stand at the judgment-seat with an undaunted front, because it was decreed he should condemn his Lord and Master? Think you that the precious blood of the saints and martyrs, which now reddens the heaths and valleys of our native land, will not be avenged because the day for its shedding had arrived? In not blood for blood the decree of One who holds the scales of justice in his bands? Hath he not said, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed?' Then woe to him, who, by the strict performance of the bloody duty imposed upon him by those whom he professes to hold himself bound to obey, encourages the wicked in their evil counsels, and for his own reward heaps up endless misery, if not in this present world, in *that* which is to come! Young man," pursued Walter Henderson, advancing nearer to the astonished soldier, and speaking in a tone of kindlier import than that he had adopted while dwelling on his brother's death, "it grieveth me much to see one apparently so young in years following so readily in the footsteps of him who is, alas! but too truly believed to bear a most deadly hatred to all espousing the side of our Kirk and Covenant; and I would fain address to you a few words of warning, for which you may yet learn to thank me, as it may be you have a mother whose stay you are, therefore be guided by me in this matter, and advance no farther on your road; it is beset with perils of which you wot not; beneath the shade of each leafy tree; recline armed men; every cottage which you pass contains a foe. Aroused to madness by fresh acts of cruelty daily perpetrated against them, the inhabitants of this district have risen to a man in defence of their civil and religious liberties; more than this, they have determined upon attacking the stronghold of the ungodly leader whom you serve; and soon, we trust, under the favour of Almighty God, to see the Tower of Lag a heap of smouldering ruins.

"Now, as sure as my name is John Kirsop," exclaimed the soldier, overwhelmed with anger, and seizing his horse's bridle as he spoke, "shall this com-

munication reach the ears of him who is likely to feel most interested in it;" so saying he made a motion to depart, when Walter Henderson with a grim smile instantly laid his hand on the bridle as if to restrain him. In a transport of fury, young Kirsop drew his sword and prepared to rush on the aged Covenanter, who thereupon started hastily back and gave utterance to a shrill whistle, in answer to which about a dozen men rushed forth from their various places of concealment and surrounded the infuriated soldier, who, bewildered by this sudden change in the aspect of affairs, quietly surrendered himself their prisoner.

"Now, most valiant sir," said Walter Henderson, who appeared to be the leader of the party, "as you have despised the warning, I, out of kindness and consideration for your youth was foolish enough to give you, you must prepare to accompany us as our captive. No evil is intended you, but should you evince the slightest disposition to escape—that moment shall be your last;" so saying, he gave orders for the party to set themselves in motion. The moon had risen, and her pale crest appeared over the summits of the surrounding hills, throwing a dim and shadowy light on the path trod by the Covenanters, as they silently, and with many precautions against surprise, pursued their way along the rough-winding road leading in the direction of Lag Tower. Suddenly they were startled in the midst of their progress by a scream, so shrill and wild in its death-like agony, that all paused to listen, awestruck by the heart-rending burst of sorrow which sounded painfully distinct amid the deep and impressive silence that reigned around. Again and again it was repeated; now floating on the breeze like the wail of some restless spirit, and anon dying away in sounds resembling the mournful cadence produced by the wind sweeping the chords of an Æolian harp. The party, at the orders of Walter Henderson, made a sudden halt, and, with deepened gloom on their faces, awaited an explanation of the harrowing sounds which now saluted their ears. Nearer and nearer sounded the voice of lamentation, and in a few minutes a small procession appeared in sight, and approached the spot where stood the wanderers, some of whom instantly rushed forward to ascertain the meaning of what they saw. The first object that met their eyes was a rude bier constructed of green boughs, on which lay the lifeless body of a young man, supported on the shoulders of four men; while at his head, with streaming eyes and dishevelled locks, walked an aged woman, the mother of the deceased. She it was who gave utterance to these terrible bursts of sorrow that first attracted the attention of Walter Henderson and his party.

"What new horror is this?" cried the aged leader, gazing with distended eyes on the bloody object before him, and addressing himself to the woman, who, totally unable to speak, merely pointed to the lifeless corpse, and again gave utterance to a shriek which froze the blood of those who stood speechless around. Perceiving that the wretched mother was wholly incapable of replying to his

inquiry, Walter Henderson then turned to one of the four men supporting the bier, and begged to be informed as to the cause of the sad occurrence, and by whose hands the unfortunate man had perished.

"Just the old story!" was the reply; "a poor innocent lad done to death by the blood-hounds of the opposite party; and all for refusing the oath of abjuration. Four of us" continued the speaker, "were this morning seated on the brow of a hill near Dunscore; James Wishart, he who lies on this stretcher, was reading aloud from the Bible, and we were lying beside him listening to the comforting words, when suddenly four or five dragoons appeared at the base of the hill on which we were stationed. Seeing, from their threatening gestures, that harm was intended us, we prepared for flight. 'Pursue different directions,' cried James Wishart, who was himself an excellent runner, throwing off his coat as he spoke. We shook each other by the hand and commended ourselves to God. Away went James Wishart fleet as the wind, and after him, with the fire of hate in their breasts, sped the dragoons. Finding ourselves unmolested, we stood as if spellbound, in breathless anxiety gazing after the retreating figure of our comrade. On he went, swift as the roe-deer. 'He will escape,' murmured one who stood by my side; at that instant he stumbled and fell. 'Oh, God protect him!' cried we all. In an instant he regained his footing, and darted on swifter than ever. Soon he disappeared in the distance. Anxious concerning our own safety, we parted and set off in different directions. This took place in the morning. Towards the hour of noon, prompted by anxiety regarding the fate of young Wishart, I, who had remained concealed beneath a cairn of stones near the spot where my friends left me, sought by a circuitous route to approach the place where last we saw him in advance of the dragoons. Alas! a few paces distant from thence there he lay extended on the ground. Observing, however, some portion of his garments in motion, I hastened joyfully forward, hoping to find him alive; but no; it was only the wind which stirred his yellow hair and a pocket-handkerchief that lay deluged in blood beside him. He was gone! His young life had ebbed away through a gun-shot wound in his breast. I sat down beside him, devoutly hoping my late companions would also return to ascertain the fate of their comrade, as I did not wish to leave his lifeless body to the mercy of the hungry ravens which hovered in circles around our heads, watching for their prey. Soon they rejoined me, another accompanying them. The dragoons, they informed me, satisfied with their morning's work, had galloped off in another direction, therefore we might with safety convey the body of James Wishart to his mother's cottage, which stood not far distant. Having constructed this rude bier, we laid his body upon it, and bore it on our shoulders along this path; just about a mile from thence we encountered his mother, who, alarmed at the protracted absence of her son, had set forth in search of him——"

"Yes!" screamed forth the distracted parent, "the spirit of my murdered boy drove me forth to meet his mangled body. I sat in my house, bewailing my solitary widowhood—alone with my foreboding fears concerning my son, and brooding with tortured soul over the fearful calamities that has befallen the faithful of the land. Suddenly I was seized with a trembling and sinking of the heart—an indescribable feeling of awe, as if some mysterious being invisible, yet distinctly felt, hovered around, overcame me, and I bowed my head in acknowledgment of its presence. Then a voice, which I instantly knew to be that of my son, although sweet and low, whispered the name of—mother! Distracted with fear, I fled from the cottage; and led by my mysterious guide, my footsteps turned in this direction. Maddened by cruel uncertainty, I ran swiftly onwards until I encountered the bier which bore all that remained of my murdered son."

Here the mother ended her sad recital, and weeping afresh, resumed her station at the head of the procession.

"Men, and fellow-sufferers in the good cause!" shouted Walter Henderson at the conclusion of the widow's tale, "what merits the man, who, on account of his high position and influence in this county, has it in his power to succour those overwhelmed by dangers and miseries of every description, and to befriend the followers of the Covenant, but who, instead of shielding these poor afflicted ones under the strong arm of his might, reduces them to the bonds of slavery, and exercises his authority over the minds of his friends and dependants to the furtherance of every evil work, whereby the blood of innocent and inoffensive men is poured out like water on the hills and valleys of Scotland?"

"Death!" was the rejoinder.

"What punishment should be inflicted on him," pursued their leader, "who has driven the labourer from his kindred and home, and the patriot from his country?"

"Let him perish in the midst of his ungodliness, and let his stronghold be razed; yea even to the ground!"

"Comrades," shouted Walter Henderson, "It is Sir Robert Grierson whom ye have with one accord denounced; he it is who has clad the green hills of Dumfriesshire in mourning, and caused the wail of widows and orphans to ascend up to heaven for a testimony against him; then let us, trusting in the help of the Almighty God, call upon him to account for his iniquities, and burn down the stronghold of his cruelties.

"Amen," said they all.

"Who is this? how comes it to pass that you have one of the ungodly in your company?" inquired one of the bier-bearers, addressing Walter Henderson, and pointing to John Kirsop as he spoke.

"He is a soldier I chanced to encounter on my way hither," replied the per-

son addressed, "and not having succeeded in bringing him to reason, I have taken the liberty of making him captive lest he interfere in some measure with the projects we have in view. But come along," he added, "night wears apace, and the work we have in hand brooks not of delay; here, Thompson, a word with you." So saying, he beckoned to one of the party, and withdrawing a few paces apart from the others, entered into a whispered conversation, which, greatly to the annoyance of young Kirsop, who strained every nerve to catch a few syllables of what tvas passing, proved wholly inaudible to the rest of the group.

His private conference with Thompson being ended, Walter Henderson once more joined his companions, and addressed them as follows:—"My friends, it is agreed upon between us that this night must witness the destruction of Lag Tower; then, let us hasten with resolute hearts and hands to our appointed task. Danger menaces us in every direction, for the tramplers of the Covenant lie lurking in secret places, seeking whom they may devour, and certain destruction awaits us should we fail in our attempt, or Sir Robert Grierson be made aware of our purpose; nevertheless, let us have faith in Him (here Walter Henderson uncovered his head) who is strong in might, and able and willing to save all those whose trust is placed in His word. It is true we are few in number; but when the soul is animated by steady and devoted zeal in the good cause, much that to us poor frail mortals seems almost impossible, may under the blessing of God be accomplished. You are all of you aware," he continued "of the motives which have induced me to embark in this hazardous enterprise, namely, to revenge the death of my beloved brother, and to prevent, if possible, by the destruction of his stronghold, the perpetration of fresh crimes—the bare contemplation of which excites the inmost soul with horror—by that wicked Laird, against whom there has ascended a warning cry to heaven proclaiming that the measure of his iniquities is completed; then, let us press forward in this most blessed work, the execution of which promises us so great a reward."

Here Walter Henderson paused for a moment, then turning to another of the party, named Andrew Hamilton, he requested him to accompany the body of James Wishart to the dwelling of the bereaved mother, in case of any surprise by the way, taking with him their prisoner, whose company would only prove an annoyance in the difficult enterprise they were about to undertake. The man thus addressed took no pains to conceal his displeasure at being prevented from attending and sharing with them in so daring an exploit as the burning of Lag Tower; but Walter Henderson represented to him the importance of the duty committed to his care, and adjured him to maintain the prisoner in all safety until the morrow, when his fate should be decided. His instructions finished, the brave old Covenanter placed himself at the head of the small but resolute party, all eager to do his bidding, and uttering a few hurried words of sympathy

and farewell to the weeping widow, who now turned her steps in an opposite direction, he commenced his rapid march towards the feudal Tower of Lag, whose outline was even then dimly discernible, amid the darkness now rapidly closing around them.

We must now leave Walter Henderson and his followers pursuing their way towards the residence of Sir Robert Grierson, and return to Andrew Hamilton, who, in accordance with the wishes of his leader, walked alongside the sad procession, his hand holding the bridle of the disabled steed, on whose back, his hands tied in such a manner so as effectually to prevent his making any efforts to escape, rode John Kirsop, his cheeks glowing with ill-concealed annoyance, and his eyes, burning with impatience, resting alternately, and with no very benign expression on the faces of the different individuals composing the group. As there still remained about a mile of their journey to accomplish, Andrew Hamilton seized the opportunity to express his surprise and regret at the unworthy part chosen by John Kirsop, which he did as follows:—"It really astonishes me beyond measure to see a young man, apparently possessed of a good understanding, and in appearance not unlike the rest of us, amongst the ranks of those we have but too much reason to style the natural enemies of all who uphold the Kirk and Covenant. O dearie me, man! but you are wandering far far from the paths of sobriety and well-doing when thus espousing the cause of the mortal antagonists of sound spiritual doctrines and church freedom; really, I am grieved to behold you thus treading the path that leadeth to destruction, with eyes blindfolded and ears shut to the words of wisdom. And what kind of amusement is this, think you, to be hunting a parcel of your fellow-creatures from bog to bog, and from hill to valley, as if the Almighty had created the one-half of mankind to be meet sport for the other? No, no, my friend; true religion does'na begin with a chase and end with a murder; far more profitable would it be for the like of you, and those whom you serve with so much zeal and devotion, to be chasing pride, vainglory, hypocrisy, and every evil tenant from your cold stubborn hearts, than to be hanging and shooting those who are manly enough to stand up for their civil and religious liberties in the face of the assembled world."

"Cease your foolish prating," sternly interrupted the irritated soldier.

"'Deed and I will not!" rejoined Andrew Hamilton, who, like many of his brethern, was fond of indulging in a little disputation; "at least not until I have endeavoured to convince you of the base unworthy part you are acting towards those whose side you should have espoused with all the alacrity of a true Christian and the patriotic feelings of a Scotchman. What are you at the present time," he continued, "but a tool in the hands of one who would dispatch you to-morrow did you give him the slightest cause for provocation or distrust? Why, then, continue in his service to the utter ruin of your immortal soul? Has not the fearful

occurrence of to-day made some impression on your youthful heart? Think you that men who thus wantonly imbrue their hands in the blood of the innocent can be held guiltless in the presence of Him who abhorreth the wicked and cruel man? or that mercy will be bestowed on those who know it not, and who, by the cruel measures they have adopted towards the adherents of a stricken Church, have brought down woe and desolation on our beloved land?"

"Why, then," said John Kirsop, "will you still remain hostile to Government? You cannot expect, if you set the whole country in a state of revolt by your fanatical and impious jargon, but that such measures as our leaders may deem proper to employ will be taken to reduce your strength and restore you to reason——"

"Reason!" wrathfully exclaimed Andrew Hamilton, "I think, friend, you are a little mistaken on that point; it is the Government that must be brought both to hear and understand reason, likewise to take care how they offend and ridicule those both able and willing to stand to their arms when their rights are trampled on and their freedom assailed."

"Miserable fanatic," said the soldier in reply, "I would avoid wasting words on one so narrow-minded and bigoted as thou art; so, pri'thee cease, and permit me to indulge in my own thoughts, which are much more likely to prove profitable than any arguments proceeding out of thy mouth. I quarrel not with thee for the part thou has taken in these unhappy disturbances which now agitate our land; nor will I, in spite of all the abuse thou has been pleased to heap on our devoted heads for our cruelty and revenge, dwell on the atrocious act thy companions are, perchance even now, engaged in; but were I free of these bonds I should teach thee to keep a civil tongue in that thick head of thine, and not thus waste thy breath in giving advice unasked and unwished for."

Here the prisoner relapsed into moody silence; and Andrew Hamilton, somewhat disconcerted at the haughty tone assumed by his new acquaintance, forbore to press the conversation further. They had now arrived at the cottage inhabited by old Mrs. Wishart; it was a dwelling situated on the bank of a rippling stream, which shone like molten silver in the pale moonlight, while the dusky foliage of a few pine-trees overtopping the roof of the straw-thatched cottage harmonised well with the procession now advancing beneath their gloomy boughs. On reaching the threshold, the sorrowing mother paused for a moment, as if dreading to enter the desolate home, whose blazing hearth would never more be enlivened by the cheerful voice now hushed for ever—never more! She sighed deeply; and after engaging in mental prayer that she might be endowed with fresh strength to support this fearful trial, she raised the latch and entered, beckoning on the others to follow. All was as she had left. The fire smouldered in the grate, the clock ticked on the wall; while the kettle gave forth its cheerful song, unheeded in the midst of the general desolation. Opening a side-door

which led into a little sleeping-room, Mrs. Wishart, her face ghastly with intense emotion, signed to the bier-bearers thither to convey the body of her murdered son. The men obeyed; and placing the corpse, at the mother's desire, on the snow-white counterpane, they retired with noiseless steps and uncovered heads to the adjacent apartment, leaving her alone in the chamber with the dead. In the meanwhile, Andrew Hamilton, who had been busily occupied in searching out a place of security in which to deposit his prisoner, of whose company he was, to own the truth, heartily tired, at length discovered a barn which he at once chose as being adapted in every respect for the present purpose. Windows there were none; and the door being secured by a double lock, rendered all attempts at escape fruitless—so Andrew Hamilton thought; and acting upon his hastily-formed opinion, he thrust in the hand-bound prisoner, and double-locking the door, proceeded to stable the exhausted steed. This done, he retraced his steps to the kitchen, where he found his four companions seated around the hearth, conversing in subdued whispers on the sad occurrences of the day.

"I really wonder how Walter Henderson and his party are getting on," at length observed one of the party, and he shook his head as he spoke.

"Not very well, I fear," replied another, "for if all tales be true, Sir Robert Grierson keeps up too much correspondence with the powers of darkness not to be made acquainted beforehand with so important an event as the burning of his tower; and should he catch any of the unfortunate wights engaged in the act, their time on earth will be but short. Sir Robert understands not mercy at any time, and an attempt such as this will be enough to drive him mad; nor will he be appeased until the perpetrators are hanged as high as Haman."

"In verity, he is a terrible man," said a third. "I never saw him but once, nor do I wish to behold him again; his eye as it rested on me seemed to read my very thoughts at a single glance, and his brow had a gloom I have never seen equalled. Off went my bonnet in a trice, and my head stooped to the very ground as he approached, so anxious was I to do him all honour, while I strove to look calm and collected, although Heaven knows I was trembling like an aspen leaf, so great was my terror of the noted Laird. 'Ho, ho!' he shouted as he came alongside of me, and his voice went through me like a sword, and seemed to take all the strength, as it were, out of my back. 'Ho, ho! but you seem a well mannered knave; and could you wield a sword or fire a gun as quickly as you can lower that bullet-head of yours, I would make your fortune; say, are you willing, provided you excel in these accomplishments, to enter my service?' 'Most worshipful sir,' I replied, with a joyous expression of face and an inward shudder, 'I should indeed have esteemed it a favour far above my humble deserts to have ranked even amongst the humblest of your retainers, but——' 'No buts,' roared Sir Robert, with a fierce glance and a scowling brow; 'yes, or no, for me!' 'Pray hear

me,' I replied in an imploring voice, fearful of incurring the deadly auger of so unscrupulous a person as Sir Robert was reported to be, 'I only intended to assure you of my regrets that circumstances——' 'Cease your abominable falsehoods,' he again sternly interrupted, 'and own the truth at once, you unshaven rascal; speak out like an honest man and tell me, what you know to be the case, that you are not ambitious to be enrolled amongst the "Laird's Devils."' So saying, he made a cut at me with his whip and rode off, laughing heartily, as if considering the whole affair an excellent joke; while I, delighted to have escaped so easily, made the best of my way homewards; and ever since that day I have taken especial care always to keep a good stone wall between me and Sir Robert, for fear the second meeting should not terminate quite so pleasantly."

"Ay, Ay," chimed in a fourth, "but were you to see the Laird suffering from an attack of the gout, such as my father once witnessed, you would then have reason to remember the meeting."

On his being urged to give them an account of the interview in question, the speaker narrated the following:—

"One day my poor father, who is a staunch old Covenanter, and cares not to avow the fact, was taken up on suspicion of having secreted some rebels who had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious to Government, and nothing would satisfy his accusers but his going before Sir Robert Grierson to answer the charge preferred against him. My father said, the very idea of facing that fearful man, as he styled the Laird, made him feel ready to faint; but he was determined to show no signs of fear, lest it might be construed against him; so putting a bold face on the matter, he not only expressed his willingness, but his anxiety, to meet Sir Robert; and, in accordance with his desire, he was instantly conveyed to Lag Tower. It happened, very unfortunately for my father, that very day on which he went to abide his trial, Sir Robert was confined to bed from a dreadful attack of his old enemy, the gout, which had rendered him so savage that his domestics were afraid to venture near him; but no sooner was he made aware of the fact of there being a prisoner awaiting his pleasure, than he left his couch; and dressing himself as speedily as repeated twinges of the gout would permit, he hobbled down stairs, blaspheming the while in a manner horrible to listen to. On entering the room where stood my father, with his accusers beside him, Sir Robert darted a keen glance at him from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, and then proceeded to question those present regarding the offence alleged to have been committed by my father. A grim smile played at the corners of his mouth, and a fiery gleam shot from his eyes as he listened to the rather complicated statement regarding my father's conduct in the affair of the late concealment. He then thanked them for the ready zeal they had displayed in the king's service, and desired that they should retire to another apartment, 'For,' said he, with a hoarse laugh, 'I should

like to have a little private conversation with the old Whig, and I dare say I shall manage to make him sensible of the heinous crime he has committed, thereby rendering himself amenable to the laws of his country.' The room being cleared of all save my father, who stood boldly confronting the Laird, his head erect and his hands folded across his breast, in the attitude of one who fears no evil and is conscious of having performed none, Sir Robert seated himself at the head of the table, and motioning to my father to approach nearer to the judgment-seat, as he styled his huge arm-chair, he addressed him in the following language:—'Is it not a downright disgrace for an old man like you, whose grey hairs ought to have covered a head of wisdom, to be arraigned before us, charged with having aided in the secreting of a parcel of knaves, rebels in fact, against their king and country; thereby frustrating the ends of justice, which required the lives of these men, and not these only, but of all who similarly transgress the righteous laws established by our most gracious sovereign King Charles the Second, whom may Heaven long preserve to the utter confusion of all who wish him harm? What have you to say for yourself, that we may be satisfied of your innocence in this matter, and permit you to depart in peace?' My father, to tell you the honest truth, was in no small degree puzzled how to reply to this strange mode of address adopted by Sir Robert; but reflecting for a moment on the character of the man he had to deal with, he arrived at the conclusion that the best way to avoid giving a direct answer to so startling a question would be to propound another, so he said, 'Well, Sir Robert, since you have desired me to reply to the question you were pleased to put as regarded my complicity in this aflair of the secreting of these poor unfortunate men, whom I cannot look upon in the light of malefactors, I shall do so firmly, and without reserve, feeling assured that no real blame can be attached to the part I have acted throughout; but, before proceeding to enter into details, I would simply ask in return, if any of those belonging to the side you espouse so warmly were in grievous distress, and in imminent danger of being deprived of their lives, should they fall into the hands of their enemies, who were eagerly following on their track, would you not esteem it a positive duty to harbour these unhappy fugitives? Would you not, I say, rejoice in the good deed you had accomplished, on beholding their foes depart cheated of their expected prey, and seek no other reward than the happiness arising from a self-approving conscience?' 'Then you acknowledge having aided these men to escape from the just doom awaiting them,' roared Sir Robert, his brow black with ungovernable wrath. 'You cannot prove that I did,' coolly replied my father, nowise daunted by the terrible looks of the fiery Laird; for his blood was up, and when once he had got over his natural timidity of character, he could have faced the old gentleman himself. 'I will make you prove it, however,' was the fierce rejoinder; 'reach me hither that Bible.' My father did so. Now, you old solemn-faced hypocrite,' said

Sir Robert, accompanying these words with a hideous grimace, occasioned by a sudden and severe twinge of the gout, 'as you value your life, you must swear by this blessed book that you are entirely innocent of the offence alleged against you, and that you know nothing of the whereabouts of these men.' 'But what if I do know something of the whereabouts of these men?' demanded my father, who was fully determined to display no coward spirit, or evade the truth, even though death should pay the penalty. 'Then your last hour has come,' replied the Laird, in a somewhat milder tone, for he was not a little astonished at my father's boldness of speech; 'so you may at once say your prayers.' 'That is rather an unusual favour for you to bestow,' said my father, with a smile; 'for if all is true that's said of you, praying does not come within your province; and instead of your victim's soul being borne aloft on the incense of prayer, it is generally dismissed with something the very reverse of a blessing.' 'No insolence, you ungrateful varlet,' thundered forth Sir Robert, while his brow contracted into the most fearful frown, my father said, he had ever witnessed; 'and since you sneer at the boon I was pleased to offer you, your prayer shall be of my framing; so down on your knees this instant, and mark you, every word you utter must be in an audible tone of voice that I may be able to hear and judge of the same. You must pray as if your soul was in every word you give forth, for the welfare of Church and State, dwelling at considerable length on the goodness of his most gracious Majesty in adopting such lenient measures towards those who have so justly offended him, likewise on the wisdom he has displayed in his choice of leaders to execute his commands.' 'Not at your desire will I kneel, you bloody man!' stoutly replied my father, his eyes flashing and his colour rising as he spoke; 'nor shall my lips be polluted with such words as you may devise. If death be the decree sent forth against me, I will meet it as becometh one who hath endeavoured to prepare himself to meet his Maker,—therefore, do your worst; and learn from me, that not to win an empire, should I say aught of the king than that he is a perjured——' 'Hold!' screamed Sir Robert in a transport of fury, 'how dare you venture to attack his most blessed Majesty in my presence? This moment is your last!' So saying, and forgetful of the malady under which he laboured, he darted from his chair and seizing hold of a loaded pistol, which lay on an adjoining table, levelled it at my father. But, fortunately for him, just as Sir Robert was on the point of firing, he was suddenly seized with a most dreadful attack of his irresistible enemy. His agony was so great that the pistol dropped from his hand; and after vainly endeavouring to preserve his footing, he gave utterance to a wild scream of mingled rage and pain, and fell prostrate on the floor. Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded him for escape, my father rushed to the door, opened it, and fled along the passage, shouting at the top of his voice, 'Help, help! Sir Robert is dead, or dying!' Overcome with terror and

dismay, the domestics at once rushed to the assistance of their master, thereby permitting my father to leave the castle unquestioned—a feat he took not long to accomplish—and considering this part of the country no longer safe for him, he speedily removed to a retired spot in Annandale, where he now resides."

"Do you think there is any truth in the stories they tell about Lag Tower being haunted?" inquired Andrew Hamilton, who was not a little prone to indulge in the superstitious fears so generally entertained by his countrymen.

Just as one of his companions was about to reply, a loud crash in the yard, as if some heavy substance was thrown to the ground, at once arrested their attention. The men instantly started to their feet, and eagerly listened for a repetition of the sound; but nothing more was heard.

"What can it be?" said one of the party, whose pallid face and faltering voice betokened the agitation. under which he laboured.

"O! it is just the wind that has blown down something about the barn," replied one of his comrades.

At the mention of the word barn Andrew Hamilton gave utterance to a loud exclamation, and seizing a lantern that stood on the table, darted towards the door, closely followed by his astonished companions. With a sinking heart, he pursued his way; and to his unspeakable horror, the first object that greeted his eyesight, on his arriving at the spot, was the door—the key of which he was carrying for safety in his pocket—lying prostrate on the ground, bereft of its hinges. Impatient to learn the worst, he rushed into the barn; it was empty—the prisoner was gone.

The reader must now please to accompany us into the interior of Lag Tower, in the banqueting hall of which several gentlemen are seated round a long oaken table, strewn with the remains of dessert, half-emptied bottles of wine, drinking cups, etc. The gentleman presiding over the entertainment, and whose hoarse laugh even now resounds through the hall, is the dreaded persecutor, Sir Robert Grierson; on his right hand are seated Captain Bruce and Captain Dalziel, also notorious for their dreadful cruelties practised towards the Covenanters; while Lieutenant Livingstone, Cornet Douglas, and others of lesser note, occupy the remaining seats. The hall, which is long and narrow in its proportions, is lighted up by the aid of pine-torches stuck in the wall, and the huge fire, as it roars in the capacious chimney, casts a ruddy glow over the swarthy faces of the revellers, and dances fantastically over the suits of time-honoured armour, swords, guns, pistols and other warlike weapons with which the walls of the apartment are adorned.

A pause has ensued in the conversation—it is the Laird who breaks it. "Well, Dalziel, and so you managed to make the old Whig swallow the oath after all, ha, ha, ha! Upon my word, it is well worth all the trouble we have been put to

during these troublous times, just to witness the rare state of terror into which some of these canting knaves are thrown when they imagine their last hour is come. Down they go smack upon their knees, turning up their eyes, and if you only permitted them, they would spend at least three hours in praying for the steadfast upholding of the most blessed Kirk and Covenant; and, for my part, I don't believe one out of twenty understands the precise meaning of the words; it is just the fact of their having them so constantly dinned into their ears by these old maundering hypocrites, whom they regard as the precious salt of the earth, that impresses them with the belief of their embracing everything that ought to be prayed for. Little encouragement do they get from me in that line. At the bare whisper of the words 'Covenants of Grace' I discharge my pistol close to their ears, and they very soon come down to earth again, and endeavour to enter into a covenant of mercy with me, whom they style the Man of Sin; but they soon discover temporising does not do for me: my words are few and plain. Take the oath at once or suffer the penalty. 'Mercy, mercy, Sir Robert! remember our wives and helpless little ones at home; what will become of them should we be deprived of our lives?' Then take the oath! I find this peremptory mode of speech does my business far more effectually than any long-winded discourse; that's what they are accustomed to, and they would willingly listen for hours, if we had only breath sufficient to hold out so long, to any amount of rubbish with which it might please us to cram them; but the brevity of speech with which I issue forth my demands puts them at once to the rout; and the short and the long of the matter is, they are either brought to hear reason, or look their last upon the sun."

"It is really extraordinary how many maintain their firmness even to the last," said Captain Dalziel, as he filled his goblet to the brim and drained it at a single draught; "they seem to take a pride in suffering death, and I firmly believe would rather lose fifty lives, or endure any amount of torture, than allow the oath of abjuration to pass their lips."

"Ha, ha! my friend," exclaimed Sir Robert Grierson with a loud laugh, "I think I am the only one of you all who can manage these skulking fellows and compel them to take the oath in spite of themselves. Never shall I forget that scene in the church of Dairy, should I live to be an hundred; how horror-stricken the whole pack were!"

"Why, what did you do to them?" inquired Lieutenant Livingstone. "I have never heard what I considered to be a true version of that affair, although I have often wished to learn what really occurred on that occasion, as it seems to have made a great noise throughout the country."

"Why, you see," said the Laird in reply, "towards the beginning of last year I chanced to be in Galloway holding courts throughout the different parishes—and

a fatiguing time I had of it, I can tell you. The Courts were wretchedly attended. Of course, ill-affected people did not come of their own accord, and there was not sufficient force to compel them to do so. Determined, however, not to be defeated, I one day assembled a large concourse of men and women—in fact, every one belonging to Dairy—in the parish church, without assigning any ostensible reason for so doing. After the church was filled to overflowing, I caused the door to be locked; and at the blast of my bugle, a band of trusty followers—previously made acquainted with my plans—came galloping up and instantly surrounded the church. This done I put my head in at one of the windows, and gazing with a wrathful countenance—though I could scarce forbear laughing outright—on the astonished group within, I shouted aloud, 'He or she, who wishes to leave this place alive, must instantly take the oath of abjuration!' Had a bombshell fallen in the midst of the assembled company, scattering death and ruin around, they could not have looked more appalled than they did on hearing these awful words. To all their prayers and entreaties—and they were not a few—I vouchsafed but the same reply—free egress and pardon to all those to whom I administer the oath. This was accompanied by a loud flourish of trumpets which seemed to complete the general consternation. 'O, Sir Robert, hae ye nae conscience, man, that ye tak sic a pleasure in making folks' lives a burden to them?' whined out an old witch, raising her apron to the corner of one eye, and looking at me hard from the other; 'do let me out; I am an auld woman——' 'The greater reason for your being a sensible one,' I replied; but she continued as though she heard me not. 'I have a large family, some of whom are biding at hame; and it would be an unco-like thing for the likes o' me to have it to say on my return that I had been and taken a non-juring oath, or some ither thing equally wicked. What chance, think ye, wad there be o' my getting to heaven after doing the likes o' that?' 'There appears to be very little chance of your getting there at present,' I said in reply; 'for, if you are an attentive reader of your Bible, as I trust you are, you must have observed the strict injunction to honour the king. And I think you will allow there is not much consideration for the person of his most gracious Majesty in your composition, or you would not refuse to take the oath which would at once prove to my satisfaction that you are a true and loyal subject.' 'Ay, ay,' she rejoined, 'that may be all very true; but it is not an earthly monarch we are bound to obey, when our consciences testify against his proceedings; and you know brawly yoursel', that the king has slipped away sadly from the straight line it behoved him to keep till, if not for his own sake, at least for the sakes of these pious and now persecuted men wha wad fain hae regarded him in the light o' a parent. But, oh, he is, indeed, a sad example o'——' 'Enough, enough, my good woman!' I exclaimed in an angry tone, for I was waxing wroth at the pertinacity with which she eluded the subject of the oath; and pulling a pistol out of my pocket, I affected to be

examining the priming as though to make ready to fire should she not yield obedience to my wishes. The sight of the ugly weapon was enough. With a loud exclamation betwixt a groan and a howl, the old beldame testified her willingness to do my bidding; adding, she hoped she might not be held accountable for that day's work, as it was only to prevent the crime of murder she had given in. A few of those present, seeing how greatly things were against them, imitated her good example; while others, again, possessing the stubborn old Covenanting spirit, repelled with scorn all offers of pardon purchased at such a price. However, they soon discovered that if they were obstinate so were we; and being, moreover, thoroughly wearied of their confinement, and alarmed at the prospect of a still longer imprisonment, they gradually gave in one by one, until the whole had consented to come to terms. After having duly administered the oath—which seemed indeed a terrible ordeal for the most of them—I wound up the affair by exclaiming, 'Now you are a fold full of clean beasts—you may go away home;' upon which the doors were thrown open, and amid loud shouts of derisive laughter, the crest-fallen Covenanters issued forth, looking and muttering unutterable things."

Here Sir Robert ended his narration, and the loud shouts of approving merriment with which the recital was received, testified how much the listeners relished hearing of any practical joke that had for its object any one of the party who had rendered themselves so obnoxious to the then existing Government.

"And did the varlets keep true to their oath?" inquired Lieutenant Livingstone, after he had in some measure recovered his wonted composure of countenance.

"I understood not, from some spies whom I had placed in and about Dairy," answered the Laird, "whereupon I immediately set out at the head of some chosen followers and traversed the whole extent of the parish. Having very good reasons to believe that my spies were correct in their information, I took the liberty of exacting some pretty considerable fines from the richer portion of the community, greatly to their astonishment and indignation, they having fancied themselves secure from all further molestation. No less a sum than seven hundred pounds was extorted by me from three persons who had been bewailing at a sad rate their defalcation in the church of Dairy; and, as you may fancy, their hearts were not lightened by the loss of so much money."

"By the bye, Laird, how did you get on with that beggarly fellow also residing in Galloway?" inquired Captain Dalziel, when Sir Robert had finished speaking. "You may remember the last time I saw you, you were on the point of starting off in pursuit of him. Did you manage to catch him, or is he still lurking in some secret place? if so, we shall ferret him out."

"There are no such proceedings necessary," replied Sir Robert with a grim

smile; "we have had many a peck at him since that eventful day, the cowardly skulking fellow that he is. Why, we spent nearly a fortnight in search of him; but, my word! his goods and chattels paid toll for all the annoyance he gave us. I wish you could have seen his wife's face as we ripped up the mattresses, scattered the contents on the floor, and carried off the ticken, as well as every other thing capable of being transported; how she did wring her hands and tear her hair; yet for all we did and threatened to do, she would not betray her husband's lurking-place. Women are so obstinate in cases like these. However, while ransacking the house, we came upon a young damsel, whom we concluded to be the daughter of the person we were in quest of. To all my inquiries regarding her father, she turned a deaf ear, protesting she knew nought of his whereabouts. Determined to try another plan, I then inquired of her where she had spent the previous evening? Entirely thrown off her guard, and suspecting no evil, she answered, in the house of Mrs. ——, naming an elderly gentlewoman, whose name I have at this instant forgotten. Thither we instantly went, and were rewarded for our trouble by the discovery of two other rebels of whom we were also in search. Suspecting the other would not be far distant, we then galloped to the sea-shore and ransacked the caves amongst the rocks, in one of which we came upon our friend, and also another who had taken refuge with him. In accordance with my orders, all four were instantly conveyed to Bangor prison, where the proper authorities tendered to them the oath of abjuration, which was taken by one and refused by the others. Then a court of assize was held and indictments served on the remaining rebels, two of whom also gave in. On being informed that the fourth still held out, I went thither, determined to reduce him to reason. He remained steadfast to his purpose, declaring nothing should tempt him to swerve from his duty, upon hearing which I broke out into a fearful passion, and swore by the bones of my father that if he did not take the oath in the space of five minutes, he should be barking and flying on his way to another world. This produced the desired effect, and the fellow, who seemed most horribly afraid, at length succumbed. But I can tell you it was all they could do to get me to spare his life I was so indignant with the rascal."

Here Sir Robert paused and replenished his goblet.

"Is there any truth in the report that the Whigs are arming themselves in this part of the country?" inquired Captain Bruce of Sir Robert Grierson, who replied in the negative, adding that the sneaking poltroons had suffered too much at the Pentlands and Bothwell Bridge ever to attempt anything like a formal stand against the Government soldiers; besides the stringent measures he had thought proper to adopt in Dumfriesshire and Galloway would effectually prevent any of the opposite faction from attempting aught like retaliation in the neighbourhood. He then proceeded to give them a detailed account of the summary manner in

which he had, that morning, dispatched old Elias Henderson—a proceeding on his part which met with unqualified approbation from the assembled revellers, who each in his turn related some memorable exploit in which they had in a special manner signalised themselves by their unheard of atrocities.

"Ha! ha!" shouted Sir Robert Greirson, "what a fine set of fellows we are to be sure! come, let us drink each other's good health in a goblet of sparkling Burgundy. There's myself, whom the rascals have nicknamed 'the bloody Lag.' There's you, my worthy friend on the right, who rejoice in the appellation of 'the fiery Dalziel;' and Bruce, who is termed 'the ungodly;' and you, Livingstone, 'the wicked lieutenant.' And pray, what are you styled?" he added, turning towards Cornet Douglas, who replied with a frightful grimace, "the black cornet," an answer which convulsed the hearers with laughter, as the young man in question rejoiced in an unwonted sallowness of complexion.

"I wonder, Sir Robert," observed Captain Dalziel, after they had duly honoured the proposed pledge, "that you do not feel apprehensive of these exasperated men attacking you some night in this old castle. It strikes me that you are rather incautious in thus making enemies so near your own threshold. This is a wild, solitary place; and were these wandering, psalm-singing fellows to unite together, they might work serious damage ere you could possibly have time to aprize your nearest friends. I am not joking, I assure you," pursued Captain Dalziel; "the idea just came into my head this evening while riding through the glen; more particularly, as I observed some rather grim-looking rascals hovering near the bye-roads. I paused for a moment in order to observe their motions more closely; but guessing my evident intentions, they addressed a few words to each other, and then sauntered carelessly away across the heath.

"What! attack Lag Tower!" cried Sir Robert, with a loud burst of incredulous laughter. "I only wish the knaves would try it. But, no; they are too well aware of what the consequences would be to brave the lion in his den. But should they come, they will find a cold, if not a warm reception; for, in the twinkling of an eye, I can, by means only known to myself, surround the castle with a lake which it would rather puzzle these canting Whigs to get across. Ha! ha! there is nothing I should like better than to see a whole troop of them immersed in such a slough of despond. What say you, Livingstone? would you not think it a transporting sight to see our most worthy friends—all clad in hodden-grey and Kilmarnock bonnets—floundering in the water like so many porpoises, while you stood on the castle-wall with your musket, in readiness to pop them off one by one as they showed their heads above water? On my life, Dalziel, I would willingly lose the best suit of armour in my possession should——"

At this instant, while loud shouts of laughter resounded through the hall, the door was flung open to its widest extent, and John Kirsop, his face haggard

with emotion, staggered into the room.

"How now, sirrah!" exclaimed Sir Robert Grierson indignantly; "how darest thou enter our presence after this fashion?"

"Pardon, pardon! Sir Robert," broke in John Kirsop, his voice trembling through apprehension; "but this is no time for ceremony."

"What meanest thou, knave?"

"The rascally Whigs have flown to arms, and even now are but a few paces distant, threatening all manner of vengeance against you and yours. Their present plan, so far as I could learn, is to destroy the castle by fire. This they propose doing this very night."

"Ha!" cried Sir Robert, starting to his feet, an example that was speedily followed by the others; "have the traitors presumed thus far? Saw ye aught of these bold conspirators?" he continued; "how many may they number? Speak out, knave, and let us lose no time in dallying; even now the villains may have commenced their operations. Livingstone, do you run to the loop-hole facing the north, and keep a look out from that quarter; and you, Douglas, hasten to the one on the right hand as you ascend the stair, where you may be able to perceive what is going on; and now, Kirsop, proceed with your narration, and that as briefly us possible."

Thus admonished, Kirsop related all that had befallen him since leaving Drumlanrig. When he came to mention his interview with Walter Henderson, Sir Robert smiled grimly, and nodded his head towards Captain Dalziel, as though he recognised the truth of his warning.

At the conclusion of the story, Sir Robert exclaimed, while filling a goblet with wine, which he handed to the exhausted soldier, "Thou art an honest fellow, Kirsop, and shalt not lose thy reward when once we get this troublesome affair arranged to our satisfaction."

Scarcely had Sir Robert Grierson finished speaking, when Lieutenant Livingstone rushed into the hall, exclaiming in a hurried whisper, "They are here! they are here! even now I perceived them stealing round the corner."

"How many may there be?" demanded Sir Robert.

"A dozen or more, I should fancy," was the reply.

"A dozen!" cried Sir Robert, with a scornful laugh, "why, from the way that fellow Kirsop spoke, one would have imagined that a hundred men at least were at the gates."

"I but told the truth," said Kirsop doggedly; "they numbered a few when they started, but they spoke of reinforcements; and that old Whig, Walter Henderson, declared the whole country-side were in arms in defence of their liberties, so——"

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed Sir Robert impatiently, "and now, my friends,

let us hasten to crush these rebels. A dozen men! Why, we ourselves would be sufficient to cope with thrice that number."

"What mean you to do, Sir Robert?" inquired Captain Dalziel.

"Mean to do!" re-echoed the fiery Laird. "Why, roast the knaves alive, to be sure! ay, every mother's son of them."

"Will you open the flood-gates on this occasion?" said Lieutenant Livingstone, laughing as he spoke.

"No, no," was the stern reply; "that were too speedy a death for these undisciplined rascals; a more lingering doom awaits them. Lag Hill shall witness their last agonies." So saying, Sir Robert Grierson strode across the hall, and detaching a sword from a pin on which it hung, fastened it to his belt. While thus engaged, Cornet Douglas entered, and, in addition to Lieutenant Livingstone's information, told Sir Robert that the assailants were even then engaged in piling up huge logs of wood, obtained from the supply set apart for the use of the castle against the outer walls.

"Then no farther time must be lost," broke in Sir Robert. "Do you, Livingstone, Bruce, and Douglas station yourselves at the three windows overlooking the scene of action; and the instant the rascals attempt to set fire to the wood, send a volley amongst them, whilst we steal round by the side postern and attack them on the rear. I think that will settle the business," said Sir Robert with a laugh, as he cautiously descended the stair, closely followed by his companions. In the meantime, as notified by Cornet Douglas, Walter Henderson and his party were proceeding noiselessly and rapidly with their operations, and already a considerable portion of their labour had been accomplished. The increasing darkness of the night favoured their project, the moon, which in the former part of the evening shone with a brilliancy that in some measure threatened to frustrate their schemes, having veiled her brightness behind huge masses of leaden-coloured clouds which slowly drifted along the sky. It formed a strange and striking picture this old castle of Lag, rising, as it did, amid a wide extent of flat, desolate moor-land which stretched away in the distance until relieved by a range of bare irregular looking hills bounding the prospect. So thought one of the party, William Hislop by name, as in common with his comrades, he proceeded leisurely to pile up around the castle walls huge blocks of wood destined, as he imagined, to level it with the ground. In conjunction with this thought, he remarked to one of his companions that it was a lonesome-looking place, and that for his part he did not quite like the task they were engaged in, adding, by way of consolation, "if that old vulture, Lag, gets us atween his claws, it's little flesh we'll hae on our backs when aince we get out o' them."

"Why, then, did you join us if such were your feelings?" said the person addressed. "I am sure had Walter Henderson known you had no love for the

undertaking, he would not have pressed you to come hither."

"It's not that I think we are doing anything wrong in burning doon the castle—no, no; the bloody persecutor, as he is, weel deserves it at our hands, and I felt rale brave and anxious about the doing o' the same, when Walter Henderson brought it hame to our souls in the manner he did; but somehow or another the case looks different now, and it's such an eerie-looking bit to be meddling wi' at this time o' night, that——"

"Hear till that, man!" suddenly exclaimed his by no means comfortable companion in a low tone of voice.

"Hear till what?" cried William Hislop, now fairly started out of all composure by this sudden exclamation. "Tush, man," he said after a moment's pause, "it's only an owlet screaming; do you no' see it up by yonder?" and they both stood still a while to observe the bird which wheeled in rapid circles around the castle, screaming and flapping its wings as though to apprise the inmates of the terrible danger that menaced them.

"Do you think that can be ain of Lag's familiar spirits?" he continued, addressing his companion; "for ye ken it is reported through the country that he keeps a wheen evil spirits to tell him all that he wants to know."

"That I canna' pretend to say," answered his comrade, whose eyes still followed the excited bird; "but it seems in a terrible state o' flutter: what can it mean by going on at that gait?"

"Did you see that strange light dancing along the moor as we came across the road?" inquired William Hislop, who was evidently a firm believer in ought that savoured of the supernatural.

"Yes I did," was the reply.

"And what do you think it was?"

"A will-o'-the-wisp, to be sure!"

"Aweel, may be!" was the doubting reply; "truly may I say that never yet has that same twinkling light cam' across my path, but something most terrible has happened to me afterwards!"

"Silence!" cried Walter Henderson in a low stern voice. At this instant a cock, which had taken up its quarters for the night on a neighbouring tree, apparently cheated into the belief from the unusual stir that prevailed around its generally peaceful domicil, that morning had already dawned, gave forth its usual challenge to the sun; a proceeding which so thoroughly alarmed William Hislop, that he exclaimed aloud, regardless of time and place, "Gude save us a'! The cock to be crowing at this time o' night; it's easy seen what 'ill be the end o' this fine work!"

"Have you a mind to ruin yourself and us, that you thus indulge in such untimely remarks?" whispered Walter Henderson, and he grasped William Hislop

tightly by the arm as he spoke. "The greatest caution is necessary," he continued, "lest we be discovered and our plans thereby frustrated. Now cease your apologies and attend to me. The wood is all ready; and it but remains for us to apply the light, and our labour will be accomplished. I will advance first, and do you follow; here are the necessary materials;" so saying, he placed a piece of flint and tinder in the trembling hands of William Hislop, who rather unwillingly proceeded to fulfil the duty imposed upon him. But scarcely had the match been ignited, when, according to the commands of Sir Robert Grierson, a volley of musketry was discharged from the windows overhead, which stretched several of the assailants upon the ground. On hearing this dreadful sound, the forerunner of yet more terrifying alarms, the lighted match fell from William Hislop's Land, and giving utterance to a loud exclamation of horror, he fell forward, as though he had been shot, on the pile of wood before him.

"Betrayed! betrayed!" shouted Walter Henderson, drawing his sword as bespoke; "fly, my friends, fly, while there is yet time!"

In obedience to his commands, the panic-stricken men rushed to the outer gate; but scarcely had the foremost reached it, when a firm grasp was laid on his collar, and he found himself a prisoner. The others were captured in a similar manner; the darkness of the night preventing their being able to distinguish friends from foes. The terrible voice of Sir Robert Grierson was then heard, ordering lights to be brought that the faces of the prisoners might be discernible. Eager to do his bidding, several of his retainers rushed to the banqueting hall, and snatching the pine-torches from off the walls, brought them to Sir Robert, who, seizing the one borne by John Kirsop, waved it aloft in the air over the heads of the terrified prisoners, as they stood motionless in the hands of their captors awaiting the doom they feared to be inevitable. By the ruddy glow of the lights, Sir Robert at once distinguished the venerable form of Walter Henderson. "Ha, thou hoary-headed traitor!" he exclaimed in a furious tone; "and is this the way in which you seek to follow after *that* which is good? Is it by deeds like these that you would fain hope to build up the walls of your crumbling kirk, and patch up anew your broken Covenant! Covenant forsooth! Who would seek to enter into terms with traitors such as you? Not I for one, and that you will learn right speedily; dearly shall all of you rue this night's work. And you thought to catch the lion asleep," he pursued in a mocking tone; "ha, ha! then you made a slight mistake, that is all; and were it not that business, which brooks no delay, requires my presence in another part of the country, to-morrow should witness your final agonies; but ere the sun has thrice completed its circuit of the heavens, shall you, and your partners in iniquity, cease to cumber the earth. Away with the villains," he cried, addressing his retainers, "throw them into the deepest and darkest dungeons beneath the castle, and there, amid the gloom that surrounds

them, let them comfort themselves with the thoughts of a speedy doom awaiting them."

"Murderer of my brother!" shouted Walter Henderson, struggling to free himself; "this night's work is a fitting termination to a day so begun; but think not, though thy infernal arts have prevented the completion of our purpose, that thou wilt always escape. No; a terrible day of retribution awaits thee, and when it does arrive, thou wilt remember the innocent blood thou hast shed, and cease to hope. In what had my poor brother wronged thee that thou must basely deprive him of life? In what manner had he infringed the laws that his blood must pay the forfeit? Oh, Judas, that thou art!——"

"How darest thou speak to Sir Robert Grierson thus?" cried Lieutenant Livingstone, at the same time dealing him a buffet on the side of the head.

"Away with the old hypocrite!" thundered forth Sir Robert Grierson with an impatient wave of the hand; "convey him to his quarters, and feed him on coarse bread and water during the remainder of his sojourn on earth; it will, in some measure, cool the fever of his blood, and enable him to view things in a clearer light than he has hitherto done. Kirsop, to your watchful care I commit the prisoner."

"Kirsop!" exclaimed Walter Henderson in a tone of dismay, "ha, that explains it all! Fool, fool that I was to trust him for one moment out of my sight!"

"Don't blame yourself, old fellow," said the soldier with a grin, "because fortune has given the scales a turn in our favour; but rather rejoice in the thoughts that you will leave the world with your conscience freed from the heavy crime which would otherwise have rendered it top-heavy, and prevented your getting out of purgatory quite so soon as you would have wished, had I not escaped from the hands of the person to whose care you commended me."

This last stroke of bad fortune quite overcame Walter Henderson, and muttering "God's will be done!" he suffered his captor to lead him away, to the loathsome dungeon appointed for his reception.

The remains of the unfortunate Covenanters who had perished at the outset of the affair had long been removed from the court yard, and Sir Robert Grierson and his friends were again seated at the festive board, carousing and blaspheming according to their wont; still William Hislop had not yet mustered up courage sufficient to emerge from his hiding-place. It was, to say the least of it, rather a hard bed he had chosen on which to repose his wearied limbs, still, as he himself expressed it, anything was preferable to lying dead on the courtyard or sickening in a dungeon; and it would be the height of ingratitude for him to complain who had, without doubt, fared the best of the party. True he was still, in some measure, within the "Laird's grasp;" yet as he listened to the wild bursts of revelry which ever and anon fell upon his ear, he felt assured that soon the whole party would

be laid prostrate beneath the table, and then he might venture forth in safety. An hour or two, which seemed to William Hislop, in his anxious state of mind, like so many ages, passed away without producing the desired change in the banqueting hall; on the contrary, mirth seemed on the increase; and William Hislop, from his hiding-place, could distinctly hear Sir Robert Grierson, whose voice he had reason to remember, deliver a song, which, judging from the uproarious shouts of laughter that followed each verse, seemed of an unusually joyous character.

"The auld vagabond that he is!" muttered the incensed listener, "to be going on in that daft manner just after he has doomed a wheen fellow-creatures to death; it really astonishes me that the walls o' the castle dinna' come doon about his ears and finish him in the midst o' his evil on-goings. Truly the Lord is merciful! Nae wonder cauld water takes to the boil whenever he puts his foot in't! I am sure I wad gin he cam near me, the nasty fellow that he is. My very blood rins cauld till hear him going on at that gait; it's like naething human. Gude sake! how I pity these poor fellows at this moment in the power o' sic a character; indeed, I may just as well pity myself when I'm at it, for I'm no that far out o' the wood that I can afford to waste time in talking to mysel' like some auld spaewife—the more especially when I may be able to do something a hantle better, than a wheen useless words, for my comrades in captivity." So saying, William Hislop thrust aside a huge block of wood which somewhat obstructed his exit, and prepared to issue forth. Scarcely had he ventured a few steps across the courtyard, when, with a loud scream, the owl darted forth from its hiding-place amongst the ivy, and again commenced wheeling in rapid circles around the castle; but this time in such close proximity as almost to strike him with its wings. Horrified beyond measure at the sight of this unexpected apparition, and fully persuaded of its being nothing else than an emissary of Satan's, William Hislop crept back to his retreat amongst the wood, where he lay for several minutes, gazing with distended eyes on the ill-omened bird as it pursued its wayward flight.

"I am a gone man!" he muttered; "a gone man! that owl will be the death o' me! It has discovered I am here, and the next thing will be the Laird coming his ain sell to pull me out o' my hiding-place. Whist ye there wi' your crying! I am sure ye might be contented wi' the lot that has fallen to your share and let me alane. O sirs me! had I but foreseen the tae half o' the misfortunes that were to befall us this dreadful night, I wad hae been sitting by my mother's hearthstane, supping my porritch wi' a thankfu' heart, instead o' lying here, expecting every moment to be my last."

While William Hislop was thus indulging in soliloquy, one of the windows of the banqueting hall was thrown open, and a voice exclaimed, evidently in reply to a question from within, "Morning breaks, and ere another hour has passed,

we must be in our saddles;" then the casement was closed, and once more the festivity was resumed.

"Now, William Hislop, now or never!" With these words, addressed to himself, the impatient Covenanter again ventured forth from the place of his concealment. This time the owl kindly forebore screaming; but stationed itself on the branch of a tree overhanging the courtyard, from which elevation it gazed on the intruder with eyes that seemed to emit sparks of fire, as though questioning his right to depart. Creeping cautiously along, under shadow of the wall, William Hislop managed to gain, unobserved, that portion of it which admitted of an easy descent on the other side. This position attained, his courage in some measure revived, and pausing a moment to shake his hand at the owl before taking his final leap, he muttered between his teeth, "There now, ye may gang and tell your hopeful master, from me, that maybe there 'ill be mair company assembled on Lag Hill, on the morning o' the execution, than he wots o'," and with these mysterious words, accompanied by another gesture of defiance, William Hislop darted from off the wall, and rapidly disappeared amidst the gloom of the early morning.

About two miles to the south of the village of Dunscore, in a little valley, sheltered by mountains from every blast that swept over the neighbouring heath, stood the form belonging to the deceased Elias Henderson. The house pertaining to the farm partook of the usual appearance of farm-houses in Scotland, at the period of which we write, and was scrupulously clean and attractive in its exterior; while the well-stocked yard and barns bespoke the thrifty farmer. Indeed, few persons following this precarious occupation could boast of greater success than had fallen to the lot of Elias Henderson.

It was the evening of the second day from that on which our story opens, and the deep air of silence that reigned in and around the farm-house of Westercleugh, told in language more expressive than the most eloquent words, that death had laid its ice-cold hand on one of the inmates. In the kitchen, close to the window, is seated an aged woman, the mother of the deceased; her hands are crossed on her breast, and her eyes remain immovably fixed on the open pages of the Bible lying on her knee. In appearance she is calm and resigned, for more than three-score years and ten have passed over her head, and old age has somewhat chilled the current of human affection, yet she mourns her sad bereavement; and while lamenting that death should have taken him who was in the prime of manhood and spared the aged, she turns to the Word of God for consolation in her affliction. In another corner of the apartment is seated, or rather reclining, for her head is thrown over the back of her chair, the bereaved wife, in an utter abandonment of grief. Her children stand grouped around her; the elder ones sharing their mother's sorrow; while the youngest, an infant of not more than two years old, sits smiling and crowing in its little chair. Silence is everywhere

maintained; and the servants belonging to the farm tread with the utmost caution as they go in and out in the execution of their accustomed duties, so truly do they sympathise with their mistress in the loss of her husband, and no less deep and sincere is their grief for the loss of a kind and indulgent master. The rays of the setting sun streamed through the casement, lighting up the venerable features of the matron, as though to comfort her, in midst of her grief, with the blissful promise of a future state, where those for ever separated in this world should be re-united in the bonds of love. After gazing for a moment on the brilliant messenger, she arose from her seat, and putting aside her Bible, crossed over to where Mrs. Henderson lay absorbed in grief, and placing her hand on her shoulder, said in a sad, yet firm voice—"Marion, grieve no more for him who has now gone from amongst us! Rouse yourself from that state of useless sorrow; it is the living who require our sympathy and care—the dead need it not. No amount of weeping ran ever restore those who have once crossed the river of death. But, oh! bethink you, Marion, of the happiness, we may humbly venture to hope, our beloved one is now enjoying in the presence of his Maker, for he was a sincere Christian, and strove to do ins duty manfully. Think not," she continued, "because my poor old eyes refuse to weep, that I lightly esteem the irreparable loss I have sustained. During the long period of years it has pleased the Lord that I should sojourn in this vale of tears, I have seen the young whom I loved and the aged fall around me like the leaves of autumn. And what, think you, has strengthened me in all my affliction? Nothing but the hope of a cloudless hereafter. Think on that, Marion. Think on the promises of the Gospel, and endeavour, while on earth, so to do your duty to yourself and your children, that no link may be awanting in the chain, which will, I trust, unite us all in the regions above." At the mention of her children, Mrs. Henderson started up from her recumbent posture, and throwing her arms around their necks, clasped them to her bosom, weeping passionately, and exclaiming the while, "Oh my poor fatherless children!" In the midst of this ungovernable burst of sorrow, the latch of the outer door was gently lifted, and a slow and cautious footstep was heard advancing along the passage leading to the kitchen. On her turning round, old Mrs. Henderson was surprised, and in some degree terrified, to perceive it was the wife of her son Walter who at that moment entered.

"What has happened, Sarah? in the name of heaven, speak!" she cried, observing the look of hopeless misery with which her daughter-in-law advanced towards her.

"Walter! Walter! have ye seen nought of my Walter?" exclaimed the fainting woman as she sank upon the nearest chair. "He left me on the morning of his brother's death, and has never returned. Yesterday," she continued in a choking voice, "my son set off in search of him, and he, too, has failed to come back. Oh,

what shall I do if they also have fallen into the hands of that wicked Lag!"

This sad intelligence struck the hearers dumb, and they remained motionless, gazing on one another with eyes that revealed the horror their tongues refused to express. At length, with a noble effort, the sorrowing mistress of Eastercleugh roused herself from her hitherto inactive grief, and strove, by every means in her power, to alleviate the uncontrollable distress of her sister-in-law, who having recently arisen from a sick bed, was thoroughly exhausted by the fatigue and anxiety she had undergone.

"And have you heard nothing concerning your husband since his departure from home?" inquired old Mrs. Henderson, who stood with her arm supporting the aching head of her daughter-in-law.

"Nothing," was the weeping reply; "but yesterday morning strange reports reached us concerning some desperate encounter that had taken place between the Laird and some of our party. This alarmed me dreadfully, and my son, seeing the sad state to which I was reduced by anxiety regarding the prolonged absence of Walter, went off at an early hour with the intention of seeking him. Up to the time at which I left home he had not returned, and too anxious to remain longer without news of some kind, I instantly resolved, spite of the distance, and my own weakness, to come hither, hoping he might be with you, or that you would be able to give me some information respecting him."

"Now may God, in his infinite mercy, grant that this new and exceeding bitter trial be averted from us," piously exclaimed the venerable matron, throwing her arms around the necks of her weeping daughters; "but let us not murmur, my children, should it be otherwise decreed by Him whose goodness and loving-kindness are beyond all praise. Our heart's dearest treasures are but lent us for a season—soon, soon must they be restored; then let us, recognising the unspeakable love which prompts the removal of our choicest blessings that our thoughts may be weaned from earth to heaven, exclaim with the bereaved King of Israel, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

Scarcely had old Mrs. Henderson finished her pious exhortation, ere the door again opened—but this time it was a man's eager footstep which paced the passage, and the voice of Walter Henderson's son that saluted their ears. He entered; his countenance looked worn and haggard, and he tossed back his dishevelled hair from his forehead with an air of despondency that escaped not the eyes of the watchful mother.

"My son! my son!" she exclaimed, throwing herself on his neck; "what of your father? speak, I can bear it all; only speak, my son!"

"You here, mother!" he gasped forth, and his voice died away in a broken murmur.

"Oh, my Walter! I see it all; thou art dead! I, too, am a widow!"

"No, mother, no! he is not yet dead, and while there is life there is hope—comfort yourself, my mother!"

"Where is he, that we may try and save him?" demanded his grandmother.

The young man shook his head as he answered, "He lies in a dungeon beneath Lag Castle, and to-morrow's sunrise sees him suffer on Lag Hill!"

"To-morrow!" screamed forth the distracted wife, and fell prostrate on the floor.

"He shall not die; oh, mother, speak to me!" cried her almost distracted son; and raising her tenderly in his arms, he gazed in her face with a look of unspeakable anguish, fearful lest she too might be snatched from him. Then seeing her recover a little, he continued pouring in words of consolation into her ears, such as were dictated by love and hope.

"Oh! can ye do nought to save him?" cried his aged grandmother, "I fear me her life will go, should he suffer death. Poor thing; oh my helpless children, you have indeed suffered much! God in his mercy succour you, for I fear man can do but little."

"Mother, he shall not die! God will never permit such an atrocious deed to sully the face of his beautiful earth," cried John Henderson, his eyes beaming with renewed hope; "so do not despair—all will yet be well. Yesterday," he continued hurriedly, "I fell in with William Hislop wending his way towards our house. On seeing me he expressed his satisfaction at the meeting, and informed me that my father was a prisoner in Lag Castle. It appeared, from his statement, that, driven to the verge of madness by my uncle's death, my father had determined upon burning the castle to the ground. This he proceeded to do in company with some friends; but information of their coming was conveyed to the Laird by a soldier who had been taken prisoner by my father, and managed to escape, so that he entrapped them all, with the exception of William Hislop, who fortunately succeeded in secreting himself among some wood, from which retreat he overheard the bloody Lag declare his intention of murdering them to-morrow. The hour sun-rise; the place Lag Hill. We are determined, if possible, to prevent this dastardly deed. Even now William Hislop is scouring the country in search of aid, and I have managed to secure some bold youths who are only too willing to assist in so good a cause. Being in this neighbourhood, I came to acquaint you with my purpose, hoping that my dear mother would hear nothing of it until all had been decided; but 'tis better thus, the sight of her pale suffering face has nerved me anew for the combat." So saying, he embraced her tenderly, and again exclaiming "Mother, he shall not die!" rushed forth from the dwelling.

The fatal morning at length arrived; and scarcely had the appearance of a few streaks of red in the east betrayed the early dawn, ere Sir Robert Grierson and his companions were pursuing their way, on horseback, towards Lag Hill,

whither the prisoners had already gone. Owing to the unavoidable absence of Captain Bruce, with a considerable portion of the Laird's followers, the guard in charge of the Covenanters was composed of but few men; yet, trusting in the terror of his name, and the secrecy with which the whole affair had been conducted throughout, Sir Robert was not apprehensive of any attempt at rescue being made. On gaining the summit of the hill where stood the prisoners, Sir Robert Grierson, placing his hand on a barrel all stuck round with sharp-pointed weapons, demanded of Walter Henderson how he relished the thoughts of quitting the world in so terrible a manner; adding, with a hoarse laugh in which his companions joined, "that it would enable him to judge whether the Word was indeed sharper than any two-edged sword!"

"Sir Robert Grierson," replied Walter Henderson mildly, "jest not thus with one about to bid farewell to this world, and who would fain compose his mind that he might be able to reflect on the joys pertaining to a better. But before suffering death," he continued, "I would wish to obtain your forgiveness for the sinful attempt I made to destroy your castle. In the darkness and solitude of my dungeon I had time to reflect on the crime I had been guilty of, in taking vengeance into my hand instead of leaving it to Him who hath said, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay!' but you had foully slain my brother, and I was mad. At the best we are but poor erring mortals; for a time Satan got possession of my heart, and I thirsted for revenge. I am now about to pay the penalty of my presumptuous sin—would God it were alone!—and I would fain leave the world at peace with you and all men."

"Bravo, old hodden-grey!" cried Sir Robert with a loud laugh of derision. "Thou hast mistaken thy vocation; the pulpit were a fitting place for thee, and had I but known of thy talents in this line, I should have had one erected for thee that thou mightest have held forth in a style becoming thy merits."

Walter Henderson turned from the speaker with a look of mingled contempt and pity, and gazing on his companions with the deepest sorrow expressed on his countenance, seemed as if about to address them, when Captain Dalziel interposed, exclaiming in a stern voice, "Now cease your canting nonsense; we want none of your conventicle phrases!"

"No, no," said Sir Robert Grierson; "pray let him go on; I never was at a field-preaching, and should like to hear how they conduct matters there; besides, there is plenty of time, and the rascals will have leisure to examine our playthings. So now, old Round-bonnet, proceed—we are all attention!"

"My friends," said Walter Henderson, heedless alike of their remarks and the jeers that accompanied them, "we have been brought here to suffer death, and I trust we shall meet it with the calm serenity of men who are travellers towards a better country. Of the cruelty of him who hath decreed that we should

perish by such unheard-of tortures I shall say nought, lest, by dwelling on the subject, I should forget my recently-acquired spirit of Christian forgiveness, and heap such curses on his head as might endanger my own salvation. Let us not, then, dwell on the sufferings we must experience ere we can win repose in death, but rather let us rejoice that we are thus called upon to suffer, and in the glorious prospect that lies before us of our being accepted in the sight of God." ("Prophesy, prophesy, old fellow!" shouted Cornet Douglas.) "Oh, my friends," pursued the aged Covenanter, his face flushed with enthusiasm, "even now, as I stand at the gates of death, the thin veil which separates the future from us is torn from my sight, and I behold a scene which gladdens my old eyes." ("Out with it, out with it, hurrah!" cried the Laird and his party, amid shouts of laughter.) "I see," he continued, "a prosperous and happy country smiling around me, the inhabitants of which live in peace one with another, and the hand of the persecutor is no longer lifted to smite. The village bell sounds sweetly on the Sabbath morn, and the faithful preacher of the Word of God, no longer fearing to teach his little flock in the sight of all men, instructs his hearers in the simple doctrines of their beloved faith; while aged matrons, as together they cross the peaceful churchyard, pause for a moment, ere entering the house of God, to gaze on the simple stone which marks the Covenanted grave. My brethren, we shall not be forgotten. In the bosoms of our countrymen, we shall live for ever. Till remotest ages, shall our wrongs and our sufferings form a soul-stirring theme; and the aged parent, as with kindling eyes he rehearses in the ears of his children the tales that have descended to him of our untiring zeal in the cause of the Covenant, shall point to the rusted sword hanging sheathed on the wall, and bless God that his forefathers were amongst the number of those who fought and bled in defence of the rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland."

"Thine hour has come!" said Sir Robert Grierson, making a signal for him to prepare for death.

The sun had now arisen, and its bright rays tinted with a roseate hue the summit of the mighty Criffel, and lit up the wild and desolate hill on which the bloody deed was about to be enacted. At the sight of the brilliant luminary, which never more should rise for him, Walter Henderson seemed for an instant overcome, but it was only for an instant, and soon he regained his wonted composure.

"Now, we shall soon see how the old rascal will face death," cried Sir Robert, in a tone of fiendish delight; "here, bring hither the barrel, and see that all the weapons are properly arranged so that he shall lose nothing of his punishment. That's it; in with him, and whenever I fire off this pistol send him head-long down the hill!"

Scarcely had the soldiers advanced to do their leader's bidding, when, with a deafening cheer which awoke the echoes amongst the neighbouring hills, a

large body of men, headed by William Hislop and John Henderson, and armed with scythes, pitch-forks, spades, and every other available weapon, rushed in amongst them, and ere they had time to recover from their astonishment, drove them right down the hill.

"Cowards!" shouted Sir Robert, in a transport of rage, on beholding the sudden onslaught made on his retainers, "dare you thus molest us in the rightful discharge of our duty? Dalziel!—Livingstone! stand by me, and we will teach these knaves a lesson."

With these words, Sir Robert Grierson struggled to regain his former position on the summit of the mountain, but all in vain. The dense crowd came pouring on, bearing all before them.

"That's the way; that's the way, my lads, to serve these bloody tyrants!" cried Andrew Hamilton, as several soldiers fell beneath the weapons of their adversaries.

At this instant, his eye encountered the form of John Kirsop, who was vainly endeavouring to force his way towards Sir Robert Grierson. With a cheer of satisfaction he threw himself instantly upon him, and so great was the force of the shock that they both lost their balance and rolled together to the foot of the hill, where they lay cuffing and tearing each other until fairly exhausted by their mutual efforts. The contest was but of short duration. In vain did Sir Robert Grierson threaten with death the first man who evinced a desire to escape. In vain did Captain Dalziel and Lieutenant Livingstone endeavour to recall the panic-stricken soldiers. Fruitless were all their efforts to maintain order. Overpowered by numbers, their followers were driven from the field; while they themselves, unable to make anything like a stand against so superior a force, were also obliged to seek safety in flight.

"Father, O father! and have I then saved you?" cried John Henderson, as he clasped the old man in his arms. "God in heaven be praised for his kindness unto us this day."

"Hurrah!" shouted William Hislop, tossing up his cap in the air, as he gazed after the fugitives, "flee awa, Laird, to your castle; and the next time ye gie orders for an execution see that there's no listeners near to circumvent ye in your evil doings."

Little more remains to be told. But few hours had elapsed since the above scene was enacted ere Mrs. Henderson was weeping on her husband's neck; and their son, as he clasped them alternately in his stalwart arms, cared not to conceal the tears which coursed down his cheeks, while he exclaimed, "Mother, I told you my father should not die!"

It was now considerably past the middle of the day, and the sun was shining in all its wonted splendour. The hedges bursting forth into vernal beauty,

and the "lark at heaven's gate singing," together with the melody of less-aspiring songsters, proclaimed the presence of spring; while the soft freshness of the air imparted an invigorating elasticity to the spirits. After a walk of about an hour and a half's duration, I at length arrived at the glen in which Lag Tower is situated. The nearer I advanced to my journey's end, the more wild and solitary the scenery became. The road wound past the foot of a hill—the scene of many of the Laird's wild exploits; for it is related of him that when tired of the comparative tameness of riding upon a level road, he was in the habit of ascending the face of the mountain upon horseback—a circumstance which contributed not a little towards preserving the country people's belief in his supernatural powers.

The ground in the vicinity of the tower is marshy, thereby affording evidence of the truth of the statement, that when Lag was in fear of being attacked in his stronghold, he could, by some secret process, at any time lay the surrounding country under water, thus preventing his enemies from approaching the tower. With affection, still constant amidst decay and ruin, the ivy clings to the old walls of Lag Tower, as though to preserve it from the further inroads of Time. Alas! unavailing protection. The heap of broken fragments which lie strewn around attest the fact that Time—that ruthless destroyer—has marked it for its prey. Whilst indulging in these melancholy reflections, the sound of footsteps behind me caused me to turn my head, in order to discover who thus intruded upon my privacy. The good-humoured face of one of the servant girls belonging to a neighbouring farm, coupled with the inquiry, "Had I come to take a look at the auld toor?"—the steadfast gaze with which I was regarding the said tower might have satisfied her that I had come for that special purpose—disarmed me of any feeling of momentary anger I might have entertained at thus being disturbed in the midst of my pleasing reverie; and I replied that I was there with the intention of seeing all that remained of Lag Tower, adding, "I suppose you find it very lonely here in the long winter nights?"

"Ay," she replied, "it's rale eerie when the owls flee about flapping their wings and screaming from amongst the ivy."

"Do you ever hear any strange sounds in the tower?"

"Many and many a time; every one about here thinks the auld place haunted, and I am certain it is. Often I canna get sleeping at night for the queer sounds ower here."

"Are there any owls now in the ivy?"

"O yes!" she replied; "there is an owl that has built its nest up there, and it has twa wee anes. It flees ower to the wood ye see yonder, and hides there the whole day; then it comes back at night and makes an awfu' disturbance—hissing and the like, so that we are feared to gae oot."

I pursued my inquiries still farther, and heard it was currently reported that

whatever liquid Lag raised to his lips turned to blood! and that whenever he put his feet into cold water it boiled! She thought he must have been a dreadfu' man! She said she would now show me the place where he put all the bodies of the people he murdered, and, so saying, she called a man to assist her in removing a stone from the mouth of what had evidently been the draw-well for supplying the inmates of Lag Tower with water. This regular "murder hole" both the girl and her companion evidently regarded with the greatest horror.

"Wasna' that an unco-like place to put the puir bodies in?" inquired the girl, gazing intently in my face, evidently expecting to read there the consternation depicted in her own.

I could not repress a smile, as I answered that I thought Lag would not be so foolish as to pollute with dead bodies the water he and his friends drank in the tower.

"What wad he mind what he took?" replied the girl, evidently rather offended at her statement being doubted. "Na, na; that's just the place where he threw the murdered folk!"

After a little more conversation, she was called away to her work, and I was left alone. There is something indescribably melancholy in wandering among the ruins of some ancient castle, whose inmates, in days gone by, bore a conspicuous part in the annals of their country, when the courtyard, which once resounded with the trampling of steeds and the shrill sound of the trumpet, now only re-echoes to the tread of some passing stranger, whom perchance curiosity has brought out of his way to inspect a ruin leagued with historical associations. *I* experienced this sensation strongly as I stood gazing on the setting sun pouring its bright rays fully on the old Tower of Lag. A gentle breeze had sprung up, and the ivy bent low its head before the welcome visitor, as if to woo its tender embraces; whilst the low sighing of the wind amongst the crevices and openings in the ruined walls seemed like some departing spirit's wail o'er the bloody deeds of the wicked persecutor.

The adventurous tourist, while exploring the romantic valleys of Dumfriesshire, would do well to visit this solitary spot, where lived the author of many an evil deed, professedly done in the cause of religion, which all who recognise the mild and gentle precepts it inculcates, would be the first to grieve over and condemn.

How pleasing to relate that a lineal descendant of this famous persecutor is revered for her many deeds of Christian charity and active benevolence, through-

out the country which formerly rung with the evil doings of the Laird of Lag!

THE SUTOR'S SEAT.

Having ascertained, during a recent visit in Dumfriesshire, that Crichup Linn—celebrated on account of its wild sublimity, but more especially for the refuge it afforded to the Covenanters during the days of their persecution—was distant about seven miles from the house where I was then staying, I set off one fine morning, with a friend, to explore the dark recesses of that romantic spot.

Dear to the heart of the Scottish peasant is the remembrance of those bloody days; when the mountains and valleys of their native country resounded with the voice of lamentation as Claverhouse and his dragoons darted like eagles on their prey; and the incense of praise ascended on high from the lonely hill-side and solitary moor, uttered by the lips of those dauntless men who took up arms in defence of a broken Covenant and persecuted Kirk.

Of the many places of refuge sought after by the Covenanters of Dumfriesshire in their hour of danger, Crichup Linn was the most frequently resorted to by them, as its narrow and tortuous paths afforded little scope for the mounted dragoon; while all along the base of the rocks, which rose dark and frowning from the depths of the abyss, Nature had formed a series of caves, as if with a view of sheltering those suffering children who fled to her bosom for protection.

A guide being procured—in the person of a grey-haired labourer, to point out the precise spots where lurked those hapless defenders of Scotland's spiritual freedom—we entered the sequestered shades of Crichup Linn. Few persons could visit this picturesque solitude without being deeply impressed by the almost terrific grandeur of the scene presented to their view while traversing the narrow path along which we followed our venerable guide, who, staff in hand, strode slowly onwards, with head and eyes bent towards the ground, as though he was ruminating, sadly perhaps, on the vanished past. Above our heads gigantic masses of rock towered upward, dark and menacing in their rugged strength, from whose crevices burst forth some withered-looking trees, which wreathed their distorted limbs into fantastic shapes around the huge blocks of stone to which they clung; while at an immeasurable distance beneath, the water—from whence the linn derives its name—fell with a murmuring sound into the basins Nature had formed to receive it.

Evidently enjoying the delighted surprise with which we gazed on the startling scene, our guide exclaimed, as if in answer to his own thoughts, while he pointed with his stick to the gloomy depths below:—"Yes! beneath the shade of these frowning rocks the persecuted Covenanter—friendless and homeless, heart-sick and weary—could lay himself down to rest in as much security as the sleeping child reposing on its mother's breast!" The old man's colour rose as he gave utterance to these words; his eyes flashed, and he grasped his staff with a firmness which convinced me that he himself, had he lived in those times, would have been a staunch supporter of the Covenanting cause. I ventured to hint as much, upon which he replied—"Maybe, maybe! there is no saying what either of us might have been had we lived in those wild days; but praise be to God! they are gone—I trust never to return in Scotland."

Re-echoing this heartfelt prayer, we pursued our way along the giddy ledge of the precipice which stretched beneath. The farther we advanced, the more wild and gloomy the scenery became, until at length we paused, mutually overcome with the stern sublimity of the, formerly believed to be, haunted linn. By means of fissures in the rocks, worn away in some places so as to resemble huge skeletons, we beheld winding passages and numberless cascades—the noise of whose falling waters alone broke upon the stillness of the scene; while in the abyss beneath, gigantic masses of hyperstein-looking rock, jutting boldly out from each bank, seemed to form, what well might have been, the entrance to some subterranean palace of the Genii. So perfect was the resemblance, that, as we gazed affrighted on the towering portals and listened to the murmurs of the water gurgling along its pebbled bed, we almost feared to see some of its terrible inhabitants issue forth, and with denouncing gestures, compel us to enter their unblest abode. After pointing out for our observation the numerous caves which formerly sheltered the adherents of the Covenant, our guide attracted our attention to a seat, in the form of a chair, hollowed out in the solid rock, remarking, as he did so, "You told me you thought from my appearance that I would have been a Covenanter had I lived in their time, and well might you say so, for my forefathers were staunch in the rightful cause; and for many a long hour did my great-grandfather sit in that seat, when Claverhouse and his dragoons were guarding the entrance to the linn. He was a shoemaker in this parish, and from that circumstance alone it is still known as the 'Sutor's Seat.'"

"Is there any tradition handed down in connection with your great-grandfather?" I inquired.

"Yes, ma'm, there is; and if you would care to hear it, you are welcome to all that I can remember." So saying, the old man seated himself on a neighbouring stone and related the story which, clothed in my own language, is now presented to the reader under the name of the

SUTOR'S SEAT.

It was late on the evening of the first of June, sixteen hundred and seventy-nine, and the wife and family of Abel Armstrong, who resided in the parish of Closeburn, were engaged in offering up fervent supplications at the throne of mercy in behalf of all those who had gone forth to fight the battles of the Lord; but the face of the mother waxed pale, and her lips trembled with emotion as she prayed, more especially for the safety of her husband and her son, who had also enrolled themselves beneath the banners of the Covenant. While thus engaged, a low knocking at the outer door caused them to start hastily to their feet, and they stood gazing on each other with looks of eager alarm, at a loss to comprehend the meaning of this unwelcome summons. Again it was repeated; but this time a feeble voice was heard entreating for admission in the name of God. Unable to withstand this earnest appeal, Mrs. Armstrong ran to the door and undid the bar; it flew open, and an officer of dragoons staggered into the cottage. At the sight of the armed intruder, Mrs. Armstrong and her daughters uttered wild screams of alarm; while the sole male inmate of the kitchen, a youth of not more than fifteen years of age, darted to the farthest, corner where stood a loaded gun, and grasping it in his hand, gazed on the soldier with scowling brows, irresolute how to act.

"Fear nought from me," faintly exclaimed the dragoon, observing the hostile attitude assumed by the boy; "I mean you no harm, nor have I the power to inflict an injury, even had I the inclination."

As he spoke, a stream of blood, welling from a deep wound in his side, dyed the cottage floor with a crimson stain.

"Water! water!" he murmured, and sank fainting into the nearest chair.

With all their womanly sympathies aroused within them at the sight of the helpless condition of the stranger who had thus thrown himself upon their hospitality, Mrs. Armstrong and her eldest daughter, Lucy, ran to his assistance; the one to bathe his forehead with vinegar, and the other to fetch bandages to bind up anew his bleeding wound.

"O but he has a bonnie sweet face o' his ain!" said Mrs. Armstrong in pitying accents, as she undid his helmet and stroked down his long fair hair, which, in obedience to the prevailing custom of the Cavaliers, descended in ringlets to his shoulders, "and so young too! My poor lad, what could have tempted you to leave your home to engage in such unprofitable warfare?"

As she spoke, a faint smile stole over the pallid features of the wounded dragoon; he opened his eyes, and warmly pressing the kind hand at that instant engaged in staunching the blood which still flowed from his side, he murmured

the name of mother.

"O, an' it's maybe you have a lady mother who is even now praying for the safety of her darling son, as I have done for that of mine this night!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, the tears coursing down her cheeks as she spoke; "but fear ye nought, for although you are far from home and kindred, and in the house of one who is hostile to your cause, yet are you as safe beneath the humble roof-tree of Abel Armstrong as though you were lying in your stately hall with your mother's arms around your neck."

The exhausted youth again pressed her hand in token of his gratitude for her promised protection, and speedily relapsed into insensibility. Deeply moved on beholding his extreme weakness, Mrs. Armstrong, with the assistance of Lucy, relieved him of his armour, and raising him gently in her arms, conveyed him into their sole remaining apartment, where, according to the usual Scottish custom, two beds were placed in the wall, in one of which they laid the dragoon. Having succeeded, by means of a reviving cordial, in restoring him to consciousness, the tender-hearted woman hastened to examine his bandages, fearful lest they might have slipped during his removal; but their fears proving groundless, they bade God bless him, and left him to repose.

Scarcely had Mrs. Armstrong and her daughter resumed their seats by the kitchen fire, when a low tap on the window pane caused them to tremble anew with apprehension. But soon their fears were allayed when the well-known voice of Abel Armstrong was heard demanding admittance.

With a scream of joy, Mrs. Armstrong darted towards the door which speedily opened to admit her husband and son, accompanied by several others of the Covenanting party.

"My husband! my son!" was all the weeping woman could exclaim, as the clasped them alternately in her arms.

"Father! oh thank God you have returned in safety! but where is William Crosbie? speak!" cried Lucy, as she turned to greet her brother; "Oh, Jamie, is he wounded or dead?"

"Neither!" said her brother, smiling fondly in the face upturned to his with a look of wistful inquiry; "only have patience, and you will see him presently; he is tending his horse, and will be here ere many minutes have elapsed."

"Oh God in heaven be praised for his goodness in thus having lent an attentive ear to the humble petitions of his servants, which ascended from afflicted, yet trusting hearts!" piously exclaimed both mother and daughter; and they gazed upwards with streaming eyes and hearts full of thankfulness for the safe return of those beloved ones whose absence had paled their cheeks and filled their bosoms with apprehensions of evil.

"Yes, let us praise Him!" said Abel Armstrong, uncovering his head as he

spoke, "who hath this day upheld the cause of his saints, and scattered their foes as the dust flies before the winds of heaven."

"What mean you, Abel?"

"That our arms have been victorious in battle. This morning we encountered the enemy on the moor of Drumclog. We beheld them advancing towards us with helmets glancing and banners waving. We noticed the proud scorn with which they regarded us as we prayed that our cause might be blessed and our hands guided in the fight; and we marked well the contempt written on their countenances as they beheld us drawn up to meet them. But they knew not our hearts. *They* could not understand the mighty spell that bound us together, and animated our souls with hopes of victory. The bloody Claverhouse, secure in the power of his might, boasted 'He would soon lay the psalm-singing caitiffs low!' but we, trusting only in One whose arm is mighty to save, commended our cause to Him, and went forth to battle. We met; they were scattered. Some fled; others lay stretched on the plain. Then we raised our standards aloft, and returned thanks to the God of heaven."

"The Lord be praised!" said Mrs. Armstrong, "for he hath indeed showered rich blessings on our sinful heads this day; he hath blessed our arms in the field, and restored those dear ones who went forth to fight in his service. Oh, Abel," she continued, again clasping him in her arms, "God in his mercy grant that you may long be spared; for were you to be taken away from me, the trial would indeed be greater than I could bear."

"Do not speak thus," said Abel Armstrong, fondly returning his wife's embrace: "we are all in the Lord's keeping; that life we enjoy came from him, and at his command we must resign it. We have, therefore, no right to murmur when those we love are taken from us. At all times let us commend ourselves to him, and he will give us strength to endure the severest trials, and cause us to come forth purified from the furnace of affliction."

Scarcely had Abel Armstrong finished speaking, when the door opened, and a young man entered. This was William Crosbie, who, at the time of the breaking out of the religious disturbances then agitating Scotland, had followed the occupation of a shoe-maker in the neighbourhood of Abel Armstrong's cottage. He and Lucy had been lovers since the days of their childhood, and were to have been married some months previously; but on the morning of the day appointed for the wedding, the aged minister, engaged to perform the ceremony, was taken prisoner by some of Claverhouse's dragoons, and lodged in Dumfries jail. As no one could be procured to supply his place, the marriage was necessarily postponed until the return of more tranquil days. The disappointment of his hopes, coupled with the imprisonment of one whom he had always regarded in the light of a parent, so wrought upon the hitherto peaceful disposition of

William Crosbie, that he, long taught to regard the measures adopted by the then existing Government as being in the highest degree tyrannical, at length threw up his employment, and went forth to fight on the aide of the Covenanters.

On the entrance of her lover, Lucy darted towards him, and exclaiming—"William, you too are safe!" threw herself sobbing on his neck. With a low cry of pain young Crosbie disengaged himself from Lucy's embrace, and staggered back against the wall; while the excessive pallor overspreading his countenance attested the agony under which he laboured.

"William!" shrieked Lucy, gazing on her lover's face with lips white and trembling as his own, "you are wounded—perhaps mortally!"

"Oh, no, dearest, it is nothing!" replied her lover, struggling manfully to regain his composure; "it is only a mere scratch in the shoulder; but a sudden twinge of pain caused me to wax somewhat faint——"

"Ha, then; he hit you after all!" said Abel Armstrong, his brows contracting as he spoke.

"How chanced it, William? by whom were you wounded?" anxiously inquired Lucy, who had in some measure regained her composure on being assured by one of the men who had proceeded to examine the wound, that it was not of a serious nature—the ball having merely grazed the fleshy part of the arm.

"It was a cowardly dragoon who fired the shot," replied Abel Armstrong; "the fellow fled in this direction, and we pursued him on horses taken from the enemy. William Crosbie, who was far ahead of us all, called upon him to surrender; when, for answer, the dastardly fellow turned round in the saddle, and discharged his pistol at him, wounding him, as it now appears, in the shoulder. We soon lost sight of the fugitive in the darkness; but he seems to have found refuge somewhere in this neighbourhood, for we discovered his horse grazing at no very great distance from hence; but of the dragoon himself we saw nothing.

"Why, how came these things here?" suddenly exclaimed one of the party, pointing, as he spoke, to the pieces of armour Mrs. Armstrong had taken off the person of her wounded guest ere removing him from the kitchen, and which, till that instant, had remained unobserved in a corner of the apartment. Mrs. Armstrong and Lucy exchanged quick glances of alarm, but vouchsafed no answer to the startling inquiry.

"The fellow must be here!" said several of his companions; handling the triggers of their guns in a manner which boded no good to the unfortunate youth, should he fall into their hands.

"Wife!" exclaimed Abel Armstrong in a low stern whisper, "you hear the inquiry—'How came these things here?' Why answer ye not? Speak—I command you."

"Oh, Abel, press me not to tell; indeed I cannot!" said the distracted woman,

wringing her hands and gazing beseechingly in her husband's face.

"What!" he cried in wrath; "have you then dared to shelter one of our foes beneath this roof of mine? Woman, you have done me a foul wrong; but tell us instantly where you have concealed him, that we may yet revenge ourselves."

"He lies there," said Mrs. Armstrong in trembling accents, and shrinking from the fiery glance of her husband's eye.

"Ha, then, he dies!" shouted divers others of the party; and they rushed towards the door as they spoke.

"You shall not touch him," cried Mrs. Armstrong, throwing herself on her knees before them, and endeavouring to prevent their egress; "you dare not pollute my threshold with a stranger's blood! Oh, spare his young life!" she continued, in tones of earnest entreaty, "and crush not your own souls with the crime of murder——"

"Woman, prevent us not," was the stern reply; "he is the foe of the Covenant, and as such must die!" and the speaker threw Mrs. Armstrong from him, and darted into the next apartment, followed by several of his companions, eager to wreak their vengeance on the wounded youth.

"Abel! Abel! will you stand idly by and see murder committed beneath your roof. Oh, save him!" and as she uttered these words Mrs. Armstrong seized her husband by the arm, and dragged him from the kitchen. It was a strange wild scene that greeted her eyes on gaining the door of the sleeping apartment. The sterner portion of the Covenanters stood grouped together; their hands grasping their ready muskets, their eyes, whose glances were dark and menacing, glared on the wounded youth, who, aroused from his slumbers by the stormy entrance of the party, sat upright in his bed, and, with undaunted mien, repaid their scowling regards with looks of haughty scorn, while he indignantly exclaimed, "Come you here with the purpose of murder in your hearts that you gaze thus gloomily on me! If so, approach and do your bloody work; I fear you not. It will be a deed worthy of your base-born natures to slay a youth, and he a defenceless one. I despise you from the depths of my heart," he continued, in tones of withering scorn, heedless of the fiery glances and threatening gestures of the infuriated men who surrounded him; "and learn this, if you need an incentive to urge you to the deed, that on the plain of Drumclog my good broadsword caused one or more of your body to bite the dust."

"Ha! boastest thou of thy evil doings! villain, thou diest." And with these words several of the Covenanters rushed towards the undaunted youth, with their guns uplifted, as if to strike him dead where he lay, when Mrs. Armstrong, with a scream of terror, threw her arms around the neck of the wounded dragoon, to shield him from danger, while she exclaimed, "Oh, forbear to slay him! How can you condemn your enemies for their cruelties, if you do such evil deeds as

this? Shame on your manhood, ever to dream of harming a defenceless foe, and he a mere boy. You shall not touch him," she cried, pushing back the men who stood nearest her; "he came to my house, wounded and bleeding, and begged admission in the name of God. Could I refuse to listen to the voice of suffering, even when coming from the lips of an enemy? No; I tended him as though he were mine own child. He spoke of his mother. I too am a mother. And I thought on my husband and son, who even at that instant might be entreating aid from the hands of strangers, and my heart melted within me. Will you be less kind—less forgiving? It is true you heard it from his own mouth that this day his hand was raised against the soldiers of the Covenant, and that to the destruction of some of our party; but did you spare those who fell into your hands? Think ye on that, and forgive the part he hath chosen."

As Mrs. Armstrong finished her touching address, William Crosbie, who had been speaking apart with Lucy, advanced towards her, and placing one hand in hers, grasped with the other that of the young soldier, and turning round to his still frowning companions, said in a stern voice, "Now look you, my friends, if I, who this evening barely escaped being killed by the hands of this misguided youth, can say I freely forgive and mean him no injury, surely you may do the same. Mrs. Armstrong is right. It is with men like ourselves we should wage war, and not with beardless boys. On the open field and in the broad daylight we should attack our enemy; not in the darkness of night and beneath the roof of one who hath promised him protection. Let the lad go. Remember with what horror we regard the cold-blooded murders daily committed by those who are opposed to our cause; and in what respect should we differ from them did we yield to the dictates of our baser natures, and stain our hearths with the sacred blood of a guest? No, no; let us act as men who have the fear of God before their eyes, and if an enemy fall into our hands, friendless and wounded, as this poor youth is, let us succour him till he is well, and then bid him go in peace from our dwelling."

"You are right, William," cried Abel Armstrong, dropping his gun on the floor, and motioning on the others to imitate his example, "let us do good even to an enemy; and if this poor lad hath shed some of our blood this day, his own hath flowed freely in exchange. So come, my friends, let us mount and ride; there is yet much for us to perform, and we must hasten to rejoin our comrades, lest they be uneasy concerning our safety. Nay, nay, now; look not thus sullen at being deprived of your revenge! Remember the nobler purpose that brought us together, namely, to fight for the spiritual freedom of Scotland, and abandon all thoughts which would lead away the heart from the mighty end to be accomplished." The men hesitated a moment ere they obeyed the voice of their leader; but the command being repeated in a sterner tone, they reluctantly quitted the

room, casting, as they did so, lowering glances in the direction of the young soldier, who, wholly overcome by the excitement of the scene, coupled with his late fearful loss of blood, sunk back exhausted on his pillow. As William Crosbie was preparing to follow his companions, the dragoon called him to his bed-side, and clasping his hand in his, said in a faltering voice,—"Young man, under the providence of God, I this night owe to you a life which is precious to me for my mother's sake. I am her only remaining son, and it would have killed her had anything happened unto me. I will not insult you by offering you money; but, should the chances of war ever throw you into the power of our party, inquire for Lieutenant Musgrave of Claverhouse's dragoons, and display this chain; it will secure you safety and attention in the meanwhile; and if spared to redeem my promise, I will procure your pardon, even should I die to obtain it."

With these words, the grateful youth threw a massive gold chain around the neck of William Crosbie, who, after warmly thanking the dragoon for his promised aid, rejoined his companions.

"God bless and protect you both in the midst of battle," sobbed Mrs. Armstrong, her voice failed her and she turned weeping from the door as her husband and son once more departed from their home to join the Covenanting host.

"And must we then part?" cried Lucy, gazing with tearful eyes in the face of her lover, who had lingered on the threshold to exchange a few parting words with her, as she now clung to him in all the abandonment of grief.

"Yes, dearest; but only for a time; ere the song of the reapers is heard in the fields, I will return—never more to leave you."

As William Crosbie uttered these words, a dark cloud passed over the face of the moon; and as Lucy beheld the sudden eclipse of its bright rays, a sense of coming evil smote her heart, and a shudder passed through her slender frame, as though the hope of future happiness she ventured to entertain was doomed to wither ere it bloomed. The voice of Abel Armstrong was now heard calling on William Crosbie to join the party. On hearing the fatal summons, Lucy clung yet closer to her lover; and her lips trembled as she bade God guard him from all danger and restore him in safety to her, in company with her father and her brother.

"Think on the coming harvest," whispered William Crosbie, as he clasped Lucy again and again to his throbbing heart; then resigning her almost inanimate form into the arms of her mother, he mounted his horse, and without daring to turn his head in the direction of her from whom it was almost death to part, galloped after his companions.

Under the fostering care of his kind hostess and her daughter, the soldier speedily recovered from the effects of his wound; the glow of returning health mantled on his cheek, and in the course of a few days he declared his intention of

proceeding to Dumfries, there to join his regiment, commanded by the redoubted Claverhouse in person. Mrs. Armstrong was deeply moved as she bade farewell to the departing dragoon, and said, raising the corner of her apron to her eyes as she spoke, "That although a follower of the bloody Clavers, and a dweller in the tents of the wicked, he had such a kindly heart and gentle manners that she loved him as if he were her own son. And oh!" she exclaimed, gazing imploringly in his face, "should you chance to encounter in battle those who are dearer to rue than life, remember the night you found shelter in my house, and spare them for the sake of one who tended you with a mother's care."

"I will; I will!" answered the soldier, wringing her hand in the fervour of his gratitude. "God is my witness that I will protect them with my latest breath; and rest assured, my sweet maiden," he said, addressing Lucy, "your lover's interference on my behalf, when the hearts of his cowardly companions were intent on my destruction, will never fade from my memory. I have sworn to save him should his life be in danger; and if at any time you think of quitting this part of the country, come to Cumberland; there I will give you a home, and my mother will be the first to welcome those who succoured and befriended her wounded son. Farewell. God grant we may meet again, and that I may be able to testify my gratitude for kindness which can never be repaid and will never be forgotten."

"Farewell, farewell!" said the gentle-hearted women, and with tearful eyes they stood on the threshold gazing after the departing soldier till his nodding plume disappeared in the distance.

Barely three short weeks had elapsed since the victory of Drumclog, when the fatal battle of Bothwell Bridge extinguished, it seemed, almost for ever, the hopes of the Covenanting party in Scotland. A prey to treachery, and divided among themselves, the soldiers of the Covenant were slaughtered without mercy by Claverhouse and his dragoons, who burned to wipe out the stain of their defeat on the moor of Drumclog. Tidings that a great battle had been fought, and the Covenanters defeated, found their way to the sequestered home of Abel Armstrong, filling the minds of both mother and daughter with fearful apprehensions lest those they loved might be among the number of the slain. Each succeeding day beheld Lucy—trembling, yet hopeful—stationed at the door, eager to obtain the first glimpse of their well-known forms—but she looked in vain. At distant intervals a few way-worn Covenanters—fugitives from the disastrous field of Bothwell—might be seen dragging their weary steps along, but all passed on their way, unable to afford any information regarding the missing men. Then hope for ever fled from the mother's breast, and she wept in the solitude of her dwelling for those whom she felt she should never more behold on earth. The younger portion of her children—whose tender years did not permit of their sharing in their mother's grief—stood gazing in wondering silence on beholding her

bitter sorrow; while Lucy strove to reassure her by comforting words regarding the speedy return of her father and brother, the tears running down her own pale cheeks as she thought on the probable fate of one still more loved than they. Weeks rolled on. The vernal tints of summer had given place to the more sober hues of autumn, still they came not. Then she too ceased to hope, and mourned for her absent relatives and lover as one mourneth for the dead.

One lovely evening, towards the end of August, Lucy—too wretched to enjoy the childish prattle of her younger brothers and sisters—went forth from the cottage to indulge, in solitude, in her own sad thoughts. She paused on the threshold, overcome with the tranquil beauty of the scene. The sun was slowly sinking behind the distant hills, and its bright rays tinged with a yet richer hue the now golden corn as it slowly waved to and fro in the grateful breeze. With a heart torn with anguish, Lucy recalled her lover's parting words—"Ere the song of the reapers is heard in the fields, I will return!" and she wept, for the harvest was come—but where was he? Unconsciously, as it were, she lifted her eyes to traverse the far-stretching plain, when the figure of a young man, approaching in the direction of the cottage, at once arrested her attention. For the quick eye of affection one glance sufficed. It was William Crosbie who was rapidly advancing towards her. With a scream of "Mother, he is come!" Lucy darted forward to meet him. Already she is within two hundred paces of him. He sees her—he quickens his pace—their arms are outstretched to embrace each other, when, oh, horror! the sun's bright rays flash on the brass helmets of two mounted dragoons as they gallop swiftly across the plain. Paralysed at the sight, Lucy endeavours in vain to apprise her lover of his danger. She warns him back. He notices them not. Thinking only of her, he rushes eagerly forward. Suddenly the stern command—"Halt, in the King's name!" rings out in the silence of the night. He staggers at the awful sound. He turns to fly—too late. The soldiers dismount from their horses, and with unslung carbines, command him to yield—or die!

"O, Lucy! and is it thus we meet?" groaned forth William Crosbie, as the frantic girl rushed madly forward, and throwing herself on her knees before the dragoons, besought them in the most moving terms to free her lover. "For many a weary day, when hungry and homeless, and forced to seek refuge in the caves of the earth, did I comfort myself with thoughts of my return to claim you as mine. I dreamt of it—prayed for it; and now I have seen you, but to lose you for ever."

"Say not so, William! Men, men! you have hearts—God gave you them—hearts to feel—to share in another's sorrow. O think on mine—close not your breasts to the voice of pity; free him—let him go, and I will bless you!" and the distracted girl clung in her agony to the knees of the rude soldiers, who repulsed her with violence, and laughed at all her efforts to move their stern natures to

compassion.

"Waste not your breath on us!" one of them exclaimed, "you will require it soon; there are those behind us to whom you may kneel for mercy——"

"But to little purpose I fear," said the other with a laugh, in which his companion joined. "Sir Robert Grierson, not to mention our own worthy leader, is by no means fond of being bothered by praying women when in the discharge of duty; so you need not expect to obtain any favour from him," he said, addressing Lucy, who became deadly pale on hearing those dreadful words, and with one more frantic appeal for mercy, she sank senseless on the ground.

"Lucy! oh heavens, you have killed her by your brutal speech!" cried William Crosbie in an agony of fear, on beholding her death-like countenance, "let me go—let me—men, devils! will you not release me?" and he made violent efforts to free himself from their grasp, but in vain. And incensed by his stout resistance, the soldiers seized him by the throat, and beat him with the butt-end of their muskets till he reeled beneath their blows. At this instant a large party of dragoons, headed by the stern Claverhouse, rode up to the spot.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the dreaded leader, gazing alternately on William Crosbie and Lucy Armstrong, who, in some measure recovered from her faint, lay on the ground, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes fixed on the dragoons with a vacant stare, as though unable to comprehend the nature of the scene.

"Why, most noble Colonel," said one of the soldiers, "as we, in obedience to your commands, were scouring the fields in search of rebels, we came upon this young fellow who was running to meet his sweetheart. It appears he was returning to marry her, and——"

"So, ho! then we have arrived most opportunely to witness a bridal!" said Sir Robert Grierson, who accompanied Claverhouse on this occasion; "what say you, my friend," addressing Sir James Graham, "to hanging them both on a tree, and having a stone placed beneath, bearing this inscription—'They were lovely in their lives, and in death they were not divided?'" And the speaker laughed long and loudly.

"Surely I have seen this fellow before," said Claverhouse, gazing sternly on William Crosbie, who met his eye with a gaze unflinching as his own. "Tell me, young man, were you at Bothwell?"

"I was."

"You confess it?"

"I do."

"And you were one of those who slew the dragoon and bore back your colours from the bridge?"

"I did the deed myself!" said William Crosbie proudly.

"Ha! I thought so! Soldiers, unsling your carbines—he dies!"

"Mercy, mercy!" cried Lucy, now fully alive to the horrors of her lover's situation; and dragging herself to the feet of Claverhouse, she seized his hand and besought him in the most heart-rending terms to spare her lover.

"Mercy, mercy!" cried Lucy, now fully alive to the horrors of her lover's situation; and dragging herself to the feet of Claverhouse, she seized his hand and besought him in the most heart-rending terms to spare her lover. "He will never more fight against the King," she said, "he was returning here to live in peace—oh let him go!"

With a calm, cold smile, Claverhouse withdrew his hand from her hold, and

made a signal to his men to prepare their arms.

"Mother, mother!" shrieked Lucy, as Mrs. Armstrong, almost breathless from her exertions, reached the spot where she knelt, "kneel with me before these men. The sight of your grey hairs may move their hearts to compassion, and they may grant you the mercy they have denied me."

"William!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong in faltering accents, "what of my husband and son—where are they?"

Young Crosbie's lips trembled. He sadly shook his head. She was answered—both had fallen at Bothwell Bridge.

"Now may I indeed kneel—kneel in sorrow and in anguish, for I am bereaved!" And with these words the weeping widow threw herself on her knees, and with clasped hands and upturned eyes, besought pardon for the youth about to suffer.

"O!" she exclaimed, "if your hearts still retain one human feeling; if they are not yet wholly seared by the bloody scenes through which you have passed, hearken unto me this night. It is a heart-broken woman who addresses you—one who is sorrowful even unto death. Husband and son have fallen. The lover of my youth, and he who would have been the stay of mine old age, are taken from me; and yet, I trust, in the midst of my affliction, I can say, God's will, not mine, be done! Will not, then, the blood of two suffice you——?"

"Two!" shouted Sir Robert Grierson, "though you had lost twenty such rebellious knaves, what matters it to us? death to all such rascals!"

"Surely," continued the widow, regardless of the interruption, "you will feel for me, and grant my prayer. Kill not the prisoner. I have grown old and gray with affliction, and my time on earth may not be long; but my daughter is young in years, and her happiness is bound up in the life of this young man. O spare her the fearful trial of losing him—bring not down her youthful hairs with sorrow to the grave. Pardon him, I beseech you!"

Claverhouse sternly answered "No!" and impatiently waved his hand for them to be gone.

"Lucy, Lucy!" cried William Crosbie, "let not your mother kneel to these cold-blooded wretches! Do not debase yourself by imploring mercy from creatures who know it not. I can face death like a man. I do not fear it. Farewell, Lucy, we shall, I trust, meet in another and a better world where none can part us." Then bidding the soldiers do their worst, the brave youth uncovered his head, and stood prepared to receive the fatal fire. These last words, uttered in a louder tone, reached the ears of a young officer who stood at some little distance from his companions, as though unwilling to witness the bloody tragedy about to be enacted. He started on hearing the familiar voice; and coming hastily forward, gazed earnestly on the prisoner as he stood bold and erect before the dragoons.

A flush passed over the officer's face, and advancing to the spot where Claverhouse stood conversing with Sir Robert Grierson, he requested to speak a few words with him in private. Claverhouse at once complied with the request; and withdrawing his horse a little apart from the others, a long and earnest conversation ensued. The conference seemed to terminate unfavourably, for a darker frown sat upon Claverhouse's brow, and his voice sounded harsh and cruel as he uttered these last words aloud—"I am sorry to refuse your request; but his life is forfeited by the laws of this land, and my conscience would for ever upbraid me should I fail in my duty to my king and my country." The red blood mantled on the cheeks of the supplicant; and he seemed about to make an angry reply, but instantly checking the impulse, he bowed his head, and then added carelessly, "As you please, Colonel; but since the poor fellow must suffer, have I your permission to exchange a few words with him ere he dies? I should like to tell him I have done what I could to procure his pardon, as I promised faithfully to save him."

"Most certainly!" said Claverhouse with a courtly smile, apparently well satisfied to get off with so small a concession. "Soldiers, down muskets! Lieutenant Musgrave wishes to speak with the prisoner."

At mention of the name, Lucy, who had been weeping passionately on her mother's shoulder, raised her head, a ray of hope animated her countenance, and she watched the young officer's movements in breathless anxiety—William Crosbie also looked disturbed and anxious. With a swaggering gait and careless mien, young Musgrave approached the prisoner, and taking him by the arm, led him some little distance apart, when he addressed him as follows:—"I have vainly endeavoured to procure your pardon. I vowed to save you; and my oath must be kept. Therefore listen to me. Accept this purse; you may stand in need of money, and when I say aloud farewell! dart off as quickly as you can in the direction of Crichup Linn. The darkness will favour your escape, and I will, if necessary, prevent the soldiers from following, until you are beyond their reach. Fear not for Lucy! I will protect her as though she were mine own sister. God bless you—farewell!" Scarcely had the word escaped Lieutenant Musgrave's lips, ere William Crosbie was speeding along the plain towards Crichup Linn; and so thoroughly was the whole party overwhelmed with astonishment at this unlooked-for proceeding on the part of the prisoner, that ere the soldiers could mount their horses and set off in pursuit, he was already lost in the gloom. With a cry of thankfulness Lucy fell down on her knees; but not to man she knelt. She was breathing a prayer of gratitude to Heaven for her lover's safety.

"Traitor!" shouted Claverhouse, his eyes sparkling with fury, "how dare you do this? By heavens! you shall answer for it, and that presently."

"When and where you please," said Lieutenant Musgrave haughtily; "you

have yourself to blame for what I have done. I begged the young man's life. I told you this good woman and her daughter had sheltered me when wounded, and that William Crosbie had prevented my blood being shed by his companions. In return, I vowed I would protect him if ever he fell into your hands. You refused to listen to my petition. It was the first request I had ever made, and I told you it should be the last; but you scorned my entreaties, and now you have reaped the fruits of your cruel refusal. Disgusted by your cold-blooded murders,——"

"Ha! this insolence to your commanding officer? Consider yourself under arrest! Captain Lennox, relieve Lieutenant Musgrave of his sword."

"Never!" said young Musgrave; "here I resign my commission, and for ever abandon a cause characterised only by cruelty and oppression."

With these words he drew his sword from its sheath, and breaking it across his knee, threw the pieces on the ground. Then taking Mrs. Armstrong by the hand, he led her and Lucy from the spot. Claverhouse remained motionless with rage on beholding himself deprived of his revenge; while Sir Robert Grierson exclaimed with a shrug of his shoulders—"We are well rid of the fellow. He has been too long in the society of these psalm-singing rascals not to have imbibed some of their notions. Let him go. He is not fit for the society of loyal-hearted subjects like ourselves; his place is the conventicle; there he will have whining and praying enough." Unwilling to exhibit any further annoyance before his soldiers, Ciaverhouse joined in the laugh occasioned by this speech of Sir Robert's, and after issuing a command to one of his men to follow in the direction of the dragoons and ascertain whether they had discovered any traces of the fugitive, he set out on his return to Dumfries. Favoured by the darkness which now enveloped the earth like a mantle, William Crosbie succeeded in baffling the dragoons. More than once their bullets whistled close past his ears, and their voices sounded ominously near, still he held on his way; and at length, when nearly exhausted, he gained the entrance to Crichup Linn. With a shout of triumph, which sounded in the ears of his pursuers like the yell of a demon, William Crosbie darted into its friendly shades; and, as he sped along its narrow path, he heard with unmingled pleasure the voices of the dragoons—who, unwilling to encounter the evil spirits said to infest the linn, had turned back from the pursuit—grow faint in the distance. The first act of the grateful Covenanter, on reaching a place of safety, was to fall on his knees and return thanks to God for his deliverance. This done, he proceeded, so far as the increasing darkness would permit, to examine the nature of the place he had chosen as a refuge against his enemies. For never before had he dared to venture within the haunted precincts of Crichup Linn.

The shades of night lent a still deeper gloom to the savage character of the linn; and as William Crosbie gazed on the huge rocks, which seemed from their tottering appearance as though the slightest touch would dislodge them, and lis-

tened to the noise of the ceaseless cascades, as they fell from rock to rock, a feeling of wonder, not unmixed with awe, took possession of his breast. As he stood beneath the shade of a beetling crag, his eyes striving to penetrate the darkness below, all the strange tales he had heard told around the cottager's ingle-nook regarding the linn, rose up, unbidden guests, in his imagination. He remembered, with cold shudderings, the weird dance described by his uncle as having been seen by him when forced, from adverse circumstances, to seek refuge among its caves; and how the precise spot where he beheld the midnight revelry of the unearthly crew was still familiarly known as the "Elf's Kirk,"[#] and the strange lights frequently seen leaping from crag to crag by those whom necessity had forced to be unwilling spectators of the unnatural flame. All these and more did fancy conjure up, like spectral demons, to haunt him with their presence, until at length, excited beyond measure at their remembrance and the thought of spending an entire night in a place so infested with horrors, William Crosbie wrought himself up to believe that he too was about to become the victim of supernatural agency. The air seemed filled with wild unearthly sounds. The blasted trees which burst forth from the rocks above his head appeared like so many hideous forms pointing at him with warning gestures from amid the gloom, while the abyss beneath was peopled with gigantic beings, who, as they issued forth from the portals of their unhallowed mansion, regarded him with malignant eyes, and tossed their menacing arms aloft in the air, as though invoking the elements to lash themselves into fury and descend on the doomed head of him who had thus dared to invade their dominions. As if in obedience to their call, a loud peal of thunder suddenly broke overhead, announcing an approaching storm. Another and another succeeded, and the blue electric fluid, fraught with death and disaster, quivered in the air like the sword of Divine wrath suspended over a guilty world. William Crosbie stood trembling and aghast as the storm, which had now reached the climax of its fury, rolled along the sky in terrible majesty. Crash followed crash with incredible velocity, while the forked lightning darted through the gloom like some heavenly messenger sent from the realms of bliss on an errand of mercy to the pit of woe. Appalled at the scene, the terror-stricken Covenanter, in acknowledgment of the Almighty's power to preserve him in this awful hour, fell on his knees amid the fierce strife of the elements, and raised his right arm on high as though appealing for protection against the horrors that surrounded him. To his inexpressible relief, the storm-cloud, having spent its fury, at length passed over the linn. The flashes of lightning became less frequent; the peals of thunder waxed fainter and fainter, and then died away in broken murmurs in the distance.

[#] Crichup Linn, *vide* Fordyce's Beauties at Scotland, vol. 2, page 312.

Under cover of a protecting rock, William Crosbie passed, what seemed to his terror-struck imagination, an eternal night; and, as soon as the early beams of the rising sun proclaimed the presence of morning, he forsook his hard couch and made for the nearest outlet; determined rather to face Claverhouse and all his host, than be doomed again to encounter the horrors of a night spent in Crichup Linn. While threading his way through the tangled brushwood, which then almost obscured the entrance to the linn, William Crosbie was startled on observing several persons running in his direction. Apprehensive of danger, he screened his person behind some bushes, in order that he might ascertain their purpose ere discovering himself to them. On they came, panting and breathless, evidently making for the linn. On their nearer approach, William Crosbie discovered them to be friends of his own, and staunch adherents of the Covenanting party. He then came forth from his place of concealment, and addressed them by their names.

"Back! back!" they cried with one voice, "he is coming! he is coming!"

"Who is coming?"

"Claverhouse! do you not see him yonder?"

William Crosbie turned his eyes in the indicated direction, and there he beheld the dreaded persecutor, mounted on a splendid black charger, galloping furiously towards them, followed by his dragoons.

"Come back with us!" said one of the new-comers, addressing William Crosbie, "we know the way to the caves; there we shall be safe."

"You need not fear pursuit now!" said one of his companions, "not even the evil spirit, were he mounted on horse-back, would dare to follow us hither!"

As he spoke, a crashing of the boughs behind them caused them to start and look back, when to their unutterable horror they beheld their terrible enemy dashing through amidst the trees. William Crosbie stood transfixed at the sight. He had neither power to move nor speak, while Claverhouse, with dishevelled locks and flashing eyes, rode towards him, with his sword uplifted in the air as if to hew him down.

"Have you a mind to be killed that you stand there while the arch-fiend himself is within a few paces of you?" said one of the men, and seizing William Crosbie by the arm he dragged him onwards to the verge of the precipice. "Down, down!" he cried, "we will cheat him yet!" and with these words the man, still holding young Crosbie by the hand, slid down among the rocks, whither his companions had gone before. "He has lost his prey; he dare not follow us."

The speaker was interrupted by a cry of horror proceeding from his com-

panions. He looked up, and beheld the horse with its rider bounding over the chasm. In his eager haste to capture the men, Claverhouse did not perceive the danger which lay in his path, until too late to retreat; so clapping spurs to his steed, which equalled in spirit its fiery master, he urged it to the leap. His horse cleared the chasm at a single bound, and landed its rider safe on the opposite side. The noble animal fared not so well; one of its legs was broken in the effort; and from his seat in the face of the rock William Crosbie beheld with admiration the feat achieved by the gallant charger, and witnessed with sorrow its death inflicted by the hands of his master. The dragoons on foot now rushed into the linn, and discharged their muskets down the abyss, thereby hoping to kill or wound some of the men who had taken refuge there. But their bullets glanced harmlessly off the rocks; and at length, wearied with their futile attempts to capture the Covenanters, they departed, venting maledictions on all such rebels. For the space of four days and nights did William Crosbie and his companions remained concealed in Crichup Linn. Their food was regularly supplied by a shepherd boy, who always managed to visit them unseen, and to furnish them with information regarding the movements of the dragoons.

On the morning of the fifth day he brought the welcome tidings that the soldiers, wearied of guarding the entrance to the linn, had abandoned their post, and gone off in search of a more promising expedition. This was indeed joyful news to the oppressed hearts of the Covenanters; and when the shades of evening rendered their escape easy, they abandoned their hiding-places, and set out for their respective habitations. William Crosbie at once directed his steps towards Mrs. Armstrong's cottage; the door of which was opened by Lucy in person. The meeting of the lovers, after the fearful scene through which they had so lately passed, may be better imagined than described. Suffice it to say that Lucy clung to her lover's neck, and cried and laughed alternately; while William Crosbie kissed the tears away, and whispered sweet words of affection, which soon restored the rose to Lucy's cheek. During this affecting scene, Mrs. Armstrong stood a little apart; her eyes were filled with tears, and her lips moved as though engaged in mental prayer. It was so. Her tears were to the memory of her husband and son; while her prayer was for the continued happiness of those who had, through the providence of God, been permitted to taste of joy after having drunk so deeply of the cup of affliction. Lucy listened in breathless awe as William Crosbie recounted the horrors he had experienced during his solitary vigil in Crichup Linn; and in her turn she related all that had befallen her since that fearful evening, dwelling at considerable length on the more than brotherly kindness of Lieutenant Musgrave, who had done everything in his power to render her happy during the absence of her lover. "And what do you think, William?" she said at the conclusion of her recital, "he has offered us all a home in Cumberland; and

my mother, to whom this part of the country has now became unbearable, has decided upon accepting his kind offer, so it only remains for you to consent to accompany us."

The answer her lover gave is not recorded; but that it was in the affirmative may be gathered from the fact that in the course of a few days Mrs. Armstrong, her family and her future son-in-law, set out on their journey to another home. As the humble vehicle, which bore the travellers, proceeded on its way, the eyes of Lucy, beaming with love and happiness, were fixed on the blue hills of Cumberland, as they rose up before her in yet distant beauty, while the tear-stained eyes of the widow wandered back to the lowly cottage, which never seemed so dear to her as at that instant when she was leaving it for ever. Youth was looking hopefully to the future—age was ruminating sadly on the past.

On their arrival at their destination, they found Mr., no longer Lieutenant, Musgrave in waiting to receive them; who, taking Mrs. Armstrong by the hand, led her towards a lovely little cottage embowered in woodbine and roses.

"This," he said, "is your home; and yonder," pointing as he spoke to a smiling farm-house peeping out from amongst some venerable poplar-trees, "stands the future residence of William and Lucy."

"O, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong with streaming eyes, "your kindness—_"

"Nay, thank not me!" he replied with a smile, "it is the gift——"

"Of a grateful mother," said a soft womanly voice, and the speaker, a mild-benevolent looking lady—whom Mr. Musgrave speedily introduced as his mother—came forth from the cottage, and, with deep emotion, welcomed the Scottish Covenanters to their English home.

At her bridal, which took place shortly after her arrival in Cumberland, Lucy looked more than usually pretty in her simple white muslin dress; while her neck was adorned with the gold chain given to her lover by the grateful benefactor, to whom, they were proud to say, they owed all their present happiness. Long and happily did William Crosbie and his Lucy live on the shores of Cumberland; and even Mrs. Armstrong forgot, for a while, the sorrows of the past, as she dandled her fair-haired grandchildren on her knee. Some of the descendants of this worthy family are still to be found on the banks of the Solway; and in their possession may be seen the massive gold chain, which is carefully treasured up by them in remembrance of the sufferings their forefathers were called upon to endure in the dark and dismal days of persecution.

Still is the story of Claverhouse's daring leap related in the parish of Closeburn; and the natural chair in which the young shoemaker sat during his brief sojourn in Crichup Linn is pointed out to the curious visitor, as

THE SUTOR'S SEAT.

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