



ABS. 1.75. 146





REFT ROB ;

OR,

THE WITCH OF SCOT-MUIR,

*No 143*

COMMONLY CALLED

**Madge the Snoover.**

A SCOTTISH TALE.

Something like

That voice, methinks, I should have somewhere heard.

DRYDEN, DON SER.

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BY THE

AUTHOR OF HARDENBRASS AND HAVERILL.

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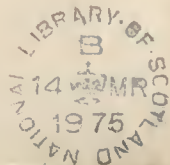
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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**R**EFT ROB does not resemble Hardenbrass and Haverill; on the contrary, it is a *Scottish* Tale on the most approved plan. It might indeed have been eked out to five times it's length, by a little judicious management, and the addition of a few other materials, *Auld* Fishwives, &c. &c. &c. Should the reader re-pine at the omission, we can only regret. Perhaps, however, in it's present state, it may be found to the full as entertaining as such tales usually are.

The readers of Hardenbrass, those

we mean who are unfashionable enough to relish *nature, wit, and humour, character and incident*, will be gratified to learn that JULIUS FITZ-JOHN, not inferior in those respects to that most excellent performance, and by the same Author, will appear with all convenient speed.

Conirdan, or the St. Kildians, a Tale, in 1 Vol. 12mo. by the same Author, is in the press, and will be published in a few days.

THE EDITOR.



REFT ROB ;

OR,

THE WITCH OF SCOT-MUIR.

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CHAP. I.

*A Storm—Scot-muir—*

*A Witch—dark Night—*

*Auld Weedy and*

*The Lady bright.*

IT was about three in the afternoon in the month of October, when the vivid green livery of nature's summer pomp is mellowed into the mingled brown, yellow, and red, that preludes the fall of those leafy honours she is pleased to be-

stow on the tenants of the forest. The fanning breeze that had tempered the burning sun at noon, had now subsided, and a death-like stillness, sure prelude to a storm, made the wild inhabitants of the mountains and vallies pant, and cast their eyes to earth in despair. The heat was excessive, the air became darkened, black clouds advanced from the south-east, while the lightnings began to play, and with their forky splendour gave warning to all to beware of the approaching danger. The stag trembled as he listened for he knew not what, and the eagle sheltered in his eyrie, half closed his eye, as the fire of heaven circled his elevated abode.

“Bide a wee, bide a wee, my lady;

an let us just tak shelter or ere the foul wark begins," cried *Auld Weedy* to his companion, as they reached the extremity of one of those vast heaths among the highlands, where in some directions the eye stretches itself in vain and painful effort to find some object to rest on! all is vast, dreary, and monotonous, and reminds the reflecting traveller of that eternity he is hastening to! So it was with *Auld Weedy*! His companion gave no immediate answer to his solicitation, she raised her hand, a fairer never graced Scottish Dame! she raised it to shade her large full blue eyes from the too vivid glare of the agitated fluid, and *Weedy* went on.

"By the blessing of God an his holy

mither, we a' come sae fur untouched an untended! wae worth they as should think to touch sae fair a flower! but this muir! don't I ken it? is it not a fearfu' sight! the big ocean of eternity not's to compare! and wha wad go just to tempt its pathless face and a storm, the like not seen by mortal, a hanging! There near the pass we a' freed is a cavern I ken, or i' time lang syne I kenned! but nae matter, it may sarve to shelter a better nor Auld Weedy." As the old man finished speaking, the war of elements began, and a sudden clap of thunder seemed as if it had split the lofty mountain behind, and rent it from the summit to the base: another and another succeeded, the rain began to fall in torrents, and old Weedy turned

towards the mountain and advanced to the part he had formerly known: his companion, with a half suppressed sigh, enveloped herself in her plaid and followed him. Sixty summers and sixty winters had Weedy seen, but age had not shaken the firmness of his step; it had bleached his head and beard, and bent him a little towards earth, but he walked gaily, and during half an hour his companion followed him through chasms in the rocks, and over brushwood, and they then began to hear, at the intervals of the bursts of thunder, the roar of a mountain torrent.

“The Lord be praised!” said Weedy, “we ha’ not far to gang! gin’ ye ha’ courage, my lady, to follow me across

the rift, and not let your foot slip, we's soon be in a shelter where ye may dry your gear and tak a wee bit o' slumber!"

"Slumber? alas! it is not repose I want," said Florinda." "What is the war of elements, and the drenching rain, and the horror of our present situation? they all fade as the vision, I see, I feel only the danger of a brother! the heavens war against me! the prophetic voice of the hoary witch yet rings in my ears, and by the delay her dismal prophesy will be fulfilled! but lead on—I have courage to follow where thou canst lead."

"Ah! my lady Florinda, wha ever

doubted the courage o' ane o' your blude? just here, ah! I mind me weel that auld scaithed tree, it's ilka like Auld Weedy! an just round the next turn is the rift an' anither its awn brither a laid across—nay sure I'm wrang the while! why, as sure as the judgment day, the fiends o' hell ha' filled up the pass, and here's a huge mountain impedes our way. Alack! alack! we can never climb this mountain o' neither side, and we mun e'en gang back again."

"Be it so," said Florinda turning round and retracing her steps, but she was stopped by the sudden fall of a large bush, washed down by the pouring rain: it struck her foot and the exquisite pain



she felt obliged her to stop. Old Weedy placed her on the fallen bush, and produced from his scrip, such of their provision as remained; he recommended it to the lady, as well as a cordial he continually carried, and it was not till after the storm had passed away, and the shades of evening began to fall, that Florinda could again attempt to walk. She had not gone far when she was again obliged to halt, and by this time the darkness was profound, the moon in her last quarter had not risen, and the narrow road they were travelling was rendered dangerous by the continual falling of stones, earth, and bushes from the mountain.

The travellers, touched by the scene,



were leaning against a tree that grew on the edge of the mountain, in profound silence, when turning their eyes towards that part they had attempted to penetrate, they perceived at a considerable height on the mountain, a figure, with a torch in its hand. It was tall, meagre and gaunt, its coal black hair hung like snakes over its face and shoulders, which were covered with a red garment that enveloped the rest of its person to the knees: the legs and arms were bare, and, as it threw the torch about in various directions, the catching light caught the prominent features, the glaring eye, the long pointed nose, the half gaping mouth, with its two solitary fangs, and the peaked chin, strewn with scattered bristles, that like luminous points re-

flected the light of the torch. Florinda and her guide gazed on this apparition for some moments in silence, at length the former said, "Alas! Weedy, it is the Witch of Scot-muir! What new woe is she come to denounce?"

"That is more nor a mere mortal may just presume to divine, my lady! so be he has not in him the true blude, the gifts o' second sight and all the auld gear: but let us lend an ear to her parlance; if so be she is in the mind to tell what sorrow she is working. Some puir hapless babe, may hap, sall rue her night-wark. I ken her glunshing way an she's ever a bodeword for some gude chiel or other!" "Dost thou know her then, Weedy?" said Florinda

—“Do I! an don’t I then, my lady! wha kens not the spae woman o’ Scot-muir? just naeboddy, at all! She as is muckle usefu’ to her master, I reckon! let her be woman, let her be man she’s aiblins the same! but lend an ear to her say, my lady. She’s used to be a bangster in her younger time!” The lady listened, but the witch merely from time to time, uttered a sort of wild cry that expressed disappointment, and Florinda at last entreated Weedy to resume their journey. “Lead the way back! let us quit these horrid cleughs, and rest us till the moon rises on Scot-muir, Weedy. No evil can befall us there, and the first glimpse of day will lend us light to guide us to Flatburn East. Hasten, Weedy, for my heart sinks at

the sight of Madge of Scot-muir." Weedy loitered as if he was unwilling to leave the mountain without ascertaining on what errand the Witch was come forth, but at length the entreaties of Florinda prevailed, and after a painful walk rendered doubly horrible by the occasional glimmerings of Madge's torch, they found themselves near the place where they first entered the passage. Florinda was nearly exhausted, she was cold, wet, and in pain, but she passed on a little further round a projecting corner of the rock, and throwing herself on the ground, waited for morning.

CHAP. II.

*Auld Weedy's tale—*

*The Witch's cries—*

*From cruel force*

*Florinda flies.*

AND now, while the lady and her attendant are endeavouring to taste such repose as the foot of a woody mountain, after a drenching rain, can bestow on mortals, it will be right to inform the gentle reader who these interesting personages were. The latter, called Weedy Paddockride, was a character not at all uncommon in Scotland at that day, nor perhaps even now. In his youth he had been a soldier, and done good ser-

vice against the English; but he received a wound at the famous defeat of Flodden Field, and the leisure this procured him for consideration, induced a different turn of mind: he suddenly laid aside his soldier's garb, and assuming that of a sort of religious mendicant, he travelled the country, and subsisted on the charity he received from the good housewives, and sometimes from the ladies of the castles, which he visited. He ever professed the greatest abhorrence of dishonesty in any shape; and so well had nature qualified him for a public character, that he never failed to persuade all who listened to him of his unimpeachable honour, honesty, and veracity. Nay, so disinterested would he seem, that once or twice, when gold

was offered him, he was known to refuse it, though at the same time he observed, that if it was put into his wallet, he could not be answerable for the sin. To shew how high his character stood, we need only relate the following fact.

The Castle of the ancient family of Mac Mac was ever ready to afford its hospitable shelter to old Weedy, and from the Laird to the lowest groom all were rejoiced to see him. To the former he gave such intelligence as was most grateful ; informed him where his hereditary foe the Laird of Mac Sly was most vulnerable ; nay, it was reported, that he had more than once been the bearer of gifts to some discontented



members of that almost innumerable clan, and with difficulty escaped the anger of the politic chieftain. In order to satisfy Mac Sly, and exculpate himself, however, he took an oath on the holy scriptures with so steady and pious a countenance, that his innocence of the charge was ever believed by the clan.

But to return to the Castle of Mac Mac. The lady, a woman of high spirit, and who dabbled somewhat too much in the mysteries of the black art, never failed to closet Weedy, and to bestow in his wallet, a wallet of sheepskin, which she herself presented to him, some considerable gift: The lady Florinda, her niece, whom she had brought up from infancy, her own parents being



dead, early imbibed a strong partiality in favour of Weedy, who knew, because he assisted in conducting the tender interviews she had more than once enjoyed with a youth of whom we shall say more anon. To each of the attendants, followers, and servants, Weedy contrived at some time or other, to be useful, and he was of course admitted to parts of the Castle where no other mendicant would have found his way. After one of these visits, a silver tankard, never used but on the Laird's birthday, was missing, and a party of men at arms was sent after Weedy, to bring him back to the Castle. He underwent a strict search, but nothing, save a few relics and silver-pennies, were found upon him; and after many examinations, it was determined

that most probably the Witch of Scotmuir, called Madge the Snoover, who had been seen passing near the Castle, must have taken it by her art. Of this woman, more like an inhabitant of the lower world than of this, Weedy always professed the greatest abhorrence; he said she was unsightly and unholy, and more, like, to nourish imps than to befriend men. Her habitation was unknown! sometimes she suddenly appeared no one knew how or why! she uttered wild words of horror, and those who had most observed her, asserted that she was invariably the same, and commenced her prophecies in nearly the same obscure terms. Florinda, who had seen her once before her appearance on the mountain, was not a little surprized,

on that occasion, to hear the old mendicant say he knew her; but as he cunningly asserted his knowledge of her to be general only, her surprize passed away.

On the morning of that stormy day when our narration began, Florinda had wandered into a little favourite grove, to amuse herself with her harp, and seated with her instrument on a mossy bank, she was admiring the gradual dispersion of the morning mist from the bosom of a lake that lay below, and listening with pensive pleasure to the distant waterfall, when on the side of the mountain on which the Castle stood, Madge, the Witch of Scot-muir, suddenly appeared. Florinda started; but the gaunt figure,

raising her bare arm, and shaking a snake she held in her hand, exclaimed,

Ere the sun kiss the western fence,  
To Flatburn East, maid, hie thee hence!  
Warn him of the coming foe;  
Warn him of the unseen blow;  
Warn him of the man of might;  
Warn him of the lawfu' right.  
Tell no mortal of thy deed;  
Hie thee alone wi' eagle speed!  
Hie thee, maiden, hie away!  
And wait not till the close of day.

The Witch then uttered a loud scream, and instantly vanished. Florinda remained some time motionless, with surprise and horror: Madge appeared something more than human! there was something so commanding in her voice,

figure, and gesture, and her advice was so momentous, that Florinda resolved, however hazardous to herself, to follow it. She returned to the Castle, and prepared to set out. But as she was putting on her plaid, she received a summons from her aunt to attend her in her apartment, and however unwilling, she was compelled to comply with it. She laid her plaid aside, and entered the room of the Lady Isabel, who had just risen, and who, having dismissed her attendant, addressed her thus. “ Good-morrow, Florinda! why that anxious look? I do not often intrude on thy privacy, for, girl, light is not more distant from darkness, than my soul is from thine.” Florinda made no reply, and the lady continued.

“ M‘Mac has just left me, and commands me to tell thee, that thou wilt soon cease to inhabit the Castle of M‘Mac. M‘Spaul seeks thy hand, and to-night he will be here, to demand thy consent.”

“ Never ! he never shall have it,” exclaimed Florinda. “ What ! ally myself to a monster ! Never.” “ With that resolve I have no concern, Florinda,” replied Lady Isabel. “ Long, very long, hast thou and thy brother engrossed the affection of M‘Mac ! long, very long, have I ceased to intermeddle in what concerns thee ! I was commanded to spare thy maiden blushes, by imparting thy uncle’s design ! I have done my duty, and I leave thee to do thine.”



“ Oh! dearest lady, do more than your duty then!” said Florinda, casting herself at the feet of Lady Isabel; “ solicit my uncle to break off such a design! tell him, that my very existence depends on it! I cannot live and wed M'Spaul.” The lady looked earnestly, but not relentingly, at Florinda, and, after a pause, she said, “ I once thought I could not live and see my husband's love diverted from me! but I do—and will till I have my—but no matter—thou wilt live! and be as great a wretch as I am. Depart—trouble me no more!” So saying, she arose, and tearing her garments from the hands of Florinda, left her extended on the floor.

She lay for some time without motion,

and uttering groans, might have moved a heart of adamant; but a jealous vindictive woman is harder than adamant! the Lady Isabel could not relent, she enjoyed the woe she saw.

At last her own attendant, Peggy, entered the room, in search of her, and Florinda, overwhelmed with grief, retired to her apartment, when she suddenly recollected the Witch of Scot-muir, and the evil that threatened her brother. It was now near noon, and she had no time to lose! From M'Mac, to Flatburn East, was full five miles and a half, and she felt that many dangers threatened her in going alone: besides, to take the direct road would be to expose herself to be fetched back by the servants, who,



she did not doubt, would be sent after her; to procure her palfrey, without the aid of a groom, was impossible, and to trust any one was unsafe. In this dilemma her only practicable plan was to set out on foot, and to endeavour to reach Flatburn East, by a circuitous way over the mountain, and by crossing a corner of Scot-muir Heath. Under pretence of wanting repose, she dismissed Peggy, and wrapping herself in her plaid, happily left the gardens, unperceived, and resolved to place herself under her brother's protection; she descended on that side of the mountain which she knew must lead her to the Heath. She was much incommoded by the heat, proceeding at but a slow pace, in comparison to her wishes, and was at last

obliged to sit down to rest. During this rest, Weedy overtook her, and acceded to her desire, that he would accompany her to Flatburn East. The rest of the day's adventures the courteous reader knows.

CHAP. III.

*Doubts—Fearful sights—*

*And welcome rest—*

*The anger of*

*Young Flatburn East.*

FLORINDA had not been above a quarter of an hour extended on the ground, in the situation we have described, the nose of Auld Weedy uttering responsive echoes to her groans, when she heard the distant tread of horsemen, and at every instant they drew nearer and nearer. Her first intention was to awake Weedy, but she feared lest his sudden exclamation might alarm those who approached and guide them to her; she did not

doubt that they were her uncle's servants, perhaps, her uncle himself, and if discovered, she knew her instant doom must be to wed M'Spaul. Impressed with this idea, she lay still, and when the horses were within about two hundred yards of the spot, she saw the path suddenly illumined by a flash of light from the part of the mountain over her head, and perceived six horsemen armed, who turned towards the passage she and Weedy had attempted. At the same time the light gradually faded, and the cry of Madge of Scot-muir seemed to welcome the new comers.

These, then, were not the M'Macs ! they were more probably the very people against whom Madge, the Snoover, had charged her to warn her brother !

if so, her delay had been fatal ! she was too late, and her Alexander might be no more. This thought was distraction to Florinda. She knew not that any body could claim her brother's lands, and therefore the charge " Warn him of the lawfu' right ! " seemed to her without aim, but she felt that the evil hour was at hand, if not passed, and as soon as the trampling of the horses had ceased, she awoke her companion. " Weedy," said she, " the clouds disperse, and by the breaking to the left, I perceive the moon is about to rise ! let us be going ! there will now be no danger in crossing the heath." " Crossing the muir ! an' wae betide me, my leddy, ye wad nat think of any gait but that to go back to M'Mac ! I wad na' answer wi' my life

the taking ye elsewhere. I thought ye cam out just for a beautiful walk i' the gloaming; and a' cause of the thunder was forced to halt! ye dinnot mean the muir, leddy! why a short mile or twa wad bring us back to M'Mac! where I'll 'gage there is a waefu' stir for ye."

This sudden opposition on the part of her guide, was an obstacle Florinda had not expected, and at first, it much alarmed her. In quitting her uncle's house, without giving notice of her intention, she had left that relative no other conjecture on her absence but one, viz. that she had done so to avoid M'Spaul; and conscious that if her interviews, with a youth who had long possessed her heart, were known, her

uncle would suppose she had fled to him; she was sick with apprehension at the stain her reputation would receive. The obvious way to avoid this was to return to M'Mac, and account naturally for her absence, for which the storm would be a sufficient excuse; but her brother's life was either menaced or had been attempted, and M'Spaul was at her uncle's. These considerations urged her to proceed, but she did not think Weedy to be trusted; after a pause, therefore, she said, "I believe, Weedy, the fatigue I have undergone, or some evil influence, has made me wild! may the Virgin who knows my good intentions protect me. I am, in fact, too tired to return to the Castle, neither my strength nor your assistance will do. I must beg you then



to go there without me, tell my uncle how I was caught in the storm, and beg him to let my palfrey come here for me. I shall take no harm, and if I find myself able, I can be shortening the way a little." Weedy did not at all seem to like this proposal, he made twenty objections to it, each one respecting Florinda herself; though, in fact, his fear that M'Mac should resent his having accompanied her was the true one: he knew the chief's vindictive disposition, and ever since the adventure of the Tankard, he had felt awkward in his presence. At length, however, he appeared to be reconciled to this plan, and took leave of Florinda, with a prayer to the Virgin to protect her.



He was no sooner gone, than that unhappy young lady arose, and recommending herself to the care of heaven, entered on the vast wild of Scot-muir, with no other guide but a feeble moon half obscured by clouds, and no other protection but her innocence. She had a knowledge of the quarter where the Castle of Flatburn East stood, and she paced the moor with great resolution. Her walk was long and tedious, and when she had nearly reached a few scattered fir-trees that served to break the monotony of the scene, she turned her head towards the mountain, and again perceived the figure of Madge, the Snoover, with her torch, and several companions likewise with torches, who had all the appearance of being rather

fiends than men. They descended the mountain, and scattered, in various directions, over the heath, gave it the appearance of being partially illuminated. Two of the lights approached Florinda, and with a rapidity that left her no hope of escaping, if she did not seek some place of concealment: her greatest chance was to throw herself down at the foot of a fir-tree, as, in that uncertain light, especially, the similarity of colour between the heath and the plaid would not be distinguishable, and every body knows that in the days we write of, it was very easy for any chieftain to whistle forth, from what seemed a barren heath, four or five hundred fighting men. They started up of a sudden, and the whole land might easily have been imagined to

be giving up its dead. To this safeguard then Florinda trusted; and with a palpitating heart she heard two of the people approach her.

“ Ah !” cried one, “ here are the luckless trees, and this stray lamb may have taken shelter under them, if she is come this way at all, but o’ my conscience I believe the Witch has nicked us, and sent us off for some bye-ends of her own.” “ Very like !” replied the other, “ them as suckles the devils, loves mischief ! I wish our captain had had other counsellors when he listened to the Witch Madge. He thinks, more of women than gold ! Would he but lead us to the Castle of M’Mac, it should light all the neighbours to bed some

night." As he pronounced the word *night*, he was within three paces of Florinda, when a shrill whistle was heard, and instantly every torch was extinguished; the men turned back, evidently in some alarm, and Florinda, once more at liberty, found herself, by day-break, within the grounds that belonged to Flatburn East.

The Castle stood on a flat, as its name imported, and was entirely surrounded by a deep moat, impassable except by the drawbridge. Florinda was so exhausted, that she had hardly strength to sound the horn, and when she had done, the guard made some difficulty to admit her. She however soon made him understand who she was,

and being conveyed into the hall, she there found her brother just risen, and about to breakfast with his followers. He was much astonished and shocked, to see her; but before he would satisfy his curiosity, he administered a cordial to her, and ordered his housekeeper to put her to bed. This order was immediately complied with, and as soon as Florinda was a little recovered, she requested to be left alone with her brother. Taking him by the hand, with a look of great affection, she said, " My dear Flatburn East, before you can know whether you ought to welcome me or not, you must listen to my story. First, your danger, and then my own, has brought me here, at the hazard of my life. Such a night of horror! I won-

der I am alive: but listen to me with patience."

"If you would have me listen with patience, Florinda, you must be speedy," returned Flatburn East. "Whoever has dared to insult or injure my sister, shall feel the weight of my arm, and bitterly rue the day! Who is the villain, Florinda?" "Hear me, brother! M'Spaul has——" "M'Spaul!" interrupted Flatburn East—"what that abortion, that monster in human shape, unable and unfit to wield a sword or draw a bow! Has he dared to insult *my* sister?" "Oh no! brother, no! not to insult me; but he has demanded my hand, and my uncle seconds his suit!"

“ Oh ho ! does he so ? ” exclaimed the undaunted chief ; “ then my sword shall teach him that Florinda M‘Mac is not made to be the breeder of monsters to the clan of M‘Spaul ! My uncle shall retract his promise ; by my soul he shall ! or, if not, we will make bonfires of the M‘Spauls, and rid the world of a monster.”

“ Alas ! brother, another danger ; one that concerns yourself presses ! I was sent to warn you—has not the Castle been attacked last night ? ”

“ No ; Flatburn East is too well known to be lightly attacked, Florinda : but what do you mean ? ” Florinda then with a few interruptions, related to her



brother the appearance of the Witch of Scot-Muir, and her own adventures; and bold and boasting as was Flatburn East, he turned pale at the recital. At length, after a pause, he said, "From whence the attack may come, I know not; and provided the fighters are mortal, I care not. Never yet was Flatburn East driven from his post, and he will not now. Doubtless those cursed M'Slys have some foray on foot, but they will not succeed here! all shall be ready for them! It's lucky that they changed their mind, and did not come last night. I cannot guess an attack from any other quarter." "It is not likely," said the sister, "that I should guess; but it seems probable that the Witch has her habitation somewhere



upon the hills close by, and I could not help imagining that she might be somehow connected with Reft Rob, the famous roving robber. The men I saw on the heath were most likely his followers.” “ By my father’s sword, thou art right, Florinda, and with this hint I think I shall be able to correct the villain’s pride ! but I must to council—tell me first though, what I can do for thee ?” Florinda, grateful for her brother’s kindness, begged him to go to her uncle, and urge him to end the contract with M’Spaul. “ I am the more anxious,” said she, “ as I know at my age it is more proper to be under the roof of Lady Isabel than shut up here with men only. Lady Isabel is not kind, ’tis true ; neither can I say she is absolutely unkind :

she has her own pursuits and she seldom intermeddles with mine! but I cannot wed M'Spaul, nor can I return to M'Mac till I am assured I shall not be pressed on the subject."

"Who shall dare to press you?" cried Flatburn East, and starting up he retired hastily, called his domestics, gave orders for summoning his followers, then, accompanied by two well armed men he set out to his uncle's. From the part that Madge had acted, he expected to see her cross his path, but he was mistaken, and he arrived at M'Mac's without any occurrence worth notice.

Flatburn East was one of those impetuous young men, who act from the

spur of the moment, and when once an idea found entrance to his brain, it was almost an impossibility to remove it: it took full possession of the almost empty tenement, and barred the entrance to any other intruder. Convinced that his uncle had sold his sister to M'Spaul, he stalked into the hall where the two lairds were sitting, and throwing himself on a seat knit his brows, and fixed his fierce eyes on the laird of M'Spaul. That chief eyed him too, but it was with a countenance rather expressive of disdain than of anger, and M'Mac himself sat for some minutes a silent spectator of a scene that threatened to terminate in anarchy and bloodshed.

## CHAP. IV.

*A Red Dwarf, foul*

*Of limb, and learn'd—*

*His offer by*

*Young Flat is spurn'd.*

THE laird of M'Spaul was lineally descended from a celebrated hero, the date of whose achievements we have not been able to ascertain. Tradition, however, related many extraordinary things of the stature, strength and courage of Thud, nay, he was so impetuous in combat that he from thence had his name Thud, signifying, a blast, or storm. He was killed in an encounter with two famous Norwegian Giants, leaving an

only son, whose prowess and strength were not inferior to his father's, but whose principal force lay in his shoulders. Heading an expedition into Northumberland his followers were besieging a castle belonging to an English baron, but were much annoyed by the arrows and missiles cast from behind a strong wall on one wing of the castle. Rage, and extreme peril of his men lent him strength, and setting his enormous shoulders against a part of the wall he thought less strong than the rest, he gave it so terrible a shake that a breach was made, his men entered, put men, women and children to the sword, and carried off a considerable booty to their own country. From this time he had the name of *Spaul* or *Shoulder* and his four sons

were called M'Spaul or sons of the shoulder.

Some learned antiquaries have asserted that they should be called sons of the *soldier*, as being more significant, but I am not inclined to agree with them, and I myself think sons of the shoulder more classical, more striking, more truly sublime. For several generations, the M'Spauls continued to intermarry with each other, nay they were so very tenacious in this respect, that they became proverbial, and to love one's cousins like a M'Spaul, was heard from one end of the Highlands to the other. Whether it was from want of a cross, from frights, from the evil eye of glamour, or from some other cause, we know not, but the

branches of the family fell off by degrees, the breed degenerated in those who continued to have issue, and at the time we are speaking of, Thud James M'Spaul was the sole male M'Spaul, and in him centred the extensive lordships of the greater part of the family. His countenance and his figure were equally remarkable. His face was long and much wider across the jaws than the forehead: his eyes were small and deep set, one was brown the other blue: from the exceeding projection of his lower jaw, he appeared to have no upper teeth, and those below stood as if they were guards to his lips, watching on different sides. His nose was long and hooked, and placed so much awry on his face that it lay almost flat to his



left cheek, while his right looked on the stretch to follow it. His hair, eyebrows, mustachios and beard were of strong, curling, fiery red hair, and when he smiled, which was but rarely, it always appeared to be in scorn.

Nor was his person less remarkable. He was in height not quite four feet; his neck short; his body unproportionably long; and legs he literally had not; his feet grew beneath the knee-joint; and this conformation rendered it impossible for him to walk. His arms were about four inches long, and his long fingers sprawling at their extremities, gave them rather the appearance of fins than of any human limb.

These personal defects, however, he contrived to conceal by his dress, a long velvet cloak, richly embroidered with gold, and fastened in front by diamond clasps, and at his meals he always had a squire who fed him, and placed him on the seat to which he chose to move.

Cut off by nature from the common enjoyments of men, hunting, and war; he had recourse to literature, and under the guidance of a learned churchman, he became an excellent classical scholar. He had a taste for travelling, and during an absence of four years, he had visited Italy, France, and the capital of Germany, and conversed with many of the remarkable men of his day. On his return to Scotland, he became sensible of

the value of the society he had lost, and endeavoured to find another to supply its place; but in vain! many of the lairds could not write their own name, and all despised book-learning; they contemned him too, for he was a man of peace, and had never headed his clan on any occasion.

He now began to study how he might fill up the vacuum there must be in a solitary life, even to a studious man, and at last determined to take a wife. To this he was urged by many considerations, particularly the desire to secure the continuance of the ancient race of M'Spaul, which must be extinct if he died without issue. The next thing was to select a woman of ancient and

honourable blood, and of such perfect soundness of constitution, and symmetry of person, as might counteract the unfortunate formation of his own. On looking round, Florinda best pleased him in all these respects, and as he found, on inquiry, that no laird was yet destined for her husband, he applied to her uncle for permission to make himself acceptable to her. This, with the prospect of a magnificent provision, was easily granted, and M'Mac himself urged the instant celebration of the nuptials. It was not, however, M'Spaul's intention to precipitate matters; he wished to have time to conquer that aversion he knew Florinda would at first feel towards him, and to win her by degrees, to receive his hand. He had a mind well stored with

ancient lore, and could, if he chose, be very amusing and agreeable; and he very wisely considered, that when Florinda had got so well accustomed to his face, as to behold it without disgust, she would listen with pleasure to his conversation, value the affection of a man whose soul was dedicated to promote her happiness, and certainly receive the magnificent presents he intended to make her most graciously. Like most other men he had no doubt of success if the field was left open to him, and he knew the weight that flattery, fine tender speeches, and rich presents had with the fair sex.

Knowing so well his own defects, he was by no means surprised to hear that

Florinda had endeavoured to avoid him, and M'Mac was half offended at his composure on the occasion. The two chieftains were sitting in rather an unpleasant mood when Flatburn East entered; they had exhausted the subject, as M'Spaul finding M'Mac very violent against Florinda, and very anxious to sacrifice her immediately to him, maintained a dignified silence, wisely considering that his reasonings would be thrown away on so violent a man, and that it was better not to explain his motives, lest the cunning inherent in the M'Macs as well as the M'Slys should seek to counteract him, and overthrow that structure of felicity of which he was now anxious to lay the foundation. We left the three illustrious chieftains M'



Mac, M'Spaul, and Flatburn East, in one of those menacing positions that makes the reader's heart, as it were, leap to his mouth, (or, in the Scottish dialect, so much more agreeable and beautiful than English, pure good classical English! *loup!*) and raises a latent hope and expectation of one of those tremendous combats and rencontres that form the very soul and basis of histories of the olden time: whether or not our reader's expectation may be satisfied may probably be seen in the course of a page or two.

During at least two whole minutes Flatburn East continued to look furiously at M'Spaul, whose disdainful lip lost nothing of its curl, and M'Mac appeared



as if he had not yet determined what course to pursue; at last he addressed Flatburn East in a sort of troubled voice, and asked if he brought news of Florinda.

“Faith I do, uncle! and thanks to this noble laird’s precipitation and your paternal care, it’s well it’s not her death I bring news of. She’s now with me! and by G—d as long as I’ve a roof to shelter her, or a sword to defend her, she shall not be made miserable by any monstrous match! let who will lose by it!”

“Nephew,” said M‘Mac, (with difficulty suppressing the anger this last insinuation made boil in his breast) “nephew! you are too impetuous! you

quite mistake the matter, and the foolish fears of a simple girl have deceived you, I can assure you.”—“’Tis well, M’Mac, that you are my uncle,” said Flatburn East, “or by the blood of the renowned Mac, the founder of our race, I would never rest till my sister—but no—you have shewn how groundless her fears were, when though she sent for succour, you let her remain abroad in a storm, doubtless raised by the infernal adherents of the M’Slys, to the attacks of night fiends and robbers! was this well done, uncle?”

“By the honour of our house I am a stranger to what you say, nephew,” answered M’Mac, still reining in his rage, “no message ever came here from Florinda, and as I was told by Lady

Isabel, that she had ridden over to Flatburn East, I took it for granted that she was properly attended, and that we should see you this morning to form arrangements with M'Spaul, who offers as if she were a Princess! indeed our family is as ancient, and as honourable as any Royal House in the world, no disparagement to the M'Spauls! which can truly boast of deathless deeds as well as ourselves." Before Flatburn East could answer his uncle, the laird of M'Spaul, gently inclining his head in return for the compliment, said in a not unpleasing voice, though somewhat too deep for his bulk and a little cracked, (this might in part proceed from his agitation) "I am perfectly sensible, gentlemen, that any offers I could make, princely as my for-

tune is, would fall far short of the merits of the divine Florinda ; I have before perfectly explained my wishes to you, M<sup>c</sup> Mac, and I take this opportunity of repeating them to Flatburn East. They are only to be allowed to woo the lady ! if I can succeed in gaining her esteem, I am her's, if not she shall be at liberty to reject me. I will be bound, she shall be free." " So she shall !" cried the brother, " and if you could see yourself, valiant Chieftain, you would think no more of this wild project. By heaven I would sooner see Florinda in the arms of Reft Rob—he is a man and a hero—than tied to a Red Dwarf." Both the chieftains started, and changed colour at this speech—but neither of them spoke, and Flatburn East went on. " M<sup>c</sup>Spaul,

take my advice, cease to seek my sister for a wife—she will never be a M<sup>c</sup> Spaul! never—and while such a preposterous idea is afloat she shall stay under my protection.” So saying he darted through the door, and mounting his horse galloped back towards Flatburn East. When he reported to Florinda what had past, and added his own determination, that she should remain with him in spite of both uncle and M<sup>c</sup>Spaul, he was exceedingly mortified to find, that she seemed much dissatisfied with the arrangement; she gave no answer to his repeated assurances of protection, but burst into tears. Flatburn East, however, was not a man likely to grieve much about what he called the whims of a baby, he remembered the prophetic

warning, and busied himself during the rest of the day in completing such preparations as might enable him either to withstand an assault or a siege. Florinda grew every hour more uneasy, which he attributed to her fears, and the day passed over in that fearfully painful manner that leaves the heart sick and the limbs aching. Florinda retired early to her room, the watch was set, and the chieftain, throwing himself down in his clothes, was soon in a sound sleep.

CHAP. V.

*The lover's song—*

*They fly to arms—*

*Th' auld chattering Nurse*

*Breeds vain alarms.*

**I**N the castle of Flatburn East lived Elspa, who had nursed the young chieftain and his sister, and who loved them quite as well as her own son Bauldy, if not better. For the truth, according to the best authorities, is, that so little force has what is called natural affection, and so much that of lairds and laird's blood in a Scotch bosom, that nine times out of ten, the quality of the nurseling carries away the palm from a woman's own



babe. And this, as it should do, turns all to the advantage of the nurse, who is treasured and valued accordingly. Elspa had observed the exceeding melancholy of Florinda, and from the two men who had accompanied Flatburn East, (whom in general for shortness she called her Flat), that it was intended to bestow her dear Miss Flory on the Red Dwarf: she thought this quite reason enough for the young lady's melancholy, and with a truly affectionate commiseration she endeavoured to comfort her. She came to Florinda's apartment, and turning out the girl who was appointed to attend on her, she began thus, while she assisted her in undressing:

“Wae's me, my sweet young leddy!

weel may the big drops roll down your bonny cheeks! for to think I should ever nurse sich a beauty to be the meat of a foul monster of a Red Dwarf, as is eneugh to flay the very life oot of a bride, the soon she see him! but I wad na say aye tall him, my sweet babe, I wad na! sooner wad I gang and swear mysell to pray night and day in a convent! and that wad be a thoosand pities seeing as hoo ye'd be the prattiest mither as ever suckled a babby. Wae's my heart, dinna fret so, my sweet bairn! it's not so bad, neither, as if your true love was a gien to anither! for then well mought ye wail an weep, an be well nigh oot o' yoursel for dole." "Elspa," cried Florinda, seizing both her hands, "I am as unhappy as—as—I can be—

I do love another, and thence my grief."

"Wae is me, my bairn, and wha is it?" cried the old nurse.

"I—I cannot tell you!" said the young lady, "but this I know, that he will be in the greatest danger to-morrow morning, if, unapprised of my change of abode, he should venture to remain at M'Mac. To go to him myself, Elspa, is impossible! alas! it is grievous to think it so! but you, dearest Elspa—you could venture! your son will either accompany you or"—"Holy Mither," exclaimed Elspa, "and hoo suld I venture across that heath! wi-the Witch o' Scot-muir o' yan hand, and the M'Slys

advancing o' t' t'other! besides it's a lang gate, and I feel the cauld afore sun rise!" "Well then," said Florinda, after a pause, "will Bauldy go?" "Oh! the bairn is upo' th' watch an' noo, an he'll e'en just gang whersae'er his young leddy desires." "If so, bring him to me as soon as his watch is o'er," said Florinda. "That I will, and I'll stay wi ye, my bairn, just to hear what fashion man he may be, has a dazzled your e'en! Oh! I hope he's o' gentle blude, wi twa blue e'en an bonny sandy lacks! dootless he can do all the knightly feats, an kens hoo to win the prize, even when kings jaust again him. Nay, but ye sough, my bairn, and the saighs o' love ever blow up the flame the brighter. Ah! I mind me weel the clatter my puir gude man

kept; (God rest his soul !) he was a brisk wooer, an' I never knew the daft play o' saying nay, when my heart said aye."

In this manner did Elspa run on for some time, almost unheeded by Florinda, when in a pause of the chat a sound as of some one singing, reached her ear. She started from the bed where she had thrown herself, and opening the casement heard a well known voice sing the following words in a fine deep mellow tone.

SONG.

Unknown, unfriended, and alone,  
'Midst pathless wilds I make my moan !  
Ah ! aid me love ! thy sighings near  
Shall breathe my wishes on her ear.  
Tell her, ere morning light I come,  
To learn her will, to learn my doom !

Entreat her ere she hies to rest,  
To hear the sorrows of my breast.

Oh ! lend thy bark and waft me o'er,  
Oh ! land me on the wish'd-for shore !  
Unbar her gates, and place me where  
I may pour forth my amorous care !

“ It is himself, Elspa ! It is himself !”  
cried Florinda, “ Alas ! why does he  
come here ? how did he learn ? what  
shall I do ? - he will be taken or perhaps  
killed by the guard—run to Bauldy—the  
castle is asleep ! run to Bauldy—tell him  
—Oh ! if I could but see him.” “ I  
can’t but think his coming to-night right  
fashous, my bairn,” returned Elspa, with  
most provoking coolness, “ an, if ye  
wad e’en send me to speak Bauldy, ye  
maun lend me the lamp—’tis just a  
blinkan ! the mair’s the pity, for is it

na the dark hoor when auld Madge has a' her cantraips, an if I sould light on a fiend o' her breeding! the blessed Virgin preserve me!"

Florinda had by this time placed the lamp in the window, as a signal to her lover, that she had heard him: she raised the wick, and giving it to Elspa, dismissed her. In about a minute, Elspa returned, and asked what she was to say to Bauldy. "He's clapped here at the north gate, just under this windore, an the puir bairn ull be all bum-bazed, if an he hear a man is sae near—nay, it all be a bodeword right awsome, an he'll na ken what to do." "What to do! only not to take any notice, Elspa, but, if possible, to contrive that I



may speak to the stranger under the window! that is all I now wish for! Oh make haste, dearest Elspa! a moment's delay may be fatal!" "Well, so I will," said Elspa, and again she turned her face to the door, and began to descend the narrow staircase with no small trepidation. In the meanwhile Florinda returned to the window, to listen whether her lover again addressed any thing to her; and in a few moments a plunge into the moat told her that he was attempting to swim over. To her anxious apprehensive love, it seemed impossible that he should ever reach the bank alive, and she listened in breathless fear, till at last she thought that even through the darkness she could discover a figure approaching: at last it stood

beneath the window, and called her by her name. "Oh, Oscar! what a risk you run! why did you come?" replied Florinda. "To ease your mind, dear maid, from that anxiety I knew your condescending goodness would feel for the forlorn Oscar. Am I to believe that you can wed the man chosen for you by M'Mac? Am I to despair of that promise my own presumption and your goodness bade me hope for?" Florinda was about to reply, when the Castle suddenly resounded with dreadful shrieks; the bell rung immediately after; the inhabitants flew to arms, and all was bustle and confusion. Horror-struck, Florinda fainted, and when she recovered her recollection, found herself on her bed with Elspa lamenting over

her. "Is he safe?" said she, as soon as she could speak. "Aye, blessed be the saints, he is, truly!" replied Elspa. "Thank God!" said Florinda. "Aye, truly, we ha' muckle to be thankfu' for!" said Elspa; "for the Laird made a muckle rampage, and had a like ta'en his blessed life. What, did Flatburn East see him then? Is he here?" cried Florinda, in much alarm. "For sure, my bairn, where soud a be?" said Elspa: "an to think I had a inkling o'the ill as was coming!—but lie still, my sweet bairn: why, ye dodder and shake! the mercifu', ye'll surely give up the ghaist! be quiet, and I'se just tell ye hoo it a' befel!" "Do so. Oh! make haste," said Florinda. "Why so I will, ye'll see, my bairn, maugre the hobblesheiw,

down yonder! Mercifu'! a body wad think the M'Sly was upon us! Well, my sweet bairn, there I was all irie, acause o'the Witch, an I went didling along, just as wad the Red Dwarf hissell, gif he had the gift o'wawking!" Here Florinda groaned, and Elspa guessing why, went on with her story. "I'd a just steppit doon th' last step but twa, for I kep it a reekoning, when a imp o' t'other warld, dootless sent by Madge o'Scot-muir, came fizzing an flaffing right forgainst me, and dinged doon the light, an I skreeked and cam doon wi' a bang an a sore sinking, thinking for sartain it war Madge, or Satan hissell, at had a stricken me." Here Florinda made a sign expressive of impatience, weeping bitterly; and Elspa, thinking

she was commiserating her misfortune, went on. "Ah! my sweet bairn, an' a sore bump I a' gotten; but nae matter o'that." "Oh no! pray go on! tell me about *him*!" said Florinda. "Weel weel, bide a wee, bide a wee! an I sall come to him a' i' gude time! The Laird hissell cam, an a ranting roar he did mak; and when he seed it was his awn Elspa, he had nigh gane greeting! and he bid the lads shid tak me to the guard room; an' there, my bairn, what a sight did I see! I see the dear lad a liggin as if he war dede, and mair nor ane bare sword a flashen awr un!" "Oh, heavens! is he wounded then? Oh tell me quicker, Elspa!" "Nae, nae, bairn, ye munna haste me. I thout at first, for sartain, he was nae mair for this warld!

but at last, Jemmy Gibbie, wae befa' his fou' head, a pricket his backsey wi' his dirk, an' a' gav a lowp, an' flang his sackless e'en to me ward, an' he said, "Oh! mither, is it just ye?" "Mother!" exclaimed Florinda, "what then is it Bauldy you are speaking of?" "Aye, for sartain is it, my bairn! an' wha' wad she hae it to be?"

To this Florinda gave no answer, but rising from her bed, she took her plaid, and though hardly able to stand, prepared to leave her room. Elspa, who seemed to have forgotten the strange voice, and the reason Florinda had to be uneasy, strongly opposed this, telling her, very truly, that all below was bustle and confusion; and that she could



not move without hearing, and seeing, and meeting the people who composed the little garrison. Florinda, however, was deaf to entreaty and reason, crying, "Oh! where is he? what has become of him?" and, running to the window, she thrust out her head, hoping, as the morning was now nigh breaking, that she might catch a glimpse of Oscar, if he yet loitered about the place. She was thus occupied when her brother entered the room, and asked, angrily, why she was up, and what she wanted. Florinda was too much agitated to reply: she covered her face, and wept bitterly. "Why, sister, what is the matter now? surely you are not afraid to stand a siege under my command? If you go on this way, you'll be as great a coward as



Elsa here, who dropped down with fright at hearing Bauldy move." "Ah! Lord bless ye!" cried Elsa, "ye ken not what moved, it war a imp o' Madge o' Scot-muir, at flaffed my light, an made me skirn! an a would a' made ye skirn too, Lord bless ye, my Flat!" "It served you right, for being up so late," answered Flatburn East. "I can't guess why you should be going to the guard-room, and giving an alarm, as if the M'Spy was upon us! Nay, I do believe somebody has been approaching a little too near! he has escaped this time, but the next he shall know what a strong tow Flatburn East has for all the Spy clan." "Ah! an hoo can ye speak sic hard words o' a puir young lad! may be no more nor a' nighted wayfarer!" answered Elsa.

This terrified Florinda as much as it alarmed Flatburn East, who, though not very clear headed or quick of apprehension, was like most of the Macs very suspicious, cunning supplying the want of reasoning powers, and he began to fancy that Elspa was some how implicated in the affair of the stranger, who had it seemed been heard by Bauldy when he plunged into the moat. His suspicion was breaking out, when he saw Florinda making a sign to Elspa not to speak, by laying her finger on her lips: this at once told him that Florinda was at least informed, and seizing her hastily by the shoulder, he demanded in a violent manner, who the person was that had approached the castle? and when to his repeated demands each one

more furious than the rest, she gave no reply but her tears, he vowed that he would not have his safety endangered by midnight assassins, and that the moment it was light he would carry her back to M'Mac, and she might defend herself as she could from her uncle and the Red Dwarf. It was in vain that Florinda wept, intreated, and vowed that there was no danger to Flatburn East, from the person who had swam the moat; all she said only irritated the furious chieftain still more; he said, he found there was treason abroad, and that in order to rid his abode of it, he should despatch Elspá along with her. Miserable as this hasty resolve made Florinda, she had no alternative, for even if she had owned all she knew, her brother

would still have sent her back, she therefore submitted in silence, and had much ado to reconcile Elspa to going with her, as that good woman considered herself eternally dishonoured by what she termed the *mislushous* malice of Madge of Scot-muir. Submit however she must, and in the midst of tears and laments numberless, and very moving, she prepared to do so. Flatburn East had hardly left his sister and Elspa half an hour, when with the dawn of the morning arrived Auld Weedy, who begged a horn of ale for the love of St. Andrew, but declined remaining in the castle, he being going further, he said, to discharge a vow he had made. He sat down with Bauldy, and from him learned the night's adventures, and the

removal that was about to take place; in return he reported that a party of the M'Slys had been out on a foray, and that it had been determined to attack M'Mac on the foregoing night, and Flatburn East on that just concluding; but that James M'Sly, commonly called Yake Isles, from the name of his place, had had a sudden attack made on his castle by Reft Rob and his followers, and that the exertions necessary to repel these banditti, and to repair the damage they had done, had obliged the clan to defer their menaced attack for the present. Several of the M'Slys were killed in the combat, and so dextrous was the great chieftain Reft Rob, that he had withdrawn his men, carrying off a considerable booty without the M'Slys be-

ing able to follow him, or even to determine on which side he had taken refuge. Weedy wished to have seen Florinda; but this Flatburn East would not permit, and he very soon left the castle, being, as he said, pressed for time. The news he had brought, however, served to soften in some measure the valorous Flatburn East, who recollecting M'Spaul, and how disgraceful it would be for his sister to be the mother of Red Dwarfs, consented that she should remain with him till he had made his uncle alter his determination; and he resolved to go once more to M'Mac, in order to bring him to terms; at the same time he told her he suspected all was not right, and that rather than see her disgrace herself by an inferior match, he

would himself be her executioner. Poor Florinda did not feel all the gratitude she ought for so fraternal a declaration; but she felt happy that there was some respite, and that her brother had not entirely forgotten her interests.



CHAP. VI.

*A man forgetful,  
Deep of thought—  
The Snoover's yells—  
The lady caught.*

**W**HILE all this was passing at Flatburn East, the inhabitants of the M'Mac were not idle; the chieftain consulted with his lady what steps to take, and both together so overpersuaded the Red Dwarf, that he relinquished his own better judgment, and consented, if the young lady could at all be brought to agree to it, to have the marriage concluded immediately. He left it to the honourable M'Mac and his lady to pur-

sue what steps they thought proper, and ordering his litter, retired to his own castle, to give orders and to select the presents he intended to offer on the joyful occasion. His joy, however, was at intervals clouded by the fear of a disappointment; but, upon the whole, he bore his journey exceedingly well, and his attendant reported that he never before had found him so difficult to please in the trimming of his beard as he was the following day. But this by-the-bye.

The greater part of the day was spent by M'Mac and his lady in consultation, and at last it was determined that the Lady Isabel herself should go to Flatburn East, in order to persuade Florinda

to return, and she was empowered to hold forth any deception she thought most advisable, M'Mac observing very justly, that conversation was but one stratagem of war.

The Lady Isabel had never, since the young chieftain came of age, condescended to visit Flatburn East, and her intention to do so on this occasion, caused some surprise: her palfrey however was prepared, and her squire Domine Goliath, as he was called, prepared to attend her.

This man was a singular compound of book learning and natural stupidity. If fame spoke truly of him, he could read the Lord's prayer backward! a won-

derful art! and he was said to practise it pretty often; yet with all this knowledge he looked very like a fool, and had so short a memory, that having on one occasion lost the forefinger of his right hand, and sleeping pretty soundly during the time of his cure, he never once recollected the circumstance; but when he took up his pen, he felt a little awkward, and observed to the Lady Isabel, that it was odd he should not sooner have discovered that he was born with only three fingers on that hand. Nay, when his mind was occupied, he was quite as unconscious of present pain; for sitting one day in his chair, considering some abstruse question, Flatburn East, who loved a joke, took a pair of pincers and drew one of his lower teeth—he moved

not during the operation, though it was somewhat tedious, the tooth being sound and firm, and to this day he knows not even that he has lost it.

On Goliath, for some reasons best known to herself, the Lady Isabel had the greatest reliance, and she chose on this day that he alone should accompany her to Flatburn East.

As it was not their intention to cross Scot-muir, but to keep on the hills till they wound round opposite Flatburn East, and as the Lady Isabel trusted to the guidance of Goliath, she desired him to ride on first, and as soon as he understood her wish, he obeyed her with great alacrity. But his attention was

soon engaged with a charm he thought sufficiently powerful to compel his Satanic Majesty to perform any the most extraordinary command, and instead of carefully observing his way, and going on at a moderate pace, he wandered wide from the quarter he ought to have neared, and so slowly as to try the patience of Lady Isabel. She called to him till she was hoarse, and the mountain echoes were weary with repeating Goliath! Goliath, though not two yards from her, heard her not. She then tried what feeling would do; but he was equally insensible to two or three strokes she contrived to give him with her whip: she would have passed him and taken the lead herself, but they were alternately ascending and descending a narrow way on the

edge of a dreadful precipice, and the trial was too hazardous. At length the shades of evening began to appear, and the way they were in was so impassable, that the horses stumbled at every step : Lady Isabel was terrified ; she screamed aloud, and Goliath finding his mind somewhat disengaged from his studies, luckily heard her, and exclaimed in a composed tone, “ is any thing the matter, Leddy ? ” “ The matter, Goliath ! why we are eternally lost ! ” “ Odsso ! I know not how that can be ! ” answered Goliath, and pricking on his beast, he turned a sharp corner in the mountain at a rapid pace, leaving the lady to follow him. This she did as speedily as she could ; but what was her horror, to find no Goliath ! he had totally disap-



peared, and no vestige of him or his horse remained.

Lady Isabel was now in one of those interesting situations that are very amusing in the recital, but not at all so in reality ; she was, however, a woman of courage and resolution, and hoping that her horse might find the way back again, she dismounted, in order to turn him round with less danger to herself. This she effected, and was about to remount, when the figure of the Witch of Scotmuir stood before her in the path. In one hand was her favourite snake, in the other a dirk ; she remained for some moments immoveable ; then shaking her familiar till it hissed terrific, and menacing with the dirk, as if she meant to

strike, she screamed forth the following wild verses, in a recitative that partook not a little of the nature and tone of infernal choristers.

Woman foul, thy hour is come,  
Tremble, tremble at thy doom !  
The adder springs unneath thy feet,  
Now ripen'd i' the summer's heat.

Wee its form when thou i' pow'r  
Mickle now i' vengeance hour ;  
Woman pause, thine hour is come,  
Truth and justice seal thy doom.

At first Lady Isabel for some reason or other was, as it were, thunderstruck ! she turned pale, her legs shook, and her powerless hands fell motionless at her side. But she was not long in this situation ; she regained her self-possession,

and raising her right hand, said, "Avaunt! devil, avaunt sorceress! I despise thy menace! try not thy charms here, or a stronger than thou shall bind thee." Again the witch shook her snake--flashes of light seemed to dart from her eyes—she stood with her dagger raised high in air, and sung,

Tremble, tremble guilty soul,  
One drop more shall fill the bowl!  
Force the lass the Dwarf to wed,  
And the grave shall yield its dead;  
Tremble, tremble guilty soul,  
One drop more shall fill the bowl.

She waited for no reply, but turning round, ran up the mountain with amazing swiftness, and was in a few seconds out of sight.

The lady was now alone ; but it was not till a few minutes after the departure of Madge, that she was sufficiently collected to observe, that her palfrey, terrified by the screams of the witch, had plunged down the dread abyss, and that she was now dependant on her own exertions only ; she was struck with dismay, and more particularly when she considered that there were both birds and beasts of prey, who would pay no respect either to gentle blood or incantation. To the latter, however, she had recourse, being determined now to summon to her aid a power that should convey her away unhurt, and to practise what she had so long studied under the learned Goliath.

She sat down to recollect the words she had so lately conned ; but whether it was, that her fright had troubled her memory, or that the hour was unpropitious, we know not ; every word, save that the most important, presented itself ; she ran over her lore ; all seemed unmethodized ! like a Pythia on the sacred tripod, she began to foam with rage at her own want of skill, and starting up, she almost heedlessly precipitated herself down the mountain.

Perseverance, however, was one of Lady Isabel's characteristics, and she tried again ; when in answer to her

“ Yield, base spirit, to my power !

Mine the force, and mine the hour !”

she perceived a man of extraordinary stature and strength, habited in a sort of black armour approaching her. Not doubting that it was that demon she had summoned, she commanded him to convey her to M'Mac, in a voice, which though sufficiently haughty, betrayed her inward agitation at the visible appearance of one of Satan's court. The man looked at her for a moment, and then answered in English, "Convey you, lady! Oh yes, so I will! but by St. George it won't be so far as M'Mac to night! you must be content to visit our infernal abode; our chief has a little business to settle with you; and by G—I could hardly have carried him a more agreeable present. Come, come along!" so saying he seized her arm, and dragging

her along, turned round the corner where Goliath had disappeared. Here the Lady Isabel fainted! partly from pain and exhaustion, and partly from fear at finding that she was in the power of a lawless freebooter, instead of having at her command a power more than mortal. When she recovered her recollection, she saw no reason to abate her fears; but the cavern of Reft Rob is too important to be introduced at the end of a chapter.



CHAP. VII.

*A cave—a din—*

*The great Reft Rob—*

*Flat's rage doth cleave*

*Th' offender's nob.*

WHEN Lady Isabel awoke, she found herself lying on a stone couch sparingly covered with heath, in a lofty cavern, whose roof would have been with difficulty discerned, had it not been hung with stalactites, which, like cut-glass, reflected the light of the torches disposed here and there against the walls. At the further end was a fire, beside which sat two men, one of them, he who had

brought in Lady Isabel. They seemed busy preparing their food, and conversed together in a low voice, so that she could not tell what they said : she, however, examined the cavern as well as she could by the uncertain light, in order to discover the outlet, being resolved to attempt her escape as soon as she thought day had appeared. Her captor heard her movements, and approaching, asked in a civil manner, if she wished for food ; to which she made no other reply but a disdainful toss of her head and a sullen-  
“ No.” “ Ah ! by my shoul,” cried the other, who seemed to be a ferocious Irishman, “ but ye’ll change that note before your ransom be paid ! Good luck to you, my lady ; and may you be often taken prisoner before you go to

your reckoning." "I wonder," said the first, "how much M'Mac will pay for his wife! If he thinks as we south of the Tweed do, he would rather pay Rob for keeping her, than for giving her back again. But I've the best right to that reward!" "Oh ho!" cried the Irishman, "ye talk it bravely, my honey! and did not I sit here waiting for ye? and was not that as much right as just going to fetch her down? I claim half, let who will have the whole, honey, and I'll cut the throat of any man, was it our captain himself, that should tell me I lie there." "No, you don't lie *there*, you lie *here*," said the former, who was commonly called Muckdin, and at the same time gave him a furious blow on the mouth, that for a moment prevented

him from answering. But though he could not speak, on account of the blood and broken teeth that stopped his utterance, he was not idle, he snatched a burning firebrand from the hearth, and pushed it furiously against the face of his adversary, who parried the blow, and wresting the wood from him, would have returned the compliment, but O'Stab took refuge behind the couch of Lady Isabel, where he defended himself with his dirk. The lady had no opportunity to escape, Muckdin threw the brand on the couch, the heath took fire, in spite of which the men continued to fight one on one side, the other on the other. A moment longer, and her clothes would have been in a blaze, when, in answer to her screams, the

Captain, with about a dozen others, appeared in the cave: with a shout that made the whole rock shake, he called to them to forbear, and snatching Lady Isabel from the couch, he placed her safe, and almost unhurt, on her feet; then, while his followers restored order, he told her that she had nothing to fear.

As the light fell full on his figure, while the face of Lady Isabel was concealed by being in the shade, she thought a more majestic one she had never beheld. His height was above tall, his chest and shoulders broad, his head erect, and every limb, as far as her observation went in so short a time, of the most masculine beauty. His face, however, she did not see, for he wore a hel-

met, and the vizor down ; she only perceived that his eyes were like refulgent stars. Lady Isabel naturally admired manly beauty ; indeed her own laird was universally considered the finest man in the Highlands, and that is quite enough to convince the whole world of his perfections, as it is well known no mortals on earth can at all equal a Highland hero. She knew that she herself was handsome, and willing to prejudice him in her favour, she turned her head so that the light might shew him no vulgar mortal was in his power ; but the effect produced was quite contrary to what she had expected, for he started, and grasping his sword, half drew it from it's sheath. Lady Isabel trembled ; and, throwing herself at his feet, said, " Oh !



sir, spare my life! alas! what have I done to offend you?" "Rise, Madam!" said he, after a pause, during which he sheathed his sword; "I have said you have nothing to fear, and the word of Reft Rob was never yet forfeited." Then turning to one of his people, he ordered him to place her a seat near the fire, and to offer her such provisions as their cavern afforded.

He next addressed himself to his company, and commanded that the spoil of M'Sly, with some other they had taken, should be produced, an order instantly obeyed; and then with a celerity beyond belief, he divided it equitably into as many portions as he had followers. Each man took his part, and when



all seemed satisfied, he addressed them thus : " I believe nothing more remains but the lady ! what is she worth ? " Muckdin would have examined her more narrowly, in order to estimate her value, but Rob bade him forbear, in a tone that would be obeyed, and the warrior being thus compelled to make a rough guess, said, ransom and all, he thought two hundred gold pieces would purchase her : at the same time giving a hint that as he alone captured her, to him alone must belong the spoil. This produced a murmur of disapprobation, which was stopped by Reft Rob, who protested that such a hint was contrary to every principle of justice, and that in a community whose bond was honour and unsullied integrity, he would resist

such unjustifiable incroachments to the last moment of his life. "The lady is mine!" said he; "I will redeem her, and Muckdin is too much a man of honour to find himself aggrieved by adhering to the laws." He then divided two hundred pieces of gold among the thieves, Muckdin not offering any opposition, though he seemed a little out of humour: as to O'Stab, he was occupied with thoughts of revenge on the furious Englishman, and contented himself with the share he had got.

Lady Isabel was upon the whole exceedingly charmed with the beauty, courtesy, and gallantry of Reft Rob, and wished earnestly to see his face; but in this he did not gratify her; he

kept on his helmet, and when he sat down to eat, and raised his vizor, he was so situated as to prevent her from observing his features.

The feast was not long, nor very sumptuous, consisting chiefly of dried meat, and at a signal given by the Chief, the men arose, and departed under the command of a Lieutenant, excepting two, who were ordered upon guard. And now, as Lady Isabel was left alone with Reft Rob, she expected that he was about to declare to her, that she was at liberty, and to promise her a safe conveyance home; but he maintained the most profound silence for some time, apparently debating with himself what course to pursue. At last, Lady Isa-

bel's patience being exhausted, she addressed him: "Your gallant conduct, Chief, leaves me no fears! and I do not doubt that you will restore me to liberty. But I confess that I can hardly believe such magnanimity to inhabit the bosom of a freebooter! Am I deceived, or is it really Reft Rob, whose name makes men tremble, and women fly for fear?"

"Such, Lady, is my appellation," replied the Chief; "and I thank Heaven that one more glorious or more terrible, resounds not through these mountains!" "Wonderful mortal! your language is not that of this part!" said the lady; "whence come ye?" "Three years are now scarcely passed since I

came here, impelled by a power whose aim I knew not, till yesterday. I came from England: my name implies my situation: reft of all, I repair on the world, the injustice the world has committed. You ask for liberty; *that* it is not in my power to grant, at present at least: my own safety and that of my people demands circumspection; and you must remain a prisoner here, with such attendance as we can give, till—but farewell, lady—time presses: with the morning light I shall return.” So saying, he left the cavern, lowering after him a sort of trap-door, that communicated with another part of the subterraneous habitation. This disappointment, and the cavalier behaviour of Reft Rob, threw the Lady Isabel into a

furious rage : she tried to raise the trap ; she tried to find the aperture through which the men had passed, but in vain ; she did not succeed, and she at last threw herself on her couch, and cried herself to sleep.

In the mean time her absence, as it was now midnight, occasioned some concern, the Laird who had appointed M'Spaul to be at M'Mac's the following day, expecting her to bring Florinda back with her. Flatburn East came before sun-set, and received so many assurances from his uncle that Florinda should not be controuled, that he resolved to send her back with the first dawn of day, and when some wonder arose that he had not met the Lady Isa-



bel and Goliath; it was easily conjectured that as there were two roads, it was probable that she had taken one and himself the other. M'Mac, who in the hope of speedily seeing his niece Lady of M'Spaul, was in a particularly jovial humour, invited his nephew to drink with him, and before midnight both chiefs were elevated with the joys of the bottle; M'Mac almost forgot his wife, and Flatburn East quite forgot his sister: at length, however, wonder that the Lady Isabel did not return, changed to alarm, and uncle and nephew agreed that it would be proper to make some inquiry. Half a dozen horsemen were ordered to attend Flatburn East, and either to escort the ladies home, or to



bring back such intelligence as might satisfy M'Mac.

It was near three in the morning when the party, headed by the gallant young Laird, arrived at the moat, and the guard was ordered to let down the bridge, and admit his master. Instead of instant compliance, the poor wretch, who was more than half drunk, began to abuse them, telling them that he knew them for *Slys*, and that he knew them too well, to let them approach the Castle: at the same time he sounded the alarm, and while Flatburn East, more than half furious, galloped round the moat, almost tempted to swim it, his own followers were seen collecting, and the piper himself began to produce

tones of discord. Lights flitted backward and forward, arms glittered, voices swore, and all was in the utmost confusion. At length, some one more sober than the rest, recognised the loud menaces of the Laird; the bridge was let down, and Flatburn East and his companions galloped into the court-yard: he there called loudly for the man who had first refused him, and no sooner perceived him, than he cleft his head with his sword, and leaving him to be buried by his companions, rushed to his sister's apartment with his bloody sword in his hand. The terrified Florinda, who was up and dressed as if expecting him, uttered a scream of terror, while Elspa fell on her knees, and entreated him to spare her life.

When once your Highlander is well roused, he is something like the great Achilles, rather implacable, and will make no scruple to sacrifice half a score innocent people to his irritability, so that Elspa was not without reason for her fears: on this occasion, however, she escaped for her alarm, and Flat, not seeing Lady Isabel, demanded her. That she had never been there, seemed to him impossible, and he suspected some trick; he rushed down, and demanded to know the reason of the drunkenness and misrule that had taken place; but no one could satisfactorily account for it; indeed every one was unwilling to speak, lest the sword should be his answer. Nearly an hour passed away in vain threats on one side, and well-found-

ed fears on the other; and at last all the resolve the young Laird could make was to dismiss the M'Macs with the intelligence of Lady Isabel's loss, and to take some reposé himself. This was done, and before day-break the Castle was again tranquil.

CHAP. VIII.

*The Lovers kiss—*

*The Lad retreats—*

*The Lass returns—*

*The Witch's threats.*

WE must here pause in our story, to relate what had passed at Flatburn East, after its noble Laird had quitted it to visit M'Mac.

Poor Florinda, a prisoner in her own apartments, distracted with fears on her own account, and with great alarm for the safety of her Oscar, placed herself at her window, to watch the last rays of

the setting sun, as they gilded the mountains in the distance. All the melancholy presages, trembling fears, and tender hopes, natural to a young lady in her situation, by turns possessed her, and so completely absorbed was she by her reflections, that even the unceasing whine and bitter lament of Elspa were unheeded. At last Elspa retired to confer with her son Bauldy, from whom she received some good consolation in the shape of a merry glass, and the absence of the Chief seeming to give liberty, a regular carouse was begun.

In the mean while Florinda continued at her post, and through the gloom her eyes were gladdened with the sight of Oscar. Her brother being absent, she



resolved to endeavour to have him introduced into the Castle, and calling Elspa, who had in her grief forgotten to lock the room door according to orders, she easily persuaded her to have him brought in: a piece of gold lowered the draw-bridge, and Elspa, locking the two lovers into the room, returned below, to encourage the family to make merry, wisely conjecturing that in an emergency, the drunkenness of the family would facilitate his escape.

Oscar no sooner found himself at liberty to pour out his amorous plaint, than, throwing himself at the feet of his mistress, he thanked her in the warmest terms for the admission she had granted him, and added a thousand other pas-



sionate and tender speeches, that brought Florinda's blood to her cheek, and her tears to her eyes. At last, however, the lovers became more composed, and Oscar, taking her passive hand, addressed her thus: " At last, my beloved Florinda, I feel I have a right to address you: hitherto you have known me under a borrowed name; but ere to-morrow's sun shall set, I shall be able to declare my own. I have been the child of misfortune, but at length my foes will sink; I have them in my grasp, and a few hours will bring me a friend whose presence alone is wanting to establish my claim to a rank the most distinguished. In the mean time, dearest object of my love, I fear to lose you! you may be reconveyed to M'Mac, and,

by some stratagem, forced to the arms of M<sup>r</sup>Spaul, before I, fettered as I am, can assert my claim to you. Hear me then, dear maid! I know in this neighbourhood of a retreat where you may remain in safety, and where, if you wish it, I will not see you till I know and can publish who I am. The occasion of your brother's absence is propitious; trust yourself to me, and consent to remain but twenty-four hours, where you shall be guarded and preserved as the dearest treasure belonging to Oscar." To this proposal Florinda would by no means consent; she urged her brother's promise to defend her, and the improbability, as he was not returned, that he would send her back to M<sup>r</sup>Mac before the evening of the morrow. She in-

quired how he had escaped the preceding night; was astonished that he regained the opposite side of the moat in safety, and thanked the Holy Virgin and St. Andrew for assisting him. These diversions, however, did not turn Oscar from his purpose; hours passed away in the pleasing debate, and Florinda, with a sigh, had almost consented to every thing he wished, when Flatburn East returned, and that scene occurred which we have already described.

Elsa, in her alarm, was some minutes before she could find the key of the room, where she knew the Laird would expect to find her; she fumbled and cried, and called all the Saints to

help her ; nay, she would even have accepted assistance from Madge the Snoover, if she had appeared to offer it.

In the mean time those within were in no less consternation each for the other, and Florinda trembled lest she should see her Oscar murdered before her face. As to that young man, his courage seemed to rise with the occasion, and never perhaps did he look more the hero than at that moment. As soon as the door was opened, he would have rushed forth to gain the moat ; but Elspa heard her Flat raging behind her, and to save his Florinda, he consented to secrete himself behind the huge bedstead, till the Chief should have again retreated.

When he went down, as has been related, he forgot, in his rage, to fasten the door, and this left Florinda some hope to secure the safe retreat of her lover, who was anxious, on many accounts, to be away, and as soon as the Castle was at rest, and the M'Macs gone, Elspa undertook to convey Oscar in safety outside the Castle wall, but not till he had again entreated Florinda to accompany him ; she was, however, too much terrified to comply, and she had the satisfaction to see him, ere long, hie across the plain, unpursued by any hostile band.

The knowledge that Oscar was safe, inclined Florinda to repose, and she went to bed, hoping not to be disturbed

for some hours. In this hope she was disappointed; a messenger arrived early from the Laird of M'Mac, inviting Flatburn East and his sister to repair as expeditiously as possible to M'Mac, as he was anxious to assure Florinda of his protection and fatherly care. Florinda had received so many frightful shocks since her arrival at the Castle, that she was not sorry to receive these assurances of comfort in her usual abode, and she prepared with alacrity to return where she might see Oscar with less danger than at Flatburn East. Elspa, at her desire, accompanied her, and the servant who had brought the message being thought a sufficient escort, Flatburn East sent his sister forward, saying that he would soon follow her himself. Flo-

rinda inquired after Lady Isabel, but he either knew nothing, or was commanded to say nothing, and Florinda felt some uneasiness on her aunt's account.

They went the upper road, and about ten o'clock met Auld Weedy going towards Flatburn East. He made his obeisance to Florinda, crying, "Ah! my leddy, I'se muckle glad to see ye sae weel: but where gang ye? Red's nae the colour for ye; ye'd best stay o' the bonny green flat. My leddy, what for ye nae understand me? Is Auld Weedy grawn daft?" These last words he pronounced with some emphasis, and Florinda was much struck with his manner: yet, as they might mean no-



thing particular, she knew not what to think. She spoke kindly to Weedy, and said, if she understood him rightly, he thought the air of Flatburn East was best for her. "Aye, for sartain, my leddy. Why, what a rout is there down at the M'Spaul! an' the Laird all dizen'd! nay, as to jewels, they're nowt! but the deil a foot gi' they for him to stand on! But he'll kith in his ain colours! an' he's mair kyte nor leg. What winna ye rin frae this kow?" "Where is he?" cried Florinda; but before Weedy could give an answer, Flatburn East appeared in sight, and ordering his sister forward, put a stop to the conversation.

With a heavy heart Florinda proceed-

ed, dreading, yet not believing, that her uncle could be so treacherous as to force her to marry M'Spaul. She attempted to move her brother in her favour, but he only urged on his horse, and they proceeded some time in silence. This was interrupted by Madge of Scot-muir, who, addressing herself to Flatburn East, said,

“Ware ye lad, an turn ye hame,

Treacher' M'Mac is the game;

Soon ye'll know, an soon ye'll feel

The righteous claim, the righteous steel.”

“Hoot awa! Witch,” cried Flatburn East, “and don't stop my way! be-gone! I'm in haste!”

“In haste to rin,

In haste to rue,

The fur ye'll gang,

The war ye'll do!"

cried Madge. "What does the Witch mean?" cried Flatburn East: "I'll mak ye rue, old snake, if ye do not get out of my way." So saying, he spurred forward his horse, and Madge, retreating up the mountain, cried,

"The sun is up, but ere he's doon,

The M'Mac sall a' swapp'd his croon."

and with this she disappeared.

Though Flatburn East pretended to despise Madge, he crossed himself, and felt a little alarmed at her prophecy, as he was commonly called the Crown of the M'Macs, being the sole male heir to

the present Chieftain. The world was ready to believe that the Laird, finding his lady brought him no issue, had ceased to regard her with that affection that seemed due to so clever a woman, and that she in return hated the nephew, who was beloved by his uncle as the crown or head of the family. It was reported that one great inducement to Lady Isabel to dabble in glamour was to remedy this evil, but it did not seem, even with the assistance of Goliath, to have succeeded, for she had never been in the way to give a crown to M'Mac. Neither Flatburn East nor his sister were ignorant of the source of Lady Isabel's hatred, and the Witch's prophecy made the former imagine that

the lady was about to produce an heir. He mused upon this in no very pleasant mood, and soon arrived within sight of M'Mac.

## CHAP. IX.

*The wooing Monster—**Ravish'd Maid—**The M'Mac's men**The foe invade.*

**F**LORINDA was so much alarmed and terrified at the threats of Madge and her own suspicious apprehensions, that when she dismounted, she could not stand without assistance, and she was obliged to use Elspa's arm to assist her to the room where her uncle waited to receive her. But if her alarm before was great, it became overwhelming, when she saw M'Spaul in a superb

cloak and a tippet of uncommon price and fineness, seated by her uncle and Lady Isabel: she could not support the apprehension, but fainted on the spot. "Ah, wae is me!" cried Elspa; "see here the fruit o' your monstrous weddings! She's dead, she's dead! my bairn! my bairn! oot o' ye! ye unco unlusome monster!" Lady Isabel commanded her to be quiet, but she raved the more, and M'Spaul, who was really shocked to see Florinda's agitation, paid no attention to what Elspa said. Florinda had just begun to revive, when her brother entered the room; and, in order to give her time to recover, M'Mac took his nephew's arm, and led him into another apartment. Then the Lady Isabel, with great apparent kindness,



taking Florinda's hand, said, " My dear niece, this joyful agitation at the sight of me, after you had heard of my misfortune, is very flattering to me ; and I owe it to your tenderness to account for my return. I was taken by that monster, Reft Rob, who left me prisoner in his cave, with two guards : one of them I bribed to release me, and he accompanied me here. He expected to return with a reward, but as it is proper that the freebooter should be destroyed, I have lodged him in the dungeon, to serve as guide to the cavern ! I'm sure I could not describe the way ! but I see you are tired. I leave M'Spaul to entertain you !" So saying, she pushed Elspa out of the room, and fastening the door after her,

left the unhappy Florinda almost petrified with horror.

M'Spaul, who, as we have said before, was a man of sense, gave the lady time to recover her recollection, and then addressed her thus: "I am grieved, Madam, to see that through the malice of nature, who has hardly left me the outward form of man, I am indeed so disagreeable to you, as to cause this violent emotion of disgust: but I entreat you, divine perfection of beauty, to listen to me, and to learn from my own mouth what affection on your part will satisfy me." Here Florinda covered her face, and groaned, and the Red Dwarf, as if he had not observed it, went on.

“ It is an observation of the ancient philosophers, that habit is second nature, and that things at first sight disagreeable and disgusting to us, become in time not only bearable, but even pleasant: and this I have experienced myself in more instances than one. It is on this property in our nature that I build my hopes of being allowed to hope for your consent, and even your kind consent, to become my wife. I am told that of the many chieftains who have admired your charms (and the number of your lovers must include all who have ever seen you) you have never shewn a decided approbation of any; and this strengthens my hopes, as I shall have only your indifference, and

not a prepossession for another to contend with. Add to this, beautiful Florinda, that in me you will ever find a doating lover! one whose whole joy will be to gratify every wish of your soul, and to make your hours pass gaily and happily away. Give me then all I ask; the esteem one friend may have from another! Honour me by becoming the companion of my travels and my studies, or rather by becoming the director of my life and the object of my adoration."

Here the Red Dwarf, who had made a long speech, sighed tenderly, and bowed to his mistress, his eyes sparkled with the fires of love, and his very moustachios, vivified by his passion, curled

and moved over his lip. Florinda twice tried to speak, but she could not! she only gasped and fainted once more in her chair.

Her lover was now in an awkward predicament, for he could not, as is necessary in such cases, run to his mistress, clasp her in his arms, and kiss her to life again, neither could he fall at her feet, clasp her knees, and her hands, and fan her with the sighs of love! nay, he could not even summon a servant to her assistance, and as his passion was every moment increasing, so was his grief to see her sufferings. The length of time, however, that she remained insensible, gave M'Spaul an opportunity of considering the solidity and wisdom of the

advice Lady Isabel and the laird had given, and he felt fully convinced, that the sooner Florinda was his wife the better, as, if he waited to overcome this maiden delicacy, much time might elapse, and perhaps she might even be unwilling at last. So easy is it for the wisest men to reason themselves into what they wish; love, like gold, will sometimes make the worser appear the better reason, and induce a man, who piques himself on his honour, to perform a most unjust part. M'Spaul, fired with the charms of the lovely Florinda, who lay fainting before him, already anticipated the joys wedlock would bestow, when Lady Isabel entered, and told him, that the two chiefs were now perfectly agreed, and that Florinda must, if he

required it, immediately give him her hand.

Tears of joy paced and followed each other down the lover's cheeks at this intelligence, and he called aloud for his squire to bring in the presents, and assist in conveying him to the altar.

While this was passing, Florinda again began to revive, and at first seemed hardly conscious of her situation; but when her aunt attempted to tie a necklace of very fine pearls about her neck, saying it was her husband's first gift, she uttered a scream of terror, and throwing herself at the Lady's feet, entreated to be spared only one day from making this sacrifice. "At the end of



that time your feelings would probably be what they are now," answered Lady Isabel, "and it is entirely out of compassion to your maiden fears, that I thus hasten matters. Believe me, my dear, a maiden will never gain courage on these occasions by taking time to reflect! when the knot is once tied, the affair is over. This is a *lucky* day, I would not have you marry to-morrow on any account."—"I will not marry at all!" said Florinda, "no power, no law can compel me to marry a monster! where is my brother? alas! will no one help me? Oh! Uncle, by every tender tie I beseech you, spare me! The hour that sees me M'Spaul's wife shall see me a corpse."—"If such be your determination, weak girl," cried M'Mac, "it will

behove M'Spaul to set a close watch over you. You see he is gone before; he waits you at the altar—his wife you must be, do not then provoke me by any obstinacy that would disgrace an ideot." Then seizing one arm he motioned to Lady Isabel to take the other, and they dragged her between them to the chapel of the castle, where the Reverend Priest, who had been duly summoned, waited with an air of joyous sanctity to complete the business. Despair giving Florinda new strength, she burst from her uncle, and made an effort to fly, but the door was closed—then addressing the Priest—"Father!" said she, "beware, I tell you, that so far from being willing to wed M'Spaul, I hate and detest him; he is my abhor-

rence, and another has my heart ! I am promised to another—I have sworn to wed another.” On hearing this, M'Spaul would have spoken ; but the violence of M'Mac prevented him. That noble chieftain burst forth into invectives against his niece that were very unfit for her ear, or for the place he was in : he insisted upon it that the ceremony should proceed, while Florinda, and even M'Spaul himself, exclaimed against it.

The Priest, who knew his duty, began to mumble forth the sacred words ! Never was a wedding less decorous and more riotous ! at last, Florinda screamed with so much violence, that spite of the laird's orders, the household could not

refrain from running to the chapel. This so enraged M'Mac, that his passion got the better of his discretion; he drew his sword, and pursued the flying domestics to the other side of the castle, where they took refuge in such holes and fastnesses as they had the luck to find: happily they were quit for their fears, and a few scratches, and M'Mac at last demolished his sword by striking at one who pushed the door to, and thus occasioned it to receive and destroy the ferocious blade.

No sooner had M'Mac run out of the chapel, than Reft Rob, armed cap-à-pie, walked in. The Lady Isabel started and screamed; M'Spaul never so longed to be able to run away in his life, and the

Priest concealed himself beneath the altar. The valiant Freebooter, brandishing his sword in his right hand, clasped Florinda in his left, and, bearing her off with wonderful velocity, mounted his horse, and galloped with her towards the mountains. He and his followers (for they were waiting for him at a short distance), were nearly out of sight, when M'Mac returned from the pursuit of his trembling domestics: and it beggars the powers of description to paint his rage and astonishment! He acted every extravagance a man can act on such an occasion, and called loudly for his arms, his horse, and his followers, to pursue the ravisher. The M'Macs knew their laird too well to be in a hurry to obey him, each one fearing that, if

he appeared first, he should be cut down ; but after a lapse of some time he succeeded in collecting his people, and sending for the man Lady Isabel had sent to the dungeon, he ordered him, on pain of death, to conduct him instantly to the cavern in the rock. The man had no choice ; he looked sullen, but being mounted on one of M'Mac's horses, he led the way, and followed the traces of Reft Rob and his companions. For some time they went on at a tolerable pace, but at length the way became so difficult, that their movements were slow, and their path steep and dangerous : they came to the very spot where Goliath had disappeared, and the man, spurring round the corner, left M'Mac in doubt whether to follow him, or to



wait his return. His own life appearing in imminent danger in doing the former, he preferred the latter, and sat chafing on his horse, and ready to sacrifice even his own men for very rage. A noise among the bushes above his head made him look up, and Madge grinning horribly upon him, as she stood out of the reach of his weapons, shook her snakes, and appeared agitated as if with supernatural fury: at length she spoke.

“Laird of Mac! behold the hoor,  
 Finish’d is the ill starr’d pow’r!  
 Pause and list! thy joy is nigh,  
 Thy task is done! thy luck is high!  
 But justice on the guilty pour,  
 Laird of Mac, in this thy hoor!”

“Aye, faith! old Snoover! there is



some meaning in thy prophecy now !” cried M‘Mac : “ and depend upon it the guilty shall feel the edge of my sword, and the ravisher of Florinda bite the dust.” The only answer Madge gave to this, was by whirling, or as she called it, snooving herself about with vast rapidity, and laughing immoderately. Immediately after, the man who had acted as his guide re-appeared on foot, and telling him that now was the proper time to enter, as Rob was engaged with the lady, and most of his men were gone out another way, desired him to dismount, and follow him on foot.

M‘Mac did not feel quite satisfied of the fellow’s integrity, but he dismounted, and leading his horse with the left, and

raising his sword in his right hand directly over the fellow's head, he directed all his followers to do the same, and to follow the way he should lead. The man recommended that there should be the most perfect silence maintained during the march, and pushing away some bushes, which by their easy yielding seemed to have often admitted visitors, they descended somewhat rapidly till they came to an entrance in the side of the mountain, just large enough to admit a man, and from which the guide had removed a large portion of stone, with a few scattered weeds growing on it. As they proceeded, the passage which was long became quite dark, and the hearts of the valiant M'Macs sank with-

in them. The laird had just prudence enough not to cut down his guide, for he thought it better to proceed than to attempt to turn; an attempt indeed that must have been abortive; and at last, to reward his perseverance, he saw a glimmering of light some way below him, and received fresh courage. At last when he hoped to emerge, and lay his enemies dead at his feet, his sword-arm was suddenly seized from an aperture in the side of the winding passage, and a large cloth being thrown over his head, he was carried by the followers of Reft Rob into a sort of small cave, and there disarmed. They were obliged to bind him, and two fellows of terrific aspect stood guard over him.

His men were easily disarmed, and all thrust into a place which could be entered only by a trap door, that was well secured on the outside.

## CHAP. X.

*Flat love-betray'd—*

*Th' auld Nurse's woe—*

*The Lady Isabel*

*Must go.*

THE reflections of M'Mac in his state of bondage, were far from agreeable, and he could not but consider the treachery under which he suffered, as a just retribution for that he had practised on Florinda; this did not, however, prevent him from vowing, that if he escaped with life, he would not leave a single Freebooter alive within twenty miles of M'Mac, while there was a *woody* to hang

them on, or a *tow* to be had for love or money.

We must, however, leave the valiant laird in his state of durance, and relate what happened to Flatburn East. When M'Mac led him to a separate apartment in his castle, it was to assure him, that his sister had consented to receive the addresses of the Red Dwarf, and that with regard to the celebration of the marriage, no violence should be offered to her. At the same time, he hinted rather plainly, that the proper thing was to leave M'Spaul a clear field to commence his operations, and added, that after what passed last night, it would not be prudent to leave Flatburn East without its laird.

The nephew very properly thought this hint something like a direct insult ; but, as he happened to be of the same opinion with regard to the principal business, he mounted his horse, and without staying for any refreshment turned his face homewards. As Flatburn East rode along, for lack of something to do, he gave way to a reflection, that by chance presented itself, on the folly of men who will take wives either to hate or to govern them, and he concluded with a determination, that no woman, however rich, and however beautiful (these were the only two qualifications he valued in a woman), should ever induce him to commit any extravagance that might lead him into mischief.



He had not gone far, when from behind a projecting part of the mountain, he heard a particularly sweet female voice, singing an old romance, and at intervals talking to a baby. Whether it was that the thoughts of matrimony, though unfavourable ones, had raised some little touch of the tender passion in Flatburn East, or that it was mere curiosity to see what the woman was like, who owned so sweet a voice, or that man is destined ever to shew himself a bundle of contradictions; whatever it was, Flatburn East threw himself from his horse, and tying him to a bush, walked round to the spot where the fair one was sitting. She looked as roguishly arch at him, as if she had guessed on what errand he came, and pressing a

fine fat baby to her breast, bid it not skreik at the big mon.

“ And why should it skreik, my bonny lassie ? ” cried the young laird, “ I have no mind to hurt either the bab or its mither : if its mither ye be . ”

“ Yes truly, your honour, I ha’ this an twa’ ither, all as lusome-as angels, an the mither o’ God bless and presarve the bairns ! ”

“ You should have said, and make them as bonny as their mither,” said Flat, gallantly taking the young woman round the neck, and kissing her heartily. She did not much resent this, probably on account of the compliment,

but, pushing him off, said, "she supposed he was a braw laird by his bawdness." This encouraged the young man to repeat the attack, and a sort of contest ensued between them, that ended by the young woman screaming out violently, and Flatburn East throwing his purse into her lap. Things were in this situation, when two men coming behind the young laird seized him, disarmed him in a moment, and blindfolding him, led him to his own horse, on which they mounted him, and conducted him to a place where they bound and left him.

Such was the termination of Flatburn East's adventure, and his only consolation was the hope of being one day able to drive their souls out of their bodies,

either by steel, wood, or tow; but as there seems little hope of such a termination to the disconsolate chieftain, we will leave him to the stormy thoughts that formed his solace, and pursue our history, which will quit the gentlemen to wait on Lady Isabel, and M'Spaul, left in the chapel at M'Mac, wondering at the extraordinary events that had taken place, and consoling each other in the best manner possible. There was, however, a third person who intruded herself into their conversation, and regardless of the frowns and reproofs of the lady, would, as she said, ease her heart and tell her plaint, even if the devil himself should threat her. This was Elspa, who rushing into the chapel, called out aloud for her bairn and made

an attempt to seize M'Spaul by the nose, an attempt, however, happily frustrated by the squire of the Red Dwarf, a huge muscular fellow, who caught Elspa by her throat, and would probably have strangled her, had not his master called to him to forbear. In obedience to this command he released the nurse, and in return for his kindness, received an attack in the face, not unlike that the infuriated Grimalkin gives, when her young brood are annoyed by hand profane. He had his dark brown cheeks, in a moment, stripped of certain portions of that tough covering Nature had bestowed upon them, and tears of blood literally flowed down upon his garments. He did not give the enemy time to repeat the attack, but casting his arms around

her, he threw her down in so awkward a position, that her head came in contact with the nose of the Red Dwarf, and it instantly sympathized with the squire's cheeks. M'Spaul uttered a cry, his squire swore, and Elspa called out for help and succour, as if the M'Slys had all been upon her. Lady Isabel, distracted by the turn affairs had taken, had hardly presence of mind enough to apply a napkin to M'Spaul's nose, a charity the more necessary, as he could not do it himself.

At last, however, Elspa was conveyed away, the squire retreated to wash his face, and M'Spaul was carried into an apartment, where, when his wants were duly administered to, he was left to re-



flect on the day's adventures, and to console himself, as well as he could. M'Spaul was, as we have said before, a philosopher, and in spite of his mortification, he could not help thinking that, upon the whole, the termination of his matrimonial attempt was not so melancholy as it might have been : that Florinda loved another was evident, and that she never would have loved him, even had her affections been disengaged, was now to him as evident. He felt satisfied that his nose had suffered instead of his forehead, and resolved henceforward to woo no ladies but the Muses, and to leave it to providence to provide an heir for his estates ! He ordered his litter, and having taken leave of Lady Isabel, retreated to his castle, where, in



spite of his bodily defects, he contrived to make himself beloved, by exercising his benevolence and humanity, and to pass his time tolerably agreeably by pursuing his studies and improvements, though he had no wife to share the one or to admire the other.

The Lady Isabel was by no means easy with the turn affairs had taken; she waited impatiently for the return of M'Mac, but hour passed after hour, and no laird returned. She had recourse to her books, and bitterly regretted on this occasion the loss of Domine Goliath, who had been from her early years her confidant, (his short memory qualified him particularly well for the office), her counsellor and her chief stay. Night

arrived and no laird came, and so impatient was she for intelligence, that instead of remaining in her room, she walked backward and forward on a terrace near the house, and between every heavy gust of wind, listened for the trampling of horses, or the sound of her laird's bugle.

It was already late, when her ear was gratified; the distant trampling of horses on the hills announced an approaching troop, and she exulted in the thought of seeing Reft Rob a prisoner in her power. She called out the few domestics who remained, to bring torches to serve as a guide to the castle, and Elspa, hoping to see Florinda again, ran forward beyond the gates: the sound

came nearer and nearer, and when it appeared to be almost at the castle, Auld Weedy walked into the castle yard. With his usual respect he approached Lady Isabel, who eagerly demanded, if it was her lord who arrived?

“Why, my leddy, wha suld a be? suld a be anither suld dare to prank up sae late to the castle o’ the M’Macs?” answered Weedy. “Ye’ll see, my leddy! ye’ll see! an a joyfu’ day, a joyfu’ day ’twill be! aye! aye! right afore inight, my leddy!”—“Daft fool!” cried the lady, “what has right to do with it? I ask thee whether the men I hear—oh! merciful heaven! treason! treason! Reft Rob! Reft Rob! oh! spare my life!

spare my life!" As Lady Isabel thus exclaimed, she attempted to fly into the castle, but Weedy prevented her, while her domestics and the priest, who had once more ventured forth, made a retreat unmolested: the men of Reft Rob seized the lady, and one of them taking her before him, they rode back again to the mountain.

The darkness of the night, the wild solemnity of the scenery, the mountain torrent, the noise of the horses' hoofs, the clanking of armour, the howling of the wind, and the screams and menaces of Lady Isabel, formed altogether a scene whose horror and sublimity could hardly be surpassed; and when the ap-

pearance of the Witch Madge, with her torch and her wild cries, was added to it, it was truly terrific, and calculated to harrow up the soul, as all Highland scenes should do. The witch, as usual, spoke in measured words, and once or twice they reached the ear of Lady Isabel:

“ The light is fled,  
Behold the dead !  
The hoor is o’er,  
Ye’ll reign no more !”

To Lady Isabel’s ear this was of ominous portent ! she knew too well what reason she had to dread that the dead should appear. She was conscience-stricken, and at last, after a toilsome

ride, was conveyed into the cavern from whence she had made her escape. What awaited her there may be known in the next chapter.

When Lady Isabel was conveyed into the cave, she found it occupied by Rob. who stood divested of his helmet, about half a dozen armed men, and the Witch Midge. Just as she came in by one entrance, her husband, guarded by two men, and Richard East with the same attendances, following, came in by another. She looked round in dismay for the scene was striking, but soon

## CHAP. XI.

*The tale of death—**The rightful claim—**The Snoover's fate—**The fall o' th' Dame.*

WHEN Lady Isabel was conveyed into the cave, she found it occupied by Reft Rob, who stood divested of his helmet, about half a dozen armed men, and the Witch Madge. Just as she came in by one entrance, her husband, guarded by two men, and Flatburn East with the same attendance, following, came in at another. She looked round in dismay, for the scene was striking, but soon



her attention was solely fixed on Rob, who regarded her with a steady look: She uttered a faint scream, and tried to articulate, but her tongue refused its office: then, covering her face, she sunk down on a seat prepared for her. No one spoke for some seconds, but at last the gallant Rob, addressing himself to her, spoke thus:

“ My features, lady, have, I see, informed you who I am! I need not tell *you* that my name is—”

“ It’s false!” screamed Lady Isabel; “ it’s glamour all! I know he died: I know he was buried!”

“ But the grave gie’s up its dead!”

cried Madge, in a deep solemn tone—  
“Leddy—I warned—but my life is lang  
eneugh! the day o’ vengeance is come!  
Oh! my bairn! hoo sweet! hoo sweet!”  
“What does all this mean?” cried  
M’Mac; “what infernal machination  
is this against the honour and life of my  
wife? Robber, we are in your power;  
if we are to die, let it be speedily.” “I  
seek the death of none, honoured chief-  
tain,” said Rob, with much emotion;  
“but I have been robbed of my birth-  
right! my life attempted—I have been  
an outcast among outlaws; and I now  
demand only justice.” “On whom?”  
“On the Lady Isabel! from her spring  
all my wrongs!” “It’s false! it’s gla-  
mour all!” screamed the lady. “Is  
this face glamour?” said the Witch.

“Has grief’s eild sae wrought in it, that nor ye nor your noble husband kens it? Look me weel!” M’Mac looked attentively at the Witch, and spite of her glaring eyes and shaggy hair, he thought her features were not unknown to him. “Is it possible that it could be Jemima?” said he. “It is, indeed, Jemima,” returned Rob, “and in me you behold that son, whose death you so bitterly lamented, and against whose innocent life my unnatural mother-in-law practised.” “It is false! all false!” cried Lady Isabel; “the child was buried! it is all a trick!” “I hope it is,” said Flatburn East, “and by St. Andrew it is a trick with a vengeance: the old Snoover will have told the truth, I see, “The M’Mac sall a swapped his croon.”

“ I tauld ye so ! ” cried Madge ; “ but wisht ! wisht ! an’ listen . ” “ My father , ” said Rob , throwing himself at the feet of the Laird , “ well may you tremble ; but the day of vengeance is come , and I trust to prove what I have said ! listen to my tale , and I will prove what I assert . When you married that monster in form of woman , I was an infant , a helpless babe , and the Lady Isabel had not been two months your wife before , having hope of giving you another heir , she employed one—she knows full well who I mean , to smother me in my cradle . ”

“ Monster ! ” cried M’Mac ; “ but proceed . ” “ My nurse , the sister of Jemima , had left the Castle without

leave, and even contrary to the express orders of Lady Isabel, and took me in her arms to visit her mother, who was then living in the glen. It was a fine evening in summer, and she charged Jemima, who had come to summon her to her parent, to remain in the room till her return, and to place her own child, a boy of nearly my age, in the bed. She did so, and retired to an adjoining room, to prepare food for me against my return. It became dusky, and she was about to light a lamp, when, hearing a noise in the adjoining room, she saw—  
one I will produce.” “You can’t,” interrupted Lady Isabel, mad with rage. Rob made no reply. “I will produce the man who with cruel hands was smothering the innocent child.” “Oh!”

exclaimed Madge, "I see him now—his savage frown, his barbarous grasp, that wrung the breath from my babe, my innocent bairn! Oh! vengeance! vengeance! I thought the hour was my last!" "When my nurse returned," said Rob, "she found the child dead, and her sister extended as if dead also on the floor. She soon succeeded in reviving her, and guessing well from whence the blow came, instantly resolved to quit the Castle, and carry me with them. They were lucky enough to leave it unseen, and for some time eluded all Lady Isabel's inquiries after them, by taking refuge in this mountain. Here was I bred till five years old, when my good Peggy's husband, whom I was taught to call my father,

was induced to join a corps of gallant men who lived by their swords in the mountains of Westmorland. There was I brought up, without any hint of my origin, till about three years ago, when the very wretch who strangled the child joined our company. In the hope of restoring me to my birthright, and avenging herself on Lady Isabel, my nurse advised my coming here, though she did not even then tell me who was my parent; she only said Lady Isabel was my foe! Often have I been tempted, as I often could have done, to plunge my sword in her breast, but this Madge forbade; she always said, ‘Stay awhile!—stay till Donald can be here.’ Last night this Donald came, and I will now produce him.”



Rob then made a sign with his hand, and one of his men going out, returned with an old man of a terrific appearance; he was, however, almost sinking under the weight of age and guilt, and as soon as he saw Lady Isabel, uttered a cry of exultation. He told, in short, the story Rob had repeated, as far as regarded himself, and added an account of the attempt the lady had made on his life by the hand of Goliath; that failed, and Donald fled for safety. And now Peggy was brought in, to confirm the whole, when Lady Isabel, who had sat for some time in gloomy silence, snatched a pistol from the belt of the robber who stood near her, and fired it at Rob, with a curse too horrible to repeat. It took effect, but not where she had intended;

it struck the unfortunate Madge, who had so long been the victim of her former guilt; as if conscious the wound was mortal, the Snoover rushed in a paroxysm of madness upon Lady Isabel, and seizing her throat with both hands, strangled her on the spot. The two unhappy wretches expired together, and the shock, such a scene gave all those present, was so great, that, for some moments, M'Mac forgot his son, Reft Rob his father, Peggy her exultation, and Donald his dread of that punishment his crimes deserved. And now all due recollection being returned to the several parties, M'Mac embraced his son, Flatburn East his cousin, and Peggy assisted the men to remove the bodies to an inner apartment. While this was

doing, Rob went out, and soon returned leading in Florinda, who threw herself into her brother's arms, too much terrified to venture to look round her.

“ I know cousin,” said Rob, “ that I have no claim to your indulgence, but I yet hope for it—I love Florinda better than life, than any gift that fortune could bestow. Long have I enjoyed her sweet conversation, in the groves of M'Mac, and if she does not withdraw from M'Mac's son, what she granted to her favoured Oscar, I may boast that she does not look unkindly on my passion. Will you oppose my hopes ?”

“ By St. Andrew, not I !” cried Flat-

burn East ! “ you have turned up very awkwardly for me ! I certainly did expect to have mounted guard at M‘Mac ! but I think if you will take the lassie off my hands, and rid me of the trouble of matching, or keeping her, I must forgive you.”

“ You forget M‘Spaul,” said the laird.

“ Oh ! as to him, he’ll be satisfied, depend upon it, after what has passed,” said Flatburn East, “ so take Florinda with all my heart.” Rob was not slow to obey : he embraced his beloved maiden, and imprinted a kiss of affection on her smiling lips. By this time the men had removed Donald to a place of safety,

and the lairds were left alone, when Rob said, "I have yet another prisoner here, and I must produce him." Then sounding a whistle, that hung at his breast, a man brought in Domine Goliath; he looked at the company and then said! "Odso! M'Mac—why ye're double—ye're young again." "Yes!" said Rob, "I have risen from the grave, my mother-in-law consigned me to! and so has Donald." "Ha! I must tell the Lady Isabel! that is her concern!" said the Domine, at the same time relapsing into a fit of abstraction. Flatburn East cursed him for a fool, but M'Mac said he was more knave, he believed. He was roused by a pinch on the nose from Flatburn East, who was somewhat discomfited with the ap-

pearance of an heir to the estate, and wanted some object to vent his spleen on; but it was a mere transient disturbing, for he wiped his nose on the sleeve of his coat, and took no notice of the insult. This encouraged the young chieftain to repeat the compliment, to the great amusement of the rest of the party, and he accompanied the twinge with a demand how he came there? “Justly, I canna tell!” said Goliath. Flat would perhaps have continued his interrogatories with accompanying motions, had not the noble Rob, or as we should now call him, Robert M’Mac, taken compassion on the poor wretch, and sent him back to his apartment. It being by this time near morning, it was resolved to proceed to the

castle of M'Mac, and to present the new found heir to the clan, and preparations were made accordingly. The laird who was anxious to have Donald secure, proposed that he, as well as Goliath, should be conveyed to the dungeons of the castle; a proposal to which his son agreed, and when, after a lapse of some time, every thing was ready, the father and son took a torch and went down to fetch the prisoner.

They entered the small place he was in, expecting to find him alone; but what was their surprise to perceive the body of Goliath lying on one side, with the head and face black as ink, and Donald on the other, with his brains



dashed out against the projection of a rock. This catastrophe was so unexpected, that the firm souls of the heroes were moved with it, and they involuntarily uttered an exclamation. They found on inquiry, that the man charged to re-convey Goliath to his prison, had by mistake thrust him into that of Donald, who doubtless flew instantly upon him, and exerting his remaining strength, was gratified by squeezing out the life of one, employed to seek his.

## CHAP. XII.

*The lovers wed—**The Macs prevail—**The Red Dwarf's gift—**The end o' th' Tale.*

AND now, a messenger having been dispatched before to order out those who were in the castle, to await their laird in the court yard, the party set out on their return to that place. Robert M'Mac himself conducted them through the mountains, and by day break, (day break is always more beautiful in Scotland than elsewhere), they entered the court yard of M'Mac ; the family being out with lighted torches to receive them.

Florinda, riding between her uncle and her lover went first, and Flatburn East, in rather a sullen humour followed after: then came the faithful Peggy, and as many of the followers of the gallant Rob, as could be spared from guarding the cavern; and a gallant shew it made to see them prancing into the court yard, while the family piper played the Pibroch of the M'Macs, and Elspa almost mad with joy to see Florinda again, danced round, screaming almost as loud as the bagpipes, "Here's my bairn, an' the Red Dwarf's gane." The great M'Mac conducted his son into the hall of his ancestors, and there declared who he was; then calling for the priest, (who having taken a cup extraordinary to comfort him after his fright, had by

mistake crept into the bed of Lady Isabel's maid), he had him roused, and leading the young couple to the chapel, he saw them instantly married. This done, he sagaciously observed, that it would now be too late for M'Spaul to remonstrate, and might save a good deal of trouble.

The next thing was to represent this affair in a proper light to the king, whose minister was so well satisfied with what the laird reported, that a free pardon was granted to the gallant followers of Reft Rob, and they instantly became most loyal, and dutiful subjects, and faithful vassals of the illustrious M'Macs.

The family of Lady Isabel being very

powerful, and the clan warlike, and apt to annoy their neighbours, either with or without a cause, the part that lady had acted, both with regard to her son-in-law, and her niece, was quietly hushed up, and she was buried with the honours due to her rank.

The faithful Peggy saw the remains of her unfortunate sister safely deposited in the grave, and Robert M'Mac himself often visited it, to see that no weeds grew there, but that the finest thistles alone should occupy the ground. Peggy was placed in that situation that was her due ; she remained at M'Mac as the nurse of the young laird, while Elspa returned to Flatburn East to enjoy similar honours.

As to the M'Slys, the hereditary enemies of the illustrious M'Macs, they were so awed and terrified by the fame and prowess of Robert M'Mac, that they never once, during his life, durst drive his cattle, or in any way annoy him, openly at least ! we say openly, because there was a report that they had projected to set fire to the castle some time after his marriage, and just when the head of the Slys was behaving outwardly with more than usual civility. This, however, we give as a mere rumour.

To Auld Weedy, Robert M'Mac would have given a yearly pension ; but he declined it, preferring poverty, and the precarious subsistence he gained from his countrymen.



“ Nae, nae !” said he, “ ye’ll keep ye’re gowd for they as wants it, Auld Weedy is na’ come to that ! he kens what is the right thing, and the true thing, and by the blessing of God he’ll bide by that !” This noble refusal exceedingly pleased Robert, as he looked upon this contempt of riches as a trait of national character : but it was found at Auld Weedy’s death, some time after, that he had remunerated himself for the refusal, by laying his hand on such jewels, plate, and gold as came in his way, during his visits to the castle. Our hero could only lament that no virtue is perfect, and that Weedy should have formed an exception to a general rule.



As to M'Spaul, he shewed that greatness of soul that was inherent in him. He no sooner heard the great discovery that had been made, than he sent an embassy to compliment the laird, and to relinquish all claim to Florinda, and at the same time, requesting permission to wait on her, and congratulate her on her marriage: Florinda not being well able to refuse so gallant a request, consented to receive him, and he was on that occasion so much delighted with the happy husband, of his former mistress, especially with his taste and talent for poetry, (a talent born with almost every Scottish hero), that a strict friendship commenced between them, and Florinda in time learned to see M'Spaul with less abhorrence than she at first

felt. He requested to stand godfather to her first boy, and made on that occasion, such magnificent presents, that they were ever afterwards preserved in a cabinet by themselves, and are to this day shewn to strangers, under the title of the spoil of M'Spaul.

The young laird of Flatburn East could never cordially forgive his cousin for cutting him out of the inheritance, nor his sister for having six fine sons, all strong, beautiful and brave. He determined at last to marry himself, that none of these might inherit what belonged to him; but to his great mortification his lady brought him only daughters. The laird of M'Mac lived to see his grandchildren excel in all the manly

exercises, and at last lost his life fighting at the head of his clan, on a foraging party, during which he had driven off some of the cattle of his neighbours: his son worthily supplied his place, and was perhaps the most renowned chieftain of his time. It was remarked of him, that he found means to make all around him contribute to his store, while none durst attempt to make reprisals ; such terror had the name of Reft Rob inspired into the breasts of the surrounding clans. His sons, and his sons' sons inherited his glory, and it has been observed by biographers and historians, that the spirit of predatory warfare never degenerated, and that the name of a M'Mac would make whole districts tremble. In later times we can only

admire and wonder! Happy would it be for us, who live in an age of comparative barbarism, if historians had been minute and particular in recording what passed in these ages of heroic virtue! But we must be content perforce to ruminate on what is come down to us, and to yield our grateful praise to those modern authors, who, sensible of the degradation of the age, are willing to enlighten and improve it, by employing their genius and their pen, in painting what the records of past ages yield to us.

Long may their fame live! long may we be sensible of the advantage to be derived from perusing details of bloody frays, burnt hamlets, stolen cattle, noble robbers, disinterested beggars, sentimen-

tal fishwomen, and pathetic smugglers. Long may we prefer Glamour to Humour, Odd names to Wit, and Ferocity to Courage! Long may dwarfs, giants, and murderers fill us with pleasure! and long, very long, may it be before the Scottish dialect with its delightful twang, shall lose its power to fascinate the southern ear, or give place to what the prejudice of an English education considers as infinitely preferable, the pure English language, which unhappily is a language, and can be understood by those who hear it. Long may the thistle preserve its natural pre-eminence over the rose, and long may Reft Rob be the darling of the fair sex, and a pattern of all that is excellent.

FINIS.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,  
SKINNER-STREET, DUNDON.











