


ALLAN M'LEOD,

THE
HIGHLAND SOLDIER.

—
BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

—
THIRD EDITION.



LONDON:
Frederick Westley & A. H. Davis,
Stationers'-hall-Court.

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AUTHOR OF "THE SYSTEM," "OSRIC," "GRAND-
FATHER'S TALES," "RACHEL," &c. &c.

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CHAPTER I.

Brother, thou art gone before us, and thy saintly soul is flown
Where tears are wip'd from every eye, and sorrow is unknown,
From the burden of the flesh, and from care and fear releas'd,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE plane-tree that forms a pleasant green canopy over my head, and throws the shadow of its broad leaves on the oak-table at which I write, while my seat of twisted boughs rests

against its trunk, grew wild in the grove about a mile from hence. I remember my brother Malcolm removing it from its mossy bed, and carefully placing it here, while he observed to me, "See, Allan, this little plant, with its two delicate leaves, and a small bud in the centre, hardly raised above the level of the earth from which it grows. If God permits the moisture from beneath to nourish, the heat from above to ripen, and the passing breeze to fan, its unfolding form, it will become a large tree, and more than repay, by its beauty and its shade, the pains we now bestow."

I was then not more than six or seven years old; Malcolm was eighteen. He sat down when he had finished his task of planting; and taking me on his knee, with an affectionate seriousness that I never can forget, spoke as follows: "I wish my brother Allan to resemble that little tree, which gives promise of thriving under our hands. The knowledge of God our Saviour, implanted in your young heart, must be nourished by the dews of his grace, and the breath of his Spirit, and the warmth of the gospel light under which we live. May he fulfil in my Allan the description he has given of the kingdom of heaven in its true subjects;

‘Like unto a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field,—which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.’ ”

While we watched the growth of the shrub, Malcolm never failed to impress, in various ways, this lesson upon my mind. I loved him dearly. I heard from my father the frequent remark, that he could not long continue among us; that the brightness of his eyes, and the glow upon his cheeks, were not tokens of health, as the more ignorant of the neighbours supposed them to be; and under the apprehension of losing the tender and delightful companion of my infancy, I listened to all that fell from his lips with attention greater than children so young generally bestow. Our fears were realized:—before the little tree had attained the height of two feet, the members of the kirk followed my brother Malcolm to his grave.

Much of holy joy and exultation was mingled with the natural sorrow of our family and friends on this occasion. My father was

highly respected by the congregation, among whom he was an elder; and Malcolm furnished such a model of youthful piety and wisdom, humility and zeal, that his early removal to the presence and glory of his Lord, appeared a token of the love of Him who took away the young Christian from the evil to come,

I was too childish—too ignorant to participate in those feelings of satisfaction, of which I could not comprehend the grounds. Death appeared to me a great evil, and my own loss intolerable. I grieved immoderately; so much, that my health was endangered by it. For a long time I continued to bring my little book of scripture lessons to this tree, and, seated on a low stool beside it, I would recal to mind all the sweet instructions that Malcolm had given me on this spot.

Even now, at the end of thirty years, when the dust of my brother is mingled, and every trace of what he once was, utterly lost beneath the turf of the burying-ground, whose boundary I see marked yonder by the tops of the dark fir-trees that surround it; even now I can fancy his fair countenance bending over me,

the curls of his long hair straying upon my cheek, his mild, serious, blue eye fixed upon the page he held before my view, and his finger pointing to the passage he was explaining, while I rested against his encircling arm.

In our house, religion was indeed made the main business of life. My father held a situation in a large bleaching establishment, and had many persons under his direction. Of these the greater number assembled with us in family worship. The scriptures were expounded, prayer ascended from the ground of the heart, exhortation was affectionately given, and meekly received; and I, the youngest among them, insensibly acquired a considerable knowledge of the doctrines taught. I could not only repeat the Assembly's Catechism, but framed such answers to those who examined me occasionally in the Bible, as to satisfy my father, and others too, that in little Allan they would soon behold a second Malcolm.

But although my head was well stored, and my imagination frequently excited by the devotional exercises of those around me, as yet my heart was unimpressed by the divine influence; and had human learning been substituted, under our roof, for these sacred pursuits,

I doubt not but my mind would readily have relinquished them to grasp at it. If I appeared religious, it was the effect of habit, not of internal conviction. I had no outward temptations to struggle against—no evil examples to resist; all was decent and strictly moral that passed beneath my observation; the idea of disgrace was attached to every thing of a contrary tendency; and of the plague of my own heart, the secret principle which prompted to only evil, and that continually, I had not an idea beyond what I repeated by rote from the Bible and the Catechism.

The difference between Malcolm and myself was apparent in this;—I was pious in word, and he in deed. The richness and abundance of the fruit he bore, his numerous good works, his humility, patience, universal love, and most exact discharge of every relative duty, gave evidence that the root was in him sound, and deep, and well fixed. In me, it was taken for granted that the same root existed, from the very correct account I could give of the matter; but no fruit appeared beyond the general good behaviour that may be expected in a child so carefully watched over, and not incorrigibly addicted to any vice.

Pious parents are frequently too ready to rest upon these outward observances, and scriptural expressions, among their children, which may be the effect of habit and a retentive memory. They do not consider how much of pride and self-deception, if not of actual hypocrisy, may lurk beneath such externals of religion, nor how many evil dispositions remain dormant in the heart, under the calm influence of domestic piety and decorum, to be called into active existence when those restraints are removed, and the allurements and persecutions of a world lying in wickedness brought to bear upon the individual. Like a ship long sheltered in port, all may appear fair, and tight, and orderly; the tackle well arranged, the sails and rigging perfect, the men at their posts, and every thing calculated to inspire confidence, while the worm or the rot may have made such inroads on the timber, unseen and unsuspected, as to render the vessel a helpless prey to the first storm she encounters. Examination, frequent, close, and persevering, can alone avert this peril: and the parent who would fit his children to ride in safety through the tempestuous ocean of life, must use the same

precaution, ascertaining, as far as human means can do so, that all is right and sound within.

When I was about fifteen years old, a brother of my father's, who had been long absent with his regiment on foreign stations, arrived to visit us. He was pious, like the rest of his family; and the animated recital he gave of various instances of conversion among his comrades, with the happy and triumphant death of some whom my parents had known, diffused so sacred a character over his account of battles, sieges, victories, and wonderful escapes, that I could yield to the ardour of a youthful imagination, easily inflamed by military subjects, without overstepping the bounds that, as I well understood, separated the pious from the ungodly part of the world. A Christian soldier appeared to me the highest of all earthly distinctions; and when my uncle recounted the opposition he had withstood and triumphed over in the defence of his religious opinions, I fancied myself treading in his steps, with brighter zeal and more abundant success, conquering my spiritual and temporal enemies with equal facility.

My father would not have preferred the

profession of arms for me; but he carried his peculiar doctrines to such a length, as to prevent his offering much opposition, when he saw events taking a steady course. He was, besides, aware that Christians, being the salt of the earth, should be spread abroad as much as might be, without endangering their own souls, in order to impart their savour where most needed. Ever dwelling, with fond and thankful recollection, on the short but useful life and happy death of his Malcolm, he felt the pride of a patriot in yielding up to his country his surviving son, assured that that son also would, at the last, be a crown of rejoicing to him, no less than his eldest born.

It was therefore determined upon, that my entering the army should not be opposed, if at the end of three years, I continued equally inclined to do so. A commission was out of the question; but my uncle recommended my studying diligently, in the meantime, with the view of rising quickly to the rank of a non-commissioned officer. "You shall enlist into our regiment, Allan," he said, "where merit is never disregarded; and, with the Lord's blessing, I shall expect to find you a stout comrade

in arms, and a faithful fellow-soldier of the Cross."

By this time Malcolm's plane-tree was taller than myself, but did not yet afford a shady seat. With uncle Donald I often walked to the grove from whence it was taken, and from the farther extremity, which commands a noble and extensive prospect, he was accustomed to gaze upon the magnificent scenery before us, under a deep feeling of that appropriation so beautifully expressed by the poet :—

"Are they not his by a peculiar right,
 And, by an emphasis of interest, *his*,
 Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
 Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind,
 With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,
 That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world,
 So cloth'd with beauty, for rebellious man?"

My recollection of the old soldier is far more vivid than that I retain of Malcolm : the latter, softened by the great distance at which the object is placed, appears like some unearthly being, visiting our sphere on a message of love and mercy. I have seen many youths, who, for a moment, reminded me of Malcolm ; but in vain have I looked for that fine

expression of hallowed calm that overspread his beautiful countenance. Foreheads I have seen, as spacious and as fair; ringlets of as bright an auburn, and eyes perhaps of as deep a blue; but the character of his features did not belong to any of them. There was a nobleness not often to be met with among the inferior ranks of life, and a simple humility rarely to be found with the higher classes. Both were the fruits of that sanctification which raised him far above the level of the ungodly Prince, while it placed him a meek and grateful pupil at the feet of the devout Peasant. I cannot, even now, write of Malcolm without feeling my eyes suffused with tears, while I mentally console myself by repeating, from a favourite hymn,

“ O think that while you’re weeping here,
 His hand a golden harp is stringing;
 And with a voice serene and clear,
 His ransom’d soul, without a tear,
 His Saviour’s praise is singing.

“ And think that all his pains are fled,
 His toils and sorrows closed for ever;
 While He, whose blood for man was shed,
 Has placed upon his servant’s head
 A crown that fadeth never !”

Feelings of a more painful nature are blended with the recollection of my uncle Donald, as far as concerns myself. The infant Allan, who tripped by Malcolm's side, learned his lesson upon his knee, and slept in his bosom, though an object of much solicitude to his affectionate mind, did not intentionally grieve him, nor give him cause to moan over the sinfulness of one he loved. But how many a bitter tear has been wrung from Donald's eye by the ungrateful Allan, whom he would so gladly have led onward in the paths of pleasantness and peace !

Our seat in the grove was at the root of a very aged oak, whose branches had from time to time been lopped away, till little more than the trunk remained ; one bough, indeed, extended its broad flat outline over the almost perpendicular descent of the bank, upon whose edge it grew, as pointing to the scarcely discernible sail that now and then appeared upon the distant ocean, white and diminutive to the eye, as the seagull which hovered near. A plain of uncommon beauty and verdure was stretched immediately below us, giving pasturage to the few sheep scattered widely upon its surface. To the left arose a range of lofty

hills, terminated in front of us by a wild rock of bare and rugged stone, whose summit was graced by the majestic remains of a considerable fortress, the black ruins diversified, and the harsh outline softened by a profusion of rich ivy. This rock descended with a graceful, but somewhat abrupt sweep, to the beach, overflowed at high tides to its very base, but at other times leaving a long bright interval of yellow sand between it and the waters of the main. The nature of the coast forbade the near approach of vessels; and they passed by at a considerable distance. Lesser hills, upon the right, interrupted our view of the sea: a narrow liquid line, above their summits, alone bespeaking that, but for them, the boundless ocean would have expanded itself beneath our gaze.

The prospect remains unchanged, but beyond the reach of a cripple: neither will Donald ever again be seen at the root of the old oak, his cap lying beside him, the few thin hairs upon his temples scattered by the breeze, his forehead darkened by the effect of sultry climates, and displaying the wrinkles of toil and pain rather than those of age, yet stamped with an expression of inward serenity,

that softened the vivacity of his quick hazel eyes; a large but not prominent mouth; the calm closing of the lips conveying much of determination tempered with kindness; a strong-built muscular form, where the usual character of military stiffness was increased by the naturally independent temper of the man, rendered more firm by the quiet habitual opposition to the erroneous principles and practices of the people among whom he lived. Greatly attached to his profession, his conversation on the most serious subjects was interspersed with its peculiar phrases and images; yet he considered war as the lamentable consequence of man's pride and covetousness; and no one could dwell with more delight than Donald upon the promises of universal uninterrupted peace, when the earth should be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord.

Seated on the spot I have described, Donald would speak, out of the abundance of his heart, on the subjects that most continually occupied his thoughts. He had become more attached to me than to any part of the family; and observed, with great satisfaction, the progress I made in the few simple branches of my learning. Like the generality of my humble

countrymen, I enjoyed advantages rarely placed within the reach of the inferior classes elsewhere. I not only read and wrote with facility, but knew a little Latin, and excelled in arithmetic. Donald's studies were confined to the perusal of his Bible and a few religious books; and I sometimes endeavoured to surprise him by the display of my superior knowledge on doctrinal and controversial points. He would, on these occasions, listen to me with grave attention, and on my concluding, mingled somewhat of caution with commendation. "It is well to know all this; but take care you do not seek to be wise above what is written. It is not the most leafy tree, Allan, that bears the richest fruit. The soldier may embarrass himself in the field by taking too many weapons. Whatever you keep in reserve, let your chief trust be in the simple keen sword of the Spirit."

My uncle's furlough expired: he returned to his regiment, and I applied diligently to my books during every hour that could be spared from my task among the bleachers. At the end of three years I prepared to enlist into the —th Highlanders, then in Ireland, who had a recruiting party stationed at Edinburgh.

My father resolved to accompany me thither, after a solemn prayer meeting had been held at his house, and my future lot made the subject of most earnest and affectionate supplications to the Throne of Grace, by many who had known me from the cradle. It was a cause of great thankfulness among them that I should be placed under the immediate observation of the pious Donald; and when the temptations, that beset the path of every young man, and particularly that of a young soldier, were spread before my view, in the awful admonitions of the elders, I trembled; and most fervently joined in blessing the Lord for the guidance that awaited me, in the paternal care of my uncle.

Of all the addresses made to me upon this interesting occasion, that of my mother's aged parent affected me most. The old woman rested her trembling hands upon my shoulder, and repeated the 91st Psalm; then added, "Go, child of many prayers; hold the beginning of thy confidence firm unto the end. Pass through the waters, the Lord will be with thee, and they shall not overflow thee: pass through the flames, he will be there, and they shall not kindle upon thee. But, if thou dost rebel,

and vex his Holy Spirit, he will turn to be thine enemy and fight against thee: and oh! Allan, who shall set the briars and thorns in battle array against him? Shall he not go through and burn them? Is he not a consuming fire to his adversaries? Take hold of his strength, of the covenant of his salvation, and be at peace with him."

"That covenant," said an elder, "is everlasting, well ordered in all things, and sure: the promise is certain to all who believe."

"Aye," she replied, "but who are the believers? Are they not those who love him, and keep his commandments? Shall having a name to live, save the soul that is dead before God? Remember, child, who hath said, 'He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' 'Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him,' saith the Lord."

"Ye will daunt the youth, Maggie Cameron," said one of the party.

"I will daunt him with the fear of his own evil heart," answered my grandmother. "I will tell him that, in his flesh dwelleth no good thing; and that in the Lord alone shall the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

I will tell him that, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; that as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God; and the Spirit is the Sanctifier, who will not suffer his temple to be defiled. My bairn," she added, most intently looking at me, "if ye live after the flesh ye shall die." I answered, "I trust, through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh."

"Then ye shall live," she added, with a smile of joy. "Look, my Allan, upon this wrinkled face: many a time it has been pressed against the rosy cheek of your infancy, and wet with the tear of fervent supplication that you might be the Lord's. You will see this face no more in the flesh; I am going through the valley of the shadow of death, where Malcolm has trod to the gate of glory, opened to us by Him who is the resurrection and the life. I know in whom I have believed, and therefore I know that nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. Let him be your hope, your trust, your Prophet, your Priest, and King: so shall we meet among the spirits of just men made perfect before his throne."

Accompanied by my father, I reached

Edinburgh; and was shortly after enlisted, and marched for the depôt. My father's parting words were, "The Lord is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."





See p 29.

CHAPTER II.

Bound, hand and foot, with chains of sin,
Death dragg'd me for his prey ;
The pit was mov'd to take me in ;
All hope was fled away.

Arriving at the regimental depôt, I found that we were immediately to proceed to Ireland, to my great satisfaction. We embarked, and after a rough passage, reached the port, from whence we were to join our corps.

During this period I had heard and seen much of the profligacy against which I had been so solemnly warned : it had the effect of disgusting me ; while the superior morality of my own education and principles furnished matter for at least as much pride as thankfulness. In fact, I was extravagantly self-right-

teous, and fully satisfied that I should hold forth to my comrades a pattern of excellence.

My uncle Donald welcomed me with paternal affection, and rejoiced to hear me speak so strongly on the sinfulness of my companions' conduct: but he cautioned me on the grounds of my censure; there was too little of pity for the delusion of the sinner, too slight a concern for the honour of the Christian name; and good reason to ask me, as he did, very seriously, "Who made us to differ?"

Accustomed by degrees to the sight of evil, and often neglecting the word, and worship of God in retirement, I soon experienced the proneness of the human heart to sin, its aversion to all good, its willingness to invite temptation, and its eagerness to yield to it. Carefully preserving in my uncle's view all that most recommended me to him, and concealing my frequent deviations from the narrow path he walked in, I began to take a sort of pleasure in successfully maintaining two characters: a few of my companions were acquainted with my sinful compliances, but readily assisted in disguising them from Donald, under whose rebukes even the boldest profligates often stood abashed. I sometimes thought

that his suspicions were awakened, and redoubled my efforts to confirm the good opinion he had held of me: thus adding the vilest hypocrisy to my other innumerable transgressions. Some indications of disturbance in the country, rendered it necessary to send out detachments from head-quarters a few months after I joined; and in my heart, I rejoiced at being ordered to a station fifteen miles from that where my uncle remained.

He had frequently visited Roman Catholic countries, and deeply commiserated the souls held under the iron yoke of that superstition; but his pity and indignation were more feelingly alive in behalf of his own fellow-subjects, who lived under the same government, and spoke the same language with himself. The neglected state of children among the poor, contrasted with that of the well-taught little ones in Scotland, was to him a fruitful subject. "It was of false teachers," said he, "the Lord spoke, when he declared, by their fruits ye shall know them, and asked, 'do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' Now, look at the wretchedness, the vice, the miserable ignorance of these poor people, and say what their teachers must be. Those priests

have no families, no household cares of their own; they are supported by the scanty earnings of their half-starved people: would not common humanity lead them to pay back a trifle of it, by giving instruction to the children of their flock? But, it is true, the dark places of the earth are full of cruel habitations. Ireland is dark; and these false prophets dread lest any opening made in the close tent of her ignorance, might admit a ray of gospel light, and shew her the abominations that she blindly cherishes."

With such feelings, it will readily be believed that my uncle longed to see the prey taken from the mighty, and regarded the members of the Romish Church, as those whom men should save with fear, plucking them from the fire. The doctrine of salvation by human merit, could not but be monstrous to one whose sole guide was the word of God. The adoration of saints, images, the wafer, and the cross, was manifest idolatry, in his clear scriptural understanding of the term: and the degrading bondage in which the communities were held by their priests, the very sceptre of Antichrist, the direct reverse of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made

His people free. In all these sentiments, I concurred; for my knowledge of the Bible enabled me to see how impossible it is to reconcile popery with Scripture, while reason showed its tenets to be equally removed from common sense; but though I despised its delusions, I cared little for the souls that were sacrificed to them: nor had I much personal acquaintance among the Roman Catholics, until sent on detachment.

Here I made amends to myself for the restraint imposed by my uncle's presence, and throwing off all appearance of religion, I followed my own inclinations, and the example of my comrades, with as little reserve, as if I had never learned that I must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of all that was done in the body.

We were commanded by a thoughtless young officer, who, while he indulged himself in the hospitable mansions of the upper classes, was not strict in enquiring how his men passed their time among the peasantry.

We continued for eight months in this quarter: I had formed an attachment to a young girl in the neighbourhood; and neither her religion nor the station she held, far inferior

to the alliance my family would expect me to seek, could deter me from following the wayward course of my own inclinations. I resolved to marry her before we left the place. It was told to my uncle, who had been informed of my improper conduct on various occasions, and had written letters which I did not take the trouble of decyphering: hearing it frequently reported that we should soon be relieved, he expected my return, and hoped for better success to his personal admonitions; but this project of allying myself with an ignorant, vulgar, bigotted member of the Church he dreaded, brought him at once to our station, which he got leave to visit.

Sadness and displeasure marked his countenance, while he looked on the hardened effrontery of mine. "You have deserted your colours," he said, "the standard of your crucified Lord, and put on the uniform of His worst enemy, Sin; but do not tempt him farther; for if His wrath be kindled, yea, but a little"—he paused, and I replied,

"I dare say, uncle, you have heard the worst of me: and every little harmless amusement and gratification have been represented to you as so many deadly sins."

“I care not what men call them, Allan; they are in the muster-roll of God’s foes, and his children cannot have any fellowship with the deceitful works of darkness.”

“And have you never been led into any sort of unrighteousness, uncle?” asked I.

“That, Allan, is a very common, and a very mischievous device of our Adversary, to turn the view from our own case to another’s. When Peter enquired, concerning John, ‘Lord, what shall this man do?’ the reply was, ‘what is that to thee? follow *thou* me.’ If I have fallen, Allan, my sin will not excuse your’s; and if I have been faithful, my happiness will not avail you. It is of himself, not of his brother, that each of us must give an account to God.”

I was disconcerted by this reply. I thought he would have spoken on the sinfulness of our nature, and while humbling himself for his transgressions, given me a plea to palliate mine; but Donald was more judicious than many possessed of greater learning, whose open self-condemnation, though just, is not always well-timed.

After a pause my uncle adverted to the

report of my intended marriage, which I did not contradict, but told him the girl was pretty and good tempered.

“Prettiness, Allan,” he replied, “is an agreeable addition to better things—good temper is still more important by far; but proceed to higher recommendations: is she pious?”

“Yes, in her way; she goes to Mass.”

“So then,” said my uncle, fixing on me a look of reproof, not unmixed with disdain; “So then, it is true that you, Allan M·Leod, the son of an elder in the Kirk, educated in strict Presbyterian principles, intend to marry a member of the Church of Rome? Your fathers have fallen in glorious martyrdom on the scaffold, and at the stake; protesting with their last breath against what you are now prepared to ally yourself with. Do you expect to reconcile Christ and Belial—the temple of God with idols?”

“She will not meddle with my religion,” said I, rather sullenly.

“Alas! Allan—I fear you will soon have little religion left to meddle with.”

“That is my concern, uncle. I shall be

happy to introduce your future niece to you, and hope you will like her."

"No: I will not sanction what would well nigh break your father's heart."

"But, suppose we should convert her, uncle?"

"Conversion is the Lord's work," he replied; "if you wished to be employed in it as the instrument, you had opportunity enough; but let that be perfected before you think of marrying her."

To this I could not agree; he brought against me all the arguments that he could collect from Scripture, reason, and natural affection. He left me in deep sorrow, grieving as for a lost child, and I hastened to conclude the marriage before the detachment marched back to head quarters.

My uncle Donald did not, as I expected, refuse to see us on our arrival. He was grave, sad, and reserved; but the childish simplicity, and artless good nature of poor Judy, overcame his displeasure—he felt much compassion for her, and took pains to occupy her vacant mind by useful instruction. She listened patiently and gratefully, but the round

of idle amusements, that she was kept in among the soldiers and their wives, quickly effaced all he could say, and left her as thoughtless as before.

I determined to appear as a reformed character on my marriage, shunning the dissipated and courting the society of the more steady and moral among my comrades. I even resolved to convert Judy to the Protestant faith; but thinking it would be an easy matter whenever I chose to attempt it, the present opportunity was neglected, and she continued in darkness.

Donald having failed in preventing my marriage, generously sought to reconcile my family to it; but succeeded no farther than to obtain a cold pardon. My grandmother never held up her head after it, and was soon placed beside Malcolm.

I pass over the following year. We were again separated from my uncle: who, in his turn, went on detachment. I became negligent of my domestic, as of my religious duties; dividing my hours between idle companions, and unprofitable books of amusement. Judy resented my indifference, listened to the artful

language of an officer, part of whose regiment was in garrison with us, and eloped with him when the corps to which he belonged embarked for England.

I cannot describe the rage and resentment with which I discovered my wife's infidelity. Consciousness of having, in great measure, occasioned it by my inhuman neglect of her spiritual welfare, no less than of her personal comfort, only increased their violence. The sneers of my comrades who envied, and the officers who despised me as a literary coxcomb, were intolerably irritating: a letter which arrived in haste from my uncle, I burnt unopened, though certain that it contained nothing but kindness. I took my Bible up, in the restlessness of my spirit, and coming unexpectedly to the words quoted by my grandmother, "Woe unto the wicked, for it shall be ill with him!" I cast it from me to a corner of the room. All seemed to conspire against me, and revenge alone occupied my thoughts: to follow the guilty pair, and sacrifice one or both of them to my vengeance, was the only plan upon which I could dwell. Listening to this dreadful suggestion, I watched an

opportunity, made up a small bundle of necessaries, not forgetting a brace of pistols, and deserted.

I hastened across the country, having purchased a mean dress, and concealed my uniform. I did not want money, and reaching a northern port, eagerly inquired for a vessel bound to England. There was not one: but the master of a small sloop to the coast of Scotland offered me a passage on such advantageous terms, that I was glad to accept them, dreading pursuit, and was again landed upon my native shore.

My father's abode was the last place I should have ventured to approach; but I learned, accidentally, that the regiment to which the man who had injured me belonged, was ordered into Scotland; and most impiously I believed that the victims were thus brought within the reach of a just revenge.

How awfully correct is that picture of the house to which the unclean spirit returns, bringing with him seven more wicked than himself! I seemed to have cast off every vestige of religious feeling with the Bible, which I never took up again from the corner where I flung it. All my early impressions, transient

convictions, and scriptural maxims, were swept away as if by a flood ; they seemed to pass like a dream. Allan M'Leod, the simple Scotch lad, who had imbibed lessons of piety with almost every breath he drew, seemed a creature of the imagination, while all the substance of a fearful reality attached to Allan M'Leod, the revengeful Highlander, the deserter of his God and his post ; and, in the sight of Him who discerns the thoughts of the heart, already a murderer.

Aware that I must be more particularly sought for in my own country, I resolved to conceal myself until the arrival of the regiment. Adopting the dress of the lowest peasantry, I wandered from place to place among the mountains, and sometimes betrayed into a feeling of momentary delight, when some scene of unexpected grandeur opened upon my view, I recalled to mind the most impassioned poetry of my native bards ; and carefully keeping every thing connected with my own sinfulness, and the purity of the Most High, from my thoughts, I soon became, in imagination, the most injured, unoffending sufferer possible. At length, calculating that the regiment must have arrived in the north, I prepared to follow up my

desperate purpose ; and bidding farewell to the few poor cottagers among whom I had lived, and occasionally worked, I set out for the garrison town.

I still shunned the high road, and passed over the hills, where none but foot passengers could well journey. Strengthening my wicked determination, and stifling the still small voice that sometimes would be heard, I proceeded rapidly along. It was the close of autumn, and the weather became tempestuous ; but wrapped in my plaid, I bade defiance to the elements, or rather delighted in beholding their fury ; it suited well the stormy state of my own mind.

Late in the afternoon, on a very rude day, I approached the sea-side. I heard the roar of the breakers ; and though no place of rest for the night appeared at hand, I resolved to hazard loss of time, and take a view of the ocean in its majesty.

I bounded over the rocks that now impeded my way, and soon beheld the object of my search. My heart thrills at the recollection of the scene.

I stood upon the edge of a craig, that seemed ready to fall down the precipice which

it overhung. Pile upon pile the rocks were heaped upon either hand, forming a vast and magnificent amphitheatre dark in naked ruggedness, and unsoftened by a single leaf of any description; even the brown moss that usually clothes the rocks was wanting here: the interval between this mighty wall and the sea was a plain of sand, dark also, and exhibiting numerous huge masses of rock, deeply bedded in the soil; beyond, the waves were tossing in the most tumultuous agitation, their waters only distinguished from the black clouds above, by the frequent breaking of the milk-white surge upon their gloomy bosom. The sky, heavily charged with an approaching storm, seemed threatening to bear down upon the furious billows that, as if in defiance, hurled their foam against it. The eagle was wheeling around her lofty eyrie on the summit of the highest rock, and drowning with her loud scream the weaker note of the bittern, the cormorant, and the sea-mew, who swept with hasty wing over the sands below, and whose shrill voices would otherwise have been heard in the intervals of the ocean's deafening roar.

But to convey an adequate idea of the scene,

is as impossible as to describe the stern delight with which I, an impious and rebellious worm of earth, gazed upon it, and dared to trace, in the sublime display of my Creator's might, a supposed resemblance to the secret workings of my own tempestuous and ungoverned passions. Heedless of the closing night, and the evident approach of descending torrents, I know not how long I should have continued to gaze, had I not been startled by the sound of a human voice.

My hand was on a pistol in my bosom, while I looked suspiciously at the advancing stranger: he also wore the national garb, and seemed to be of a respectable rank in life.

With much courtesy he addressed me:—"I may appear intrusive; but there is a storm at hand, and you are so far from any habitation except my own, that I cannot but offer you such shelter as it affords to a benighted countryman."

I thanked him, without actually accepting his invitation, for guilt rendered me fearful of every one. Then turning again to the ocean, I remarked, "Is not this magnificent scene an excuse for the traveller playing truant on his road?" "It is most awfully sublime," he

replied. "A feast for the poet's imagination," continued I.

"A lesson for the Christian's soul," he rejoined, in a low but distinct voice. "Listen to the roar, behold the billows heaving their lofty but unsteady forms, and then compare it with the description of the inspired writer: 'The mountains saw thee, and they trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by; the deep uttered his voice, he lift up his hands on high; surely the Lord is mightier than the noise of many waters.'"

"Many a lesson is to be gathered from such a display," I remarked, speaking by rote. "Observe," he went on, "that tremendous wave now rolling onward; it is as though all the waters of the ocean had conspired and combined to swallow up the shore. What shall oppose their overwhelming force? See, they have touched the strand, and shrunk back upon themselves, without approaching an inch beyond the spot of which He has said, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.' How often has the enemy, advancing, like those roaring billows, to destroy his church, been thus repulsed by an invisible hand! Nay,

how frequently is the individual believer rescued in the same manner?"

"But not the wicked," said I, feeling as if my intended prey might be delivered also.

"The wicked have been preserved too," answered he thoughtfully, "to save the children of God from the commission of sin in destroying them."

These words produced a strange effect on me: the vengeful feelings of my mind gave place to a gloomy sadness, as the thought arose, "I was once numbered by men among His children; whose am I now?"

My companion again urged my accompanying him home; and his language having removed all apprehension from my mind, I thankfully agreed.

It is written, that "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him;" and it is most certain that all who have witnessed the effects of true religion on the heart and life of him who professes it, however abandoned they may be themselves, will sooner confide in a Christian than in their nearest friends among the ungodly.

The stranger led me back to some distance

from the scene, and descending the side of a hill, we entered a low and lonely cottage, almost buried in trees. A mild-looking woman received us, who was just about to put two rosy children to bed : the little ones lingered for their father's kiss and blessing, and retired.

We had not been long in the cottage before the rain began to descend in torrents, beating furiously upon its roof. My host, whose name, as he told me, was Campbell, roused the fire ; and when I expressed strongly my gratitude for his hospitable care of an unknown traveller, he replied, " I went out to seek one of my little flock of sheep, which had strayed, I found it, and sent it home by the boy. Just then, I saw you turn off the path, to approach a point from whence I knew you could not proceed ; and in expectation of this storm, I followed you."

" It was a Christian deed," said I.

" It was an act of simple duty," answered he, " and not the less so because some, perhaps, would not have fulfilled it. We are apt to attach imaginary merit to some performances, merely because we see our fellow-creatures so

sinful as to neglect them. This lesson," he added, "I learnt long ago from one of whom you remind me very forcibly."

His wife had placed a candle between us, and he resumed, looking earnestly at me: "If your eyes were blue, and your hair long, and of a lighter shade, I should almost think that he was present now."

"With those exceptions," said I, thoughtlessly, "I am reckoned like my brother Malcolm." He bent over the table, and earnestly exclaimed, "Malcolm M'Leod was his name! but it is fourteen years since he bore your resemblance."

"And it is thirteen years since my brother, Malcolm M'Leod, entered into the joy of his Lord," said I, involuntarily using expressions to which my lips had long been a stranger, while I half regretted having been led into a disclosure of my name, which might prove perilous to me in my present situation.

Campbell had grasped my hand in one of his, while with the other he shaded his face for a while, then said, "When you have partaken of our homely fare, you shall hear what cause for thankfulness I find in being permitted

even to shelter from the rain a brother of Malcolm's."

A blessing was besought upon our repast; and having concluded it, Campbell commenced his narrative.





See page 46.

CHAPTER III.

We love him, and whate'er he loves,
It is our bliss to do ;
While sin is that he most abhors,
We must abhor it too.
Love does not rate with niggard hand
The least that he may pay :
Our dread is to deserve his frown,
Our life is to obey.

“ My father was principal clerk in the large manufactory of Duncan and Co., which formerly supplied your father's bleaching-ground.

“ Malcolm frequently attended to deliver in the bales of linen on their return, and an acquaintance was formed between us. I was a thoughtless and daring, rather than immoral

character,—fond of venturing to the extreme limit of what I judged allowable, and enticing others to follow my example. Malcolm, however, constantly declined placing himself in the way of temptation. To my persuasions he would reply, ‘No, Alexander; these things are like the beginning of strife; it is easy to commence, but when and where will you leave off?’”

“His refusal was so mildly expressed, that I did not think he would persevere in it; but, to my surprise, I found him as firm as he was gentle. It became my pastime to assail him with unexpected allurements, until his forbearance, always mild, yet resolute, irritated my pride; and I determined to triumph over a constancy that humbled me, with a painful sense of inferiority, to a boy two years younger than myself.

“I recal with horror this period, when, without any defined wish to injure my friend, I lay in wait for his sou’, the half conscious instrument of that adversary who, as a roaring lion, walked around his path seeking to devour him. Had he fallen into the snare, and been called so speedily to his account with a weight of unrepented sin upon him, and I the cause!”—

He shuddered, and Mrs. Campbell remarked, "He was one of the 'young men' addressed by the apostle John,—'because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.'"

"Yes," said her husband, "the word of God indeed dwelt in him richly. Sanctified through that word of truth, and kept through his Saviour's name, he was preserved, so that the wicked one touched him not; but how great was my crime in trifling with his safety! It is the work of a murderer,—of Satan himself, to lead another into transgression; and to leave the youthful mind exposed to evil counsel and examples, is a sin as nearly connected with the former, as the door is with the house into which it opens. Malcolm, finding me bent on drawing him into the path of peril, became more cautious of my society. He was kind as ever; but often, when he could not avoid me, spoke in very solemn language on the peril to which I exposed myself. 'Believe me,' he would say, 'you cannot handle pitch without defilement. The companions in whose revelings you delight to partake, are avowedly irreligious and immoral in their practices. If you accompany them to the brink of the pre-

cipice, where is the security against your falling? You are like the moth fluttering round a candle. I would fain keep you from the flame, which may prove unqueuchable and eternal.' His words impressed my mind with secret dread. I was more fixed in my resolve to avoid gross sin, but not deterred from combatting in him what I considered the vain squeamishness of a superstitious mind.

“ I wanted to engage him in riotous company, if it were only to show him how easily I could stop short of the excess in which others indulged. For this purpose, when persuasion proved hopeless, I had recourse to stratagem. With my dissolute companions, among whom young Duncan was numbered, I formed a party for the water; and bidding them wait in a small shallop a little way up the river, easily persuaded Malcolm to row with me and another lad, in a larger boat, to a short distance, as if merely for exercise.

“ We soon came up with the rest, who jumped into our vessel, while the other pushed off in a moment. Malcolm saw the stratagem: he did not join in the laugh that announced its success; but I never beheld a more unruffled calm upon his countenance, than when he

relinquished the oar, and took his seat near the stern of the boat. He avoided looking at me. To the civil speeches occasionally addressed to him, he made courteous replies; and when the conversation assumed a more profligate character, he was immoveably silent and grave.

“ We landed upon a small island, and produced our stores, among which strong liquor was most plentiful. It had been determined, among the rest, to triumph over my caution and Malcolm’s scruples, by making us both drink to intoxication: for this purpose the mixture was made doubly strong.

“ I did not refuse to take what I considered a moderate quantity, but Malcolm declined the beverage altogether. When all remonstrance, argument, and entreaty, had proved vain, they began to mock and revile in a manner the most provoking. The heightened colour of the cheek, and a severe expression on his brow, proved that pride was not totally eradicated from his heart. Corrupt nature yet struggled, though nailed to the cross. I did not bear a part in these disgraceful and inhospitable insults; but my head was too much confused by what I had drank, and by the clamour

around me, to admit of the interference that I was doubly bound to offer.

“ Convinced that I had drank too much, I resisted the attempt to force more upon me, and was assailed by language as shameful as what Malcolm had endured.

“ This I could ill have supported when sober,—much worse in the state I was then reduced to. Young Duncan being the most insolent, I retorted his impertinence without scruple : and jeering at the assumed authority over the son of his father’s clerk, received a blow, which I returned with such force as laid him senseless on the grass.

“ An attack from the whole party followed. I was borne down by numbers, and murder would probably have ensued, for I had snatched a knife from the table in my fall ; but Malcolm now sprung forward, and with the cool resolution of sobriety, opposed to the madness of drunkenness, succeeded in flinging off two of my assailants, and placing himself astride over me, so as to afford a momentary protection.

“ Short, indeed, it would have been against such odds ; but the youth who was an object of the general scorn and hatred, while resisting sin, appeared in a different light under the

display of personal strength and courage. Several of the party calling out for fair play, placed themselves beside him. By this time I had recovered my footing, and was well disposed to fight; but Malcolm loudly called the attention of the rest to Duncan, who continued motionless on the earth.

“His situation appeared most alarming; one of the young men proposed that the boat should immediately return with him, and a few of his companions, including Malcolm and myself. They did not hesitate to say, as we rowed along, that he richly merited the fate he appeared to have met, and willingly connived at my leaping ashore and escaping. Malcolm whispered me to speed to the cottage of an old woman, named Jenny Burn. You know who resided there?” added Campbell, addressing me. “Yes,” I replied, “Maggie Cameron dwelt in that abode.”

“She did,” continued Campbell. “It was nine miles from the manufactory; but I reached it quickly, and was soon followed by Malcolm, who told me that young Duncan was in a very precarious state, and that I must either deliver myself up, or remain concealed.

“ ‘What would you advise?’ ” I asked.

“ ‘I know not,’ he replied, ‘but, were it my case, I would not resist the law.’ ”

“ ‘No, my bairn,’ remarked your grandmother, ‘I think you would not; but as yet, the law has no claim upon him. Duncan may recover; and in the mean time, whatever may afterwards happen, let us not send him to the prison—the dwelling of vice and despair, but seek to improve this sad visitation to his eternal advantage.’ ”

“ Malcolm gladly acquiesced. I remained with Mrs. Cameron; and while Duncan continued in danger, every hour was marked by the zealous endeavours of that pious woman, to awaken in my mind a deep sense of my peril, as a condemned sinner in the sight of God, whatever opinion men might form of me. In that cottage was the seed of divine truth sown, which I humbly hope has in some measure sprung up since. I confessed to her my continued assaults on the constancy of Malcolm, at which she wept abundantly in mingled grief and thankfulness. My faithful friend visited us constantly, and aided the efforts of his grandmother for my conversion. They

were not crowned with immediate success ; but a blessing was given, and I was ultimately brought to the saving knowledge of a crucified Redeemer.

“ Duncan recovered ; but my father lost his situation through my guilty conduct. I had the anguish of seeing his declining years embittered by poverty and disappointment. We removed to a distant part of the country, where he died a few years since ; and the little property I possess here was the portion of my Mary, this affectionate and faithful partner, whom the Lord has given to bless a most unworthy servant.

“ When I left the neighbourhood of your family, Malcolm was beginning to show symptoms of decline. They were realized.”

“ They were,” I answered ; “ he died, as I suppose, about a year after these events.”

“ And your grandmother ?”

“ Gone,” I replied, with a pang that wrung my very soul ; then added, “ I never heard these circumstances mentioned in the family.”

“ My residence at Jenny Burn’s was not known,” said Campbell, save to herself, Mrs. Cameron, and Malcolm : we agreed not to speak of it unnecessarily, as it might have

affected your father's interests in Duncan's factory."

Many anecdotes of my grandmother and of Malcolm, many pious and striking observations uttered by them, were repeated by my host, whose heart appeared to overflow with thankfulness for being permitted, as he called it, to pay back to me one mite of the ten thousand talents he owed my family. It formed a prominent feature in the devotions of the evening. A chapter was read, a hymn sung, and the inmates of the cottage fervently recommended to the watchful care of the Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.

Retired to my bed, I gave way to such agony of feeling, as convulsed my whole frame. My former state, the objects who had watched over me so fondly, and stored my young mind with knowledge, which now turned to my condemnation, had been so unexpectedly and vividly recalled, that the heart sickened, and fancy became disordered under their influence. In imagination I felt the pressure of Maggie Cameron's hands upon my shoulder, and heard her utter, "Woe unto the wicked, for it shall be ill with him, saith the Lord." Then the

gentle countenance of Malcolm would appear to beam upon me, and his voice whisper, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." This was a favourite passage of Malcolm's. Campbell had repeated it as such; and I was now in a state of feverish delirium sufficient to surround me with imaginary objects. Among these, poor Judy was ever present to my view; and I dwelt with equal amazement and abhorrence on my past conduct and murderous intentions. Again, the scenes of my childhood, my father's family, and pious friends,—that flock from which I had so wantonly strayed, and the uncle to whom I had been such an ingrate, oppressed my spirit, and I wept through the sleepless hours of the night.

In the morning I looked so ghastly and so ill, that Campbell would not hear of my further travelling that day: his wife attended to me most assiduously, and his children tried all their little playful arts to extort a smile; but my spirit was in heaviness, and I longed to

seek counsel of the Christian to whom I had been so providentially directed.

He perceived my distress, and delicately encouraged me to open my mind, which I did, fully and without disguise, excepting only as to the infamous purpose for which I had deserted; he regarded that step as the effect of highly excited feelings, amounting to temporary derangement; and under the impression that it would be so viewed by my commanding officer, he strongly recommended an unqualified submission, on my part, to the lawful authorities: at the same time offering his purse, and his personal services to their utmost extent, adding that his house was mine as long as I would continue to remain in it.

There was a joyful alacrity in all he offered and did, that proved how truly delightful to him was the opportunity thus afforded of befriending a M'Leod.

By his advice, a letter was written to my uncle Donald, and conveyed to an English post town, under cover to a friend of Campbell's, from thence to be forwarded to the regiment; and as some time must be lost before the answer could arrive in the same

circuitous way, a trusty relation of Mrs. Campbell's was employed to make enquiry concerning Judy at the head quarters of the regiment to which her seducer belonged.

He was there; but no person answering the description of my unhappy wife had been seen among them.

I remained with Campbell, and was regaining some degree of inward composure, from the successful struggle made against my revengeful inclinations.

It was a false peace, grounded on my own meritorious exertions. Bibles were not then so plentiful as now; but Campbell insisted on supplying the place of mine with one in which some passages were marked by Malcolm's hand: he had a second, the gift of a pious minister, also departed.

Satisfied with the victory I had gained over one evil propensity, I resumed my religious duties with more confidence; and awaited Donald's reply in a tolerably resigned frame.

But his letter, which was delayed a full fortnight, brought me most unexpected and overwhelming intelligence. The epistle which, as before noticed, I burnt unread in the agony of my mind previous to my desertion, was to

inform me, that, having been secretly apprized of Judy's intention to accompany or rather to follow, the officer, my uncle had intercepted her flight, and by his warnings and affectionate entreaties, turned her from her sinful purpose. She was with him at the detachment, guilty only as far as the intention went. To this intelligence the present letter added, that, on hearing of my disappearance, Judy surmised I had destroyed myself; a threat I had more than once wickedly and unmeaningly uttered, when vexed by any trifle; and so strong was her conviction of it, that supposing herself the cause of my own destruction, a brain fever ensued, and she was, at the time of Donald's writing, so completely worn away by its effects; and the deep melancholy succeeding it, that no hope was entertained of her surviving many weeks longer. "However," added the pious writer, "the Captain of our salvation has not disdained to enlist this poor penitent under his standard. Judy has received the word with gladness, and is marching onward to the heavenly city." He also said, that so much pity was excited for us both, as to leave little doubt of my being slightly punished, if at all, on surrendering myself up.

I lost not a moment in hastening to the nearest port from whence I could proceed to Ireland: Campbell accompanied me. Tears and prayers marked our hurried departure from his cottage, and were renewed when he bade me farewell on board the vessel.

To my uncle I went as fast as I could travel: long and bitterly he wept over one, who he hoped might be greeted as a returning prodigal. Judy had expired under the agitation of joy soon after being informed of my safety: but she died in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

I fell ill; and remained for some weeks in the hospital, scarcely thankful for the free pardon that was granted me.

I was, indeed, an altered character from this time: unavailing remorse, which I took for true repentance, cast a deep shade of seriousness on my appearance and manners; while an utter distate for the society that had led me so fatally astray, appeared to myself and others a thorough conversion. My uncle wrote under these favourable impressions, and obtained for me from home the most affectionate assurances of forgiveness and love.

But was I a Christian then? No: the

Christian is one, who, renouncing all self-dependance, looks to his Saviour alone for righteousness and strength. Convinced that the corrupt fountain within taints his duties, until they become objects meet for the divine pardon rather than approbation, he does indeed earnestly strive to fulfil all that is commanded, but finds himself in his best estate a most unprofitable servant. Feeling the weights of sin, that impede his progress in the heavenly race, while struggling to free himself from them, he looks alone to Jesus, who must be the finisher, no less than the author of his faith. He knows that the work of God alone will endure : that nothing we are, nothing we can do, is acceptable in the sight of the Lord, except what is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to cause old things to pass away, and to make all anew. A clean heart must be created, soft and teachable, where the law of God is engraven, instead of that stony, dark, rebellious one which is born with us, and remains closed against the light of the Gospel. The true Christian shuns sin, because he hates it as the enemy of God, and dreads it as the determined destroyer of men's souls : he combats it, as Malcolm did, by the

word of God and prayer; and conquers by flying from its presence.

But such was not my state. I had transgressed; and smarting under the rod that overtook me, while the fear of greater and eternal torments was before my eyes, I avoided sin, as the precursor of punishment. Vanity and vexation of spirit had been the fruit of my former enjoyments, and I was weary of them. These feelings led me to strive against farther temptation; and succeeding in the attempt, I made a merit of my obedience, and considered myself a faithful servant. Yet, resting on my own strength, the perfect weakness of which I had already experienced, I lived in constant fear; in some respects a salutary fear, indeed, but incompatible with the "perfect love" of God's children; the reliance implicitly reposed upon him, who they know is able "to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

War was now raging in the Peninsula, and thither our regiment was ordered.

It was my happiness to be embarked in the same transport with my uncle Donald, for the passage was tedious, and it is more difficult,

when crowded in so small a space with the licentious and profane, to escape the contagion of their ill examples. Drinking to the very verge of intoxication, gambling, and disgraceful language, prevailed to a melancholy extent among the men: but there were still a few who could not only sigh in secret for the abominations that were done, but openly and faithfully reprove them. Among these I chose my companions, and confined myself to them.

In the Bay of Biscay we met with terrible weather. I suffered less than most of those to whom the sea was new; and my uncle, from long custom, was rendered as insensible to its effects as an old sailor. I have paced the deck beside him, when few others could maintain a footing upon it; or at a little distance admired the picturesque figure of the hardy soldier, his plaid wrapped around him, yet escaping in many places, and spreading its green folds upon the breeze. His dark cheeks assuming a higher tint from the bracing air, and his thin locks straying from under the bonnet, pulled close over his brow to render it more secure against the rushing gale. The confused rapidity with which the billows appear to run, in this stormy sea, and the immense swell of

its waters, delighted me; and I gazed upon them with unwearied pleasure, remarking to my uncle, that the beauty and sublimity of the scene were sufficient to banish all feeling of apprehension.

“It is a fearful sight, notwithstanding,” he replied, “if you consider how many are rolling over these greedy waves, with only a few bits of plank between them and hell.”

It was too true. On that very day a vessel went down, with some of the most profligate characters on board, and among them the officer who had once been the object of my revenge.

When we ascertained this event, my uncle drew his plaid across his eyes. “Alas!” said he, “how is one taken and the other left! Poor Judy, in her ignorance, and brought up in the grossest darkness, was stayed in her wanderings, and led back to the fold of God; while this unhappy man, enjoying every advantage that education could afford in a Christian country, lived abandoned to vice, and his end is without hope!”



See page 70.

CHAPTER IV.

Sinners, awake betimes! ye fools, be wise;
Awake before this dreadful morning rise;
Change your vain thoughts, your crooked ways amend;
Fly to the Saviour, make the Judge your friend.

WE landed in Lisbon; and here my uncle's zeal for the honour of God and the purity of religion, was again strongly called forth. Accustomed, as I had been, to witness the observances of the Roman Catholic rites in Ireland, I was astonished at the extent of its open idolatry in this country, where it is the established religion; and asked my uncle whether it would be carried so far, if permitted among our fellow subjects. "It could not be otherwise," he replied; "for it is the boast of all classes among them, that their doctrines

cannot change. What they did in England, in Queen Mary's reign, and what you see them doing here now, must be done wherever their church has power to act up to its own principles."

When I saw wooden images, splendidly dressed, carried through the streets, under silken canopies, with lighted candles and garlands of flowers, all the people doing them homage, I felt the impiety of those things, which being done in a corner in Ireland did not so greatly shock me: but when I beheld whole regiments of Portuguese soldiers, as well as the crowds around them, fall down to worship a consecrated wafer in the great square of the city, I was confounded, and said to my uncle, "Are we in a heathen land?" "Poor creatures," he replied, compassionately, "they verily believe that bit of baked flour to be the identical body of our Lord, that was nailed to the cross, containing his soul and divinity too."

"But how can they believe it?" asked I. "Do not their reason and their senses prove its absurdity and impossibility?"

"They are not permitted to make use either of reason or senses," said he, "in any case where they might contradict the assertions of

their Priests: nor are they suffered to read the word of God, which would at once prove to them that they are believing a lie."

"If I did not see all this," I remarked, "nothing could persuade me it was possible for men, calling themselves Christians, thus to outdo the madness of heathen idolatry."

"I know it to be possible, said Donald, "not only from having seen it, but because I read an exact description of it in the second chapter of St. Paul's second Epistle to the Thessalonians, in the third chapter of his second Epistle to Timothy, and in the thirteenth and seventeenth chapters of Revelation."

"How do know you that St. Paul speaks of the Roman Catholics?" asked a Serjeant, who was by; "a Priest told me that passage in the Thessalonians described the Mahometan religion."

Proud to show my learning, I replied, "If you can make out that Mahomet fell away from the church of Christ, and that he taught his followers to call him God, I will grant you that the Apostle's words may be applied to him. But Mahomet never was a Christian, nor sat in the temple of God; he never took any higher title than that of Prophet, and the

Mahometans do not pretend to any miraculous powers."

"But the Roman Catholics do all this," said my uncle; "their church was once purely Christian; their Popes sit in the temple of God, and most impiously suffer themselves to be called by that awful name; they oppose His word, exalt their laws above His, and glory in what they call miracles."

One evening, while I was on guard with my uncle, before the quarters of a General Officer, the air became intolerably close and sulphurous, and we were startled by such a motion of the earth as made us reel. In the next moment, people, half naked, began to rush from some of the houses, and many falling on their knees and crossing themselves with wonderful rapidity, called upon the Virgin Mary and the saints to preserve them.

"It is an earthquake," said Donald. I trembled; his look was solemn as when he gazed upon the stormy ocean, nor was it less calm.

The consternation having subsided, and the people returning to their homes, my uncle observed to me, "As far as I understand their language, I did not hear one prayer addressed

simply to the living God, among twenty appeals to his dead creatures.”

“ They often exclaimed ‘ Jesus Maria,’ ” observed I, “ which I think means God and the Virgin.”

“ Yes,” he replied, “ and called upon *Santissima May de Deos,* that is, ‘ Holy Mother of God,’ a blasphemous title ; but you did not hear a syllable uttered to the Almighty, without joining the name of some mortal with his ; as if he was unable to help them alone. Is not that giving his glory to another ?”

“ In such a moment of terror,” I remarked, “ they would speak the very feelings of their minds.”

“ Yes, Allan ; and call for the best defence they knew of. A broken reed they rest upon, trusting in what cannot profit ; but the Christian who has learnt of the Father to come to the Son, builds his house upon a rock that is not to be shaken by an earthquake ; ‘ Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled ; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.’ ”

“ I think Lisbon was once swallowed up by an earthquake,” I remarked.

“ Yes” said my uncle, “ I heard the particulars of that event, and very extraordinary and awful it appeared, considering when and how the town was destroyed. You know, Allan, than on the festival of any saint, these poor people think they perform a pious act by lighting candles before what they call the shrine of the one they are celebrating. It was upon All-Saints’ day, when every shrine had its tapers lit up, that the earthquake came on : the buildings were rocked to and fro, like ships in the breeze ; great numbers were overthrown ; and while the wretched inhabitants were hurrying towards the coast, as the safest place, such a body of water as never had been seen before, swelled on high in the Tagus, burst upon the land, and swept off thousands of the terrified sufferers.”

“ Unhappy souls !” I exclaimed, “ earth and ocean both leagued for their destruction.”

“ Ay, Allan, that was the immediate work of Him, in whose hand are the deep places of the earth, and whose the sea is ; but mark the dreadful circumstance that finished the calamity of this city, ‘ wholly given to idolatry.’ The buildings, as I have said, rocked to and

fro ; the muslin curtains and other light ornaments that surrounded the shrines, were caught by the tapers lighted before them—the graven images of wood fed the flame—the blaze burst forth at once in every quarter of the city ; what the earthquake and the water spared, the fire devoured. It raged night and day, and ended only when all that could supply it with fuel was consumed.”

“ And even this did not reclaim them from their errors,” said I.

“ No ; it was all attributed to natural causes ; and had it been proved miraculous, what could you expect among those who blind their own eyes, and harden their hearts against God, by casting his word behind them ? ‘ If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’ ”

We were now relieved. Our comrades in the guard-house had been exceedingly alarmed when their piled arms were thrown down, and themselves made to stagger by the concussion of the earth ; but the danger having passed over, they were drowning the voice of awakened conscience in the usual way, and many were mimicking the words and actions of the inhabitants, which, to a mind of any feeling or

reflection, were matter of grief and pity rather than of ridicule;—but how can he who values not his own soul have any concern for his brother's?

We were soon marched for the interior of Portugal and Spain. Dreadful were the scenes of cruelty, rapine, murder, and wretchedness in every form, that we witnessed. I do not wish to describe them. Should this little book fall into the hands of soldiers who were present, they will remember them well, and it would be useless to shock the feelings of others who saw them not. Many a time have I beheld my uncle's countenance expressing the deepest compassion, and his eyes lifted to heaven in secret thankfulness, while he whispered, "Happy England! Land of the gospel! Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound!"

But I fear there were not many among us, who thought like Donald. Some even appeared to consider themselves justified in wresting from the wretched inhabitants of the land the miserable wreck of what the enemy had destroyed, and quarrelled and cheated, among each other, over their disgraceful spoil. Such a blot on the character of the British

soldier, I must hope, was not very general ; but in the greater number of my comrades, I saw little of Christian sympathy with the overwhelming sorrows of the poor creatures whom they came to assist. Campaigning seemed to them less a matter of melancholy duty, than an excuse for indulging all the bad passions of the mind without restraint ; and I could not but say to myself, “ If they thought such a band of merciless men were let loose at this moment against their own peaceful homes, how differently would they feel ! ” Many affect to admire, beyond all things, the precept of our blessed Lord,—“ Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; ” they wish to represent it as containing the whole sum of the gospel : but how little do they show of that divine doctrine in their common practice ?

I was present in several engagements. I saw the blasphemer struck dead with the half-uttered imprecation on his lips. I heard the dying cry of the ignorant worshipper, addressed to saints who could neither hear nor save. I witnessed the blow that laid the gay and thoughtless in the dust of the earth, cut down like flowers in the spring-time of their beauty ;

while the living trampled on hoary heads, grown grey in unrighteousness, whose final awaking must be to shame and everlasting contempt.

Here and there, among the multitude of slaughtered bodies, I might discern the mortal remains of some who, obedient to the command of their earthly sovereign, had cheerfully hazarded and sacrificed life in their country's service; and having proved loyal through all to the Captain of their salvation, had been called to take possession of a heavenly inheritance.

Dark as I still was as to the actual state of my own heart, and mistaken on the real ground of a sinner's acceptance with God, I had a very clear view of the different lot awaiting the believer and the unjustified in eternity; and the expressions of holy joy and thankfulness which I heard from the lips of my uncle, when in the discharge of our sad duty, covering with earth the bodies of the slain, he recognized among them such individuals as he knew to have been faithful unto death, were really echoed from my inmost heart.

In the work of death we continued engaged for years. Our ranks were thinned by the sword and the pestilence, and still were the

vacancies supplied with others who arrived from home. To enumerate the merciful deliverances with which my own course was marked, would be impossible. I have seen the head of my next comrade carried off by a ball, the wind of which stunned me. I have observed the musquet of an adversary pointed at me with unerring aim, and his hand relaxed in death ere he could draw the trigger. I have relinquished, in the regular relief of guards and picquets, my post to another, and turned at the distance of a few paces to behold him shot dead on the spot where I stood but half a minute before. A bomb, bursting by my side, has buried me beneath a shower of earth and stones, from which I have been extricated unhurt, while my comrades were rent limb from limb by the explosion. Many of these wonderful escapes passed unnoticed, being so common in such a scene of danger, as made the existence of every survivor appear hardly less than miraculous; and becoming more frequent, the little thankfulness that accompanied the acknowledgment of the few first, died away into a mere feeling of self-gratulation on my good fortune, as I impiously termed it. Will not these catalogues of unmerited mer-

cies be shown in judgment against many who forget what the Lord has so signally done for them, and think it no part of their duty to do any thing for him? Oh, that my brother soldiers would recal to mind but one out of the innumerable preservations they have experienced in the battle and the storm, and seriously ask themselves, "where would my soul be now, had I fallen at such a time?" If you be of the number of those who forget God, who neglect the reading of his holy word, and pay but a cold and formal, an ignorant, constrained and heartless duty in worshipping Him, then the doom of such, as declared in Scripture, is, that they shall be turned into hell; and "who among us can dwell with the devouring flames? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

About two years after our arrival in the Peninsula, a severe engagement was fought, in which our Highlanders suffered considerably. I escaped as usual; and accustomed as I was to meet my uncle equally unhurt, it was a severe shock to hear that he was among the most dangerously wounded.

As soon as possible I hastened to the tent where he lay, and found him, after a dreadful

operation, evidently exhausted, and hastening to his eternal home.

In reply to my anxious enquiries, he said, with a smile of unspeakable composure,—
 “Peace, Allan! it is all peace. When did any ever trust in Him and were forsaken? when did He say to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain? His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. Read that chapter to me, Allan.”

I read the 25th of Isaiah.

“Yes,” said he, “this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

A groan from a dying comrade interrupted him. He raised his head to look at the sufferer, who expired. “Alas!” exclaimed Donald, in a voice of deep feeling, “who slew all these?”

“The chance of war,” I replied.

“No, no,” he added, “it was sin. ‘In Adam all die;’ but how few shall be made alive in the glorious likeness of Christ! Pray, Allan: it may be that repentance shall even now be given to some of these, and to me too; for surely every breath that remains in this

body should be uttered in a sigh of penitence for having been so faithless,—so thankless a servant to the best of masters.”

I prayed. It was an exercise to which I had been accustomed from childhood; but never, I think, had the prayer risen so from the ground of the heart as it now did. I could not forbear introducing the conversion of poor Judy among the causes for especial thanksgiving on my uncle's behalf. A smile of increased joy bore witness to his grateful recollection of it.

When I concluded, he said, “I am bleeding to death, Allan—it will soon be over. Blessed be God, who has enabled me in a measure to watch, to keep my loins girded, and my lights burning.”

“You have been a burning and a shining light,” said a hollow voice near him.

He started, and we both looked towards the spot from whence it came. Donald said, “My sight is dim—I cannot distinguish, but surely that was not the voice of a stranger.” “It is that of Colin Armstrong,” answered the speaker,—a Highlander of a different regiment, who lay near, after suffering the amputation of an arm.

“*What* are you, Armstrong?” asked my uncle, with an emphasis most peculiarly strong. “A brand plucked from the burning, Donald, and through you. It is five years since I contrived to get out of your reach; but a voice more powerful than your’s followed me, repeating all your dreaded and hated warnings: it pursued me into every den of infamy where I strove to lose or to drown it in the uproar of madness. Three years longer I fought against my own soul, Donald; but grace triumphed. For eighteen months I had no peace from the fearful convictions of a wounded spirit. Six months I have lived by the faith of the Son of God. We shall meet, Donald; we shall meet before the throne of the Lamb.”

A convulsion passed over my uncle’s face. When he could speak, he murmured, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart”—— the rest was drowned in the rattle of death; he turned on his side, and expired.

Every respect that, in such a mass of carnage, could be shown to an individual, was bestowed upon my uncle: but it was I who dug his grave, and my hand smoothed the sod over his remains. I felt most deeply and unfeignedly the value of what I had lost in

him, and feebly endeavoured to express some part of in the following lines:—

Christian soldier! thou hast enter'd
 Where thy foes can never come ;
 Where thy steadfast hope was center'd,
 In a bright celestial home.
 Thou hast trod the path of duty ;
 Thou the fight of faith hast won ;
 Thou hast seen thy King in beauty,
 And eternal life begun.

Never more can doubt distress thee,—
 Hope is swallow'd up in sight ;
 Sin shall never more oppress thee,
 Victor in thy Saviour's might !
 From the field of death ascending,
 Angels bear thee on thy road,
 Where the golden gates extending,
 Show thy pure, thy blest abode.

Fare thee well! Around thy pillow
 Kindred foot shall never move ;
 Sever'd by the rolling billow
 From the country of thy love.
 Yet thy God will not forsake thee,
 Mould'ring thus 'neath foreign skies ; *
 Soon the trumpet's call shall wake thee,
 And thy scatter'd dust arise.

Deeply must my bosom cherish,
 Wheresoe'er my step shall go,
 Fond regrets, that cannot perish,
 While I tread this vale of woe.
 Let surrounding friends inherit
 Sad mementoes, priz'd for thee;
 May the mantle of thy spirit,
 Christian soldier, rest on me.

Every spare minute was now devoted to poor Armstrong; and I had the satisfaction of believing that my attentions contributed to his ultimate recovery. He told me that he was formerly in our regiment, and that my uncle, who had known and loved his family, pursued him in his career of unbounded licentiousness, with such solemn warnings, particularly the startling question, "What are *you*, Armstrong?" answered frequently by himself with a fearful picture of the sinner's character and state; that by incredible exertions he succeeded in getting removed to a different regiment, solely to escape from Donald. The event has been shown. Armstrong was sent home with the next party of disabled soldiers, and I have heard no more of him.

Our two battalions were soon after separated; that in which I remained had lost its last pious member in my uncle; and I think our muster-roll did not contain the name of any one, except myself, who made even a profession of serious religion, and mine was but the shell without the kernel. Pride and self-righteousness preyed like a worm upon the little knowledge that dwelt within; and my transgressions of the rules I had laid down for sobriety and moderation, were becoming more frequent and open, as my dangerous liberty in evil society increased.

In this state of hypocritical service and actual rebellion, I went on, undaunted by the forms that death was assuming on every side of me. With a strange sort of superstitious regard for my Bible, I made it my companion, though scarcely ever reading it. I took it with me into an engagement, and, in the tumult of the fray, I lost it; receiving at the same time a contusion on the *leg* from a spent ball, which lamed me for a few days.

This circumstance roused me to something like reflection. In my perilous condition, I would fain have had recourse to my Bible, but in the whole battalion there was not

one to be found. Determined to supply my loss as well as I could, and not to be debarred from the privilege I had never before long remained excluded from, I formed all the writing paper I could collect into a small book, and proceeded to insert as many passages as my memory could furnish me with from the Scriptures. The lost Bible was doubly valuable, as containing so many marks from Malcolm's judicious hand. I deserved not to possess the treasure, but have often, of late, solaced myself with the hope that some one was directed in finding it, whom its pages might make wise unto salvation.





CHAPTER V.

See p. 85.

It needs our hearts be wean'd from earth ;
It needs that we be driven,
By loss of every mortal stay,
To seek our joys in heav'n.
And what is sorrow, what is pain,
To that eternal care,
That breaks the conscious heart for sin,
When sin is hated there !

My manuscript soon became a subject of interest ; and I stole some hours from far worse occupations to carry it on. The references pointed out in my early catechism were mostly forgotten ; but texts, often repeated by my Grandmother, my Parents, Malcolm, Campbell, and my Uncle, remained engraven on my mind. Those, happily, were of the most awakening description ; and many a hidden meaning seemed to flash on my mind as I deliberately

wrote out the passages with which a slight perusal or momentary attention in listening, had brought me but superficially acquainted.

This was the first link I can point out in the rich chain of mysterious mercies that bound my soul to the Saviour. It was the beginning of my conversion from dead works to serve the living God.

My little book, my pens, and a small ink-horn, were now always in the breast pocket of the under vest, which an aguish tendency obliged me to wear. I did not lay them aside when entering the battle, only securing them better than I had done my Bible; and happy it was for me that I did so.

In one of the lesser engagements that took place between detached parties, I was wounded by a musket ball, which lodged in my knee,—taken prisoner—and conveyed to a fortified place in the rear of the enemy.

In this miserable situation, badly attended, worse fed, and surrounded with fellow-sufferers as helpless as myself, I was condemned to linger under great bodily pain, and still severer anguish of mind, until an exchange of prisoners should restore me to my native land. My first dread was lest the French soldiers should rob me of my manuscript; but in this I was better

off than I should have been in the hands of our Spanish allies. Religion formed no subject for persecution among the followers of Buonaparte, who were infidels alike in principle and practice. My little book was examined, and its contents being ascertained, it was returned to me with à laugh; the pens and ink-horn were, however, thought worth capturing, together with my watch and knife. Thus prevented from adding to the contents of my text book, I was left to ponder over the pages already written.

By some impulse, or fancy, I had commenced with the memorable quotation of Maggie Cameron: "Woe unto the wicked, for it shall be ill with him, saith the Lord." This was sadly verified in my misfortunes; and it led me to reflect with horror and remorse, sometimes amounting to despair, on the many and aggravated sins I had committed.

It was not now as in the house of Alexander Campbell, where compunction was awakened by a recurrence to names and persons once so dear to me. In this instance my dread and shame arose from a more correct view of the infinite purity of Him against whom my offences were committed. I did not consider my per-

sonal misfortunes so much the punishment as the necessary fruit of my iniquity ; and looked for divine retribution in the world to come. All the attributes of the Most High appeared armed against me ; but none affected me so much as the mercy I had neglected, and the long-suffering forbearance I had despised. My knowledge of the Gospel showed me the nature and prevalence of sin, and the ample sufficiency of Christ's salvation. My crime was not that of ignorant opposition, but of wilful neglect. It was "because He had called and I refused to hear, because He had spread forth his hands and I regarded not," that I looked for a continued hiding of his eyes from my supplication, a mocking of the fear that was now come upon me.

I was not at a loss for Scripture invitations and encouragements ; but believed myself excluded from both. To the vilest, the most hardened of those about me, I could without doubt or hesitation have said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," well knowing that faith was the root, from whence would spring the tree of righteousness, sanctification, and obedience ; but I believed, that in my heart, the root had once been

planted, that I had torn it up by my sins, and when destroyed, it could not be replaced.

The fact was, that I never had really believed; my head was well stored, but my heart unconverted. The soil was not broken for planting that precious seed, which I supposed to have already sprung up and withered. Old things had never passed away; pride had not been humbled, nor self-abashed. I had been seeking my own credit, or at best only trying to escape the pains of eternal death, in all former services. Such a principle as love to God, zeal for the glory of His name, or jealousy of what might tarnish that glory, had formed no part of my religious feelings. I thought hell an evil, and heaven a blessing; and rejoiced over those who escaped the former to find shelter in the latter; but the idea that enmity against God would be the chief misery of a condemned soul, and perfect love to Him the felicity of the blessed, had never been formed in my mind. I felt it now, in all the bitterness of dread, that everlasting exclusion from His favour, would be my hopeless portion.

The bullet in my knee could not be extracted. I continued to suffer extreme pain from it, and from the unsuccessful operations performed;

frequently expecting that the next would be the amputation of the limb, and nearly indifferent to the event, under an impression that the reality of all I dreaded would scarcely be worse than the confident anticipation.

“The servant who knew his Lord’s will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” This is generally exemplified in the horrors of conscience endured by those who have sinned against light and knowledge. Ignorant wanderers are often brought back to the fold under gentle chastisement, but wilful perverters incur a heavier and more protracted scourge. I am sure, if any thing can give a foretaste of the torments lost souls must endure, it is the season of deep conviction in the mind of a sinner, who has known the truth, even with the superficial head knowledge that profiteth nothing, but is the savour of death unto death.

To increase my misery, doubts would frequently arise, which I perfectly well knew to be suggestions of my spiritual enemy; but which I could by no means vanquish or shake off. They added to the sense of criminality, and convinced me that I was given over to a reprobate mind.

Many months passed on while I languished in confinement, under the frown of the Lord, who appeared determined to consume me by means of His heavy hand. The wound in my knee closed; but the bullet remained within, producing incurable lameness.

The arrow of conviction, meanwhile, stuck fast and rankled in my soul; but to be drawn forth in due time by Him, who was anointed "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

A *cartel* was at length agreed upon; and I with other prisoners embarked for Portsmouth.

As we approached the English Channel, I requested to be carried on deck, and with a feeling of saddened pleasure gazed around me. After the spectacles of death and devastation, among which I had existed for years in Portugal and Spain, and the gross licentiousness, privation, and misery, of the place where we had been so long confined in captivity, there was something so gladsome in the very breezes of our native land, that the heaviest heart bounded under their influence. The coast

gradually appeared, and the long line of white cliffs stretched upon our left, in simple majesty, crowned with the pure verdure of spring, which had clothed the distant fields in the freshest hue. The blue sky, lightly dappled with delicate clouds, spread its graceful arch over the scene, while the deep green waters rolled their little silvery billows to kiss the feet of those chalky precipices, round which the hand of Omnipotence had led them, to form a sure defence. Seen in perspective, the Isle of Wight displayed its picturesque outline; abrupt and rugged at first view, and softening as we advanced along its woody banks into the richest character of sylvan beauty: The sides of the vessel were lined with husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, whose eyes, often dimmed with the tear of emotion, gazed upon the shore, as though their intense looks could penetrate across the long tract of country that yet lay between them and their distant homes. In this anxious feeling I did not participate. Unworthy of my family, I rather dreaded than desired again to behold the paternal roof; but there was one sensation evidently pervading our party, in which I certainly partook. It was that of almost exulting satisfaction in the

consciousness of having gone forth to meet in another clime, the foe whose victorious course unchecked, might, perhaps, have led him to pour the fiery deluge of war and blood upon the smiling country that now lay stretched before us, in all the softness of unbroken tranquillity, and transform that garden of Eden into a howling wilderness.

The Christian cannot delight in slaughter; far from his mind is the inhuman exultation over thousands who are swept away in unrepentant sin, and tens of thousands reduced to want and woe, by their untimely fall; but he can rejoice that the sword has not been commissioned to pass through his own beloved land; and be thankful that his individual exertions and sufferings have combined, under the divine mercy, to avert that scourge.

When we closely examine the population of England, and discover how much of impiety and vice are boldly displayed under the broad beam of scriptural knowledge, we may be astonished that the Lord bears so long, and so patiently, with a people whose privileges add to their condemnation; but taken generally as one of the kingdoms of the earth, this island is a gem, a glory of the nations. Basking in

the light of the Gospel herself, she desires that its rays may penetrate to the darkest corners of the globe. Freely she has received, freely she gives; she scatters the word of God unsparingly among the heathen, in bold and faithful reliance, that the bread of life cast upon the waters will be found again, though after many days. She sends forth her missionaries, under the divine injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature." "Go, and teach all nations." And they depart, humbly craving the annexed promise, "Lo, I am with you always." England, moving unimpeded in the full enjoyment of rational liberty, strikes off with one hand the manacles of the slave, and with the other places before him the page of that truth which has power to establish him in spiritual freedom. Many, indeed, are the tares that spring up in this field of choice wheat; but the Lord in mercy makes strong the hedge, and raises an impenetrable bulwark around, while He reserves the weeds to the day of separation, and eternal judgment.

We were landed at Portsmouth, and I was immediately afterwards discharged as disabled for farther service; but admitted an

out-pensioner of Chelsea hospital, through the strong recommendation of my commanding officer.

Reason, religion, and natural affection, pointed out my native home as the most suitable place of repose for me: and I was perfectly sure, that a very affectionate welcome awaited me there; but something, I fear it was pride, withheld me from repairing thither. I dared no longer be a hypocrite, and did not like to acknowledge the state of despondency and desertion to which my mind had sunk. I longed for consolation, but preferred to seek it from strangers, rather than among my nearest kindred. I believed myself perfectly humbled under the mighty hand of God; but abasement in the sight of man, I could not bear: and by indulging this proud feeling, I certainly kept the Comforter away from my soul, and laid up cause of further regret and remorse. I remained for a whole year in an obscure lane in Portsmouth, then took up my abode in a village where the Gospel was proclaimed, regularly attended the public preaching of the word, but shunned the personal notice of the minister, whose compassionate looks had more than once rested on my pale, sorrowful

countenance, and crippled form. At length, it became necessary to obtain his signature to the certificate for my pension, and I chose a morning when I believed him to be particularly engaged, that it might be hastily concluded.

He was very much pressed for time, and glancing over the paper, observed that several days were yet to pass before that on which it must be sent in: requesting that I would leave it, and call on the morrow to have it properly filled up. I could not refuse to do so, and reluctantly kept my appointment.

He was alone in his study. "Allan M'Leod," said he, in the kindest tone, "I regret having caused you an additional walk, which must be painful: sit down now, and rest yourself."

I obeyed; his mild looks had long been dear to me, and my shyness wore off rapidly.

"You have suffered much," he continued, still looking on the paper: "wounded in the Peninsula?"

"Yes, sir; wounded, and a prisoner for nearly twelve months.

"Sad indeed," replied he; "but yet, Mr. M'Leod, there is a liberty,"—he paused, and I could not forbear repeating,

“ A liberty unsung

By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confed'rate take away.”

He seemed surprised and affected ; and I went on, “ Pardon my boldness, sir ; the most humble among my countrymen have the privilege of reading what is confined to the better sort elsewhere.”

“ I rejoice at it,” he replied, “ particularly when that privilege, instead of being abused to foster a corrupt imagination, is improved to the benefit of the soul. You, M^r Leod, know the liberty of which Cowper so sweetly writes ?” “ I know it, sir, as the drowning mariner knows the port that he has left, but cannot regain.”

The minister's countenance assumed an expression of keen interest and animation ; “ Cannot the mariner utter the cry of drowning Peter, assured that the ear of Peter's Lord is as quick to hear, and His arm as strong to save, as in that hour when he snatched the doubting disciple from the billows ?”

“ St. Peter,” I replied, “ was rashly confident, and then unreasonably doubtful ; but I,”

— here I paused, for at that moment it struck me that my case was precisely similar; I had attempted in my own strength to walk the waters of the world, while outwardly calling upon the Lord: I was now sinking, and the more I doubted, the deeper I had sunk. I pursued the train of thought aloud: “I do not doubt His power to save.”

“But His willingness you, perhaps, do,” said the clergyman; “and is not that a most injurious, ungrateful doubt?”

I looked down; I wished to believe him, but feared.

“Here,” continued he, “is the instrument by which you claim support from the government of the country. I will put my name to it; and when you forward the paper to its destination, have you any apprehension of seeing it returned upon your hands, a dishonoured draft?”

I perceived the drift of his argument, and half smiling, shook my head.

“Well, M’Leod, here is the Bible. In this is found a covenant, confirmed by two immutable things, the promise and the oath of Him who cannot lie: it is sealed in the blood of the incarnate God, witnessed by the Spirit of

truth. This covenant ensures to you the possession of a gift, not earned by your own defiled services, but by the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish and without spot; by His righteousness who has magnified the law and made it honourable. Without hesitation, you rely on the pledge of your country, and send in your claim. Do you fear to rest on the promise of your God, and to plead the merits of His Son?"

I could not answer: he went on.

"Your military service may not, in your own feeling, have been altogether free from blemish."

"I was a deserter," exclaimed I, looking at him with an eagerness that surprised myself.

His eyes glistened: he silently pointed to the guarantee of my Sovereign's pardon and bounty; and the action was more eloquent than words might have been.

At that moment, to my great affliction, a visitor was announced: by the clergyman's desire, he took a book to the window: I advanced forwards to the table, and the good man, while he dated and signed my certificate, placed before me an open Bible, with his pencil marking the eighteenth verse in the

first chapter of Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" and while he put the paper in my hand, with a strong emphasis repeated, "Faithful is He who hath promised, who also will do it."

This was the first steady beam of hope that was admitted into my mind. There is much to awaken and to improve in the public ministry of the word by a faithful pastor; but its promise addressed to the individual carries more of encouragement; and when so applied by a commissioned teacher of the truth, of whatever persuasion he may be, it bears more the character of a message through the accredited ambassador of Christ.

The minister who confines the exercise of his sacred functions to the place of worship, and unavoidable performance of the appointed rites, must give account to God for many a soul concerning which he takes no thought. He considers not the terms of that awful accusation, "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was

broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost." The 34th chapter of Ezekiel should form the daily study, and the nightly meditation, of him who ventures upon the sacred office of the ministry.





CHAPTER VI.

The hand that quits the vengeful sword,
Still holds the chastening rod,
And still reminds the erring child,
His father is his God.
The earthly good too dearly lov'd,
From the fond bosom rent ;
The lofty eye ; the front of pride,
With shame and sorrow bent ;
The pain, the poverty, the care,
That break the stubborn will ;
Prove, though the sinner is redeem'd,
The sin is hated still.

I HAD now frequent interviews with my pastor. He did not hastily speak peace, nor daub with untempered mortar the wall began to be raised against my spiritual foes. He rightly observed, that the wound in my knee

proved how little of real strength or advantage was to be derived from the mere skinning over of a hurt. Deeper work was necessary to the healing of my soul, and by degrees the heavenly Physician restored me to peace. I should rather say he created a peace that I had never before known.

One of the first fruits of this happy change, was an anxious desire to learn some tidings of my parents. I was shocked to think how cruelly I had kept them in ignorance of my fate for years, and resolved to lose no time in addressing them. I had lived upon my pension, as corporal, hitherto, but not without considerable privation. I reflected now that my father must need assistance, either to carry on his business, or to maintain him, if that was declining. I dispatched a letter of inquiry; but before an answer could arrive, I met at Chelsea hospital, where I went to see an old comrade, a person from the neighbourhood of my native place. I knew him immediately, but saw he had no recollection of me, and he answered my inquiries as those of a stranger. I first named some families near my home, and then asked for the M'Leods of the Green.

‘ Poor people !’ said he compassionately, they have seen trouble enough. Ten years ago they had a hopeful son in the army ; he went to foreign lands, and was taken prisoner, and never heard of more. Misfortunes came upon M’Leod—he trusted to a rogue who deceived and robbed him, and latterly he got entangled in law. The old wife pined away ; she died a year back. It is feared matters will go against the family, and the grey hairs of her husband follow her with sorrow to the grave ?”

“ And did no friend—no Christian friend, come forward to assist them ?” asked I.

“ What could they do, man ?” he replied. “ All their friends are people who find it hard enough in such times to support their own, and they cannot neglect their families to undertake a difficult law-suit, even for a person as much respected as old M’Leod is through the country.”

My conscience bitterly reproached me. Had I followed the dictates of filial duty, it would have been mine to smooth the dying pillow of a mother, and to relieve a father from the most cruel distress. A ready pen

would have been more valuable to him than the most active limbs; mine had been idle, and he was impoverished and broken-hearted.

My informant, seeing I took an interest in the subject, went on. "Perhaps you may know somewhat of young Allan. I would gladly carry any tidings of him, if only from a person who saw him die. About two years back, there came one Alexander Campbell, I think, to the Green: he had something to say about Allan, and much there was of sorrowful rejoicing: but I believe it was of past times he spoke. He staid awhile, and was most kind to the poor old people: but I heard say he has lately sailed for America, with his family, to take possession of some property left by a relation there."

Another disappointment this: my generous friend, Campbell, gone in ignorance of my safety.

Immediately I hastened home, just in time to rescue, by the most determined efforts, my little patrimony from the grasp of legal oppression.

My poor father was indeed completely worn down by age and sorrows. He lived but a short time, and that little space was spent in

unbounded thanksgiving for the restoration of his unworthy prodigal.

I disposed of the bleaching establishment, to defray the heavy expences the law-suit had involved my father in, but retained a few acres of ground, including Malcolm's tree, near which I built a small cottage. On this spot I assemble the children of the village, and giving them such instruction as my sad experience enables me to bestow, I find a blessing accompany my endeavours, and often rest with refreshing influence on my own soul.

“Faith without works is dead.” This is the frequent burden of the admonitions I give my young friends. It is a name, and not a reality; a dead mass, not a living root, if it produce not the fruit of righteous deed and a holy life. In Malcolm, in my Uncle, Campbell, and the pious minister, we have seen how faith worketh by love; and in myself, for many years, how like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal the mere shell of knowledge is displayed.

A soldier never passes my cottage without a cordial invitation to enter. The recollection of what I once beheld in my uncle Donald, is more than ever endeared to me; and if such be not the character of every soldier in our

army, the fault is not in the country that brought them forth, in the rulers who govern them, nor in the churches to which they respectively belong; but it is the deep and fatal error of their own souls, who will not come to Christ that they may have life.

I have seen men enter the field of battle in riotous spirits, with minds as totally unprepared to appear in the presence of God, as if they had a certain assurance that death could not overtake them, weakly imagining that such impious boldness would obtain for them the reputation of superior bravery; but the man who calmly and steadily looks danger in the face, is clearly possessed of more courage than he who works himself up to a sort of intoxication, afraid to take a quiet view of his duty. The same men I have beheld, in the hours of lingering sickness, or during a long and dreadful storm at sea, trembling with terror, and shrinking, dismayed, from the prospect of that eternity, which, at other times, they seemed willing to rush upon without a thought. This shows, that the resolution of such people is, as I said before, an intoxication of the mind—a mere madness.

Among my comrades, some appeared quite

indifferent to the danger, on the ground that, according to their notion, "every bullet had its billet;" that the fate of all was fixed; and whether at home or abroad, they could not live beyond a certain day, nor fall before it arrived. But even supposing this to be the case, what has the time of their death to do with the future state of their souls? Because you think you may be destined to die to-day, is that any reason that you should be satisfied in going to the place of torment to-day? Or if you suppose your life may be secure for twenty years, are you therefore to resist God's grace, despise his warnings, and trample on his laws to the end of that period? Whether we die by the sword, the pestilence, or the storm, or linger out in extreme old age, or perish by one of the many accidents that occur every day in all ranks of society, the nature of the event is the same. The soul departs, and finds itself in the world of spirits, either tormented, (and tormented by those who have drawn it from the way of holiness) or borne by angels to the presence of Him who redeemed sinners to God by his blood. This world, with all its delusions, vanishes away: our mortal life, which now seems to be the only reality,

appears as a dream; and the eternal things which we regard too often as a vision, prove to be an awful and unchangeable reality. No alteration can be produced in the state of the soul after death—Christ no longer pleads for it, and the prayers of men and angels would be totally unavailing, if all creation should unite in them. The general judgment approaches; the body will be raised from the dust of the earth, and rejoined to its immortal soul: both must appear before the throne of God, to give an account of all that was done before death divided them: and every one not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

A calm consideration of these things can never render any one afraid of dying, who knows the value of the hope set before us in the Gospel. Afraid of sinning, all must be, who rightly regard them; but when we are told that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ shall surely escape the pains of eternal death, and receive a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, we must allow that such a prospect deprives the last enemy of his terrors. The more confident a man is of heaven, the less will he dread the

gate that opens into it. There are many Christian characters, in our Army and Navy, who would fear to join their comrades in profligate conduct or profane conversation, but who, in the hour of danger, are ever foremost in the performance of their most arduous duties. It is a shocking insult to Him who gave us the Bible, and commanded our studying it, to suppose that Holy Word will make us less active in doing what is right, or less happy than in casting it behind us; or regarding it as an object of respect, as blind and unprofitable as what the heathen pay to their wooden gods. Yet, I have met with some, and those parents of families, who were more afraid of seeing the Scriptures introduced among their children, than a contagious disease; and who, if one of the number gave any indication of a serious thought on the important subject of salvation, lamented more than they would have done over the same individual in a coffin. What a dreadful delusion is this! We are liable every hour to the stroke of death, which places us at once amongst those who are doomed to Hell, because they forget God, or those who are to find eternal blessedness in praising and serving him for evermore.

Heaven can be no place of enjoyment to the soul that shuns every thing connected with it; nor the presence of God be desirable to those who despise the Word which he has magnified above all his name. God will not be mocked; I have found it so. I have been a self-deceiver, a deliberate hypocrite, and an open profligate. In all these my sin has found me out; and though the Lord has magnified his mercy, in giving me peace at last, taking away my transgressions, and reconciling me to himself by the precious blood of his Son, yet has he visited my offences with the rod, and my sins with scourges. Through my own wickedness I am deprived of a partner, whose affectionate care would now be invaluable to me, crippled as I am for life, and unable sometimes to assist myself. My wound still occasionally breaks out, and pieces of bone come away, attended with great pain and fever; and at such seasons my mind is often sadly cast down, while my sinfulness and ingratitude appear so great as almost to drive me to despair; then some pious neighbour will come in and read the Word of God and pray beside me; but how different is the occasional visit of a stranger from the constant attention of a faithful wife—the dutiful

good offices of children brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Still I am constrained to acknowledge that my cup of mercies runs over, while I am utterly unworthy of the least of them.

Surrounded as I am by all that was familiar to my sight in infancy and youth, often I forget the lapse of years, and wonder that the forms and the voices once enlivening the scene salute my eyes and ears no longer; but they are gone. Those forms are mouldering in the grave, and those voices are silent. Yet, in immortal bodies they shall all arise, and in one harmonious song shall they unite, saying, "Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."—Amen.







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