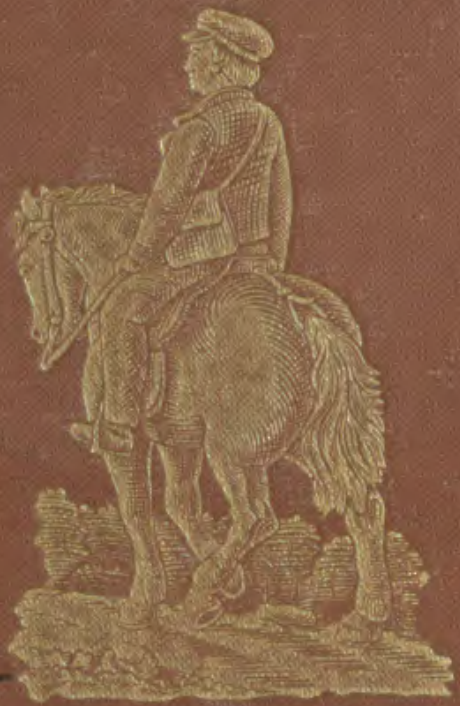
Bygone Days in Our Village



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OUR VILLAGE.

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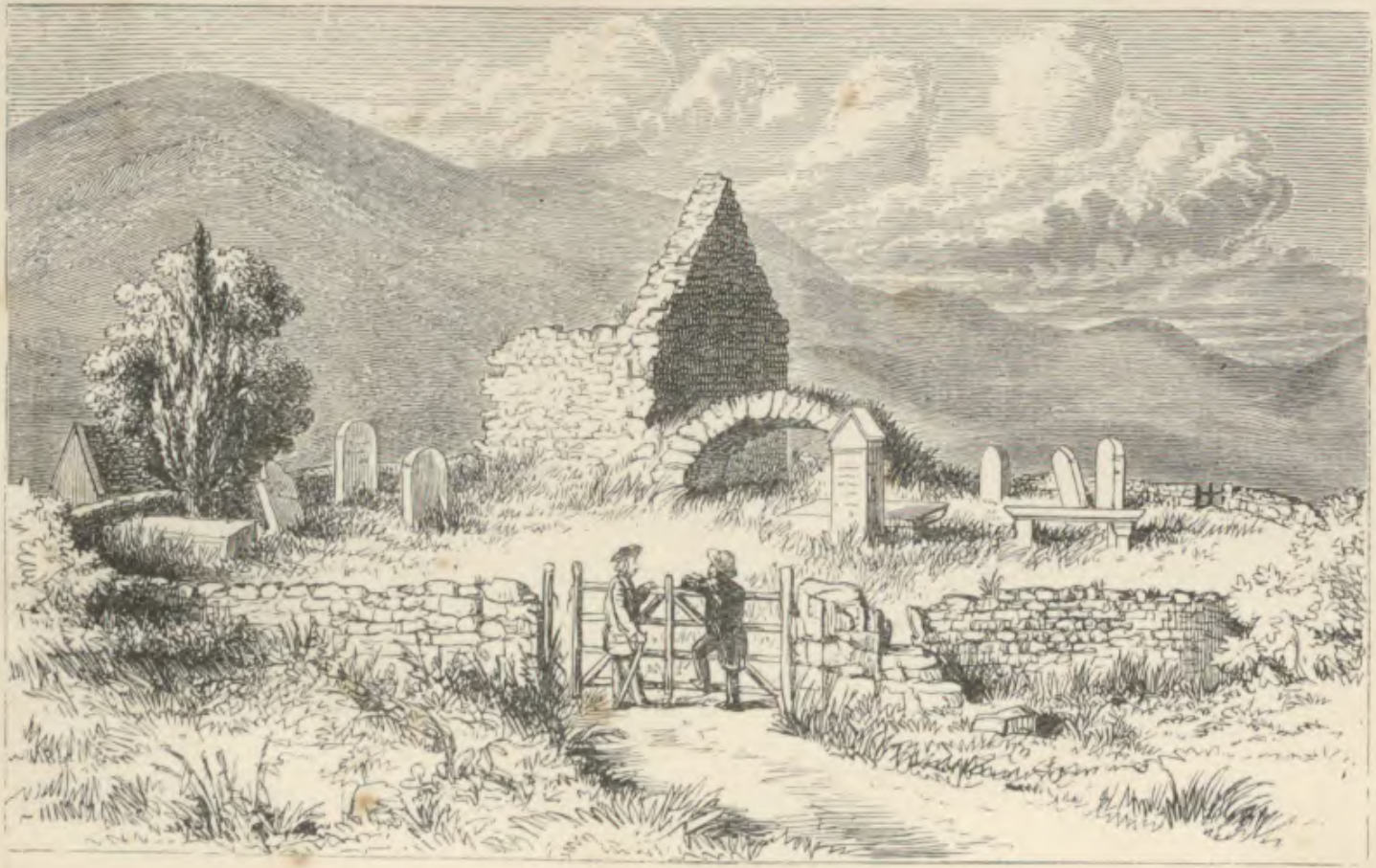

BYGONE DAYS IN OUR VILLAGE.

Frontispiece.

BY-GONE DAYS

IN

OUR VILLAGE.

By J. L. W

EDINBURGH:
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1882.

WE spent our early days in a quiet rural district, where the manners and customs of the past lingered in much of their original simplicity, long after they were banished from the crowded city; and it is to this little world that we would now introduce the reader, trusting that the society, albeit for the most part lowly, may not be found altogether uninteresting.

J. L. W.

EDINBURGH, *October* 1863.

CONTENTS.

'OUR VILLAGE.'

In the days o' langsyne, when we carles were young,
And nae foreign fashions amang us had sprung;
When we made our ain bannocks, an' brew'd our ain yill,
An' were clad frae the sheep that gaed white on the hill;
O! the thocht o' thae days gars my auld heart aye fill.

In the days o' langsyne ilka glen had its tale,
Sweet voices were heard in ilk breath o' the gale;
An' ilka wee burn had a sang o' its ain,
As it trotted alang through the valley or plain:
Shall we e'er hear the music o' streamlets again?

R. GILFILLAN.

ALL things earthly, even man himself, must submit to Time's invincible sway.

Long centuries ago, the sun shone down on many a lordly castle, which, to the toilworn peasant of the hamlet under its shadow, seemed to defy the power of this fell destroyer. But now the dust of castle and hamlet, of lordly baron and lowly vassal, is alike

buried and lost where the ploughshare furrows in spring, and the yellow corn waves in autumn.

Nor need our memory take so extensive a range. Where we now hear the hum of busy life rising and falling from morn to night, sixty years have scarcely passed since nothing broke the silence of hill and meadow, but the shepherd's whistle, the bleating of the scattered sheep, or the cry of the startled bird as it rose on whirring wing from its home amongst the heather.

I never saw our village as it stood in primitive and picturesque simplicity towards the end of last century; but old Bridget knew and loved it in those days, and from her I learnt to know and love it too. Let me try to remember her descriptions, though it is many a year since last I listened to them, for her eyes have long been closed, and her lips silent, in death.

At the foot of a grassy knoll, gay with yellow broom, daisies, and dandelions, stood about a dozen rustic cottages, roofed with turf and straw.

Away behind the little hill rose the silent mountains, and far up amongst the heather there bubbled merrily a tiny spring, cradled in soft green moss, whose waters, careless of their happy home, dashed down the narrow channel they had worn, and then

flowing along clear and limpid under the wooden bridge, wimpled past the little hamlet, and quietly away into the meadows beyond. Elder bushes clustered on its banks, shading deep, dark pools, where the silent trout, shy and graceful, flitted in and out like shadows.

To the east of the village lay a large tract of moss land, dotted over with hags half full of water, marking the spots whence, from time immemorial, winter fuel had been dug, and piled up in stacks behind each separate dwelling.

Upon a rising ground, in the opposite direction, stood the parish church, with its ivy-mantled walls and belfry standing out in bold relief against the clear sky. It was an ancient building, long and narrow; its length increased by the addition of a burial vault belonging to the noble family who owned the neighbouring domain, but who for many years had ceased to use this dark and dreary abode as a place of sepulture.

The inner walls of the church were adorned with monumental tablets, boasting Latin inscriptions; and one had figures arrayed in showy garments, red, green, and yellow; but the eyes of the village children sought oftenest the gallery which displayed the picture of a ship, coarsely painted upon blue waves,

with a legend, telling that John Torrens, mariner, had left to the kirk-session some small donation—requiring in return this tribute to his memory.

The kirkyard surrounded the church, enclosed by a stone fence and gate, from which a footpath made its way between the graves to the door of the 'house of God.' As some superstitious feeling lingered in the minds of the people debarring burial behind the church, the front part was covered with the small mounds underneath which the dead reposed with their feet eastward, as in this direction it is expected that our Saviour will first appear at the resurrection. Varied were the tomb-stones that preserved on this busy earth the memory of those who slept quietly beneath. Some, called 'thruch stanes,' lay flat upon the ground; others, more ambitious, were placed upon supports, sarcophagus fashion; while the greater number were upright. Diversified also were the devices graved upon those tablets: one having a sand-glass, another a skull and bones, and a third a cherub's head and wings; but time and weather, and often the mischievous hands of village children, had mutilated, and in some instances destroyed, the original quaint beauty of those figures.

Close to the church stood the manse; an inconvenient, ill-built dwelling, but nevertheless maintain-

ing a kindly hospitality, being the resort of the sick and aged in the neighbourhood when in want of what the minister's wife termed 'kitchen physic.' The minister, Mr G——, was an easy-going, good sort of man, who, if not very earnest in his work, yet did nothing unbecoming his sacred profession. In a comfortable living, his days passed quietly away; but then those were not the times of bustle and excitement.

Not far from the manse stood the parish school, a building more than sufficient for the scholars, as they seldom numbered a dozen; and if it had not been for a 'mortification' (a sum of money left to educate a certain number of boys), they would never have exceeded half the number, the 'maister' being ill qualified to fill his responsible situation. Yet, though the mental cultivation was little attended to, the boys received instead many a lesson in agriculture; for the teacher, having a piece of ground attached to his house, sent the scholars to work in the fields on every occasion when they might be useful.

Near to the schoolhouse stood the cottage of Robbie Brown, the beadle, a most important functionary connected with our village. He was gravedigger also; and when not engaged in that work, plied the shuttle with great dexterity.

Robbie could manufacture damask table-cloths as

well as linen ; and at that time almost every family in Scotland, of any means, prided itself on its large stock of napery. Then he rang the *passing bell*, which made known to the inhabitants that some brother or sister had passed away from among them ; and this he did walking through the village at a slow pace, with his head uncovered, tinkling a small bell, and at intervals giving the name of the departed. This bell was sometimes called the *dead bell*, as it served to invite the neighbours to attend the *lyke-wake* and funeral. Robbie had another source of emolument besides those above mentioned, namely, 'cryin' the roups.' This he did by mounting the 'loupin' on stane' (a flat block of granite or whinstone, placed at the church-gate for the accommodation of the ladies who came thither on horseback); and just as the congregation dispersed, he gave notice of any sale about to take place in the parish or neighbourhood, indulging in coarse jocularity unbecoming the time and place. This practice was at length discontinued, and bills were affixed to the church-gate instead. Notwithstanding all his profitable employments and perquisites, Robbie Brown was never rich. Meeting in the inn to make arrangements concerning funerals or other matters, his money was spent rather too freely for the comfort of his family. The officials of Robbie's class were at that time, for the

most part, *characters*; and he was no exception. Many are the anecdotes that even yet are told of his eccentricities. The following may be given as specimens :— Happening one Sabbath to hear a noise outside of the church during divine service, he sallied forth to use his authority in quieting the disturbance, and found that his two sons were the delinquents. Seizing an arm of each, he dragged them into the church, and with a look of importance marched them up the passage to a bench which stood in front of the pulpit, where causing them to be seated, he exclaimed in a loud voice, 'Sit down, ye rascals, and learn wisdom at the feet of Gamaliel.'

These boys went ever after by the name of 'Robbie's rascals,'—a not unbefitting appellation, as they grew up wicked, mischievous youths.

On another occasion, as Robbie was pushing his way through the crowded passage of the church before the minister, and not finding the people as yielding as he wished, he exclaimed in a loud voice, 'Stand about, will ye, and let your betters by;'—a salutation which had the desired effect, though it brought a smile upon every face.

Near the church and school stood an inn and farm house conjoined, a class of public-houses that have been long extinct in Scotland. This one was

celebrated for the quality of its 'home-brewed,' no less than for the racy wit of its landlord; and consequently it became a favourite resort of the lairds in the district, who met there to enjoy social intercourse, and often continued their *sederunt* throughout several days. Before any convivial party was held at the 'Loan Mou' (for such was this house called, because it stood at the point where the lane opened upon the road), a quantity of beer was brewed; beer, or cap-ale as it was sometimes called, being used in those times instead of tea or spirituous liquors. Projecting from the front wall of the house was a seat called the *dais*,* which afforded the members of the family or the loungers about the place an opportunity of inhaling the fresh air,—a luxury which, owing to the scanty accommodation and small windows, was seldom enjoyed within doors; and as here passing visitors were also received, the seat was seldom empty.

A great event here each Martinmas was the killing of the 'Mart.' Winter food for cattle being scarce, many were slaughtered at this season; when it was the custom to lay in a stock of meat to serve at least half a year, generally a whole one. A young bullock, a few sheep, and two or three pigs were

* *Dais*, French: throne or canopy.

killed on these occasions. Then the salting of meat, curing of bacon, and preparing of puddings, black and white, was no light matter, and gave employment for days together to the old women of the village. Bannocks or cakes were eaten with this food; and as wheaten bread was seldom or never seen, the process of baking formed no light part of household work. In it all the females took their turn, even the ladies not disdaining to bare their arms and knead the dough which they made into bannocks. These were generally prepared in the evening; and being wrapped in paper, and laid during the night amongst the peat-ashes upon the hearth, they were ready for use in the morning, but not unfrequently required an axe to break them.

Surely the teeth of our grandfathers were made of better stuff than ours.

The cultivation of the potato was then little attended to; consequently that important vegetable was rare, and only used for supper in the winter season.

This meal was always at eight o'clock; and the preparation of it was engaged in by the male as well as the female servants; for the beating, or, as it was called, the '*champin*',' of the potatoes was a work of strength. When ready for use, the pot, with a 'bicker' full of milk, was placed upon the table,

round which all the company sat and dipped their spoons into these vessels alternately, chatting and laughing merrily as they partook of the good fare. A greater number of servants were required for farm work at that time than now: with every plough two persons were engaged,—one the ploughman, who held the stilts, the other the *gad-man*, from the long *gad* or goad with which he impelled the horses or oxen; four animals being generally required to one plough.

Then, as the farmer frequently paid his rent from the produce of his dairy, especially from his stock of ewe-milk cheese, a number of young women were always needed in the ewe-milking season. This milking was done in the 'faulds' at an early hour in the morning, where the shepherd had penned his flock the previous evening. Carding, spinning, attending lint-growing, hay and peat making, and other similar work, occupied the female servants the rest of the day. The interval between the plough 'lowsing' in the evening and supper time was called 'the fore suppers.' In those hours the young men busied themselves making whips, mending broken harness, or manufacturing the brogues which they wore instead of shoes. These were formed of leather tanned from horse hides, and when purchased had only a single sole; thence called 'single-soled shoon.' It

was the business of the purchasers to double, sometimes treble, the soles with their own hands before using them; and every house had a stock of instruments for assisting in this work.

Leaving the 'Loan Mou,' we proceed a little towards the west, until we reach the comparatively modern castellated mansion of the late Sir H—— B——, embowered amidst a forest of pine wood and beech; while a quarter of a mile to the south upon a grassy knoll, stood the ruins of the castle, where in former times this family lived and reigned like kings over the whole district. This place the peasant feared to pass after nightfall, and even at noonday the children held their breath when approaching it; for there were rumours of strange spectres seen, and strange noises heard issuing from amidst its ruins at the midnight hour when the moon was full; and a lady in white had oftener than once startled the unwary traveller, by gliding at dusk across his path; nor had all the arts of the minister availed to lay this wandering ghost, and give it rest in its narrow bed.

The family of Sir H—— B—— at the Hall consisted of two sons and three beautiful daughters. A proud woman was Lady B—— when she looked around upon her children, and anticipated the fur-

ther aggrandisement of her name from the high connections she hoped they would form; for pride of ancestry was her ruling passion. Lucy, the youngest daughter, differed in character and disposition from all the others in that gay, worldly household, and was so much a favourite in the village that this sketch would be incomplete without her presence. In the old oak-panneled library of the Hall may still be seen her portrait. It is that of a young girl, apparently about sixteen years of age; she wears a white dress, with a scarlet mantle thrown lightly over her shoulders; the lovely face shaded by golden ringlets falling in showers down to her slender waist, while the calm, gentle expression of her soft blue eye is tinged with sadness. How often would the old people tell of the light her presence shed around their cottage hearths, when her sylph-like figure glided out and in amongst them! Forsaking the noisy revels and boisterous sports of her kindred, she was ever found by the bed of the sick and dying, ministering to their wants, or helping to cheer the heart of the mourner by kind and soothing words. It was but a little while that gentle one was permitted to linger upon earth, 'for her sun went down while it was yet noon.' As she faded like a flower, her parents said consumption was preying on her vitals; but there

were others who guessed that a broken heart was the secret of her malady; and so said her old nurse Janet, who never wearied speaking of her 'dear young leddie.' The poor girl, it seems, had responded to the affection of one who, though a scholar and a gentleman, did not meet the views of her ambitious family; and her mother said, that sooner than see her daughter wed with such as he, she would lay her head in the coffin. Lucy knew too well this was no vain threat, and so she gently bowed her head to the stroke; and when her nurse would say in bitterness, 'It's hard to see you die, my bairn, and you sae young,' her mistress would answer sweetly, 'You know what the psalm says, Janet—that beautiful psalm you taught me to repeat when I was a child:

"With length of days unto his mind
I will him satisfy;"'

and then she would add, 'Not long life, but *length of days* unto His servant's mind, that's it, nurse! And with the blessed prospect of entering soon upon life that will never end, surely my days on earth have not been too few; therefore *I am satisfied*.'

Returning to the village by the north road, we pass the well, protected from the rays of the sun partly by the mossy bank, and partly by the beech-

tree which grew close to its spring; the basin was covered over with lichens, while wild flowers in abundance grew round its brink. Shaded by the tree was a seat, upon which the old women rested before returning home with their pitchers.

The first house in the village was the smithy; a place of constant resort for the young men of the neighbourhood, who gathered there as much for amusement as business. Habbie, the smith, being a great newsmonger as well as keen politician, no sooner had tidings of any of Lord Nelson's victories reached the village, than he mounted his raw-boned horse, and sallied forth amidst the cheers of his comrades to carry the tidings to some more remote place. Habbie was a true, though narrow-minded Scotchman, and thoroughly despised everything southern, especially 'Black Prelacy,'—a name which is given even yet to Episcopacy amongst some of the lower orders in Scotland. Between Prelacy and Popery, Habbie either would not or could not see any difference. Only once was he coaxed to enter an English chapel in a neighbouring town; and when asked afterwards how he was pleased with the worship, exclaimed contemptuously, 'Yon kind o' wark is well eneuch to please fools an' bairns, but it winna dae for folk o' mind and judgment. Guide us a', sic foolery

A fallow cam in wi' a white sark, an' spoke sae fast, he soon grew short o' win', and sine another took up the words till he gathered breath again.' Such was Habbie's description of the 'Papish' worship, as he termed it.

On the other side of the street, opposite the smithy, stood a small inn, where in more recent times the mail-coach halted for fresh horses. A very unpretending inn it was, with its small sign-board over the door, upon which was represented a spread eagle,—such being the arms of the family at the Hall. The bar-room of this place was damp and uncomfortable, its walls ornamented with pewter measures, while in a formal row around were placed a few deal chairs. In a barn attached to this inn were generally held penny weddings. It was the habit in those times for the lower orders to be married in church, to which the party marched, preceded by the 'fiddler,' who remained at the gate during the ceremony, and again took the lead of the bridal party, playing such tunes as 'Woo'd and married an' a',' until they reached the inn, where refreshments awaited them. After the repast the company adjourned to the barn, and usually danced *in* the following morning. A general invitation was given to those marriages, when every individual who attended paid so much for the entertain-

ment, and what was left helped to assist the young couple to begin housekeeping.

Though, as I have before mentioned, the mail-coach belonged to more recent times, yet, as it is in most parts of Scotland a thing of the past, since the rails superseded the turnpike, it may as well be noticed before proceeding. How truly did the appearance of this vehicle, with its scarlet-coated guard, break the monotony of the uneventful day, connecting the quiet place with the busy city; and how gladly the bonnetless, barefooted 'callants' rushed to welcome it as soon as the horn sounding in the distance foretold its approach! Then followed the patient waiting until the horses were released, that they might enjoy the delight of riding them to the pond, and of hearing the plashing of their feet in the cool, clear water; groups of idle men the while collecting around the passengers, to gather scraps of information regarding the doings of the King and Parliament. All too swiftly passed those few minutes of delay—brought to a close by the appearance of the guard in his buckskins, carrying the mail bags, followed by the gentlemen, who hurried to their seats, leaving cups of coffee half emptied and steaks half devoured. No sooner had the driver mounted the box than 'smack went the whip, round went

the wheels,' leaving the valley to its former seclusion.

The grocer's shop was the only one of which the village could boast; and it was kept by Widow Davis, a woman of strong character, and unbending rectitude. Her husband had fought all his life with adverse circumstances, and at last died a broken-hearted bankrupt. His widow struggled hard, and fared plainly, that she might be able to pay the creditors 'plack and bawbee,' as she termed it; and she succeeded in this her dearest wish, so that when her youngest son, a lad of fifteen, was on his dying bed, with a voice in which were mingled tones of pride and sorrow, she whispered in his fast-deafening ear, 'Oh! Jamie, my laddie, when ye meet your father in heaven, be sure and tell him that I've paid a' his debts.'

Next to the shop of Jenny Davis lived Tam Liddel, the cooper, who went from one farm-house to another keeping the barrels and cogs in repair. Tam was a curious little man, with deep-set black eyes, and a quantity of grizzled hair. For forty years he plied his craft in that neighbourhood, and at last met his death in a sad manner. Being overtaken by a snow-drift one evening, when returning home from some of his circuits, he got bewildered, and, instead of walking straight forward, had gone round and

round, tracing a circle, till he sank down, and died from exhaustion. The field is still called the Cooper's Corner.

The only other village worthy mentioned by Bridget, was Sandy Ramage, the tailor, who also, like the cooper, itinerated the country pursuing his calling. Sandy was an adept at his trade. He made the dresses of the farmers' wives and daughters, as well as the garments of the male sex. Lady B—— would let none but Sandy put scissors into her new brocaded silk; and when a respectable couple were married, it was customary to present the minister with as much black satin as made for him vest and knee-breeches, and who but Sandy could make good the donor's intention? So from the castle to the cottage the tailor boasted a flourishing business, and from intercourse with those of a better class, received a touch of manners and polish above his fellows.

While speaking of our village life, the annual fair or hiring market must not be forgotten. It was the one great event of the year, and anticipated by the children months before its approach. Early in the morning of that day, tents were erected, filled with tempting wares of every description; and stalls placed upon the street, displaying gingerbread, apples, 'bickers,' 'cogs,' spoons, brogues, clogs; with lint,

wool, hanks of yarn, and webs of cloth, the fruit of home industry. Then showmen flocked in with giants, dwarfs, and 'monsters of the deep;' as also, parties bearing swinging boats and 'merry-go-rounds,' which they set up on the green by the 'burn side.' From all points, as the day advanced, might be seen blithe country lasses streaming in towards the village, accompanied by ploughmen in their span-new drugget suits, or young shepherds with their hodden-grey plaids over their shoulders, who brought their long swinging steps to a pace which suited better that of their companions.

Then, too, might be observed farmers jogging leisurely in on horseback, with their wives seated behind on pillions, and also gipsies with their donkeys and their creels stuffed with 'besoms,'—every group gayer than another, and all merry as a May morning.

Up and down the fair, at intervals, were collected knots of male and female servants waiting to be hired; discussing the merits or demerits of the places they were about to leave, or canvassing the characters of the different farmers who chanced to pass. Above the hum of voices might be occasionally heard the notes of a 'fiddle inviting the young people to a dance on the green, where they footed away bravely,' the men snapping their fingers and 'hooching' voci-

ferously when passing through the evolutions of the Scottish reel.

Life passed quietly away amidst these people. Children were born, grew up, were married, and died; while the outward course of existence, upon the whole, was seldom ruffled. Yet one event there was which struck dismay into the hearts of every family, moving them like the leaves of the forest when stirred by the breeze, for all were more or less related: this was the calling away from amongst them their finest young men to serve in the militia.

The desolating wars of Napoleon had rendered his name terrible to the villagers, and when, one cold raw morning in February, those youths were marched from their homes, women followed them on their way, wringing their hands and weeping bitterly,—fearing they had looked their last upon the faces of sons, brothers, and lovers.

If any of our ancestors were rising from the grave and visiting their old village, they would fail to recognise it in the thriving bustling place it is now. Shops abound everywhere, their large plate-glass windows displaying to the best advantage tempting treasures. The inn is a commodious hotel, much frequented by tourists. The railway whistle sounds shrilly from the station hard by, announcing the

arrival or departure of loaded trains, and taking the place of the old coach, which is now only remembered as a dream; its guard and driver vanished, and the roads growing green over which it passed in those 'good old times.'

Another family has grown up at the Hall, of which one sweet child bears the name of Lucy. Let us hope her lot in life may be more fortunate than that of the fair girl who preceded her by many long years.

What the minister could not do, modern education seems to have accomplished; for the white lady is seen no more amidst the ruins of the old castle, and merry children play around without fear. The 'Loan Mou' has been supplanted by a handsome dwelling, bearing the name of Hillside House; while the farmer who inhabits it drives his dashing vehicle to the new parish church, built upon the site of the old one. The tree which shaded the lichen-covered well has been cut down, and the mossy bank levelled where the spring once bubbled clear and cool; even the fountain itself has disappeared, but it is no longer needed, for water is supplied to the town from a distant reservoir.

Nevertheless, amidst all those changes, sin, sorrow, disease, and death remain the same; for the

word has gone forth which can never be recalled while the earth lasts: 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: *cursed* is the ground for thy sake; in *sorrow* shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. . . . In the *sweat* of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for *dust* thou art, and unto *dust* shalt thou return.'

THE MILLER'S WIFE.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

ON the shelving banks of the stream which flows past the village, stands the old weather-beaten mill of B——.

This building, like every one of its kind, is laden with what is commonly called mill-dust: dust covers the floor, walls, and rafters—fills the cobwebs which hang from the roof—besprinkles the ivy growing by the doorway, and whitens all the dock-weeds and nettles that flourish in profusion around. Then, in regard to the miller himself, he continually reminds

one of the fragrant auricula which opens to the soft breath of Spring, and is familiarly called in Scotland, 'The Dusty Miller.'

Hand in hand come the little children of the village, and gaze with delight upon the busy wheel plying its endless evolutions 'through shining foam;' hand in hand they stand, leaning over the deep pit in which it moves, awed into speechless wonder by its darkness and depth; while the elder ones fish the stream for minnows, or gather bunches of the 'Queen of the Meadow,' which grows in wild luxuriance on its banks; and so, from generation to generation, the old mill forms a never-failing source of interest and amusement to the childhood of the place.

About the end of last century, this mill, with the fields adjoining, was held in lease by Alexander, or, as he was more commonly called, Saunders Williamson.

For nearly two hundred years had the Williamsons tenanted those lands; but the wise people in the village shook their heads gravely, and prophesied that in all likelihood Saunders would be the last of the race; 'for he wasna like ony o' his forbears,' they said, 'he being, at the best, but a silly (delicate) feckless cratur, while they were a' strong, active,

well-to-do kind o' folk. Then Saunders' head,' they argued, 'was somehow filled wi' every sort o' knowledge but the right ane; and when he was fykin away makin' balloons, an' sic like nories, everything about the farm was gaun to wreck and ruin.' Besides, he was a bachelor on the wrong side of forty, and likely to remain in this condition; 'for 'deed,' it was said, 'he hadna as muckle smeddum (spirit) in him as look after a wife.'

Now Williamson was not in reality the 'feckless cratur' that the villagers thought him to be; for had he been a man of science, or a member of any of the learned professions, he doubtless would have risen to eminence; but for the book-worm, the student, the calling of miller and farmer possessed little interest. However, to be any other thing than his father had been, seems never to have once entered into the mind of this simple man, especially as there were no other sons in the family; and thus the mill-lands gained a poor tenant, and the world lost a useful man.

As his neighbours renewed their several leases, they bargained with their laird for freedom from the thirlage to Williamson's mill, because their meal was sure to be either too much dried or not dried enough; and so by degrees the old wheel was getting into disuse.

Things were in this state, when in church one Sabbath morning, just before the minister ascended the pulpit, Mr Barry, the schoolmaster and session-clerk, rose and coming in front of the precentor's desk, said in a clear, distinct voice, 'There is a purpose of marriage between the parties following: Alexander Williamson and Alison Stewart, both in this parish.' Twice he repeated the same words, and then returned to his seat.

The congregation were amazed. It cannot surely be the miller! thought one; it can never be bonny Alie Stewart o' the Glen! thought another.

This strange proclamation formed the topic of conversation among the gossips on their way home from church; and when Tibbie Murray, the cooper's wife, entered her dwelling, she found her husband chatting with Jock Dobie, the carter.

'Wha think ye's cried the day?' she exclaimed.

''Deed, lass, we canna guess,' answered her neighbour.

'Weel, nae other body than Saunders Williamson to the lassie Alie Stewart o' the Glen. Hech, sirs,' she added, 'it beats a'; for it can neither be for love nor money she's marryin' him; it's ower well kent he hasna ae bawbee to rub on another; an' we a' guessed what took young Jamie Crawford up the road

sae often in the gloamin'. What can hae ta'en the lassie?'

'Just what taks a' you women folk,' growled the carter, who always prided himself in the contemptuous manner with which he spoke of the gentler sex. 'I tell ye that a woman is to me the maist bumboozlin' thing aboon the grun'; they're best off wha hae nought to dae wi' them; an' if I'm no sair mista'en, Saunders, puir chiel, will find that out or mony months are gane. He winna hae his sorrows a' seeken, for she will soon ring ower him.'

'If women are as ye say, Jock Dobie,' replied Tibby, provoked by her neighbour's taunts, 'I wonder what men are. Nae doubt Jamie Crawford has vexed her sair some way, puir thing, for she liked him well ance. Did I no see her mysel, last Fasten-e'en Fair, wi' her een glancin' like canels, an' the bonny red on her cheeks, as happy as a queen, when Jamie an' she gaed up an' doun pretendin' they were lookin' at a' the braws, but only seein' ane another? O, Jock Dobie, Jock Dobie, if women are ill, it's men that has made us sae.'

The Friday following the Sabbath just mentioned was the marriage-day of this, as it was thought, ill-assorted couple. It was a beautiful morning in June, and the sun shone brightly on the young bride as

she placed her hand in that of the bridegroom, and vowed to be a loving, faithful wife till death should them part.

The moment the minister pronounced them man and wife, some five or six young men who were ready to run the *bruise* rushed forth, striving who should soonest reach the miller's house, to return, as is the custom, with a bottle of whisky to salute the bride. Jamie Crawford was the successful one on this occasion; and as he stopped the bridal party to receive his reward from the young wife, he could only whisper, or rather hiss into her ear, as she leant from her saddle,

'Alie, you will live to rue this day's wark.'

Alie's lips moved, but no reply was heard; her face grew deadly pale, and she seemed for a moment as if she would have fallen from her seat; but presently by a strong resolution she conquered herself, and the scene passed unnoticed by the rest of the party.

Alison Williamson, whatever motives prompted her to this marriage, was too true a woman to neglect her duties now; and if she did regret her choice, she had prudence enough not to gratify an idle world by letting it be known; nay more, if she did not love Williamson with the romantic love of her

girlhood, she at least esteemed and respected him, and discerned the beauty of his character, though his neighbours could not. True, she lost the merry laugh of her early days, and her voice was seldom heard singing the beautiful ballads of her native land, which she was wont to warble so sweetly in her old home; but she had still the pleasant smile on her fair young face; and did not her new position require a composed and sedate demeanour?

Under Mrs Williamson's superintending care, everything in the house looked cheerful and bright; the room got a carpet which she span for it with her own hands, and the window was adorned with green chintz curtains, throwing a pleasant shade over the faded furniture. Out-of-doors matters were also changed: the pigs no longer wandered at will around the house, digging up the ground with their snouts; in the garden, flourishing cabbages stood in rows as regular as soldiers forming a line, and the fences were put into repair as if by some magic hand; but after all it was no fairy's work, only Alie's, who carried in a large pocket suspended by her side a few nails, and a small hammer, to be ready on every emergency.

As time wore on, even Jock Dobie was compelled to acknowledge that 'after a' there might be excep-

tions to the general rule, that "a' women were alike useless, an' that Saunders Williamson hadna made a bad choice; 'deed, it was the only wiselike thing he ever kent him do.'"

Much Mrs Williamson could do to mend matters at home; for as confidence in her own powers increased with her duties, she rose in the morning to attend to the farmers' corn when sent to the kiln to dry, and superintended the young women who came with it as sifters. Thus the old wheel was kept continually moving, and the mill, formerly despised, now became the most popular for miles round. However, her husband still went to the markets, for which he was as unfit as he had proved himself to be in regard to home affairs. One day, when preparing to go forth as usual, Alie came up, and laying her hand on his shoulder, said, 'Sandy, will ye no let me gang for ye the day? I ken ye wad like to be at hame wi' yer books; an' then ye hae been but puirly of late. Sae, if ye will let me, I will try this ance how I get on.'

'You, Alie?' was her husband's surprised reply. 'But what can ye ken about corn and wheat?'

'Think ye, Sandy,' returned his wife, 'that I haena made use o' my een a' the time I hae been about the mill, an' put as muckle o't through my hands? Now

the horse is a quiet ane, an' Willie Telfer a steady chap; sae I think ye needna be feared to lippen me away.'

'But the bargainin', Alie,' argued Williamson, 'how are ye to manage that? It's a' dune ower a dram in Jenny Cranston's public-house; an' there ye wadna like to gang, I'm sure.'

'Neither dae I mean,' was the reply. 'The corn is gude that I hae to sell, an' nae fears but I will get a merchant for't where I please to show it, which will be on the street.'

'The bairns, though,' persisted her husband; 'wha's to look after them when ye're away, and keep them frae bein' drowned in the mill-dam or burned in the killogie?'

'Oh! I can manage that too,' said the determined woman. 'Nannie will tak as gude care o' them now, sin' she has come, as I am fit to do. My mither let me get her, just that she might help to look after them, puir things.'

'Well, well, gude-wife,' said the miller, yielding at last without much reluctance, 'it's said a wilfu' woman maun hae her way; so e'en gang an try your hand, an' I wouldna wonder, tho', after a', ye'll be far better at the job than me.'

From this day forward Mrs Williamson attended

all the markets, bought and sold all the grain and cattle; and never did the breath of scandal tarnish her good name. She was honest, and her word was to be depended upon. If she offered an article for sale, she knew its fair value, and asked no more; so the short, stout-made little woman, with the open, resolute face, standing in the market-place beside the bag of grain, was sure to gather customers around her.

When her work was over, seated on a pillion behind Willie Telfer, the serving man, who bestrode their faithful horse Charlie, she feared neither snow nor rain. 'God' truly 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;' for with an active, acute mind, and strong health, He fitted Mrs Williamson for the work she felt called upon to do; and doing that work, she was happy. No one doubted this; but she was a woman of few words, and seldom spoke of her feelings; so it was only the look of her calm face that testified to her contented mind. However, when her old lover, Jamie Crawford, returned to his 'ain countrie,'—from which he had been absent ever since her marriage,—to take her beautiful niece, Alison Stewart, to be his wife, and she chanced to meet him on his wedding day by the burn side, where they had often wandered together in days gone by, she could

say with a calm, untroubled voice, 'Jamie, may Alie and you be as happy as I hae been; you are takin' her far away frae her ain frien's among fremd (strange) folk; oh, be kind till her, puir thing.'

'I will, Alie,' he answered, 'for your sake as well as for her ain;' then adding, 'Can ye forgive me, Alie? I made you suffer much; oh, have I not suffered too!'

Mrs Williamson stretched out her hand, and took that of Mr Crawford, saying, 'We were baith to blame, Jamie; though, nae doubt, ye were maist. But let this comfort ye,—in the midst of a' my sorrow I would aye say that it cam frae a Father's hand, and O Jamie, I now ken there was a *need be* for it; He will suffer no idol to fill the throne of our hearts. I have lang been a happy wife, far happier than I deserved to be.'

'Thank you for these kind words, Alie,' was the reply. 'Mine has been a lonely lot ever since I left my ain country; and when I heard your brother had a daughter of the name that aye sounded pleasant and kindly to my ears, I said I will go back to bonny Scotland an' see if this Alie's like ane I kent langsyne; an' who knows but she may take pity on me, and share my solitary hame?'

While Mr Crawford spoke those words, a tear

which had gathered in Mrs Williamson's clear blue eye trickled down her cheek, and fell upon the chubby hand of the infant she carried in her arms. She turned hastily as if to hide her feelings, and walking back to the house, entered the apartment in which many of the guests were already assembled, and where her husband sat conversing with the company. She gently placed the infant on his knee, saying, in a voice kinder than even her wont, as if to make amends for some unbidden thought, 'Keep your son, Sandy, till I gang an' look after the bride, for I doubt the minister will be here afore she is ready.'

Magdalene Williamson was the miller's eldest daughter. She inherited from her father not only his delicacy of constitution, but also the same gentle, studious, retiring disposition. She was his friend and companion more than any of the others in the household; and as he was ripening into old age, she seemed the staff on which he most loved to lean. When about eighteen years of age, Magdalene began to show increasing symptoms of languor and weakness, but she grew the while more beautiful, more loving, and twined herself more around the heart of her active, energetic mother, who never allowed her to do any menial work. 'Gang your ways, bairn,' she would say, 'an' tak your book or seam beside

your father, or ye can sing him some of your auld sangs that he likes sae weel tae hear ; for noo, when his sight is failing him, he has mony a dowie minute I doubt.'

And so, day by day, Magdalene and her father sat together in the honeysuckle porch, listening to the mill-wheel ever humming its pleasant tune.

After some time the old man occupied the porch alone, for Magdalene was too weak to rise from the sofa in the little parlour ; but then she could draw aside the now faded chintz curtains, and smile kindly on him, or wave her hand when she wished him to come and take his seat by her side.

In answer to her father's anxious inquiries, she would say, 'I am well, quite well, only a little weak ; but if the cough left me, I would get strong.'

Then her eye was so bright, and her cheek just like the rosebud that her mother plucked and laid beside her upon the book. Gradually the thought of death stole into the mind of the young girl ; at first it was in sadness, but this soon gave place to peaceful resignation. Her father had long dreaded the fatal symptoms, and was almost thankful when Magdalene understood them also.

'It would have been wrang,' he said, 'to let her go to the grave dreamin' o' life.'

'Father,' she would say, 'it is well. God is

good. I have long felt I never could be of much use in this busy world; never like my mother, never like my brothers and sister; but I will work in heaven, where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."'

Then the old man would answer, 'I will be lanely, lanely, Madgie, when you are gane.' And she, putting her thin, worn hand on his, would reply, 'It will only be a little while, father, that you are left behind; you will soon come to me, though I cannot return to you, and then "shall we be for ever with the Lord."'

And thus would converse the father and daughter, living as it were apart from the others in this household—living apart, and yet being, because of their weakness, the centre around which every heart in it was drawn. The children hushed their merry voices, lest they should startle them by their noise. The elder ones hurried from school, anxious to do what they could to alleviate or soothe their hours of weakness; and the poor mother often bustled over her work, unlike the quiet manner in which she was wont to go about it of old, to rest a little while beside the invalids in the parlour.

One day, in the end of summer, Magdalene lay in

her accustomed place, and her father sat in his arm-chair, drawn close to her side. Mrs Williamson entered the room, carrying an open letter, which she held up to her daughter, saying, 'See, Magdalene, here is a letter I hae just gotten frae Jamie Crawford, askin' you to gang an' spend the winter wi' them. He says their skies are a deeper blue than ours, and their trees are aye green, while the air they breathe comes laden wi' the scent frae orange and citron groves; but for a' that he wud gae muckle muckle to see the cloud-capped hills o' Scotland, an' find ance mair the bitterest o' its blasts blawin' on his cheek. Yet it's the land for you, Magdalene; and he thinks the sound o' your Scottish tongue will be the sweetest music he has heard for mony a day. I will gar your brother write that ye will gang, for I think the change will set ye up; an' we are rich now, sae we dinna need to think o' expense.'

'Mother,' said the dying girl, 'it cannot be.' Then pointing to a place on her open Bible, she added, 'Read this, mother; I found it yesterday, and thought it was a message from God to me.'

Mrs Williamson, according to her daughter's request, read aloud, from the forty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah, these words: 'Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain

shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured.'

'Mother,' said Magdalene, 'I mind it well; it's like yesterday since I was a wee thing sitting on your knee, and you told me of Him who is called the Balm of Gilead; an' now, when He wants to take me to Himself, that I may be for ever with Him in that land (far better than the one to which you would send me), where it is said, "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away,"—you will not part with me even to Him.'

The poor mother was at first struck dumb with astonishment; then bursting into tears, she clasped her dying child in her arms, and cried,

'God's will be done; yes, His will be done with my precious bairn.'

A short time after this, Magdalene Williamson breathed her last, gently and peacefully, surrounded by her weeping kindred. Soon her father followed her to the grave; and Mrs Williamson giving up her active duties to her sons, now growing to manhood, spent the autumn of her days in peace and retirement; and when in a good old age she was laid beside her husband and daughter, the whole district mourned as for a mother in Israel.

Alison Williamson was no ordinary woman, and to her may not inappropriately be applied those Scripture words, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.'

THE CRIPPLE.

The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigour and strength.

SMILES.

THE winter and spring of 18—had been unusually severe; cutting east winds and nightly frosts had checked the buds, and shrivelled the tender blades of grass. The cows in the yard drooped and pined for fresh pastures, while the tender lambs in the fields perished from cold and hunger. The price of provisions was rising daily; bread being dear and work scarce, already whisperings of famine began to be heard; and the heart, as it pictured faces gaunt and pale, skeleton fingers, and hollow eyes, longed and sighed for gentle showers and kindly breezes.

Suddenly towards the end of April the wind veered into the south, and these longings were ful-

filled. The sky, before cloudless, assumed a leaden hue, and heavy rain speedily followed.

On the return of sunshine, I prepared for a walk to the village. The trees in the avenue down which I passed had donned their green mantles—green of a hue so delicate, so pure, so ethereal, that it almost seemed to flood the air. The sun's rays had not embrowned it, nor the dust of summer dimmed its lustre; it was fresh and beautiful; and as I traced amidst this emerald cloud the bold trunks and gnarled branches of the oak, or the elegant stem and slender, pendant, offshoots of the birch, I thought those ancient foresters became their spring attire better than either their summer or autumn garb.

On reaching the corner of the single street, at the end of which stands the smithy, John, its tenant, issued forth enveloped in his leathern apron, his brawny arms bare to the elbows, and his face begrimed with smoke and dust. An important personage was the smith. The laird sent for him when his colt was ill, preferring his advice to Mr Steel's, 'the horse doctor' of the district. Tibbie, a village celebrity, confessed he was a '*skeely*' man, John; for he cured her cow one winter when 'a' the neighbours thocht it wad die.' The clergyman often looked into the smithy to consult about the management of the

glebe; a subject upon which he was profoundly ignorant,—indeed, John was wont to say, 'Our minister kens nae mair about corn and grass than the beasts I shoe,—aye, far less; for they can mak a distinction, but he canna.' Need we wonder, then, if the smith felt himself of importance? Far less useful men are unwilling to be considered cyphers in society; and that he did so feel, there was no mistaking. He showed it in the firm erect form, the determined air with which he planted his footsteps on the ground, as well as in his shrewd, sagacious, self-satisfied countenance. On this occasion I could not help observing that John's face wore rather an anxious look, and his step was quicker than usual, as he passed me with a slight inclination of the head.

Inquiring at a group of females who were gathered around Mrs Roy's shop-door, if anything was wrong in the village to-day. ''Deed, aye, Miss Rose,' was the answer received from old Betty, who was seated on a bundle of firewood she had thrown from her back, 'Geordie's cuddie's deein', and the smith has been docterin' at it a' mornin'; but his skill has failed this time, an' it's about a' ower wi' it, puir beast.'

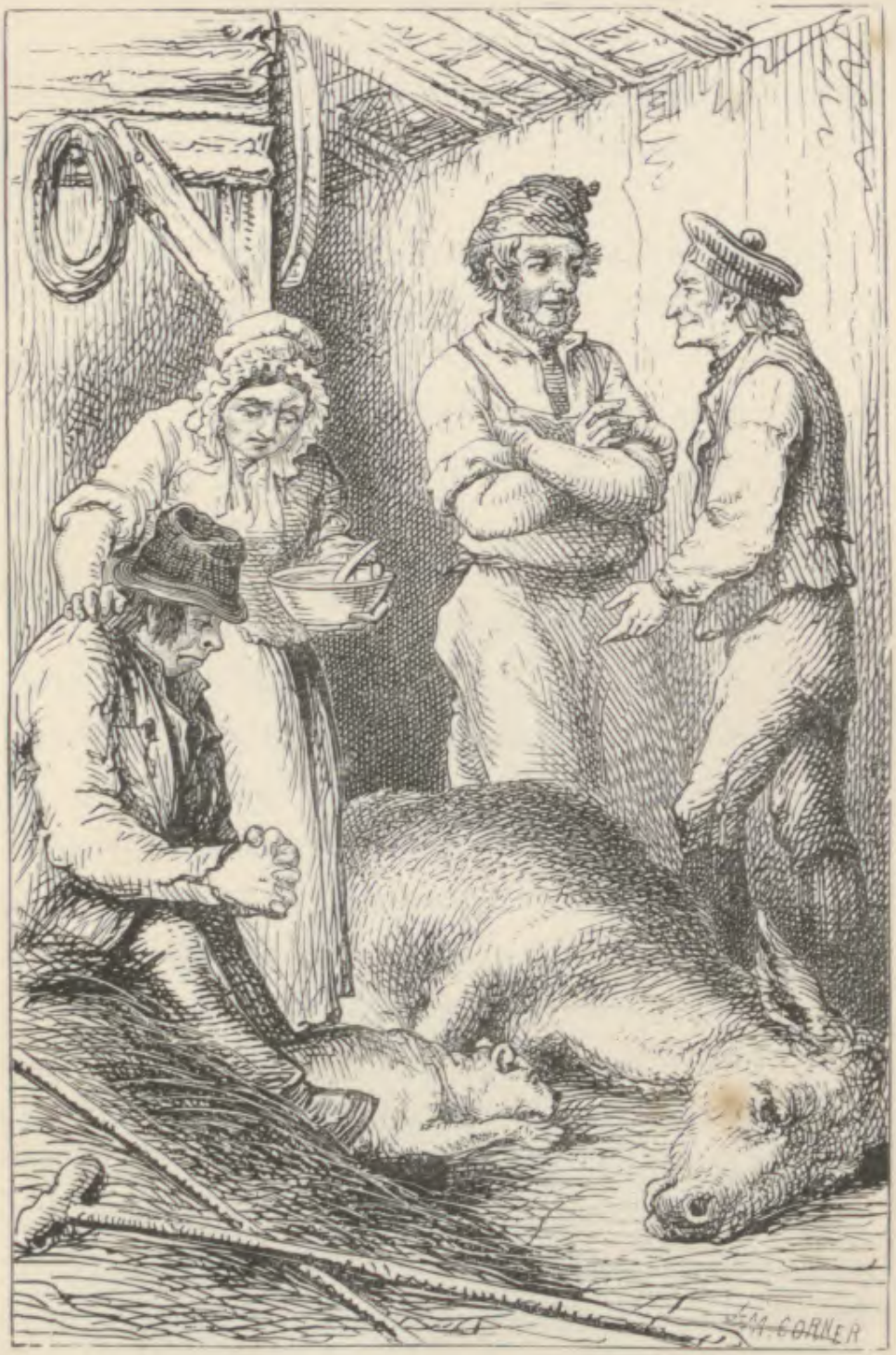
The death of a mean, and too frequently ill-used donkey, may seem a very slight matter; perhaps it is so in most cases. I knew that this was an excep-

tion, for the donkey had supplied the place of a friend to Geordie.

The murmur of voices attracted me to the shed where the poor animal lay. The first glance showed me that it was dead—the eye being already glazed, and the limbs rigid. Its master sat on a heap of hay intended for fodder, his crutches thrown down by his side; while Wasp lay at his feet, resting his head between his front paws, not sleeping, and, more unusual still, not snarling and fighting, even though his old enemy, the shepherd's dog, had found its way into his domains.

I always considered Wasp an ugly, uninteresting cur, a compound of ill nature and stupidity; now he had a look of intelligence which won my heart. His eye expressed bewilderment and sorrow, as if the scene was strange and inexplicable; and he was evidently puzzled whether or not to recognise in the lifeless carcase before him, his old, tried, friend the donkey.

A few men stood around the smith, and consulted regarding the digging of the grave, in which discussion Geordie took no part; his head had sunk upon his breast, and his hands were pressed firmly together. The soft breeze was blowing through his tattered hat, and lifting a lock of thin grey hair from



BYGONE DAYS IN OUR VILLAGE.

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his cheek. Bell, a kind neighbour, stood beside him, and urged his partaking of some refreshment which she held in her hand.

Geordie thanked her in a broken voice, but added, 'I couldna eat, the first bite wad choke me. My puir beast! my puir beast!'

'But, Geordie,' argued the good woman, 'ye were aye kind till't, an' that may comfort ye now when it's gane.'

'O! woman, woman,' was the reply, 'when your bonny wee lassie died last Beltane's-ee'n, did the thocht that ye had been aye kind till her save ye frae murnin'? Na, na, ye didna think ye had been half eneuch sae than. And wasna that deed cratur lyin' there a' to me instead o' kith and kin? Mony a lang day we hae travelled thegether; whiles when the sun shone bricht ower our heads, an' whiles when mirk cluds hid it frae our sight, an' sair storms raged aroun' us. But I ken ye mean to be kind, an' aye were sae.' Then, as if his thoughts went back again to his loss, he added, 'Aye, mony a bite we baith hae gotten frae ye, but it will need nae mair! it will need nae mair!'

I remember a well by the side of a dusty highway. Always cool and clear were its waters, for the beech-tree sheltered them from the rays of the sun. I have seen the beggar dip his hand into the basin and

drink till he was refreshed. I have watched the poor wearied horse hasten to the spring, and draw in the invigorating draught. We plucked, when we were children, the flowers that grew upon its margin, and wreathed them into coronals. Why do I speak of this well now? Because some characters never fail to remind me of this bountiful spring, and Bell was one of those. Let me describe her as she stood and tried to speak words of comfort to that old man. The tall, rather ungainly form, the plain features, the large mouth, chin sharply outlined, broad, determined, one of the kind which gives resolution to a face, —all these relieved by the soft, blue, clear eye, that you could look down into, and it would not shrink from the gaze, with the open forehead and the beautiful expression which the face always wore, gave its character to a physiognomy which there was no mistaking.

This is a selfish world where such characters are rare; and well may we prize them highly, and thank God for the light of their example. I always felt refreshed and quickened by coming in contact with one whose sympathies were so broad, so deep, nay, so world-wide, that it was impossible not to think better of mankind from being in her society.

Kind, good Bell, she had her reward; for, doubt

it not, with what measure we mete, it will be measured to us again.

'What will ye dae now, Geordie lad?' said idle Wattie, the weaver a few days after the death of the donkey, when he met its master dragging himself along on his crutches.

'An' what should I dae, Wat?' was the reply.

'O! just gang on to the parish. Mony as guid a man as yoursell has done it afore ye.'

Wat was a sly, clever, idle fellow, who slept all day and poached all night; nor troubled himself much about how his poor heart-broken wife struggled on, amidst hunger and rags, to support a sickly family. Wat was a Chartist, and hoped one day to share the plenty of his well-to-do neighbours. Till then he contrived to spend life as he best could. Still conscience did not altogether leave him in undisturbed repose, and the manly independence of Geordie could not fail sometimes to touch him. Therefore it was with a look of annoyance and a shrug of the shoulders that Wat heard the determined reply, 'It has come to muckle, but it hasna come to that yet.' And so Geordie with a heavy heart went on his way, whilst his neighbour slunk off in the opposite direction with a listless gait, his bonnet slouched over one eye, and his hands in his pockets.

Gladly would Geordie's friends have supplied him with another donkey in lieu of the one he had lost, but to this he would not consent. The old one had suited itself to his infirmity, and he could not mount another. Thus he spared the feelings of those who fain would help him, whilst in reality he could form no new ties.

So he confined his wanderings to the farm-houses nearer his home, bringing the eggs and butter, with which the farmers' wives supplied him, to the village carrier for a small remuneration. Wasp, brisk and quarrelsome as ever, trotted at his side, and contrived to make enemies of all the cats in his master's 'rounds.'

Our kitchen department in the days of which I speak, was presided over by Lizzie Thompson, a woman who, with suitable birth and education, might have borne rule as the stately abbess in a convent. Though but a humble kitchen-maid, she had a *knack* of government peculiarly her own, and managed by quiet decision to maintain perfect order among the half-dozen young men and women who worked upon the farm. Now, this power probably lay in adapting herself to the temperament of each individual with whom she came into contact; and so she used to say of Geordie, whose seat was always ready for

him by the blazing fire, 'Geordie is a gude kind o' body, though his temper is queer; he has just a way o' his ain which needs to be considered; and ye may turn him roun' your little finger if the richt plan be ta'en.' I have often thought since of the wisdom contained in this speech. We all have some peculiar characteristic that the skilful diplomatist discovers and uses to advantage—some 'way o' our ain' to which our friends have a secret clue, and by judiciously managing may so humour our feelings, that harmony instead of discord will be the result.

Thus Lizzie acted, and in so doing lay her strength. The farm-servants dearly loved a little gossip, and Geordie, from his wandering life, had frequent opportunities of receiving information; but he would not be questioned, nor would he speak if he saw that his auditors had itching ears. However, Lizzie could draw him out, her apparent indifference of manner rendering him loquacious. Then he would take the wool to the carding mill, or even assist in washing the potatoes if at any time she required his aid; in short, when kindly and considerately treated, he was quite disposed to render himself useful.

But it was more especially in the humble shealings amongst the hills that his presence was gladly welcomed. The shepherd's wife bleached her web by

the burn side, leaving Geordie to rock the cradle; or a sick friend in a neighbouring glen sought her aid, then he amused the children in her absence, singing to the poor sickly one the ballad of Chevy Chase till it fell asleep, resting its little weary face upon his knee.

More than once, when our faithful horse Driver was quickening his pace as he approached near his warm stable in the evening of a winter day, we discerned in the distance a solitary dark object relieved against the snow, which might have been mistaken for a boulder or bush; but upon nearer inspection, it proved to be Geordie returning from some of his lonely 'rounds' amongst the moors; and long after we were enjoying the luxuries of the tea-table, and the bright fire before which puss was stretched, we remembered the poor lonely creature still many miles distant from his village home.

When I first knew Geordie, he had a sister who lived with him. I never thought there was much sympathy between them; 'Marget' did not understand her brother's nature—that nature which hid so much kindly feeling beneath a rough exterior.

'An ill-natured body,' she would call him, when speaking of him to her neighbours; and would add, 'but it's an auld saying, and a true ane, that cripples

are aye cankert.' 'Cripples aye cankert!' and what makes them so? It is their fellow-men, who, not content with the burden God has laid upon them, add to it by their scorn. I have heard a poor woman, as she showed with a joyful heart her new-born infant, exclaim, 'Thank God the bairn is *wise* and *warld-like*.'

Ah! had it been otherwise—had the limbs been distorted or the tiny frame bent—then might the loving mother have wept bitterly as she pictured the weary days and nights that her little nursling must too surely have met in passing through the dreary future

I have seen the sickly raven torn by the bills of its feathered kindred; and when I scared them from their cruel work, it was but to view the poor bird flutter its wing, and distending its bill, fall dead at my feet.

Little Tommy, I often watch him as he plays with his comrades in the pretty grass field: he cannot run, leap, or wheel the barrow-full of stones like the strong boys, and they soon begin to think him an encumbrance. Poor child, even now I see him as he leans wearily over the fence, holding with his long thin fingers the bunch of 'gowans' and butter-cups that his sister has gathered for him.

'Marget' was half ashamed of her lame brother, and instead of dropping words of sympathy into the

wounded heart, she increased the bitterness of his life by her contemptuous manner.

However, he missed her when she died, and his house, once so tidy and clean, soon bore unmistakeable proofs of her absence. Then he lingered longer by his neighbours' hearths, or sat more leisurely amongst the hay-makers, discussing the qualities of the crops around.

The last time I ever saw Geordie was one beautiful Sabbath afternoon in summer. He lay upon the velvet turf under the shade of the trees in the avenue; the soft breeze wafted the scent of roses and sweet briar from the shrubbery close by. He was alone now, for Wasp shared the grave of the donkey by the burn side. Upon drawing near, I heard him reading in a monotonous tone the metre version of the 51st Psalm; for Geordie, like all the Scottish peasantry, indulged in the never-failing custom of reading aloud,—such a mode of procedure seeming to be indispensable to a full understanding of the subject. As I passed, he saluted me with 'A fine nicht, me'm, for the craps,' touching at the same time his old tattered hat.

Shortly after, we left home to spend some weeks in a distant part of the country; and on our return, the autumn had closed in, and the winds of October

strewed the ground with withered leaves, or whirling them up in heaps, swept them into the hollows by the wayside. A few roses hung on the bush opposite the window, but their bloom was faded—they appeared wan and blighted, and nests from which the feathered occupants had long fled, were seen in the scant foliage. The fields looked bare and desolate; we had left them waving with yellow corn, but the reapers' song had ceased, and, for another year, the sickle was laid up on the shelf. Our spirits felt depressed by the scene, when Lizzie opened the door and told us that Geordie was dead. Dead! it took us by surprise. We had seen the old man fading and drooping, and we knew his time on earth must necessarily be short; but we had not anticipated so early a removal of one in whom we had so long felt an interest.

All I could learn of his death-bed was, that he had the same reserved nature to the last, never disclosing his feelings to any one, not even to Bell, who was often with him. He did not ask the Bible to be opened, but he seemed to listen with interest if some Christian friend read from its sacred page. Reason kept her throne to the last hour. Let us hope, in those days of weakness, he was preparing to appear before his Maker and his Judge.

He left L.20 to bury him, and pay the expenses incurred during his illness, that in death as in life he might be independent of parish aid.

When he died he was missed, poor and obscure though he was—missed from the kitchen fires at the farm-houses, and the lowly hearths of the shepherds in the lonely shealings—missed, because the meanest of God's creatures, made in His image, cannot pass away from His earth without leaving a blank behind.

And now Geordie is forgotten, or remembered only as a dream; but would that more of his countrymen inherited his upright, independent spirit: it is to men of his stamp and metal that Scotland owes her greatness.

NELLY'S COTTAGE.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the live-long day;
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light.
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise; but though her lot be such,
(Toilsome and indigent,) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

COWPER

NELLY'S cottage! let me think of it now when I look from my window, and see nothing but lofty houses shutting out from sight every tree, and shrub, and blade of grass.

Nelly's cottage! my pen lingers over the words,

as if to bring it before me again, and restore to the shelter of its rooftree those who once found a dwelling there.

We fill our albums with the portraits of beloved friends, and add to our stock of photographic slides the representation of every well-known and deeply cherished spot; because we would thus retain a brief memory of the past with all its joys and sorrows, pausing, when hurrying along life's path, to take a retrospective glance, and, as former days with all their lessons rise before us, learn to walk more humbly and more wisely for the future.

Ah! these are blessed resting-places where we sit down to *consider* and *recall*—blessed indeed if we use them aright.

In Nelly's days photography was an undiscovered art. Let me try, then, to sketch from memory the cottage and its inhabitants.

First as to the cottage. Though after all there may be hundreds in our land far more beautiful, yet to me there lingers around it a charm which no other possesses. Its thatched roof, projecting over the walls, was covered with moss and wild flowers; the turf chimney, from which arose the blue curling smoke, was half concealed by clustering honeysuckle; and the small four-paned window peeped out from amidst

wreaths of ivy and briar rose. Behind towered a high mountain, its sides fringed with shaggy pines; while in front stretched out the loveliest of glens, through which bubbled and sparkled a bright, clear stream, on whose banks the alder and willow grew luxuriantly, their branches occasionally meeting and dipping into the water.

That cottage, before it became the abode of Nelly, was, by means of a childish incident, especially remembered by me. Many years ago we paused in the midst of our play as a small coffin was carried forth from its doors; it was covered with a faded pall, and a few mourners bore it away upon poles. We watched with awe the humble procession, as it alternately appeared and was lost again amidst the windings of the path.

It was a day in flowery June, and the trees seemed to bend beneath their massive foliage; not a breath of air ruffled them, not a leaf stirred except where the wood-pigeon came on rapid wing from their depths, startling us by its sudden flight. Ever and anon a 'het glaff' passed over the surface of the ground, spreading languor on the already heavy, sultry atmosphere, and foretelling too surely the approach of a thunderstorm. The lurid clouds were piled up one above another, gloomy and threatening, obscuring the

rays of the sun, and making noon-day dark as twilight; while the raven, that bird of evil omen, croaked harshly over our heads. A sense of depression overpowered us, manifestly shared in by the cows standing wearily near the park gate, and by Bingo, our faithful attendant, who drooped his ears and hung his tail as he followed closely behind. A strange, solemn feeling stole upon us. The funeral—the first we had seen—the expected storm, the weary, mournful look of the dumb animals, all combined to weigh down our spirits, and we hurried home in silence.

It was little Esther they had borne away to the grave—Esther, the sunny-haired child, whose life had been as bright, as happy, and as brief as that of our beautiful tame linnet, which had hopped, and sung, and chirruped amongst the green weeds we hung around his cage—our pet and plaything. But just as we promised ourselves long years of pleasure from his songs and pretty ways, he died; and she died too, sweet child, singing like the linnet to the last—amidst the wild delirium of fever, singing songs of heaven.

A few months later, and the funeral scene was repeated. This time the coffin was longer, and the mourners more numerous; and Bennie, whom we

met with a load of hay upon her shoulders, told us, while wiping the tears from her eyes, that it was Esther's father who had been borne away to be laid by his child; adding mournfully, 'that, Peggy (his wife) didna think he had ever got ower his bairn's death, an' when the cauld sat down on him, he sank at ance, an' said he wad never get aboon't.'

My father removed the widow some time afterwards to a house in the village, leaving the cottage empty for a shepherd to occupy at the approaching term. The shepherd came, and very soon we made the acquaintance of his wife Nelly Elliot.

I have at times observed those amongst the Scottish peasantry whose refinement of feeling and manner would have graced a lordly hall. Such was Nelly. Dignified, calm, self-possessed, it mattered not how she was employed, she was never flurried, never discomposed. Was it early noon when we visited her cottage, then she might be seen dressed in white 'mutch,' short gown, and drugget petticoat, summoning her flock of poultry to their morning meal. Hens are not such stupid birds as many people suppose; at least Nelly's were not, for they flew helter skelter at her call. The ducks waddled from the stream, following each other in a line, nodding their heads and shaking their tails. The pretty

silvery-necked pigeons kept outside the circle, hasting with quick, short steps to pick up stray crumbs; while piggy in his sty heard the sounds, and pushing his nose through his wooden frame, grunted loudly for a share of the good things. Having waited till silence was restored, hens, ducks, pigeons scattered, and piggy devouring his food, then, invited by Nelly, we would enter the cottage, and chat while she prepared the vegetables for dinner; and all this menial work was performed with the air and the grace of a duchess. But it was in the evenings, when the house was, as she termed it, 'red up,' that we best enjoyed a talk with this good woman. The hearth was then whitened, the fire blazing, and the kettle singing merrily, all in preparation for Johnnie's return from the hill; and Nelly had leisure, when she knitted her stocking, to enjoy a little friendly conversation.

I have spoken of Nelly's manner; but her genial, sunshiny temper had an influence which baffled description, putting you into good humour with yourself and all the world. Some there are who annoy and teaze you; constitutionally awkward, they are continually knocking against you, saying something that makes you feel uncomfortable; blundering their way through life, they make it a burden to themselves, and anything but a pleasant, smooth pathway to

others. Nelly was different from these unfortunates, and her face bespoke her character: it was intelligent, resigned, peaceful. Her hair was nearly grey; clear, soft eyes, a straight nose, and a mouth that smiled benignly, sweetly,—not a self-satisfied, complacent smile, which seemed to say, I am a happy, prosperous woman, do you envy me? but a smile which betokened sympathy wide and deep with a world of sorrow and suffering. She spoke, and you listened; for a freshness and beauty ran through all her conversation, edifying as well as pleasing to the hearer. She would often tell us, that, turned adrift upon the world a child of eight summers, when sitting with her plaid over her head in the 'beild' of a hedge, tending the farmers' cows, she would read in her Bible (the only book she possessed) the story of Joseph and his brethren, or the beautiful tale of Ruth, till in fancy she gleaned with her in the fields of Boaz, or followed Orpah returning to her own people amidst the blue hills of Moab. It was thus that in after years her language was borrowed in such large measure from the sacred page, and glowed with the imagery of Eastern lands.

Adie, the postman, spoke of the loss he had sustained by the death of his son, 'at the very time,' added the poor man, 'when I looked to him becom-

ing a prop to his mother an' me in our auld age.' 'Ah! Adie,' was the reply of that good woman, 'God winna hae us to lean on ony but Himsel'; but dinna think either that a strange thing has happened to you. Do ye no mind Jonah an' his gourd? He micht hae spared the bonny kindly plant at the gloamin', when the lang cool nicht was afore him; but it wasna then that it withered. Look an' ye'll see. It was when the sun was risen, an' he needed its green leaves to shade him from its heat. Ah! Adie, Adie, that's a lesson to you and me, teaching us to cease from "man, whose breath is in his nostrils"'

Many an hour Geordie the cripple sat by Nelly's cottage-window, where the scarlet geranium flourished in the broken teapot, and often would he say, 'Nelly is aye sae kind an' mensefu', a puir body never grows ower big buik at her fireside.' It is a pity that good old expressive word *mensefu'* has become unfashionable now,—a word which so truly characterizes the disposition of many a Lowland peasant, indicating a discreet, liberal, considerate character, free from niggardliness of every description,—one who anticipates your wants, and satisfies them in a delicate manner, giving good measure, 'pressed down and running over.' Such most truly was Nelly; and nothing manifested this trait in her character so clearly as did

the use she made of her little garden. Many a sick-room was fragrant with the nosegay brought from its borders, and many a wasted hand was stretched out to grasp the treasure which spoke to the lonely heart of gentle gales and kindly showers; and, strange to say, the more its contents were rifled, the more luxuriantly they grew. Never were such cabbage roses seen as bloomed there; never such white lilies; and as for balm, southernwood, and spearmint, they absolutely perfumed the air, when after sunset the cool breeze of evening played amongst their leaves. A few old black-currant bushes grew in the shady side of this little parterre, and these had fruit in such abundance, that many an invalid shared with the kind donor the delicious preserve made from their large rich berries. We never could help comparing this garden of Nelly's with that of Ann Grubb. Now Ann's was larger and richer in soil, but somehow it did not produce like Nelly's; and the reason was, everything in it grew rank and strong, for its owner never gathered of its flowers to bestow upon a friend, never lifted a root to share it with another. Ann's heart and sympathies were seldom extended beyond herself and family; therefore the truth contained in these precious words, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' she never experienced. Besides,

her discourse was uninteresting, tending to the glorification of herself and children. If you spoke upon any other subject, her wandering eye and restless demeanour showed plainly that the topic failed in engaging her attention. But let her tell what a 'wonderfu' laddie' her Willie was, 'though she said it, wha shouldna,' or how 'muckle the schulemaister thought o' wee Maggie, yet it's no for a mither to praise her ain,'—then, and only then, would something like a happy expression appear upon her countenance. Ann had made enemies of every one around, Nelly excepted; and this was because her kind friend possessed in large measure the grace of charity—that charity 'which never faileth,' 'which suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;' and thus she always excused Ann by saying, 'We hae a' our failings as well as her. Nae doubt she is foolishly fond o' her bairns, but maybe sae are we a', only we dinna show it as muckle; an' if her temper is no just as good as it might be, she has a heap to try her. It's no easy to bring up a family on sma' means.'

Good, kind Nelly, it was thus she never failed to teach us children lessons of wisdom that, I trust, we have benefited by in our intercourse with mankind.

But though often saying, 'O! misses, look whiles in on Ann, puir thing,' we seldom took her advice, shunning as we would some evil thing, the unhappy yet handsome face of the mason's wife.

I have said that Nelly's flowers and fruit found their way to many a sick-room; and much as they were prized, her cheerful presence was more cordially welcomed—her conversation and sympathy beguiling many a weary hour. Poor little Tommy, the widow's son, could not analyze the effect those visits produced; but that he liked them, he could only express by saying, 'I dinna ken what's the way o't, Nelly; but whenever ye come, I think on the bonny burn-sides where the wee lambies play among the white gowans, an' on the birds, an' bees, an' the sun glintin' through the cluds in the sky, an' I canna tell ye a' what besides.'

And so Nelly would sit down by his bed after shaking up his pillow, and interest him with Bible stories till it was time for tea; and all that afternoon the boy never once asked, in his accustomed weary voice, what hour it was.

Old Adam enjoyed her visits too, as he sat by the fire in his son's dwelling, where Grizzy, his daughter-in-law, and the children vied with each other in their kindness to 'grandfather.'

For twenty years Adam had been unfit for labour, and sometimes the thought would sadly cross his mind that he was a burden to his family; but Nelly was ever ready with some word of consolation. 'In a great house,' she would say, 'there are servants for a' kinds o' wark, an' they are the best that do faithfully whatever is appointed to them by their master. Now this world is God's house, an' your wark in it is to suffer; so see that ye do it patiently, an' fear not but your bairns will get their "wages." Do ye think the Lord will let them serve Him for naething? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." And then follows the payment: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Sae dinna spend your breath in fretting, Adam; spend it in praising.'

John Elliot, the husband of Nelly, was an honest, upright, God-fearing man, scarcely less esteemed in the neighbourhood than his wife. If his presence checked levity and folly, it was not that he reproved them with sternness, but rather by his calm, serious manner, awed the frivolous into sobriety. Naturally contemplative, his occupation as a shepherd tended to increase this disposition, by securing to him leisure for reflection. It was beautiful to see the reverence his wife at all times showed him, training her children to

do the same. He was an elder in the church with which he was connected, and this she ever put before them as an incentive to their good behaviour—reminding them that in the tabernacle of old the meanest things, even the snuffers and the spoons, were required to be of pure gold; and inferring from this, that everything connected with the church should be as far as possible without blame. But an incident which once occurred will illustrate this trait in her character.

One summer evening I saw Nelly with a pail and stool, going to the field to milk her cow. I followed, loving to stand by and hear the rush of the pure white milk into the wooden 'handie,' and watching the contented look of 'crummie,' as she stood with the dew on her nose, patiently chewing the cud while Nelly milked. We talked of the swallows which skimmed past, almost brushing the clover flowers in their flight; of the wood-pigeons, whose coo sounding plaintive, dreary, sad, amongst the neighbouring trees, mingled with the murmur of the burn that gushed by our side; of the bees that sailed by us, returning to their hives laden with spoil: of everything around we conversed, till, on my leading the subject of discourse to her own family, Nelly told me of her daughter Chirstie having been that day disappointed in obtaining a situation of which she was in quest.

'How did it happen?' I inquired; 'was she too young and inexperienced?'

''Deed no, Miss Rose, it's no that,' was the answer; 'it was on account o' the gudeman.' And then she added, 'When Chirstie cam' hame she was greetin'. I asked her what was wrang; she didna like to tell me at first, but at last said, "It's on account o' my faither that the lady winna hae me." "Your faither!" I cried with amazement (for ye ken how weel John's respeckit); "an' what was her faut to him, I wonder." "Because, mother," says the lassie, "he belangs to a kirk she disna like, an' is an elder in't forby."'

As Nelly told me the story, her eye beamed, and her countenance looked calm and serene; then stretching out her hand, as if to give emphasis to her words, she exclaimed, 'Wasna I a proud woman then! sae I tell't Chirstie to tak' thae words an' bind them for a chain about her neck, an' bracelets on her arms, for the Lord had put great honour on our house that day.'

As she spoke I remembered the martyrs of old who had suffered reproach for the name of Jesus, and thanked God in my heart that Scotland even yet numbered amongst her sons and daughters those who rejoiced to suffer for His sake.

OUR OLD NURSE.

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

PSALMS OF DAVID.

'IT was a bien house, your grandfather's, bairns,' said our old nurse one day as we children were seated around her cottage fire, hearing her talk of old times.

'Bien!' we all exclaimed, 'what does that mean?'

Peg—for so the faithful old woman was familiarly called—smiled as she answered, 'I canna gie ye a dictionary ane for't; I only ken a bien house lang syne was ane where there was plenty o' this warld's goods, an' hearts an' hands in it to share them wi' others.'

'Then tell us all about it, Peg,' we cried. 'How many rooms were there in it? how was it furnished?' And so saying, we drew our seats closer around the blazing fire.

'Rooms! bairns,' Peg replied, the movement of her body keeping pace with the turning of the wheel, 'folk was na sae upsettin' in thae days; an' though your grandfather was a laird, an' your grandmother a laird's daughter, they just had a *but* an' a *ben* like other farmers in the country. The but end was the kitchen, the ben the spence or parlour. In the ben end were box beds, a table, clock, an' some chairs—nae sofa, though; your grandfather wadna hear o' sic a thing; a' the rest he ever took was in a high-backed chair. A cupboard wi' glass doors stood opposite the window, where your grandmother keepit her best china; an' proud, proud she was o't, aye showin' it to the maist advantage. The carpet was hame-made; we carded and span the woo' for't oursels, and dyed it too wi' the moss the bairns gatherit frae the stanes on the hill-side. But the kitchen, bairns, was the queerest place; at least ye wad think sae if ye saw it now. The fire was in the middle o' the floor, an' round it were three seats that we ca'd the sides an' back benches: the back bench was where the gangrel bodies sat that gaed about the country, and aye cam to us for a nicht's lodgings. Round the wa's were hung bundles o' yarn and lots o' hams,—no better could be fund anywhere. Then next I may mention the dresser an' shelf, wi' the

pewter plates on it that aye shone bright as new shillings; the kist stood beside it, that held the meal an' barley, and mony a gowpin gaed out o'them to the beggars' meal-pocks. A wheel an' reel were at the other side; an' on the chess o' the window were rowans o' woo, an' empty pirns, wi' some ballads, an odd volume or twa o' sermons, an' maybe a rose-bush or slip of geranium forby.'

Such was Peg's description of that old farm-house; and though many years have passed since, it is fresh in my memory as if heard but yesterday.

It was in this dwelling that Peg was first introduced into the family that for so long a period she faithfully served. The scene has often been described to me. One day in summer, as my grandmother was sitting in the parlour, trying in vain to lull her restless infant to sleep, my grandfather entered, accompanied by a girl whose services had been previously secured as nurse for the child. Timidly the little maiden looked around, almost afraid to venture into an apartment which, though homely enough, seemed imposing to one who had never before set foot on aught save the mud floor of a turf cabin. The sun's rays, glancing through the honeysuckle which hung in clusters by the window, lighted up the sober brown carpet, and shone direct on the

face of the old mahogany clock, as grim and grave, it looked down from its corner, and glistened on the brass pendulum, whose oscillations were seen through the glass in the front of its case. The lady wore a cap trimmed with rich old lace, and bound around her head with a blue ribbon; while a cashmere shawl, soft and fine, covered her shoulders, displaying the front of her short-waisted manka dress. Very kindly her new mistress smiled upon the girl, and bade her approach to view the little one, who lay gazing upon a sun-beam which streamed through the apartment, ever and anon trying to clutch it with his chubby hands.

The young nurse had found a task congenial to her mind, and soon she made the acquaintance of her little charge, teaching him the interesting baby language of 'how the cock crows,' 'the dog barks,' and I know not what else.

This first stage of instruction past, she taught him to plant his little footsteps firmly on the sod, plucked for him the gowans from the turf, and then, as his mind expanded, caused him to lisp hymns or texts of Scripture suited to his tender capacity.

When the child no longer required her services, Peg was promoted to the office of household servant. In her new occupation, her duties were many

and responsible; but remembering that the eye of God rested upon her, she performed them faithfully, never ceasing, however, to care for the boy who had been her special charge. Often did he in after years tell of the day when his father, roused to anger by his disobedience, had lifted his hand to deal out a heavy blow. Peg was working near watching the scene, and quick as thought she rushed between the incensed parent and his son, exclaiming, 'Bide a wee, maister, ye mauna strike the bairn the now; ye might rue it a' yer days; wait till the passion's aff ye, and then punish.'

It was the time, the spirit, and amount of chastisement, not the chastisement itself, that Peg dreaded for the boy. Hers was no weak nature, that would have screened the offender from proper punishment. 'He that spareth the rod hateth the child,' she would say; and never failed to impress upon the children instant obedience to their parents' commands, saying often, 'Quick, bairns, never sit a bidding.'

Peg's lot had happily been cast in a Christian family, where all its members were animated by the same spirit. A friend, speaking long years after of the integrity of her fellow-servants, said, 'I never meet with such good, honest people now, Peg; what made them so faithful?'

'They feared their Maker, sir,' was the simple response, uttered with a voice and accompanied by a look which seemed to express astonishment at the question. Did he not know those were Christians? Could they who were true to God, be false to man?

Peg was an earnest woman, and her religion was above suspicion or distrust; yet her words were few, and not unnecessarily obtruded upon others. I suspect the worthies of old, lived Christianity rather than talked it, acted rather than defined it; while we, perhaps, are too apt to follow an opposite course.

These were not the times when piety was used as a cloak to worldliness and sin; and though the ministry of life was a cold, dead thing, and people gathered not together as now to comfort and edify each other, nevertheless religion attained a height and depth among some of that generation which it rarely does in our more noisy days. It might be that our ancestors were too austere in their deportment, too stern in their discipline, and too careful to avoid all expression of passionate feeling; yet they were the children of those who had suffered persecution for the cause of Christ, and who rather than, Judas-like, betray their Master, had dyed the heather of our country with their hearts' blood.

Though Bibles at that time were comparatively rare,* yet Peg had one; and strangely antiquated that old book seemed to our youthful eyes, with s's hardly to be distinguished from f's, its well-worn cover, and a title-page bearing the inscription, written with care in red and black ink, 'Marget D—— aught this book, 1782.'

There lingers an indescribable charm about an old well-worn Bible. What matters it though the paper be coarse and brown, and the print well-nigh illegible? Doubtless it has done service in its day, comforting the sorrowful, and restoring the backslider to the paths of peace. And then, if the volume bears a name, an additional interest becomes attached to it: what before had something akin to vagueness, now takes life,—personality. And so I thought the other day, when, happening to pass an old book-stall, my eye lighted upon a Bible printed eighty years ago, which,

* Peg's master was accustomed to sleep each night with a small copy of the Holy Scriptures under his pillow. He awoke one morning, and found to his grief the book had been stolen while he slept. 'Never mind,' said he to his wife, when lamenting the loss, 'if the person receives benefit from its contents, it will be restored again.' After the lapse of twelve months the book was placed under his pillow as before; but the perpetrator of the act was never discovered.

besides the name of 'Janet Reid,' bore upon its blank leaf those words:

'This testament of grace and truth
Shall be the guardian of my youth;
And oh, may its inspired page
Cheer and support my latest age:
Then shall I ever keep the road
That leads to glory and to God.'

It was in this spirit that Peg perused the sacred Scriptures. At whatever hour in the morning the servants were called to begin the labours of the day, she, having secured, beforehand, time for reading and meditation, was ready to start with the others for peat-moss or harvest-field, as circumstances might be. Yet she had no closet to which she might retire; the 'hay-loft' or barn suited her purpose as well; and the word she then read sustained her mind unruffled through the labours and bustle of the day. Upon it she meditated too, as she sat by her wheel in the honeysuckle porch, when the twilight stole silently on, and the wild, waste moorland, melancholy and vast, which lay stretched out before her, appeared like some inland sea stirred into tiny waves by the passing breeze.

Peg was one of a family remarkable for their strength of memory; and with her this gift continued to the close of life. Even after having reached four-

score years, she could commit large portions of Scripture and sacred poetry as correctly as she had done in her early days. A younger member of her family resembled his sister in this, though he was unlike her in other respects; he being as anxious to blaze abroad his acquirements as she was to conceal hers.

'Will,' said one of the sons of Peg's master to this man when he was boasting largely of his learning, 'what is the "Pons asinorum."'

Will could not answer, neither would he let his ignorance be known; so, like a true Scotchman, he replied—

'I'll tell you that, my young maister, if you will tell me how many kings there were among the Hittites lang syne.'

Of course the youth pleaded ignorance, and Will walked off victorious.

Life passed quietly away in this moorland family, each day only a counterpart of its predecessor. The morning began with prayer, and the evening closed with praise. At last the husband and father was struck down in his prime, and the household was left desolate. Bitter were the tears of the widow, for she sorely missed the kindly words of sympathy which fall so sweetly from a husband's lips. She missed, too, the strong and willing arm that had for so many

years been her stay. In those days Peg strove to cheer her, breathing thoughts of hope and comfort from the inspired word, until time wore on, and brought with it other changes to that circle.

When the eldest son of the family returned to the old house on the moor, having first built a cottage adjoining for his mother and her servant, it then became the pleasing task of Peg to instruct his young wife in the ways of a life naturally strange. Was it washing day? she could take the baby 'off her hands,' and soothe it to sleep with an unfailing lullaby; or she could amuse the romping boys better than any one else, and keep them 'out o' mischief,' being the depositary of all their secrets, and learned as to the number of eggs contained in the wren's nest, or the corner of the grass field where the lark reared her young, and such important matters. Then she mended torn garments, and doctored cut fingers; in short, was the one in the household to whom application was ever made. Nor were Peg's services confined alone to the members of her master's family—her poor neighbours not unfrequently making application to her surgical skill; and to such calls she willingly responded, feeling privileged in being able to relieve a little the sufferings of others.

After the boys grew up to manhood Peg still con-

tinued their friend and adviser. One of them often told of the time when he returned from college during its recess, bringing with him a skeleton to forward his anatomical studies; but where such a thing was to be concealed became a matter of earnest consultation between his confidant and himself. At last Peg resolved that it should be hid underneath her bed, saying, 'Your grandmother winna find it out there, for she wadna be pleased if she kent o' sic a thing being about the place.' Alas for their plans of secrecy! Her mistress did discover it, and ordered a grave to be dug forthwith, saying to her servant, 'I wonder ye werna feared to sleep with old bones below your bed.'

'An' what was there about a wheen auld banes to fricht me?' said Peg; 'it's no the dead that will harm me, mistress, I am sure.'

In course of time my grandmother and her faithful servant were again left alone, the younger and humbler being a staff and stay to the elder when passing into the vale of years. Journeying thus they came at length to the turn of the road where they had to part—they who had travelled threescore years rejoicing and sorrowing together. Yet such is life. In heaven it will not be thus. Let us then comfort each other with the thought that all our bitter partings will be

over here. And so my grandmother died, and Peg girded herself to perform the last sad rites to the clay-cold corpse; and when all was done, but not till then, she sat down and wept bitterly.

By the member of the family whose infancy she had so carefully tended, was Peg in turn watched over during the last remaining years of her life. He placed her in a pleasant cottage near his dwelling, where in summer the lime-trees which sheltered it were alive with the song of birds and hum of bees. The stream that glided past its door proved a never-failing attraction to the feet of our childhood; we waded in its waters, or dabbled amidst its soft sand, besides making swords and weaving helmets from the rushes that grew on its banks. The cottage also had its charms, for we loved to see the old woman in her stuff dress seated by her wheel, and to watch the fine thread passing through her aged fingers. Sometimes, too, she would let us try to spin, and then would smile at our grief when the thread snapped in our untrained hands. 'Why cannot we do it, Peg?' we would ask; 'it seems simple.'

'Just, bairns,' she would reply, 'because ye maun first learn a thing before ye can doe it well; it's only practice that makes perfection.'

Peg had her sharp corners,—at least we thought so; a little sternness, a little hardness, a few unadorned

words of naked truth; but presently these were counteracted by Christian humility: she had not meant to offend—could not—for her heart overflowed with love for all God's creatures. As the bright-winged butterfly fluttered on her cottage window, attracted there by the blossoming rose-tree, we would say:—

'Peg, let us take it, we are gathering specimens. we want it for our collection; how beautiful it is with its spotted wings!'

'Na, na,' she would answer, 'ye mauna kill the puir thing: the warld's big eneuch to haud us a', an' it's been made for some gude end.'

And so saying, Peg would open the lattice, and presently the lovely insect was seen sailing away over the beech hedge into the meadow amongst the buttercups.

The small table on which lay her Bible and spectacles was seldom without its nosegay; it might be only a sprig of aromatic pine, with its small scarlet-tipped flowers, or a few sprays of snowy hawthorn. They were easily reached, these blossoms, and flourished for the poor as well as for the rich. You only needed to cross the rustic bridge, or take a few steps down the glen past the old holly-tree, and there they were, pines and hawthorns, yellow broom and gowans; in such abundance that

you might fill your lap a dozen times over with them, and they would never be missed.

In this cottage the quiet evening days of Peg's life passed away. Having no earthly cares, she prepared the more assiduously for a home in heaven. To her morning and evening hours of devotion were added a mid-day one; and though her door had neither lock nor bolt, the darkened window showed how she was engaged, and the silent sign was understood and respected.

At last, when life was drawing to a close, the little one of fifty years before took his place by her bed, and to none would he relinquish the right to soothe the last few remaining hours of her life. Strange it was that then the mind and memory of the dying returned again to the time of that friend's childhood; the past became the real, the present the dream. Her home was not now the cottage by the stream, under the spreading trees, but the lone old house in the far-off moorland, which she peopled again with the dead; then the careworn, middle-aged man who hung over her pillow, became once more the playful school-boy, and the John of her early years.

She sleeps in the 'auld kirkyard' that you may see by ascending the grassy knoll behind the cottage;

and the village children still point out the place of her rest, unmarked save by the drooping willow. Thus though all who loved her have passed away, her memory survives, for 'the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

'And I heard a voice saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'

THE CAMERONIAN MINISTER.

Servant of God, well done:
Rest from thy lov'd employ:
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy.

At midnight came the cry,
'To meet thy God, prepare!'
He woke—and caught his Captain's eye;
Then, strong in faith and prayer,

His spirit, with a bound,
Left its encumbering clay;
His tent, at sunrise, on the ground,
A darken'd ruin lay.

The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease;
And life's long sorrow closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.

MONTGOMERY.

ONE day, while Jamie Grieve the pedlar was unstrapping his pack in our kitchen, he told the servants that a sermon was to be preached on the village green the following Sabbath evening.

He delivered the same tidings at all the farmsteadings and cottages where he displayed his merchandise, as he travelled up the glen; and consequently, long before the hour of meeting, a goodly number of people had assembled.

The spot on which they met was one well suited for the purpose, being a natural amphitheatre, with its sides formed into terraces which rose one above another. On these sat the congregation, forming a striking and interesting spectacle,—the blue bonnets of the men contrasting with the white 'mutches' (caps) of the elder women; while the young girls had either their hair bound up with ribbons, or wore the hoods of their grey or blue cloaks as a covering.

Amongst the people already congregated might be seen old James Robertson, a man of rich gifts and graces. He had come from his cottage, leaning on his staff, and taken his place beside elder Allan's mother, conversing upon Scripture texts, or recalling some weighty sermon listened to years before. Near them were the Fletchers, remarkable, from the eldest to the youngest, for their knowledge of the Bible, even amongst a people who made it their constant study; remarkable also for their powers of memory, and their great zeal in defence of the truth; and though their occupation was but the humble one of shepherds,

they were known and respected throughout all the district where they resided, as a strong-minded though rather singular family. Mary Fletcher, the mother, was a rare character, and her likeness was stamped upon her sons. Even now she might be noticed by the breadth of her forehead, and the look of calm, determined resolution which appeared in her countenance.

More than twenty miles she had walked to be present on this occasion, yet no sign of languor or fatigue might be observed on her strong athletic form.

The good old smith, John Linton, was seated apart, his eyes closed and his lips moving, as if in secret prayer.

But, indeed, it would be difficult to tell who of all the people were absent, that for miles around loved to hear the glad tidings of the Gospel preached with fervency and power.

Down from the neighbouring hills came the little streams of worshippers—mothers bearing their infants, fathers leading elder children, young men and maidens, and tottering old age; until, when the minister arrived, he found a multitude of people awaiting his appearance.

Mr Ballantine, the Cameronian minister, who was this evening to address the congregation, was a tall,

spare man, with a slight stoop. The long lashes gave softness to his dark eyes; while black hair, slightly tinged with grey, shaded his calm forehead. His was a singularly attractive countenance; and yet it was not in any particular feature the attraction lay, but rather in the look of sympathy it always wore, showing, as in a mirror, the feelings that were passing within. He had higher and nobler aims in life, this man of God, than to study what is so much the fashion of the age—the educating of eye, lip, and brow, so as to reveal no tidings without of what passes within the palace of the mind. The service having begun by the congregation singing the first four verses of the 63d Psalm to the sweet, wild tune of Martyrdom, the minister led the devotions in a strain, which expressed such humbling convictions of the evil of sin, such deep reverence for the Most High, and such a solemn sense of the Divine presence, that the multitude were awed; yet when, with childlike assurance, he went on to express his confidence in the mercy and love of God, the feelings of awe gave place in the minds of the listeners to sanctified and humble joy.

The sermon which followed was taken from the text, 'Flee from the wrath to come.' It was more remarkable for its persuasive earnestness, and the

closeness of its application, than for its systematic arrangement, or the elegant structure of its sentences; yet there were throughout occasional flashes of genius, that showed his was no ordinary mind.

Dissenting ministers in those days were accustomed to deliver their addresses in a half-singing tone, which, though sometimes effective, occasionally gave a ludicrous aspect to their discourse; but though Mr Ballantine indulged slightly in this habit, his beautifully melodious voice made it pleasing rather than disagreeable. James Robertson raised his hand every now and then, as if in corroboration of the great truths to which he was listening; and when the echo of the last sacred song died upon the breeze, and the multitude had bowed their heads to receive the parting benediction expressed in the words, 'Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be with you, and all the Israel of God, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen,' James turned to his companion, and said, 'That man is in earnest. Oh! if the Lord would but send mair labourers like him into His vineyard.'

Mr Ballantine rode slowly down the valley in the stillness of the quiet evening; and as he passed by little groups wending their way homewards, many a heart was lifted up in secret prayer for a blessing on his head.

The great day alone can disclose the fruits of that night's sermon; but that his words fell not like water spilt upon the ground, we know: for when little Charlie, the drunken hedger's son, died a few months afterwards, he kept repeating in his delirium, 'Flee from the wrath to come;' and these words never ceased sounding in his father's ears, till he also became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The small church and little white-washed manse occupied by this good man were situated in a retired glen near the south of Scotland. Very lonely they were, surrounded by the calm, wistful-looking green hills, where no sound could be heard, save the cry of the heath-cock, or the whew of the plover, with the occasional bleat of the sheep; yet Walter Ballantine loved the place and its people, and never sought, or even wished, another home. Though unmarried, he was not a solitary man, for a widowed sister and her child shared his dwelling.

Little was known of his early history, for he had come from a distant part of the country to this spot; yet there were whisperings of a fair young girl who had passed before him like a bright vision, and as fleeting too; of a cold ambition separating mutual affection; of a broken heart following blighted hopes; of the awakening of a strong nature, like another

Samson, to break the withes of sorrow that would have crushed and chained him,—an awakening to work, and watch, and weep, not now for gold, but for a Saviour, *her* Saviour, whom in prosperity he had little prized; of a departure from a father's house, and a life of comparative affluence, to cast in his lot with the poor and despised people of God,—a life from henceforth of resigned sadness and patient waiting, till *they* two should meet again in their heavenly home.

Soon after his removal to his present charge, Frank Gordon, his friend and brother-in-law, was cut off suddenly, leaving Mary Ballantine a widow indeed; and gladly she accepted the offer to share with her little girl her brother's solitary dwelling.

Calmly passed the lives of those bereaved ones in this quiet spot; and time, as it rolled on, healed the wounds of sorrow, though it left the scars; nay, it even covered them over with simple joys, like the wild flowers that, hanging over some rugged cliff, hide the rents and rifts that the storms of winter have made on its bosom.

Most of the preaching in Scotland, at this period, was distinguished by a certain freedom and looseness of faith, and a low and spiritless style of doctrine. The profession of a strict orthodoxy was considered the sure sign of an illiberal spirit; and, on the other

hand, a loose freethinker gained the credit of having a large and well-instructed mind. It was the practice of even good and devout men to preach on the same text for months together, when a whole system of dry, passive theology was reiterated till it became wearisome. One minister, it is said, preached a life-time upon the 1st verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' embracing in that text all things in heaven and earth, not excluding the life and passion of our Saviour, though the latter theme engaged generally but a very small part of the sermons in those days.

However, the long dark night of the eighteenth century was then drawing to an end, and already watchful eyes perceived in the horizon streaks of the approaching dawn; for men, like the Cameronian minister, purified by suffering, and enlightened by the Spirit, were everywhere appearing as heralds of salvation.

The congregation he preached to was a small one, but the minister looked on the whole world as his sphere of labour, and in every soul found an object of interest. Hence he went gladly forth to preach the Gospel whenever he was invited, seeking only a stone for his pulpit, and looking for no reward but

that of winning jewels for his Master's crown. Being by birth and education a gentleman, his manners were refined and elevated above his position; but that circumstance only rendered his walk and conversation more effective; and so it might be said of him, he was an epistle known and read of all men. Guileless and simple in manner, he found a ready entrance into all hearts; severe upon himself, he judged mankind favourably; and being in earnest, he preached the truths he believed, and others believed in consequence.

Ah! I often think it is not the man upon whose lips hang hundreds of entranced hearers, neither is it the learned theologian nor giant debater, who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven; but rather the humble, unknown one who plods along this world's dusty highway, seeking no earthly honours, and having no trumpet of fame to spread abroad his deeds,—one whose whole life is the earnest 'Baptist'-like cry, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

And so walked Walter Ballantine; and as he passed, the peasant doffed his blue bonnet with such reverence as he would have shown to a monarch. The sufferer came forth and poured the tale of sorrow into the ear always ready to listen to the voice of affliction; and the child stopped in the midst of its

play to look up into the sad, kindly face of the minister, and receive his blessing.

One evening in the end of November, some months after the date of the village sermon, the cheerful fire was blazing in the manse parlour. The tea-tray was placed upon the table, at which sat Mr Ballantine, busy with his Sabbath discourse. His niece, Jeanie Gordon, a fine sprightly girl of fourteen years, sat on a stool at his feet, conning her tasks and nursing the kitten in her lap, while her mother prepared the evening meal.

Mr Ballantine put aside his manuscript, and rested his head upon his hand, as if in deep thought; which his sister observing, said, 'You look anxious to-night, Walter; has anything occurred to vex you?'

'I heard accounts to-day,' he replied, 'of the sudden and dangerous illness of Will Hardy, who lives in the cottage near the foot of the glen. I must go this evening and see him; perhaps even now a word may be spoken to save his soul. You know how wicked he has been, and what grief his manner of life has caused me of late.'

A few minutes after the termination of the repast, Mr Ballantine wrapped himself up in his plaid, and, taking a stout staff in his hand, prepared to go upon his journey.

'Do not be concerned about me, Mary,' he said, as Mrs Gordon and Jeanie followed him to the door: look how brightly the moon is shining over Broadfell; it will light me on my way, and I hope to be back long ere it sets again.

It was well-nigh as clear as day, for the snow covered the ground, and hundreds of stars shone in the deep blue cloudless sky; and mother and daughter watched the retreating figure of the minister long after the crisp of his feet among the frosted snow could no longer be heard; and then, closing the door, they took their place by the parlour fire, to make some warm winter garments for the poor.

About two hours passed in this work, when a loud 'sugh' of wind came suddenly over the dwelling, and the leafless trees that sheltered it creaked and moaned as it swept by. The two ladies started up, and, going to the door, looked out upon the night; but a sudden change had come over the face of nature: the moon was scarcely visible, and the stars were obscured by a dull, misty atmosphere. As they stood tremblingly viewing the scene, the wind, which every moment increased in violence, roared wildly up the glen, tossing great flakes of snow to their feet.

'Oh, my brother!' exclaimed Mrs Gordon, snatching her daughter's arm to support her now

feeble limbs. 'I wish, Jeanie, he were home in safety.'

'They will not let my uncle return alone, mother,' said Jeanie, for hope is ever strong in the young heart; 'or he may remain all night at the cottage.'

Mrs Gordon sighed deeply, but returned no answer to her daughter's words of encouragement.

The next morning arose calm and clear, as if no storm had ever disturbed the peaceful scene; and as some shepherds were busily engaged looking after the lost and scattered sheep drifted into the hollows by the last night's tempest, they came upon the body of Mr Ballantine.

Quietly sleeping the sleep of death, he lay, his face calm as in life, his hands folded over his breast, and his beautiful hair stiff and matted with snow and ice. Yes, there he lay, his warfare now ended, and the heart cold and dead that ever beat with love and kindness for all God's creatures.

They lifted him, these weather-beaten men, and carried him home, gently, tenderly, as if they had been bearing in their arms a sleeping child.

It was a mournful procession that, a few days later, carried Walter Ballantine to his last resting-place. True, there was no stately hearse with tossing plumes; no long train of mourning coaches; no

array of *paid* mourners. But ah! there were *real* ones, men who wiped the tears that streamed over their sun-browned cheeks with their rough hands, and groaned in very bitterness of spirit as they talked one to another by the way of the loss they had so suddenly sustained.

They buried him in the wild churchyard, from which no human habitation is seen, and where no human voice breaks upon the ear, save the occasional call of the shepherd when sending his dog after the strayed herd. And as they smoothed down the sod, the gloom on their spirits was deepened by the stormy twilight, whose sky hung like a pall upon the hills, and by the thunders of the cataract, as swollen by melted snow, it rushed tempestuously over the slippery rocks.

Walter Ballantine had amassed no wealth over which surviving relatives might quarrel. Having in early years listened to the call, 'Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have *treasure in heaven*,' he had experienced the promise, 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold *now in this time*, . . . and in the world to come, eternal life.'

THE PARISH SCHOOLMASTER.

'You Scotch are a strange people,' said one of the commercial gentlemen. 'When I was in Scotland, two years ago, I could hear of scarce anything among you but your Church question. What does all your theology do for you?'

'Independently altogether of religious considerations,' I replied, 'it has done for our people what all your Societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and all your Penny and Saturday Magazines, will never do for yours—it has awakened their intellects and taught them how to think. The development of the popular mind in Scotland is a result of its theology.'—FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ENGLAND. By HUGH MILLER.

NOT far from the foot of our valley may be seen the whitewashed schoolhouse of the adjoining parish, full of busy life as the bee-hives in the master's garden.

Sixty years ago the site was occupied by a straw-roofed cottage, consisting of two apartments, in one of which dwelt the teacher, while the other was used as the parish schoolroom. The arrangements in the

latter place were as primitive as the dwelling: a mud floor; frail wooden benches, chopped and hacked in all directions; an old desk, over which were suspended the formidable 'taws'; an unplastered roof, and naked rafters, hanging with dust and cobwebs, upon which the boys 'speiled,' whenever the teacher left them for any length of time; while the fire-place was formed by a single stone raised above the others on the hearth, upon which generally smouldered some peat-ashes. This fire was got up in the morning by each of the scholars bringing a piece of fuel; and the first employment of the teacher was to kindle it—a work of time and difficulty, and requiring a choice of the least of two evils, no fire at all, or intolerable smoke.

The outward appearance of this dwelling looked picturesque—more so than it does now; for the hills behind have been partially cultivated, as have the broomy knolls stretching away in front, once gay with yellow furze and little grassy spots between, decked with the beautiful and fragrant clover—a flower which, like the heather, loves the soil and air of Scotland.

Now this schoolhouse was not more wretched in its interior than were others of this period throughout the land, education being then a secondary consideration. Nor was it of a high class. The salaries

of teachers were so low, that the office was often filled by those who could make a livelihood in no other way. A story is told which illustrates this state of things. Upon one occasion, when a respectable matron was talking to a neighbour of her sons, and their different qualifications, she added, 'We think o' makin' Tam a joiner, and Will maun be a smith like his father.' 'And what will ye do wi' Jock, there?' said her friend, pointing at the same time to a boy notorious for stupidity. 'Oh, Jock!' exclaimed the mother thoughtfully; 'weel, I doubt he'll be gude for naething but to mak a dominie o' him.' And so dunces like 'Jock' were often made dominies. At times, however, a high order of intellect found its way into the class of teachers, especially near seaport towns, where navigation was valued and remunerated, and in the teaching of which many of them excelled. To these, in the winter evenings, young sailors were in the habit of resorting from their homes, miles away, to be instructed in the practice of this useful art. But for ordinary teaching, a schoolmaster needed no great learning. The alphabet and Shorter Catechism, or 'What-side,' as it was sometimes called (because, on turning over the first leaf, where the alphabet stood, the next page commenced with the question, 'What is the chief end of

man ?'), and as more advanced books the New Testament; the Book of Proverbs; and, lastly, the Old Testament, summed up the literary education of the pupils.

After all, were not our fathers made wiser by this system of training than at first sight appears? The committing to memory of the sage maxims contained in that wonderful Book of Proverbs could not fail to impart much sobriety of judgment and clearness of understanding to the youthful mind; while the 'Shorter Catechism,' one of the most complete compendiums of theology ever written, being given as a part of the lessons of each day, fixed impressions on the mind, at that early stage of its progress, which the care and worry of after years could never efface. And then, what shall we say of those beautiful metre Psalms, first versified by Francis Rous, an Englishman, but to which the English object, because of their want of polish? It may be that they are in some points rough and rugged, yet they appear like some old Doric pillar, whose architecture, though simple, fills you with admiration of its rude grandeur. Besides, because of the closeness with which they adhere to the original version, those Psalms are prized by many a child of God even as Scripture itself. Learned at school, they were remembered in old age; and I have seen the aged Christian enter the valley of the

shadow of death leaning upon them, and singing with quivering voice as he went along,—

'Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.'

And while we stood and watched the glazing eye-ball when the pulse was at rest and the last strife was over, his partner of sixty years repeated those beautiful lines, which, heard at that time, can never be forgotten,—

'The storm is changed into a calm
At His command and will,
So that the waves, which raged before,
Now quiet are and still.'

To eke out the schoolmaster's salary in those old days there lingered throughout the country a relic of a barbarous and intolerant age, in the shape of cock-fights—every pupil being compelled to enrol his name in the list of those who kept a bird for this cruel sport, and pay so much a head upon it to the teacher. The arena was the schoolroom, which, for months afterwards, bore marks of the sanguinary combat. Innumerable evils attended this system. It led to gambling, and fighting, and many bad and hateful passions; as a proof of which, the following anecdote was told me lately by a friend:—

The grammar school he attended had its annual cock-fight. Upon one occasion, the victorious bird was the property of an interesting little boy of eight or ten years of age—a widow's only son, a fair-haired, beautiful child, the favourite of his playmates. The reward he obtained was a small silver bell, which was hung round the neck of the champion. On the evening of the day when he bore off the prize, one of his companions, coveting it, allured him to a gentleman's preserves, in which numerous spring-guns lay concealed; and the poor little fellow, unconscious of danger, unwittingly treading upon one of these, it went off, and the contents were lodged in his brain. His wicked companion rushed home, carrying the doleful tidings to the widowed mother; but the bell, being found in his pocket, revealed the manner of the child's death, and the guilt of his murderer.

After the enlightened humanity of better days exploded this sport, the money which the teacher derived from this game was made up by means of 'hansels,' or presents, given to him every New Year or Christmas day,—a custom which also engendered bad feeling amongst the pupils. In some schools the boy who brought the handsomest gift was carried in triumph through the town or village upon what was

called the king's chair, a seat formed by the arms of his companions.

Another, but not an unmixed, evil attending the system of education then prevalent may be mentioned. It arose from the fact that many of the parish teachers were licensed preachers, who, waiting 'for a kirk,' frequently either left their charge to supply pulpits for the sake of the guinea then received, or spent their time in preparing sermons.

Labouring under all these disadvantages, what else than the Bible instruction which they received made our fathers the men they were?

But to return to our parish school. In those times it was taught by a Mr Davidson, a sketch of whose character may give some idea of many of the men who filled those important spheres of labour.

Mr Davidson was naturally a good-tempered man, but not qualified to keep order amongst unruly boys. Symptoms of absolute mutiny were, however, repressed by tremendous bursts of passion, when all were glad to succumb. Though without any pretensions to learning, he was not without some professional vanity. He would sometimes say, 'They find fault with my teaching, but let any of them produce such scholars as I have reared. Amongst my pupils I can count a professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres,

a celebrated advocate at the Scottish bar, and a distinguished painter.

The 'distinguished painter' in after years was accustomed to amuse himself with his old schoolmaster's credulity. Mr Davidson painted ornamental names for the church Bibles and psalm-books of his scholars and servant-girls, garnishing them with birds and trees, and other ornaments, for the sum of sixpence. His old pupil supplied him with colours for this work, which he told him were very rare and costly. 'The maister' never wearied showing them to visitors, adding proudly, 'I taught the boy to paint; he owes all his fame to me.'

A love of the marvellous which bordered upon untruth was the most prominent feature in Mr Davidson's character. He once told, with the gravest face, and an air which convinced you that he believed what he narrated, that he remembered upon a certain occasion seeing Solomon's treatise on Natural History offered for sale at a very low figure in a neighbouring town, but neglecting to purchase it at the time, had never been able to trace it out again. 'That,' added he, 'may have been the book mentioned in the Bible as that in which the wise king wrote of all herbs, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.'

More wondrous still, he avowed that he had once seen a toad hatching the egg of a cock, and had rushed into the 'ditch' and crushed the monster. Had he not done so, the result would have been a cockatrice, which might have laid waste creation.

Fishing was his favourite amusement; and never was angler at once as unsuccessful and as persevering. The snows of winter could not deter him from his sport; and many an hour he spent, even in that inclement season, on the banks of the stream which passed the church gate, with a grey plaid folded around him, and a napkin tied gipsy fashion over his hat, patient and picturesque,—always dreaming he had hooked an uncommon fish, could he only have landed it.

Upon one occasion, when pursuing this recreation on a water some miles distant from his house, he thought he had captured a large salmon; and leaving his rod, he hurried to a farm close by, to procure the assistance of the farmer and his servant to bring it to land. But lo! when secured and raised up, the salmon was found to be only part of the skeleton of a horse. Nothing, however, could convince him that a fish of enormous size had not once been there.

Though not at all addicted to the vice of intemperance, he at one time fell into the hands of a re-

cruiting sergeant at a neighbouring fair, who, after plying him with whisky, prevailed upon him to take the shilling and enlist as a soldier. Who can describe either the horror that overwhelmed the poor man when he found what he had done, or the joy of the scholars when they thought that the 'maister' would go to fight the French, and leave them consequently to be troubled with no more school? By paying the smart sum of one guinea, he got rid of his fears, and the boys were balked in their hopes of liberty.

Mr Davidson was very superstitious, and, like many in those times, believed in 'warnings,' omens, and witchcraft, etc., etc. A favourite game on the schoolgreen then was 'shinty.' The ploughmen often engaged in it summer evenings, providing themselves with clubs with which to drive the balls. One of these clubs happening to be of laburnum, green and newly peeled, a little boy, stripping off some of the inner bark, had eaten it. He immediately sickened and grew seriously ill. The whole school caught the alarm; the master ran about like one distracted, exclaiming, 'How was it peeled? how was it peeled? everything depends upon that. If it was peeled up, he will retch; if across, he will burst.' Upon hearing this announcement, the yells of the poor sick child were dreadful, the little fellow expecting nothing else

than the fate of Judas Iscariot. However, the illness passed away without any fatal results.

The parish schoolhouse is now a modern two-storied building, the ceiling lathed and plastered, the flooring of wood, with modern benches and desks. A number of books are piled up upon the shelf, while the walls are adorned with maps and pictures. The schoolmaster is a smart youth, who teaches his pupils how far the moon is distant from the earth, and how fast light travels from the nearest star; while the precocious parrots cannot tell the day, nor month, nor year in which they live. And as old Johnny Duncan, the minister's man, meditates on the change since he was young, he exclaims to his companions, who sit leaning their chins upon their staves under the large oak-tree, 'Well, sirs, it may be a' very good this kind o' education, gien' the bairns a smatterin' o' learnin' about moons and stars, cats and dougs, and far away countries that we never heard o' when we were young; but I doubt very much if this will mak them as good men as their fathers were, wha learnt only the carritches, the Book o' Pro-verbs, an' the bonny Psalms of David.'

ELDER ALLAN.

Who would true valour see,
  Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
  Come wind, come weather:
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first-avowed intent
  To be a pilgrim.

BUNYAN.

THE earliest recollections of my childhood are connected with Elder Allan, and although many years have passed away since our first meeting, the remembrance of it is fresh as if it had been but yesterday.

It was a fine autumnal afternoon when I accompanied my mother in one of her walks to the village. Our road lay through an avenue of trees, bounded on the right by a field of ripe corn, in which a band of reapers were busily employed, whilst on the left

there gushed and sparkled the 'Hollos burn.' The harvest moon had just begun to appear over the hill, but its silvery light was dimmed by the last rays of the setting sun.

It is impossible to make the foot of the young keep pace with the staid, measured step of mature years; the child has a world of its own to traverse—a world full of enjoyments so simple, that those who have experienced the deep realities of life can rarely sympathize with it. It thoughtlessly scares the bird from the bough, and lifts the feather which flutters from its wing to place amidst its treasures; or spends the hours of a long summer day sporting with the merry kitten, happy and joyous as its four-footed playmate. Truly the earth abounds with pleasures rich and varied, gladdening the child's young heart; but flowers, lovely flowers, above all, are its delight from the days of infancy, when dimpled hands, seizing the richest blossoms, crush them in their grasp, till tiny feet carry it along to gather the daisies from the sod, and the mother at twilight finds her little one asleep, its lap filled with those simple, light-loving flowers. And thus sometimes I fell behind to cast a pebble into the stream, and again ran before to gather the red poppies with which to adorn my bonnet.

But to return to the story. As we made our way

through the avenue, a respectable-looking man left the reapers, and drawing near us, doffed his blue bonnet as he approached. With the timidity of early youth I kept close to my mother, peeping out from behind the skirt of her dress, half afraid, half curious to see the stranger, who sought to win my favour by means of a rosy-cheeked apple which he held out to my gaze. The bribe proved effectual, love for the apple conquering fear ; and as I left my hiding-place to seize the prize, he put his hand on my head, bidding me be a good child and fear the great God.

After talking with us a little while, he left again to rejoin the reapers, and we continued our walk.

It was thus began my first acquaintance with Elder Allan.

Surely Scotland owes not a little to its Presbyterianism, in which the combined labours of the minister and elders form a mutual assistance to each other. The layman brings his shrewd practical wisdom to the aid of his minister, whose education and habits necessarily circumscribe his knowledge of men and things. Neither rank, fortune, nor a college education are at all requisite to fit the elder for his office in the Church : the well-learned catechism of younger days, and the well-studied Bible of mature years,—these alone form the plain curriculum which qualifies

for a dignity where the hodden gray is as welcome as the costly broad-cloth. And so highly is this honour esteemed, that to sit in the councils of the Church—to be one day chosen to represent it in its highest court—to be the minister's adviser and assistant, are no mean incentives to many an honest upright peasant.

The high moral and religious character of Allan early pointed him out as worthy to fill such an office; and a solemn day it was in our little church when he, with two or three others, stood around the pulpit, and in the midst of the congregation took upon themselves the solemn vows before entering upon those duties,—vows which all but Allan himself knew how faithfully he fulfilled.

The sacramental Sabbath was a day to be remembered in those times. It occurred in the end of summer, when, in high districts, nature is in its greatest beauty, the banks being covered with the dog violet and the bluebell, and the gardens gay with flowers of every hue. Then the church was fragrant from the sprigs of thyme, southernwood, and other odoriferous plants carried by the peasants, along with the Bible wrapped up in a handkerchief, and laid before them in the pew. Solemn on such occasions looked the calm face of Allan, as he bore, assisted by his bre-

thren, the sacred elements, and quietly moving along the aisles lest any incautious step might disturb the worshippers, dispensed them to the communicants seated around the table covered with snow-white lawn; and when the 103d Psalm was sung between each service to the old, grand tune of Coleshill, the precentor repeating the line, loud and clear sounded this good man's voice as with feeling manner he responded to the words,—

> 'Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God,
> And not forgetful be
> Of all His gracious benefits
> He hath bestowed on thee.'

In the twilight, after the services of the day were over, and the echo of the closing hymn had died away, Allan would give us his parting blessing ere we separated for our respective homes; and well his young minister knew, that throughout the sacred duties now brought to an end, his hands had been upheld in large measure by the prayers of his elder.

Ever watchful was Allan over his pastor, aiding and encouraging him in his ministerial work. He met him one day as he came down from the pulpit, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, thus addressed him: 'Now, sir, ye hae put pleugh in the law, see that ye dinna draw it out again.' The reason of this

remark being, that the minister had preached a sermon in which the justice and love of God were combined; for with the preachers who spoke only of the latter without mentioning the former, Allan had little sympathy.

Like the Covenanters of old, his views were strongly Calvinistic. If any one holding opposite opinions regarding the much disputed doctrine of election tried to draw him into controversy, Allan would generally cut short the argument by saying, 'Well, there is ae thing I am sure o', and that is, if God hadna chosen me, I would never hae chosen Him; it's a' very fine yer saying, friend, but I just dinna believe a word o't.' Amongst the writings of the old divines, the works of the Ettrick minister held the chief place in his esteem. 'Gie me the Bible an' Boston,' he would say, 'then take what else you like.'

A great writer has somewhere said, 'I am afraid of the man that has few books, not of the one who has many.' It was the pondering over these few old books which made our fathers the men they were; and grand, grave men, after all, were these fathers of ours. No network of iron then interlaced the land, linking wild glen to village, and village to crowded city, trembling beneath the mighty engine which

tearing, thundering, and leaving far in the distance the line of dingy smoke, whirls on; no 'harnessed lightnings' bore tidings from one part of the kingdom to another, flashing news even under the waves of ocean; there were no penny posts or penny newspapers coming in every morning to tell the events of the past day. Therefore our ancestors jogged on over the world's paths more leisurely, more patiently, more quietly than we do now. They met in each others' houses, and discussed the contents of the weekly newspaper, or commented upon their favourite authors,—Boston, Hervey, Matthew Henry, and the like, when such remarks as the following might often be heard: 'Davie beat me in the Fourfold State, but I managed him when we cam to the Meditations.' Among such worthies Allan lived; one of themselves, he carried the calm, contemplative spirit of the past into a generation jostling, bustling, hurrying on through life, fretting at its ills and fuming at its misfortunes, and whirling along with the speed of their own locomotives. Then to the law and to the testimony he ever went, to settle disputes or clear up doubtful points; and he would generally close all controversy with, 'My good sir, it's neither what you say nor what I say, but what the Word of God says.' Once convinced a matter was right, then,

whatever were the consequences, it must be done. Rather than part with his principles, he would have parted with his life; and often would he tell of the time when for the sake of these principles he was sorely tried, though, by God helping him, he was enabled to stand firm and conquer. Leaving our service, he had been engaged as superintendent over a flourishing business in a neighbouring town. His employer, who regarded not the laws of the Almighty, sent a messenger one Sabbath morning, requesting the attendance of Allan in his counting-room, to assist him in making up his books. 'Tell Mr Todd,' said the brave man, 'that I am his servant from Monday morning till Saturday at midnight; but the Sabbath belongs neither to him nor me; it is the property of another Master, and I cannot spend it but as He chooses.' And then he used to add, 'This was ane o' the maist trying days o' my life. My bairns were but sma', an' their mother far frae strong, wi' naething but my hands to maintain them. I kent if I was turned away frae this place without a character, it wad stand hard wi' us; but I didna' hesitate; I saw before me, as if it were written in fire, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;" an' I durstna disobey the command. We gaed that day to the kirk, but I didna get muckle gude o' the

sermon, for the future was aye uppermost. However, at nicht, as little Rachel was sitting on my knee reading her Bible lesson, her wee bit finger pointing the words as she gaed alang, she cam to the verse in Chronicles where Joab tells to Abishai their duty, saying, "Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and the cities of our God, and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight." I started up an' said, "Now, bairns, that's a word for me; it shows me that I must do what is right, leaving the result to God."' To the honour of his master be it said, far from dismissing him from his employment because of his faithfulness, he treated him ever after with marked respect, leaving him to spend the Sabbath hours as he thought best.

Later in life, Allan employed his little savings in stocking a small farm in our neighbourhood, when we again met and enjoyed much pleasant intercourse. Seldom was he absent from church or prayer-meeting. Generally he drove his family in a farm-cart; but when deep waters and raging tempests prevented the attendance of his household, with his stick grasped firmly in his hand, and his checked plaid wrapped around his well-knit frame, he was ready to brave any hardship; and so alone he went forth to the house of God. Above all places, the

Sabbath school was his especial delight; it was there the happiest expression lighted up his broad open face; and his blue eye had a calm, soft glance when he looked around on his class of young boys, and began: 'Now, bairns,'—his never-failing mode of commencing his instruction. And deep and rich were his explanations of the Bible lessons, told in forcible language, directed right to the heart—though at times his words were plain and discourteous, as when he designated the weak son of Solomon 'a puir silly sumph,' and advised the children to learn, by his error, always to be guided by the old rather than the young. His opening prayer on these occasions had often this expression: 'Lord, teach us to work here, that we may not be idle in heaven, for there are na drones there.' Then, if he saw the children gazing around them during the singing of the Psalms, and not joining in the melody, he would say, 'Sing now, bairns, if ye would do it in heaven; mind, it's a' praise there.' Then, warming upon the subject, he would exclaim, 'Either sing here or howl hereafter.'

In consequence of a dispute with his landlord, the time came when Allan was called to leave his pleasant cottage by the side of the stately river, and go forth amidst strangers seeking another home. We were very sorrowful, and sympathized the more with him

as he knew not in what direction to bend his steps. 'Dinna murn for me,' he would say, when we talked upon the subject; 'as ae door steeks, another opens. Such has been an' ever will be the case as lang as we are in this world; an' though for a wee while we have to grope our way in darkness, fear not: at evening time it shall be light, an' that is God's time.'

And so light did arise, guiding him to the forests of the far western world, and he was content.

At the gate of the little whitewashed church in the valley we parted in silence, for our hearts were too full of sorrow to find utterance in words; and Allan, burying his head in his plaid, rushed from our presence. We watched his retreating figure down by the poplars at the river's brink, till the silvery mist, that was spreading its soft damp mantle over moor and mountain, closing around him, hid his form from our sight.

We cannot tell what his life may be in the distant land where his lot is cast, or how gladly the poor Indian may learn the message of mercy from his lips; one thing we do know, that the God of his youth will be his Guide till death, and after death his exceeding great reward. But it may be that even now he is reaping his reward; and that his dust reposes quietly under the shade of some dark forest-

tree, with the wild man treading over his head. Well, it matters not; for the last trump shall awake him there as surely as if he slept in the churchyard by the mountain stream, where the winds of Scotland blow pure and free over the graves of his fathers.

THE DRUNKARD'S HOME.

He comes not; I have watched the moon go down,
But yet he comes not: once it was not so.
He thinks not how these bitter tears do flow,
The while he holds his riot in that town.

J. G. PERCIVAL.

ONE beautiful forenoon in the end of July, while we sat at work in our little parlour, a plainly attired, sagacious-looking woman was announced as Mrs Cowan. On entering, she made a low curtsey to my mother, and then said, 'Though ye dinna ken me, ma'am, I hae ta'en the liberty o' ca'in' on ye, to ask your advice about some business o' our ain.'

'I will be glad to assist you, if it is in my power,' answered my mother, at the same time placing a chair for the stranger. 'Have you come far this morning? you look fatigued.'

'Only ten miles or sae,' was the reply; 'an' I hae-

na walked the whale o' that either, for the gudeman brought me a bit in a cart, an' he is to meet me wi't again in the gloamin'.' She then went on to tell her errand. It concerned a young woman who had once been a favourite servant in our family. She had married very imprudently, to the great disappointment of my parents; and their interest in her had from that time been much lessened. Her husband treated her so very badly, that Mrs Cowan wished my mother to advise her to leave him and return to the protection and home of her father.

'Ye ken,' added the woman, 'that she needna have ta'en service unless she pleased; but being my step-bairn, she thocht I had nae right to interfere wi' her; an' maybe I was to blame tae, for I hadna eneuch o' sympathy wi' her. However, I am willin' to mak amends now for my faut; an' if she will only come back again, she will never get an upcast frae me nor mine.'

'Bessie will never leave her husband, cruel as he is,' replied my mother; 'and this not only because I believe she still loves him, but also that she feels so strongly the duties of a wife, and the obligation she lies under to fulfil the solemn engagements she entered upon at her marriage.'

'Her father winna be pacified unless I try, though,'

responded our guest; 'he just murns about her nicht an' day, till I whiles say, "Gudeman, ony body wud think, to hear ye, if they dinna ken to the contrary, that ye hae nae other bairn but Bessie." He has got a bonny cottage ready for her up the burn a wee bit frae our house, where she an' her bairns may live an' get their meat among us; it never wad be missed. But I ken she wadna tak it well if I was speakin' to her, sae I thocht I might mak bold to ask you if ye wad be kind eneuch to try an' advise her.'

'If ever a woman could be justified in taking such a step,' was the answer, 'it would be Bessie; but I know she will never do it. However, to satisfy her father, I will try if I can prevail upon her to leave her husband to his fate; for I believe there is scarcely a day passes in which her life is not in danger, and in one of his drunken frenzies his eldest child was lamed by a blow from his hand.'

My mother then ordered some refreshment for the stranger; and after hastily equipping herself, took the road to Bessie's cottage.

In answer to her tap at the door, a childish voice bade her enter; and in reply to the question if her mother were from home, the little lame girl, who sat by the fire holding an infant on her knee, replied,

'that she had just gane the length of the fir-wud to gather sticks, but wad be back the now.'

Everything in this house bespoke the drunkard's home. Though clean, the furniture was mean and broken, the dresser-shelf scantily supplied with stone-ware, and the children poorly clothed, and seemingly half-starved; and as Bessie's old mistress took the proffered seat, she sighed as she thought of the misery the poor woman had brought upon herself.

Bessie before her marriage had been the belle of the district; and a blither, tidier young creature was seldom seen. Many admirers she had too, and many a mother would gladly have seen her son secure so good a wife; but the headstrong girl had placed her affections on one unworthy of them, fascinated by his fine face and handsome person; and few could have told now, that the pale, emaciated, care-worn wife of Jamie Scott was ever the gay, light-hearted, 'bonnie' Bessie Cowan.

The visitor had not long to wait; for in a few minutes Mrs Scott was coming down the glen from the wood, bearing upon her shoulders a load of dead branches. The July sun was pouring its burning rays upon her head, unprotected save by a white cotton cap, and she appeared to be ready to sink under her burden.

'You seem very unfit for such work, Bessie,' said my mother, as the poor woman, entering the house seemingly much exhausted, let the sticks fall upon the floor.

''Deed, ma'am,' was the reply, 'puir folk hae to dae muckle the're no fit for. Jamie's dinner maun be gotten ready, an' the coals are scarce, sae I hae to gang to the wud for sticks. It's very gude o' the maister gien' me the liberty to tak them.'

'Then your husband is at home just now?' said her visitor.

'Well, I hope,' answered his wife, 'he's puttin' up Mr Dickson's dykes the day. They sent last nicht, biddin' him gang this morning and build up the slaps that the wind had blawn down.'

'I am glad,' was the response, 'to hear that James is employed at present; for by all accounts he has had a sad time lately.'

Something like a blush passed over the pale face of the poor wife, who replied—

'It's ower true, far ower true; but surely he'll mend yet. Oh! mistress, that is my prayer nicht an' day.'

'You deserved a better fate, Bessie,' was the reply of my mother, who then proceeded to lay before her the wish of her father, and the offer he had made.

'Oh!' cried the poor lame child from the corner to which she had shrunk, and whose presence had in this interview been entirely overlooked,—'Oh! mother, say to the ladie ye'll gang, for it's an awfu' life this we lead wi' my father aye drinkin'.'

Bessie turned round upon her child with a sad countenance, and said, 'Puir thing, ye weel may say that;' presently adding, in a voice a little sharp, 'But, Jeanie, ye shouldna speak ill o' yer ain father, for the Bible tells ye to honour your parents.' Then addressing her visitor, she said, 'Oh! mistress, ye mauna be angry wi' me, but tell my father I canna leave Jamie—no, I canna do't, for a' that's come an' gane. I took him for better and for *worse*—yes, *for worse* as weel as better—in sickness and health, till death should us part. I vowed before the Lord a' this, and ye ken it is said, "What God hath joined together, let no man"—*no man*, mistress—"put asunder."'

'But, Bessie,' was the response, 'your husband has forfeited all claim to that sacred title. He does not deserve your love nor care; for your children's sake you ought to leave him.'

'It canna be, ladie, it canna be,' sobbed the poor wife. 'Oh! I maun stay wi' him, for if I were to leave, he wad gang fairly to ruin; an' then body an

soul wad be lost. Ye ca'd me infatuated lang syne; ye may think I'm that yet; but mind he's the father o' my bairns, and I canna, canna gie him up. But,' she continued, 'it's my puir auld father's grief that vexes me. Oh! if he could forget that ever he had sic a bairn! I dinna deserve his love!'

It was with a heavy heart indeed that Mrs Cowan set out upon her return home, saying,—

'I am feared to meet the gudeman, he will be sair distressed to see me my lane. Oh! the puir misguided thing; God help her, for man canna.'

After this, matters became worse with Bessie, for Jamie got more and more idle and dissipated. How his family lived, was a mystery to their neighbours. We children might have wondered too, if we had not seen occasionally a half cheese, a bagful of meal, or, it might be, a quartern loaf, slipped under Bessie's cloak on a dark night, when the gentle knock was heard at the 'front' door, and opened by some of us youngsters, that the servants might not know who sought admittance.

About a year after Mrs Cowan's visit to our home upon her fruitless errand, we were startled one day by old Archie, the postman, entering the kitchen and demanding to see the 'mistress' immediately, saying the 'maister' had sent him 'to bid her put on her

bonnet and gang down to Bessie's, for Jamie had been drouned the nicht afore, and they were bringing hame the body; but it would be weel if the puir thing was prepared for the sorrowfu' event.'

The previous day there had been a fair, or hiring market, in a town some miles distant, and Jamie Scott had been there, and as usual got intoxicated. He was last seen in life by a young shepherd, who had led him so far on his homeward road; but as he never reached his cottage, Bessie had gone to the village in the morning, and given the alarm to some of his neighbours, who set out in quest of him. A stream over which he must pass, having been so flooded from recent rains that the rustic bridge had been rendered insecure, it was immediately feared that he must have perished there. A search was accordingly made, and soon the body was found, entangled amongst reeds and brushwood at the water's edge, a mile or so below the bridge.

With a sad heart my mother took her way to the glen to prepare the widow for this calamity. The cottage-door being open, revealed poor Bessie sitting with her child convulsively clasped to her bosom, rocking her body to and fro, scarcely seeming to notice the lame child, who was saying,—

'Dinna tak on sae, mother; my father may come

back again. Hoo often hae we seen him lost for a day or twa, an' he cam hame safe at last? Oh! dinna greet sae, mother, dinna greet!'

Neither of them perceived the entrance of their visitor, until the words, 'The Lord comfort and support you, Bessie,' caused the poor woman to look up; but seeing the sad expression of her friend's face, she cried out, 'I see by ye, mistress, it's a' ower wi' him;' and then she burst into a wail of sorrow so long and deep, it seemed as if her very heart were breaking with the intensity of grief.

It would have been vain to have offered words of consolation at such a time, in such a case. Silence was the only sympathy that could be shown. Soon the young men approached with the corpse—a bloated and disfigured mass—and laid it on the bed. The poor woman then seemed to forget entirely the presence of strangers,—forget everything, indeed, but her own sorrow,—and, throwing herself on the body, she covered it with kisses, crying, 'Oh! speak to me but ance again, Jamie, my husband, my husband!' My father, entering at the moment, drew my mother from the scene.

Bessie would never leave the cottage in the glen, sacred to her as the abode of her married life. She seemed to forget all her husband's unkindness, and

to recall only the little gleams of sunshine that had been hers. These gleams she magnified in her mind, until they grew so large as to cover over every bitter remembrance of the past.

The neighbours kindly refrained from wounding her feelings by speaking of Jamie in a depreciative manner, which, indeed, was after all no rare circumstance; for the Scotch peasantry seldom indulge in 'speakin' ill o' the dead.'

A friend once remarked to me, that he had been a traveller in many lands, and studied the physiognomy of different nations; but there was one peculiar expression he never met with save in the Scotch females of humble life, and that was one in which sagacity and common sense were blended with a calm, uncomplaining, unselfish look, as if the person had passed through much sanctified sorrow. This exactly described the appearance of Bessie's countenance, as I have seen her when returning from the harvest-field, surrounded by her children, and, in answer to some remark of Jeanie's, she would say, 'He hath led me forth by the right way, that I might go to a city of habitation. O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!'

THE PATRIARCH OF THE VILLAGE.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden gray and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that;
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae puir,
Is king o' men for a' that.

BURNS.

IN the outskirts of the village stood, many years ago, a cottage with its garden—a small patch of ground surrounded by a flower-border, and a spot in the centre reserved for greens and other vegetables.

The rich blossoms of the cabbage rose clustered around the window, and contrasted well with the white lilies and dark sweet-william that grew beside them.

A nosegay from that simple parterre pleased us

children far more than the most costly bouquet could have done; and though we had abundance of similar flowers, which the gardener insisted were much superior, we still retained our partiality for those of the cottage garden.

On lately visiting my old haunts, I found a pasture field where this dwelling had once stood, and, clambering over the fence, narrowly sought for some remnant of the garden, hoping to secure a solitary plant, and bear it away as a remembrance of the spot. But my search was vain,—the smooth, close turf showed that it had been long in that state, and, though 'gowans' and clover bloomed profusely, the rose, sweet-william, and lily had vanished like a dream.

On retracing my steps through the village, my old friend Adam Henderson, the joiner, who was at his door mending a cart-wheel, thus saluted me,—

'I saw, Miss Rose, that ye were up takin' a look at the place where auld William's cottage stood lang syne. It's sair alterit now, but ye'll mind it as it ance was?'

I answered in the affirmative, and told him how much I wished to have found a relic of the garden to take with me to my distant home.

'Aye, but that ye'll hardly get,' said Adam; 'it's been ower lang a grass field to find flowers.' Then

adding, 'I hae nae doubt ye ken the way that the auld man liked his bits o' plants sae weel.'

I replied, I knew little or nothing of William's history, but would be glad to learn anything regarding him.

'Weel,' said my kind friend, while he pointed to his son to finish the repairs on the broken wheel, 'as ye used to like hearing stories about a' the folk ye kent when ye were a bairn, I will tell you what few mind now in the place forby mysel'.

'It will be weel on for sixty years sin' William marryt a bit bonny young lassie ca'd Mary Bertram. He took her to the cottage on the brae, where his sister Lily leeved wi' them; an' mony a time I hae heard my mother say how agreeable they were a' thegither. It micht be twa or three years after this an English lad cam to be the laird's groom. He was a fair-tongued, braggin' kind o' a chiel, wi' a lot o' airs and new-fangled notions. However, he didna bide lang amang us, for he said our country was a puir, cauld bit. Now, as for what he thocht, or whether he gaed or no, naebody cared; only Lily Laidlaw, the misguided lassie, had ta'en up wi' him, an' sae naething wad serve her but she maun marry the useless crater. It was a sair heart to her brither, but ye ken "them that will to Cupar maun to Cupar;" an' so, in spite o'

a' that could be said or dune, she marryt him. The nicht afore she left—it was in spring—William was planting some cabbages in his yard; after that he sheuched in a wheen white lily roots round the rose-bush that grew by the window, saying to his sister, wha hung o'er the yett lookin' at him, "They'll mind Mary and me o' you, Lily, when ye're far away."

'Puir thing, she was greetin' sair then. Some folk thocht she had by this time fund out she was wrang, but that I canna answer for. However, she took up some seeds o' sweet-william, an', sowing them round the lilies, said, "They will stand for you, Willie, though I winna be here to see them grow up. An' the rose will be for Mary; ye ken ye aye said she was like ane."

'My mother was stan'in' beside them, wi' my sister Effie in her arms, then an infant. When she saw them a' sae dowie—for Mary by this time had joined them, sobbin' as if her heart wad break—she tried to comfort them, sayin' things turned aye better out than we expeckit; but Lily only shook her head and said, "As I hae brewed, sae I maun drink." The next mornin' she left for England wi' her man, an we heard nae mair about her for some years.

'Ae day (I mind the circumstance weel, though but a bit little laddie at the time) a letter cam to William

wi' the Lon'on post-mark. Now, sic a thing was a rare occurrence in thae days, for postage was heavy. The auld women about the place ferlied lang and sair what the letter wad be about, some sayin' ae thing, some another; but the Laidlaws were quiet kind o' folk, and kept their ain counsel. A day or twa after, in the gray o' the mornin', some o' the ostlers belanging to the inn saw William in his Sabbath-day's claes tak the road for Carlisle. He cam back about six weeks after, bringing a young lassie wi' him. His sister was dead, and this was her only bairn. Lily, or English Lily, as we aye ca'd her, wasna as close as the Laidlaws; and when she got acquaint wi' the folk about, didna hide how unhappy her mother had been, and how ill her father had used them, till at last he gaed aff an' left them a' thegither. William had gane to England in time to see his sister afore her death, and promise to bring up her bairn.

'No lang after this, Mary died, and then her little infant; so Lily was left wi' her uncle alane, an' a great comfort she was to him. She stayed wi' him till she was marryt. After that he leeved his sel' in his auld cottage, never losing conceit o' the flowers that minded him o' the past, takin' care o' them as lang as he was able to pap about an' work in his bit garden.'

The narrative, simple though it was, had interested me much, and, after bidding Adam good-bye, while walking back to my temporary home I could not help tracing out, one after another, every little incident I remembered of old William, the patriarch of the village.

I never knew William otherwise than an old man with white locks falling over his shoulders, dressed in a cut-away coat, long vest, knee-breeches, fur-and-rig stockings, and shoes with brass buckles. His eye was soft and black, his features beautifully chiselled, and his brow open. He was a genuine Scottish character—shrewd and sagacious, or, as it was termed, 'auld farrant,' with a great deal of dry, quiet humour. He had the knack of saying the *right* thing in the *right* place and at the *right* time—a rare quality, and a very useful one in this world of discord, as it acts like oil on the jarring machinery, and makes the wheels move on more softly than they otherwise would do. He was a great favourite in the village, which Bell, when she spoke of him, explained by saying, 'Everybody likes him, for he is aye sae "*laithfu'*."' Now, I do not know any quality that the poor esteem more highly than the one they call 'laithfu';' and as many an English reader may not understand the term, I may say that it indicates a disposition in which

there is nothing selfish or greedy, nay, something entirely opposite—a 'laithfu" person hiding poverty, if poor, as scrupulously as if it were a sin that it should be known, and shrinking from receiving favours if not able to return them again. Then William was honest and upright. You might have trusted him with untold gold; and as for debt, he feared it as he would have feared the plague. Many a time he would say, 'If a man does not wish to be thought a thief, let him pay his just debts; he has nae mair right to withhold payment, *when* and *where* it is due, than he has to put his hand into your pocket and steal your money.'

I cannot help thinking and fearing that this stern, brave spirit of justice is in a great measure dying out amongst our peasantry. There is more than one here and another there, upon whose shoulder I could lay my hand and say, Friend, 'owe no man anything, but to love one another.'

But to return to William: his very honesty gained him, at one period of his life, many enemies.

For years he had served most faithfully a wealthy baronet in the neighbourhood, never stopping during his hours of labour to pass away the time with songs and jests like his fellow-workmen. At last, tired of the silent but severe reproof which a conduct so dif-

ferent from their own administered to them, these men leagued together to impute crimes to William which his nature abhorred. He suspected their intentions, and demanded to see his master, in order that he might clear himself; but every obstacle was thrown in the way to prevent his obtaining this end. An earnest man, he was not to be trifled with. Making his road through long passages and up flights of stairs till he gained the baronet's presence, 'What do they accuse me of, Sir Charles?' said the faithful servant; 'do they say I'm a thief?' 'Not that exactly, William,' answered the laird, who was lolling in his easy chair reading the newspapers, from which he hardly turned his eyes; 'not that. But it is better you should leave my service at once. I cannot bear quarrels.'

'Ah, Sir Charles!' said the grand old man, as he stood with his blue bonnet in his hand, his gray hairs falling over his shoulders, like a picture of an old covenanter—'Ah! Sir Charles, I tried to serve you faithfully, minding I had a Master in heaven; and though you cast me off, He never will.' And without waiting for further reply, he left the room.

His faith was the most child-like of any I ever saw. It was enough if God said it; then he believed. 'Why should I be ower anxious about the morn?' he would reply to any one who prognosticated hard-

ships, or even starvation, in the future. 'Has not God said, "Bread shall be given you; your water shall be sure"? What would I have more? Would I make God out a liar?' Then he was truthful, his word going further than many a one's oath. So thoroughly was he known and esteemed for this quality, that a judge of the old Scottish stamp, one day when he was brought before him, exclaimed, 'We maun gie ye the oath for form's sake, but ye wad speak the truth, man, whether or no.'

William's cottage, though consisting of but one apartment, with its furniture old and smoked, nevertheless drew to it in the winter evenings a few of the decent sort amongst the villagers. These sat around its fire, and discussed the events of the past day, until the 'wag-at-the-wa'' sounded the hour of eight. After that the old man loved to be alone. Now, this fire-place differed from others in the village, —its chimney being formed to consume 'seeds' from the neighbouring mill, instead of coal or wood. It was very wide, and always contained a large quantity of that dry fuel on one side, while a charred heap of it was built up on the other. A crooked piece of iron supplied the place of poker and tongs, serving both to draw down the fresh seeds and remove the burnt.

Amongst the group assembled, the master, in his antique dress, formed the most conspicuous figure. He generally sat at one side of the fire, attending to the fuel, which needed pretty constant care. Opposite was the tailor, a Tory because the laird was one, quoting bad Latin, and using long, meaningless words; while Wat, the weaver, was sure to be at hand, engaging the knight of the thimble in an argument, in which, in spite of the bad Latin and long words, he ever came off half best. Sometimes the shoemaker joined the circle, with now and then one of the farm-servants who might be waiting in the village till the smith 'laid' his irons. No doubt it was the dry humour of William which attracted those quiet people to his poor dwelling; and many a joke uttered by him still floats over the country, though the speaker has long since passed away. The laird even yet tells of the time when he, with some others of the heritors, were engaged in calculating the expense of erecting a wall around the churchyard. William, who happened to be about the spot, was consulted. 'D'ye no think, gentlemen,' was his reply, 'it's time eneuch to repair the fences when the tenants complain?'

The old man had the charge of our bees, and in this way we often met. Every autumn, with the help of Lizzie Thompson, he carried the hives to 'a still'

in the glen where the heather abounded. Saturday afternoon was always chosen for this removal, because it was our holiday, and we would upon no account have missed the excursion. Then we loved to watch, as we wended our way up the loch side, the clear water, smooth often as a polished mirror, and reflecting on its bosom clouds and sky; or the rocks above it, embellished with sweet wild flowers.

While the bees were made secure in their new quarters, we would deck ourselves with heather, or stop in our homeward walk to gather the small black crowberry, till the words, 'Bairns, bairns, yer mother will wonder what's keepin' us sae late,' would make us leave our sport and walk quickly home.

Was it a dry spring-time when the furze must be destroyed by fire to give room for sheep pasture? Again, it was William who attended at the 'muirburn,' and carried the live peat, while we walked by his side with our 'pinafores' stuffed full of 'shavings.' My father and the men-servants followed with 'hedge-bills' and 'pitchforks.' I can shut my eyes even now, and the scene is again before me. William kneels down, puts the 'shavings' around the peat, which he blows with his breath into a flame. The fire spreads it seizes the furze; soon a bright light rises up to-

wards heaven, showing clearly the figures of those who surround the spot. Below lies the valley, like a deep, dark gulf, whose depth you cannot fathom, for the shades of evening have already fallen thick and fast. We whisper, half in dread, half in delight, 'Is not this like the pictures we have seen of savages dancing around their fires?' The flames spread; they will soon reach the young trees in the neighbouring plantation; their fiery tongues lick the ground close by. 'Quick!' cries my father, with alarm, 'cut down the bushes in their way; leave them nothing to lay hold of!' This done, the progress is arrested. Now a hare leaps from its nest, scared by the sounds; the dogs bark; the men hound them on its track. O the excitement of that hour! We are wild with delight, and need the constant warning from William,—

'Tak tent, bairns, keep back; that's gude misses; mind the fire will gripe.'

It is nearly midnight ere we reach home, and nearly dawn ere we close our eyes in slumber.

Before leaving this part of the country I visited the churchyard, by the gate of which some young children were playing.

'Come,' I said to one of them, a bright-eyed boy, 'come and tell me, if you can, where William Laidlaw is buried.'

'Please, mem,' was the reply, 'grandmother says ye canna find the place now, for it's level wi' the grass.'

'Who is your grandmother?' I asked, 'and why does she take an interest in this grave?'

'Grandmother is his niece, Lily Turner,' answered the boy; 'she leeves in yon house down near the mill. Mony a time she tells us about him, an' says she wad be proud to see us grow up to be like him, for he was a gude man.'

Bless the boy for that word, which I needed just then. I knew I was wrong; but as I remembered those village worthies, and found scarcely a trace of them where they were once so well known, the thought, in spite of all I could do to prevent it, would ever obtrude itself, 'Is there profit in anything under the sun? seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten: and how dieth the wise man? as the fool.'

Now I saw it was not in vain that the good lived; for even after the touch of time had levelled his grave, his memory was blessed.

THE LIFE'S GREAT TRIAL.

Pilgrim, though the road be dreary,
It shall end in radiant light:
Be not on the pathway weary,
Thou shalt walk with Me in white.
Soon shall dawn a day immortal,
Thou shalt share My victor throne,
And at Heaven's eternal portal
For thy *cross* receive a *crown*.

I. L. BIRD.

IN one of the wildest glens of my native country may still be seen a shepherd's solitary dwelling.

The oppressive stillness of that place is almost painful, and one turns gladly away from it to seek once more the haunts of busy life.

'How can man exist in this spot, so far from his fellows?' we said one to another, when, passing through that neighbourhood, we chanced to come upon this cottage; and Bridget, to whom, upon our return, we gave an account of our rambles, informed us that

some years before a favourite niece had been married to the shepherd, named Grahame, who resided there. 'An' it wasna sae dowie, bairns, as ye think,' added the old woman, 'for there was aye plenty o' wark to do, an' that keeps folk frae wearyin'.'

'Do they still live in that lonely place, Bridget?' we inquired.

''Deed no, misses,' was the answer. 'It's lang sin' they left for the north countrie, an' I haena heard about them for years.'

Last summer, when visiting relations in the Highlands of Scotland, circumstances threw me in the way of hearing about those Grahames, whose residence had so deeply impressed my youthful mind.

Some years after the death of his wife, who left an only daughter, Grahame married an interesting young woman. She only lived to place in the arms of her step-daughter an infant soon to be motherless; and as the husband ere long followed her to the grave, both his daughters became orphans.

Ere long, Annie Grahame was united to a young man named William Campbell; and her sister Mabel found a home under her roof. Years glided quietly by, and no trial entered the peaceful house of the Campbells; but sickness and death at last came, and Annie was made to feel in all its bitterness what

it is to be a widow indeed, and desolate; but she knew in whom she had believed, and with a stedfast faith commenced the struggle needful for the support of her fatherless children.

In this, Mabel, now in her sixteenth year, gladly took her share, and by their united efforts the little household was maintained in comfort; but Annie had inherited her mother's delicate constitution, and, as time wore away, it became manifest that she was exerting herself above her strength.

Bravely she struggled on to fulfil her accustomed duties; but at length nature gave way, and she was laid upon that bed from which she was never again to rise.

Mabel had hoped to the last. Ah! when does the young heart cease to hope, saying, 'If the south wind comes it will revive her;' or, 'If the new medicine the doctor ordered had time to take effect;' or, 'if' —I know not what ifs beside. And so we go on hoping, because working, until death comes, and we feel how unprepared for it we have been. And now through the long, long night has Mabel watched by the couch of the sick one.

Dreary and sad have been the hours, for, tossing in wild delirium on her pillow, not one moment of rest has the poor sufferer found; at one time with

imploring voice beseeching help amidst imaginary fears; at another, begging a draught of water from the clear cool spring familiar to her childhood—the spring far away among the hills by the shepherd's cottage door; again, warbling psalms and hymns learned at a mother's knee, or varying them with wild snatches of songs and lullabies, till their sad cadence caused Mabel to weep bitterly. The light of the flickering lamp placed near the bed revealed too plainly the ravages that wasting disease had made on the countenance of the sufferer; but while faintly illuminating the rest of the apartment, it seemed only to deepen the gloom. Still, with unwearied assiduity has the watchful nurse hung over the lowly couch, striving to humour each passing fancy, or banish the haunting terrors of a heated imagination, until her limbs seem scarcely able to support her trembling frame.

But now the disease appears to have taken a favourable turn: sleep has succeeded to the raving of fever; and Mabel, hope reviving in her breast, extinguishes the nearly expiring lamp, and draws aside the window-curtain, that she may mark the progress of dawn.

Already faint streaks appear in the east, and these, even while she stands, increase into a crimson blush, which soon tinges the heavens with its radi-

ance. The face of the cold grey sea is also bathed in the roseate light; and as she gazes upon the splendour of the scene, she remembers Him who can say to those rolling waves, 'Peace, be still,' and rejoices to think that 'the issues of life and death are also in the power of His hand.'

As Mabel thus watches and meditates, she marks not the awaking of her sister, till from the bed a feeble voice falls upon her ear, and she hears her name called softly.

In cheerful tones, derived from and coloured by the heart's wishes, she approaches the couch exclaiming, 'Surely ye are better, Annie, for ye hae slept quietly this hour an' mair.'

These hopeful words were unheeded, perhaps unheard, for the pale face and sunken eye gave back no response; but, half raising herself on her pillow, the sufferer said, in a voice faint, yet distinct—

'Mabel, I am dyin'; I hae but a few moments to be wi' you now. Promise me this afore I leave you: dinna send my bairns to the workhouse, but keep them by yoursel', and teach them to be gude, and to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! Mabel, as I hae been faithful to you ever sin' your mother, wi' her last breath, gaed ye to my charge, sae be ye to my puir bairns, soon to be orphans.'

Bewildered by those words, which fell like a blow upon her heart, Mabel could make no reply. Did she hear them aright? Death at the very moment that she dreamed of life—death to one so dear, so good, so valued: surely it could not be.

'Mabel, ye dinna answer me,' cried the poor woman; 'quick, for even now darkness is coming ower my sight: tell me that ye will train my bairns for heaven, and I will die in peace.'

Mabel, thus urged, gave with faltering voice the wished-for promise; and the poor mother was satisfied, for waving her hand in token of acknowledgment, she fell back upon her couch and expired.

The funeral is over, and the house is still almost as death, for the children have sobbed themselves to sleep—the quiet, peaceful sleep of childhood. Mabel alone is awake, sitting wearily, sadly by the expiring embers on the hearth: her head rests upon her hand, and her large dark eyes, that seem gazing into vacancy, have an expression of hopeless misery in their depths; while the black hair and dress render the paleness of her cheek more visible. Hers is a slight girlish form, too slight, too girlish, one would think, to bear the heavy burden of life: it looks rather one to be protected, cherished; but now it is bent with

suffering, as if a weight of years and sorrow chained it down.

Poor Mabel, this night have all the bright hopes of her woman's heart been rudely torn asunder, and the future lies spread out before her, cold, cheerless, and blank. *This night* had the cruel alternative been put before her, either to relinquish the children, and cast them upon the cold hand of charity, or give up one she had loved from childhood, who had learned his lesson from the same book, and filled her lap with nuts from the hazel glen. Did she hesitate in her choice? No, not one moment, for the path of duty lay plain before her; she was deaf to all entreaties, all persuasions. 'How will you be able to maintain yourself and these infants?' it had been asked; and she answered, 'The Lord will provide.' 'But with me,' it had been argued, 'you will have a life of ease, safety, and abundance; you are too young, too gentle, to walk alone. Mabel, come to my protecting care, and I will not let the winds of heaven blow upon your cheek too roughly.' 'And,' she replied, 'wi' a troubled conscience, harassed by a broken vow, could I expect peace?'

And now she is alone, straining her ear to hear once more the sound of that step which had been music to her heart—the step she could know amongst

ten thousand—listening to the last echo of that voice with its deep rich tones, never to be heard again. Oh, the anguish of that never! And as she hides her agonized face in her hands, she yet sees the gaze of that eagle eye, whose glance was wont to make her pulse beat wildly.

Could she but weep, tears might relieve her burning brain; but that solace is denied her. Did she blame him? She could not tell; perhaps he had but acted as others would have done, but not as she would to him. Ah, no; for there was no sorrow, no burden so great that she would not have counted it a pleasure if shared with him and for his sake.

There is a depth of unselfish devotion in a woman's heart, with which few men are able to sympathize.

To our sex has been given, as a portion in this life, *home*, its *affections and duties;* while to man has been allotted the sterner work of battling with the world, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, or spending the midnight oil in hard, dry studies, fitting him for his sphere of labour. But to cheer him, solace him in this, he demands all woman's thoughts, all her care, all her love—*all;* and too often these are poured out unmeasured, yet unrequited, at his feet.

'Know'st thou all
I would have borne, and call'd it joy to bear,
For thy sake? Know'st thou that thy voice had power
To shake me with a thrill of happiness
By one kind tone? to fill mine eyes with tears
Of yearning love? And thou—oh! thou didst throw
That crushed affection back upon my heart;—
Yet come to me!—it died not.'

Poor solitary young creature! As, stunned, stupified by the greatness of her anguish, she sits motionless, hour after hour passes by, and the timid mouse, peeping from its hole, gains courage to issue forth on its nocturnal wanderings: the lamp also expires in its socket, leaving her in unheeded darkness; but she cares not, marks it not. Suddenly the church clock, tolling the hour of four, strikes upon her ear: it was the hour three mornings ago that her sister died; and as the vision of that deathbed scene rises up before her, and she remembers all that sister's love and care for her ever since she was a child, she bursts into a flood of tears, and falling upon her knees, cries out in agony, 'O God, I am oppressed; undertake Thou for me.'

Years have passed since then, and Mabel Grahame is still the gentle, patient woman: her black hair is now almost grey, and her figure has lost its elegance and slightness; but her face is still beautiful: for surely beauty consisteth not so much in symmetry of

feature or brilliancy of complexion, but rather in the cherishing of feelings kind and tender, which the face reflects faithfully, as in a mirror. She has had a life of toil and industry, often protracting labour from early dawn till midnight. But the promise to her dead sister has been truly, faithfully kept; and the children, walking with her Zionward, have grown up to comfort and care for her when she is less able to provide for herself. And now, in the autumn of her life, looking back along the way by which the Lord hath led her, and remembering the deep affliction through which in the days of her youth He caused her to pass, she can nevertheless say, 'It has been the right way.' Surely 'He doeth all things well.' 'Blessed are they that trust in Him: fear Him, all ye His saints.'

Yes, truly, such as Mabel Grahame are blessed indeed; for even though their path through this world may be dark, crooked, and lonely, yet surely at the last and great day it will be found 'that they who sowed in tears, shall reap in joy;' and 'he that *went forth weeping*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless *come again with rejoicing*, bringing his sheaves with him.'

WILLIE BLAKE.

God help the imbecile! more dark their lot
Than dumb or deaf, the cripple or the blind.
The closed soul-vision theirs, the blighted mind;
Babes, while full-grown—their page of life a blot.

Let love take up the task before her set,
Let faith sustain, though long the toil may be:
Fan it but gently, nurse it patiently,
That buried, smouldering spark may glimmer yet.

For He who in His wisdom oft makes choice
Of foolish things to put to shame the wise,
Things weak and base, and which the proud despise,
Can cause these feeble ones to hear His voice.

H. A. BIRD.

THERE is scarcely a village in Scotland that has not its privileged idiot,—a 'silly creature,' wandering aimlessly about its pathways; one whom it might not be safe to provoke; or, it may be, one whose guilelessness or simplicity moves every feeling heart with pity.

Our village numbered among its inhabitants one

of the latter class. Willie Blake, more frequently called 'Cannie Willie,' was an imbecile lad of some fifteen years of age. Of a kind, loving disposition, he secured to himself many friends. He brought the water from the well for old Betty, who was too feeble to fetch it herself; he carried crumbs in his pockets to feed the robins and sparrows which hopped about the hedgerows; he rescued poor cats from the carrier's fierce dog; in short, pitied and relieved distress wherever he found it, and in turn received kindness and sympathy from all who knew him. He had never been sent to school, for the training of imbeciles was then unknown, yet at times he showed signs of shrewdness that might have encouraged friends in the attempt to instruct him, at least in simple things; and on rare occasions he displayed symptoms even of reflection and forethought. His memory was excellent; he never forgot the scraps of old songs that he had once learned, and he sung them in a pleasing manner to plaintive airs. Indeed, so fond was he of verse, that his conversation often consisted of words linked together so as to form rhyme; as, for example, if a neighbour met him and said, 'Are ye comin' to see us the day, Willie?'—he would answer, 'No the day—the morn I may!'

Poor Willie, he was harmless as a little child, and liked nothing better than to play with tiny infants who could scarcely walk. He would sit for hours alone by the burn-side, watching the leaping trouts, or saunter through the meadows, gathering nosegays of wild-flowers which he brought home to adorn his mother's cottage. No one sought to harm him in all his rambles, not even the mischievous school-boys.

Willie was a widowed mother's only child. She doubtless loved her boy; but her affection was not expressed in words: what was far better, she showed it by her deeds. Strong-minded, proud, and independent, she neither asked nor received aid from any one; but worked early and late, that Willie might be comfortably clothed and fed: spinning, washing, shearing—nothing came wrong to her! What she did, she did well. Willie loved his mother too, but that love was mingled with fear: had she been weak and suffering, he would have given her his whole heart; but she was so vigorous, so brave, it puzzled him—he could not understand her.

The minister often spoke long and kindly to Willie when he chanced to meet him in his walks, and taught him hymns and paraphrases, instead of

the ballads and unmeaning rhymes he was always chanting.

One Saturday evening the poor boy encountered this good man in one of his rambles. The minister talked more earnestly to him than on any former occasion. He told him of heaven, of hell, of a Saviour; and as Willie listened, the tears chased each other down his cheeks, and were wiped away with the edge of his blue bonnet.

On the morning of the following day, Mary Blake was only putting her cottage to rights when the church bells began to ring. This being no unusual circumstance, it did not much trouble her. Entirely engrossed with this world's concerns, she seldom thought of another; and used to argue that, if God had meant to save her, He would have placed her in more favourable circumstances, and given her a more prosperous lot, for she had no leisure in her busy life to think of eternal things. Ah! there are too many, I fear, amongst our poorer brethren who justify their carelessness of divine things in this manner, and by so doing reject the greatest refuge and solace bestowed by a holy God upon the toilworn children of men; forgetting the sorrows which ever accompany prosperity—forgetting, too, the Bible words, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.'

Jenny Dick looked in upon Mary when passing to church, and finding her in short-gown and petticoat sweeping the floor, inquired if she 'were nae gain' to the kirk the day?' '*'Deed* no, Jenny,' was the answer, 'I canna be ready in time; ye see, as there is naething to dae on the Sundays, I whiles sleep ower lang, and ha'e done sae this mornin'.' Willie, who was sitting in a corner unperceived, sharing his breakfast with the kitten, suddenly started up, and coming forward to his mother at the same time, raised his finger in a solemn manner, and sung out in his own plaintive strain—'Naething to dae! Naething to dae! Ye ha'e heav'n to win and hell to shun, an' ca' ye that naething to dae?' As if an arrow had pierced her heart, the strong woman bent beneath those simple words uttered by her idiot boy. All reasoning, all sophistries fled, her refuges of lies were swept away, she was speechless. The proud, hardened spirit soon became subdued, and, weeping like a child, she cried out, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

From that hour she was a changed woman. Willie, too, became more loving, more gentle, more teachable, and in a great measure relinquished his songs and ballads for the hymns and paraphrases, which he sung with great pathos.

Soon after this, a violent fever spread death and desolation amongst the tenants of our village, and Willie was among its first victims. He died exclaiming, 'Heaven is won! heaven is won! but, oh! mother, it was Jesus who won it for me.'

'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; *that no flesh should glory in His presence.*'

EUPHIN MORRISON

For the heart grows rich in giving,
All its wealth is living grain;
Seeds which mildew in the garner,
Scattered, fill with gold the plain.
By the Author of 'The Three Wakings.'

NOT far from the schoolhouse stood, some thirty years ago, the thriving shop or store of Euphin Morrison, whence the small farmers in the neighbourhood, as well as the villagers, were supplied with goods of almost every description. Euphin was an active, thrifty, 'well-to-do' body. Her father had died some years previous to the date of my story, leaving her a fortune of L.10, with which she stocked her store. Being shrewd and sagacious, or, as her neighbours termed her, 'lang-headed,' she soon made herself a good business connection in a small way. She was a little deformed woman, with piercing black eyes, and a keen, what might be termed, 'hardened,'

expression of countenance, giving no encouragement to any poor suffering one to pour the tale of sorrow into her ears. Her conversation was uninteresting, consisting only of remarks regarding the price of provisions, the best way of procuring wealth, or how she might *save* in this, that, or the other thing; indeed, *save* was the beginning and end of every topic upon which she touched. Her sole relatives were three orphan nieces, children of an only sister; but with these Euphin had long ceased to have any correspondence. It was said that a quarrel, which had taken place years before, had separated her completely from this family. Therefore, with all the gentler, kindlier feelings that should adorn the female character crushed and blighted within her, if they ever existed, this woman thought only of gain. She watched the markets, buying when cheap and selling when dear; besides baking, brewing, and turning a penny in every imaginable way.

She attended church regularly, but the minister's discourse fell as on the barren wayside; for all the time of the service she was calculating her profits, and forgetting the most important of all calculations, namely, what it would profit her if she gained the whole world and lost her soul.

One day a neighbour's little daughter came to her

shop, asking the loan of half a sovereign to pay the rent. 'Mammy sent me,' said the child, raising her soft, dove-like eyes to meet the cold, hard glance of Euphin: 'she says, if we canna pay it the morn, our landlord will roup us out; an' we ha'e nae place to gang, nor ony frien' to help us at this time.' 'Your mother needna come to me either,' exclaimed Euphin. 'I am but a lone woman, an' working hard to get ends to meet. Bid her gang to the gentry, an' no to the like o' me, who am as puir as hersel'.'

Now, Euphin believed, or at all events hoped to make others believe, that she was poor, thus justifying her refusal of assistance to the suffering and destitute; yet conscience would sometimes make itself heard, and a few energetic words which had been flashed across her mind in a recent sermon would return vividly: 'Men, women, ye that have full cups, I charge you in God's name, share them with those who have empty ones; drink not of them all yourselves, else they will turn to poison in your grasp.' And as little Nelly turned that day from her door, sad and hungry, bearing the cruel message to her widowed mother, those stern words again sounded in the ears of Euphin, 'Ye that have full cups, I charge you in God's name, share them with those who have empty ones,' etc.

That same evening, the beautiful Agnes Gordon,

her sister's child, stood before her, and clasping her hands, while the tears trickled over her cheeks, exclaimed, 'Help us, Aunt Euphin, for our dead mother's sake, an' the Lord will repay you an hunderfold. A fever has seized upon poor Janet, an' we ha'e nae money to get the medicines the doctor has ordered for her.'

'Ah! is this the way o't?' said the unbending woman. 'An' Neil Gordon's daughter has to come at last to puir bowed Euphin (as he ca'd me) for help! Well, this is a world o' ups an' downs; but as I ha'e received nae kindness frae you nor yours, I will show nane.'

'Then God forgi'e ye,' exclaimed Agnes, as she retraced with a sorrowful heart her faltering steps to the abode of misery, and heard with powerless anguish the ravings of her young sister tossing on her bed of straw.

Again, as Agnes turned from her door, did those words come to Euphin's memory, and the soft pleading eyes of Nelly, with the gentle voice of her niece, seemed to give them a power they never had before; and as she locked the shop-door and drew her window curtain before retiring to rest, she muttered, 'It has been an unlucky day!' and so she said again after the lamp was trimmed, even while she counted the bright money she had that day added to her store.

Next morning, strange to say, eight o'clock sounded from the church spire, and Euphin's curtains were still undrawn. The neighbours became alarmed at a sight so unusual. They tried the door, but it was locked. Then, going round to the back of the dwelling, they examined the window, and found it had been tampered with, and yielded to the touch. Upon entering, a scene of confusion appeared, in the midst of which lay Euphin speechless on the floor. She was not dead, however; and after a few hours was so far recovered as to be able to tell what had taken place. She said that she was awoke in the middle of the night by sounds in her house; she screamed with terror, when two men rushed to her bed, and would have strangled her, but a noise outside frightened them, and they made haste to decamp with the little booty they had secured, leaving her half dead with alarm. She rose to call for help, but fell senseless on the floor, where she was found.

It was some days before Euphin was able to resume her business; meanwhile, as she lay on her bed, the scales fell from her eyes. She now saw clearly what a sinner she had been, and how mercifully God had preserved her life. Then again sounded in her ears the solemn words which had haunted her on the eve of that eventful day. She now understood that it

was God who had been enabling her to procure wealth, which, instead of using as a *steward* in His service, she was hoarding up to plant as thorns in her dying pillow. Again came back to memory the soft eyes of Nelly and the gentle voice of Agnes—Agnes, her sister's child; and they had played, that sister and she, underneath the old thorn tree by her father's cottage-door. Poor Flora, now dead! And as these thoughts passed in quick succession through her mind, she wept bitterly. Blessed tears those were, softening the hard cold heart, bringing back to it affections that the sordid love of gain had eaten out,—falling quietly, peacefully, as the dew falls in the calm summer evening, when the flowers, scorched by the noonday sun, drink it and are refreshed,—blessed tears! The angels in heaven beheld them and rejoiced.

Euphin's resolutions passed not away with the hours of her weakness. No; for, made with trust in God's assistance, she was enabled to keep them. 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price,' was henceforth her motto; and above her chimney-shelf she wrote these words, 'Ye that have full cups, share them with those who have empty ones.' Then her sympathies were extended to the poor and destitute wherever she found them. Every Sabbath her sixpence was deposited in the 'ladle,' while she re-

sponded to all calls, either for missions or special congregational purposes, by giving at least five times that amount. Nelly's mother was no longer afraid of the rent-days; and her little girls, being well clothed and well fed, tripped blithely to school,—thanks to Auntie Euphin, as they called their kind friend.

Agnes Gordon was received into her own house, and proved a valuable assistant to her when she was getting 'no so able' to attend to her little store; while Janet and Kitty were fitted out for service. And when John Maclean sought Agnes for his bride, Euphin gave her an ample providing, and L.50 with which to begin housekeeping; and so did she with one after another of her nieces, as they left her for their respective homes.

And still Euphin went on giving, and still her riches increased. Like the man in the Pilgrim's Progress, 'the more she gave away, the more she had.'

A happy woman she was, too; and though she knew the men who had robbed her, she never revealed their names, saying, like Joseph of old, 'They thought evil against me, but God meant it for good.'

Amidst the graves of her kindred may be seen the green mound, underneath which the dust of Euphin Morrison reposes, until the trumpet shall

sound on the morning of the resurrection, and wake the dead from their long last sleep.

'Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupteth.'

THE CHARITY OF THE POOR.

Then out an' spak' bold Thomas true,
As he grasped spear in hand,
Cries 'Willie, ye maun tarry here,
While by your cause I'll stand.

'Your mother was my ae sister,
We grew up side by side;
An' to her son I'll faithfu' be,
Whatever fate betide.'

SCOTTISH BALLAD.

'YOUR father's lang in getting hame the day, Teena,' said Mrs Oliver, addressing her eldest daughter, who was busy preparing a savoury stew that simmered upon the fire. 'It's near five o'clock, an' he used aye to be here about three.'

'He had to gang roun' by Mireside wi' some sacks,' answered the girl, 'an' he said he would be langer;—but that's him now, I hear the sound o' wheels.'

'Ye'd better put the kettle a wee bit nearer the

fire, to let it be fairly boilin', an' mak' him a cup o' tea; he likes ane when he comes hame cauld an' weary.' And, so saying, Mrs Oliver continued her darning, leaving her daughter to prepare the evening meal.

A few minutes after this conversation, the door opened, and a stout, healthy-looking man, in the prime of life, entered, and was heartily welcomed by mother and daughter; while a chubby fair-haired child, throwing away the doll with which she had been playing, trotted to meet him, exclaiming joyfully, ''At dad, 'at dad;' adding, 'an' Ovey (Rover) tae,'—at the sight of her playfellow, a large mastiff, who followed close to his master's heels.

Gideon Oliver lifted his little girl in his arms, saying, 'Has Isa been a gude bairn when dad was away?'

'Isa been gude, vely gude,' answered the child in her broken speech, drawing at the same time her dimpled hand through his hair.

Mrs Oliver had risen upon her husband's entrance, and began to unfasten the wrappings from his neck, exclaiming, 'Ye are late the day, Gideon; but Teena says ye had to gang to Mireside afore ye cam' hame. It's very stupid o' me bein' feared when ye are a wee ahint your time, but I canna help it, ye are as regular as the clock for ordinar'.' Then,

perceiving a sad expression on his face, she added, in an anxious tone, 'Has ony ill happened ye, Gideon, for ye look wae?'

Gideon Oliver turned away his face for a moment to brush a tear from his eye; then, quickly recovering himself, he placed in his wife's hand a letter, which she received in silence, and read the following words:—

'DEAR SIR,—It is my sad duty to inform you that your sister Mrs Fairlie died this morning, after a protracted illness, which she bore with Christian patience and resignation. While upon her deathbed, she requested me to mention her wish that you should come and make all necessary arrangements regarding her funeral, and also her desire that one of her children might be placed under your care, hoping that each of her late husband's brothers would adopt one of the remaining three. I trust that after all the debts are paid, there may be a little left over, to assist in defraying the expense of maintaining and educating the children till they are able to support themselves.

'However, all these matters can be talked over when we meet.

(Signed) 'JOSEPH BRAIDWOOD,

'*Brampton Schoolhouse.*'

It was some minutes before Mrs Oliver could speak, after reading the letter; at last, the first burst of grief past, she said, as if addressing herself,

'Puir wee Ellen, she canna be mair than ten months auld, she was born about the time Sandy died. God help the motherless infant!'

That evening, after the children were asleep, Mrs Oliver drew her seat near her husband, who sat in silence by the fire, and entered at once upon the subject of Mrs Fairlie's death; for well the true wife knew how tenderly her husband had loved this sister, and how sorely his heart was bleeding for his loss.

'I wish I had gaen to see Peggy this simmer, Gideon,' she began; 'but it was a lang way to Broadlands, an' I didna well see how I could leave the bairns; an' then I seem to ha'e nae heart for anything sin' our wee laddie died; but if I had kent she was sae ill, I wadna ha'e let anything stop me.'

'There's nae use vexin' yoursel' refleckin', Mary,' said her husband, kindly. 'Peggy wrote that she couldna expect ye to gang sae far frae hame an' leave sae mony bairns. It's me that's been to blame; I might ha'e gane an' seen her, puir thing. But what dae ye say about us takin' Ellen? She will soon be auld eneuch to toddle about the house wi' Isa; only

another wee ane will gi'e ye mair wark, an' ye havena been a'thegether strong this while back.'

'Never think on me, Gideon,' answered Mrs Oliver; 'I wad dae muckle for Peggy's bairns. We gaed to the schule thegether, an' learned our lessons aff the same book, an' mony a day we played thegether by the burn-side at Auld Shiels; an' then, when we were bits o' lassies, no ower fifteen, we gaed away to Thurwill Fair, an' hired oursels to the same master. Do ye mind it, Gideon? It was there, tae, we attended Mr Clark's sacrament. I was a thochtless crater in thae days, never heedin' onything but dress or folly; an' mony's the warnin' I got frae Peggy to mind that there was another warld besides this ane. A' the time o' the table service, when Mr Clark was addressin' us, I saw the tears drappin' frae her een; an' the first serious thought I ever had was when she made me kneel down beside her in the plantin' as we cam' hame frae the kirk that day; an' then, O how she did pray for us baith!'

'She was aye a by ordinar' lassie sin' ever I mind,' answered Gideon, 'an' no like any o' the rest o' us. I wonder where she got sic genty ways as she had. I never saw anybody could equal her, except yoursel', Mary.'

'Dinna mention us in the same breath, Gideon,'

replied his wife; 'I just wish I was half as gude as she was. I dinna ken what was about her, for nane o' the young men durst ever use ony freedom wi' her; and even on the harvest-rig, or at the buchts in the mornin', where sae muckle folly used to gang on among the lads and lasses, her manner checked a' kind o' nonsense. An' then, though she was sae bonny, that never seemed to uplift her. I mind ae nicht, at Hillend, after we were dune wi' our wark, we took a saunter up the burn-side frae the house, an' sat down on the bank aboon the washin' pule. We hadna been lang there when Willie Gourlay (our master's son) cam' up wi' some heather in his hand, which he put into Peggy's cap, an' tellt her to look at hersel' in the water, an' see how bonny she was, sayin', "I saw the laird's daughters when they were dressed for a ball the other nicht, Peggy; but for a' their ribbons and brooches they didna look half as well as you." Instead o' bein' the least carried wi' his praise, though she liked him sae well, she only was vexed, and said cannily,—

'"Ye wadna mak' me proud, wad ye, Willie? I ha'e as little right to be vain o' my face as the peacock has o' his grand feathers that he is aye spreadin' out for admiration; we didna mak' oursels." Oh! Gideon, I whiles think if she had only marryt Willie

Gourlay, they wad baith ha'e been happy, for Willie wad ha'e travelled ower the whole world, I believe, for ae kind blink o' her e'e.'

'What can ye say about it, Mary,' replied Gideon, sadly, 'than just it had been ordered otherwise by Ane wha canna err? Ye see Peggy had her ain share o' independence, an' she couldna stan' his mother an' sister's lookin' down on her; but mony a vexed heart she had, especially after Willie 'listed, an' gaed aff to the Indies. Then we a' advised her to marry Robert Fairlie, thinking he was a grand match for her, besides bein' a clever, active man, though I doubt, after a', he wasna worthy o' her. But nane ever heard Peggy complain. If she had sorrows, she keepit them to hersel'. Ye havena tellt me yet, though, what ye think about us takin' wee Ellen.'

'I am loth to part them, Gideon,' said his wife. Do ye no think we could keep them a'? Ye ken the Fairlies are a high, proud kind o' folk, an' sair my heart misgi'es me if Peggy's bairns wad be well lookit on amang them. But mind this, Gideon, if they should come, an' if they should ha'e ony siller, no ae penny o' it is touched by us. I wad never ha'e it said that Gideon Oliver made his sel' rich at the expense o' the orphan bairns.'

'It winna do, Mary,' was the reply. 'Dinna ask

me, for it vexes me to refuse you ought. Ane is as muckle as ye can well manage wi' our ain. But as it is likely I may bring the wee lassie away wi' me, some o' the lads frae Black House had better meet me at the town on Friday nicht; the coach gets there about seven o'clock.'

It was a stormy and bleak winter day when the friends who were to conduct the remains of Mrs Fairlie to her last resting-place, met in the farm-house of Lochhead.

After a short prayer by the old and venerated minister, the mourners began to form themselves into a procession behind the hearse, which moved slowly forward to the churchyard, the 'God's acre' of our ancestors, where man is the *seed* that the 'Lord of the harvest' will raise up *in glory* when 'time shall be no more.'

The snow, which had been falling for some days, was now drifted into wreaths here and there over the melancholy expanse. Sometimes the air was calm, not a murmur heard of tinkling rill or rushing stream, for all were frozen up in winter's icy embrace; again the wind came in gusts, shaking the leafless trees in its fury, and scattering in every direction the dazzling masses of snow.

The heart of Gideon Oliver was desolate indeed

when he saw the clods thrown into the grave, and the skilfully cut turf smoothed over the mound which contained all that was mortal of one so well beloved.

Turning to leave the place, his eye recognised a stranger standing near, his form muffled up in a military cloak, which half concealed his features. This stranger, like himself, seemed absorbed in grief, and started as Gideon laid his hand upon his shoulder, and inquired if he were not William Gourlay.

'Who asks my name?' was the surprised reply.

'Gideon Oliver,' answered his companion.

In a moment the other stretched out his hand, and grasped the hard palm of the carrier's in his own; then sinking his head upon his breast, he groaned bitterly. After a few moments' silence, Gourlay, who by steadiness and ability had earned promotion from the ranks, and now enjoyed the position of lieutenant, spoke, and said, 'I am indeed William Gourlay. You will wonder to see me here, but a few words may explain all. Arriving lately in Scotland, after ten years' absence in foreign lands, a restless longing seized me to see your sister, though lost to me for ever, and to take one look at the face which had been the load-star of my life,—the face of my first, my last, my only love. I came here this morning, but only to have the sad privilege of following her re-

mains to the tomb; and now I go forth a wanderer, without a home, to lay my bones on some distant shore.'

'Dinna speak that way, Mr Gourlay,' said the kind-hearted carrier; 'ye have still youth on your side, and ha'e ye nae sisters that need your care? Dinna be sae cast down; try to say, "The Lord gave, and He hath taken away: blessed be His name." Humble yourself under His hand, and He will lift you up again; bend to His will, and you will find that it has been good for you to be afflicted. Gang hame to your friends, Mr Gourlay, and rouse yoursel' like a man. Had Peggy been to the fore, she wad ha'e gi'en you the same advice.'

'Friends!' said the soldier, bitterly, 'I have no friends. Have you not heard that few are left now of my father's house? Ten years absence has emptied our dwelling, filled our burying-place in the churchyard, and scattered the survivors over distant lands.'

'Puir chiel!' said the carrier, wiping away the tears that were flowing freely over his rough cheeks—'puir chiel'! say ye sae? then I am wae, wae for ye. I am rich, for I ha'e a wife and bairns. Come an' see us, an' Mary will be a sister to you. Do ye mind o' her? She was Mary Innes lang syne—Peggy's friend and neighbour when she served at your father's.'

'Yes, I do remember,' answered Lieutenant Gourlay. 'Ah! could I forget aught, or any one connected with those times? I loved your sister, Oliver,' resumed the soldier, 'as man never loved woman; but my family were proud, and they parted us for ever. Since that time, it seems as if the sap were dried out of my heart and my right arm were withered. But one word before we part—*her* children?'

'They will be provided for,' was the reply. 'But will ye no come wi' me? I canna think on ye gain' away sae desolate.'

'Not now, Oliver, not now,' groaned the poor man. 'Farewell, my friend; and if we should never meet again in this world, may we all meet in a better.' And so saying, the soldier hurried from the spot.

Gideon Oliver slowly and sadly retraced his steps to the house, where a party of friends were already assembled to consult about the disposal of the children, as well as to make arrangements for winding up the business connected with the farm. A place was soon made at the table for the new comer, and the conversation was resumed by the eldest brother-in-law of the deceased, who asked if any one present knew the extent of the debts; for Mrs Fairlie's illness following so soon after her husband's death, these matters had been neglected.

Mr Braidwood, the schoolmaster, replied, that as far as he was aware, from what Mrs Fairlie told him on her deathbed, after everything was cleared, there might be a matter of L.50 to each of the children.

'Then who amongst us is to take the children?' inquired the first speaker. 'I understand my sister-in-law wished each of their uncles to receive one. I have no objections to the eldest coming with me; she may assist her aunt in household matters. Her money will go so far to maintain her; for I would consider it unjust to my own family were I to adopt a stranger, even though that stranger were my brother's child.'

Gideon Oliver heard this cold, unfeeling speech with flushed cheek and kindling eye; then starting to his feet, he exclaimed, 'Gentlemen—for ye are a' gentlemen that are here, an' I am but a puir man—no fit company for you, I'll warrant some o' ye are thinkin'. I ha'e heard Mr Fairlie's offer—sae ha'e ye a': now hear mine. I will tak' a' the bairns—not ane, but a',—yes, a',' he repeated, seeing the company looked one to another. 'They are my sister's,—the sister I liked best, now a saint in heaven; an' wha, I wonder, has as gude a right to them? I canna promise to bring them up leddies, but I will try and bring them up Christians.' Then turning to the schoolmaster, he said, 'An' you, Mr Braidwood, will see

that the money is put into the bank in the name o' the bairns; no ae penny o't will be touched by me, as I hope to lay my head in peace on my dyin' pillow.'

After a pause, the silence of which seemed to imply the assent of the friends present, the minister rose, and seizing the hand of the carrier, said, 'Gideon Oliver, you have made me proud of my country this day. The children are yours, and may the blessing of Him who is the orphan's shield and the widow's stay be with you; but your wife?'

'I will answer for her; she will take them to her heart as if they were her ain; an' right glad she will be. It was her proposal that I should bring them a' hame wi' me; but I wadna listen to her, for she hadna been strong, an' I couldna think o' her bein' toiled. And now, gentlemen,' he continued, turning to the company, 'I will bid you gude day and be aff, for we've a lang journey afore us, the bairns and me;' and so saying, Gideon left the apartment.

Friday had been a day of excitement in the carrier's cottage; the children wearied, and counted the hours till evening would come and bring their little cousin; and even Isa asked, before going to sleep, that she might be awaked before 'Dad and wee Elie tam hame.'

'That's them now, mother!' cried little Gideon, as he rushed to the door. 'I ken Daughtie's fit; an'

see, Rover kens it tae, for he's waggin' his tail.' Then turning quickly, he exclaimed, 'Fast, Teena, bring a chair! here's father an' a hale cart fu' o' bairns; an' the snaw's been fa'in' thick upon them, for the're a' as white as doos.'

Few words passed between Oliver and his wife until the children were all safely in bed, after which Gideon related the sorrowful events of the past day, saying, as he concluded, 'Ye will be glad for ane, Mary, that I brought them away; ye said the puir things wad be ill lookit on amang their father's friends.'

'Gideon Oliver,' answered his wife fondly, while a tear moistened her soft, gentle eye, 'I am prouder o' ye this nicht, my husband, than I was that day I stood wi' ye afore the minister, an' heard ye vow to protect and cherish me till death should us part. Glad I am—mair than glad. This is the first time my heart has been light sin' our wee laddie's death. The Lord has restored fourfold that which He took away. Oh that He may enable us to be faithful to this great trust!'

Returning to my native place after the lapse of some years, I enjoyed many pleasant rambles amongst the poor, accompanied by the minister's wife, in whose

hospitable dwelling were passed some delightful weeks of that summer.

'Come,' said that friend to me one day, when the fineness of the morning tempted us to leave the house for a wander in the fields, 'let us visit a dying bed, that we may learn how to die when our time comes.'

'Then it is the deathbed of a Christian,' I answered.

'Yes,' was the reply; 'but you shall see and judge for yourself.'

A few minutes after this conversation we were threading our path through a coppice wood, which soon opened into a tract of moorland, rich with ferns and furze, interspersed at intervals by knolls covered with crab and bramble bushes. As we sauntered on, the lark quivered upwards, flooding the air with melody, contrasting pleasantly with the hoarse croak of the raven, which flew heavily along, brushing the heath with his wings. About the middle of this moor stood a few scattered cottages, the most distant of them being that to which we bent our steps. We were met a few yards from the door by a comely young woman with an infant in her arms. The mother's face bore traces of weeping, and at the sight of my friend the tears gushed forth afresh. She preceded us quietly to the house, and led the way into a

beautifully clean and orderly apartment, rendered fragrant by the rose-tree that clustered round the window. Upon a bed lay a woman apparently about fifty years of age, supported in the arms of an interesting-looking girl, who, dipping a handkerchief in water, tenderly bathed the forehead of the sufferer.

After a few moments' conversation with the sick one regarding her health, Mrs Cameron inquired, 'Is your trust in your Saviour as firm as ever, Mrs Oliver?'

'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' was the answer.

'And you have no fear to enter the river?' was again asked. 'You know there is "no other way to the gate."'

'No,' said the woman, 'for you remember the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,"—though I like to read it best leaving the *will be* out o' the verse. I aye think the learned men that looked ower the translation o' the Bible should ha'e let it stan' "I with thee," and that made the promise no sae muckle for the future as the present time; now it's the present I need. But ye were speakin' about the river: I think I am already on its brink, and waitin' quietly till a post 'ill come with a letter to me, as it did to Christiana and her

company; then I'll prepare to gang across, hoping for "grace to help in time of need."'

'Do your children come often and see you?' inquired Mrs Cameron.

'Yes, bless them, puir things,' was the response, they are a' kind to me. Mony a time I think the gude-man an' them wad put the hairs o' their head aneath my feet to serve me.'

'And so they should,' said my friend, 'you have been faithful to them.'

'Dinna say that, Mrs Cameron,' cried Mrs Oliver, 'I have been at the best but an unprofitable servant; I tried to do my duty to them, but have sadly failed. However, I can die in peace; for I think that ane and a' o' them are seeking the pearl o' great price, an' will meet me an undivided family in heaven, where Peggy will see her bairns again.'

A spasm coming upon the sufferer shortly after this, we left the house accompanied by the young girl, who had given up her post by the bed to her eldest sister.

'Your aunt will not survive long, Ellen, I fear,' said my friend.

''Deed we expect naething but death, ma'am,' answered the poor girl through her tears. 'An' what will we dae without her? Oh how kind she has been

to us a'! We never kent ony difference between us an' her ain; 'deed I think she made, if onything, rather mair o' us. Then she span a' our claes, just as she did my cousins'; an' when my sisters were in service, mony a time she gi'ed them a five-shilling piece, saying, "Young folk are aye needin' lots o' things." When Ann was married she got the same providing as her ain daughters; an' we never kent but my uncle had ta'en her siller to pay for't—it wad only ha'e been richt if he had; but instead o' that, the whole o' it was gi'en into her hand, capital and interest, on her marriage day. But I canna tell ye o' a' they ha'e dune for us. Oh! Mrs Cameron, my heart is like to break when I think o' losin' her!'

A few days after this, a note was placed in my friend's hand telling her of the death of Mrs Oliver. It did not surprise us; for we felt, when we last saw her, that her days were numbered and her useful life nearly finished.

She rests in peace till that day when the vision shall be fulfilled:—'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

THE WANDERERS.

The pawkie auld carle cam' ower the lea,
Wi' mony good e'ens and good morrows to me,
Saying, Kind sir, for your courtesey,
Will ye lodge a silly puir man?

THE GABERLUNZIE MAN.

A SKETCH of rural life in Scotland in the beginning of the present century would be incomplete, were no mention made of the beggars who then wandered across its moors and mountains, finding shelter and sustenance at the various hamlets and farmhouses that came in their way. Since the law forbidding vagrancy has been more strictly enforced, an interesting and often romantic portion of this class has almost entirely disappeared from our land; consequently, a few remarks on some of these characters may not be altogether devoid of interest. The wanderers were of different grades, —from the gentle beggar who sat with the master

and mistress in the spence, to the gipsy, with her coal-black hair, who only asked a 'mouthfu' o' meat,' and permission to sleep for a night in the shelter of a barn.

First of the wandering class may be mentioned the beadsman or blue-gown, of which Eddie Ochiltree, in Sir Walter Scott's 'Antiquary,' was a type. The proper designation of those beggars was the King's Beadsmen.

Bede or bead, in old English, signifies 'a prayer;' —a beadsman was one who offered prayers for another. In ancient times, persons of rank and wealth often engaged men to make supplication to Heaven on their behalf; and beadsmen were appointed to pray for the prosperity of the king and state. Those so employed were privileged beggars, and they naturally degenerated in course of time into mere mendicants.

The beadsmen were assembled in the Canongate Church every king's birthday, where a sermon was preached by a minister holding the appointment, for which he received L.50 yearly; and the clerk who dispensed the royal bounty was munificently remunerated with half that sum; another beadsman being then placed upon the list. Each one received cloth for a blue gown, a loaf of bread, a bottle of ale, and a

leathern purse, containing a penny for every year of the king's age. A large pewter badge was attached to the breast of the gown, on which, besides the name of the receiver, were inscribed the words *Pass and Repass*. This bespoke the privilege of begging, and claimed for the suppliant the kindly hospitality of the public. The ancient practice of appointing beadsmen was discontinued in 1833.

The most numerous class of beggars, however, were those who, though less privileged, seldom failed to receive a welcome and a night's lodging in the houses where they appealed for alms. They carried in their wallets a round wooden dish, which they held out to the gudewife upon entering, and received in it the alms she was pleased to bestow, which generally consisted in a 'nievefou' or two of oatmeal, afterwards duly transferred to the meal-pock swung over the back. Sometimes they were cripple, requiring to be sent from house to house in barrows or upon horseback, afterwards in carts. I have heard an old gentleman relate that, happening when a child to spend a winter at an upland farm, he could remember the battles that took place amongst a party of beggars who chanced at one time to be storm-staid there. As soon as the roads were passable, the troublesome guests were packed into a

cart; and the little boy begged permission to accompany the man-servant who drove them,—some to the neighbouring farm, others to a greater distance. It was a rough moorland road over which they passed; and the jolting of the cart, together with the fighting of the beggars, caused continual delay, as one after another was pitched out upon the soft moss land, and had to be replaced. The driver at last got enraged, and called out—after having for the fourth or fifth time seen them all safely seated—'If ye dinna keep your seats now, ye "*dirtry*," I'll just coup ye a' out thegither on the muir.'

The gipsies—that interesting race of whose origin so much has been written and so little is still known—formed another branch of those wanderers. They roamed over the country, making brooms of birch and heather, manufacturing spoons from the horns of farm oxen, supplying the 'gudewife' with pitchers, or repairing her 'pingle pans,' spaeing fortunes, stealing poultry, and breaking down the fences. The men were dexterous anglers, and often excelled in athletic sports; some possessed a fine musical taste, and were the favourite 'fiddlers' at fairs and penny weddings. They pitched their encampments in secluded lanes and by the side of plantations, where the busy stir of their curious life formed an

object of interest to the simple peasantry. Though showing no mercy to those who incurred their hatred, they often were most faithful in their attachment to the families that treated them kindly, or afforded them shelter.

One of those gipsies received many an 'awmis' and night's lodgings at the house of a gentleman, whose son in after life frequently related the following story of his boyhood.

Having been sent by his father to a neighbouring town for a considerable sum of money, he left home in the morning, hoping to reach it again before dusk. Being unexpectedly detained, however, the afternoon had nearly closed ere he approached the lonely moor which lay between him and his father's house.

As he entered upon the wild waste, stretching several miles before him, the sun was sinking beneath the distant horizon, tinging the hills with a golden light, while the moon, like a silver bow, already appeared in the sky. The boy was brave, nevertheless, as his eye fell upon the spot where some time before a pedlar had been robbed and murdered, a sensation not unlike terror crept over his frame, and stooping down, he tapped his pony's neck, saying,

'I wish we had kept by the highway, Vixen, for this moor is not a canny one for you and me to-night.

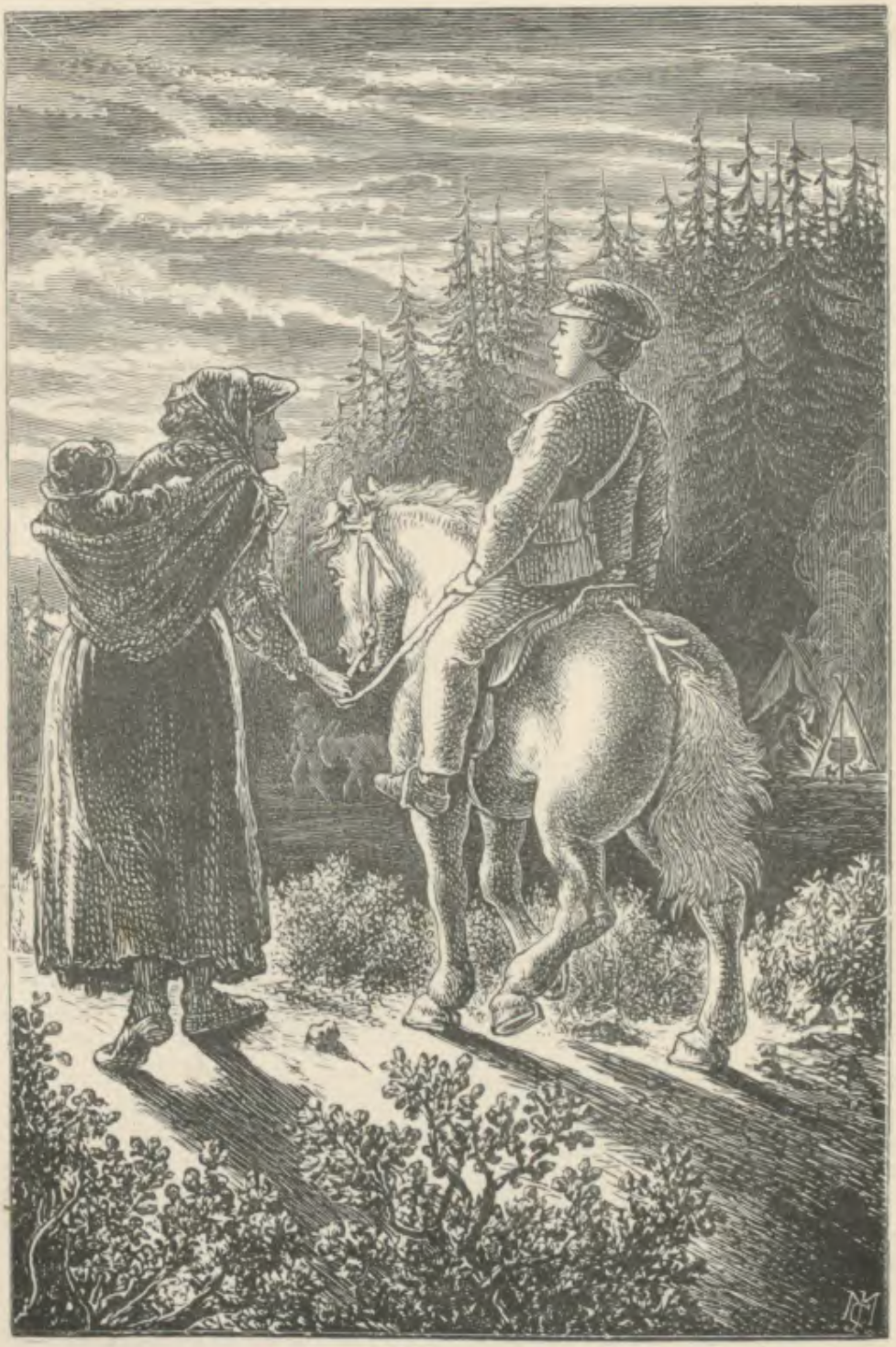
Vixen pricked up her ears in response to her master's voice, and, curving her beautiful neck, trotted on at a brisker pace. He had not proceeded far on his way, when he discerned a solitary figure standing on the path over which he must needs pass. Should he turn? No! it would be cowardly. So, whistling a tune to keep his courage up, he rode boldly forward, and on drawing near, recognised, to his great delight, a gipsy woman who often lodged at his father's house.

'I am happy to see you, Nannie,' exclaimed the youth, gladly, as Vixen obeyed the rein, and drew up to a walk beside the female. 'It's something worth while to meet a friend on this moor after sunset.'

'A blessin' on your bonny face, my young master,' answered the gipsy; 'I am blithe to see it again. But ye're ower late out on the muirs the nicht, for the country is loose the now.'

'I was detained in the town, Nannie,' said the boy, 'and as I knew my father would be anxious about me, I came through this way, to save a half-hour or so of time.'

'Well, it wasna wise o' you,' was the response, 'for our folk ha'e encamped the day ahint yon plantin', an' the cuddies an' dowgs might fear your pony; but I will tak' it by the bridle and lead it past.'



BYGONE DAYS IN OUR VILLAGE.

Page 194.

She then added, 'I heard at the house that you were expeckit hame; sae I just came away to meet ye, in case ye happened to tak' the short road.'

'Well, Nannie,' said the youth, with a feeling of relief in having found a friend at such a time in such a place, 'do as you will, lead me as you please.'

As the boy and his guide approached the encampment, the scene presented was a lively one. Sheltered by the dark pine wood, stood a tent, near the door of which played a few black-eyed, half-naked children; a woman sat beside them on the trunk of a tree, busy with her needle; while a beautiful girl superintended the cooking of the evening meal, placed in a cauldron swung between three poles over a blazing wood-fire. An old man, whose white hair contrasted strangely with his swarthy face, was seated upon the ground making brooms from a quantity of heather which lay strewed around. A young fellow led forth a donkey to pasture upon the moor, and the boy thought he could observe an angry scowl upon his face as he looked at the woman and her charge; nor did he deign a word of reply to her observation about 'tetherin' the cuddie a gude bit frae its neighbour, for the grass was gae bare about the place.'

As they passed the tent, an ugly cur rushed out, and set up so fierce a barking, that Nannie, lifting a

stick, hurled it in the direction of the animal, and sent it back whining to its place of concealment. The gipsy led her young friend well-nigh a mile farther in his homeward direction, then quitting the bridle, said—

'Let na the grass grow at your heels till ye reach your father's house the nicht, for it's well kent among our folk that ye ha'e mair siller about ye than the gudeman could well spare. I kept our men frae meddlin' ye, an' no ower well pleased they are wi' me for't, I ken; but for your ain sake, as well as for hers that's now away, I couldna see a hair o' yer head injured.'

The boy was astonished at the speech of his gipsy friend, and alarmed when he thought of the danger which, by her interference, he had just escaped.

'Nannie,' he said, 'how can I thank you enough, or what have I done to deserve your kindness?'

'What ha'e ye done!' replied the woman. 'Na, rather, what ha'e ye no done, you an' yours, for me an' mine? Mony's the lump o' bread an' cheese I ha'e gotten frae your mother, when I wasna ower well supplied wi' meat; an' mony's the nicht I ha'e sat dry an' cosy by your ingle-cheek, when the rain was lashin' without. An' mind ye nae the day when the ill callants o' the town set the carrier's big doug on

puir Effie, that's now gane, an' how ye got your ainsel' bitten by takin' it aff her? If ye ha'e forgotten about it, she never did till the day o' her death; an' often she said to me, "Oh! mother, if ye ever ha'e it in your power to serve the young maister, dae it for my sake."'

The lad pressed the poor woman's hand, for tears were beginning to fall, as she recalled the words of her lost child; and saying, 'I will never forget your kindness to me this night, Nannie,' he put the spur to his pony, and galloped towards his home, which he reached in safety.

The imbecile and insane formed another touchingly interesting class of wanderers. Those poor stricken creatures seem to have made a deep impression on the minds of the young,—their strangely mysterious histories, somewhat anticipating the place of the sensation novel in our days, and giving to the grave, practical character of the rural population a tinge of romance. A friend, speaking lately to me upon this subject, said she remembered fifteen of those helpless beings who came about her father's house when she was a child. She could also remember how the children feared to enter the woods around after nightfall, lest they should meet some poor lunatic, who often lay down to sleep amidst the

dried leaves, or wandered about singing strange wild melodies among its glades.

One of those unfortunates was a peculiarly interesting woman, tall and very handsome, named Daft Jean. On her visits, she never asked anything except a cup of tea, a rare article in those days. Her tale was a sad one. Born of respectable parents in the lower ranks of life, she was a dutiful and affectionate daughter, notwithstanding the admiration her beauty never failed to excite. She unfortunately placed her affections upon the least worthy of her admirers; and in consequence of his proving false, her mind received a shock from which it never recovered. When her faithless lover left the neighbourhood for Edinburgh, every week this poor stricken one travelled from her father's house, twenty miles distant, looked in upon the man at his employment, and then without delay turned her face homewards again. And this she continued to do for many years; neither the snows of winter, nor the burning heat of summer, deterring her from this strange pilgrimage. Surely the gaze of those mindless though beautiful eyes must have sunk into the heart of the wretched man,—continually reminding him of his sin.

Another interesting wanderer was called 'Wee Davie,' to distinguish him from 'Big Davie,' who

also roamed about the country, and slept during the night near the coal-pit engine.

'Wee Davie' was a spare-made little man, as his name implied. People said he was 'mair rogue than fool,' which doubtless he was. He carried a basket containing a few tapes, rolls of cotton, needles, laces, and ballads. Of the last named article he had always a goodly stock, and could sing most of them himself My friend remembers the pleasure with which she used to listen to the 'Lass of Glenshee,' or 'The Hills of Glenorchy,' Davie's especial favourites; and with which, after a good deal of coaxing, he was almost sure to favour the company. He was a bit of a wit too, and often astonished the farm-servants with his humorous remarks.

'Davie, ha'e ye ony "Willie Cossar" preens the day?' said our nurse Peg to him one time, when he chanced to enter her master's kitchen during the noontide meal.

'No, Peg, I ha'e nae preens,' was the answer; 'but I'll tell ye what I can gi'e, lass—nose specks.'

Now as Peg at that period was not very young, and, like all Adam's race, did not care for being thought old, she rather winced under this remark, muttering, as she turned away, 'The ill-faured body!' which only raised a laugh amongst her fellow-servants.

Jock Geddes was another of that class. He was a tall middle-aged man, with a long flowing beard, of which he was exceedingly proud. Jock was an inveterate liar; indeed, it seemed an impossibility for him ever to speak a word of truth. He astonished his listeners with the magnitude and power of invention, in which he excelled.

'They are queer folk ower in Fife,' he would say; 'queer folk, and ha'e queer wayes.'

'How that, Jock?' would be asked.

'Weel, to gi'e ye an example o't. I saw ae day a man ploughing, an' I gaed up to see what kind o' beast he was drivin', it seemed so curious. "Man," says I, "what's that?" "Oh," says he, "did ye never see onything like that afore? look weel at it, for I am sure ye ha'e." "No, man," quo' I, "to my knowledge." "Weel," quo' he, "it's a big midge." An' sure eneuch, when I looked langer at it, I saw it was just a midge, but ane as big as a horse.' With such marvellous tales Jock contrived to amuse his hearers, and himself also, for it was thought he really believed the lies he told.

Perhaps the greatest favourite amongst all those characters was one called 'Piper Jack,' because he played very sweetly upon the Irish bagpipes. Jack was not an imbecile; but from the mere love of idle-

ness and adventure, he travelled the country, and found a welcome in every dwelling where he was known. His father was English, but his mother was an Italian; and Jack inherited from her the black eyes and raven hair, as well as the dark complexion, peculiar to that sunny clime; he inherited also the fervid feelings and strong passions which characterize that race.

Jack would have shared his last farthing with one poorer than himself, and oftener than once parted with his coat to cover some wretched, starving creature. Not only was he generous to a fault, but he was honest also.

'Why don't ye work, Jack?' he would be asked.

''Deed, my lady, to tell you the truth,' he would answer, 'an idle life suits me better. I could not settle at work; I must be my own master, and wander at will among your mountains.'

'But then, Jack,' would be argued, 'you would be independent if you ate the bread for which you laboured; and then you could keep a house above your head, and never need to go cold and hungry, as you often must do; and, you know, the Bible says, if a man will not work, neither should he eat.'

'Ah, my lady,' the cunning rogue would answer, with the most winning smile lighting up his handsome face, 'an' does Jack not work? Why, what would

the lads and lassies do if they had not music to cheer them? An' as for a roof to cover me, I never want one, thanks to your blessed country. The Scotch, my lady, will not let any poor creature suffer cold or hunger without giving aid.' And then he would add, 'Oh! of all the countries in the world, give me Scotland; its mountains, it may be, are bleak and cold, but the hearts it shelters are the warmest.'

Jack knew well the weak point in our national character.

Sometimes those beggars made the simple unlettered peasantry believe that they possessed a supernatural power, and in this way inspired them with a feeling of awe, or rather terror, which they turned to their own advantage. One of that kind called herself Lady Cameron. She was a proud, dignified woman, of violent temper, whom all were afraid to offend; therefore she proved a troublesome guest. When she left a house which she had condescended to honour by her presence, and where she had demanded and obtained the best bed and the best fare, she would be in high dudgeon if a servant were not sent with her to the next dwelling she thought fit to visit, to carry her 'bundle' of clothing. Upon one occasion, when the servant's in my grandfather's household were busily engaged during a harvest day, my grandmother po-

litely requested Lady Cameron to carry her own 'bundle.'

'I would doe for you, mistress,' said the proud beggar, 'mair than I would for ony other body; but to carry that,' pointing to her clothing tied in a handkerchief, 'I winna doe for man or woman livin'.'

She made, or tried to make her hosts believe she conferred a great honour upon them by remaining under their roof, as her appearance was sure to bring them a flow of prosperity. On the other hand, her displeasure was dreaded, as that would be followed by a train of misfortunes.

But time would fail were I to mention half the wanderers whose names were like household words, and with whose strange tales old Bridget amused us in the winter evenings, varying them occasionally with a fearful ghost story, till we started at the sound of a solitary leaf blown by the November blast against the window frame, and huddled together, until, hearing the breathing of the living, our beating hearts gained courage from the contact. Now those days, in which we listened to Bridget's tales, are but memories of the past. The beggar has almost ceased to wander from door to door, or re-appears in other and more degraded types; and as to the ghosts, in this busy, practical age, they also have vanished. We can dispense

with the latter; but surely the former, though having their disadvantages, helped to draw out the sympathies of our nature, and to implant a friendly feeling in the human heart. Nevertheless, the needy have not ceased from out the land, and the promise is still, as of old: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth.'

APPENDIX.

Note A, p. 6.

Dead Bell.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 367.

Note B, p. 6.

Lyke-wake.—A gathering in the house of the deceased to watch the corpse, during the several nights intervening betwixt the death and funeral. A verse in the old Scottish ballad of the 'Humble Beggar' illustrates this custom :—

'It happened ill, and it happened waur,
It happened that this beggar did die.
An' wha do ye think was at his lyke-wake?
Lads and lasses o' high degree.'

Note C, p. 8.

Beer-brewing was a very simple process in old times. A vessel, in shape like an upright churn, hav-

ing a false perforated bottom, was filled with malt and tepid water; the liquid which fell into the under part was then removed into a large copper, and boiled for an hour or two; it was afterwards put into casks, and allowed to ferment for two or three days before being ready for use.

NOTE D, p. 8.

Dais (French).—Throne or canopy.

NOTE E, p. 8.

Mart-killing.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 334.

NOTE F, p. 9.

Bannocks.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 330.

NOTE G, p. 10.

The practice of *ewe-milking* is referred to in the beautiful and touching ballad of 'The Flowers of the Forest,' where it is said—

'I've heard of a lilting at our ewe's milking,
Lasses a' lilting before the break of day;
But now there's a moaning on ilka green loaning,
That our braw foresters are a' wede away.

'At buchts in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
The lasses are lanely, dowie and wae;
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her legin' and hies her away.'

NOTE H, p. 10.

Brogues.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 341; also the old song—

'Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk,
And down wi' the Earl of Home!
And up wi' a' the brave lads,
Wha sew the single-soled shoon.

Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk,
Up wi' the lingle an' last!
There's fame wi' the days that are coming,
And glory wi' them that are past.

O! mitres are made for noddles,
But feet they are made for shoon;
And fame is as sib to Selkirk
As light is true to the moon.

NOTE I, p. 15.

Marriages celebrated in church.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 346.

NOTE K, p. 18.

Itinerating Tailors.—See Somerville's Life and Times, p. 351.

Note L, p. 25.

Thirlage.—A remnant of the old feudal system lingering in some parts of Scotland, whereby those who rented certain farms were, by the articles of their lease, compelled to send their grain to a particular mill. See Dictionary of the Scottish Language, by John Jamieson, D.D.

Note M, p. 28.

Bruise.—See Dictionary of the Scottish Language, by John Jamieson, D.D.

Note N, p. 103.

Cock-fights.—See My Schools and Schoolmasters, by Hugh Miller, p. 47.

Note O, p. 190.

Beadsmen.—See Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, vol. i. p. 188.

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