THE

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A Tale of 1826.

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF PAISLEY AT THAT TIME,

WITH PARTICULAR NOTICES OF

The Great Fire of Ferguslie in 1725;

The Dearth, in 1800;

The Opening of the Canal Passage Road, in 1808.

"Oh, slippery state of things! what sudden turns,
What strange vicissitudes, in the first leaf
Of man's sad history to-day most sunny,
And ere to-morrow's sun had set, most sad!
How scant the space between these vast extremes!"

[illegible]DITED AND PUBLISHED BY PARLANE & SMITH.

MDCCCLII.

Price One Shilling.

Agnes McCurt

THE

BURNLIP;

A Tale of 1826.

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF PAISLEY AT THAT TIME,

WITH PARTICULAR NOTICES OF

The Great Fire of Ferguslie, in 1789;

The Dearth, in 1800;

The Capsizing of the Canal Passage Boat, in 1810,

&c.

"Oh, slippery state of things! what sudden turns,
What strange vicissitudes, in the first leaf
Of man's sad history! to-day most happy,
And ere to-morrow's sun had set, most abject!
How scant the space between these vast extremes!"
—Blair.

PAISLEY:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY PARLANE & SMITH.

MDCCCLII.

PREFACE.

From the emigration of the Paisley Weavers by hundreds, the application of machinery to their trade, and the combination of other circumstances, it is evident that hand-loom weaving will in a short time be annihilated. In the following Tale, therefore, I have endeavoured to preserve—ere they vanish for ever—a few traits in the character and condition of a body of operatives which is fast receding from view, although once numerous and valuable in the community.

Two of the incidents introduced, it may be mentioned, were suggested by real occurrences, viz.,—the opportune receipt of a hundred pounds by the old man, and the generous assistance afforded by the two humble youths to their destitute companion. The details of the one I had

from the lips of a person who was benefited by the unexpected gift of the Indian merchant; and a scene differing only in a few particulars from the other, I witnessed personally. It may be stated, likewise, on delineating that member of a worthy craft, Peter Prickflea, that all professions, trades and employments, furnish sketches of the kind; and the examples quoted in Note g show that the annals of military talent, literature, and philosophy, present numerous instances of an opposite and noble nature, in those bred to the occupation practised by the *gentlemen of the cloth.*

The slight anachronism committed in describing the proposed trip of the Canal Boat as being to Glasgow, instead of Johnstone, from which she had just arrived, is scarcely worthy of remark. The extension of the Canal to the city was not, indeed, completed when the boat was overturned; but as the cutting of the line was still going on, in my narrative I merely anticipated its progress a little; and the only apology for the poetical liberty thus taken, is, that it was necessary for the construction of my story. In fine, I would hope that my little book will not, from a generous public, meet with a reception the less gracious,

because the events it details happened before our eyes to persons we have known, and on a spot where we have lived and moved.

Speed then, fair Spirit Barque! impelled by Feeling's cherub-breath, o'er the "vast ocean" of mind. 'Neath sail and pendant, lit by Joy's golden beam, bear thy welcome freight to every port—each human bosom—a balm for pain, an antidote to sorrow. Win the smile of beauty; the applause of wit; the love of all who delight in virtue, worth and truth. Show that common life, even in its humblest phases, possesses a real interest. Impress upon kindred hearts the seal of affection. Entwine my name with the images and objects of my native scenes, and such to me will be the dearest fame.

Paisley, *Dec.* 1852.

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that her inhabitants were really less virtuous and less happy, may not be so readily admitted. At all events, it is certain we are now subject to many evils of which our forefathers knew nothing in the days of "langsyne." Striking proofs of this are furnished by the excessive population of large modern cities, and consequent failure of the hospitality which characterised those good old times. Yet I would not be understood here to assert that Scotia's sons are by any means peculiarly deficient in generosity. On the contrary, the distress experienced by the operatives of Paisley &c. in the year 1826, gave rise to many brilliant instances of beneficence. The prompt and liberal manner in which many of the wealthier individuals in the locality then came forward with subscriptions, to procure employment for their otherwise destitute countrymen, was honourable to themselves, and to human nature in the highest degree. This, it will be perceived, cannot produce a thorough cure for the ills that beset us; but enabling a multitude of men to gain subsistence till the return of better times is a great thing.

As the following tale briefly exemplifies the sufferings which these exertions were so nobly made to alleviate, and illustrates, in a simple and natural manner, the habits and customs, the feelings and virtues, of a much misunderstood portion of the working classes in the the west of Scotland; I hope it will not be found uninteresting.

Having been rather infirm in my health during the summer of the anno domini mentioned above, I took a walk one day for the benefit of a little air and exercise, to view the operations on the Paisley Moss, which a number of weavers, who had been thrown out of their usual employment by the dulness of the trade, were then engaged in reclaiming. The view there presented of the miserable condition to which so many men, hitherto used to win their bread in an independent manner, were reduced, was but little calculated to dispel the gloomy broodings that already possessed my mind. Therefore, as the day was exquisitely fine, and I had not for a long time previous looked upon the place of my birth—the charming valley of Ferguslie—which was in the immediate neighbourhood of their labours, I felt an irresistable inclination to continue my walk, that I might wander among its beauties, and gaze once more upon a scene so delightful and so dear. The features and objects of that delicious spot, inseparably linked to my heart, wound themselves into my feelings, and were engraven upon my memory—things never to be forgotten. My filial love for it was awakened anew with increased ardour; and, as I strayed along, my mind was soothed and elevated to a pitch of calm enthusiasm. For the moment all my cares and anxieties were banished. On the pursuits and the pleasures of mankind I looked without solicitude, and felt that whatever freaks fortune might be disposed to play me through life; in the exercise of thought, and the flight of imagination, I possessed at least one source of enjoyment of

which she could never wholly deprive me. It was an extatic gush of "that perpetual dower flowing up perenially from the fountain of the spirit." Poetry is the natural effusion of such a mood, and I formed the ideas thereby suggested into the following

SONG.

AIR—"Wat ye wha I met yestreen."

My native vale, sweet Ferguslie!
  Perhaps thy minstrel may not tell
The tie that binds his soul to thee;
  But oh! his heart can feel it well.
The rambles of his early youth
  Were bounded by thy boundary,
And all his dreams of love and truth,
  Seem blent in memory with thee.

The lavrock singing o'er thy glade,
  Though distant, still his fancy cheers;
And in thy dark fir planting's shade,
  The lintwhite chaunting still he hears.
The wild bee circling round thy heath;
  The wild flower blooming on thy lea—
All, all will charm my mind till death!
  My native vale, sweet Ferguslie!

All the long past anticipations of my youth—all the traditions connected with the surrounding grounds, and the remaining fragments of the old Castle of Ferguslie,

which was formerly attached to the Monastery of Paisley, with the legends of

"Ye saintit well at Wudsyde
Yat ebbis and flawis at Spryngetyde,"

were tossed and turned up in my mind, till, as I traced the serpentine path that winds around the modern villa, now supplanting the ancient messuage—had the shade of the reverend Abbot John Hamilton, or any of the Monks of Clugni, once belonging to our antique Abbey, risen up with cowl and capuchin before me, I verily believe I should have dropped upon my knee and besought a benediction from the holy father.

I roamed unnoticing, though as it seemed not unnoticed, till I gained the point at which the line formed by Bissland's Road and M'Kerrell's Lane intersects that leading from the townhead of Paisley to Elderslie—the birth-place of the immortal Wallace—when, turning round the corner to eastward, I was suddenly roused from my reverie by a hearty slap across the back, which made me start aside and rub my shoulder with my hand. Gazing up, surprised at this unexpected salutation, who should I behold but my old friend William Oliver, upon whom I stared as at an aparition dropped from the clouds.

The dress and manner of this individual was so decidedly singular, they would have rendered him notorious in times less fastidious than the present. A sketch of his personal appearance will not therefore be inappropriate. His face, though wrinkled, retained the

hues of fresh old age. His grey hair, combed gracefully backward, ended in a natural curl, extending from ear to ear, not unlike the bottom of a tye-wig. On his head was placed a diminutive hat, whose disproportionate brim, entirely enveloping the low crown, was turned up on all sides, so that its edges formed a complete triangle, and presented to view what is facetiously termed a "cockit scraper." Round his throat was tied a red silk handkerchief, with small square spots, having each the print of a barley-corn in the centre. Over this was folded his shirt-neck of "Paisley harn," bleached pure as the snow. His coat, of an extremely light blue dye, had in lieu of a collar only a narrow cape; this lack, however, was fully made up by the wideness of its skirts, which descended to the lower calf of his leg. On one front of it were sewed, at regular spaces, uncommonly large silver-plated buttons, and on the other were seen the button holes, corresponding in number, length, and distance. The cuff or wristband of his short wide sleeve was turned up nearly to the elbow, and adorned at the top by a circle of buttons, plated like, but smaller in size than the others. A green plush vest, exhibiting two rows of yellow globular buttons, with specks of mother of pearl, reached down the whole length of his body. Its immense pockets were parted by two slopes that formed an angle at the bottom, and lying one on each haunch, bobbed alternately a good morrow, as he lifted his feet to move along. Short strait corduroy breeches, at perfect contrast with the amplitude of his upper garments, were fixed at his knees by steel buckles.

He wore a pair of thick rigg-and-fur dark blue stockings, that might have revived conversation amongst Mr Stillingfleet's literary ladies in the absence of that gallant patron of their club;* and his shoes were secured by buckles of the same metal, but much larger than those at his knee. In his right hand he carried a long crummie-headed stick, which he lifted at every second step in the consequential manner a drum-major twirls his military staff at the head of his regiment on a field-day; while his left, and greater part of the arm were immersed in the capacious pocket of his coat, and his sleeve furled up, till the cuff nearly touched his shoulder; so that the spectator may have conceived the ludicrous idea of a straw in a corn sack.

Such was the graphic costume of William Oliver, who stood most unexpectedly before me. When we met, the old man having observed my abstraction, and being in something of a humorous vein, imagined it would be a mighty good joke to waken me abruptly by the application of his staff. This feat he had performed, and there he stood gazing and laughing at his own success and my confusion—with one hand grasping his crummie stick, a necessary support, fixed deep into the ground, and the other placed upon his side as if to keep it from bursting. His belly was bent out till the large pockets of his vest dangled clear before, and the wide skirts of his coat behind, that part of his dress most appropriately, in his case, termed "small clothes." His head

* The "Blue Stocking Club."

was thrown back, and his face turned up to heaven, till the "cockit scraper" seemed ready to lose its hold of his combed and pomatumed cranium.

"Are ye at your poyetree again—ha, ha, ha!—that ye can neither see nor hear when folk speak ta ye?—ha, ha, ha!" he cried out in broken sentences, when his thundering fit had so far subsided, that he could now and then get a few words edged in, as it were, betwixt the peals.

"If it should be so, Mr Oliver," said I with a smile, "I think I have paid the kain for it this time in earnest."

"Na, I rather think the *cane** has paid you for it this time in fun—ha, ha, ha!" he replied with an increased roar of laughter at his own conceit, which he evidently considered an excellent pun.

"It will be *black mail** to me at all events," I returned, rubbing the spot on which he struck me; whereupon, taking my expression in a literal sense, William commenced laughing and shaking again like some ponderous and noisy machine set into motion, and I had the mortification to see the epigramatical point of my ingenious application of the term given to the tax imposed by some of the highland chiefs on their neighbours for security, lost upon the unintellectual capacity of my friend. When his risible faculties became somewhat composed, and the usual compliments of greeting were passed, I remarked to him that he had been walking.

"No," said he, "I hae'na walkit vera far yet; I'm

* See note a.

jist for taking a bit daunder down by Auld Mary Spreul's House, and alang the woods to see the men working at the Moss."

This intimation seemed to imply that William's home was near at hand, and as I knew that he had lately lived in a different and distant part of the town, it naturally led me to inquire concerning his present residence; in reply to which I received the grateful intelligence, that the old man was again settled comfortably in his original habitation on Candren side.

But before inserting the account which he gave me, it is necessary to narrate in a new chapter some circumstances that happened at an earlier period, in order that the reader may be enabled to understand the exclamations and allusions made by William during the course of our conversation.

Chapter II.

THE DEARTH.

"An odd-like wife they said that saw;
A moping runkled grannie:
She fley'd the kimmers ane and a';—
Word gaed she was na cannie."—Ramsay.

Before what is called the Muslin Trade—*i. e.* the manufacturing of muslin goods—commenced in Paisley, William Oliver was employed at weaving *silk gauze.* This fabric, introduced in 1759, became soon, and continued to be for a considerable time, the principal produce of the town. The first and most extensive warehouse for conducting this business was erected about a mile west from the Cross, and the dwellings and workshops of the weavers were built for convenience as near as possible to that establishment, and formed a kind of clachan around it. There my old friend was domiciled, in the middle of a row of low thatched houses, to each of which a small piece of garden ground, partitioned amongst the different tenants, was attached, and stretched from the back of the buildings to the edge of Candren Burn: whence the place partook the name of The Burnlip; thus identifying itself with a limpid little

stream, which, with many a fairy winding among the adjacent fields, comes as if on purpose to add another beauty to the charms of Ferguslie and Millarston; then wimpling westward, ambitious of its shade, glides through the Newton Wood, celebrated by my poetical townsmen, Tannahill, in one of his most delightful songs.

The first floor of William's dwelling was divided into two equal parts—one containing his weaving shop, the other the kitchen and a small room. The window of the latter, surrounded by blooming wreaths of honeysuckle, looked into the garden, so that when it was left open, to admit air, the bubbling of the stream, the song of birds, and the odours breathed from fragrant flowers and bushes, filled the apartment with a variety of sounds and scents, deliciously mingled and harmonised together. In particular parts of this garden William had distributed the different kinds of culinary herbs and plants usually to be found in that of a working man. A small flower plot, the tending of which had afforded him a grateful recreation during many a meal hour and "gloaming shot," was adorned at one end by a neat summer seat or arbour, and at the other by a couple of bee-hives, whose busy inmates kept up a continued and exhiliarating music as they went and came with restless wing, on their errands of industry, through the salubrious atmosphere.

In this rustic habitation William spent the most pleasant days of his life. His comfort, doubtless, even here was broken in upon by occasional troubles and

anxicties. The DEARTH,* for instance, which commenced at the close of the 18th century, caused him much of both dread and difficulty; but these were no greater than all his neighbours were then exposed to. There was for three years a great scarcity of provisions in the land, so that many persons, albiet wages were then high, could not procure adequate sustenance. People were often obliged to travel miles for a small quantity of oatmeal or a little flour, which when obtained at an exorbitant price, was accounted a particular favour. Everything eatable was made use of, and substituted by the populace for food. Grain merchants and grocers kept up the victuals they had on hand, in order to wring fortunes for themselves out of the necessities of their starving fellows; and so desperate was the case many were reduced to for want, that the public storehouses were forced open by ravenous mobs, and their contents violently carried away by the crowd, in spite of the blades and bayonets of the military.

From the pressure of an exigency so general, it will not be imagined that the inhabitants of The Burnlip were exempted. Mrs Oliver (William's wife), therefore, although an active and eident woman, was often compelled to lament the trials she had in bringing her bairns through that visitation, when, to use her own words, "Folk had plenty o' sillar, but provisions were na to be gotten for the buyin'."

Amongst the inhabitants there were, of course, some individuals who felt more keenly than others the hard-

* See Note b.

ships of the time; and in the number of those who suffered most severely, was an old woman called Margaret, or more commonly MAGGIE EASDON, who occupied a detached cottage at the foot of a small hill that rose abruptly from the roadside; and whose forlorn condition the bustling disposition and good nature of Mrs Oliver induced her—unlike some of the neighbours—sincerely to commiserate.

Of this ancient dame there were many marvellous stories afloat among the *natives* of the clachan. Sorcery, witchcraft, and paction with the devil were the least of her imputed crimes. She had lived in the same hut as lonely, as poor, and as old like since ever her most aged neighbours recollected having seen her, and many of these were now "nae chickens." She had, no doubt, been young at some period, but nobody about remembered her being so; and as all traces of her origin or connections were thus lost to the vulgar, there was a veil of mystery and wonder wrapt about her, that made her be looked upon by the more simple and ignorant with fearful credulity. Her appearance and manner too were much adapted to increase the feelings of awe with which she was beheld: for while her features and her frame, her wrinkled cheeks and shrivelled arms seemed as brown and dry as those of an Egyptian mummy, her voice had comparatively little of the querulousness that extreme age brings along with it; so that it was strange to see one upon whom the various cares—the numerous toils and troubles of nearly a century of mortal existence had stamped their uner-

asible insignia, stalking alone and chattering to herself as if surrounded by invisible beings. She was scarcely like a creature of this earth. It seemed as if the grave had given up its dead, and renewed the life and the spirit, without renovating the colour and the clay of the body. The effect these circumstances produced, received additional force from the uncommon meanness of her dress; which consisted of a thread-bare stuff gown, an old linen cap and soiled red cloak; worn in all seasons—in spring and summer, autumn and winter, "time out of mind." Her gown and cap indeed, might sometimes change shade a little. but the cloak was never altered—never off, not even in bed at night—if ever she went to bed or slept at all, as some of her best informed neighbours sagaciously hinted that she did not; for the earliest villager always found Margaret up before him in the morning, and at whatever time the latest retired to rest, there was ever a small and mystical light twinkling through the patched panes of her cottage window.

Beside the gable of said cottage grew, or rather had ceased to grow, an old tall sapless hawthorn tree, which, waving its crabbed branches, and creaking in every blast, stood without a bud in spring or a blossom in summer, unless it might be that here and there a leaf or two pined upon some less barren bough, as if to inform us that life had once been in its trunk ; or perhaps far in the latter end of autumn, or the beginning of winter, might be seen out of all reach, upon the very top of the highest twig, a single bunch of half-red and

slowly-ripening haws. Such, however; had not always been the case with this solitary stem. There were many people hard by, who remembered—and that not very long since—when the bloom followed the bud, and the fruit the flower upon it, as regularly and as plentifully as upon any tree in the valley; and hence they most naturally inferred that Margaret was not *canny*, "For how else could it be," said they, "that a tree whilk usit aye to be sae fu' o' leaves, and to hae sic bonny flourishes, should begin to dwine now, after standing sae mony years, gin it were gettin' fair play? It was na wont to be sae feckless afore. Na, na, its evident she has flung the glamoury o'er 't!" This opinion was vastly auxiliarated by another occurrence that happened most opportunely. A girl sent by her mother for some wares to the shop of widow Hoggit, relict of the late grocer of the clachan; just as if there had not been another dub in all her way, heedlessly dropt the money into a large jawhole opposite Margaret's door, and then began to cry at her loss. Our crone, seeing the little maid's distress, took up an old hoe that lay by her ingle; and the first time she drew it through the fragrant pool, linking out came the coin, shining amidst the mud, like a white cat's tail* on a black bog, or if you would have me classical,

"Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear."—HEM!—SHAKSPEARE.

In this occurrence the worthy folks aforesaid found another indisputable proof of Margaret's hellish league.

*The CANNA, vulgarly termed cat's-tail.

Peter Prickflea, a thin-chafted tailor, long considered a perfect oracle by his neighbours,—and who really did not move through the world like an ordinary mortal, inasmuch as his locomotion was greatly accelerated by a stilt and a staff, on account of a certain lameness in one of his legs—Peter having witnessed the above deed performed by Maggie Easdon, shifted his crutch to place it more firmly beneath him, shook his head with mystic solemnity, and putting his unshaven lips close to fat Widow Hoggit's ear, timorously whispered, "What think ye of that now? Never tell *me* ony body could do the likes o' that gin they were na ower grit wi' the deil—and wi' an auld howe too!"

"Aye, aye," responded the greasy relict, with a portentous ogle, "it's e'en a' true ye say. She's a witch or waur, I'se warrant, Mister Cracklouse—eh,—Prickflea, I mean," and simpering an apology, she invited this precious portion of a man to "come his wa's in bye, and crack ower the news o' the parish;" which meant neither more nor less than to repeat all the scandal each had heard or hatched, with perhaps a few of the love-glances said to pass betwixt this delicate pair.

Yet destitute and decried as she was, there was still one person, whose state and transactions—whose every movement and motion awakened in Margaret the most intense interest—in whom her very soul was absorbed, and who returned her devotion with an affection as lively as that she bestowed. This was a boy who dwelt in the same cottage with her, and who seemed to engross her attention the more in proportion as she receded

from all communication with the rest of her species. Although this youth had resided with her from infancy, his history was to the neighbourhood nearly as impervious as her own. He was said, though without certainty, to be her grandchild, the son of her daughter; but whether the offspring of wedlock's holy band, or the illegitimate issue of an unfortunate passion, baffled alike the inquisitive impertinence of the tailor's corner coteries, and the invidious conjectures of the vast and vulgar Widow's tea parties. This secret was the more indissoluble, as the young man was always designated by the old woman's own surname of Easdon; and although the Christian one of ANDREW was sometimes prefixed to it, the matter was but little mended. It furnished no clue whereby the busy-bodies could ascertain anything of his progenitorship satisfactorily. Instead of aiding their inquiries, it tended rather to perplex them, and to leave them the more in the dark the further they investigated the subject.

Chapter III.

THE CAPSIZE.

"Within its depth have youth and beauty perished,
And from its surface shriek'd despair and dread;
Yet pure and calm the water seems to sleep,
Like a cool villain after murder done."—Anon.

It would only be anticipating the course of my story to detail at present the parentage of Andrew Easdon. As I happen, however, to have possessed sources of information more authentic than those of the inquisitive worthies depicted in last chapter, I may in commencing state this, for the satisfaction of my readers, that his mother was one of those persons who were drowned when the Canal Passage Boat was overturned at the Paisley Basin, on Martinmas Fair Day,* in the month of November, 1810; and that the suspicions circulated in the village were so far correct, she being indubitably the daughter of old Maggie.

But though surrounded by holiday show, and placed among the frequenters of a Fair, the feelings of Mary Easdon were little akin to the thoughtless gaiety of the crowd who caused the catastrophe on that day, when she took her seat in the boat. Even for many a day

* See Note c.

before, the poor girl had seldom stirred from her home, or mingled in any way with the light-hearted and happy; for she knew that by one irredeemable step, she had added the most bitter ingredient to the cup of sorrow which her mother had been obliged to drink; and a wish to compensate as far as possible, by unremitting attention, the grief she had caused to a parent, who, even when soured to all the world beside, yet doated upon her, induced her never to leave the house except upon the most pressing necessity. There had reached her ear, however, at this time, intimation of a vessel having arrived in the Clyde from the "far East," and Mary hoped through that channel perhaps to procure some information regarding the destiny of one who was still dear to her, though he had wronged her deeply. Having explained her purpose and her prospects therefore, Mary parted from her mother to embark on the Canal, with the promise of an early return, which was never to be fulfilled in life; and the accident which prevented it was long and painfully remembered in the town.

The Canal, extending from the village of Johnstone to the city of Glasgow, had been lately opened; and the conveyance being something novel to the inhabitants of Paisley, many of them resolved, as it was the fair, to enjoy the holiday by an aquatic trip. The canal wharf therefore was immensely thronged, and when the boat arrived from Johnstone, a simultaneous rush of the crowd took place, to obtain seats in it; a great number in their eagerness, hurrying upon the top be-

fore the cabin and steerage were filled: by which—her ballast being light—the boat capsized and the whole were instantly plunged into the water. The scene that succeeded defies description. Hats, bonnets, cloaks and shawls floated all over the surface, or sunk suddenly clutched from below. Many persons helplessly perished at the bottom, before the multitude crushing and tumbling above them could be removed. When the boat righted, a number came up along with her, clinging to the sides and railing; but some of these being chilled by the cold, owing to the severity of the weather, lost their hold, fell back and were drowned. Others were pulled down again by individuals struggling for life in the water, and grasping in extremity at whatever came within reach; whilst the screaming of women and the shouting of men rose deafening above the tumult. In the centre of the town, a picture the more striking, from its very contrast to this, was to be beheld. Winter having set early in that season, the day was excessively cold and bleak. The very walls of the houses appeared blue. Thin scanty snowflakes fluctuated upon a frosty wind of the most piercing keenness; and notwithstanding it was the Fair, the Cross, the High Street, and streets adjoining, were all as desert and still as a city of graves; for the cry had come up that the Canal Boat was capsized, and her passengers drowned; and everybody who had relations out, ran to the basin to see if any of the dead belonged to them. In all the streets contiguous to the fatal spot were parties carrying the corses of the drowned, and in all the accessible

houses were medical men and others, rubbing the bodies of those whom there was any hope of recovering. On both sides, the Canal Basin was lined with an immense crowd, some of whom were groping in the water with poles and drags for the victims of the element; and others grasping at the limbs and garments of the drowned as they rose to the surface; on which occasions a murmur of horror ran through the throng, and there was a rushing and pressing to see who had been brought up, till a way was with difficulty opened to let the body pass, followed by the sudden lamentation of persons in the crowd, as they recognised the individual borne off to be a friend or an acquaintance.

In one case, the form of an apparently young female was carried out by two men;—the pale face was turned upwards, the bonnet had fallen off, and the long jet-black hair, loose and dripping, trailed upon the ground. When proceeding down the lane that leads from Canal Street to the basin, they were met by an old woman in a red cloak, with an anxious face and hurried step. When she drew near the party, her eye glanced upon the corse; then, wringing her hands with a supprest shriek, she cried, "It is she, it is she—Mary, Mary!" and as she moved after the breathless clay, the benefit of assistance seemed nearly as necessary for the mother as for the daughter.

The melancholy state of Paisley for some time succeeding the unfortunate affair of the Canal was manifestly oppressive. In many of the houses were two, and in some three dead bodies at the same time, accord-

ing to the number that had been in the boat belonging to each family. In others might be seen, stretched upon a bier, one member of the family who had perished; while on a bed near lay quivering between death and life, another who had just escaped. But there was one cottage in the suburbs where, if the deprivation was not so extensive, it was not less afflicting; nor the grief less intense, though perhaps not so violent—that was the cottage of Maggie Easdon. From the repute, or rather disrepute, in which she was held, it will hardly be imagined that the old woman met with much sympathy from a number of those in the neighbourhood. On the contrary, the death of her daughter, and the distress it occasioned, were looked upon as visitations for the unnatural transactions that were ignorantly imputed to her: and even when poor Mary was laid in the dust, in the Broomlands (latterly the Martyrs') church-yard—which was then unenclosed and desecrated, but is now embraced within the beautiful Cemetery at Woodside—it was looked upon as a special interposition of Providence. "For," said her mother's slanderers, "it wadna be richt to allow the likes o' her to be interred in a regular Christian burying-ground."

Among the few exceptions to those who cherished these charitable opinions in the village, was Mrs Oliver. As before observed, this simple but kind-hearted matron, although her own means were in no extraordinary degree affluent, suspecting that the deeds superstitiously ascribed to Margaret, were alledged more to furnish an excuse for neglecting her, than from any belief in their

truth, had long been in the habit of rendering her many friendly attentions, by which—though rather borne than besought by the ancient dame—a kind of intercourse had grown up between them, that enabled Mrs Oliver, without any sense of intrusion, to ameliorate in diverse ways the condition of one whom she considered as undeservedly left to struggle unaided with the pressure of penury. The native reserve, too—her detractors said the pride—of the old woman, who scorned to ask anything from the selfish beings around her, naturally increased their aversion; so that the only other individual, outside her own walls, with whom she held ought like communion, was William's daughter, Ellen, at this time a child; who, having become somewhat familiarised by her mother's visits to Margaret's cottage, shared not a little in the partiality which its aged possessor lavished upon her young male ward. Ellen's years fitted her for a playmate to Andrew; and long would Margaret sit beneath the fading hawthorn, while the golden light of summer's sun, sparkling in the bosom of Candren, was reflected upon the gable of her cottage, and observe the innocent sports of those companions, with a look of tranquility that nothing else on earth appeared able to produce. Or placed between them in the winter evenings, before a fire of wood gathered from the contiguous plantings, she would pour into their ears some moving story of love, fray or faery; or chant one of the pathetic old ballads, whose simple verse and melting airs have hallowed even the humblest of Scotia's hearths since the earliest ages. During these exertions, the tone of

her voice, the lustre of her eye, and the expression of her countenance would return with all the power and pliancy of youth, and would fail again immediately, as her enthusiasm vanished, with the closing strain.

The following fragment, supposed to have in her imagination some affinity with her own feelings, was a favourite, and she sung it often with touching tenderness, while tears streamed down the beautiful cheek of Ellen Oliver; and Andrew, fixed as a statue, gazed upon her face in wonder and surprise.

"O! dinna wear the mourning weed,
Nor shed for me a tear;
But wrap me in a winding sheet,
Upon an humble bier.

"Unheeded let me sleep in earth,
Some low and lanely spot,
Where a' that I have felt and done
Will be, like me, forgot.

"This world and life nae mair I prize;
Their joys are nocht to me:
Fain in a hame beyond the skies
My weary soul would be.

"Gin a' I loe on earth were blest,
Without regret I'd leave
Whatever it contains, to rest
At peace within the grave."

. . . . . .

Slender as these enjoyments were, if such a name may be given to any feeling that could visit the bosom of a being so forlorn, they were not to last. Great and grievous changes at length took place in many families of the clachan. The trade in silk gauze declined, and the manufacturing of *covered** goods, which afterwards raised Paisley to a high pitch of commercial importance, having commenced there, the silk weavers of Ferguslie, for the sake of employment, were compelled to quit the spot which had been to many of them a birth-place, and to all of them a home, to mingle in the town amid crowds with whose habits they were little acquainted; and to dwell in streets whose noise and smoke could but ill repay them for the fresh air and quiet of the Burnlip. William Oliver was forced to remove thither like the rest, and old Maggie felt a keener sting of regret than she imagined the fortune of any alien could again have awakened in her breast, when she learnt that the solitude of her cottage was likely to be no more broken by the officious kindness of his wife, or the amusement of his lovely and gentle daughter Ellen.

As we must here change the scene, and allow a number of years to pass in which we take "no note of time," I shall avail myself of the occasion to close this chapter; merely observing that in the interim Ellen Oliver took the opportunity of growing up to woman-

* Goods in which wefts of different colours were put on above the ground, for the pattern.

hood; and in those to come, shall relate to the readers who may be kind enough to accompany me so far, some interesting incidents which afterwards happened to her, not only from that remotion, but from what is emphatically, in cases like hers, termed "a change of life."

Chapter IV.

THE FIRE.

"Fye let us a' to the bridal,
For there will be lilting there;
For Jock's to be married on Maggie,
The lass wi' the gowden hair."—Old Ballad.

Bright burnings gave me light
Wherever I went, the ways I passed all things was set in sight. . .
Thou seest, and mixt in dust and smoke thick streams of richness rise.
—Phaer's Eneid.

Paisley Lasses have long been deservedly celebrated for beauty, and the numberless witching wiles that captivate the heart almost before we are conscious of possessing one; and truly I should be sorry to detract from the praise of my fair townswomen. This however may be said, that with all their attractions and perfections—with all their influence and endearments, there never appeared amongst them a better or a bonnier lass than Ellen Oliver. In describing this lone flower which has been, as it were thrown into my path, I may be permitted transiently to muse upon it with feelings of sympathy and admiration. The time given to such de-

lectation can be but short. The clouds of adversity gather fast over it; and I would the more fondly thus protract the few moments of happiness snatched from misfortune, ere the blights and blasts that prematurely come to crush its bloom have yet arrived. Even independent of these adventious causes, Ellen was in sooth an admirable girl. In her bright blue eye there was no expression of haughty thought or powerful passion; but in its glances were seen the softness and the sweetness of virgin purity. Parted upon a beauteous brow, her golden locks hung curled and clustered in radiant profusion, shading a cheek tinted with that delicate mixture of red and white which speaks at once of health and innocence. Her person might be aptly compared to one of those light and lovely forms Fuzeli has delineated in his matchless illustrations of Shakspeare; and her mind was a fit guest for such a tenement. Her scholastic education was indeed rather limited, nor was her reading very extensive; but what principles she had received of the one, were well grounded; and the other being guided by a vigorous understanding and good taste, her manner in company was what may be properly termed polite; while her conversation was alike free from the vulgarity of ignorance, and the affectation of learning.

Such at the time was Ellen Oliver, who is henceforth to form a principal figure on our canvass. Such was she, in the bloom of youth and health and beauty, when Andrew Easdon introduced, or as it is called, *black-footed* to her a youthful comrade named Allan Glen.

The intimacy that had subsisted between Ellen and Andrew in their earlier years, though of course remitted by the removal of the former from the Burnlip, was never entirely dissolved; and at all times when they chanced to meet, the recognition of a smile, a nod, or a kind inquiry for each other's welfare was interchanged, if no longer conversation, or warmer recollection of friendship passed between them. At such casual meetings Ellen had frequently seen Allan Glen in company with Andrew, and thus a reciprocal partiality sprung up between the former youth and herself, without perhaps either being aware of its full extent, till the formal introduction mentioned above happened. At this occurrence, however, the heart of Ellen, like a swoln rose-bud which bursts into blossom with the first sunbeam that basks upon its balmy leaves, expanded with a new and extatic feeling. To all the other charms that youth and joy gave to life, that of conscious love was now added; and if all creation was not thereby made in reality more beautiful and happy than ever it had been before—if the sky was not clad with a brighter blue, and the earth with a fresher green—if the swallow did not sport more merrily in the air, and the trout more lively in the stream—to Ellen they at least seemed to do so, and that to her was the same as if they did. There was a bewitching glaumor thrown over every thing around her. Wherever she moved it was perfect fairy-land. The blackbird's song swelled with richer tone from the woods of Arklcston and Greenlaw, as she strayed up the "Lovers' Walk" by Allan's side in the

summer evening. The flowers around "Queen Blearie's cairn," and the broom on "Paul's Knowes" breathed a richer fragrance when seated amongst them; and even the dilapidated mansion of Blackhall gained something of the picturesque, while the harvest moon wrapt its feudal walls in silver, as they strolled along the canal bank, or down the path leading to "Jenny's Well." To tell how many delicious evenings Allan thus enjoyed with his Ellen, upon the banks of Cart, "rowed in her cloak," and how long they always remained whispering together in the closs after he had conveyed her home, would be tedious, if not too bad; and such things were not already well enough known to every lightsome lad and lass without being rehearsed here. Allow me then on this topic merely to remark, that although the mode of courtship just alluded to may seem strange to people unacquainted with the custom, yet often does the darksome shade of a paved entry, and the kindly fold of a cloth mantle, enclose hearts as warm, and thoughts as pure, as those canopied by the painted ceiling, and surrounded by the silken drapery of a lady's chamber.

Allan came in due course of events to ask of Ellen's parents their consent to his marriage with their daughter. The bridal-day was fixed; but instead of a public union, the young folks thought it better to invite their friends to a *booking*—a kind of merry-making that seems now to have supplanted the ancient penny wedding over the greater part of Scotland. These entertainments are generally held in a tavern, by the friends

of parties purposing marriage, on the night that their names are enrolled in the Parish Register; from which transaction the fete derives its name. After meeting and receiving a treat of whiskey &c. in the house of the bride, the company retire to the appointed tavern, and spend the night in drinking, singing, and dancing. Each pays his portion of the expenses, and there is thus a greater latitude of mirth and enjoyment than if the treat were furnished by an individual only. At that which united the names of our young lovers, there was such fuddling and fiddling, such dancing and daffing, that one is induced to regret that moments so full of happiness should ever have an end. All were in element. The old women talked of their children, the young ones of their lovers. The hoary sires recommended the feats of their youth. William Oliver expatiated with garrulous complacency on the time when the silk trade was brisk, and the Burnlip was a busy and a happy place. Many remarkable events that arose in Maxwelton and the surrounding country during his first residence there—and which, though serious enough when they happened — furnished afterwards matter for amusement and laughter, were resuscitated by him with all the freshness and singularity of their first occurrence.

Amongst others, he detailed numerous whimsical circumstances occasioned by the hurry and bustle of the great Fire in Fergnslie in 1798, with peculiar humour.

"I mind it weel," said the communicative old man, "it was on a Saturday in the month of May. The

weavers had quat wark, and were playing at the bullets on the toll road—for there were nae police here in thae days, neither rural nor burgh. We had just finished a hail, and gane into the toll-house to get a drink o' yill, for the weather was extraordinary warm and drouthy. I had left the lave sitting in the change-house, and was rinnin' hame for some bawbees to pay my share o' the lawing, when I met a man coming forrit in perfect desperation. As soon as he came near me, 'Oh, William!' cried he, 'Ferguslie's a' in a lowe!' Wi' that I turn't back and tell't them in the toll-house, but they only laught in my face, and wadna believe me. It was sae short syne we had left the place, and nae-thing wrang, that they trowed I was making fun—but, faith! it turned out earnest enough wi' some o' them gin the hin'er-en'—ha, ha, ha! Awa I cam again, and when I reached the tap o' the brae, sure enough it was in a bleeze. The fire had commenced someway near the head o' Coats's Lane, and as there was a strong win' blawin' at the time, it burned amaist immediately frae ae end o' the Raw to the ither; besides twa or three houses that were consumed on the opposite side o' the road. There was ae biggin', however, preserved by rather a curious contrivance; when the people in't saw the fire comin' on them sae rapidly, they gathered a' the blankets they could get, soakit them weel in water, and spread them on the tap o' the house,—and had the same plan been tried wi' mair o' them, I doubt na but they likewise might hae been saved. But instead o' taking care o' things, ye wad hae thocht the folk rather tried to add

the destruction. The evil had come upon them sae iddenly, that they got nae time to think o' what they ere about in the confusion. Claiths were torn to ieces in the hurry to preserve them, and valuable fur-iture thrown out and smashed amang the stanes to revent its being burnt. Nor did some o' the weavers' ear fare muckle better. A coal-ca'er* that cam' bye rae the West heugh,† while helping some o' them in a iop, snickit one o' the tails‡ through wi' his gully nife, and gart harnish,‖ web and a' plump into the readle-hole §—ha, ha, ha! But there was a chiel, a'd Andie Bannerman—a distant relation o' my ain—vham the strangest thing happened to that I heard ' about a' the burning. His web was near an end, and hough the fire was makin' fearfu' strides down the raw o the shop he wrought in, and he had been aften warned to come aff the loom, or he would be burned in he middle o't, Andie was determined to work his web out in spite o' either the fire or the fock. He was aye a curious self-willed creature! The flames were flashin' in at his vera window before he stoppit; but Andie made his point good. He finished his claith, cut it out, set awa' to the warehouse wi't, and was never mair seen nor heard tell o' for mony a lang day and year after't—ha, ha, ha!"

* Coal-driver. † Coal mine.

‡ Small cords by which the harnish is suspended in the loom.

‖ A collection of threads that raise the yarn and form the figure on the cloth.

§ A hole dug in the floor to admit the weaver's treadles.

Thus with laughing, toddy, stories and songs, the night glided jocundly away, till becoming tired by the very pleasures that prevailed, the company itself at length glided away likewise. When the time allotted for publishing the banns was fulfilled, the marriage of Ellen and Allan took place privately.

And here we must again permit a few years to pass unnoticed, at the end of which we find the affectionate and youthful pair performing parts of a very different cast from those hitherto sustained by them in the drama of life.

Manufacturing had reached a high pitch of apparent prosperity; the demand for weavers was extraordinary, and work well paid. Allan was an excellent tradesman; cheerful, sober, and industrious. His wife employed what minutes she could spare from her household arrangements, and the pleasing cares of a young family, in winding her husband's pirns and clipping (cutting) the cloth he had woven; and as the eldest of their own boys was now able to draw * to him, things went on for a considerable while regularly and comfortably; and Ellen, it may be said, was happy. But the humble joys of the poor are as unstable as the more expensive indulgences of the rich. Allan latterly got a bad web with a heavy flower.† His warp was extremely uneven

* Pull up the yarn to form the pattern on the cloth, whence the boys thus employed were called draw-boys.

† The FLOWER is a number of small cords of different kinds called lashes and simples, by which the draw-boy pulls up the yarn.

nd brittle, quite unfit for the fabric it was applied to, nd his boy was too light for the simples;* so that from he insufficiency of his yarn, and the inability of his raw-boy to serve him properly, he found it impossible, y long hours and strenuous application, to earn even a noderate wage. To aggravate these difficulties, his ngagement was finished when the stagnation of busi- ess in this department was at the very worst, even of he unfortunate era that gives a title to this tale.

By an extensive system of speculative over-produc- ion, a vast store of shawls, plaids, &c., had been ac- umulated, for which no merchants could be found. The factitious demand for labour, nefariously fostered by wind-bills, glutted the market. Numerous and heavy failures took place. Those manufacturers who had capital were afraid to risk it in trade. The com- pany by whom Allan was employed, had already a large quantity of goods on hand, and did not then incline to make any more. Every other were reducing the num- ber of their weavers. In short there was no more work for the husband of Ellen Oliver—for the supporter of her children.

* Simples—see preceding note.

Chapter V.

THE DEPRESSION.

"Life's a faught;
The canniest gate, the strife is sair:
But aye fou-han't is fechting best—
A hungry care's an unco care."—Burns.

With a man, poor, even in his most affluent circumstances; with one like Allan Glen, toiling from hand to mouth, as it is emphatically termed, the descent from misfortune to misery is always brief, and often unavoidable. It will not therefore seem absurd when I say that Allan found himself almost instantaneously precipitated to the most necessitous condition. Unfortunately the same occurrence that deprived him of occupation, threw his wife likewise idle. Surrounded by a young and helpless offspring; their slender store of victuals exhausted, and having no apparent method of procuring further provision, his sensations were excrutiating.

Thousands of the ingenious mechanics in Britain—those men of whom it was written by a *great departed* *

* Dr Channing.

in the New World, that, "nowhere on earth will you find a people more high-minded, more jealous of their rights, more bold in expressing their thoughts, more resolute and earnest in putting forth all the powers of human nature."—Thousands upon thousands of this people—the sinews of the kingdom—of all occupations and all parts of the nation, were in the situation above described;* and possessing spirits that scorned stooping to public charity, while such a degradation might be at all averted, the only resource of many to supply the pressing necessities of the moment, was in pledging with pawnbrokers, or selling for trifling sums the articles of household furniture, or body clothing which former hard labour had enabled them to purchase.

In this manner Mrs Glen had seen the utensils that were once the ornaments of her bien and clean dwelling, gradually and entirely dispersed; except a couple of shattered old chairs, on which no money could be raised; and even one of those she was obliged partly to burn for fuel. One whole day and part of another had now lingered away without parent or child being enabled to break their fast. Ellen had stilled the calls of her children for bread by all the promising, and caressing, and beguiling which maternal affection could invent, till caresses could no longer soothe—promises no longer beguile; and their cries struck upon Allan's ear with the painful acuteness of anguish. Starting from the side of an empty bedstead, on the edge of which he sat for want of better accommodation—

* See Note d.

"Ellen," he cried, "I canna bear this ony langer. I maun get something for you an' thae bairns, come o' mysel' what will. Gin I do gang wi' the sodgers and lea'e you, I'm driven till't, but no by ony fau't o' yours."

The concluding sentences of this declaration penetrated Ellen's heart like the chilling blast of a north wind; for since the *dulness* of trade commenced, there had been many recruiting parties of military stationed in Paisley, and the unfortunate tradesmen thrown idle by it were enlisting in great numbers. The thought of being parted from her husband, therefore, came over Ellen like a dreadful dream. In her mind were dreary visions of crowded ships crossing tempestuous seas. Then came countless hosts of armed men, excessively fatigued by marching in a country infested by wild beasts; she saw the corse of one, loving and beloved, who had died suddenly by the pestilential climate of an Indian land: and when she knew it to be the body of her own husband, not even the appeals of her famishing children could dispel the petrifying phantasy that bound her; but with hands clasped and wildly wrung, and with eyes gazing upon the door, from which her husband had disappeared, as if their nerves would burst, she sat in an attitude of the utmost agony, pallid and motionless as the marble monument upon a grave.

Allan rushed from his house in desperation. But when he gained the open air, conscious of being in public view, he checked his impetuosity, and walked slowly up the street. At the cross he was met by Andrew Easdon, and another mutual companion of

their earlier years. Andrew, notwithstanding the solitary nature of his education, possessed considerable intelligence, and was withal of a free and ardent disposition. Observing a cloud upon Allan's brow, and thinking probably to dissipate its gloom by a little humour—

"What's the matter, Watty, wi' you?" cried he, laughing, and quoting familiarly Wilson's unique poem.* Seeing, however, that his friend's features still retained their gravity, he assumed a more serious deportment, and said, "There's surely something wrang, Allan. What gars ye look sae sad?—whaur are ye gaun?"

"To list," answered his destitute companion in a deep melancholy tone.

"To list!" repeated Andrew, surprised and interested; for Allan Glen was a person by no means thought to be imprudent in his conduct.

"Aye," said the latter, after the young man's exclamation, "what else can I do, Andrew? I hae been out o' wark this while, and e'now left Ellen and the weans without a bit o' bread to put in ane o' their mouths. I'm therefore forced to this way o' procuring them immediately that support which I doubt they will sair miss when I'm ower far awa to help."

As he spoke his eyes glistened with suppressed tears, evidently called forth more by grief for his wife and family, than by his own sufferings. Andrew turned his face aside, for there fell unresisted a pearl over his own cheek, as he said—

* Watty and Meg.

"It has been the fate o' mony a clever fellow at this time: yet it's a pity ye should do the like o' that, gin it could be helpit for a wee, till we see how things turn. Come awa ower to the *Hole in the wa'*—we'se get a dram there—ye can taste wi' us and thiuk about it at ony rate."

The two unmarried men introduced at the beginning of the above conversation, belonged, when it took place, to the fortunate few of our operative townsmen who still had webs, though at a low rate—prices having fallen fearfully—and had each, by dint of extra labour, and denying themselves the usual amusements of youth, saved a small sum for the purpose of entertaining their sweathearts, whom they were trysted to meet in the evening. For-gathering unexpectedly with an old acquaintance, however, caused them to break upon their purses. The quantity of liquour with which they were served by the hearty and bustling landlord in the Wee Wynd, was one gill of Stewart's best, and a bottle of Cheap's beer—which the consumers mixt together and drank in the shape of *pap-in**—at that time a favourite beverage of the "Paisley bodies."

While imbibing their liquor, the company, after deliberating on Allan's particular case and the position of his family, naturally turned their conversation to the unhappy state of the town generally:—the almost destitute condition of its inhabitants; the length of time they had been idle—many of them for months unable to procure the most ordinary subsistence, and obliged

* See Note e.

to hang day after day, and week after week, for a portion of broth at the door of a public soup kitchen. Nor were their physical sufferings the most mortifying of the evils they deplored. The demoralising effect of these circumstances upon the minds of their children, from beholding the degradation of parents they had been used to look up to and consider valuable and respected in society, was more to be lamented, as it is more irrecoverable, and deteriorates the estimation they are held in—not only by the populace, but those that are nearest and dearest to them. Oh, when the young heart is thus alienated—whether by political oppression, commercial acquisitiveness, or domestic antipathy—why needs we wonder that the perverted spirit should afterwards act with irreverance to those themselves who first taught it to despise others? When the pure well of filial affection is so poisoned at the spring, why be surprised that its waters, like those of Meribah, are bitter to the taste?—that the tree inclines as the twig was bent, and that its fruit turns to ashes in the mouth?

During this discussion, Allan, as it will be readily supposed, was restlessly anxious. When the reckoning was called,

"Johnnie," said Andrew, naming his unwedded companion, "ye can pay Francie (the host) wi' your sillar, and I'll gie Allan mine. Our lasses 'll no think a grain the less o' us though they get nae treat the night; they ken trade's dull ony way."

To this the other cheerfully agreed, and when change was returned by the host, "Allan," said Johnnie, "tak

up thae bawbees too. We hae nae great need to spend money the night after a'; and as Andrew has made sic a guid use o' *his*, it's but right that I should be equal wi' him in a kindly deed."

In bestowing a favour—especially a pecuniary favour—everybody knows that the most simple and affectionate manner is always the best. Had there been anything like ostentation in their actions, when Allan's comrades proffered him their slender assistance, the latent susceptibility of a heart, the more jealous of indignity even from the extremity of his want, would have prompted him to reject it. But there was that true glow of benevolence in their countenances, which makes the greatest benefit more acceptable. Besides, there had passed between them, during the companionship of their earlier days, many reciprocal transactions of borrowing and lending cash, which neither debtor nor creditor ever thought of remembering. Allan therefore put the money in his pocket, and when the young men parted with him to meet their sweethearts, consoled himself by thinking it was only one of those returns of old confidential friendship, which he should not fail to repay, if Providence ever enabled him to do so. Nor can I leave the gentle lovers, who thus succoured him, to pursue their blissful course without one wish—one hope for their happiness. The deed they had performed must certainly have awakened in their bosoms feelings of unmingled delight. When we behold two humble youths spontaneously sacrifising the little *all* for which they had toiled so hard, and on which they had founded so

ny pleasing anticipations, to the necessities of a dis-
ssed companion, the heart swells with something
re than admiration. It rises with a consciousness of
e true sublimity of our nature; and finds in the fact
edifying illustration of our Saviour's comment upon
e widow's mite.

Chapter VI.

THE RELIEF.

"Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul,
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much. . . . . .
Oft have I proved the labours of thy love."—Blair.

Allan reached the door of his desolate dwelling exactly at the moment when Ellen, in her terrible imaginings, had seen him stretched, a lump of clay, breathless and bloated beneath the surface of an Indian wild. When he appeared, her eye glared fearfully upon him. Springing up with the eagerness and extacy of a criminal reprieved upon the scaffold, she shrieked "He's livin' yet!—he's living yet!"—my man*—mine ain Allan Glen that was buriet!" and attempting ineffectually to clasp him in her arms, she fell senseless upon the floor. Allan, struck with horror at the tragic scene, and bewildered by Ellen's incoherent exclamations, was for some time unable to comprehend what passed.

*"Man," common abreviation of "goodman"—husband.

At length he endeavoured to lift his wife from the ground. Slowly raising her up, and gazing upon her colourless face, he spoke aloud, as if unconscious there was no person capable of understanding the import of his words by to hear him—"She's gane—aye, aye—she's gane! Her reason had fled afore her life; but 'tweel its nae won'er—her sufferings turn't her brain!" At this crisis Ellen, drawing a deep sigh, blest her husband with the first sign of recovery. On opening her eyes and beholding him, she faintly uttered his name in much surprise. Gazing around her, as if imperfectly recollecting something, she inquired, "whare are the weans?" Then observing the desolation of her house, she continued, "Am I still miserable? and are we to part again for ever?"

The Grecian painter has been much praised for the dexterity with which, after having exhausted all the images of grief in his picture, he veiled the face of one of his figures to hide a father's sorrow. Would that I had some equally ingenious method of acknowledging my inability to do justice to a husband's joy.

When Allan found Ellen restored to life, and ascertained that she was not so materially hurt as he had at first suspected from the violence of her fall, his raptures were unbounded. Every embarrassment was instantly forgotten. He pressed her to his breast; soothed and softened her pains by the most tender attentions; breathed into her ear the most ardent language of hope, and concluded by intimating to her the disinterested friendship of his comrades.

We have already seen that a continual and innocent familiarity existed between Ellen and Andrew Easdon in their childhood, like a sweet floweret breaking unconsciously forth with the first days of spring. Although farther separated, and seldomer together afterwards, their affection, purely fraternal, was not forgotten, but rather increased by the frank and generous disposition of the latter. This trait in Andrew's character Ellen always admired, and had often spoken of it to Allan Glen before they were married, with such warmth of applause, that something like a flash of jealously would start into her lover's brain. A momentary reflection, however, always convinced Allan that the energy of her language was only the suggestions of one estimable soul vented in artless commendation of another; and the meteor of suspicion passed as quickly as it came.

When the torpor of Ellen's functions began to wear away, and she became gradually conscious that she was still in this mortal world; and that the overwhelming horror by which her senses had been subdued, was but the produce of her own imagination, distempered by the terror and the painful trials she had been subjected to, from the destitute condition of her family. When she heard the lively gratulations of her spouse, and perceived the faces of her offspring again brightened by the cherub smile of contentment; when she thought by whose humane assistance the bread which produced that enlivening change was procured, and reflected that the same hand which had preserved her children from perishing of hunger, had likewise given her back a be-

loved husband whom she had deemed lost for ever—all her enthusiasm for the character of Andrew Easdon thoroughly revived. She was not only gratified that the happiness of her family had been renewed by one whose soul was purely benevolent, but her satisfaction was doubly enhanced by the knowledge that that benevolence was exercised from motives of the purest respect. As she dwelt upon these things with the warmth and gratitude natural to an ingenuous spirit, her heart became too full for the utterance of her feelings. Unable to speak or communicate her emotions otherwise than by the incontrolable expression of her face, she looked into that of Allan Glen with the features of a being almost divine, and literally—if I may use the words of a powerful and pathetic passage of Scripture—"fell upon his neck and wept."

I have often thought it a pleasing proof of the care Providence takes of his creatures, that if the resources of the poor to procure enjoyment are narrow, their hearts are in general easily made happy,—an idea well exemplified at this time in the family of Mrs. Glen, to whom it was happiness to be thus again together, although in the most indigent circumstances, after the dreadful separation with which they had been threatened. And many were the blessings presently poured upon the head of their benefactor—many the prayers breathed for his future happiness as they closed round the scantily furnished hearth, again brightened by his bounty, and cheered with anticipation of better days to come;—for even here the angel Hope could enter.

Next day, at a meeting of the unemployed operatives, it was resolved to petition the Sheriff, and the Provost and Magistrates, to inquire into their circumstances, and project some means for their relief. This was done, and by the requisition of the Rulers, a Public Meeting of the Merchants, Manufacturers, and other principal inhabitants of the town was held in the Town Hall. A number of the weavers assembled in front of the County Buildings, to learn what measures should be adopted at this convocation; but there was nothing finally decided upon. The destitute men were, however, advised to apply in the meantime at proper places, to persons appointed to supply them with the means of subsistence. They were generously recommended not to be backward in asking aid, nor to consider themselves as common paupers. Their distress, they were told, was the distress of the country, and no sensible person could look upon them as degraded, though compelled to yield to the unpleasant circumstances of the time. They had toiled faithfully while employment could be obtained, and it was proper they should be supported when consequences, by them unavoidable, now rendered it impossible for them to support themselves.

Allan, it will be almost unnecessary to say, made his case known to the persons appointed to relieve the distressed in the ward where he lived, and found assistance administered in a manner grateful to the feelings of applicants. Shortly afterwards, application was made by the local authorities to the Government for assistance,

and a national subscription supported by it entered into, by which nearly £300,000 was collected; which sum was placed under the management of a committee, and applied to the help of the needy in various parts of the kingdom while the distress continued—leaving at last about £20,000 in the public treasury, which was gradually expended afterwards as occasion required, and the Committee dismissed.

Chapter VII.

THE NABOB.

"He late from India's clime impatient sailed,
There as his fortune grew his spirit failed."—Crabbe.

"This life is all chequered with pleasures and woes," says, or rather sings Tom Moore; and verily I believe the Irish Anaceron is in the right. The sentiment appears to be amply corroborated, by the history of William Oliver's re-establishment on the bank of Candren Burn, which I received from him in a conversation noticed at the close of chapter I.; and of which I promised to give a due account, time and place fitting. He detailed to me, amongst other interesting events, the greater part of those thrown into the form of a narrative in the other chapters preceding this. As the description however of the manner in which, and the person by whom, the grievances of Ellen and her family therein related were finally relieved, may seem somewhat extraordinary; I deem it best to give the account in his own language.

"Although," said William "the assistance granted to the idle weavers by the Committee of Supply was dispensed in as discreet a manner as possible, it didna agree weel wi' the palates o' the fock. Men wha had been used to eat the bread o' independence, could but ill tholl to see their families hanging for subsistence on public charity. And this feeling was but little soothed even by the out-door wark that was invented for them by the gentlemen."

"It was literally," I remarked, "what Burns calls,

"Begging a brither o' the earth
To gie them leave to toil."

"Just sae," returned William. "Allan Glen didna like it ava; but what could he do? He couldna better himsel', aud for my part, I couldna help him. My ain web was out; I got nae mair, and was within an ace o' being as ill aff as himsel'. But really fock should never despair; for its strange to see how things are order't for the best, when to a' human perception they seem to be irremediable. Just at this nick o' time I got a visit frae a friend o' mine, vera opportunely, and I'm sure, vera unexpectedly. He had come hame to England frae the Indies some time before, and was ladened wi' gowd, age and decrepitude. His fortune was said to be nearly fit to buy up the hale o' this kingdom, national debt aud a' thegether, for ought I ken. He was a complete Nabob, in as far as the possession o' sillar gangs; but if the imbecility and selfishness, sae commonly attributed

to the character in this kintra, be an inseparable part o't, there was nane o' that in him—he gart the guineas steer about as weel as himsel'. He seemed to live only in a bustle; but as his fortune was already made, and he had retired frae business, I imagine his time hung heavy on his hands among the Englishers—whare they hae neither blacks to bamboo, nor tigers to hunt—ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe, however," said I, "they get up a tolerable *lion-chase* now and then."

"Oo-ay!" replied William, "but I suspect my friend had to play the lion's part himsel' amang them; and sae to get out o' the *toils*, he thocht he wad tak a trip down tae Scotland and see his frien's there; and instead o' leaving them a hundred pounds each in a will, as he at first intendit, he resolved jist to gie them 't wi' his ain hand, sae that they should neither need to weary for his death, for the sake o' his wealth; nor yet cast out about their legacies when he did die. He had an unco trotting and speering afore he fand me out; for he had gane to the West End, whare I liv'd when he left this kintra; and it was sae altered that he didna ken't to be the same place. Somebody at length tell't him that I was livin' down the town; syne aff he set bruislin' and blawin' tae get me; and I daursay he rather enjoy't his trouble than grudge't it, for it keepit him busy. An unco scraping and cocking and how d'ye-doing he had when we did meet. He talkit as fine as ye like, and skippit about as conceitit as a bit guinea fool (fowl), and tell't me he really didna expeck tae fin' me sic a

very auld man:—as if the creature himsel' had been a callan o' aughteen, ha, ha, ha! He was quite made up o' business and bustle. He couldna be at rest a moment till he had deliver't the news he had brought; but before his introduction was weel endit, pu'ing out a big pocket-book fu' o' papers, he turned them ower till he came to a particular pouch, and handit me a bill to the amount I mentioned, drawn on the Paisley Bank. 'Yet,' said he, drawing out a great nievefu' o' notes, "if you would rather have the cash, I can give it to you and keep the bill.' I was sae dumfoundered that I jist answered I thought the bill wad do; and ye may be sure that I was mair than thankfu'; for the state o' my puir lassie Ellen, and her wee bairns rushed into my mind, and I saw it would enable me to relieve them. 'In this' quo' I to him, 'ye hae done a guid deed—a better aiblins than ye think. Ye ha'e made mony hearts for-bye mine happy.' But I doubt my words were na perfectly distinct, for I heard mine ain voice quaverin' in my throat as I spak. The Nabob felt it too. The kindness o' his nature strugglet through his affectation, and it was curious to see him hitchin' and screwin', and striviu' to snppress the tears that wadna hide for him. At last he forced them awa' wi' a bang, as if he thought sic things beneath his dignity, and muttered something about even a *young* man being twice a child. For a' this I could perceive that he was pleased wi' what he had done; nor was his pleasure the gratification o' mere pride at gieing awa' sae meikle siller; it was genuine joy derived frae seeing anither happy;

and being conscious that he was himsel' the author o' that happiness. I saw him glint at his legs, that were sair croin't by the burning climate o' India, wi' a leuk o' satisfaction, as muckle as to say, 'now, I dinna regret the decay of my limbs, sin' it has enable't me to do the like o' this.' And O, gin the wealthy and the high wad oftener stoop frae their pride o' place this way to partake o' sic enjoyment; gin they wad but allow themselves to taste the pure delight arising frae the exercise o' humanity; gin they wad learn how meikle miscry might be prevented, and how mony gratefu' hearts created amang the humble and the worthy, by the distribution o' a sma' portion o' that superfluous treasure, which is aften allowed to rin to waste; or spent but for the hurt o' its possessors: they wad soon ken that the greatest dignity whilk can be displayed, is the dignity of doing good."

"Indeed," I observed, "that virtue is its own reward. Finely have we been told that,

'It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.'"

"Atweel thats true!" said William; and the gratification o' the Nabob at that moment was a proof o't. O'ercome by the force o' his natural feelings, he seemed to forget a while the character he had adopted; and in the course o' our conversation inquired after mony individuals we had baith kent afore he gaed to the East. Particularly about auld Maggie Easdon and her

daughter; and when I mentioned to him the drowning o' the latter—whilk he appeared never to ha'e heard o' before—and praised the bit laddie that she left at her death; there cam sic a strange mixture o' passions into his face, that it wad be impossible to say whether sorrow or shame, pride or remorse was uppermost. They seemed to be a' there together, or in turn; but alertly changing the subject, he assumed a cheerfu' tone, and gied me a lang account o' his ain adventures; what lands he had travelled in, and what wonders he had witnessed. Described the habits and customs o' the Indian's as sae odd, and the wealth and grandeur o' their kingdoms as sae immense, that it a'maist turn't my brain to hear him. Hech! but yon must be a curious country."

"Some of their cities," I remarked;" "are the most ancient and astonishing in the world. A number of them are formed in the heart of the mountain, and extend far under the surface; while in many of those above ground the splendour of their zenanas, their mosques and temples, is past our conception. Their very tombs are palaces."

"The natural productions of the country, likewise," observed William, seem to belang to a different creation a' thegether frae aught hereabout. Their rivers ha'e gowden sands; the stanes on their islands are rubies and sapphires, and their commonest plants yield rich perfumes. Innumerable flowers o' delicious odour follow ane anither without an interval; ae species opening their blossoms through the day and anither through

the night. The air glitters wi' beautifu' insects, and the forrest wi' the most gorgeous o' the feathered tribes. Parroquets and peacocks are in thousands. The bird o' Juno, and the bird o' Paradise are their native fowls—Indeed as far as the bounties o' nature and the arts o' man can make it sae, the hale land wad appear, by what the Nabob said, to be a Paradise itsel'. But O! the natives are deep deep sunk in the slough o' superstition. What a grevious thing it maun be to see men and women worshipping—not only stocks and stanes—but diminutive images made by their ain hands out o' the mud o' the Ganges!"

"In truth," said I, "they seem to worship anything, or everything—trees, serpents, crocodiles, monkeys, tigers, birds o' prey, and even the Evil Spirit himsel!"

"What opinion, cried William, "can we form o' the intellectual condition o' a' people, wha suppose that touching a cow will purify a person frae a' his sins? and whase only idea o' a future existence is, that the sauls o' the guid occupy the bodies o' great men in the world to come; and those o' the wicked, the bodies o' brutes? They consider the raven—the corbie craw—a symbol o' the saul in a state o' separation frae the body."

"All their superstitions, however, I remarked, are not equally ridiculous with these. There seems even something affectionate in their custom of devoting cakes to the names of their progenitors on the graves; and hanging pots of water on the branches of the Peepul tree for their ghosts to drink. Water is often scarce and highly valued in India, and the sacrifice must in many cases be very great."

"Trouth!" William replied, "the maist o' their notions are sufficiently ridiculous. They hae a tree the fruit o' which is deemed to confer a longevity o' twa hunder years on whacver tastes o't: and ae well the water o' which clears the e'esight and brightens the understanding; while that o' anither bestows immortality! I wish,' quo' the Nabob, when speaking to me, 'some o' your rhymers in Paisley had a sup of it: it would save them a vast deal of trouble, besides the time—not to mention useful paper and ink—he, he, he!' But these are no the warst o' the Eastern superstitions. Just think o' the waste o' human life caused there, by their sacrifices to Juggernaut and Kali: their suttees and self-immolations by burning, drowning and sae on."

"It must be confessed," returned I, "that these diabolical rites have a dreadful effect on society, and produce in it, where they prevail, a disregard of human life that often occasions the destruction of it from trivial causes."

"They do that," said William. "A striking instance of it happened while the Nabob was in Calcutta. 'Two native free holders,' he tauld me, 'having disputed about a slip of land; one of them being unable to defeat the other, built a straw hut upon the spot and deliberately set fire to it, burning his own wife inside, in order that her spirit might hunt the ground and deprive his antagonist of the benefit of it; and when expostulated with on his conduct, his only reply was, 'She was a very old woman—of what use was she?'—he, he, he!' Here the Nabob set up anither skirl o' laughter

at the licentiousness o' sic transactions, notwithstanding their depravity, till I fairly thoucht he wad hae faintit awa' in the fit. But as if becoming suddenly aware o' some impropriety on his part, he checkit himsel' in the middle o't, and lookit round wi' the self-condemned air o' a school-boy caught in the act o' pilfering an orchard. Starting up and hastily shaking me by the hand, 'Mr. Oliver,' quoth he, 'farewell!—perhaps I may call upon you another day.' Then awa' he hurried on his course, amaist without gieing me time to say 'gude day,' unceremoniously as he came; wi' a' the eccentricity o' a comet: bnt wi' vera different portents to the regions destined to receive his visits. And sincerely do I hope he is happy himsel'. Indeed happiness *maun* be his, although he'll no tak time to enjoy't.—After this," continued William,—"to mak a lang tale short,—findin' mysel' in easy circumstances, I began to think lang for the spot I was born and broucht up on—for neither poverty nor eild, can entirely irradicate attachment to our birth-place. Therefore, having heard that the house I us't to occupy in the West, was to let at the term, I e'en took it, and flitit out at Whitsunday. Sae I'm now blythe to think I can step about amang kent faces, and consider mysel' ance mair at hame; after dreeing sae mony mishaps, and being sae lang awa' frae the bonny Burnlip."

Chapter VIII.

THE REMINISCENCE.

"I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence."
—Mercht. of Venice.

I had not seen William's daughter for many years prior to her marriage; and being somewhat interested in her fate, from the account which her father gave me of the perils to which she had been exposed since, I therefore took an opportunity of inquiring in what situation her husband and she were placed at the time; and received information that Allan was latterly engaged as overseer of the men employed in *Seedhills quarry*.*

"Howsever," said my old friend, "when I got the hunder pounds frae my rich relative, I gied Ellen sillar to relieve frae pawn her chest o' drawers, her wedding ring, and twa-three ither things that she had maist notion o'; and as mine ain wife had been lang dead, and a' the rest o' the family were awa', I grew wonderfu' eerie wi' being aye in the house alane, and thought I wad be the

* A whinstone quarry in the suburbs of Paisley, in which the unemployed people were set to break stones, by order of the Committee.

better o' Ellen's company—for ye ken she was ay a favourite wi' me—puir thing! When I flitit back to the West-end, she cam out alang wi' her guidman and the weans to stay wi' me: Allan got a web short syne, and things are gaun on kinna squarely again."

When the old man paused, I remarked that it was something strange Ellen's relief had originally come from that land, which in her fearful vision appeared to be the most fatal portion of earth to her.

"Ay, ay," said William, winking, and shaking his head knowingly, "nae doubt, nae doubt—they'll mony a thing appear strange to you e'enow: but gin ance ye hae livit in the warld as lang as I hae done, my lad! ye'll ken that day-dreams, as well as night anes, are aften to be read by contrairities.—But come out man," continued he, shaking me warmly by the hand and smiling affectionately, "come out and gie us a ca'. Ye should na be sic a stranger at the West-end: its the place ye were born in, and the fock yonder about are ay fond enough to see you. I ha'e gotten the bee-skeps set up again at the back o' the house, and the summer-seat is still standin' upon the brink o' the Burn:—come out an' we'll pu' you a bunch o' flowers; we ken ye like a *poesy* ony way," he said, playing upon the word with a sly leer at my predeliction for rhyming; which he had often seriously, but ineffectually advised me against. "And I'm thinkin'," was his conclusion "they'll be twa three strawberries in the yard this year.—ha, ha, ha!"

The last words which were uttered by him as his

ironical smile wore gradually into a broad laugh, were a simple, but powerful appeal to the sensibility of my earlier recollections; and bore such an edifying proof of good nature, that an explanation of the allusions therein contained, will better exhibit the warmth of his heart, than the highest eulogium I could bestow upon it. I hope therefore my gentle reader will excuse me for explaining it in this place.

When the failure of the trade in silk gauze took place as narrated in a former chapter; my parents, soon after my birth, found it necessary, like many others, for the convenience of employment, to reside in the town. As William, however, remained in Ferguslie for some years after the removal of our family, my father, who was in the habit of frequently taking awalk in summer to see his old acquaintances in that neighbourhood, sometimes took me, then a boy, by the hand along with him; and upon such occasions I was always treated as a reward for good behaviour, with a small quantity of strawberries, or with a few cherries from the cherry tree in William's garden, which to my inexperienced conceptions, seemed boundless and inexhaustible. It was to these things that the old man so happily alluded, and his pressing invitation to visit him, awakened anew all my reverence for the character of the worthy person who had thus proved himself a kind friend in my tender years, and now extended his affection to me after encountering many trying vicissitudes in the latter part of his own life, and when the cares that come with manhood had left some traces of their pencil upon my brow.

I parted from him unceremoniously, for I saw that the uncommon spectacle of a merry old man and a dreaming younger one, attracted the notice of the honest householders around us; and their faces began to peep and their necks to stretch, from the doors and windows in grotesque groups: but if there was less of reverence in the manner of my adieu than usual, there was no diminution of respect in my heart. Seeing me make away in a hurry, the ridiculous incident with which our meeting commenced, flashed upon William's mind with fresh vigour, and he holloed after me in the midst of his laughing convulsion.—

"Ay ay, lad! ye're wise tae sheer aff when there are hard straiks gaun. Ye're no the first chiel that has proven himsel' a clever fellow by a timely retreat. 'Ae pair o' heels is worth twa pair o' hands,' says the proverb, and I hae nae doubt but ye acknowledge the truth o't. The neist time ye're in the way o' losing your senses, come out and I'll gi'e you anither touch o' my talisman. Never was the magic wand o' a sorcerer, or the charmed sword o' a knight-errant mair famous for relieving enchantit dames frae wizard castles, than my crummie is for bringing back the wits o' a chap when they gang a wool-gathering yon way. It's an infallible restorative—ha, ha, ha! An' I say, (here he flourished the *cockit scraper* above his head with the one hand, whilst he stretched himself upon tiptoe by the aid of his stick in the other, for the purpose of roaring after me)—I say, I'm expeckin' the Nabob down again some o' thir days: gi'e us a ca', man, and we'll try to get some mair o' his droll stories out o' him."

"I will, I will," cried I, waving my hand in return, but pushing briskly forward at the same time; and William, turning in a different direction, proceeded on his way with the gradual motion, and military twirl of his staff formerly noticed; so that in a few minutes we were beyond reach, by either sight or sound, of one another.

The description William had given me of his relation the Indian merchant, inspired me with an eager desire to see that person. The anomalous medley of moroseness and beneficence, feeling and affectation, acuteness and frivolity, of which his character was said to consist, took a strong hold of my fancy; and I felt myself strangely interested in the actions of a man whom I had never seen—whose name, so far as I knew, I had never even heard; for William Oliver, in talking of him to me, had merely mentioned him by the designation of "the Nabob."

To allay this thirst of curiosity, therefore, shortly after receiving the account of him presented to the reader in last chapter, I bent my steps once more Westward, with a latent expectation, that if the man of mystery should happen to be in our country, as William had suggested by the concluding words of his stentorian address, I might chance to meet him.

When I knocked at my old friend's door, it was opened by his daughter; and though I had in reality anticipated that this would be the case, I could not at the first glance of her person in the entrance, help looking upon her with considerable interest, on account of

the length of time that had elapsed, and the severe domestic trials she had been subjected to since we last beheld each other. She had since that time become successively a sweetheart, a wife, and a mother. She had tasted those pleasurable sensations which a happy parent alone can know, and endured those heart-wringing afflictions which a distressed one alone can experience. She had sat in the soft sunshine of competence and contentment, and passed through the fiery ordeal of privation and poverty—chronicled in an earlier stage of my story. Nor had the current of my own life flowed on without meeting some obstacles to ruffle the smoothness of its surface. Neither of us, therefore, could suppose but that the other must be materially altered. Yet assuredly I had not prepared myself to witness such an absolute metamorphosis of the fairy being who glided before my eyes in boyhood, like the aerial inhabitant of another world. As she stood in the opening of her father's door, dressed in a clear quilted cap, a printed bed-gown and druggit petticoat; with a checked worsted brat, or apron, and her feet cased in a pair of *rind* slippers; she presented altogether a figure that Moreland might have adopted in one of his exquisite rural sketches. Though there still remained the same attention to neatness in her apparel; with obvious indications of bodily health; her face had lost so much of its former plumpness, that her eyes appeared to have grown much larger in proportion than the other features; and her cheek, once of a bright crimson colour, was monopolised by a snow-white hue. But if

the lively tints of youth had vanished, there was left in their place beauty of a much superior kind. It was the sweet, still, mitigated melancholy expression which sorrow often leaves on the female countenance, after ceasing to make his abode in the heart. It was an intelligence of a more heavenly nature—a purer emanation of soul than was displayed even by the brightness of her own features in younger years. When last I beheld her face it was that of a lovely and light-hearted maiden—now it was the countenance of a graceful and thoughtful matron.

She gazed on me with the surprise of one whose eyes are fixed on a phenomenon, and ejaculated, "O what a stranger!" while her face was covered with a warm suffusion of its primitive red.

"How are ye El—, eh, Mrs. Glen?" said I, blundering and taking her awkwardly by the hand; for in our early acquaintance, I had been so used to address her familiarly by her Christian name, that it rose most readily to my lips; and I felt something, as it were unnatural, in being obliged to greet her at present by that of her husband.

Having assured me of her welfare, "Hech!" she continued, "I wonder what airt the wind's blawin' the night." She repeated this common proverbial saying with the cheerful smile of sincerity that indicates satisfaction at seeing a long absent friend. I had not time to reply, for William Oliver, who by the side of a blazing peat fire, sat in on old-fashioned arm chair with a high carved back, rose up and with an ironical

risibility on his features, occasioned either by my present blunder, or the recollection of his own jest at our former encounter—I could not discover which—called out to me,

"Come awa' and tell us how ye're livin' the day. This is my particular friend, Maister Bannerman!" he said, addressing a gentleman on the opposite side of the fire.

The Nabob—for such was the person to whom William introduced me—rising with the utmost politness, made me a profound bow; and I returned his condecension, with all the interest possible, not to render the scene entirely ridiculous. Ellen ran to set a chair for me, but thanking her I took up one for myself, and placed it beside that on which her father was again seated; whilst she turned away with a composed smile, and sat down to her *wheel* before one of the windows. In a few moments Mrs. Glen's mind seemed completely engrossed by her own domestic concerns; and as she went on winding wefts for her husband, and at the same time rocking with her foot a cradle where her infant daughter lay asleep, I could not but admire the simplicity, that accomodating itself to circumstances, finds not only contentment, but even happiness in a situation, which by more ambitious tempers would be found altogether insupportable.

Chapter IX.

THE EXPOSTULATION.

"Is there in human form that bears a heart
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth,
That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts, dissembling smooth;
Are honour, virtue, conscience all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting wrath,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child,
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild."

—Burns.

While employed as she has just been described, Mrs. Glen sung for lullaby to her child in a low distinct key, the following ballad composed by some one of those inspired but unfortunate Scottish bards, whose names are now lost for ever, though their soul-breathing effusions are held in perpetual admiration:—

MY BONNY BABY.

"O sleep, my bonny baby!—in innocence sleep on,
Nor ever dream thy mither hath cause to sigh alone:
Ilk trouble that oppresses, wad doubly seem severe,
Gin thou, my bonny baby! didst share the bitter tear.

"My parents broke their hearts, and the grass is o'er them now;
In death they find the rest that their life wad ne'er allow:
My proud relations scorn me—frae shame and poortith flee—
And thou, my bonny baby! art a' that's left to me.

"Thy brow is pure, my baby! and yellow gold thy hair:
Though fause thy sire, and wealthy, wi' ne'er anither heir;
Yet when thou smil'st upon me, the love within thine e'e
Has made a world o' sorrow a world o' joy to me."

These verses were chanted to one of the wild sweet ancient melodies peculiar to our country. The effect the strain produced when I first heard it, was wondrous. Mrs. Glen's voice was, as remarked above, not pitched very high; but her tones were uncommonly clear, and her execution naturally feeling and tasteful; so that the interest thereby excited, communicated itself to the company around the fire, and they began listening by degrees more and more eagerly till conversation was entirely dropped. Had Ellen observed this it is more than probable that the reserved modesty of her disposition would have induced her to stop, blushing in the middle of her song: but happily the birring noise made by the rotation of her wheel prevented her from noticing the cessation of their talk, and as she continued her heart-melting strain, William Oliver sat with an expres-

sion of fatherly exultation upon his face, enjoying both the performance of his daughter, and the captivation of Mr. Bannerman; who, pressing his chin upon his hand, fixed his eyes intently upon the singer, while signs of strong feeling, varied by the cadence of the music, flitted across his countenance, like the light and shadow over a dial on a breezy day. My own feelings were very differeut from those of either my host or my fellow visitor. All the circumstances of the heroine of the ballad did not exactly coincide with those of the singer, but in both cases it was the lullaby of a young mother to her sleeping infant; and as I contemplated the picture before me, the form of the victim of seduction—beautiful even in ruin—so pathetically depicted by the ancient minstrel, was impressed on my mind, till I hardly refrained from repeating aloud the ennobling stanza, from the "Cottar's Saturday Night," that forms a motto to this chapter.

But although my own sensations were thus roused by Ellen's song, to an extent of which I had not any anticipation; the passionate interest it excited in the Nabob appeared to me quite inexplicable, when compared with the cause from which it seemed to arise: and it was only when that passion received elucidation from circumstances to be hereafter narrated, that I was enabled to comprehend something of the poignancy and depth of his feelings. In the mean time he had been so completely thrown off his guard by the subject of the ballad, that it was concluded before the necessity of concealing his agitation seemed to strike him. In an effort for

this purpose, he threw himself carelessly back in his chair, till it became balanced upon the hind legs, with its top leaning against the wall, and assuming a tone of indifference, muttered the terms "trifling" and "silly," while, unobserved by him, William Oliver, winking and nodding to me, said with a suppressed chuckle, "He's a curious body!"

It would not perhaps be easy to imagine two figures more perfectly contrasted at all points than the two that occupied the opposite sides of the fire—my worthy host and his Oriental relative. While the former seemed a rare memento of the antiquated mode of dressing in the last age, the latter might have been considered an emblem of extreme modern fashion. His hair was brushed and stroked up all round, as if *Strap's** brother-in-trade who dressed it, had laboured to give it as nearly as possible the appearance of a mop. His shrivelled cheeks were completely drowned in the depth of his shirt-collar; which, fine as the spider's web, clear as the mountain snow, and garnished by the most beautiful needle work, enveloped his ears, and came so close in front, that only the sharp point of his chin, with a small portion of his thin curled lips, were visible; and it was impossible for him to turn his head to either side, without the peak of his hooked nose running a-muck against one or other of its edges. His eyebrows were jet black, and over-arched a pair of eagle eyes, that seemed fenced by his high cheek

* See Smollet's novel of "Roderick Random."

bones, and glanced from object to object with the vivacity of lightning. Round his neck was tied a black silk handkerchief, folded scarcely broader than a common ribbon; and he wore over his shoulders a massive watch-guard, whose ends dipping from view into his bosom, came out again between the lower buttons of his white vest, and was attached to a splendid gold watch. A wine-coloured surtout of the finest texture, with high paded neck, and elegant silk buttons, was so stuffed and stiffened in the lapels, that when it was fixed tight round his waist, they bulged out like a lady's bust. His wide nankeen trousers, puckered at the head-band and strapped below, had at the bottom of each leg a small piece cut out in front, in such a manner as to shew to the greatest advantage his ancle and foot, covered by a white silk stocking and slight shoe—and in the neatness of which he evidently prided himself. He carried a pair of fine kid gloves in his hand, and upon his finger was a gold ring, with brilliant stones and rich carving.

When to the above particulars are added his broad-brimmed Leghorn hat, turned up with green satin; and the silver spectacles across his nose; with the favourite gold-headed cane, ferruled with ivory at regular spaces, which was at all times and in all circumstances—at kirk and market his companion, there can be little doubt that his figure had in it something extraordinary to the eyes of the simple people that beheld him.

As he stretched himself carelessly back in his chair, spread his fingers, and thrusting them into his hair,

stroked it up from the sides of his head, in the self-sufficient manner of a first-rate dandy—displaying at the same time the sparkling gems of his ring—it seemed strange that a person of his consequence should condescend to rest and converse familiarly with the inhabitants of such an humble dwelling as that we were now seated in. The elegance of his apparel, and the splendour and value of his ornaments were undoubtedly out of keeping with the rest of the picture around him. To a fanciful eye it might have seemed as if one of the beautiful birds of Paradise had stooped to mingle for a season amongst a flock of our cheerful but sober-pinioned Scottish linnets. This was possibly one of his incongruities, but the one perhaps for which a natural reason could be most easily rendered. The truth is, that although Mr Bannerman was well aware of the evil eye with which such association was looked upon by those who considered themselves patterns of every thing proper in "high life," and who were weak or selfish enough to suppose that their importance would be lessened by any attentions bestowed upon a poor honest man: yet he well knew, likewise, that the command of a fortune like his own, was according to their opinions—or at least according to their practice—an excuse for many errors in its possessor,—that, in fact, like charity, it covers a multitude of sins. As another reason might be assigned the fact, that he felt it a relief from their coldness and formality to mingle with the lower classes, and witness the unfeigned sensations and unsophisticated manners they exhibited, when surrounding their

homely but happy hearths—where the language spoken is that of nature—where the flow of sympathy is not checked by the caprice of fashion—where heart calls to heart, and eye to eye speaks love. Though seldom practically participating in their humble pursuits, and in moody moments avoiding even to share in their simple conversation, he had yet a certain happiness in beholding their joyous faces, and hearing their hearty bursts of merriment; such as all men indulged in, ere by the microscopic power of the word *decorum*, they had discovered that it was a crime to laugh.

With regard to his entertainers, too, it may seem improbable that they should be fond to have a person of his condition to visit them; when from the superiority of his rank, and the nature of his character, it would appear that his presence must rather have been a check, instead of an encouragement to the sallies of their innocent mirth. This however was not the case, for his very eccentricities formed at all times an unquestioned passport to their *bields*; and it may be noticed that the humbler orders of our countrymen have always had an honourable pride in receiving such familiar marks of kindness from their *betters*, as the saying is. This feeling was powerfully exemplified in the attachment of the Scottish clans to their chiefs, during the existence of the feudal system; and even since that time in the heartfelt respect of the tenants for their *lairds*. But there was yet a more important argument in the boundless benevolence which after all formed the staple of Mr. Bannerman's character; though

that godlike attribute was sometimes unaccountably thwarted by mistaken notions. Amid all his weaknesses and absurdities, his heart was ever open to compassion, his hand ever open to charity; and where he did mix with those placed beneath him on account of their poverty, he never came, but with the intention of doing good, even when he would not acknowledge the motive to himself. He was thus always secure of a hearty welcome; and it is to be hoped that after this explanation, the anomalous habits of this gentleman will not appear mean or unnatural: or if there should still remain some delicate scruples in the mind of my reader, I must at present leave him to settle them as he best can, and proceed with another chapter of my tale.

Chapter X.

THE RECONCILIATION.

"But for the poetry—oh, that, my friend
I still aspire—nay, smile not—to defend."—The Baviad.

Notwithstanding my consciousness of the deference due to a stranger, the epithets uttered by the Nabob at the conclusion of Ellen's song, appeared to me little short of sacrilege; for the sweet natural simplicity of our Scottish ballads, has always been with me, as the Christmas and May-games were with good Squire Bracebridge, a kind of hobby horse; and I made with more warmth, perhaps, than the occasion warranted, a number of expostulatory remarks upon the beauty and originality of our national minstrelsy; when suddenly changing his humour with his position, Mr. Bannerman swung himself forward, till his chair again rested upon *all fours,* and with a smile curling upon his thin lip, that at first puzzled me whether to ascribe it to mirth or mockery, said, "You are right Sir!—perfectly right

with respect to the simplicity of Scottish songs. In that I entirely agree with you; there are some of them *simple* enough in all conscience—he, he, he!"

Here his smile burst into a shrill hysterical giggle, to which William Oliver added the accompaniment of his deep bass laugh with a heartiness and velocity that made the whole house ring; and when their hurly burly concert drew towards a conclusion, the former talking, coughing and keckling * alternately, like a hen when she has laid away, continued when he could muster as much breath, "But as to the *originality* of your national music, I must beg leave to differ a little in my opinion. In fact I have sometimes, I confess, been inclined to think it was rather an imitative production; and that it was in some way derived from that of the Hindoos. In Bengal, for example, the common people are like those here excessively fond of singing; and the airs which I used to hear among them always brought the Scottish melodies into my mind. This observation will no doubt appear somewhat *far-fetched*—pardon the pun—but the similarity of the two kinds of music is striking: besides, what the argument takes from the invention of your country, it gives to its antiquity; for we know that all *useful* learning (laying great emphasis upon the last word but one,) came first from the East; therefore by a natural course of reasoning, the inference undeniably is, that that which is most closely like any department of it in character, must likewise be nearest

* Chuckling.

t in age. The Scots are always too *moderate* in their claims upon the 'olden time.' (Here the smile of mockery was again visible.) They date the production of their native melody only a few centuries back—in the era of their own first James I believe—while by this mode of arguing, they might easily carry it up to the time of one of the first kings of India; that of Bharat for instance, who lived thousands of years ago, instead of hundreds.—he, he, he!"

During the delivery of the above speech by his friend, William Oliver sat with his face rounded into an applauding smile of satisfaction, and gulped down every succeeding sentence with great zest; whilst he kept poking me every now and then in the ribs with his elbow, and exclaiming in an under tone, "Hearken till him! —hear ye that now!!—that's for you!!!—weel, I never heard o' that afore," and such like expressions of conviction; his wonder rising a degree higher with every successive exclamation, as marked by the points of admiration; and when the Nabob set off at last in a scream of piercing laughter, my old friend burst out anew with his hoarse sounding "ha, ha ha!" much in the way that we have seen a country clown on his clumsy cart horse thunder after the light fleet racer; plunging and hobbling round the *four-and twenty Acres* at St. James' Day Fair.* The severe irony with which Mr. Bannerman animadverted, on what I considered a harmless vanity in my countrymen, stung me to the quick.

* See Note f.

Besides the ribaldry by which he took from "our gay gallant Stuart"—the truly princely James I.—the merit of inventing the sweet plaintive melody peculiar to our land, was quite unjust; and when I attempted with some acrimony to defend the one, and excuse the other, William Oliver got into a "peck of troubles." From his habitual respect for the Nabob, and his almost paternal affection for me, he was anxious to preserve peace betwixt us; and becoming afraid that a rupture would ensue, he became as restless as a fish out of the water: now winking hard and shaking his head at me; now treading upon my toes, or pulling my coat-tail behind the chair; and when he thought himself unnoticed by the Nabob, whispering in my ear, "Hout tout! dinna anger him—let him tak it his ain gate—what needs ye heed about their vain conceits, or their fool sangs?" Then he would strive to flatter me into his wishes with "Hout! dinna say ony mair about it like a man!—I'm sure ye ken better sense than to cast out about naething ava;" and so on, till to avoid making him uneasy, I constrained my feelings and spoke as mildly as possible to Mr. Bannerman, whose insinuations I could not, with the old man, look upon as quite "naething ava." This acquiesence however only gave the Nabob an opportunity of venting a little more ridicule; and he by no means strove to hide his willingness to take advantage of it, but replied scoffingly—

"Well, well! after all, the period I have suggested for the birth of your music *may* be too violent an exertion of the organ of—of —eh!—what do they call that bump

which phrenologists say, enables us to remember dates? —pshaw! never mind.—You see I am a believer in their science, although somewhat ignorant of it,—perhaps, like many, the more confident on account of my ignorance. However, as I do not wish to deprive your kings of any honour; pray, instead of merely dating your melody from the days of James I, what should you think of vesting it in those of Fergus I!—Why man! you dont ascribe so high an origin to your music as you do to your brose!"

Here striving to suppress his eternally derisive smile, he chanted in a mock heroic manner, the following stanza of a once popular song—

"When Fergus the first of our kings, I SUPPOSE,
At the head of his armies had vanquished our foes,
Before they began they had fed upon BROSE—
O! the kail brose of old Scotland;
And O! for the Scottish kail brose."

"That will shew you I am an admirer of Scottish lyrics —he, he, he!"

Although chagrined by the pertness of these observations; the ludicrous tone in which the verses above were sung, with the incongruity of the objects placed in juxtaposition by the remark that immediately preceded them, were too much for my gravity, and I was fairly forced to laugh outright along with Mr. Bannerman; upon which, springing from his seat with all the alacrity of a youngster, he grasped my hand, and shaking it vigorously, exclaimed—"My Dear Sir, I am glad to see

you pleased, for there was some suspicion *here* (patting his breast with his finger in the manner of the elder Kean, when he uttered a pithy sentiment upon the stage) of an irruption, when I saw the volcanic fumes rising so high; and I assure you I should have been sorry to lose already the acquaintanceship of one from whose company I have derived *such pleasure.*"

At the reconciliation which now took place—for I heeded not the sarcastic tone in which the last words were spoken—my old friend could not contain his raptures; but catching hold of his chair by the bottom, pulled it closer to the fire; stretched his legs straight out, and rubbed his hands so rapidly together, that I thought the skin should be off his palms. His head leaned back upon the old-fashioned chair-back, whilst he gaped and laughed most jovially; and the shrill "he, he he!" of the Nabob was heard like the obstreperous notes of an octave flute, rising at intervals over the deep sound of a basoon: and between the bars William squeezed in "That's right now—that's right—Od! I like tac see that now. That's the way to do—ha, ha, ha!" Then turning round and laying his hand on my chair-arm, he gazed in my face with unqualified fondness, till I fairly expected he would pat my head as a father does that of his child when it has behaved well.

Whilst the two carles kept roaring away, out of all time and tune, as if striving which should outstrip the other in variety of discords, their boisterous mirth was suddenly checked by a tap at the door—the expression

of which was as peculiar as the *mortality* of Corporal Trim's hat, when he dropped it "plumb upon the ground," in moralising upon the death of Master Bobby Shandy. It was neither a loud knock, nor a low knock; neither a quick knock, nor a slow one. It was neither rude, nor hesitative; neither rightly double, nor single. It was a—no—in fact it was just exactly such a knock as left us entirely at a loss to conjecture by whom it could be given. All the rules of rapping were broken through by it. There was something mysterious in its very tone; and as the night was now far advanced, the lateness of the hour, and the unexpectedness of the summon, gave to it a preternatural effect. The sound attracted every ear in the house; and when the door was thrown open, the figure that presented itself to view was far from being calculated to lessen our interest. It was a female form, covered by a long white night-gown; and as a white handkerchief, that bound a cap of the same hue on the head, was wrapped under the chin, it had the appearance of a ghost just risen from the grave. The face, too, had a dead-like colour—not so much pallid, but rather as if it had lain some time in the earth; and there was a glassy lustre about the eyes that looked more like the other world, than that which mortals inhabit. It spoke not when the door was opened; but gliding forward to the circle around the fire, gazed straight, without further motion of limb or lineament, upon Mr Bannerman; and while all around laboured under an irresistable feeling of awe, as in the

presence of a supernatural being, the very boisterousness of their late mirth made the utter stillness that now reigned more oppressive.

Chapter XI.

THE DISCLOSURE.

"Touching this vision here.—
It is an honest ghost, that, let me tell you:
For your desire is to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may."—Hamlet.

As the fire had burnt to an ember, the only light in William's cottage was a feeble flame emitted from a small black-iron oil lamp that Ellen used while winding. Some seconds therefore elapsed before the Nabob could discover who his unearthly intendant was; and when at last he recognised in the figure's features those of Margaret Easdon, he recoiled into his chair with the aspect of one who has unwittingly trodden upon a rattle-snake. When the old woman beheld him draw hastily back, she lifted her arm with the air of a priestess delivering the response of an oracle, and said in a solemn tone:—

"Shrink na frae me, Andie Bannerman! What need ha'e ye to fear a frail auld woman, wi' ae foot in the

grave? If your conscience be clear in the sight o' that God before whom we shall baith shortly appear—wha 'searcheth the heart and trieth the reins'—it will be a' the better for you, and can now be nae waur for Maggie Easdon. I come neither to curse nor to accuse you; nor should ye hae been troubl't by my presence here this night, but that I felt my dead-ill is upon me, and I hae a duty to perform ere I lea'e this world, whilk if left undone, I could na rest in the earth. It is a duty to the dead as weel as to the livin'—to my puir drown't lassie, an' her bonnie boy!"

When Margaret made this allusion to the unhappy fate of her daughter, the Nabob hurriedly covered his face with both hands; and while his elbows pressed upon his knees, his whole frame was seized with a tremour so violent, that the chair shook beneath him. Without remarking his agitation, the old woman went on:

"It is a duty that I owe to yoursel'. Though your marriage might be a secret to men, it was nane to Him wha instituted that sacred ordinance; and by rejecting your ain lawfu' offspring, ye deny yoursel' the enjoyment o' a pleasure that a' the riches o' your Indies, baith east and west, could not purchase—the high and holy joy that a parent derives frae the pure and fond affection o' a virtuous child. During health, that would be a 'light to your feet, and a lamp to your path;' and in time o' sickness, what hand wad sae kindly administer the cordial draught, or sae saftly smooth your weary pillow, as that o' your ain flesh and bluid? When the cauld turf shall cover your caulder heart,—when the

blessed sunbeam itsel' can nae langer bring licht to your e'e, or the breeze o' simmer balm to your nostril,—when the green grass now beneath your feet waves o'er your head, and the emblematic floweret that withered aboon you mingles its dust wi' your ain—wha then will visit your narrow bed, and wi' tender regret ca' to mind a' the kind looks, and words, and deeds that hae passed atween you in life, till by heart-felt love ye are again linkit together; and thus even death seem unable to divide you? Will it be the fram friends that your wealth has bought?—They may rear a monument o' sandstane or o' marble at your head, and deck it wi' the flattery o' the poet, or the fause tears o' the painter;—then, thinking they ha'e done enough, and grudging even the trifling trouble they bestowed, turn awa', careless o' your slumber, glad to make their escape to worship those in the world wha ha'e something yet to gi'e them—leaving you forgotten and neglected ever after. But *he* will be a living monument there! *His* will be the true tribute o' filial sorrow, mair precious than the pearl frae the main, or the gem frae the mountain! Dinna turn that tear o' affection to ane o' scorn for unmerited neglect. Dinna turn the prayer that should be breathed over your ashes, into a curse upon a recreant parent, for betraying the trust that Nature had reposed in him, and that even the brute animals regard. The cup I now present to you is filled with richer juice than wine of Shiraz. Dinna, O! dinna dash it frae your lip; for if the golden bowl be ance broken, it comes nae mair to the fountain. Dinna"—

While Margaret thus proceeded, without let or hindrance in her energetic appeal, Andrew Easdon at this point rushed into the cottage, with his head uncovered, and his face displaying the most eager anxiety. His grandmother—it may here be stated, by way of explanation—had previously been long confined by age and infirmity, so that her body was sorely wasted, and her mind become weak. From the odium in which her character was held by the superstitious neighbours, none of them could be induced to pay attention to her wants. In this strait the duty of sick-nurse had been voluntarily performed by Andrew. He had waited by her couch for some time past, with the devotion of one about to lose the last and only object he regards on earth. On this evening, however, being overcome by unremitted watching, he had dropt for a short while asleep; and the old woman, as often happens in cases of delirium, had taken the opportunity of stealing from her bed, and quitting the house unobserved during his slumber. On awaking he was surprised to find that his charge had eloped; but recollecting that in her fits of raving he had frequently heard her mention the family of William Oliver, he suspected she had taken her way thither; and without tarrying to put on his hat, or arrange his dress, he ran through the darkness thither in quest of her. He burst into the cottage at the last part of her harangue quoted above. Margaret, on perceiving him enter, instantly changed her subject.

"It is he! Come here, Andrew Bannerman!" she cried, siezing him with one hand, and with the other

pointing to the Nabob's feet; "kneel there," she continued, addressing the youth, "kneel there, and ask a blessing of your father!"

From the confusion into which he had been thrown by missing her at home; the unexpected company in William's dwelling; and the surprise occasioned by the strangeness of his grandmother's address,—as he had always hitherto been kept by her strictly ignorant of his paternity,—together with a habit he had contracted of immediate submission to the old woman in whatever she requested—Andrew, before he took time to think, bent his knee, and clasping the Nabob's hand betwixt both his own, pronounced, with great emotion, the endearing appellation, "Father!" when Mr. Bannerman, sobbing aloud, started from his seat, lifted the young man from the ground, and clasping him to his bosom, exclaimed, "My son!"

At this instant the uncarthly expression vanished like a mist from the features of Margaret Easdon. Reason for a few moments seemed to resume its throne. Throwing wide her arms, and looking up to heaven with a smile of exultation, she cried—"It is finished! May the forgiveness and blessing of the Eternal God rest on both, and on all. Now let me die!—Aye, Mary! I come, I come!" And striking her hands loudly together above her head, she fell at full length a lifeless corse upon the floor. At the same moment, the moonlight, bursting suddenly through the uncurtained window, gleamed upon the face of the dead, and was instantly again covered by the passing cloud. This

fortuitous coincidence, natural and striking as it was, had a sensible effect upon the nerves of the beholders. It seemed as if the spirit of the old woman had visibly sprung upon a beam of light to its long wished-for haven.

These incidents, together with the allusions made in the speech of Margaret Easdon, revealed to me at once the source of a hitherto inexplicable melancholy, which in spite of all the Nabob's exertions to conceal it, flowed like the under curreut of a river, at the bottom of all his mirth, and all his humour; and which even the consciousness of his own generous deeds could not counteract. They explained to me also many of the seeming inconsistencies of his character, and the cause why the song sung by Ellen had arrested him in the extraordinary manner related. It was plain that its subject had awakened in him the recollection of circumstances which he would rather have left in oblivion. The worm of remorse had evidently been busy at his heart, when his chin rested on his hand, and the gloom was on his brow. The ridicule with which he attacked Scottish music afterwards, I now saw had been only an effort to banish more disagreeable reflections. Even the extravagant laughter he indulged in, and which at the time seemed forced and unnatural, I perceived, was but an assumed gaiety to deceive spectators, and veil from their view the workings of a darker feeling; and I was sorry lest I might uniutentionally have hurt his feelings by some of the remarks I made in its defence. Ellen, too, seemed to me inexcusable, on the supposi-

tion that she was aware of the position in which Mr. Bannerman was placed, while she was singing: but a momentary glance at her conduct convinced me that the supposition was groundless, and that, unaware of its application, she had breathed her melting strain in the unsuspicious warmth of a mother's love. She rose mechanically from her wheel when Margaret Easdon entered the cottage. During the old woman's appeal to the Nabob, she stood a perfect statue of sympathy and simplicity; and when the latter clasped Andrew to his breast and declared him his son—reflecting that he who thus unexpectedly gained a father, had formerly preserved a dear parent to her own children—the recollection of her intense sufferings at the time when her husband parted from her to enlist as a soldier, with their concomitant incidents, rushed into her mind; till she became unable to speak or move, farther than twisting the superfluous string of her worsted apron into a thousand coils the one moment, and rubbing the back of her ear with her forefinger the next; while large tears glanced in her deep blue eyes, and at the same time a faint smile brightened her pale and beautiful face.

As for William Oliver, he was like the Reverend Micah Balquhidder, confounded, and did not know what to do. To use a vulgar phrase, he looked as if the nightmare had come over him. It must be recollected, that although the various incidents which took place between Margaret's entering his cottage and her death, have occupied a long time in the relation, yet they all hap-

pened in reality in the space of a very few minutes; and so surprised was William by the rapidity of their occurrence, that when Margaret struck her hands together and fell on the floor, he started as if the lightning had flashed in his eyes, and the thunder rolled in his ears. Gazing distractedly from the Nabob to the corse—then to the company around—and now to the Nabob again; he was so completely bewildered, that he was incapable of giving any order, or sharing in any of the transactions that took place. The nerves of Andrew and his sire were likewise so excessively shaken, that both were nearly as unfit for exertion; so that I was obliged, with the assistance of Allan Glen, who then came in from his work, to lift the dead body and stretch it upon a table, till convenience could be got for conveying it to the house where the old woman had lived.

Chapter XII.

THE CONCLUSION.

"Here garrulous old age winds up his tale."—Blair.

When the news of the events recorded in the preceding chapter spread throughout the clachan, it will be easily imagined that they caused a world of wonder and surmise in the corner coteries of the cripple tailor, and the tea-parties of the fat widow. It was said in these circles that the witch Maggie Easdon had transformed hersel' into the shape o' a ghaist new risen frae the grave, and had appeared to the company assembled in William Oliver's house at midnight. That she had bewitched the Nabob wi' her cantraips, till he thought her daughter's *get*, Andrew, was his ain son, and promised to make him heir to a' his wealth. That as soon as Maggie had consummated this infernal deception, a clenched hand, while naething else o' the person to whom it belanged could be seen, struck her dead upon the spot; and immediately after, the devil flew awa' wi' her saul through the window on a flaught o' fire.

"But what else," quoth Peter Prickflea, who was the orator, to the acquiescent and enamoured Widow Hoggit, "what else could be expectit to come o' ony ane that sae evidently dealt wi' the Deil? Auld Nick is aye sure to get them at the hinder-en', wha are sae fond to ser'e him in this warld; and it's only a pity that he didna get her sooner, for she should ha'e been burnt on the Gallow-Green* langsyne."

The reports here quoted received in part something like a confirmation, when in a few days Margaret was respectably buried by the side of her daughter: and shortly afterwards Andrew Easdon—now Bannerman—genteelly dressed, was driven away along with the Nabob in his carriage. Where Andrew was removed to—whether to Mr. Bannerman's estates in England, as some alleged; or to his property in the East Indies, according to others—was not positively known in the clachan. The closing career of both the discovered father, and the acknowledged son, seemed therefore as mysterious to the inhabitants, as their origin had been before the disclosures of Margaret Easdon and William Oliver. William himself may still sometimes be seen sadly bent over his crummie-stick, wandering at leisure on a good day on Candren Bank. The staff has now lost a great deal of its consequential twirl as he moves; and the "cockit scraper" has been supplanted on his "curly pow," by one of those new-old-fashioned hats denomi-

* Where a number of old people were burned for witchcraft at Paisley, in 1697.

uated *wide awakes.* This is the only assimilation William could be induced on any account to make, with what he calls the senseless changes of these glaikit times. Shortly after his return to the West-end, he advanced part of the cash he had received from the Nabob, to his son-in-law, for the purpose of commencing business as a manufacturer: and Mrs. Glen has now the pride and pleasure of seeing her husband, by dint of attention and perseverance, walk amongst the principal *corks* in Causeyside.

Here I would fain close my narrative, whilst there are yet some "crumbs of comfort" to be found in the fortunes of my *dramatis personae.* But there was one of them, who was, at least in his own opinion, more important than all the rest; whose fate it would be unjustifiable not to notice particularly.—Poor Peter Prickflea! Alas! his personal consequence met with a mortifying revulsion. When the nine days' wonder caused by the death of Maggie Easdon, and the departure of Andrew with the Nabob, died away among the inhabitants of the clachan; their next subject of surprise and surmise, though of a widely different nature, was one little less interesting—the perpetration of an irregular marriage, between the *part* of a man and the relict of a grocer—A *clash-to** of the tailor and the widow. The mutual affection of these turtle doves waxed betimes so hot, that they could not tarry

* Clash-to—a kind of dispensation granted by Justices of the Peace, to parties who unite in the bonds of wedlock, without going through the regular process.

to go through the usual forms prescribed by the church. A trip to *Bridle-land*, then the Gretna Green of the West, was the upshot; and there by an accommodating laxativeness, very inordinary in the Scottish laws, the tender couple were soon made *happy*. Peter's happiness however was but of short duration. The nuptial knot was *hardly* tied, when Mrs. P. began to shew symptoms that the gray mare was the better horse. They had in mutual ignorance of each other's motives played the game of cross purposes. She, as it turned out, had courted the tailor merely for her own convenience, and the thriving trade he drove with the needle. Peter on his part wedded her chiefly for the good things in the grocery; and she for that reason resolved that he should not enjoy them. In the consequent struggle Mrs. Prickflea had the advantage. Not by any means, it is to be supposed, on account of her strength: for, though twice the size of her husband, being a woman, she was therefore "the weaker vessel." But the tailor, even had he been a man, would not have been the first who discovered that, particularly in such cases, the battle is not to the strong. If he *made* the breeches his wife wore them, and what was worse, wore them ostentatiously. The sudden change in Peter's manner was notorious to the neighbours. His look gradually became less consequential, and his voice less authoritative in the coterie. He appeared seldomer at the corner of the lane; and when at last he altogether ceased to be seen there, it was reported that his wife had confined him to the sewing board. Nay, that she often went so

far as to lock him in the small room that contained it, without meat or drink; whilst she entertained her *kimmers* in a lower apartment, at a tea table sumptuously furnished with every dainty: and that when the bottle had gone freely round the company, she would sing in a jolly manner, to their great amusement, the following ancient fragment—

"O! gin ye were dead gudeman,
And the green turf on your head gudeman,
A rantin' widow I wad be,
Wi' a braw young joe to comfort me."

At the last of these banquetings, during the singing of the verses, there was a tremendous rapping upon the inside of the door of the room in which Peter was imprisoned. Mrs. P. excited by the brandy she had swallowed, and supposing the noise to be a mode adopted by her husband to annoy and affront her before the company; vowed to take vengeance upon Peter for his presumption: and rising reeling from the table staggered up stairs. Her irritation only increased the mirth of her associates, as they considered from the state she was in by drinking, that she was not capable of hurting him much. None of them therefore offered to oppose her progress, but sat laughing and listening for the fun which they expected to arise from a coalition of the couple. They heard her with much difficulty reach the stair-head, which was extremely narrow; the key was thrust into the lock, the bolt forced furiously back, and the door burst hurriedly up. Meanwhile there was no word spoken, but the guests heard as if it

were the sound of a single blow, succeeded by a loud tumbling noise, that ended in a heavy crash upon the landing place below. By this the humour of the company was in an instant completely changed. "Good God!" cried one of them starting up in terror, "she has thrown him down stairs—he will be killed:" and the whole made a simultaneous rush for the spot. As they reached the door, to their astonishment in bounced —not Mrs. Prickflea—but Peter, mad with rage; and continuously exclaiming, "I'll wanton widow ye!—I'll wanton widow ye!" he laid his crutch furiously about the head and shoulders of all within his reach; whilst one lady escaped this way without her shawl, another that way without her bonnet—some to one corner, some to another, till the chamber was quite clear. Then seizing the tea table, he overthrew it with the whole contents, smashing crystal, china and stoneware in a heap upon the floor; and making a complete Douglas' Larder with the liquors and viands that covered it. When at last he was pacified, or rather overpowered, and attention turned to the lowly state of his *better* (bigger) *part*; she exemplified the truth of the adage "fou fock 'll no fell; and it was found that her inability to rise was more on account of the weight of her own flesh, and the potency of the strong waters she had swallowed than from the fall. On lifting her up there was observed a hollow mark upon her brow, which remained as long as she lived afterwards; and which was supposed to have been received from the crutch of her husband—driven to desperation by her treatment and

her threats—when the sound of a blow was heard as the door of his room opened. There was however no direct proof of this; and besides, it was possible that she might have got it in her tumble down stairs from intoxication. The suspicion therefore was hushed, and the body conveyed to a more comfortable couch. To remove that leviathan of the land, was no easy task, for it required the united strength of the company, male and female, to carry her; and the gentlemen were often observed to titter, and the ladies to look demure, as a petticoat was inadvertantly shoved up, or a fold of the napkin bustled aside in the labour of their progress.

"Loud on the morrow was her wail and her cry," when the brandy fumes were partially dissipated, and she became sensible of the destruction which had happened to milk pots, bread waiters, cups and cruets. Peter's resolution had however a beneficial effect in so far, as it taught her to be more circumspect to her husband in future, from the awe in which she stood of his stilt: and if by her termagance she had annihilated his conventions at the corner, he by the demolition of her *crockery* as decidedly put an extinguisher upon her parties. Henceforth this worthy couple, though residing under the same roof, by latent and mutual consent, lived completely detached from each other, and kept entirely distinct establishments. She stuck alone by her shop, and he by his *shop-board*. In this mode they went on without intermeddling, or even speaking, it is said, to one another for years. This tongue-tacked existence—having his mouth *steekit* (*anglice*, stitched) as

it were—however, sadly misfitted the loquacious inclination of the tailor. The silence Peter was obliged to preserve, preyed upon his spirit like the moth in a musty patch, and imperceptibly shortened the *measure* of his days. Life slipped through like a knotless thread. He was cut off without a "hem!" and found stuck upon his table, stiff as his layboard and cold as his goose; with his eyes open, his legs crossed, the cloth upon his knee, and the needle between his thumb and fingers. His limbs were so firmly *folded* beneath him, that he had to be buried as he sat: and he now lies in the Abbey Church Yard, like a worn-out garment thrown aside; with a stone at the head of his grave, on the reverse of which is carved, the proper insignia of his profession—a cabbage plant above a pair of large scissors, with the blades extended open, as in the act of clipping it throngh. Peace to his *remains*!* With this sacred wish let me conclude the tale of THE BURNLIP.

* See Note g.

NOTES.

Note a, page 8.

Paying the Kain.—The kain is a kind of due, or tribute, formerly —and even yet in some parts of Scotland—paid in produce by the farmers to the landlords. To "pay the kain" is a proverbial phrase, used when a person suffers for improper conduct, analogous to Franklin's "paying too dear for the whistle."

"Black Mail" was money levied by some of the Highland chiefs from their more peaceful neighbours, for protection from the caterans, or mountain robbers. Previous to 1745, this tax was exacted, and willingly submitted to, with the understanding that the chief would neither, himself, molest those who paid it, nor allow others to do so. If any of their property was plundered, he was bound to make up the loss.

Note b, page 12.

The Dearth.—The exorbitance of dealers who strove to make fortunes, by withholding provisions from the market during the Dearth, caused disturbance in several parts of Scotland. A grocer in Paisley having "stowed away" a quantity of potatoes in one of the vaults under the Abbey, it was broken into at night, and the potatoes carried forcibly off by a mob. To preserve the peace and protect the property of the lieges, the magistrates called out a corps of volunteers, then in the town; but, like considerate gentlemen, they allowed the riot to be over before doing so. In fact, the soldiers were amongst

the most busy helping themselves whilst the pillage lasted; and a caricature was afterwards exhibited in the public windows, representing a volunteer with a bag on his back, calling to the crowd to keep out of the way, as he was in a hurry home for his musket.

NOTE c, page 18.

Paisley Martinmas Fair commences on the second Thursday of November, lasting nominally three days; and it was on the Saturday of that week, 1810, that the catastrophe happened. In an account of it published at the time, we are informed that "the boat suddenly heeled to one side, and upwards of one hundred and eighty people, men, women, and children, were instantly plunged into the Canal Bason, in which the water was six feet deep. 105 persons were providentially saved—85 lost. Of these, 8 were under 9 years of age; 57 from 9 to 17; 12 from 17 to 25, and 8 at a more advanced age. One family had 4 members drowned; two had 3 each; and seven 2 each."

In an old broad-sheet on the subject, "Printed for," as it bears, "and sold by Thomas Cumming and the booksellers of Paisley," the author commences his task with the following invocation:—

"Awake! my muse, in plaintive numbers tell
The tragic story, which, alas! befel;
A numerous group at Paisley Fair of late
In bloom and vigour met a mournful fate.
For Johnstone, all on harmless frolic bent,
Short-sighted mortals! mark the dire event."

Farther on, some naturally touching incidents are thus described in grandiloquent style:—"Some god-like souls, with daring intrepidity, dashed to the bottom and actually performed wonders on this mournful occasion. Shocking to relate, one of them, after bringing up a number of his fellow-creatures on shore, was grappled by the expiring multitude, and pulled to the bottom by those very persons whom he generously meant to save. Several young persons had formed parties

for an excursion to Johnstone,—the account of one couple baffles all description. A young man went to the bottom, with the beloved mistress of his heart in his arms. The unfortunate fair one is in a way of recovery, but her lover lies folded in the icy arms of death.

"The spirit of social mirth and cheerful vivacity for which the inhabitants of this place are justly celebrated, has suffered a temporary suspension. You can scarce meet a person on the street, that will not tell you a mournful tale respecting some departed relative. A gloom of melancholy seems to pervade the countenances of all ranks of men on this mournful occasion."

NOTE d, page 37.

GENERAL DEPRESSION OF BUSINESS IN BRITAIN.—"In 1826," says a popular writer, "large bodies of starving and unemployed labourers were supported on charity." A detailed statement by the Secretary of the London Committee, shews that in the Hundred of Blackburn, comprising a population of 150,000 persons, 90,000 were out of work. In Edinburgh, nearly 2,000 were idle; and the author just quoted, alluding to this circumstance, remarks—"Edinburgh is not a manufacturing city; and if so much misery existed in it, in proportion to the population, what must have been the condition of Glasgow, Manchester, and other manufacturing towns?" In Paisley, the number unemployed was 17,000.

NOTE e, page 40.

PAP-IN.—This beverage derived its name from the act of popping a glass of spirits into a tumbler of ale. "Stewart's best," was whisky of the best quality, produced by a well-known distiller of the day. "Cheap's beer," a famous kind of small beer made by a brewer of that name. "The Hole in the Wa'," or "Wee Wynd," was a narrow lane leading from the Cross to Dyer's Wynd, where Gilmour Street is now formed.

NOTE f, page 77.

ST. JAMES' DAY FAIR.—This Fair commences on the second Thursday of August, and like the others, coutinues three days. Before the present Course was formed, the Race (for the Silver Bells) was run on the Fair Friday, upon the public road, round a piece of ground commonly called The Four-and-twenty Acres, which was contiguous to the place where the principal market was held, and was said by tradition to have been granted to the town for the institution of an annual race. At these sports occurrences of the kind alluded to in the text were often to be seen.

NOTE g, page 98.

NOTICES OF MEN BRED TO THE BUSINESS OF TAILOR, WHO RAISED THEMSELVES TO EMINENCE AFTERWARDS. Sir John Hawkins, known by the appellation of 'Joannes Actutus,' andRalph Black—both knighted for their valour on the field of battle by Edward III.—were tailors and fellow-apprenices. Elliot's valorous troop of Light Horse, celebrated for their charges upon the Spaniards, was almost wholly composed of men from that trade. Speed the historian, and Stowe the antiquarian, likewise belonged to it; as did Thomas Woodman, who first suggested the abolishing of slavery. Robins, the compiler of "Anson's Voyage," was the son of a tailor. The money to institute Hutchison's Charity School, in Paisley, was first bequeathed by a tailor: and in Sir Samuel Romilly's "Memoirs," we are informed that in Stirling there is an inscripion on the wall of some almshouses founded by a tailor: which, after mentioning this fact, and the establishment of a fund for another public purpose by the same person, concludes with these words—"Forget not, reader, that the shears of this man do more honour to humau nature than the swords of conquerors."—SEE PREFACE.