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THE
THREE PERILS OF MAN:
A BORDER ROMANCE.

THE
THREE PERILS OF MAN;
OR,
War, Women, and Witchcraft.
A BORDER ROMANCE.

By JAMES HOGG,
AUTHOR OF "WINTER-EVENING TALES," "BROWNIE OF
BODSBECK," "QUEEN'S WAKE," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Beshrew me if I dare open it.

FLETCHER.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1822.

THE THREE PERILS OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

He was a base and a cruel knight,
As ever my two eyes did see;
And all that he did, and all that he said,
It was by the might of glamourye.
But yet his gear was o' the goude
As it waved and wampished in the wind;
And the coal-black steed he rode upon,
It was fleeter than the bonny hind.

Ballad of Sir Colin Brand.

The distance from Melrose to the castle of Aikwood being only about nine English miles, our party came in view of it before sun-set. It was one of those dead calm winter evenings, not uncommon at that season, when the slightest noise is heard at a distance, and the echoes are all abroad.

As they drew near to the huge dark-looking pile, silence prevailed among them more and more. All was so still that even that beautiful valley seemed a waste. There was no hind whistling at the plough; no cattle nor sheep grazing on the holms of Aikwood; no bustle of servants, kinsmen, or their grooms, as at the castles of other knights. It seemed as if the breath of the enchanter, or his eye, had been infectious, and had withered all within its influence, whether of vegetable, animal, or human life. The castle itself scarcely seemed to be the abode of man; the massy gates were all locked; no porter was in attendance; and there was only one small piping smoke issuing from one of the turrets.

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"Gude faith! callans," said Charlie, "that's a douth and an awsome looking bigging. I wish we were fairly in, and safely out again."

"Is that now to be my residence, Yardbire?" said the beautiful Delany. "Will you go away, and leave Elias and me in that frightsome and desolate looking mansion?"

"If the great Master gie us a civil answer," said Charlie, not well wotting what to say,— "and desire to have you for his handmaiden, or rather the mistress of his castle, to overlook the other maids, and the spinning and weaving concerns like, then we have orders to leave you. But, if he should be cross, and crabbit, and paughty wi' us, ye're in gude hands, and we'll no quat wi' you sae easily."

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"Thou art in good hands indeed," said the friar: "But, alas! what is man! a flower of the field that the hand of the mower cutteth down and leaveth to decay: A shadow; a sound that passeth away and is not. But, maiden, thou art in better hands than ours; in hands that will not leave the innocent and guiltless to perish. There is an arm around thee that thou seest not: there is a guardian with a sword behind thee and before thee, of whom thou art not aware. Therefore have thou no fear, for no evil shall befall thee."

"Methinks I could live any where, and be void of fear, if but suffered to be in your presence," said Delany: "There is something in what you have told me that goes to my heart, and on it I think I can rely."

"Blessed be thou, my daughter!" said he; "yea, and blessed shalt thou be in thy generation"—

"Hear to that!" said the poet aside: "Still on one subject! It is all over with some body!"

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—"But thou art perhaps going into a place of danger, and evil things may await thee. Here, take thou this, and keep it in thy bosom; and, by the blessing of the Holy Virgin, it shall shield thee from all malevolent spirits, all enchantments, and all dangers of the wicked one; the time may come when thou shalt more thoroughly understand the great things contained in this book."

As he said this, he put into her hand a small gilded copy of the Four Evangelists, which she kissed and put into her bosom. All the rest saw this, and took it for a book of the Black Art.

By this time they were drawing near to the gate at Aikwood, where all continued silent and still as formerly. Notwithstanding of this, Charlie's horse, Corby, began to cock his ears and snort in a terrible manner. Stout-hearted as Charlie war, his countenance began to alter; but he uttered not

a word farther than coaxing Corby to proceed. The mule leading the way altogether regardless, the horses jogged on after him, example going farther than precept, whether with man or beast. All the horses were, however, become restive, though none of them was half so fierce as Corby. He continued to force down his head, as if smelling the ground; anon capering and snuffing the air, snorting aloud, and moving with an elasticity rather like a thing of spirit than of joints and bones. "Gude faith, Corby, my man," said Charlie, as he patted his mane, "a' isna right here! Wend on, ye camstairy thief: what the deil ails ye? But, gude sauf us! ane should take care wha they name here. They say, an speak o' the deil he'll appear."

The old proverb had scarcely left Charlie's lips, when, all at once, they beheld three pages in black livery standing ranged before the gate, although the moment before there was no living creature there. They seemed to have arisen out of the ground, and as they rose they bowed their heads in a sarcastic way to the embassy. The appearance of the pages, and the motion that they made were both accomplished in the same moment of time, and at the motion every one of the horses broke away, like so many scared wildfowl, some one way, and some another. Charlie tried to restrain Corby with the whole might of his capacious arm; but the impatient animal plunged and bounded into the air with such violence, that his rider was obliged to give him head, and away he sprung like a roe over field and river, straining every nerve to be out of sight of Aikwood, while Charlie's warrior cloak, that hung only by the shoulder clasp, flapped so far behind him that he appeared like a black cloud skimming the valley. Though none of the other horses made equal speed with Corby, every one ran as fast as it could, and all to the eastward, though far asunder.

The mule, on the contrary, never moved nor concerned himself about the matter. He indeed held forward his long ears, and took a serious look of the pages, as of some sort of beings he did not more than generally understand. Nevertheless he despised them, and looked about with apparent astonishment and derision at the madness and folly of his associates. The friar, finding himself left with his mule and the three pages thus unaccountably, began to address the latter; but they only imitated his motions, and made wry faces, without returning him any answer. The mule had by this time taken another serious look at them, and disliking them exceedingly, he sidled towards them with all his mettle, and tried to hit them with his heels. The urchins then raised such an eldritch laugh that they made the arches of the castle to ring, and, skipping about and about, provoked the mule to farther violence. He, on his part, was nothing loth to attack; he ran open-mouthed at one, kicked at another, and tried to crush another up against the gate, all to the great annoyance of the friar, who, with the utmost difficulty kept his seat for a good while, in spite of the mad evolutions of his provoked and provoking beast. But the game once begun was not suffered to subside. The giggling elves, with the swiftness of lightning, skipped about, and, in whatever direction the mule darted, one of them was always pricking him behind. The worthy friar waxed very wroth, and swore by the life of Pharaoh that he would execute vengeance on them. But the noise of mirth and mischief waxed louder and louder, until the austere inmates of the castle heard; and the great Master said to his only attendant, "Gourlay, what is the meaning of all this uproar?"

"It is only Prig, Prim, and Pricker," said he, "making sport with a mendicant friar and his ass."

"Are they killing him?" enquired his Master, with the greatest composure, and without lifting his eyes from a large book that lay before him.

"I wot not, sire," said Gourlay, with the same indifference.

"Ay, it is no matter," returned the Master; "It will keep them in employment a little while."

"Perhaps," said Gourlay,—and retired back to the casement with sullen step.

By this time the mule had become so outrageous, that he wheeled, kicked, and plunged, like one of the furies; and, at the last, in spite of all the friar could do, laid him fairly on his back, amid the frantic shrieks and gibberish of his tormentors. Gourlay beheld the incident from the crevice of the turret, and, not daring to discompose the great Master, he walked down to the gate to witness the sport at a shorter distance; though with a callous indifference about the matter, and without the least hope to enjoy it.

When he came nigh to the scene of action, he looked as if he expected the friar to have been dead, and was rather astonished when he saw him raise his head, and utter a solemn anathema against the pages, who fled back as if awed and overcome. The seneschal not comprehending this, turned his pale glazed cheek toward the friar, elevated his brow as if looking at the verge of the high hill beyond the river, and stood motionless, stealing a side glance, now and then, of the stranger.

The latter raised up his gruff face, inflamed with passion, and, seeing the tall ungainly figure of Gourlay standing like a statue, with a red turban on his head, and a grey frock or mantle, that in ample folds covered him from the neck to the sandals, took him at once for the mighty enchanter, and addressed him with as little respect as might be.

"If thou art the lord of this mansion, draw near unto me, that I may tell thee of the deeds of thy servants, which eat thy bread, and stand at thy gate. Lo, have they not lifted up the hand against my life, who am a stranger, and a servant of him against whom thou hast rebelled and lifted up the heel? Go to; thou art a churl, and a derision, and a bye-word among thy kindred and people, and not worthy to be called by their name. I came unto thy gate in peace, on a message of peace, and the words of peace were in my mouth; and why hast thou suffered these children of the wicked one to maltreat and abuse me? Why dost thou not open thy mouth?"

The pages chattered with a malicious laugh at a distance, and the seneschal came stalking near, in a sort of confused astonishment, to take a nearer view of this talking phenomenon. He came and looked over him without altering a muscle of his face; and the friar, irritated by pain and the contempt shewn toward his sufferings, went on. At any other time he would haply have been chilled by the pale frigid countenance, shagged beard, and glazed unearthly eye that were now bent over him; but in the present state of his feelings he disregarded them; and, though convinced that he spoke to the mighty enchanter himself, continued his harangue:—

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"Come thou near unto me that I may curse thee. Thou child of all unrighteousness, art thou not already cursed among the children of men? Where are the wealth and the cheerfulness, where are the welcome, and the faces of joy and mirth, that are to be met with at the houses of thy kinsmen whose bread I eat? Where the full basket and the welcome store? the wine that giveth its colour in the glass? the sounds of mirth and gladness? the sounds of the song, the viol, and the harp? And where is thy tongue, that thou canst not speak?" cried the friar, elevating his voice to its highest and most impatient tones.

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"Humph," said Gourlay.

"Humph!" returned the friar; "What dost thou mean by humph? Tell me, in one word, Art thou the lord of this castle?"

"No; but his seneschal," said Gourlay; "What hast thou to say?"

"Then lead me to thy master, that I may see him face to face, and tell him the words of him that sent me. I will not be afraid of these dogs of thine and thy master's. What is become of thy tongue that thou dost not speak? Tell me, I say, can I see thy master?"

"Perhaps," said Gourlay; and, seizing the friar by the shoulder with a rude but powerful grasp, he dragged him in at the gate.

"With-hold thine hand, and thy unmannerly grasp," said the friar,—"else I will smite thee with the sword."

The seneschal regarded this threat only with a grim unmeaning smile; and as he held the friar by the right arm so firmly that he even lost the power of it, it was impossible for him to draw his sword.

"Nay but hearken unto me," continued he; "surely it is better for thee to live than to die. Therefore bring in my beast that he may have provender; and let me also bring my goods and my changes of raiment along with me in peace, else how shall I set up my face before thy master?"

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The seneschal then paused, and motioned with his hand to the pages to bring the panniers; they ran to obey, but as soon as any of them touched the huge wallet, he hastened back and fell to the ground.

"Vermin! cannot you bring the furniture?" cried Gourlay.

They shook their heads, and stood at a distance.

"Humph!" said he, "I do not comprehend this," and leading the friar back, still holding him fast by the arm, he suffered him to lift the panniers himself, which he did with good will, and then allowed himself to be led away by the uncourteous seneschal, who said to the pages as he departed, "See to the vile animal!"

Without more ado he led the friar in, and pushing him rudely into a small vaulted apartment, he locked first a ponderous iron door, and then a massy wooden one, full of nails, upon him; and, without regarding his complaints or anathemas, or deigning a word in reply to his queries, he left him to his own bitter reflections.

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The apartment at first appeared to be dark, but on looking about he found that there were two grated loop-holes in it, and by the light from these he soon perceived that there was nothing in the place save the skeleton of a man of uncommon stature and dimensions. The bones were lying flat on the floor, every one in its place exactly as the man had died, and the flesh wasted away from them. No disarrangement had taken place, nor was the smallest joint wanting. This was a petrifying sight to the poor friar, who, crossing himself, and turning from the horrible spectacle, set his nose through the grating and looked out on the fields.

The first thing he beheld confounded him more than all he had ever seen in his life. The three devilish pages were tampering with his mule to bring him within the outer gate; but he, in his usual manner, proved as refractory as ever, and laid about him with all his might. On this, the boys in one moment whipped him up in their arms, and ere the friar could draw his breath, far less utter a Pater-Noster, they set him down in the middle of the court, straight before the friar's grating, and tied him to the shaft of a well with a strong rope. The friar said a Benedicite; and, ere he had done, the devilish and provoking imps began to torment the poor mule beyond all sufferance, whipping him round and round the post, and making him fling and jump till the blood and sweat were pouring together from his branded sides, and he was no more able to resent the injuries committed on him. The friar fumed, and threatened, and cursed them in the name of the blessed saints; but they only laughed him to scorn: And when the mule could no longer resent the lash, they brought red-hot spindles and pushed them between his hind-legs, which made him fling and rear till he fell down at the post, and lay groaning, unable any more to move.

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The thing that provoked the friar worst of all was the sight of the tall seneschal standing looking on, and seeming, by his motions, to be directing the game. Never was such a flood of eastern eloquence heard at Aikwood, as was poured from the small crevice in the bottom of the eastern

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turret that evening. No one, however, regarded it, or, if they did, it was only to mock or mimic the sublime deprecator.

To all that he said, the seneschal grinned a smile of grim disdain, and motioned to the pages to redouble their sport, which they did, till, as said, the poor animal could furnish them with no more.

The friar now beheld a joyful sight through the twilight, the rest of his companions coming on foot towards the gate. They had gathered together at the mill, about a mile to the eastward of the castle, and made another attempt to approach it on horseback; but their efforts were vain; not a steed would come one step farther than just in view of it; so they agreed to put their horses up at the mill, leaving them in charge of the miller and his two sons, and to proceed on foot to the castle, to join their mysterious associate the friar, whose magical might some of them began to dread, and others to trust.

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Gourlay beheld them approaching as well as did the friar, and again waited on the great Master with awe and trembling.

"I pray thee, mighty Master, to forgive me," said he, "but too true is it that the wretched pedagogue has said,—for here come a body of the warden's friends, with swords in their hands, and one beautiful human thing in their company."

"And what then?" said Michael, in a stern, hollow voice.

The seneschal trembled. "I—I—only want to know how they are to be received," said he.

"Received?" cried the Master, raising his voice to a pitch that made the old wretch shrink as it were within himself. "Received? As spies should, to be sure. Begone!"

Gourlay ran cowering toward the door.

[18]

"Stop.—Come back here. What forces are in the castle?"

"What forces? Hem! Great Master, you only know."

"Any things of flesh, I inquire?"

"No, not one; if you except the old witch Henbane. Oh! I beg your pardon, great and honoured master! I meant your worthy and respectable housekeeper."

Michael gave three gentle tramps with his heel, and in one moment the three pages in black livery, Prig, Prim, and Pricker, were at his knee.

"Work, Master, work. What work now?" said they all in one breath.

"Give your master there a toasting for his insolence," said Michael.

The pages giggled for joy; the seneschal kneeled and roared out for mercy, and, as a motive for granting it to him, said the strangers were at the gate. The pages had already laid their fangs on him; but the Master, on the arrival of the strangers being brought to his mind, ordered the imps to desist. This they did on the instant; but, without delay, rushed on Michael himself, as if they would tear him to pieces. He threatened, cursed, and dared them to touch him; but they seemed nothing daunted by all he said, but danced around him with demoniac gestures, crying still out with one voice:—

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"Work, Master, work; work we need;
Work for the living, or for the dead:
Since we are called, work we will have,
For the master, or for the slave.
Work, Master, work. What work now?"

"Miserable wight that I am!" cried the mighty Master. "Then, d—d dwarfs, since it must be so, bring the slave back, and let him have three varieties, and no more."

Gourlay had made his escape with all expedition, but it was not long ere they overtook him, and brought him back, leading him in the most grotesque manner that can well be conceived. They then began to twirl him about, first with his face one way and then another; and, latest adventures making the strongest impressions on their wicked imaginations, by some devilish slight they transformed him into the shape of a mule, and practised on him all the wanton cruelties they had so lately done on the friar's, seeming to enjoy the sport all the while with redoubled zest. They next changed him into a dog; and, tying a cannister, containing some small stones to his tail, they pursued him round and round the room, and finally out into the yard, with long whips, every one breaking at him, and giving him a lash as he came by. This caused him always now and then to exert himself with such speed that the cannister was sometimes hitting him on the head with a loud rattling yerk, sometimes on the back, and all over the body, while the poor steward was running, yelping in the uttermost desperation. The friar beheld part of the sport from his grate, but little wist that it was the hated seneschal that was suffering, else he would have doubtless enjoyed the scene in no ordinary degree. The rest of the embassy also saw it from the outer gate, where they now stood rapping and calling without being regarded, the pages being too intent on their game to pay the least attention to such as they.

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"Let alane the poor tike, like good lads," cried muckle Charlie, "and come and open the yett. What ill has the silly beast done to you?"

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"They bring me in mind o' Jock Harper's terriers," said Gibbie, "that wad rather do ill for the sake o' doing it, than do ought that was good or right for a' the world."

"I hate to see a colley-shangie," said the poet; "there is nothing sublime or romantic in it."

"They're nae canny couts thae three chaps," said Charlie; "Corby wadna look at them, and he kens things gayan weel. We maun just hae a wee patience till they be done wi' their chace. It's a queer kind o' place this."

The poor metamorphosed steward, finding no rest for the sole of his foot, betook him again to the staircase, and crept down at his master's feet, deeming the chastisement to have been over. But he was no sooner there than the pages were after him, and by the time they had whirled him three times about, he started up a hare, and the three pages, turning themselves into colley dogs set all upon him. [22]

With the form of every quadruped into the shape of which he was turned, he seemed to acquire its nature and antipathies, and in none was it so striking as in the hare. When the collies began to snap at him, his terror is not to be imagined; he darted round and round the hall like lightning, breaking out and in to Michael's study, to the great disarrangement of his conjuring apparatus, books, and papers; while every time that a colley sprung with open mouth at him, he uttered a desperate scream.

This was the only one of their frolics that appeared to amuse the great Master, his partiality for the sports of the chase being proverbial to this day. When he saw the old seneschal laying back his long ears, and exerting his powers of speed in such manifest terror, and the malignant collies whinking after him, and waylaying him in every strait, making him often spring aloft, he could not help laughing outright, and baiting the dogs on him. The tears stood in the old hare's eyes when he heard this, nevertheless his fright made him agile; he bolted from the halls and alleys of the castle into the extensive yard; and there was such a hunt! Michael and the friar both ran to their respective windows to see the sport, and our party at the outer gate shouted and halloed with great energy. Many a time did the dogs get a snap at the steward, and make him scream out, while all the onlookers laughed aloud. At length, thinking he would actually be worried, he cleared the wall, and made a bold effort to gain the wood. But these were a trio of dogs from which there was no possibility of escape. Ran he fast or ran he slow, there were they after him, snatching at his hips and panting sides, and yelping so keenly all the while that the seneschal had no doubt of being torn in pieces should they fairly seize him. They turned him, and made him trace many an acute angle on the hill, while our party were running after him, throwing always sticks or stones at the steward, as he hasted by them, and baiting the dogs on him. Finding, as formerly, no other resource, he returned with main speed to the castle, and crept down at the Master's feet, who, with one touch of his divining rod, changed him into his own native forbidding form. [23]

He started up in great wrath; and, though panting so that he could scarcely speak, swore a horrible oath, that he would no longer be kept in bondage and maltreated in that manner; and that, since it was impossible for him to escape in any other way, he would cut his own throat, and run his chance of an after life. [24]

"Poor dastardly braggart!" said Michael; "not for the soul that inhabits that old malicious frame, dare you do such a thing. I would seize on it, and make sport of it for ages. I have you wholly in my power, and, dead or alive, it is the same thing to me. Were you to do as you say, and take away your life by a ghastly wound, I could even make one of these fiendish spirits enter into your body, re-animate it, and cause you to go about with your gaping wound, unclosed and unpurified, as when death entered thereat. Think of what an existence that would be, and then go and put your miserable threat into execution." [25]

"Hah! There it is!" said Gourlay: "Turn me as I will, I see nothing but wretchedness. Cursed be the day that I saw you, and ten times cursed the confession I made, that has thus subjected me to your tyranny! However, use me another day as you have used me on this, and you do it at your peril, if you were the devil himself. I have warned you."

Michael only smiled contemptuously at the threat; and again asked what living creatures were in the castle, as he wanted a retinue to receive the message of his kinsmen.

"I have told you already," said Gourlay, in the same passionate and irritated mood; "and I again repeat it, that there is no mortal thing in the castle, but the old witch, and perhaps two or three hundred rats."

"Take that in the first place then," said Michael, "for your impertinence,"—at the same time laying him flat on the floor by a tremendous blow, although he only moved his hand toward the steward; "and in the next place go call out these three hundred rats you talk of, marshal them up in the court, and receive the mighty warden's people with all manner of pomp and respect, and use them according to their demerits." [26]

The steward roared out with pain; and gnashing his teeth with rage, he arose growling, and was hasting away, when the Master asked him if he was going to accomplish what he had bidden him do.

"Without doubt;" said he, "Is it not very likely that I shall be able?"

"Take that then," said the Master, "and put it above the lock-hole of the door; it shall serve you as a summons, and Prig, Prim, and Pricker shall marshal your array." With that he gave him a small piece of parchment written in red characters, which the steward snatched angrily out of his hand, and going down the stair did as the Master had ordered him. [27]

The charm was effective, and its effects momentary. The bustling and the screaming of rats were heard in every corner of the castle, and forthwith a whole column of men marched out into the

court in three files, led by the three pages, and headed by the incensed seneschal in his grey mantle and cap.

Our messengers looked mightily astonished when they beheld such a retinue, and Charlie observed that "it was a confounded shame for Mr Michael no to join the warden, and had sae mony idle men lying tholing starvation beside him." But then looking wildly around on both sides to his friends, he added, "God's grace be about us! wha kens but a' thae may be spirits or elves in the shapes o'men? I think they hae unco queer musty-like looks. An I had Corby here he wad soon tell me wi' a vengeance."

Old Gourlay, now at the head of his corps, demanded what the strangers wanted; and on being informed who they were, and that they came on a special commission to the Master, they were admitted, and walked up a lane between two ranks of armed men in full caparison. [28]

The Master beheld them from his casement, and was mightily diverted by the whimsical appearance of the various individuals that formed the group, two of whom he conceived to be the most beautiful creatures he had ever seen. Whoever reads this will at once guess who these two lovely beings were; but if he does, he will at once guess wrong. It would seem that a wizard sees every thing in this fair and beautiful creation through an inverted medium, and that all the common and fine feelings of nature are in him changed and distorted. The beauty of the two young captives appeared, in Michael's eyes, hateful, and even affected him with loathing; but two more lovely and engaging creatures than Jordan and the Deil's Tam he had never seen on earth. The hooked nose, wrinkled face, and mouth from ear to ear of the laird, he thought exquisite; but Tam's long coulter nose, turned up in front, his small grey eyes, and shapeless physiognomy, were beyond all expression engaging. So, from the time that the Master got the first look of them, he determined, contrary to his usual custom, to see and converse with his guests. [29]

They were soon conducted to the door of the vault, in which their friend the friar was immured; and, as soon as the door opened, he exclaimed, with a loud voice, "I charge you, O my brethren, and my companions, that ye come not into this place, nor set a foot within its boundaries; for the place is a place of death, and the bones of the dead men are in it."

There is no deciding what these words might have produced, had they been pronounced in time; but as soon as Charlie and the laird, who were foremost, heard the friar's voice, they rushed towards him without thought or fear of the consequences, and, ere he had done, the hindmost were pushed in by the relentless arm of the seneschal, and the iron door closed behind them. Perceiving how matters stood, the friar straight lifted up his hands, and continued to declaim in a still more fervent stile. [30]

"Hout! Gude Lord, friar man, haud your tongue," said Charlie interrupting him: "What signifies making sic a frase as a' this? or what good will it do? I hae run mysel into mony a primary in my life, but I never fand that mony words did muckle good. I trowed that ye had mair art about ye than to be feared for a stane an' lime wa,' an' twa or three airn staincheons. Pith can do muckle, but art can do mair."

Charlie meant the black art; but the friar taking him up in another meaning, shook him by the hand and blessed him.

It may not have occurred to the reader and it is not likely it should, that this same friar was an English monk, the most celebrated man of that age, then exiled from his country, and obliged to skulk in disguise, for fear of being apprehended and burnt as a wizard and necromancer. He was the greatest philosopher and chemist of the age, the real inventor of gun-powder, and many other wonderful discoveries, and, withal, a pious and good man,—although one whose character was tintured with peculiarities so striking, that some took him for a man crazed in his mind, but far more for a powerful necromancer. His name is familiar to every man in the least acquainted with the literature or the science of that age; but while he remained in Scotland being always denominated the gospel friar, we have judged it best to call him by that name. If the reader has not discovered this, it is time he should know it; and whether the friar was a necromancer or not, will appear in the sequel. [31]

When the party got leisure to converse together, their first words were expressive of the astonishment they laboured under at sight of the warlike force kept up by the Master. Charlie only testified his regret that there was not a right and mutual understanding between him and the warden; but the maid Delany was the first to remark that she did not think they were right men, because their faces were all alike, and their eyes were not like the eyes of any human being she had ever before looked on. In this every one present acquiesced, and great was their wonder how or whence that mighty armed force had sprung; but they agreed that there was no contending with such numbers, of whatsoever nature they might be, and that there was nothing for it but submitting to the Master's will. [32]

The day light was by this time quite extinguished, but the moon was up; and it being a hard frost, with a slight covering of snow, or rime, it was nearly as light as some winter days. Their damp, mouldy vault with the grisly skeleton lying at the one side of it, shewed horridly dismal in the wan and shadowy light, and threw a chillness over their hearts. They hoped and looked long for dinner, and then for supper, but neither of them came; nor did they hear or see any living thing all that night, save the friar's mule, that had again got to his feet, and stood at the post groaning and trembling of cold. This was a grievous sight to the friar, for his heart was moved for the sufferings of his poor beast; and in the bitterness of his spirit he vented some anathemas against the unconscionable seneschal, saying,—"Verily if ever that son of Belial fall into my hands, I will be unto him as Adramelech and as Sharezer, and do unto him as they did to the father that begat [33]

them."

Every time that Charlie looked out at the mule, he testified a sort of inward satisfaction that his own trusty steed was not brought into the same scrape, and sundry times said, "Gude faith, Corby kend better sense than coming into sic a place as this is. He's as weel off down wi' the auld miller; He'll get some pluffins o' seeds or dust, poor fallow. An they gie him but water, I'm no feared for him, for there's plenty o' meat yonder,—but he'll never do if they let him want water."

About two o'clock in the morning the seneschal entered with a light, but had the precaution to lock the wooden door before he opened the iron one. The prisoners had sat down on the floor, and were leaning on one another; and, dismal as their lodging was, some of them had fallen sound asleep. Delany was leaning on the friar's breast, and the poet had laid himself down behind her, and covered her with his mantle. The rest were huddled together, so that they appeared to be lying above one another; but all, or most of them, set up their heads at the entrance of the steward.

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Tam was the first to address him. "What's come o' our supper, goodman, that you are coming toom-handed? Do you no think it is time your guests had something to eat, or hae ye naething either to eat or drink in this great gousty castle? I dinna care what ye may think, or what you may say; but in my opinion you and your master baith are naething but twa ill-bred unmannerly niggards."

The seneschal grinned disdain, and clenched his teeth in wrath. He was about to reply, but all their tongues were loosed on him at once, some complaining of one thing some of another, and the friar more particularly of the treatment of his beast. All, however, ended with a request for meat.

"No," said Gourlay; "we have no meat for spies and forayers. A halter is the only guerdon we bestow on such dogs. I want this fair maiden, and for the rest of you"—He finished the sentence with a sneer and a point with his finger to the bones; and seizing the maid by the shoulder, he dragged her toward the door.

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"Softly sir, and if you please," said the poet, speaking in pure iambics, and seizing the bars of the iron door before the steward and his prize. "We have indeed this maiden brought, from distant camp and knight renowned, unto the master of this house; and to none else we give her up: No, not to thee, nor arm of flesh."

As the poet said these words, he bristled up, and faced the steward at the door, to keep him back; but the carl gave him such a blow on the temples that he staggered and fell. The friar then interposed, and though he was a strong and powerful man, the irascible steward plied his blows so fast and so hard about his bare pate, that he was also overthrown. The maiden screamed; and the old incendiary was within a hairbreadth of having her outside of the iron door, when she would have been wholly out of the power of her friends and protectors. But at that critical instant Charlie Scott seized the steward by the arm, never doubting but that he would twist him like a willow; but he was mistaken. The churl seized him by the throat with his left hand, with such prodigious force that Charlie deemed him to have the strength of six common men, and lending him a blow on the face, he made his mouth and nose to gush blood. Charlie returned the salute with interest, yet the steward stood his ground, and a most desperate struggle ensued, in which victory appeared doubtful. Gibby perceiving his friend and champion's jeopardy, drew out his sword, and was going deliberately to stick the old ragamuffin behind, had not Charlie called out furiously to him to forbear.

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"Keep back your whittle, you cowardly dog," cried he, "else I'll cut you into a thousand pieces. I never yet took odds against a man, nor shall I now, unless I am fighting wi' the devil. In that case I may measure my backbreadth on the floor. But be he the devil, be he dicken, I shall gie him ae squeeze."

Charlie with that closed with his dangerous opponent, and gave him such a squeeze that he made his back and ribs to crash. The steward twisted his face into the most hideous contortions, and exerted his whole force to extricate himself, but Charlie brought him to the ground, falling upon him with all his ponderous weight. It was among the bones of the gigantic skeleton that the two combatants fell; and Charlie, deeming that he had given his foe enough for once, and a little startled to find himself among the rattling bones, began to unloose his grasp, and said in a hurried way, "Billy, I'll learn you how to strike fo'k on the gab and the brigg o' the nose sae rashly!" and was getting up as fast as he could, when the steward gave him such a blow with the thigh-bone of the dead man, that he had very nigh brought him down again. If Charlie's bonnet had not had a bar or two of steel, that blow would have shattered his skull. As it was it stunned him a little, and made the water start into his eyes; and he had just recollection and strength sufficient to secure his adversary's arms, by holding them down, so that he might not repeat the blow. Yet, with all this Charlie's temper was not to be ruffled. He cared not how often or how much he fought, but he never fought in wrath.

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"Gude faith, my man," said he, "but ye're no nice o' your chapping sticks! and foul fa' me gin ye dinna lay them gayan freely on. But I dinna blame ye. A wight man never wants a weapon; only come that gate again an ye dare."

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The steward growled and cursed, trying all that he could to throw Charlie from above him, and master him by sheer strength. He had no idea of being overpowered by a single arm, nor was he wont to fear half a dozen, but he had never met with the like of Charlie Scott before. He might as well have tried to remove the hill of Aikwood; so he was obliged to succumb, which he did with a very bad grace; nor would he either abate one inch in his demand of having the damsel

unconditionally, or grant one request that they desired of him.

"Why, then, there's nae help for it, honest man," said Charlie; "I hae ye firm and fast, and what ye winna gie us we maun e'en tak at our ain hand. Honest friar, come you here, and tak' a' the keys o' the castle aff this camstary hallanshaker, and we'll e'en help oursels to sic as we can get. I sal tak care that he sanna move a spauld against you, and as for his tongue we maun just let it wag."

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The rage of the seneschal, when he saw himself robbed of the keys of the castle, is not to be described: he cursed and raged in such a manner, that, even after the friar had both doors fairly open, Charlie durst not move from off him, or let him go, for fear of some deadly scaith.

"I dinna ken what I'm to do wi' this deil's buckie," said he; "he's like the tod's whelps, that grow aye the langer the waur."

"I wad gie him a settler," said Tam.

"He brings me in mind o' a barrel o' beer, fuming and fuffing. He'll no settle till he be pierced," said Gibbie.

The friar then took up his bulky baggage, and walked out with that and the light, meaning to bring his mule's halter wherewith to bind the seneschal; but Charlie, making his escape from him, locked him in,—and thus were our messengers left in the full and free possession of the castle of Aikwood.

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CHAPTER II.

The lady looked o'er the castle wa',
She looked both pale and wan;
For the door was locked, and the lord within,
He was no Christian man.

Song of May Marley.

When the steward saw that he was fairly mastered, and that neither strength nor words could avail him ought, he remained where he was in sullen silence. He had got no orders from the Master to bring him the maid, but it had come into his head to go and take her to himself, and he had nearly effected his purpose. What might have been the consequence of his success, it is painful even to calculate; but he was thus prevented, though not without blood and wounds.

The guests now traversed all the lower apartments of the castle, there being neither bolt nor bar to interrupt them; but for all the retinue that they had seen at their arrival, there was neither the appearance of man nor beast remaining. The large hall did not seem to have been occupied for a long period. The shelves were empty, and there were neither dishes nor fragments of meat of any description; and every thing within as well as without the castle had the appearance of desolation.

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At length they came to a door, from the bottom of which they perceived some light issuing, of which they were glad, as they were afraid the steward's lamp would fail them and leave them in darkness. Deeming themselves on ticklish ground, they consulted in a whisper before venturing in. Charlie Scott was quite a fearless man among his fellow creatures, but all kinds of supernatural agency pressed heavily on his conscience. Therefore, in the present instance, he dissuaded his comrades from entering, with all his eloquence.

"Gude faith, callans, keep back off that place. It is may-be the warlock's room; and gin he should be in the mids o' some o' his cantrips at this eiry time o' the morning, gude sauf us! it is a question what might be the upshot. Na, na, friar; I tell ye, bide back, it is best to let sleeping dogs lye, for fear they get up and bite you."

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But the friar's creed differed from that of Charlie, and he went dauntlessly forward, putting him aside with his hand, and saying at the same time, that he would "surely go in unto him as with a front of brass or of iron;" that sooner or later the time and the season of their meeting must come, and why should he be dismayed?

The friar then opened the door with caution, and entered, followed by all his associates, Charlie Scott bringing up the rear, and whispering to those next him in a tremulous voice,—“Od that body's mad! He'll lead us into some ill-faur'd snapper. Dinna be ower rash, callans. Just look afore ye.”

Instead of the great enchanter, however, they found only an old woman, so busily engaged with something on the fire, that she scarcely deigned to regard them as they entered. She had a wooden tube, like the barrel of a gun, with which she blew up her fire; and she kept blowing at it till the flame came above the lip of her caldron, and let her see into it; for she had no lamp, nor any other light save that which came from the fire.

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When she had made it blaze thus high, she spoke to herself, and without taking her mouth from the tube; saying some words to the following purport:—

"Sotter, sotter, my wee pan,
To the spirit gin ye can;

When the scum turns blue,
And the blood bells through,
There's something aneath that will change the
man."

When Charlie saw her unchristian-like face, and heard her mumbling these horrid words through her long hollow tube, he turned his back and fled, taking shelter in a void entrance, to which he was led by some light that fell into it from the rays of the moon. Full hardly was he then bested, for he still deemed that he heard the witch's rites at a distance; and the faint ray of the moon through a narrow aperture made the rest of the space appear so shadowy and dim, that Charlie saw he was in a dangerous situation, and actually began to fancy he beheld a face in the dark staring at him, and still coming nearer. It was no time to stand there; so he fled with all his might. But in his dismay he lost every kind of aim, or consideration whither he was going, and at once stumbled on the undermost step of a stone stair. Thinking the apparition he had seen was by that time hard upon him, and no other way that he knew of open for flight, he rose and pursued his course straight up stairs, in a state of perturbation hardly to be accounted for. The first landing place that he came to he ran himself against a door, and not finding farther entrance he faced about, and, leaning over the balluster, he set up such a yell as never was before breathed from lungs. It is true he neither heard nor saw aught of the apparition; but Charlie was a sensible man, and he was certain it might be there for any thing that he knew; so he set up the same kind of cry that he was wont to do when he lost his neighbours in a mist, or in a night foray, only about ten times or so louder.

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"Hilloa! Tam Craik! friar! hilloa! d—n ye a'; what for winna ye come wi' a light?"

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Charlie was now at such a distance from his comrades, who were still in the witch's small apartment, and the echoes of the huge void castle so confused the sounds, that they took the cries of their captain for the rushing of a whirlwind roaring through the crannies of the castle, and paid no regard to them. No state could be more deplorable than that in which muckle Charlie Scott was now placed. To have returned down the stair would have been meeting the devil face to face; or, as Charlie much better expressed it, "to hae dabbed nebs wi' the deil."

He had therefore no other resource than to bellow out for assistance; and seeing none approach, he said aloud in great agony of spirit, "Lord, gin I were but on Corby's back again! ay, though it were in the wildest glen o' a' the Cheviots, and the Eskdale souple o'er my shoulder," (that was the cant name of Charlie's tremendous sword;) "I might then work my way: But sic a place as this I saw never! Od, an there be lugs within the wa's o' the house I shall either gar them hear or crack them. Hilloa!"

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Not satisfied with giving yelloch after yelloch, as he termed his loud cries, he flew to every door on the landing place, laid on it with his fists, and kicked it with his foot, calling at each of them in the same key as before, "Is there ony body here?" He at last prevailed: one door was opened, and he was admitted inside. But, alas for our gallant yeoman! he only by this transition got out of one exceedingly bad scrape into a worse.

These casual separations of *dramatis personæ* are exceedingly unfortunate for the story-teller who aims at conciseness and brevity; because it is impracticable to bring them all on at the same time. A story is like a waggoner and his horses travelling out the king's highway, his machine loaden with various bales of rich merchandise. He goes smoothly and regularly on, till he comes to the bottom of a steep ascent, where he is obliged to leave a great proportion of his loading, and first carry one part of it to the top of the hill, then another, and then another, which retards him grievously on his way. So is it with the writer of a true history such as this; and the separation of parties is as a hill on his onward path.

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It is otherwise with dramatic representations, and in these the authors have a great advantage. Let their characters separate as they will, or be engaged as they will, they can at any time, with the greatest ease, be brought together on the stage. The one enters from the one side, and the other from the other, and we do not much concern ourselves how or whence they come, taking it for granted that they are there, and that is enough. It is rather delightful to see a hero, in whom one had begun to take some interest, and whom he supposed to be far distant, exposed to dangers abroad and perfidy at home, all at once stalk majestically in from the side scene, and take his place before our eyes. It gives the heart a great deal of relief to see and know that he is there in person to stand up for his own injured rights. But in our own case there is no such expedient. Like the waggoner, we must return from the top of the hill, and bring up those of our characters that are left behind. At present we must return from the top of the great stair-case in Aikwood castle, into the housekeeper's cell on the ground floor.

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Charlie had made his escape almost unobserved; those next to him weening that he had only drawn a little back to keep a due distance between the witch and him, so that they pressed forward to the scene without regarding him.

The crone continued her orgies, blowing her fire one while, and again stirring the liquid in the caldron; then making it run from the end of a stick, that she might note its state of gelidity. The friar addressed her in his usual stile of sonorous eastern eloquence; but she only regarded him by a slight stare, and a motion with her hand, as if she wished him and his group to disappear. She had taken them for spirits that she had conjured up, and perhaps thought they were come before the time; for in mumbling to herself, they at one time heard her saying, "So you are all there, are you? Well, I shall find you work. Sotter, sotter my wee pan."

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This scene went on for a considerable time without any variety, the witch attending solely to her caldron and her fire; the friar standing before the flame, and Tam and Gibbie, with their long kipper noses, peeping over his shoulder. The other three were behind these; the poet with his arm round Delany's waist, and the beautiful face of the boy Elias, the very picture of amazement personified, appeared below the friar's right arm. Scarcely could such another group be formed for the painter's eye. Here sat the witch, haggard and wild, close at the one cheek of the fire, watching over her caldron and infernal morsel with the utmost eagerness. There stood the gruff friar, with the keys of the castle in his right hand, and the dim lamp in his left, raised above his head; so that, from the two groups of light, the marked features of amazement could be distinctly traced; which, with the faint and yellowish hue of their complexions, made the whole highly picturesque.

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The witch continued her occupation; till, at length holding up her stick to note the consistence of her jelly, that appeared like boiling blood and water mixed, there was something in its appearance that confounded her. She dropt both her tube and her stirring stick among the ashes, and turned about staring wildly at our group. She appeared as if examining their features one by one in search of some one whose presence she missed; and perceiving the boy's face below the friar's arm, she fixed her eyes on that, cowering down at the same time like a cat that is about to spring on its prey. Then, rising half up, she moved toward him in a stooping posture, turning always her face first to the one side and then to the other, until her nose came almost in contact with the boy's, on which he slipped his face out of her sight behind the friar's back. Observing next the two droll faces over the friar's two shoulders, she appeared delighted with the view; and letting her jaws fall down, she smiled at it, but it was rather a gape than a smile. She then tottered again towards the fire, rocking her body and wagging her head as before, repeating the while this unmeaning phrase:

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"Niddy, noddy, niddy, noddy.
Three heads on ae body."

Haply she deemed all the three faces she had seen belonged to the friar, and was happy at witnessing such a monstrous appearance.

Sitting down on her hams as before, she seized on her two implements, and began to blow and stir for about the space of a minute, testifying great impatience to see how her spell proceeded. But the moment that she held up a part of her morsel on the stick, and let it drip off, she perceived that all was wrong, and that her guests were the reverse of those she expected. As soon as she looked at the liquor, she uttered a horrible scream, while every joint of her body shook with fury; and, lifting a wooden ladle that lay by her side with devilish nimbleness, she splashed the boiling liquid on the faces and bodies of our amazed compeers.

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"Deil be in the auld jaud's fingers!" cried Tam: "Gin she hasna jaupit out baith my een!"

"I have indeed given my cheek to the firebrand!" said the friar; "and the skin of my forehead hath departed from me!"

"She brings me a-mind o' my mither," said Gibbie—but he got not time to proceed; for after she had exhausted the contents of her caldron on the intruders, she attacked them with burning coals and pieces of wood. These she dashed among them with such desperate force, that part of them sought refuge in retreat. Not so our redoubted friar. He gave the lamp out of his hand to the laird, bidding him take care of it, and turning his back toward her, and running backward for fear of farther injury to his face and eyes, he seized the witch by the frock, and putting his arm round both hers to restrain them, he held her fast to his side. In doing so, he uncovered the cross that hung at his girdle. When she saw this, and that her body was pressed against it, she uttered the most horrid howlings, and appeared to be falling into convulsions. Nevertheless, the friar kept his hold. He let her scream on, and, dragging her toward the door, said unto her, "Thou wicked one! as thy works have been, so shall be thy reward; and as thou hast sown, so also shalt thou reap. Come with me, and I will put thee into a place where thou shalt cease from troubling."

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Without more ado, he bore her away to the vault where lay her surly and unyielding associate, beside his mass of dry human bones; and forcing her in, he locked them up together, saying, as he turned the massy bolt, "Lo, the gates of iron and of brass close upon thee! the bolts of steel are drawn around thy dwelling! There shalt thou remain, and there shall thy flesh be consumed, unless thou repentest thee of the evil that thou hast done."

There was a shrewd smile on the friar's face as he said this, as of one who either did not mean to put his threat in execution, or marvelled how it was that he should thus be lording it in the castle of Aikwood, and imprisoning whom he would.

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Never till that instant did any of the party miss their friend and champion, Charlie Scott; but when they turned from the door of the prison to consult what was to be done next, behold he was wanting. This caused them great dismay, but the friar most of all.

"Wo is me!" cried he: "How is the mighty departed, and the pillar of our strength moved out of its place! As well may they take my head from my body, and say unto me live, as bid us go on and prosper without that mighty man."

The poor waggoner must again return from the top of the hill, and bring up the most important and weighty part of his cargo; no less a load than muckle Charlie Scott, laird of Yardbire, and the far famed warlock and necromancer, Master Michael Scott.

The mighty uproar that Charlie made at the head of the stair, when he believed the devil to be on the steps, aroused the great necromancer from his nocturnal experiments, all of which were of an infernal kind. At such hours as these his capacious mind was abstracted from all worldly concerns, such as other mortals busy themselves about. If any thing sublunary engaged his studies and calculations, it was how to make the living die and the dead to live,—how to remove mountains out of their places, to turn the sea into dry land, and the fields into a billowy and briny ocean,—or in any way counteract nature in her goings on. In some of these great enterprises was he doubtlessly engaged that morning, when the voice of Charlie Scott astounded his ears.

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Often had hosts of demons mustered at his call in the castle of Aikwood, and the yelling sounds of the infernals were no strangers to his ears; but never had he heard such a potent voice before as that sent forth by Charlie, when he conceived himself cooped up between the devil and a bolted door. Conceived did I say? No: Charlie saw distinctly, by this time, an indefinable being coming slowly up to him. Saint Peter! as he did thresh the warlock's door. "Is there any body here? Hilloa! Open the door I say." Thump, thump, thump!

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The bolt inside was drawn, and, owing to the strong pressure without, the door flew wide open at once. Charlie perceiving the light, and fearless of ought but the figure behind him, rushed into the room, and made toward the fire. The door was instantly shut behind him with a loud and furious clash; and Charlie then turning around, got the first look of the inmate. He was a boardly muscular man, somewhat emaciated in his appearance, with a strong bushy beard that flowed to his girdle, of a hue that had once been jet black, but was now slightly tinted with grey. His eyes were uncommonly bright and piercing, but they had some resemblance to the eyes of a serpent. He wore on his head a turban of crimson velvet, ornamented with mystic figures in gold, and on the front of it was a star of many dazzling colours. The rest of his body was wrapped in a mantle or gown, striped with all the hues of the rainbow, and many more.

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Charlie's eye had lately been lighted up with terror, but as it fell on the majestic figure of Master Michael Scott, its wild gleam softened into respect, and he saluted him with his quick, abrupt, border bow, which rather resembled the motion made by a raven beckoning from his rock as he wakes the surrounding echoes, than the slow and graceful courtesy then so well understood among the great. Michael still kept his erect posture at the back of the door, fixing on our yeoman an indignant and angry glance. That look conjured up a little more of Charlie's breeding; he doffed his steel bonnet with the one hand, stroked down the hair of his forehead with the other, and gave the master another bow, or rather a nod.

"Gude e'en t'ye, Sir; I fancy you're the lord o' this castle?" said Charlie.

"You fancy so, do you?" said the Master with a sneer; and giving three tramps with his heel on the floor, in one moment the three pages, Prig, Prim, and Pricker, stood beside him.

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"Work, Master, work,—what work now?"

"Take that burly thief and housebreaker, bind him, and put him to the test."

"Stop short there, my good masters, till I speak t'ye, said Charlie, "I'm neither a housebreaker nor a thief, but a leel man, our warden's kinsman, and your ain, Master Michael Scott. I came here on fair and honourable service, and I have been guidit waur than a tike; and I'll just tell you plainly, for I'm rather an e'en-down chap, that if ane o' thae brats dare but to touch me, I'll tak my hand aff his haffet in sic a way that he sanna grene to lay foul finger on a gentleman again."

The three pages fell a giggling at this speech, and one of them brushed forward and seized Charlie with a force of which he had no conception. But he was one that never suffered any personal attack with impunity. He drew a stroke with his clenched fist, and aimed such a blow at the page's head, that, if he had had a head like other pages, would have smashed it to pieces. Charlie hit no head at all. He struck a thing of nought. But the force of his arm was such, that, about two yards farther on, he hit an apparatus of curious construction, which he called "a machine for setting the wind on fire," and which he made to fly all in flinders against the wall. The Master's eye kindled with rage; but the three urchins, who delighted in nothing but mischief, laughed still the louder, and pressed all forward on Charlie. He had been a little astounded at missing the page's head; but, being somewhat flustered, he had not leisure to reflect, and his conceptions were naturally none of the most acute; so, for the present, he took it for a miss. But seeing they purposed to lay violent hands on him, he sprung back into the middle of the room, in order to command weapon space; and drawing out the Eskdale souple, he stood on the defensive in a most determined posture.

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The pertinacious elves wheeled also backward, taking a circle round behind the Master, and advanced on him all abreast. Good Lord, with what might Charlie struck at them! He came on them with a hew that he meant should cut them all three through the middle at once. But he, a second time, struck on vacancy. The sword whistled through the void, taking Charlie round with it, and demolishing almost every thing that was in the room. The pages screamed with delight, but Michael foamed with fury. Charlie paid no regard either to him or the devastation he had made among his utensils; but, springing round the board to the other side of the room, said, in a loud perturbed voice: "Tell me just this ae thing, Michael,—are thae three creatures deils? Because an they be deils, I hae nae mair chance wi' them than a cat. But as for yoursel, goodman, I ken ye are flesh and blood, and o' my ain kith and kin," (and with that he seized Michael by the throat.) "therefore, either gar thae hellicats gang about their business, or, by Him that made us, I'll thrav your neck about."

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Whether it was the might of the enchanter himself, or that of his bond spirits, Charlie wist not; but in one moment after that his feet were tripped from beneath him, and he was laid on his back

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on the floor. There he was held by a might against which his great strength could not prevail, bound with cords, and stretched on the board. The Master and his familiars then conversed in Latin, a language of which Charlie knew but little, having never been at court; but he heard they were conversing about his baptism. Charlie had not got much time in his life to think about these sacred rites, yet he had always held them in proper respect and veneration; and at that time he blessed the hour he had been presented in holy church, having strong hopes that on that account the powers of hell would not prevail against him. The elves loosed his buff-belt, and unclasped his steel-doublet, laying his manly bosom quite bare. The Master gave them directions in Latin, and each of them went and brought a long knife with two edges, sharp as a razor, and having a point like a lance.

"I didna trow that there had been ought sae misleared in nature as this," said Charlie. "It's no that I'm ony feared for death. I hae looked him ower often i' the face to blench at his ca': but I wad just hae liket to hae fa'en i' the field wi' my sword i' my hand, and no to be cut up like a Christmas pye, and carved a' into collops by a wheen damned deils."

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One of them prepared to cut open his breast, and another his belly; but a moment's dispute taking place between them in some unknown tongue, about the mode, as Charlie believed, he crossed himself as well as he could with his bound hands, and pronounced a sacred name into himself. That instant he perceived the pages fall a-trembling, and stand back; their faces blanched with dread, and the weapons fell from their hands. The Master was wroth, and ordered them to proceed, as Charlie weened by his motions; but, instead of that, they retired trembling into a corner. He snatched a knife from one of them, as if determined to do the deed himself. Charlie then deemed himself gone; for he had a sort of confused idea, that, by certain laws of nature, and the use of holy rites, wicked spirits were restrained, else mankind would be destroyed: "But what law of nature, or what holy word or sign," thought he, "can restrain the arm of a wicked man? It is my duty to try, however," thought he again; and with that he whispered a prayer to the Son of the Virgin, that He would save a warrior from a death like this.

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Charlie's prayer was heard, short as it was; for at that very moment, while yet the syllables hung on his lips, entered the gruff figure of the friar, with the keys of the castle over his arm, and followed by his associates.

"What seek you here, you dogs?" cried the Master, turning about with the great knife in his hand: "Am I thus to have my privacy disturbed, and my abode ravaged by a pack of carrion hounds from the hills? Brave pages mine, bind them all, and cut me them into a thousand pieces."

Scarcely was the order given ere they had the poet on the floor, and bound with strong cords. The rest prepared to escape; but the great enchanter placed his back to the door, brandished his great knife, and dared them to approach him. The mettledness of these pages cannot be conceived, far less described; they seemed but to will a thing and it was done. Ere ever one of the intruders had time to rally his thoughts, or almost to think at all, three of them and the boy were all lying bound in fetters. But when the imps came to seize on the friar, they could not. They skipped about and about him, but they had not power even to touch his frock. The virgin stood behind him trembling; and on their feeling their want of power over the friar, they turned to lay hold on her. But the moment they touched her robe, they retired back in dismay.

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Michael looked as if he dreaded there was something about these two that boded him no good; but he wist not what it was, for he had never seen the prowess of his bond spirits counteracted before; therefore he awaited the event for a space, when he perceived them vanquished.

The friar had time to rally his thoughts, and remembered that the maid had the blessed gospel concealed in her bosom; and judging that these were perhaps fiends with whom they had to do, who durst not stand against the word of truth, he drew his cross from below his frock,—that cross which had been consecrated at the shrine of Saint Peter, bathed in holy water, and blessed with many blessings from the mouths of ancient martyrs—had done wonderous miracles in the hands of saints of former days,—and lifting that reverently up on high, he pronounced the words from holy writ against which no demon or false spirit's power could prevail. In one moment all the three imps fled yelling from the apartment. The countenance of the enchanter fell, and he quaked where he stood; but the eye of the friar was kindled up with exultation and joy.

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"There worketh the hand of my master!" exclaimed he: "There have I trusted, and I am not, like thee, ashamed of my trust. I have a strong-hold of hope, and it is founded on a rock, but thy habitation trembleth beneath thee; and dost thou know, or hast thou considered, what is underneath?"

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The friar then went up and loosed the bonds of his friend Charlie, and of all the rest, one by one, exulting in his creed, and pouring forth such sentences of sublime adoration as are not suited for an idle tale.

The Master at length took courage and rebuked him, saying, "It is vain for thee, foolish dupe of a foolish creed, to multiply such great swelling words of vanity. What though thy might hath, for once, prevailed above my might, and thy spell proved more powerful than mine? I will engage, nevertheless, that in nine times out of ten, mine, on fair trial, shall prevail over thine. And at all events I can at this time call in the arm of flesh to my assistance, and do with you whatever seemeth to me good."

"Ay, gude faith, and that's very true, Master Michael Scott," said Charlie: "and that we saw wi' our ain een. It is great nonsense to quarrel with the lord of a castle aneath his ain roof, although, I confess, I was the first to do it mysel'. But there's an auld saying, wha wad sit i' Rome and strive wi' the pope? or misca' a Macdonald in the raws o' Lochaber? We came wi' nae sic intent, but in

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fair friendship, and on courteous errand. And now when we are a' rather on equal footing again, let me beg o' you, great and powerful Master, to be a reasonable man for aince. Answer the warden's request, and let us gae; for really, great Sir, our master canna well want us; and mair nor that, I'm feared yon chaps at the mill dinna gie Corby ony water."

Though the Master did not understand the latter part of this speech, yet the honest simplicity of Charlie somewhat interested him. His stern and sullen brow cleared to something like a smile; and on looking at the singular and original group before him, he half resolved within himself to have some intercourse with humanity once more. "If it were but for a day, or even an hour," thought he, "would it not form some variety in a life thus dedicated to searching after hidden mysteries—a life of turmoil and distraction, in which there is no allay?"

Such were some of the thoughts that glanced on the dark mind of the necromancer, as he turned his eye on the broad weather-beaten face of honest Yarbire, "And what may your master's request be, yeoman?" said he. [69]

Charlie had great hopes that he would now bring matters to a bearing at once; and, coming a step nearer to the Master, he laid the one fore-finger across the other, and answered him thus:—"Why, gude faith, Sir, it is neither mair nor less than just this:—Ye ken the last time ye war at the castle of Mountcomyn, ye gae our master, your kinsman, the warden, some little insight anent things that were to come about:—of some bits o' glebes, and hopes, and glens, ye ken, that war to fa' to his house. Now, Sir Knight, or Master, as I should say, he's a man that, aboon a' ithers that ever war born, looks to the honour and the advantage o' his house. He's as loyal as the day's light, as generous as a corn mill, and as brave as a blast o' snaw or a floody river. Od, you will turn either the ane or the ither sooner than you will turn him wi' his muirland callans at his back. —Ay, I hae seen him.—But it's needless to tell what he'll do for his ain. So you see, Sir Master, that was the preceese thing he sent us for." [70]

"To send troops to his assistance, I perceive?" said the Master.

"Why, Sir Master, to say the truth, we hadna that in charge; though it wad be far mair mack like, and far mair feasible, and far mair honourable into the bargain, to send yon great clan o' ratten-nosed chaps to help our master, than to hae them lying idle, eating you out o' house and hauld here. Ye wad aye be getting part o' the spulzie. Half a dozen o' kye at a time now and then disna do amiss. Sae, if you will come to terms, I will engage for ane to see you get fair share, to the hoof and the horn, the barn an' the beef boat, the barrel and the bed blanket. But, ye ken, Sir, in matters like this, we maun do ae thing afore another, like business men; and ye maun be sae good, and sae kind, and sae obliging, as to answer our first request first."

"As far as I can recollect," said Michael, "I never heard any request made." [71]

"Why, gude faith, Sir, ye ken, I believe I forgot that part o't," said Charlie: "But ye see, that's neither here nor there; for the thing requires some explanation. Do you ken a' this mad story about the siege o' Roxburgh?"

"I trouble myself about no worldly things," said the Master, "nor do I wish to hear about them. Is there no one present who can tell me this great business at one breath?"

Charlie stepped back. "There's nae garring him hae patience,—and good troth my tongue I fear has outrun my logic," said he: "Friar, speak you."

"Great and magnificent Master of Arts," said the friar, stepping forward, "whom I have longed to see above all men! Lo, thou seest, and thou hearest, that this man, although he be a man of might, and a warrior from his youth, is yet uncouth of speech, and altogether diffuse; therefore listen thou diligently unto the voice of thy servant. Behold we are come to thee from the man that ruleth over the borders of the land, and leadeth forth his troops to battle. He sendeth unto thee greeting, and beseecheth to know of thee what shall befall unto his people, and to his house, in the latter days. It is thy counsel alone that he asketh, for thou art renowned for wisdom and foresight to the farthest corners of the earth. The two nations are engaged in great and bloody contest, and high are the stakes for which they play. The man who sent us intreateth of thee to disclose unto thy servants who shall finally prevail, and whether it behoveth him to join himself to the captain of his people. He hath, moreover, sent unto thee, by our hand, these two beautiful captives, the one to be thine handmaiden, and the other to be thy servant and run at thy bidding; and whatsoever thou requirest of our captain, that will he do, even to the half of all that he hath." [72]

There was but one thing on earth by which the wizard could be flattered, and that was a deference to his profound art. He therefore listened with patience to the friar, and answered, that the request his kinsman had made would take many days to consider of: "For," said he, "I have those to deal with that are more capricious than the changing seasons, and more perverse than opposing tides and winds; therefore remain with me a few days, that I may prove you." [73]

"Od bless ye! Sir Master, the thing is impossible!" said Charlie: "I coudna bide frae my captain and chief, and him in jeopardy; neither could I endure to think that my poor beast should want water sae lang. A man's life often depends on his beast."

"Thou givest us no meat," said the friar, "nor wine nor strong drink givest thou unto us. How, therefore, can we remain in thine house? Nevertheless would I love to abide a short time with thee, to witness thy great might, before which the masters of divinations in other lands have trembled. Verily, I would also show unto thee what thy servant can do."

"If I were to cope with such as thee, it would only be to show thee thy littleness!" said Michael. "But thy creed is an abomination to me, and I abhor it. In the meantime call up my steward, and I will order him to provide you with meat and drink." [74]

The poet now, for the first time, spoke up in the Master's hearing; and, indignant at the steward's design on Delany, he delivered himself with great vehemence.

"Nay, say not so, great Master. The devil hath possession of that man, sure as the stars burn on the morning's brow. He give us meat or drink! Sooner he will draw forth the crimson current from our veins, and lay us with the dead: Sooner he will rob beauty of her treasure, and deface the image of his Maker. Let us go forth to hill, or dale, or wood, strive with the crow for carrion, or contend with owlets for a mouse; but to be bearded by that same surly beast, the heart of man not brooks it. As for me, I lift my voice, my absolute protest, against the degradation and effect."

"He is indeed a son of Belial," said the friar; "but I have put him in ward, that he trouble us not. Lo, here be the keys of thy castle, which I intend to keep as our surety. Therefore show me the place where thy good things are disposed, and I myself will be steward for a time; for indeed that man of thine is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him."

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The Master's brow lowered with dissatisfaction. His subordinate spirits in whom he trusted had no power over the friar, and other man had he none within the castle, save Gourlay, who was almost as much fiend as man. He therefore intreated the friar to set his steward at liberty, and restore to him the keys, else no meat or drink could be had; and, at the same time, he gave them all warrandice that they should be kindly used.

"My seneschal," said he, "is as stubborn and froward as any demon of the pit, nor will he do one kind or fair action save by compulsion. But he dares not disobey me. If he should presume to dispute my orders in the slightest instance, one word from you shall be sufficient, and I will shew you how he shall be requited."

It was forthwith agreed that the Master should accompany them down to the dungeon, in order to restrain the fury and violence of his servant. Matters were therefore arranged, and the two prisoners set at liberty. The steward was sullen and intractable, lying still on the dungeon floor, disregarding of the words spoken to him by the friar; but when he heard the Master's threatening accents he sprung to his feet and came forth, looking at Charlie in such a manner as plainly said, "I shall be revenged on you."

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The Master then took him to task, demanding by whose orders he had shut up his kinsman's friends in the vault. But he only snarled and gnashed his teeth in reply.

"And then to suffer yourself to be mured up there!" said the Master.

"Ay," said Gourlay; "some have won a tilt on the king of the field who never saw the day to win it on another."

"For the viper blood that venoms thy heart do thou ought amiss to these gentlemen," said the Master, "or to this obnoxious thing that is their ward! Wherefore, let me ask, were they compelled to shut you up there?"

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The steward only grunted in reply; but the poet came again boldly forward, having been exasperated beyond measure at the steward for his attempt on Delany; and he said,—"Sir knight, in that I'll truly counsel you. At dead hour of night, when all was still, save the snell piping of the frosty wind; even we were all at peace, and quiet lay as did the dead man's bones, but that, between, the friar at equal intervals sent forth his nasal roar, so vehement that the mice, yea, and the starveling rats, ceased from their prowling, listened the dire sound from fleshy trumpet of our mother church, then sought, with stretched forth tail, and nimble foot, the depth profound! There quaking did they lie, like fiends driven from the height to the abyss,—lank make, chilled heart, and grievous length of tail. At that ill hour, in comes this boding owl, this ill-starred man of sin, and straight demands that peerless maiden for your honour's couch. Him we refused—the maiden shrieked for help—he dragged her forth, and on this laurelled head, crowned by the muses with celestial bays, inflicted ruthless wound. The bedesman also fell; but he our friend, the Hector of the hills, wrought his o'erthrow, and circum-mured him. Thus my say is ended."

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The Master, as the poet spoke, seemed several times so much amused that they expected he would have burst into laughter. But one look of his eye spoke sentences. When he heard that Gourlay had demanded the maid for him, he gave him such a glance as made the wretch almost cower to the earth; and when the poet ended he turned his eyes on Charlie, measuring him from head to foot, and seeming as if he doubted the fact that he or any man could master his redoubted seneschal. However, the Master had seen so much of the group, that he determined, contrary to his custom, to have some amusement with them. He therefore ordered his seneschal forthwith to provide all good things for their entertainment.

The stubborn wight made no movement betokening obedience. He stood upright with his dull white face a little elevated, and his eyes turned up below his brows, while those who were next him heard him saying to himself, in accents that creaked in his throat, "Hell must be moved for this repast!" The Master heard not this sentence, but noting his steward's indecision, he stamped with his foot, and pointing with his finger, the latter led the way into an antichamber of the same cold and naked appearance with the rest of the apartments of the castle, where, leaving them with a light, the two went away into the great Master's dormitory, "To cast their cantrips, and bring up the deil."

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"He keeps an unco cauld house this carl," said Tam, when they were left by themselves: "I fancy he'll ken brawly he'll hae ane bien eneugh at the hinder-end, and downa bide to see fire in this!"

"He brings me a-mind o' daft Jock Amos i' the Goosegreen," said Gibbie,— "wha never durst lie down on a bed because his mother died on ane. Whenever he saw a bed wi' white sheets on it he fell a-trembling, and ran to the gate."

Goe fetche mee lofe of your wheitan breide
 And ane other coppe of wyne;
 For drynke I quhile myne doublet ryve,
 For drynke I moste repine.
 I fele not coraage in myne herte,
 Nor mychte into myne honde,
 If there is nott wytchcrafte forth abrode,
 There neuir was crafte in londe.

Ballade of "Prince Henrie."

The morning had by this time dawned on the gray hills of the forest, and that with an aspect gloomy and foreboding. The white snowy clouds had crept down into the bosoms of the hills; and above these clouds were here and there to be seen the top of a mountain crested with its dark cairn, so that the heavens and the earth seemed to be mingled together.

"Gude sauf us!" cried Charlie, as he peeped out at his small crannied window, "but this is a grim, gousty-looking morning! I wish the prince o' the air be nae fa'en a brewing some o' his hellish storms and hairikens on us. If there be spirits moving about on thae hills to-day, they can be nae good anes, ye may see by their look out. Sant Mary be with us! see their drumly heads appear to be raised to double their ordinary height."

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"Be not thou afraid, my son, of the prince of the power of the air, for there is one that is greater than he," said the friar; "and though the fiends may for a while muster their fogs, and foment the air with storms, yet will he send forth his angels and scatter them; yea, he will send them forth riding on the whirlwind, and the clouds of heaven shall be their chariots, and the powers of darkness shall fly in dismay before them."

The friar stepped forward to the window, and gazed for a minute in breathless astonishment; then turning away, he added in a solemn tone, "Verily, my children, I am afraid to look at the face of the sky, or to behold the hues that are abroad on the firmament this day, though my strength be the munition of rocks."

The steward now appeared with his rod of office in his hand, and, with all due ceremony, marshalled his guests up the great stair, and finally up a small winding stair, to an apartment at the very top of the upmost tower, above all the turrets and paved battlements. This room was in a blaze of light with flaming torches all around; and (joyful sight to our precious embassy!) the table was covered with rich viands in great abundance. The friar, having got short of breath in his ascent, lagged considerably behind, while the foremost rushing in, every one began to help himself with the greatest avidity; so that, when the friar at length came puffing into the apartment, all the rest had begun without grace. The seat at the foot of the table was still unoccupied; and before that there stood a beautiful smoking sirloin of beef, with a gentle brown crust around it, and half swimming in gravy. Never was there a more delicious sight presented to a hungry man.

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The worthy friar, seeing all the rest engaged, would not risk a trespass on good manners by interrupting them, although it was an established custom with him to bless every meal before tasting it. In conformity with this venerable custom among Christians, he lifted up his spread hands, closed his eyes, and leaning forward above the beef so closely that he actually breathed upon it, and felt the flavour of health and joy ascending by his nostrils, in that fervent and respectful attitude he blessed the beef in the name of Jesus. Never had blessing a more dolorous effect. When the friar opened his eyes, the beef was gone. There was nothing left on the great wooden plate before him but a small insignificant thing resembling the joint of a frog's leg, or that of a rat; and perhaps two or three drops of gravy.

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The friar's associates were all busily engaged. The steward was moving about behind them, and at that time happened to be passing by near where the friar sat; of course, this latter worthy had no doubt whatever but that the malicious old rascal had stolen the roast slyly from under his nose the moment that his eyes were closed, whereas the steward was as much astounded as he. It was a fine picture. The friar had placed himself hastily to begin; but, missing his beef, and seeing nothing of it on the board, he was moved with great anger and indignation. There he sat, biting his lip, and having his deep dark eye fixed on the seneschal; and there stood the tall seneschal, with his mouth wide open, his face half raised toward the cornice of the chamber, and his dull heavy eye fixed on the friar's plate. He was in utter dismay; for he dreaded that, on such a blessing being pronounced openly, the whole of his provisions would in like manner vanish away; and he was a blithe man when, instead of blessing, the friar, on opening his mouth, was rather inclined to curse.

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"Cursed be thy malice, for it is great," cried he: "Thou Nabal! thou Rabshakeh! thou Shimei, the son of Bichri! thou Er! thou Onan! thou vile Judas, the son of Simon! Magormissabub be thy name; and may it be blotted out after thee, and become a bye-word, and a proverb, and a hissing among people and children. Restore that which thou hast unjustly taken away, before I thrust my sword into thee, and take away thy life. Give unto me the precious morsel thou hast taken away, or, lo! thou art in the jaws of destruction, and the pit openeth her mouth wide upon thee."

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The steward answered neither good nor bad; for he was afraid of the vengeance of his master, and the evil spirits that wrought at his bidding, and delighted in nothing so much as in tormenting him, else had he not taken the friar's curses without repaying them sevenfold. He

therefore shut his mouth, and closed his eyes, putting on a countenance of the utmost derision. But the friar's heart had been set upon the beef, his soul had rejoiced over it, and he could not with patience give way to the idea of losing it; therefore, instead of joining the rest, who were devouring their various fare with great eagerness, he continued his anathemas on the steward.

"Blethering gouk!" cried Charlie: "Can nae ye tak part o' what's gaun, and haud your jaw? What signify a' thae strings o' gospel phrases at sic a time as this? Will they fill a hungry stomack, or mak the worthy seneschal either better or waur than he is? Come pledge me in a cup o' wine to the health of our great landlord, Master Michael Scott." [86]

They handed the stoup down to the friar, who filled for himself, and took the pledge, though still with a gloomy and a discontented brow. He then left his seat, and went up one side of the board, close to Gibbie Jordan, where he began a-helping himself to a slice, from a mangled shoulder of venison apparently. But it relished not,—for still the lost beef was uppermost in his mind, and his eye glanced hot displeasure at the steward.

"Surely he is of all men the most accursed," added he: "He drinketh up malice as the ox drinketh up water; and as his name is so is he. Whereunto he hath conveyed the morsel that I loved, is a matter too high for me to comprehend. I see it not in any corner of the habitation, nor doth the smell of it reach my nostrils. But I will visit it upon his head; and mine eyes shall see my desire on him." [87]

The dishes of meat were, however, of good quality, and well mixed with fat and lean; yet none of them knew exactly what they were, neither would the sullen steward deign to give them the least information on that head. There was even one large shapeless piece, of a savour and consistence so peculiar that no one of them could tell whether it was flesh or fish. Still they continued their perseverance, devouring one dish after another, and drinking off one stoup of wine after another, without any abatement of appetite on the one side or any exhilaration of spirits on the other, the steward always bringing in a supply with the most perfect equanimity. At length our yeomen began to look at one another. Their hands had waxed weary with cutting, and their jaws would scarcely any more perform their office.

"What is the meaning of this, my brethren," said the friar: "Surely it is better for us to desist, lest our table prove a snare unto us. Lo, my hands are weary, and my cheek-bones are pained even to their utmost extremities. Verily, it is all vanity, for my body is only filled as with the east wind." [88]

"Na, na; ply away. It's good sport. I dinna see how we can be better employed," said the deil's Tam.

"I think, my brethren, that we should from eating straight refrain," said the poet; "for eating is but weariness, and drinking is but pain. There is no strength into our bread, nor spirit in our wine: some warlock wight has ta'en the might out of this food of mine." [89]

The steward had all this time never spoken word good or bad; but had served them with the utmost obsequiousness; and when they had at length ceased from feeding, he went and gave the Master an account of the repast, which proved a source of great divertisement to him.

"I have not," said he, "for these many years, had any desire to trifle with the beings to whose species I once belonged; but this group surpasses all of their kind. I will, therefore, lay aside my profound studies, and be with them as one of themselves. If it were but to torment them, I will indulge in this idle and vain humour. I have almost forgot how human passions work." [90]

"I pray of thee, Master," said Gourlay, "that thou wilt suffer me to slay yon grim and snarling dog in the grey frock. I loathe, hate, and abhor him. He is, moreover, a bit of a necromancer himself; and has the insolence to suppose that he can rival you in power." [91]

"It is there I long to try him," said the Master. "In power I brook no rival in this or any other land, as thou thyself, and thy wretched companion in bondage, can witness. There is only one thing in this weak man in shape of a friar that I fear, and that thing shall be nameless. Perhaps I may commission thee to take him away. In the mean time, remove the remainder of their wretched viands, and bring me in a vessel full of the strong wine of Palestine, mixed up with the essence of many spirits. It is a beverage fit for gods. In it will I pledge these deranged mortals; and thou shalt see some sport for once, if aught on earth can divert thee." [92]

"Certes I shall be diverted, great Master of arts. I hope you will favour them with a touch of *the varieties*, by way of example?" [93]

"By and by, Gourlay,—all in good time. In the mean while, let us deal with them as men and as gentlemen; and, before I metamorphose them into quadrupeds, let us see what kind of beings they will make of themselves." [94]

The Master accordingly entered the room, where his guests still sat round the board. All of them rose, and made obeisance; but, without returning the courtesy, he took his seat at the end of the table next to the door, and was just about to address them, when he was interrupted by Charlie Scott. There were two great individuals always uppermost in Charlie's mind,—these were his master the warden, and his horse Corby; and finding himself again in the Master's presence, and thinking he rather looked better pleased than he was wont, he judged it prudent not to let the opportunity slip: so, after scratching his head violently with both hands, he thus preferred his solicitation: [95]

"Gude faith, Master Scott, I'm glad I hae seen you again; and, nae disparagement either to you or your house, Sir Knight, but the truth is, we canna bide here. For, in the first place, you see, our skins will gang to the bauks in a jiffey; and, in the next place, our captain, the warden, canna [96]

want us. It is far mair than our lives are worth for us to stay here; for, troth, Sir Master, the lives o' others depend on it. Now, I wadna like that we were trowed to be corbie messengers. And that brings me a-mind, Sir Knight, how muckle need I hae to be at the mill down by there. I hae a friend at it that I fear is in nae good plight."

"Content you, gallant squire, for a space," said the Master; "I do intend to answer the request of my noble kinsman with all expedition; but such things cannot be done in a moment. I must read the face of the heavens, and listen to the voices from the deep below. I have likewise a master to consult; he has another; and both are as perverse as hell itself. Be content, therefore, and enjoy yourselves for the remainder of this day. Give me all your names that I may register them, and give me them truly."

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Every one gave his name and designation, save that the poet gave the name of the lovely Delany with an encomium on her beauty and virtue. But Michael cared for none of those things. What appeared beautiful in the eyes of other men, to his were loathsomeness and deformity. Far different was the case when the friar announced his own name.

Michael started to his feet, and, with spread hands, and every feature of his countenance dilated with joy, he exclaimed, "What? Primate of Douay in France, and author of the Book of Arts?"

"The same, great Sir," said the friar: "I confide it to you: But haply thou dost not know, in this thy retired habitation, that men thirst for my blood; that I am a persecuted man, and have suffered imprisonments, bonds, wounds, yea, and tortures; that I have been hunted from nation to nation, and from land to land, until I found shelter and protection among these wild and reckless Borderers, a people that neither fear God nor regard man. With them have I taken up my abode. I am become a father to them, and they are as children unto me. I love them. But, if they should be induced to give me up, wo would be unto me!"

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"What d' ye say, man?" said Charlie, grasping his hand. "D' ye think a Scot amang us wad gie you up? If there be sic a man in the Border array, he ought to be d—ned. But I trow I ken a bit o' the warden's mind there; and I can tell you, a' the pens and a' the rapiers in England wadna gar him gie up the gospel friar. Na, na; if ever he's gien up, he maun gie up himsel, and mak his ain conditions too."

"Great and notable Primate, you are welcome to this castle," said the Master; "whether by the title of monk, prior, primate, or friar, I say you are welcome here. I have ridden a thousand miles to meet with you. But that is long ago. I had heard of your great skill in the sublime arts, that surpass the comprehension of ordinary men, and I determined to stake my life on the trial of skill between us. I was disappointed in meeting with you, for you were not to be found, dead or alive. The days of my ambition are fled. My power has been acknowledged so long, none daring to contend with me, that indifference hath ensued; after that came disgust, and with it misery. Thou art the man of all the earth whose fame I have envied; and, if thou darest, I will contend with thee, for freedom or for life, which thou wilt. If thou art overcome, thou shalt be my bondsman and slave, and if thou conquerest I will submit to be thine."

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"Lo, I will contend with thee even for name and being," said the friar. "Of the strong-holds of sin and Satan am I not afraid. I have put the ministers of thy vengeance to flight already, and I will chase, yea, I will overcome and pursue them away; as chaff is driven before the wind, will I scatter them. Dare not to contend with me; for, if I judge aright, my Master holdeth thine in chains, and if I interfere thou canst do nothing. I judge it therefore best to contend as brothers contend. To admire what is truly great, and deride that which is insignificant. Mine are the arts of peace, truth, and righteousness, and I hoped thine were the same."

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"Why, art thou not a monk, a follower of the wretched maniac, Benedict of Padua? that driveller in hidden mysteries?" said the Master. "I do not rightly comprehend thee, or by what power thou didst thwart my servants. Tell me in one word,—Art thou not in combination with the potent elemental spirits that rule and controul the earth, the air, the fire, and the waters? If not, thy arts are superficial and worthless."

"Thou shalt see, and thou shalt judge," said the friar: "I am not ashamed of that I can do." And with that he went and brought up his huge portmanteau, in which he always carried many a small and curious apparatus; but these he kept carefully concealed, having suffered so much from the superstitions of bigotted and illiterate men, in the course of his profound researches. He was the greatest chemist that had ever appeared on the stage of existence; yet that curious and refined art was he obliged carefully to conceal, having been persecuted as a necromancer over every kingdom of southern Europe.

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When he went away Charlie Scott was terribly in the fidgets. He expected instantly to witness the raising of the devil, and other infernal spirits, against whom he cherished the most inveterate dislike. His eyes began to set in his head, and the roof of his mouth became so dry that he could not pronounce words distinctly.

"Gude faith, Sir Master," said he, "I dinna appruve of a man setting up his birse, and braving a gentleman in his ain house. And, wi' your permission, I hae something o' great importance to do at the mill; sae I'll e'en step down that length, and I shall come up again' the morning by day-light."

"Please to remain with your friends, good yeoman," said the Master: "You shall witness something worth your while. What can you possibly have to do at the mill?"

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"Muckle, muckle to do at the mill, Sir Knight; I'll just refer it to yoursel,—can either man or beast leeve wanting drink?"

"I beg your pardon," said the Master: "I had almost forgot my principal errand. Gourlay, fill me a glass of the wine of Palestine."

The steward did as he was ordered; and the Master, taking the cup, drank to the health of his kinsman, the warden, and all his friends. Every one of his guests did the same, save the maiden and boy; and every eye was cleared, and every heart warmed, for the liquor was as strong as brandy.

"Weel, Sir Knight," said Charlie, "that is what ane wad ca' rather stiff sturdy drink; I hae nae tasted ought as weel worth the drinking: And if ye will just gar auld Crossgrains come ower us again, I think I could even prevail on myself' to face the deil, and let Corby tak his chance."

The request was instantly complied with. Each of them got another cup; and the friar having tarried a while to put his affairs in order, when he came back the tongues of all his companions were going at once, and he was apprehensive that they were bewitched. He, however, took the pledge in one full cup, and was greatly revived by it; but refused taking another at that time. [98]

The room in which they sat was lighted by four windows: those to the east and west were small circular ones, having a pane of bright glass in each: those to the north and south were merely long slits in the wall, without any glass; and the first thing the friar did, before producing the specimens of his art, was to close up all these windows, so as to exclude the light of day, and the glass of the western one he either contrived to remove, substituting another in its place, or else he put another piece of magnifying glass over it.

When he began a-closing up the last, Charlie entered a vehement protest against it, on the ground that no body would see what he did, or what he raised, and any one might be seized by the neck ere ever he was aware, by some o' his infernal deils. [99]

"I hate a' surprises," added he; "It's best keeping the crown o' the fell, and seeing weel about ane. Room to fight and room to flee, an ye like, Maister Gospel-friar. Wha do you think's gaun to play at hide-and-peek wi' the deil in sic a place as this?"

The Master, in a sneering manner, requested that the great enchanter might have his own way: and Charlie, whose tongue was a little loosed by the wine of Palestine, was at last restrained, though not without a good deal of grumbling and fidgetting. The room was darkened; the friar went into a small alcove, and, by the help of a magic lanthorn, a thing never before seen in Scotland, he raised up a tremendous and horrid figure on the wall. It was of gigantic size; its eyes, lips, and paws moved; and its body was thrown into various contortions.

All were in breathless silence on the appearance of this extraordinary shade; but among the darkling group there was distinctly heard one whose breathing was frequently cut short, as if something had been choking him, or seizing him by the throat. [100]

After the apparition had gone through its various evolutions, all apparently at the further end of the apartment, it fixed its eyes, clenched its teeth, and, stretching forth its claws, it appeared to make a spring forward at the party.

"Aih! L—d be here!" cried Charlie in a trumpet voice, and threw himself flat down behind the rest. Hearing that some of them laughed at the fright he had got, he ventured to speak and expostulate a little; but no curiosity could induce him to raise his face from the floor, or open his eyes again while the friar's exhibition continued. "Lair him, lair him, friar!" cried he,— "or, od, I's be about your lugs some day for this. Lair him, lair him, in the name of St Michael! and if that winna do, try him wi' Peter—he'll send him ower the battlements like a shot. O good friar, whatever ye do, lair him!"

The friar went on with his phantasmagoria. The figure, after giving a shiver or two, was parted into three, all of the same form and size, but all making different motions, and different contortions of feature. The three were afterwards parted into six, which, among other grotesque feats, danced a reel, and, on running thro' it, every one threw itself heels-over-head. The group of onlookers laughed outright at this, notwithstanding their astonishment, and called to Charlie to look. But he would not move his face from the earth, and only asked, in a half-suffocated voice, "Is he no laired yet? Od I shall be about wi' that cursed body for his tricks." [101]

When the friar had concluded this feat, he put out his small lanthorn, took the machinery out of it, concealing it beneath his ample frock, and again opened all the windows.

Charlie got up, and running to one of the loop-holes, "Gude be thankit, I'll get a cooke o' the air o' heaven again!" said he, "for I hae been breathing fire and brimstone this while byegane. Foul befa' me gin ever I saw the like o' yon; I was sair dumfounded,—but wha could stand afore the face of a fiery giant?" [102]

The friar's associates looked at the lanthorn, examining it with curious eyes, but perceived nothing about it which could in any way account for the apparition they had seen. Master Michael Scott did not deign to ask a sight of it, but paced over the floor in sullen and thoughtful mood. The seneschal stood fixed to the spot on which he had witnessed the phenomenon, with his heavy unmoving eyes turned towards his master. He seemed dubious whether he was vanquished or not. The Master at length spoke, addressing the friar:—

"I hope, right worshipful Primate, this is not the extent of your knowledge and power in the sublime art of divination? The whole is only a delusion,—a shadow,—a phantom, calculated to astonish women or children. I acknowledge it to be ingenious; still it is nothing. You multiplied your shadows, turning three into six; now, if I turn three men into six living, breathing, substantial beings, will you acknowledge yourself outdone?" [103]

"Certes, I will," said the friar.

"Away, then, with deception," said the Master: "What I do, I do in the open eye of day.—Stand forth three of you."

"Master Michael Scott, I'll tell you what it is," said Charlie, "I solemnly protest against being parted into twa."

"You shall neither suffer nor feel the least inconvenience by the change, brave yeoman," said the Master; "therefore be not afraid, but stand forth."

Charlie hung his head to one side in a deep reverie, till at length his countenance lightened up by degrees, his features opening into a broad smile.

"I'll tell you what it is, Sir Knight," said he, "if you will assure me that baith o' us shall be as stout and as wight chaps as I am mysel e'en now, gude faith, I dinna care though ye mak me into twa, for my master the warden's sake. If you could double an army that gate, it wad be a great matter. I doubt sair I'll cast out wi' my tither half about something that I ken o', and that's Corby; but I'll run the risk. Nane o' your cutfing and cleaving, however, Sir Knight. Nane o' your imps wi' their lang-kail gully knives again." [104]

Charlie stepped up the floor, and took his stand with his back at the wall, to await doggedly this multiplication of himself. Tam soon joined him: but there was a hard contest between Gibbie and the poet, both of whom were rather personal cowards, and both alike averse to such experiments. The former was at length obliged to yield, for Carol clung so close to the maid, that nothing could induce him to part from her; and, ever since the friar gave him the grievous overthrow, he had lost all confidence in his personal prowess.

Michael stamped thrice with his heel, and spoke some words in an unknown tongue, in a low muttering tone; but some of them heard the sounds of Prig, Prim, and Pricker. There was a momentary confusion in the apartment. A darkening haze flashed over it, and blinded the eyes of men for a short space; the floor gave a shake, as if it had sunk down a little,—and there stood two of each of the three friends, so completely alike that no one knew who was who. [105]

No scene could be more truly ludicrous than the one which now ensued; each man turned to his prototype, and the looks of confusion and astonishment in both being the same, the beholders were seized with irrepressible laughter.

Charlie felt his legs, thighs, and ribs, if they remained the same as before. The other boardly personage in the same shape followed his example, and added, "Gude faith, the like o' this I saw never!"

"You may weel say't," said the other; "But let me see if you can draw that lang sword as weel an' as cleverly as I can do."

"Gude Lord, hear til him!" said the first: "He's speaking as he were the true Charlie Scott himsel! Speak ye, friend: Were you me before this! That, is, did you ride with the warden over the border?"

"I am sure if you were there, I never saw you before," said the second speaker; "But I dinna ken what I am saying; for the truth is I dinna comprehend this." [106]

With that they again gazed at each other, and looked over their shoulders, as if they would not have cared to have fled from one another's presence.

With every pair the scene was much the same. Tam was so much astonished that he turned to his second self, cowered down, leaning his hands upon his knees, and made a staunch point at him. The other took precisely the same posture, so that their long noses almost met. The maid, the poet, and the boy screamed with laughter. Both of the Tams laughed too, so that they very much resembled an idiot looking at himself in a glass.

"Friend, I canna say but ye're very like me," said Gibbie to his partner; "But, though nane o' us be great beauties, ye look rather the warst o' the twae."

"It brings me a-mind o' a story I hae heard my mother tell," said the other, "of a lady and her twa Blackamores"—

"What the deil man!" exclaimed the first; "Did your mother tell that story too?" [107]

"Ay; wha else but she tauld it? I say my mother, auld Effy Blakely of the Peatstacknowe."

"Eh?—She your mother? It is gayan queer if we be baith ane after a'! for I never had a billy."

The two Gibbies then both began to tell stories, which each claimed as originally his, so that the perplexity still increased. Nor was it better when the parties began to mix and address each other. All spoke of themselves as the right and proper persons, and of the others as beings in their likenesses, and the most complete uncertainty prevailed. But, just as the novelty and interest of the drama began to subside, Michael, by a wave of his hand annihilated the three additional personages, and all remained as it was before the grand exhibition commenced, save that our group had got a new topic of conversation and merriment.

"Primate of Douay, so celebrated for thy mighty enchantments, how thinkest thou of this?" said the Master. [108]

"That thou hast done what no man could have done beside," said the friar; "and that thy power even surpasseth that of the magicians of Egypt, and of those of the countries in the lands of the east. But in one thing my power is even as thy power. Dost thou know that I could have prevented

thy charm, and put a period to thy enchantment at my will and pleasure?"

"It is not the power of prevention that we are trying," said the Master. "Suffer my servants to do their work, as I shall suffer thine, and we shall then see who are most punctually obeyed, and who shall perform the greatest works. Only, if I prevail in all things, you will surely have the generosity to acknowledge that my master is greater than thine?"

"Wo be unto me if such a confession proceed out of my lips!" said the friar: "Who can be greater than he who builded the stories of heaven, and laid the foundations of this earth below; who lighted up the sun, sending him abroad in brightness and in glory, and placed the moon and the stars in the firmament on high? Who is greater than he who hath made the mountains to stand, the seas to roll, and the winds to blow? who hath not only made the souls of men, but all the spirits of the upper and nether world—" [109]

"Peace, thou maniac!" cried the Master, interrupting the friar, in a voice that made him leap from the floor: "Comest thou here to babble treason against the master whom I serve, and the mighty spirits with whom I am in league? Do what thou canst do, and cease from speaking evil of dignities. What knowest thou of the principalities and powers that inhabit and rule over the various regions of the universe? No more than the mole that grovelleth beneath the sward.—What further canst thou do in proof of thy profound art?"

"Behold with thine eyes, O thou who accountest thyself the greatest among the children of men!" said the friar, with a waggish air; "that I will but speak the word, and the mountains shall be rent asunder, and the tops of the everlasting hills stand in opposition. Knowest thou the proper name, figure, and dimensions of that peaked mountain over against the castle, to the west?" [110]

"Well may I know it," said the Master, "for I have looked out on it these fifty years, and many a hundred times have I followed the chase around it. It is named Cope-Law, and the mountain is my own."

"Mountain of Cope-Law, hear my voice," cried the friar in the same waggish tone, in which there was an affectation of sublime command: "Thou hast borne the footsteps of thy great master and his black horse Beelzebub, yet hast thou neither been scorched nor rent. Yea though he hath cursed thee in the bitterness of ire, yet hath thy grey head never been shaken.—But, behold, a greater than thy master is here. Mountain of Cope-Law, hear my voice:—Be thou rent asunder and divided into three, that thy owner may look on thee and be astonished. If it please thee, mighty magician, look out on thy mountain of Cope-Law now." [111]

Many a thousand times had the Master looked out at that circular window; every bush and grey stone on the hill were familiar to him; and, all unsuspecting of the simple deceit that had been practised on him, he went and looked forth from the window, when, in the place where one round peaked mountain was wont to be, he actually saw three, all of the same dimensions; and, as he weened, each of them more steep, tall, and romantic than the original one had been. He looked, and looked again—the optical delusion was complete. He paced the floor in sullen mood; muttered some sentences to himself in an under tone, and once more looked forth on the singular phenomenon. The mountains remained the same. They could not be seen from any other window, and no one thought of descending to the great balcony; so that in the eyes of all the friar remained triumphant.

The Master could not brook this. He strode the floor in gloomy indignation; and at length they heard him saying, "If I should venture to demand it—But is it then to be my last great work? The demand is dreadful!—I will—I'll demand it. Never shall it be said that Michael Scott was out-done in his own art, and that by a poor peddling friar. Come all of you hither," added he in a louder tone. "Look at that mountain to the east. It is known to you all—the great hill of Eildon. You see and know that it is one round, smooth, and unbroken cone." [112]

"We all know it, and have known it from infancy," was the general answer.

The Master gave three strokes with his heel, and called the names of his three elfin pages, who in an instant stood before him.—"Work, Master, work,—what work now?"

"Look at that mountain to the east," said he, "ycleped the hill of Eildon. Go and twist me it into three."

The pages grinned, looking at him with eyes of a devilish gleam, as a ravenous creature eyes its prey.

"The hill is a granite rock," said one,— "and five arrow-flights high," said another,— "and seventy round the base," said the first. [113]

"All the powers of earth, and hell to boot, are unmeet to the task," added the third.

"Thou art a proud and impertinent liar, perverse imp of the regions of flame," said the Master: "Note this, The thing must, and shall be done; even though a body and soul should both be given up as the guerdon. I know my conditions; they are sealed, and subscribed, and I am not to be disobeyed. Get to your work without more hesitation."

The three pages then fell to reeling about and about, singing a wild and uncouth trio, in words of the following import:

"Pick and spade
To our aid!
Flaught and flail,
Fire and hail!

Winds arise, and tempests brattle,
And if you will the thunders rattle.

 Come away
 Elfin grey,
Much to do ere break of day!

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Come with spade, and sieve, and shovel;
Come with roar, and rout, and revel;
Come with crow, and come with crane,
Strength of steed, and weight of wain,
Crash of rock, and roar of river;
And, if you will, with thunders shiver!

 Come away,
 Elfin grey;
 Much to do ere break of day!"

As they sung these last lines they reeled out at the door in a circular motion, so rapid that the eye dazzled which looked on them. The poet, drawn involuntarily by the ears after that wild fairy lay, hastened out after them. He looked east, and west, and all around, but he only saw three crows winging their flight toward the hill of Eildon.

From the time of their departure the temper of the great Master became extremely variable. At one time his visage would be clouded with the gloom of despair, and at another lighted up with a sort of horrid exultation; but he spake not, save to himself.

The friar, therefore, in order to divert his host, and gratify his own vanity, proposed to show off some more wonders of his art. Accordingly he closed up all the windows once more, making the apartment as dark as pitch, and exercised many curious chemical devices, lighted Roman candles, and made them dance about the chamber in every colour of the rainbow.

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He was still busily employed playing off his little ingenious tricks, when the party were disturbed by a bustle in one of the corners. It chanced to be so dark at the moment that no one could see what was going on; but they heard a noise as of two people struggling; then a blow, and one falling down with a groan.

The friar paused, calling out and enquiring what it was. Charlie, never behind in a fray, bustled over the forms toward the scene of action; but falling by the way, the noise was quickly removed to another corner, a door was opened and shut, and all was again quiet.

Every one ran about groping his way in the dark, and coming full drive against others, till the friar had the presence of mind to pull the stuffing out of some of the windows. The first thing they then saw was the poet lying on the floor, void of sense and motion; and then it quickly appeared that the steward and Delany were a-wanting. The whole party, save the Master, set out on the pursuit, headed by the friar and Charlie, and came just in time to rescue the maid as the wretch was dragging her into his abominable cell. It seemed that he had determined on seizing her as his prey, and now that the three infernal pages, his tormentors, were dispatched elsewhere, he feared neither the Master nor his guests; and, taking advantage of the utter darkness, and of the poet and her being in a corner by themselves, he stole up to them, gagged the maid, silenced the poet, who resisted, with one blow, and then bore off the helpless lady with all expedition.

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When he saw that he was overtaken and overpowered by numbers, he only laughed at them; and assured them that, in spite of all they could do, he would have possession of her, and that they should see. The girl wept and complained of being hurt; but then he only laughed and mocked the louder. Some of them proposed that they should hew him all to pieces, but the friar had resolved on his measures, and, at his request, they took the culprit up before the Master, and there lodged their accusations against him. But the Master either durst not, or would not say a word against him; for, in fact, it appeared that this great man, without his familiar spirits, shrunk into nothing, and was not only afraid of his own bondsman, but of every thing around him, deeming himself altogether without help.

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The friar's eye burned with indignation and rage, at witnessing such arrogance on the one hand, and imbecility on the other; but his bootless wrath only delighted the steward the more; and it was evident that, had it not been for fear of Charlie Scott's long sword and heavy hand, he would have taken his prey from the midst of them.

Delany still wept and sobbed till her bosom was like to rend, and begged to be taken away from the castle, or to be killed and put in her grave. The friar tried, with all the fair and kind speeches he was master of, to comfort her; but when she saw the poet pale, bleeding, and sitting still unable to rise, she only waxed worse, and hid herself from the eye of the wretch behind the friar's frock.

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"Daughter of my love, and child of many misfortunes, be thou comforted," said the friar; "for though the wicked triumph for a space in their iniquity, yet shall they not thrive. They who refuse to do justice to the innocent and upright in heart shall perish in their sin, and pass away as the smoke that is driven by the wind. Therefore, my daughter, be thou comforted; and that thy heart may be cheered, I will show thee a wonder of my art,—a wonder so great that whosoever seeth it his heart shall melt within him; and whosoever heareth of it his ears shall tingle. Come, whoso listeth, forth into the open air, and I will do it in the sight of heaven and of man."

The friar then lifting up his huge portmanteau, went forth to the large paved gateway that surrounded the whole of the uppermost arches of the castle. It was so ample as to be like a small

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field, for it covered all the castle, save four small pointed turrets, and the square apartment which the party now left, that rose like a shapeless dome above all. In one corner of this level battlement there stood a leaden vessel that had once been used as a cistern. To that the friar went; and, laying down his huge walise, he took from thence a handful of blackish sand, and strinkled it all around the battlement on the one side to the opposite corner. He then stood and looked awfully around him. He looked to the heavens, but they were shrouded in a dark hideous cloud that now covered the mountains, and hung lowering over the uppermost spire of the castle. Neither the Cope-Law nor the hill of Eildon could be seen, nor could aught be seen save the dark and troubled cloud. The scene was truly impressive; and when the rest saw the friar looking on it with such apparent dread, all of them looked abroad with him, and whispered to one another, "He's gaun to be about some awesome enchantment now."

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The friar covered up his pormanteau with the leaden vessel, and then desired the Master to bring any weight he chose, and heap it on its bottom, which he had now turned uppermost, and, at one word or sign, he would make his goat-skin wallet carry the vessel, and all such weight, round the battlements of the castle.

The Master, and every one present, pronounced the thing to be impossible,—the steward grinned in derision,—and, after mocking and taunting the friar on his art in the most gross and provoking terms, he proffered to hold down the leaden tub, wallet and altogether, or to forfeit his head if he failed. Then laying himself over it, in the attitude of holding it down, he called on the friar to proceed, and give him the promised canter round the walls, which he well deserved, he said, not only for his kindness to them all, and to their Miss in particular, but also for his kind intentions. Then he scoffed aloud, crying out, "Now thou poor vain fool and liar, be as good as thy word, and give me, an it were, but one hobble."

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"God do so to me, and more also," said the friar, "if I do not give thee such a hobble as eye hath not seen!"

With that he struck a spark of fire among the black sand, as the rest supposed it to be, that lay among his feet. The sand caught fire,—the flame ran sputtering around the western battlement,—and the next moment the steward and his tub bolted away into the firmament in a tremendous flash of fire, and with a sound so loud that it shook the castle to its foundations. Some averred that they saw, through the fire and smoke, a momentary glance of him and the cistern both, as they pierced the cloud towards the north; but nothing further was heard or seen,—and, in a second of time, all was quite and gloomy above and around as it had been before.

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CHAPTER IV.

The wind blew as 'twould blawn it's last,
The thickening showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleam the darkness swallowed,
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed;
That night a child might understand
The deil had business on his hand!

Tam o' Shanter.

Long was it before any of the astonished spectators opened their lips. The shock had almost deprived them of sense, sight, and motion; and when they began to articulate, it was only to utter short exclamations, and names of saints. Tam Craik was the first who ventured a remark, which was in the following words:—"By the Lord Robin!" (meaning, it was supposed, the king.) "The deil has flown away wi' him bodily in a flash o' fire!"

The great Master stood mute with astonishment; he even trembled with dread; and appeared once as if he would have fallen at the friar's feet: But he never said, Where is my seneschal gone? Whither hast thou sent him? seeming rather to succumb to his guests for the time, being as a man utterly at their mercy. His powerful and malevolent spirits had left him by his command; his steward, and only human attendant, had been blown into the air; and as for the miserable night-hag, they had seen no more of her since her escape from the prison vault, and they wist not whether she remained in the castle, or had fled from it out of dread of the symbols of the Christian religion, which she had seen about the friar, and the effects of which she had felt in frustrating her potent spells. The wizard had therefore none to execute his commands, and appeared a being quite forlorn, as well as greatly troubled in his mind.

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No one ever knew to this day by what means the wicked seneschal was borne away among the clouds in a column of fire and smoke; and those who witnessed it spread the word over the country, that the devil took him away with a great roar amid fire and brimstone; and that, after having him up among the dark clouds, he tore him all to pieces. It was a fact that one of the steward's mangled limbs was found hanging on a tree, among some thick branches, in the wood of Sheil's Heuch, over against the castle, which gave some countenance to the report; and no farther remnants of him were ever discovered.

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The friar, however, knew well enough by what means he was taken away; and though he never explained it as long as he remained in Scotland, it is meet that the readers of this tale should

know the truth. It can be told in a few words. The friar had brought his huge wallet full of the strongest gunpowder he had been able to make, to shew off his wonderful feats, and astonish the great Master. The exigency of the moment induced him to part with it all at once; and, in all probability, he could not have caused so much astonishment by any experiment he could have put in practice.

He was guilty, however, of a manifest oversight; one that had well nigh proved fatal to the whole party in its consequences. When they found themselves freed from their vile persecutor, and the great Master rather their prisoner than they his, their first thought was of departing from that unhallowed place, and awaiting, in the neighbourhood, the wizard's final answer, without which they durst not well return to the warden.

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Charlie jumped on the battlement with very joy that he would now get down to the mill to see what was become of Corby, and how he fared; and he was the first man to proceed down the narrow stair-case, leading the way to the fair fields. But, alas, how transient are all sublunary joys and hopes! In the middle of this confined and difficult stair, just at its darkest and most acute turn, there was a massive iron door, which Charlie ran his nose against in his descent, and soon found, to his mortification and disappointment, that it was locked and double locked. He returned to those above with the dismal information. The friar's countenance fell, and he became pale as ashes, when it was thus brought to his recollection that he had not only blown the brutal seneschal to the devil, but that he had blown the keys of the castle along with him; and there were they left on the roof to perish with hunger.

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After many ineffectual attempts to break open that door, having no other resource, they agreed to go to the topmost tower, and there unite their voices, in order to raise the country to their assistance; for, without ropes and ladders, they saw no means of escape. Accordingly they ascended, and uttered many a prolonged and tremendous shout, for the space of a whole hour. But these unwonted cries only drove the hinds to a greater distance from the castle. Many of them had witnessed the mighty explosion at the exit of the seneschal, which, in the middle of the lurid gloom, had a hideous effect; and when they heard such long and loud howls proceeding from the battlements of that gloomy and desolate pile, they weened that a whole host of demons had assembled about it, and kept far aloof.

In these and other fruitless exertions, our hapless prisoners spent the evening of that eventful day. The sun, or the blue sky, had not once appeared since the break of morn. For a little while, about noon, the hills of the Forest were visible, and, on their back-ground of pale shadowy clouds, formed a scene of dark sublimity. Still, as it approached toward evening, these clouds came lower and lower down upon the hills, and became more dark and dense in their appearance; and precisely at the close of day the storm burst forth in all its fury, sweeping over hill and dale with increasing majesty every minute. The woods roared and crashed before the blast. The snow descended so thick that in a short time every ravine and sheltered dell was heaped. After that came sleet and snow mingled; and, finally, a driving rain dashed with such violence on the earth, that it seemed as if a thousand cataracts poured from the western heaven to mix with the tempest below. Needless is it to describe that night farther. It was that on which the great battle was fought in the camp of Douglas, and formerly mentioned in this momentous history.—It is therefore apparent that Isaac the curate is now drawing near to the same period of time when he broke off at a tangent and left the camp, and that every thing will, of course, go on to the catastrophe without further interruption.

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Kind hearted and gentle reader, be not too sanguine. Who can tell what is to fall out between the cup and the lip? Incidents seem to have multiplied intentionally to interrupt poor Isaac's narrative. Besides, let any one consider how he is to liberate and get free of this group of interesting individuals, locked up, as they were, to perish on the top of the castle of Aikwood. It was no difficulty to Isaac. He was one of those wise and downright men who know that truth tells always the best, and to that maxim he adhered. But the worst of it was, there were so many truths, that any body may see it was scarcely possible to get them all narrated in their proper places; and that, without the help of the waggoner, the task could never have been effected.

"Gude sauf us, but it is gaun to be an awsome night!" said Charlie Scott, as he stepped the last up into the dark apartment in which the party had spent the greater part of the day, and into which the storm had now driven them once more.

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"Gaun to be?" said Tam, taking up Charlie's words; "I wot nae what it is gaun to be, but it is an awsome night already."

"It brings me in mind of a story," said Gibbie, "that I hae often heard about a friar Gabriel o' St Martin's that raised the deil—"

"Od, Sir, an ye dare, for the blood of you, speak another word about raising the deil the night," cried Charlie, interrupting him, "may I be chased by an Englishman, if I dinna thraw you ower the castle wa'. We little ken wha may be near, or wha may be amang us. Gin ane may judge by appearances, that same chap ye hae named (gude keep me frae repeating it) isna in his ain hett hame the night. Heaven defend us, hear how the wind howls and sobs! I wish yon auld houses o' the mill may be safe aneuch; they stand sair exposed. Hech-ho! hear til't! There will be mony cauld quarters on Otterdale the night, but there is some a-wanting there that wad be blithe to share them."

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The friar now set himself to strike a light, which at last he effected; and collecting the oil which remained in the lamps into one, they found, to Charlie's great satisfaction, that they had as much

as would burn over-night, besides some remnants of waxen torches. Of all the huge remains of their morning feast that they had seen removed from the table, they could not find one vestige, even though the trenchers remained in the chamber as it was termed; but, to their great joy, they found an article as precious to the eyes, for about two-thirds of the huge flagon of the wine of Palestine were still left. This, in the total absence of fuel, was a discovery of some consequence; and the friar, in the like absence of a steward, took that office voluntarily on himself.

When the lamp was kindled, the first thing that Delany did was to dress the poor poet's hurt head, and bind it up with a napkin. This attention and kindness so thrilled his heart that he could not refrain from tears, and seemed to rejoice in his wound; and as both he and his adored maiden had seen the ruffian steward transported up to heaven in a flame of fire, they were freed from all terror on his account; and, notwithstanding all the perils with which they were surrounded, they appeared composed, and, if not happy, were at least quite resigned to their fate. [131]

The great Master sat muffled up in his cloak, and apart by himself, his brows screwed down into deep curved wrinkles, and his sunken eye fixed on the ground. The friar filled a cup of wine, and, bowing, presented it to him the first. He took the cup, and drank it off, but he spoke not a word: his piercing eyes glimmered round the chamber; he uttered a loud groan, and, apparently, sunk again into his deep reverie. The transportation of his steward, while in the very act of braving the friar's might, made a terrible impression on his mind, and he weened that he now sat before his master—before one that might send him on a voyage of the same nature whenever he chose; and therefore he judged, with great reason, that for a space it behoved him to keep on good terms with so dangerous an opponent. [132]

When each had taken a cup of the elevating beverage, the effect was delightful; all their cares, dangers, and wants faded; the terrors of the storm, that was still increasing, only startled them now and then, as it rattled on the tower, or yelled thro' the crevices below. They chatted, laughed, and broke jokes on each other, till even the sublime Master was diverted from his profound and brooding ideas, and smiled at the rustic simplicity of the characters around him. The laird of the Peatstacknowe told a great number of his long stories, of which something that was seen, said, or done, always reminded him; Charlie told confused stories about battles and forays; and the poet came in always between with his rythmatic descriptions and allusions; until at one time the associations of ideas followed one another in a manner so truly ludicrous, that the enchanter actually laughed till he had almost fallen into a fit, a thing that had not for twenty years been witnessed of him. [133]

The tempest still continued to rage, and the loquacity of the party beginning to flag, they became drowsy as midnight approached. The friar then looking gravely around him, and, laying aside his hood, took a small psalter book from his bosom; which volume also contained the four books of the Apocalypse; and, opening it reverently, he proposed that they should all join in performing the evening service to the Virgin, and the hymn to the Redeemer. Delany rose from off the lap of the poet's cloak, where she had sat nestling all the evening, and came and kneeled down at the friar's knee. The Master started up with a look of indignation, stamped on the floor, and ordered the friar to put up his vain book, and refrain from such flummery in his presence. The friar looked at him with a steady countenance.

"It is not meet that I should obey man rather than God," said he. "I have taken a vow in the face of Heaven, and I will pay that vow in spite of men and devils. I will sing my holy hymns with these my friends and children, and he that listeth not to join, let him be accursed, and translated from the presence." [134]

This last sentence sounded rather equivocally in the Master's ears. He liked not such a translation as he had lately witnessed; for, with all his power and mysterious art, the terrors of death still encompassed him about. He held his peace, therefore, although he growled like a lion at bay at being bearded thus in his own castle.

The friar proceeded as he had said, and all the rest joined him with becoming devotion, save the poet, whose orisons that night were somewhat cold. He could not brook the charm that drew Delany from his own side to his rival's knee. The Master sat aloof, biting his lip, and grinning in derision; but, at one part of the service, although the curate does not say what part, he was insensibly overcome, and fell into a painful oblivious dream. The strains of the sacred music, simple as they were, stole over his soul, as some remembrance of early life sometimes steals into the heart of enfeebled age, reminding the decaying and dying worm of joys he can no more see, and of feelings of delight that have perished for ever.—If a son of the mountains of the north were transported to some far foreign clime, and there doomed to remain for life: After sojourning in that land for half an age, until grey and bowed down, if by chance, on some still evening, or mayhap through the eddies of the storm, one of the strains of his native land were poured on his ear, think of the recollections it would awaken in his mind: How painfully thrilling the sensations! Would it not be like the last sweet beam of a hope he was never more to cherish, a last look of all that was dear on earth?—Such were the feelings that crept unbidden over the soul of the enchanter, on hearing the sweet sounds, that reminded him of a religion he had for ever renounced, and in which he had never firmly believed till he had believed to tremble. [135]

In this troubled trance he sat leaning against the wall, until the worshippers had reached the middle of the hymn to the Saviour. He then was seized with strong convulsions, and, rising up, with staggering steps, he fled from the chamber, crying as he went,—"Cruel and improvident things! reptiles! cursed, whining sycophants! that would send me to my doom before my time!" He rushed out to the battlements, and, groping his way through the storm, took shelter in the narrow staircase, that he might hear no more of the sounds that thus troubled and distracted his [136]

soul. What dread had seized him, or what he had seen or heard, his guests knew not; but they had scarcely well ended their hymn, when he rushed again in among them, with wildered looks, and his hair standing on end, seeming glad to take shelter among those from whom he had so lately fled with abhorrence. No one enquired the cause, for all were so weary and overcome with slumber; and every one then composed himself to sleep in the manner that best suited his convenience.

The storm continued to rage with unabated violence, and, after they had laid themselves down, they found that the castle was all tottering and quaking before it. The firmest heart was appalled; for the rocking of the castle was not all; every now and then they heard eldritch shrieks arising, as of some wretch perishing, or rather, as some of them thought, like the voices of angry spirits yelling through the tempest. When one of these howling sounds came on the blast, every one of our prostrate friends breathed a deep sigh, or uttered some exclamatory sound, Charlie had always one, which he uttered even after he was asleep. "Hech! Gude sauf us, sirs! what will be the upshot o' a' this?" The Master sat muffled up in the corner close behind them, and after he judged them all to be asleep he fell a-crooning a sort of hymn in an under key. The poet was, however, more than half awake, and gathered up some broken fragments of it. Poets are never to trust when they give quotations from memory out of the works of others; and perhaps honest Carol might add some bombastic lines of his own, but he always averred that the following lines formed a part of the warlock's hymn.

"Pother, pother,
My master and brother!
Who may endure thee,
Thus failing in fury?
King of the tempest that travels the plain;
King of the snow, and the hail, and the rain,
Lend to thy lever yet seven times seven,
Blow up the blue flame for bolt and for levin,
The red forge of hell with the bellows of heaven!
With hoop, and with hammer!
With yell, and with yammer;
Hold them at play,
Till the dawn of the day!
Pother! pother!
My sovereign and brother!

"O strain to thy lever,
This world to sever
In two or in three—
What joy it would be!
What toiling, and moiling, and mighty
commotions!
What rending of hills, and what roaring of oceans!
Ay, that is thy voice, I know it full well;
And that is thy whistle's majestic swell;
But why wilt thou ride thy furious race,
Along the bounds of vacant space,
While there is tongue of flesh to scream,
And life to start, and blood to stream?
Yet pother, pother!
My sovereign and brother!
And men shall see, ere the rising sun,
What deeds thy mighty arm hath done."

If it was true that the Master sung these ridiculous lines, which is not very likely, his "sovereign and brother" had not accepted of his sacrifice, nor paid due deference to his incense of praise. For, a little before the break of day, our group were aroused from their profound slumbers by loud and reiterated cries. The lamp was still burning feebly and blue. Charlie, whose ear was well trained to catch any alarm, was the first to start up; but the sight that he saw soon laid him again flat on the floor, though not before he had leaped clear over a narrow oak-table and two forms. There was a black being, that appeared to be half-man and half-beast, dragging Master Michael Scott along the room toward the door; yet he dragged him with difficulty, and at some times the wizard seemed rather to prevail. Horrible as this phantom was, all those who saw it agreed that there was something about it that instantly reminded them of the late seneschal; and, as they raised their heads and beheld it, every heart was chilled with terror. Charlie pronounced his short, loud prayer, which has already been recorded in this history, and which consisted merely of one vehement sentence of three syllables; yea, he pronounced it as he flew; and then squatting in a corner, and covering his head with his cloak, that, whatever dreadful thing happened, he might not see it, there he lay repeating his little prayer as fast as human breath could utter it.

The demon struggled hard with the Master; and the latter, as may well be supposed, exerted his utmost power,—so that his adversary only got him toward the door as it were by inches. When he found himself losing ground, he always made a certain writhing motion, which cannot be described, and which every time extricated him somewhat from his adversary's clutches. Then the apparition laid hold of him again by the left side with his lobster claws, and that gripe uniformly caused the wizard to utter a loud and piercing cry. At such times Charlie's little prayer

might be heard waxing still louder as the strife increased; and, though he lifted not his face from the earth, he continued a kind of spurning motion with his feet, as if he would fain have burrowed under the wall like a mole.

For a long time no one durst move to the Master's assistance. The scene so far surpassed ought they had ever conceived in horror, that their senses remained altogether benumbed. The combat continued with unabated ardour. The Master foamed at the mouth, his hair stood all on end, and his bloodshot eyes stared wildly, as if they would have started from their sockets. At length the fiend so far prevailed as to drag the Master close to the door, where he threw him down, and made a motion as if he would have dashed him through below it. But Michael was flesh and blood, and could not enter nor depart by the key-hole, or the foot of the door, like the beings with whom he had to do. The demon therefore tried to open the door; but the enchanter's muscular frame being jammed against it, it could not be opened at once. Michael's efforts were now directed to that object alone, namely, the keeping of the door shut, and he exerted himself till his remaining strength was exhausted, but at last suffered himself to be dragged back from the door, repeating these words as he lay flat on his back:—"Tis done! 'Tis done! 'Tis over! 'Tis over!"

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The lookers on sat and trembled, all save the friar, who had by that time somewhat rallied his scattered senses, and stood on his feet. The fiend had dragged the Master back from the door by the feet, and holding him down by the grey hair with one hand, he opened the door with the other; then, stooping down, he twisted the one hand, armed with red crooked claws, in his hair, and the other in his long grizzled beard. The friar had stepped forward, and, at that moment, laying the rood on the Master's forehead with the one hand, and the open Book of the Gospels on his breast with the other, he pronounced a sacred Name, and in that name commanded the demon to depart. Swift as the javelin leaves the hand of the warrior, or the winged shaft flies from the bowstring, did the monster fly from the symbols of a creed by which he and his confederate powers were all controlled, and from a name and authority at which the depths of hell trembled. He rushed out at the door with a yell of dismay, and threw himself from the battlement on the yielding wind. The friar peeped forth after him, but he only heard a booming sound, which died on the gale, and beheld like a dragon of blue livid fire flying toward the east, in the direction of the hill of Eildon.

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The friar returned into the chamber with a countenance beaming with joy. No conqueror ever returned from the field of battle with an exultation of mind so sublime as that which now lighted up his uncourtly mien. His victory had been so sudden and so complete, that all present were astounded at the greatness and extent of his power, and none of his friends doubted that his might was as far above that of their host as the sun or the stars are above the earth. They had in this instance seen it exemplified in a manner not to be disputed; and there was the Master himself still sitting on the floor, and gazing on his deliverer with astonishment.

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"Man, may I not thank thee for this?" said he.

"No," said the friar, "think not of a poor mortal thing like me, overcome with sins, faults, and follies: You are freed for this time; but thank One who is greater than I."

"True; I am freed for the present," said the Master; "but it is by a mode, and by a power, that I dare not, for my existence, acknowledge or acquiesce in."

When Charlie heard by what was passing that the devil had been vanquished and was fled, he called out with a voice that seemed to come from under ground,—for he was so muffled up in his cloak that the sounds could scarcely be heard,—"Friar, steek the door." The good man obeyed, and as soon as Charlie heard the welcome sound, he raised his face, which was much of the same colour as a living lobster, and, standing on one knee, viewed all the faces and corners with that eloquence of eye which is quite indescribable. How superior was it to his blunt address:—"Gude sauf us, callans, is a' safe?—Is the coutribat ower? Sic a fie-gae-to as yon I saw never! Hech! but it is an unsonly place this! I wadna live here an there warna another place to be had aneath the shoulder o' heaven."

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A long discussion now commenced between the friar and the Master, on the principles which each of them professed. That colloquy is too serious, and too tedious, to be copied at full length in this place; but it amounted simply to this,—That the one considered the Christian Revelation as the source of all that is good, wise, or great among men. The other had disbelieved it from his youth upward; and, not being able to come to any conclusion from ought he could learn among men, he had besought communion with the potent spirits of the elements; and, after seven years of unparalleled suffering, such as cannot be named, had attained what he sought. These had confirmed him in his infidelity. He had entered into a league with them, renouncing, for ever and ever, all right in a Redeemer, and signing the covenant with his own blood. That afterwards he had rejoiced in this fellowship, which had enabled him to do deeds such as no other man could perform, till by degrees he discovered that the meanest professor of the religion of Jesus, if influenced by faith and sincerity, had the power of counteracting these mighty spirits, and of frustrating their highest intents. That then his eyes were opened when it was too late, and he only believed in time to tremble and despair. The friar urged the inexhaustible riches of heavenly mercy; but the Master spurned at it, declaring his resolution to abide by his covenant, whatever his fate might be. He despised the very name and nature of repentance, and would rather suffer with the colleagues he had chosen, he said, than whine and cringe to another master,—"Though I now feel to my sorrow that they are subordinate," added he, "yet are they mighty and powerful, beyond what thou canst comprehend; and why may not I be a sharer in their energies in a future existence as well as in this?"

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The friar gazed and trembled when he heard the wild and erratic ideas of this extraordinary man;

and, ceasing to reason further with him, he enquired how it came that some of these mighty associates of his were his enemies, and seemed but to watch an opportunity of tearing him in pieces.

"They are jealous of their rights, and capricious beyond all conception," said he. "The utmost circumspection is not fit to keep on fair and equal terms with them. Even yet I do not know but that this is to be my last night here. If I have gone beyond my commission in the orders I have given, then am I doomed to be their bond slave for ages: but if I am within my limited bounds, and the work is effected, then shall I still be obeyed for a time and a season. Would that it were morning that I might know the worst!"

"Scarcely dost thou need to express thy wish again," said the friar; "for, lo, the day dawneth in the east, and the shadows flee away before it; the winds have gone to their chambers to sleep, and the rains are over and gone. Let us walk forth and see how the darkness fadeth before the face of the day, and all that is stirring abroad on the fair face of the creation." [148]

The Master did not move, for it was yet but twilight, and nothing could be seen distinctly; but the friar stepped down to the battlements, and Charlie, who looked on him as their only safeguard, followed. The poet would doubtless have followed also to have seen the dawn of the morning after a storm; but, like all the rhyming race to this day, he was enslaved by the eyes of a maid, languished in chains, and could not move but as she moved. Alas for the poor amorous poet! The others lay in a sluggish and restless slumber.

The friar and the bold yeoman strode together along the paved way, and looked abroad; but they could see only the clouds whitening in the eastern horizon, without being able to distinguish wood from waste, or land from water. [149]

"Let us kneel down and pray, my son," said the friar, "even in this quiet place, where we shall be freed from the interruptions of the wicked one; for great and manifold are the dangers that surround us. I see not what remains for us, but either to throw ourselves from the walls and perish, or remain where we are and feed upon one another."

"It is an awsome eternitive, man," answered Charlie; "I'm sure an ye think praying will do ony good, I shall take off my bonnet and kneel down on my knees, and hearken weel; but what mair can I do?"

"You can join with me in spirit, my son," said the friar, "and pray with your heart."

"I am sure, gin I but kend the process, I am very willing," said Charlie. With that he took off his steel belted bonnet, and kneeled reverently beside the friar, who prayed so fervently and sublimely for deliverance, that Charlie looked about every minute, not only then, but all that morning, to see by what means they were to be delivered; for he had no doubt but they would be set free to a certainty, and that in a very short time. [150]

When they arose, the first word that the friar said was the following fervent exclamation—"Blessed Virgin! What do I see?"

Charlie looked all about for some approaching miracle; he had even some hopes of seeing a detachment from the warden's army; but his eye ranged the dusky fields in vain.

"What a strange world we live in!" rejoined the friar: "Yea surely there are things in heaven and in the earth, and in the waters,—yea many things, of which man knoweth nothing! Why art thou gazing abroad on all nature, my son? Turn thine eyes toward the east, and tell me what thou seest."

Charlie did so; and, on the instant, the two friends were standing fixed in amazement like two statues. They moved not, save, now and then, to steal a momentary glance at each other. The great mountain of Eildon was actually rent in pieces from the top to its very foundations, and piled up in three towering spiral mountains, as they remain to this day. Only at that time they were taller, darker, and more uniform. [151]

It was a scene of wonder not to be understood, and awfully impressive. The two rivers flowed down their respective vallies, and met below the castle like two branching seas, and every little streamlet roared and foamed like a river. The hills had a wan, bleached appearance, many of the trees of the forest were shivered; and, towering up against the eastern sky, there stood the three romantic hills of Eildon, where before there was but one.

The friar was the first to move from his trance, stepping away in deep meditation. Charlie was by this time likewise released from the spell, and he ran to the door of the high chamber, calling aloud, "Come a' out, sirs, come a' out. The like o' this was never seen sin the warld stood up!"

They came forth accordingly, and their consternation was correspondent to the extraordinary event. But when the Master came out, and saw what was done, he shouted, and leaped on the battlement like one frantic, boasting, and uttering words of terrible blasphemy. He looked on the mountain of Cope-Law, and he could scarcely believe his eyes when he beheld it standing in one unskaited unbroken cone, as it had done for ages. He looked again to the three mountains of Eildon, and his exultation and blasphemous boasting was redoubled. [152]

"So, all that you and your master can effect," cried he, "is to throw a little glamour on the sight,—is to practise a little deception! I never weened the monkish art or profession to consist of more. See what my sovereign and master can do!"

"Hold there," said the friar. "Who was it that made these mountains at the first? Was that deception?"

"It was not thou," said the Master.

"But who was it, then, that sent up your wicked seneschal into the stormy clouds in a flame of fire?" added the friar. "And who was it that saved your life, but this morning, from a fiend that would have devoured you? Were these both deceptions?" [153]

The Master's countenance fell. The friar said this, because, in their present perilous situation, he wished to keep a little awe over the wizard, and likewise to put a stop to the torrent of blasphemy that proceeded from his lips.

The morning advanced, the sun arose, but no assistance, no relief appeared to our hapless prisoners. They had tasted nothing for a day and night, save one cup of wine each, and they had not above as much more remaining. For all this the Master was so much elated, that his behaviour was rather like that of a person frantic with joy, than that of one shut up among others to perish of hunger. His companions in misfortune noted likewise that he was again disposed to be peremptory and tyrannical with them, and they dreaded that his familiars were again at his command.

The men wrought all the forenoon endeavouring to break up the iron door; but they neither had mattocks nor room to work in, and they made no more impression on it than as many mice would have done. They were now quite disconsolate; and, being unable to do aught else, they puzzled themselves in accounting for the late steward's motives for having locked it. They remembered that it was standing wide open when they brought him up a prisoner before the Master; and they likewise remembered of having seen him step into that stair for a minute or two, immediately before he began to brave the friar. Therefore, all that they could guess was, that it had been locked with some fatal intent. [154]

The friar, perceiving that their efforts were vain, entreated them to come in from the open air, and keep themselves quiet and cheerful, that they might wear the longer. He trusted in Heaven, he said, that they would be delivered, but in the mean time it was absolutely necessary to use every precaution; and for that purpose, he added, if one of them would keep watch at each of the four windows, lest any passengers or countrymen should come near, he would tell them a story, which would at least have the good effect of keeping them quiet. The Master was quite delighted with this proposal; and, taking the flagon of wine, he proposed that they should share it among them; but the rest opposed it, and contented themselves with half a cup each. [155]

Charlie was most of all cast down. He had heard a word from the friar that morning that sunk deep on his heart. It was something about eating one another! And not being able to get rid of the thought, he brought it again overhead. The rest were all struck dumb; for they perceived that it was but too apparent it might come to that. The Master grinned darkly, and said it was well. But Gibbie said he hoped, "if things came that length, they wad draw cuts, that ilka ane might get a fair chance for his life." The poet begged, with tears in his eyes, that, out of respect to the tender sex, they would leave Delany the last, or at least that, when the lot fell on her they would take him in her place. To this they all agreed with one voice: but an extraordinary thought striking on the Master's mind at that instant, he made a motion, and proposed to settle it off hand by a vote. [156]

"This maid, whom you term beautiful, is mine on one condition," said he; "and as I can now in a very short time comply with that condition, I claim her as my own. I will therefore give her to the man among you who tells me the best tale. She shall be his, fully and freely, to do with her as seemeth him good. And the man among you who tells the worst shall, if need require it, be blooded and flayed in this same chamber for food to his associates."

Charlie's blood ran cold within him at this proposal. He almost thought he felt the flaying knife and the teeth of the ravenous half-famished eaters; and when the Master called out, "Approve, or not approve?" Charlie was the first to call out, "O! Not! not, not!" He was seconded by Tam Craik, but all the rest voted on the other side; so that they were left in the minority, and the matter was finally decided to be precisely as the Master had proposed. The poet stretched himself, so eager was he to begin; for his heart yearned within him to win the beautiful Delany. Gibbie was also uplifted, and sure of victory; but Tam and Charlie were both quite hopeless and cast down. [157]

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CHAPTER V.

And I said unto him, Can'st thou tell unto thy servant what is the meaning of this?

Esdras.

The friar having volunteered a tale, the priority was unanimously awarded to him: So, after the watches were set and all quiet, he began the following singular narrative, without further ceremony:

The Friar's Tale.

CHAPTER I.

1. In the days of the years of my pilgrimage, it chanced to me that I sojourned in the great kingdom that is toward the south.
2. And I passed through the city that lieth on the river of the hills, unto the house of Galli the scribe, who was a good man and a just.
3. And he had one only daughter, who was unto him as a treasure and an heritage, for her mother had been led unto her people before the maid could distinguish between her right hand and her left. [159]
4. And the maiden was fair to look upon;
5. For her neck was as polished ivory, and her chin like the ripened peach basking on a wall that looketh toward the south.
6. Her lips also were like the honey-comb; her teeth were rows of pearl, and her breath was as sweet smelling incense, and myrrh, and cassia.
7. Her eyes were brighter than the dew of heaven, and her hair was like the beams of the moon streaming through the white clouds that are in the firmament of air.
8. And I loved the maiden exceedingly; and my heart burned within me; and I became as a dead man.
9. And I wist not what to do, or what would become of me; for the vows of the Lord were on me that I could not wed; and I said, Woe is me, for I am undone!
10. And I went in unto her, and communed with her of my great love; and when she had hearkened to my voice, she laughed me to scorn. [160]
11. And I said, Why dost thou laugh me to scorn? Knowest thou not that I would lay down my life for thee? For I love thee so much above all things that are on the earth, that I would even lick the dust from off thy feet.
12. And she said, What wouldst thou have me to do?
13. And I looked on my right hand, and on my left, and I communed with my heart.
14. And I perceived that the maid had asked aright, for I knew not what I would have her to do; and lo my countenance became abashed.
15. And she laughed at me exceedingly; yea she laughed at my calamity till the tears streamed from her eyes.
16. I said therefore unto myself that I would die, and be gathered unto my fathers; for how could I live to be a scorn and a derision, and to be burnt up as with a devouring flame? and I had many thoughts of unrighteousness dwelling in me.
17. And she told her father of these matters; and Galli the scribe was wroth with me, and said unto me, Why wouldst thou betray my daughter, the child of my age, and the hope of my grey hairs? [161]
18. Is it not better for thee to depart unto thine own country, and to thy kindred, than commit this great wickedness?
19. And my spirit was grieved within me; nevertheless I could not depart, for my heart clove to the maid, and I loved her as my own soul.

CHAPTER II.

1. And it came to pass that the army of the prince of the land encamped in that place;
2. For he was a great prince, and had increased his army; and he had captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens.
3. And these were clothed in gorgeous apparel, in brocade of gold, and in brocade of silver; and they were vain men, for they had the plumage of birds upon their heads, and gems of silver, and of gold, and of precious stones, on their breasts; and swords girded on their thighs. [162]
4. And the damsel beheld them, and her heart danced with joy; yea, her eyes followed them whithersoever they went.
5. And I was more grieved than ever; therefore I counselled her, and said all manner of evil of the men.
6. But she would not hearken to my reproof, but cast all my counsel behind her back; and she derided me.
7. And it came to pass, in the process of time, that one of the captains of fifty came to her, and spoke kind words unto her, even great swelling words of vanity.
8. And she hearkened unto him, and her ears drunk in his burning speeches, even as the ox drinketh in water; and she delighted therein; and he looked into her eye, and behold he saw his own image impressed in it, as in a glass.
9. And he looked into it many times, and it grew brighter; and every time that he looked into it he saw his own image the more deeply and strongly reflected, until he knew that he lived in her heart. [163]

10. But her image was not in his eye.

11. And I knew this, and was grieved. Therefore I withstood him to his face, and rebuked him; yea, and I also cursed him.

12. But the captain of fifty mocked me; he also told the maid, and she became wroth with me, so that, the two being combined against me, I could do nothing but sit down and weep.

13. And she gave unto him all that she had; yea she gave him until she had no more to give, for she gave unto him herself.

14. And her countenance was changed; her bright eyes retained not their wonted brightness; her voice was broken, and her tongue faltered in her mouth.

15. But the captain of fifty regarded it not; for he left her and went his way, and he did eat and drink, and made himself merry with wine.

16. And he said, What is a maiden that I should regard her? or for what were the daughters of women formed but for my pleasure? [164]

17. And the prince of the kingdoms of the land sent unto his army, that they should go into a far country to fight against the enemies of their lord the king. And the men purposed to go; and the captain of fifty purposed to go also.

18. And when the maiden heard of it her heart failed within her, and she fell sick, and I feared it would be to death.

19. And I tried to comfort her; and I watched with her day and night, and prayed many prayers for her; but she became worse, for her spirit was wounded and cast down.

20. And Galli the scribe was also sorely afflicted, and he mourned exceedingly, saying, Alas! what shall I do for my daughter! she who was the hope of my age, and my only comfort here below. Wo is me, for she is dying of a lingering disease, and I shall be left childless! Now Galli the scribe knew not what the captain of fifty had done unto her, nor of all that she had given unto him.

21. So I went forth unto the host to seek this betrayer of women, and to speak peaceably with him, and to reason with him. [165]

22. But he knew me afar off, and said to his brethren, Lo, here cometh that man of a strange country, let us make him our sport.

23. And they combined against me, and treated me with great indignity; for they bound my hands and put me into the river, and the flood carried me away, so that I said in mine heart, lo, I shall be drowned, for there is not one to pity or save me.

24. But they took me forth before my breath departed clean away; and they stripped me naked, and tied me to a stake, and scourged me.

25. And afterwards they stoned me out of the camp.

26. And I was very wroth, and went unto the captain of the host, and made my complaint known unto him.

27. And I said, O my lord, hearken unto the voice of thy servant. Behold one of your captains of fifty came unto the house of Galli the scribe.

28. And the man intreated him kindly, yet hath he betrayed his daughter, and refuseth to do her justice; and the maid will die, and her father, who is a good man, will go down to the grave with her. [166]

29. And he answered and said unto me, What have I to do with this matter, or with thee? As a maid treadeth the wine press, so let her drink. It is not meet that I should be troubled with these things.

30. And I went away and wept bitterly, for I could find neither consolation nor redress; and I saw that the wickedness of the men was very great.

31. Then I went and trimmed my beard, and borrowed me a suit of armour; and I put an helmet of steel upon mine head, and a breast-plate upon my breast, and I girded on a sword.

32. And I went forth and challenged the captain of fifty to fight with me.

33. And I said in mine heart, Lo, I will fight this wicked man, and overcome him. And I will take his sword from him, and rend his armour from off his loins.

34. And then will I compel him to do justice to those whom he hath wronged, else will I smite off his head. [167]

35. And we met by the side of the river; and he discerned me not through my disguise, for he said unto me, Who art thou, or what have I to say to thee?

36. And I said, For the wrong that thou hast done to the house of Galli the scribe have I called thee out to battle.

37. And he said, Thou hast done well. I will chastise thee as thou deservest, that thou mayest learn how to lift up thy hand against the servants of our lord the king.

38. So we fought; and his hand was sore against me.

39. For he drove me out of my place, and wounded me, and my hope had nearly perished.

40. But I prayed to the Lord for strength. And we fought again; and the combat was very sore

that day, and he prevailed not against me.

41. And after the combat had lasted until my breath was spent, and my arm weary, by the help of the Lord I wounded him in the loins, so that my sword found a passage through his body, and he fell.

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42. And I was sore afraid; and fled away, and hid myself; for I trembled at the thing I had done, because I perceived that the last case was worse than the first.

43. And when the soldiers came to him, he said that Galli the scribe had sent out ruffians to slay him.

44. And when these things were told to the captain of the host, he was exceedingly wroth, and he sent forth men to destroy the house of Galli the scribe, and to slay him, and take his substance for a prey.

45. And the captain of fifty died that night; and they buried him with great lamentation, for they wept over him, saying, Alas! our brother! for he hath been cut off before his time.

CHAPTER III.

1. And it came to pass, that after I had laid aside my armour, and put on my pilgrim weeds, that I went forth into the plain, and into the city.

2. And when I heard the words of the captain of the host, and the command that he had given, I hastened to the house of Galli the scribe, and said unto him, Go to, put up all thy money, and thy jewels, and fly for thy life, for behold evil is determined concerning thee.

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3. But he would not hearken to my voice; for he said, I have done no man wrong.

4. And I intreated him, but prevailed not.

5. Therefore I went unto his daughter, and told her of what I had heard; and I said, Rise up, make haste and escape, for the soldiers will abuse thee.

6. And she was afraid, and said unto me, Take me, and hide me for a short time, for thy words have never deceived me.

7. And I hid her in a palm tree, and remained with her.

8. And the men who belonged to the captain of fifty, even to him whom I slew in battle, came as they were commanded; and they entered into the possessions of Galli the scribe, and they took all that he had for a prey, and burned his house with fire.

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9. And we beheld all from our hiding-place, and were greatly astonished; for we saw Galli the scribe flying through the garden, and the soldiers pursuing hard after him, with their swords drawn.

10. And when his daughter saw it she shrieked and fainted away; and when the men heard her voice they looked about, and some of them ran into the arbour, but they found her not, therefore they pursued after Galli the scribe.

11. And I trembled sore, for I knew not if we were discovered, neither could I support the maiden in her seat.

12. For she beheld whose men they were that pursued after her father to slay him, and she deemed that her captain of fifty had sent out his fifty to devour them, yea to destroy, and to slay, and to ravage; and there was no more spirit in her.

13. And I prayed to the Lord my God out from among the branches of the palm tree, and he heard my voice.

14. For the spoilers came, and they sought, but they found us not.

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15. For their eyes were blinded that they could not see. We beheld their eyes, and heard the threatenings that proceeded out of their mouths, yet could they not perceive us.

16. And their threatenings were filled with the abominations of iniquity, for the men were very wicked.

17. And I took her out of the palm tree by night; and I covered her with my sack-cloth gown, and we tried to fly and make our escape, but she could not; therefore my distress was very great.

18. And I carried her to the house of a poor widow in the suburbs of the city, and I concealed her there till her strength should recover.

19. And I went about making many inquiries; and I heard that the soldiers had taken Galli the scribe, and had given him up to be persecuted, and tormented, and slain; also that the whole army were abroad searching to recover his daughter, to execute vengeance on her.

20. And I was grieved for that I had done, and for bringing evil on those I loved; for I knew that the men of the host spoiled the people, and did according to their will.

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22. So I borrowed me a pilgrim's robes, and in these I equipped the maiden; and when she was clothed in her flowing sack-cloth gown, with her cross, scallop, and shell, behold I myself could not discern her.

22. And we escaped from the city by night, and journeyed toward the north, and at break of day we came to the fords of the great river, where we were encountered by three of the soldiers of

the guard, who waylaid us.

23. And I said unto them, Whom seek ye? And they said, We be sent out to seek the daughter of Galli the scribe, for she hath betrayed one of the captains into her nets, and hath robbed him, and also caused him to be cut off from his men; therefore are we sent out to take her, that she may be delivered into the hands of his men, that they may do to her as seemeth good in their eyes.

24. And the maiden trembled, so that the men beheld it; and I turned and said unto her, Said I not that it was so? [173]

25. And I said furthermore, Sit thee down, my brother, until we converse with these men, for they are good men, and filled with wisdom; and lo, have not I strange things to relate unto them?

26. And the men sat down, and we sat down beside them.

27. And I said, We are pilgrims and strangers, and come from a far country. And they said, Peace be unto you.

28. And I said, moreover, that it was given unto me to dream dreams, and to see visions, and that I had a vision of my head upon my bed, which was of this Galli the scribe of whom they spake.

29. For I saw and beheld that he had put forth his hand on a captain of the servants of my lord the king, and had sent forth his bravadoes, who had wounded him until the sword passed through him, even from the left side unto the right. And the men said, Is not this wonderful?

30. And behold I saw the servants of my lord the king enter the dwelling of the man, even of the scribe, and take his goods, and him they pursued with the edge of the sword, and took by the vineyard as thou goest down towards a river. [174]

31. And they burned his house with fire, so that the flames ascended up on high; and his daughter who was sick, and concealed in an inner chamber, her also did they burn until she was quite consumed.

32. And the men wondered exceedingly; and they bowed down their heads and said, Thou hast told unto us strange things. It is even as thou hast said. Go on your way.

33. And I blessed them; and they returned to tell unto their captains the wonderful things which they had heard.

34. And I fled with the damsel until I came to the sea; and when we had found a ship we went into it, and I brought her to my own country, but not to my kindred, for I placed her in the holy isle near the river of the north.

35. And she mourned night and day for her father, and also for the captain of fifty, whom she called her husband; for she dreaded that some evil had befallen unto him. [175]

36. For, on the day that he had sworn to her, he had given her a graven image, which she kept hid in her bosom, and she wept over it and kissed it.

37. And I was grieved, and rebuked her, but she refused to be comforted; and I went and came and brought her of the good things of the land, for I loved her as the breath of my nostrils.

38. And when the days of her months were fulfilled, behold she brought forth a daughter.

39. And the babe was also beautiful to look upon. And the bosom of the mother yearned over her child, and she called her by her father's name, even by the name of the captain of fifty.

40. And she kissed her child, and wept over it day and night; but the frame and substance of her body were wasted away with perpetual grief, and I saw that the child would die.

41. And, when I saw the countenance that was once beautiful as the morning bathed in tears, as her babe lay at a breast in which there was no nourishment, I was exceedingly sorry even unto death. [176]

42. And lo, I took the child and nourished it; yea I fed it with bread and with wine, with butter also, and with honey and milk from the beasts of the field; and the child was restored.

43. But the mother decayed like a flower that is cut down; for the winds of grief had passed over her, and her spirit was consumed. The summer came, and all the herbs of the field were renewed, but the fairest flower of the land was bending down to meet the clay.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And it came also to pass that as soon as I found myself in a land of safety, I wrote many letters to Galli the scribe; for I said, Peradventure he may escape out of their hands.

2. I wrote also to the chief of our order, giving account of the whole matter, and attesting the innocence of Galli the scribe.

3. But no answer came to me, therefore was I sore distressed; for I said, If the mother and babe both perish, what shall become of me? [177]

4. And one day as I sat with the babe on my knee, I beheld, and, lo, the eyes of the mother were fixed mournfully on her babe, and she lifted them to my face, and looked at her babe again.

5. And I could not contain myself; so I lifted up my voice and wept bitterly.

6. But she smiled, and said, Wherefore shouldst thou weep? Behold, am not I in the hand of the Lord? And my child, the daughter of my youth, and of my love, thou also art in the hands of thy

Maker.

7. May he lead thee, and guide thee, and keep thee from the snares in which thy mother hath fallen.

8. Though thou hast lost thy father, as I also have lost mine, yet hast thou a Father in Heaven who will not forsake thee. Neither shalt thou altogether lack a father's care here below.

9. And she said to me, Is it not even so?

10. And I could not answer her, for I wept aloud; yea, I even wept until the child grew affrighted, and wept also. [178]

11. And the mother took the graven image from her neck, and from her bosom; and she kissed it, and hung it round the neck of her babe.

12. And she said, It is the image and likeness of thy father, wear it, my child, till the day of thy death.

13. Peradventure thou mayest fall among his people, and among his kindred, for they were men of honour and renown.

14. And she kissed her child, and said, Now shall I be taken from thee, and go to my grave, and they will bury me, my babe, among strangers, and there is none of my people to shed a tear over me.

15. And we all wept abundantly, and shed many tears.

16. And while we yet cried aloud, lifting up our voices, behold one entered in, and said, Peace be with you!

17. And I discerned him not, for mine eyes flowed like two fountains of water.

18. But the woman cried out, and sprang from her couch, and she clasped her arms around his neck, and said, My father! my father! [179]

19. And behold it was Galli the scribe.

20. And the woman said, Now hath my child found a father indeed.

21. And she said, Blessed and happy mayest thou be, my daughter, for I bring thee joyful tidings, and blessed be this man who hath befriended and saved thee. His intercession hath also saved the life of thy father; all that was mine hath been restored to me, yea, and more also.

22. And I will give all unto thee and to thy child after thee, and thou shalt have riches and honours in thy own country, and among thy own people.

23. But his daughter answered him not, for the words died on her tongue; but she looked in his face and smiled, and then she looked at her babe as it lay on my knee.

24. And Galli the scribe was sore amazed, and said, What aileth thee, my daughter? and why answerest thou not to the words of thy father?

25. And he held her in his arms, and her hands were clasped around his neck that they would not be loosed. [180]

26. And behold there was a sound like a small voice issued from her mouth, and the light of her eyes became dim, and her head fell back over the arm of her father.

27. And her gentle spirit departed away unto him that gave it; for she spoke no more, neither breathed she any more.

28. And we buried her in the isle of the holy place, and mourned for her many days.

29. And I besought of Galli the scribe that he would leave the child with me, that I might bring her up in our convent, and breed her in the ways of purity and truth.

30. But he refused, and said, I cannot part with the child of my only daughter; she shall go with me and be the heiress of all that I possess.

31. And after I had blessed him, he departed with the little maid to go to his own land, and I saw them no more.

32. For after many years had elapsed, I went again into the country beyond the river, and I visited the house of Galli the scribe. [181]

33. But behold he had never returned to that place; and the people of the land reported unto me, that he fell among thieves, and was slain, and the babe was slain with him, or led into captivity.

34. The ways of heaven are unsearchable, and the hand of man often worketh out its decrees. But for the misfortunes that befel the house of Galli the scribe will I go mourning till the day of my death. [182]

CHAPTER VI.

Beef steaks and bacon hams

I can eat as lang's I'm able,
Cutlets, chops, and mutton pies;
Pork's the king o' a' the table!

*Fragment of an old Bachanalian
Song.*

"It has made my heart very sair that tale," said Charlie; "I wish you hadna tauld it."

"I think it is nae tale ata'," said Tam Craik: "If I coudna hae tauld a better tale than that, I wad never hae begun. I could now wager sax merks, and sax brass mowdiworts to boot, that the Gospel-friar is the man that shall be the first to thole the knife. And what for should he no? He'll make the best mart amang us."

"I differ widely from you," said the poet, "with regard to the merits of the tale. I love the friar for telling it; and I love him ten times better for the part he took in the transaction. How I do admire the love that has no selfish flaw, no moiety of sense to prompt its aberrations! Should I ever get free from this vile pinnacle,—this grave in altitude,—I'll search the world for that dear child, and find her too, if in the world she be." [183]

"Alas! I have searched, and searched in vain," answered the friar. "It was so long before I knew of the mishap of my friend, and my darling child, that all memory of the transaction was lost. I would travel from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to find out that dear, that beloved maiden; and could I find her I would yet put her in possession of the inheritance of her father. For I have instructed the heads of our order, and they are preserving it in their own hands as the patrimony of the orphan and the father-less."

During the time of the friar's narrative, Delany had been sitting close by his knee in fixed and earnest attention; and at this time there chancing to be a pause in the conversation, she looked wistfully about, as if afraid she was going to commit herself by telling a lie. But there was such a beam of intelligence playing over her lovely countenance, that all the party fixed their eyes on her, as if watching with the deepest interest what she was going to say. [184]

"I have a confused dream of having heard something of this story before," said she: "but subsequent events had quite obliterated the traces of it from my memory, till this narrative renewed them: I think I can give you some intelligence of this lost maiden. You said she was called by her father's name. Do you recollect what that father of her's was called?"

"Ay, that will I never forget while memory retains her seat in this repentant bosom," said the friar. "His name was Captain Jacques De-la-Veny."

"The very same," said the maid. "Then do you know ought of this? Or did you ever see it before?"—and she took a small miniature from her bosom, holding it near to the friar's eye.

"By the blessed stars of heaven, and the Holy Virgin that rules above them!" exclaimed the friar; "it is the graven image of the captain of fifty whom I slew in battle. I saw it placed in thy bosom, yea I held thee on my knee till that chain of gold was locked about thy neck never to be removed. Thou art indeed the daughter of the fairest and the comeliest among women,—of her whom I loved far above my own life, and for whom I travailed in pain; yea, thou art the child that I nursed and held on my knee, and all the inheritance of thy fathers is thine. Blessed be thou, my daughter! and blessed be they who have preserved thee! Come to my bosom my child, my beloved, my fair one, that I may fall on thy neck, and bless thee, and weep over thee; for my soul rejoiceth that I have found thee." [185]

The poet could stand it no longer; he threw himself at the maiden's feet, and embraced them, and wept aloud. Charlie was busied in drawing pictures of swords and cross-bows on the floor with the brazen end of his sheathe, and always giving a loud sob as if his heart would burst. Even Master Michael Scott once drew the back of his hand across his eyes, though no one believed it was ought of sympathy that affected him. [186]

"The abbreviation of the name was so natural in the mouths of the people of this land," said the friar, "that I wonder I should never have recognised it, nor yet on the face of my dear child the features of her mother. Hard has been thy lot, and the lot of thy fathers, but blessings may yet remain in store for thee."

"I dinna see where they're to come frae," said Charlie, sighing louder than ever. "It wad be the hardest thing I ever kend, if ane sae young, sae bonnie, and sae good, after a' that she has borne, should be prickit up atween the yird and the heaven here, to be hungered to dead, and then eaten wi' the corbies."

"Life's sweet to us a'," said Gibbie: "She wad be as little missed as ony that's here, if she *should* be starved to death wi' hunger."

"She shall *not* be starved to death wi' hunger;" cried Charlie, in a tone of valiant desperation. "Na, na; afore she die o' hunger after a' she has come through, I'll rather cut a limb off my ain body and feed her wi't. An Corbie be spared, I can e'en ride by the warden's side wi' a timmer ane." [187]

"God bless you, for a kind heart," cried the poet.

"Gin I thought I were to win her mysel," said Tam, "and win away wi' life out o' this luckless place, I wad do a good deal for her; but if I trowed ony o' you were to get her frae me—I'll no tell you how I feel."

"Just as a hungry man should feel," said Gibbie; "and as ane wha has starvation afore his een

maun feel. It is e'en a sair trial, and often brings me a-mind o' the story of Marion Gib's callant."

Master Michael Scott, thinking that, in right of seniority, the Laird was now about to begin his trial story for life or death, made a signal with his hand for his guests to compose themselves, which they did with one consent; while Gibbie, pleased with the mark of deference shown to him, went on:—

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Laird of Peatstacknowe's Tale.

There wad aiblins nane o' you ken Marion. She lived i' the Dod-Shiel; and had a callant to the lang piper, him that Squire Ridley's man beat at the Peel-hill meeting. Weel, you see, he was a gilliegaupy of a callant, gayan like the dad o' him; for Marion said he wad hae eaten a horse ahint the saddle; and as her shieling wasna unco weel stored o' meat, she had ill getting him mainteened; till at the lang and the last it just came to this pass, that whenever Jock was i' the house, it was a constant battle atween Marion and him. Jock fought to be at meat, and Marion to keep him frae it, and mony hard clouts and claws there past. They wad hae foughten about a haggis, or a new kirning o' butter, for a hale hour, and the battle generally endit in Jock's getting a', or a good share o' ilka thing. (I wish we had sic things here, even though we had to fight for them!) When he had fairly gained the possession, by whatever means, he feasted with the greatest satisfaction, licking his large ruddy lips, and looking all about him with eyes of the utmost benevolence. Marion railed all the while that the poor lad was enjoying himself, without any mercy and restraint, and there wasna a vile name under the sun that had ony signification of a glutton in it, that she didna ca' him by. Jock took the bite wi' the buffet;—he heard a' the ill names, and munched away. Oh, how his heart did rejoice o'er a fat lunch o' beef, a good haggis, or even a cog o' milk brose! Poor fellow! such things were his joy and delight. So he snapped them up, and in two or three hours after he was as ready for another battle as ever.

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This was a terrible life to lead. Times grew aye the langer the waur; and Marion was obliged to hire poor Jock to Goodman Niddery, to herd his kye and his pet sheep. Jock had nae thoughts at a' o' ganging to sic a job at first; but Marion tauld him ilka day o' the fat beef, the huge kebbucks, and the parridge sae thick that a horn-spoon wadna delve into them, till he grew impatient for the term day. That day came at length, and Marion went away hame wi' her son to introduce him. The road was gayan lang, and Jock's crappin began to crawl. He speered a hunder times about the meat at Goodman Niddery's house, and every answer that Marion gae was better than the last, till Jock believed he was gaun home to a continual feast. It was a delightful thought, for the craving appetite within him was come to a great height. They reached the place, and went into the kitchen. Jock's een were instantly on the look-out; but they didna need to range far. Above the fire there hung two sides of bacon more than three inches deep of fat, besides many other meaner objects: The hind legs of bullocks, sheep, and deer, were also there; but these were withered, black, and sapless in appearance. Jock thought the very substance was dried out o' them. But the bacon! How it did make Jock smack his lips! It was so juicy that even the brown bristly skin on the outside of it was all standing thick o' eenbright beaming drops like morning dew. Jock was established at Goodman Niddery's; he would not have flitted again and left these two sides of bacon hanging there for an estate. Marion perceived well where the sum of his desires was fixed, and trembled for fear of an instant attack: Well might she; for Jock had a large dirk or sheathed knife (a very useful weapon) that he wore, and that he took twice out of its place, looked at its edge, and then at the enormous bacon ham, which was more than three inches deep of solid fat, with the rich drops of juice standing upon the skin. Jock drew his knife on his sandal, then on the edge of a wooden table that stood beside him, examined the weapon's edge again, and again fixed his green eyes on the bacon. "What do the people mean," thought he to himself, "that they do not instantly slice down a portion of that glorious meat, and fry it on the coals? Would they but give me orders to do it,—would they even give me the least hint, how slashingly I would obey!"

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None of them had the good sense to give Jock ony sic orders. He was two or three times on the very point of helping himself, and at last got up on his feet, it was believed, for the sole purpose of making an attack on the bacon ham, when, behold, in came Goodman Niddery.

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"There's your master, sirrah!" whispered Marion, "haste ye and whup aff your bonnet."

Jock looked at him. There was something very severe and forbidding in his countenance; so Jock's courage failed him, and he even took aff his bonnet, and sat down with that in his one hand and the drawn knife in the other. Marion's heart was greatly relieved, and she now ventured on a little conversation:

"I hae brought you hame my lad, Goodman, and I hope he'll be a good servant to you."

"I coudna say, Marion: Gin he be as gude as you ca'ed him, he'll do. I think he looks like ane that winna be behind at his bicker."

"Ay, weel I wat, Goodman, and that's true; and I wadna wish it were otherwise. Slaw at the meat, slaw at the wark, ye ken."

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"That *is* a good hint o' my mother's!" thinks Jock to himsel: "What though I should show the auld niggard a sample? The folk o' this house surely hae nae common sense."

The dinner was now, however, set down on the kitchen-table. The goodman sat at the head, the servants in a row on each side, and Jock and his mother at the foot. The goodwife stood behind her servants, and gave all their portions. The dinner that day consisted of broad bannocks, as

hard as horn, a pail of thin sour milk, called whig, and a portion of a large kebbuck positively as dry as wood. Jock was exceedingly dissatisfied, and could not but admire the utter stupidity of the people, and their total want of all proper distinction. He thought it wonderful that rational creatures should not know what was good for them. He munched, and munched, and gnawed at the hard bread and cheese, till his jaws were sore; but he never once looked at the food before him; but leaning his cheek on his hand to rest his wearied grinders somewhat at every bite he took, and every splash of the sour shilpy milk that he lapped in, he lifted his eyes to the fat bacon ham with the juice standing on it in clear bells.

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Marion wished herself fairly out of the house, for she perceived there would be an outbreak; and to prepare the good people for whatever might happen, she said before going away,—“Now, goodwife, my callant’s banes are green, and he’s a fast growing twig; I want to ken if he will get plenty o’ meat here.”

“I winna answer for that, Marion;—he shall fare as the lave fare; but he’s may-be no very easily served. There are some misleared servants wha think they never get enough.”

“Tell me this thing, then, goodwife; will he see enough?”

“Ay; I shall answer for that part o’t.”

“Then I shall answer for the rest, goodwife.”

Jock had by this time given up contending with the timber cheese, and the blue sour milk, and, taking a lug of a bannock in his hand, the size of a shoe sole, he went away and sat down at the fire-side, where he had a full view of the bacon ham, three inches thick of fat, with the dew standing on its brown skin.

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The withered bread swallowed rather the better of this delicious sight; so Jock chewed and looked, and looked and chewed, till his mother entered into the security mentioned. “That is a capital hint,” thought Jock; “I shall verify my good mother’s cautionry, for I can stand this nae langer.” He sprang up on a seat, sliced off a large flitch of bacon, and had it on the coals before one had time to pronounce a word; and then turning his back to it, and his face to the company, he stood with his drawn dirk quite determined to defend his prey.

The goodwife spoke first up. “Gudeness have a care o’ us! see to the menseless tike!” cried she; “I declare the creature has na the breeding o’ a whalp!”

Jock was well used to such kind of epithets; so he bore this and some more with the utmost suavity, still, however, keeping his ground.

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Goodman Niddery grinned, and his hands shook with anger, as if struck with a palsy; but for some reason or other he did not interfere. The servants were like to burst with laughter; and Jock kept the goodwife at bay with his drawn knife, till his slice was roasted; and then, laying it flat on his dry piece of bread, he walked out to the field to enjoy it more at leisure. Marion went away home; and the goodman and goodwife both determined to be revenged on Jock, and to make him pay dear for his audacity.

Jock gave several long looks after Marion as she vanished on Kettle Moor, but he had left no kind of meat in her shieling when he came away, else it was likely he would have followed his mother home again. He was still smacking his lips after his rich repast, and he had seen too much good stuff about the house of his new master to leave it at once; so he was even fain to bid Marion good-b’ye in his heart, wipe the filial tear from his eye, poor man, and try to reconcile himself to his new situation.

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“Do you carry aye that lang gully knife about wi’ you, master cow-herd, or how do they ca’ ye?” said his master, when they next met after the adventure of the bacon.

“I hae aye carried it yet,” said Jock, with great innocence; “and a gay gude whittle it is.”

“Ye maun gie that up,” said Niddery; “we dinna suffer chaps like you to carry sic weapons about our house.”

Jock fixed his green eyes on his master’s face. He could hardly believe him to be serious; still there was something in his look he did not like; so he put his knife deeper into his pocket, drew one step back, and, putting his under row of teeth in front of those above, waited the issue of such an unreasonable demand.

“Come, come; give it up I say. Give it to me; I’ll dispose of it for you.”

“I’ll see you at the bottom o’ the place my mother speaks about whiles,” thought Jock to himself, afore I gie my gully either to you or ony that belongs to you.” He still kept his former position, however, and the same kind of look at his master’s face, only his een grew rather greener.

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“Won’t you give it up, you stubborn thief? Then I will take it, and give you a good drubbing into the bargain.”

When Jock heard this, he pulled out his knife. “That is a good lad to do as you are bidden,” said his master. But Jock, instead of delivering up his knife, drew it from the sheathe, which he returned to his pocket. “Now I sal only say this,” said he; “the first man that tries to take my ain knife frae me—he may do it—but he shall get the length o’t in his monyplies first.” So saying, he drew back his hand with a sudden jerk.

Goodman Niddery gave such a start that he actually leaped off the ground, and holding up both his hands, exclaimed, “What a savage we have got here! what a satan!” And without speaking another word he ran away to the house, and left Jock standing with his drawn knife in his hand.

The goodman's stomach burned with revenge against Jock; so that night he sent him supperless to bed, out of requital for the affair of the fat bacon; and next day the poor boy was set down to a very scanty breakfast, which was not fair. His eye turning invariably to one delicious object, the goodman perceived well what was passing in his heart; and, on some pretence, first sent away all the servants and then the goodwife. He next rose up himself, with his staff in his hand, and, going slowly away into the little parlour, said, as he went through the kitchen, "What can be become o' a' the fo'k?" and with that entered the dark door that opened in a corner. He made as though he had shut the door, but he turned about within it and peeped back.

The moment that he vanished was the watch-word for Jock; he sprang from his seat at the bottom of the table, and, mounting a form, began to whang away at the bacon ham. Some invidious bone, or hard object of some sort, coming unfortunately in contact with the edge of his knife, his progress was greatly obstructed; and though he cut and sawed with all his might, before he succeeded in separating a piece of about two pounds weight from the main body, his master had rushed on him from his concealment, and, by one blow of his staff, laid him flat on the floor. The stroke was a sore one, for it was given with extreme good will, and deprived Jock of sensibility for the time being. He and his form both came down with a great rumble, but the knife remained buried in the fat bacon ham; and the inveterate goodman was not satisfied with felling the poor lad, but kicked him, and laid on him with his stick after he was down. The goodwife at length came running, and put a stop to this cruelty; and fearing the boy was murdered, and that they would be hanged for it, she got assistance, and soon brought Jock again to himself.

Jock had been accustomed to fight for his meat, and, in some measure laid his account with it, so that, on the whole, he took his broken head as little to heart as could have been expected,—certainly less than any other boy of the same age would have done. It was only a little more rough than he had been prepared to look for; but had he succeeded in his enterprise, he would not have been ill content. The goodwife and her maids had laid him on a kitchen bed and bathed his temples; and on recovering from stupefaction, the first thing he did was to examine his pockets to see if he had his gully. Alak! there was nothing but the empty sheathe. Then he *did* lose the field, and fell a blubbering and crying. The goodwife thought he was ill, and tried to sooth him by giving him some meat. He took the meat of course, but his heart was inconsolable; till, just when busy with his morsel, his eye chanced to travel to the old place as if by instinct, and there he beheld the haft of his valued knife sticking in the bacon ham, its blade being buried deep in sappy treasures. He sprang over the bed, and traversing the floor with staggering steps, mounted a form, and stretched forth his hand to possess himself again of his gully.

"Aih! Gudeness have a care o' us," cried the goodwife; "saw ever ony body the like o' that? The creature's bacon mad! Goodman! goodman, come here!"

Jock, however, extricated his knife and fled, though he could scarcely well walk. Some of the maids averred that he at the same time slid a corner of the ham into his pocket; but it is probable they belied him, for Jock had been munching in the bed but the moment before.

He then went out to his cows, weak as he was. He had six cows, some mischievous calves, and ten sheep to herd; and he determined to take good care of these, as also, now that he had got his knife again, not to want his share of the good things about the house, of which he saw there was abundance. However, several days came and went, and Jock was so closely watched by his master and mistress all the time he was in the house, that he could get nothing but his own scanty portion. What was more, Jock was obliged every day to drive his charge far a-field, and remain with them from morn till evening. He got a few porridge in the morning, and a hard bannock and a bottle of sour milk to carry along with him for his dinner. This miserable meal was often despatched before eleven o'clock, so that poor Jock had to spend the rest of the day in fasting, and contriving grand methods of obtaining some good meat in future.

There was one thing very teasing: He had a small shieling, which some former herd had built, and plenty of sticks to burn for the gathering or cutting. He had thus a fire every day, without any thing to roast on it. Jock sat over it often in the most profound contemplation, thinking how delightfully a slice of bacon would fry on it,—how he would lay the slice on his hard bannock, and how the juice would ooze out of it! Never was there a man who had richer prospects than Jock had: still his happiness lay only in perspective. But experience teaches man wisdom, and wisdom points out to him many expedients.

Among Jock's fat sheep there was one fat ewe lamb, the flower of the flock, which the goodwife and the goodman both loved and valued above all the rest. She was as beautiful and playful as innocence itself, and, withal, *as fat as she could lie in her skin*. There was one rueful day, and a hungry one, that Jock had sat long over his little fire of sticks, pondering on the joys of fat flesh. He went out to turn his mischievous calves, whose nebs were never out of an ill deed, and at that time they had strayed into the middle of a corn field. As bad luck would have it, by the way he perceived this dawted ewe lamb lying asleep in the sun; and, out of mere frolic, as any other boy would have done, he flew on above her and tried if he could hold her down. After hard struggling he mastered her, took her between his feet, stroked her snowy fleece and soft downy cheek, and ever, as he patted her, repeated these words, "O but ye be a bonny beast!"

The lamb, however, was not much at her ease; she struggled a little now and then, but finding that it availed not, she gave it over; and seeing her comrades feeding near her, she uttered some piteous bleats. They could afford her no assistance, but they answered her in the same tremulous key. After patting her a good while, Jock began to handle her breast and ribs, and found that she was in good earnest *as fat as pork*. This was a ticklish experiment for the innocent lamb. Jock was seized with certain inward longings and yearnings that would not be repressed. He hesitated

long, long, and sometimes his pity awoke,—but there was another natural feeling that proved the stronger of the two; so Jock at length took out his long knife and unsheathed it. Next he opened the fleece on the lamb's throat till its bonny white skin was laid bare, and not a hair of wool to intervene between it and the point of his knife. He was again seized with deep remorse, as he contemplated the lamb's harmless and helpless look; so he wept aloud, and tried to put his knife again into its sheathe, but he could not.

To make a long tale short, Jock took away the lamb's life, and that not in the most gentle or experienced way. She made no resistance, and only uttered one bleat. "Poor beast!" said Jock; "I dare-say ye like this very ill, but I canna help it. Ye are suffering for a' your bits o' ill done deeds now."

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The day of full fruition and happiness for Jock was now arrived. Before evening he had roasted and eaten the kidneys, and almost the whole of the draught or pluck. His heart rejoiced within him, for never was there more delicious food. But the worst of it was, that the devils of calves were going all the while in the middle of a corn field, which his master saw from the house, and sent one running all the way to turn them. The man had also orders to "waken the dirty blackguard callant if he was sleeping, and gie him his licks."

Jock was otherwise employed; but, as luck would have it, the man did not come into his hut, nor discover his heinous crime; for Jock met him among the corn, and took a drubbing with all proper decorum.

But dangers and suspicions encompassed poor Jock now on every side. He sat down to supper at the bottom of the board with the rest of the servants, but he could not eat a single morsel. His eyes were not fixed on the bacon ham as usual, and moreover they had quite lost that sharp green gleam for which they were so remarkable. These were circumstances not to be overlooked by the sharp eyes of his master and mistress.

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"What's the matter wi' the bit dirty callant the night?" said the latter. "What ails you, sirrah, that you hae nae ta'en your supper? Are you weel eneugh?"

Jock wasna ill, he said; but he could not enter into particulars about the matter any farther. The goodman said, he feared the blade had been stealing, for he did not kythe like ane that had been fasting a' day; but after the goodwife and he had examined the hams, kebbucks, beef barrel, meal girdel, and every place about the house, they could discern nothing amissing, and gave up farther search, but not suspicion.

Jock trembled lest the fat lamb might be missed in the morning when he drove out his flock, but it was never remarked that the lamb was a-wanting. He took very little breakfast, but drove his kine and sheep, and the devils of calves, away to the far field, and hasted to his wee housie. He borrowed a coal every day from a poor woman, who lived in a cot at the road side, to kindle his fire, and that day she noticed what none else had done, that his coat was all sparked over with blood, and asked him of the reason. Jock was rather startled by the query, and gave her a very suspicious look, but no other answer.

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"I fear ye hae been battling wi' some o' your neighbours," said she.

This was a great relief for Jock's heart. "Ay, just that," said he, and went away with his coal.

What a day of feasting Jock had! He sliced and roasted, and roasted and ate till he could hardly walk. Once when the calves were going into a mischief, which they were never out of, he tried to run, but he could not run a foot; so he was obliged to lie down and roll himself on the ground, take a sleep, and then proceed to work again.

There was nutrition in the very steams that issued from Jock's hut; the winds that blew over it carried health and savoury delight over a great extent of country. A poor hungry boy that herded a few lean cows on an adjoining farm, chancing to come into the track of this delicious breeze, became at once like a statue. He durst not move a step for fear of losing the delicious scent; and there he stood with his one foot before the other, his chin on his right shoulder, his eyes shut and his mouth open, his nose being pointed straight to Jock's wee housie. The breeze still grew richer, till at last it led him as straight as there had been a hook in his nose to Jock's shieling; so he popped in, and found Jock at the sublime employment of cooking and eating. The boy gaped and stared at the mangled body of the lamb, and at the rich repast that was going on; but he was a very ignorant and stupid boy, and could not comprehend any thing; so Jock fed him with a good fat piece well roasted, and let him go again to his lean cows.

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Jock looked very plump and thriving-like that night; his appearance was quite sleek, somewhat resembling that of a young voluptuary; and, to lull suspicion, he tried to take some supper, but not one bite or soap was he able to swallow. The goodwife, having by that time satisfied herself that nothing was stolen, became concerned about Jock, and wanted him to swallow some physic, which he peremptorily refused to do.

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"How can the puir thing tak ony meat?" said she. "He's a' swalled i' the belly. Indeed I rather suspect that he's swalled o'er the hale body."

The next morning, as Jock took out his drove, the goodman was standing at the road side to look at them. Jock's heart grew cold, as well it might, when the goodman called out to him, "Callant, what hae you made o' the gude lamb?"

"Is she no there?" said Jock, after a long pause, for he was so much astounded that he could not speak at the first.

"Is she no there!" cried the goodman again in great wrath, imitating Jock's voice; "If ye binna

blind, ye may see that. But I can tell you, my man, gin ye hae letten ought happen to that lamb, ye had better never hae been born."

"What can be comed o' the beast?" said Jock; "I had better look the house, she's may be stayed in by herself."

Jock didna wait for an order, but, glad to be a little farther off from his master, he ran back and looked the fold and sheep-house, and every nettle bush around them, as he had been looking for a lost knife.

"I can see naething o' her," said he, as he came slounging back, hanging his head, and keeping aloof from the goodman, who still carried his long pike staff in his hand.

"But I'll mak you see her, and find her baith, hang-dog," said he; "or deil be in my fingers an I dinna twist your neck about. Are you sure you had her yestreen?"

O yes! Jock was sure he had her yestreen. The women were examined if they had observed her as they milked the cows. They could not tell. None of them had seen her; but they could not say she was not there. All was in commotion about the steading, for the loss of the dawted pet lamb, which was a favourite with every one of the family.

Jock drove his cattle and nine sheep to the field—roasted a good collop or two of his concealed treasure, and snapped them up, but found that they did not relish so well as formerly; for now that his strong appetite for fat flesh was somewhat allayed, yea even fed to loathing, he wished the lamb alive again: He began, moreover, to be in great bodily fear; and to provide against the probability of any discovery being made, he lifted the mangled remains of his prey, and conveyed them into an adjoining wood, where he covered them carefully up with withered leaves, and laid thorns above them, "Now!" said Jock, as he left the thicket, "let them find that out wha can."

The goodman went to all the herds around enquiring after his lamb, but could hear no intelligence of her till he came to the cottage of poor Bessie, the old woman that had furnished Jock with a coal every day. When he put the question to her, the rock and the lint fell out of Bessie's hand, and she sat a while quite motionless.

"What war ye saying, goodman? War ye saying ye had lost your bonnie pet lamb?"

"Even sae, Bessie."

"Then, goodman, I fear you will never see her living again. What kind o' callant is that ye hae gotten? He's rather a suspicious looking chap. I tentit his claes a' spairged wi' blude the tither day, and baith this and some days bygane he has brought in his dinner to me, saying that he dought nae eat it."

Goodman Niddery could make no answer to this, but sat for a while grumpling and groaning as some late events passed over his mind; particularly how Jock's belly was swollen, and how he could not take any supper. But yet the idea that the boy had killed his favourite, and eaten her, was hardly admissible: the deed was so atrocious he could not conceive any human being capable of it, strong as circumstances were against his carnivorous herd. He went away with hurried and impatient steps to Jock's wee house, his old colley dog trotting before him, and his long pike-staff in his hand. Jock eyed him at a distance, and kept out of his path, pretended to be engaged in turning the calves to a right pasture, and running and threshing them with a long goad; for though they were not in any mischief then, he knew that they would soon be in some.

The goodman no sooner set his nose within Jock's shieling than he was convinced some horrid deed had been done. It smelled like a cook's larder; and, moreover, his old dog, who had a very good scent, was scraping among the ashes, and picking up fragments of something which he seemed very much to enjoy. Jock did not know what to do when he saw how matters stood, yet he still had hopes that nothing would appear to criminate him. The worst thing that he saw was the stupid hungered boy on the adjoining farm coming wading through the corn. He had left his dirty lean kine picking up the very roots of the grass, and had come snouking away in hopes of getting another fat bit for his impoverished stomach. But, when he saw Goodman Niddery come out of the cot with impassioned strides, he turned and ran through the strong corn with his whole might, always jumping up as he proceeded.

The goodman called angrily on his old dog to come after him, but he would not come, for he was working with his nose and fore feet among Jock's perfumed ashes with great industry; so the goodman turned back into the house, and hit him over the back with his long pike-staff, which made him glad to give over, and come out about his business; and away the two went to reconnoitre further.

As soon as the old dog was fairly a-field again, he took up the very track by which Jock had carried the carcass that morning, and went as straight as a line to the hidden treasure in the thicket. The goodman took off the thorns, and removed the leaves, and there found all that remained of his favourite and beautiful pet lamb. Her throat was all cut and mangled, her mouth open, and her tongue hanging out, and about one half of her whole body a-wanting. The goodman shed tears of grief, and wept and growled with rage over the mangled form, and forthwith resolved (which was hardly commendable) to seize Jock, and bring him to that very spot and cut his throat.

Jock might have escaped with perfect safety had he had the sense or foresight to have run off as soon as he saw his master enter the wood; but there seems to be an infatuation that directs the actions of some men. Jock did not fly, but went about and about, turning his kine one while, his nine sheep another, and always between hands winning a pelt at one of the ill-conditioned calves,

till his incensed master returned from the fatal discovery, and came up to him. There was one excuse for him, he was not sure if the carcass had been found, for he could not see for the wood whether or not his master went to the very place, and he never thought of the sagacity of the dog.

When Goodman Niddery first left the wood, he was half running, and his knees were plaiting under him with the anticipation of horrid revenge. Jock did not much like his gait; so he kept always the herd of cows, and the sheep too, betwixt himself and this half-running master of his. But the goodman was too cunning for poor Jock; he changed his step into a very slow careless walk, and went into the middle of the herd of cows, pretending to be whistling a tune, although it was in fact no tune, but merely a concatenation of tremulous notes on C sharp, without the least fall of harmony. He turned about this cow and the other cow, watching Jock all the while with the tail of his eye, and trilling his hateful whistle. Jock still kept a due distance. At length the goodman called to him, "Callant, come hither, like a man, and help me to wear this cow against the ditch. I want to get haud o' her."

Jock hesitated. He did not like to come within stroke of his master's long stick, neither did he know on what pretence absolutely to refuse his bidding; so he stood still, and it was impossible to know by his looks whether he was going to comply or run off altogether. His master dreaded the latter, and called to him in a still kinder manner, until Jock at last unfortunately yielded. The two wore the cow, and wore the cow, up against the ditch, until the one was close upon her one side, and the other upon her other. "Chproo! hawkie! chproo, my bonnie cow!" cried the goodman, spreading out his arms, with his pike-staff clenched fast in his right hand; then springing by the cow in a moment, he flew upon Jock, crying out, with the voice of a demon, "D—n you, rascal! but I'll do for you now!"

Jock wheeled about to make his escape, and would have beat his master hollow, had he been fairly started, or timeously apprised of his dreadful danger; but ere he had run four or five steps the pike-staff came over the links of his neck such a blow that it laid him flat on his face in a mire. The goodman then seized him by the cuff of the neck with the one hand, and by the hair of his head with the other, and said, with a triumphant and malicious laugh, "Now, get up, and come away wi' me, my braw lad, and I'll let you see sic a sight as you never saw. I'll let you see a wally-dy sight! Get up, like a good cannie lad!"

As he said this he pulled Jock by the hair, and kicked him with his foot, until he obliged him to rise, and in that guise he led him away to the wood. He had a hold of his rough weatherbeaten hair with the one hand, and with the other he heaved the cudgel over him; and as they went the following was some of the discourse that passed between them.

"Come away, now, my fine lad. Are nae ye a braw, honest, good callant? Do nae ye think ye deserve something that's unco good frae me? Eh? Ay, ye surely deserve something better nor ordinar': And ye shall hae it too."—(Then a kick on the posteriors, or a lounder with the staff.)—"Come your ways like a sonsy, brave callant, and I'll let you see a bonny thing and a braw thing in yon brake o' the wood, ye ken."

Jock cried so piteously that, if his master had not had a heart of stone, he would have relented, and not continued in his fatal purpose; but he only grew the longer the more furious.

"O let me gang! let me gang! let me gang!" cried Jock. "Let me gang! let me gang! for it wasna me. I dinna ken naething about it ata'!"

"Ye dinna ken naething about what, my puir man?"

"About yon bit sheep i' the wood, ye ken."

"You rascal! you rogue! you villain! you have confessed that you kend about it, when I wasna speiring ony sic question at you. You hound! you dog! you savage wolf that you are! Mother of God! but I will do for you! You whelp! you dog! you scoundrel! come along here." (Another hard blow.) "Tell me now, my precious lad, an ye war gaun to be killed, as ye ken something about killing, whether would you choose to have your throat cut, or to have your feet tied and be skinned alive?"

"O dinna kill me! dinna kill me!" cried poor Jock. "My dear master, dinna kill me, for I canna brook it. Oh, oh! an ye kill me I'll tell my mother, that will I; and what will Marion say t'ye, when she has nane but me? Oh master, dinna kill me, and I'll never do the like o't again!"

"Nay, I shall take warrant for that: you shall never do the like o't again!"

In this melancholy and heart-breaking manner he dragged him on all the way by the rough towsy head, kicking him one while, and beating him another, till he brought him to the very spot where the mangled remains of the pet lamb were lying. It was a blasting sight for poor Jock, especially as it doubled his master's rage and stern revenge, and these were, in all conscience, high enough wrought before. He twined the hapless culprit round by the hair, and knocked him with his fist, for he had dropped the staff to enable him to force Jock to the place of sacrifice; and he swore by many an awful oath, that if it should cost him his life, he would do to Jock as he had done to that innocent lamb.

With that he threw him on the ground, and got above him with his knees; and Jock having by that time lost all hope of moving his ruthless master by tears or prayers, began a struggling with the force which desperation sometimes gives, and fought with such success that it was with difficulty his master could manage him.

It was very much like a battle between an inveterate terrier and a bull dog; but, in spite of all that

Jock could do, the goodman got out his knife. It was not, however, one like Jock's, for it had a folding blade, and was very hard to open, and the effecting of this was no easy task, for he could not get both his hands to it. In this last desperate struggle, Jock got hold of his master's cheek with his left hand, and his nails being very long, he held it so strait that he was like to tear it off. His master capered up with his head, holding it back the full length of Jock's arm; yet still being unable to extricate his cheek from Jock's hold, he raised up his knife in his right hand in order to open it with his teeth, and, in the first place, to cut off Jock's hand, and his head afterwards. He was holding down Jock with his right knee and his left hand; and while in the awkward capering attitude of opening his knife, his face was turned nearly straight up, and his eyes had quite lost sight of his victim. Jock held up his master's cheek, and squeezed it still the more, which considerably impeded his progress in getting the knife open; and, at that important moment, Jock whipped out his own knife, his old dangerous friend, and struck it into the goodman's belly to the haft. The moment he received the wound he sprang up as if he had been going to fly into the air, uttered a loud roar, and fell back above his dead pet lamb.

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Lord, how Jock ran! He was all bespattered with blood, some of it his own, and some of it his master's; wanted the bonnet, and had the bloody knife in his hand; and was, without all doubt, a wild frightsome-looking boy. As he sped through the wood, he heard the groans and howls of his master in the agonies of death behind him. Every one of them added to Jock's swiftness, till it actually became beyond the speed of mortal man. If it be true that love lends a pair of wings, fear, mortal fear, lends two pair. There is nought in life I regret so much as that I did not see Jock in this flight; it must have been such an extraordinary one. There was poor Jock flying with the speed of a fox from all the world, and yet still flying into the world. He had no home, no kindred to whom he durst now retreat, no hold of any thing in nature, save of his own life and his good whittle; and he was alike unwilling to part with either of these. The last time he was seen was by two women on Kirtle-common. He appeared sore bespent, but was still running on with all his might.

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The goodman was found before the evening, but only lived to tell how he had come by his end. All his friends and servants were raised, and sent in pursuit of Jock. How he eluded them no man knows; but from that day Marion's Jock has never been more seen or heard of in this land.

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CHAPTER VII.

Cher. That story of our captain's is rather an odd story. Is it not, Mark?

Mark. Rather of the wonderful.

Ford.

"I dinna ken but I could maybe tell ye something about him an I liket," said Tam Craik; "but I wad maybe be as wise to haud my tongue."

"I wad like very weel to hear mair about him," said Charlie; "for his life has had such a queer beginning, it maun surely hae had a queer end."

"But what an it shouldna be endit yet, Yardbire," said Tam: "Marion's Jock is perhaps living, and life-like, to tell his ain tale. However, we'll say nae mair about that just now, till you tell us what you think o' Gibbie Jordan's tale. For my part, I never heard a tale I was sae muckle interested in a' my life."

"It is ane o' the best tales *o' the kind* that ever I heard," said Charlie.

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"It is a most abominable tale," said the poet.

"In what way, Master Poet?" said Charlie: "I dinna like to hear ony body condemned without reason."

"It is for the badness of the moral that I do it dislike," said the poet: "The moral is so truly bad, all mankind it must must shock; it is to kill this harmless lamb, the flower of all the flock,—to feed upon her lovely form that's fairer than the snow,—to eat her flesh and drink her blood! It makes mine eyes to flow!"

"Gude faith, an I thought that war his drift, I wad brain him," said Charlie; "and I confess it looks rather like it."

"There can be no doubt of it," said Master Michael Scott: "The maid Delany is the favourite lamb, whom he wishes you to kill and feast on in the same delicious manner as did the hero of his tale; and I am the goodman whom you are to stick afterwards, and fairly make your escape."

"It is a shocking tale I really doubt," said Charlie; "and throws a disgrace and an imputation o' something unseemly on my chief and a' his friends, and I winna put up wi' it."

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"I do propose that from the walls the caitiff we do throw," said the poet; "or kill and eat for dainty meat the laird of Peatstacknowe."

"I fear if the votes were to be ta'en just now he wad hae an ill chance," said Charlie: "But it's fair in ha' where beards wag a'. Let ilk ane of us hae a fair chance. There may be mae bad morals amang us. Wha's turn is't next?"

Charlie himself, being next in point of seniority, was called on for his tale.

"I hae been thinking hard what tale I should tell you," said Charlie; "but I find I can tell nought but the thing I hae seen, and I'll be pinched sair eneuch to make sense o' that. Therefore, gin ye like, I'll tell ye my first adventure in war,—for I aye mind it the best, and will do as lang as I live."

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Charlie Scott's Tale.

It was under the command of Hab Elliot that I made my first raide; a gay rough spun cout he was, and nae cannie hand for a southland valley. Weel, you see, there was a chap came to my father's house at Yardbire ae morning, and he says to my father, "Wat," says he, (that was my father's name, what he ca'ed me Charlie for I dinna ken, for I never spier'd,) "Wat," says the chiel, "ye maun raise your lads, and tie on your wallets, and meet the warden the morn at the Hawk-Hass, there's gaun to be a stoure on the east border."

"An there be a stoure on the east border I's be there for ane," said my father; "but the de'il ae man hae I left but auld Will Nicol and the callant Charlie. There hae seven men o' Moodlaw and Yardbire fa'en sin Beltan. I canna mak men, but I shall fight wi' them I have. As for Charlie, he disna want spirit, but he's unco young and supple, and will mak but a weak stand in a strong blast: Auld Will he kens brawly how to take care care o' himsel; and, atween the twa, I may be ill bestedde. But, gae as it will, I'll be there."

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I was a massy blade that day when I gaed o'er Craik-Corse riding at my father's side. I was sae upliftit I could hardly sit on my yaud; and I saw my father was proud o' his callant, as he ca'ed me,—that made me ten times waur. The first men we came at were the lang-shankit Laidlaws o' Craik; and then the Grahams o' Drife they came up wi' us; and when we came to Howpasley, my father got the laird's right hand, and we gaed ower Skelfhill-swire seven score and ten, but there were only fifty o' us had horse, and mine was ane o' the best."

"Wha's this stripling that rides the good dun mare," said the laird o' Howpasley.

"That's my bit niff-naff of a callant," says my father: "That's my Charlie, cousin John."

"He's a twig of a good tree," said Howpasley: "I like the spark gayan weel, if he wad ride a little evener up, an' no haud forrit his head like a woodcock. But, my word, he has a lang arm!"

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"Ay, a pair o' them, cousin," said my father; and the twa carles hotched and leuch at my father's joke.

The warden was lying at the Hawk-Hass wi' twal score o' good men; but there were nane o' them had horses but the Elliots, and some gentlemen of the Scotts. When Sir Ringan saw us coming, he came out on foot to meet us; and when the gentlemen of our party saw that, they lighted off their horses, gae them to their henchmen, and walked out before the men. Howpasley walked on the right hand, my father next, and, as he desired me, I came slounging up next him. I lookit best on foot, for my legs were sic a length; I was higher in fact by half a foot than either John of Howpasley or my father, but a perfect tripe for sma'ness. When our captain, the brave Redhough, came near to us, I thought I should hae swarfed; my heart dunt-duntit like a man humblin bear, and I was maist gasping for breath. I had hard sae muckle o' his bravery that I expectit an auld, gruff, austere carle, as proud as Lucifer, to meet us. But, instead o' that, I sees a boardly knight in the very prime o' manly beauty: his cheeks were ruddy, his eyes dark, and the black beard on his booner lip was just beginning to curl upward. My heart was a' his ain at the first look; and I said to mysel, "Ye're the man that I'll risk my neck wi' ony day." I likit him sae weel that I mind I thought I could just hae lain down in a gutter, and letten him tramp on the tap o' me.

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He first shook Howpasley by the hand, and then my father; and then he gave a broad look to my beardless face, turning his eye back to my father's.

"That's my Charlie, Sir Ringan; my only son now," said my father.

"You are welcome, cousin Charlie, to our camp," said he: "If ye be as brave a man as your father, I shall never want a hero at my side."

I should hae said something in return, but the deil a word I could say, for I was like to fa' to the fuffing and greeting. He spake to a' the gentlemen in the same kind hamely manner; and then lookit at a' the men, and spiered how mony belonged to every ane.

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"And how many are with you, cousin Yardbire?" said he.

"They are a' here that I hae, noble chief," said my father: "Last year at this time I brought forty to the field, and now I hae nae ane but my auld henchman and that lad. We hae somehow been ower rash, and I now get a' the wyte. They ca' me Wat the Waster,—and not a man will haud land under me."

"Ay, ay, Yardbire," said he; "you and your men hae stood the brunt of the battle ower often for me and mine. But you are grown auld, and ye maunna claim the post of honour ony mair till Charlie come to his strength. I'll make you captain this day o' the best troop you ever led. You shall hae the hard-headed Olivers, the grimy Potts, and the skrae-shankit Laidlaws; and you shall form my flying party—"

My father here interrupted him with "Na, na, my master, deil a flying troop I'll lead! if it binna a fighting ane, it winna follow me lang."

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The warden smiled; and calling out all the men of the families he had named, he put such of them

as had horses under the command of my father. Of these there were forty-seven, so that our troop consisted of fifty men in all. We were joined with the Elliots; but Habby having ninety men of his own name, the command of the horse devolved on him, and my father was only looked on as the second. I didna like this unco weel; but it coudna be helped, and I was glad to be in the field ony way.

The first sight we got o' the English was frae the top o' Penchrist; but a' that day we could only ken where they were by the reek they were raising. My blood boiled when I saw them burning the houses o' Scotsmen, and fain wad I hae had a hand-shaking wi' them.

There was ae message came after another a' that day. The Kers had been beat and chased across the river, and the English host had over-run their territory. Our chief didna seem to care for that sae muckle as I thought, nor wad he stir his foot till they crossed the Rule. There war mae men came in every hour, for the beacons were a' bleezing; and as soon as the English set foot on the territory of the middle marches, away we rade straight to meet them. [234]

It was on the hill of Hawthornside where I first saw the face o' an enemy; and I'll never forget sic queer strummings as I had within me. Oh, I wad fain hae been at them! There was a kind o' yeuk, a kind o' kittling, a sort o' prinkling in my blood like, that I fand wadna be cured but by the slap o' a sword or the point o' a spear. Instead o' being feared for a wound, I wad hae gi'en my horse and light armour baith to have had a good prodd frae an Englishman,—but I wad hae liket that the warden had seen me.

We kept the hills between them and the border wi' our horse, but the foot kept the straits to the westward. Forbye the Elliots, and my father's troop o' Potts, and Olivers, and skrae-shankit Laidlaws, the warden had three hundred Scotts on horseback; so that in all he had short o' five hundred horse, and about eight hundred foot. At the head o' his horse he rade straight up to the faces o' the English, and challenged them in our king's name to tell their business in that place. Up came an English knight, Sir Robert Neville of Ravensworth, and he crackit baith proudly and saucily, but I didna ken weel what he said. He threatened no to leave a beast or a body atween Borthwick and the Border. Our captain was as crouse as the other, sae there was nothing but ill blude atween them; but the thing that we likit warst of a' was the certainty that he had eight thousand men, being just sax for our ane. [235]

The warden then held a council o' friends upon the top of the hill, and in view of the English host. Some said ae thing and some said another to him; but at length he turned to my father, and he says, "What says our cousin Walter o' Eskdale to a' this? But I needna speer that,—he never gae me aught but ae advice a' his life."

"I'll tell you what I wad do, captain," says my father: "Afore yon sun were twa cock-strides down the west I wad fight them." [236]

"I kend what it wad be," said the warden. "But, my brave Yardbire, are you considering the disproportion o' force?"

"What's that to think about?" said he, "the greater the better!"

The warden claspit him in his arms, and the tears came hopping down my muckle soft flobby cheeks.

"Yes, captain," continued my father, "I hae been thinking o' the odds against us, and I am thinking o't just now. But ye ken art may do muckle."

"Now, to hear him speaking about art!" said the warden, pushing him playfully around by the shoulder,— "To hear a man speaking sagely about art, that never thought of ony other art in his life but hard hand nevel! Pray now, my dear cousin, will ye let us hear this deep profound art o' yours, that will enable ae man to beat half a dozen?"

"I wad form our little army into the shape o' a wedge," said my father; "and I wad yerk that little wedge into the heart of their great log of an army, and split it a' to shivers." [237]

"G—d a mercy, hear to him!" cried the warden. "And pray what is to form the point o' this wedge, Yardbire?"

"Just my grey naig's head, captain."

"I kend weel what it wad come to, cousin. Your grey naig's head wad soon be cracked; but an ought were to happen yours, what wad come o' me?"

I thought sae muckle o' my auld father, that I couldna haud my tongue nae langer, and that was the first word I ever spake to the warden in my life. "Never fear, my master," quo' I; "it winna be ilka ane that sal crack his grey crown the day."

"Weel said, Charlie!" cried the auld hero; and he waved his cap round his head, "Weel said, little Charlie! Now, captain, for the wedge!"

The warden lookit a good while at us without speaking, and I gart mysel trow there was a blink o' admiration in his dark eye; "Ah, Wat, Wat!" said he; "weel do you ken I'm ower ready to follow your mad schemes! But they have sae often proved successfu', though wi' very hard wark, that I'll e'en take the risk, and sey your skill aince mair." [238]

He then drew his horse from the height into the glen behind, and formed them precisely on my father's plan, with a troop of horse in front, and one on each wing, the foot being arranged in close column in the middle; and as my father claimed the post of honour as his right, he rode the front man: Will Nicol and I were next him, and behind us there were four of the Laidlaws. I saw

no farther, but was informed after that when the horse made the charge, the foot had orders to run and keep up with them.

We took a sweep down the water to the north, and appeared all of a sudden in the rear of the English army. Their scouts had seen us, but could not guess our intent; for as to a thought of our attacking them, that never entered their heads, so that their host was not new-modelled farther than their columns facing about toward us. They deemed we were going to retreat toward the north, and were making ready to pursue us, when all at once the point of the wedge turned at a right angle, and rushed with all haste on the centre of their line. [239]

Then there was such a hubbub, and calling, and noise of armour rattling throughout their army as I had never heard! My father spurred on, and, after some few hard blows, opened the line. He had the least to do of any, for the ranks opened naturally before him as he heaved his heavy sword. But ever as their wedge grew thicker, their columns being pressed together, lay the heavier on our flanks, and several gallant men of the Scots fell. I saw naething o' this, but soon fand the effects of it; for my father drove faster on than the flankers could bear up after him, and our point lengthened out and grew thinner at every step. I had been unco keen o' fighting, but I got my fill o't then. I trow I gae some o' them some gay good yerks on the chafts.

Ravensworth by this time perceiving the danger in which his army stood of being divided, brought up his side columns and closed around our front. I heard him saying in a loud exasperated voice, "For shame, countrymen! for shame! will ye suffer a landward Scots laird, an auld crabbit loun like that, to ride in through your ranks and out through your ranks, as they were files o' thistles? Down with the moorland thief! down with him!" [240]

"Aha, Robin o' Ravensworth, is that you?" cried my father: "An I win within sword's length o' you I shall settle your crack."

As he said this he raised himself up in his stirrups. Auld Will Nicol roared out, "For Christ's sake, master, stop!" But, in place of that, he spurred up to the captain with all his might, challenging him to come forward. Neville kept his ground, and prepared for the attack, but refused to come forward; and, just as my father and he began to measure swords, my father was struck by six or seven spears all at once on his left side. Some of these he received on his buckler, but others of them pierced his side, and, before any of us could lend him the least assistance, he was unhorsed. Ravensworth also gave him a wound as he was falling. I, who was close behind him, and a-head of all the rest, was now hard bested. I clove the head of the first spearman on my left; and ere I had recovered my sword from the stroke, Ravensworth's sword was at my breast; and I have no doubt that stroke would have slain me, had it not been for a plunge made by my father's horse, that came between us and marred it. By this time the Laidlaws had come up on my right,—a wheen as hardy, determined louns as ever brak warld's bread,—and they were laying about them like incarnate devils. The horse kept the lancers from reaching me on the left, so that Ravensworth and I met fairly hand to hand. Sure am I that I never gae sic a straik sinsyne, nor ane wi' sic good will. I dinna think I clave his helmet, but I gae him sic a devil o' a knob on the temple, that he was stoundit, and fell as dead as a stane at my horse's feet. My father was at that time on his knee, and I saw him trying to raise himself up by the stirrup-leather, for he had never yet quitted the bridle of his horse. He saw me bring down Neville, who fell almost at his very side; and he looked to me, and cried, "Weel done, little Charlie! weel done, my brave man!" [241]

That was the last word I ever heard him say. My brave, worthy, auld father! He was sae used to ca' me little Charlie when I was young, that he coudna gie it ower when I grew bigger than him; and he cried to me, "Weel done, little Charlie! Weel done, my brave man!" I'll never forget that moment. My honest, kind-hearted father! Ye maun forgie me, sirs, for taking a hearty greet at this part o' my tale. Mony a ane hae I ta'en at the same bit.—Ay—he often ca'ed me little Charlie, and he cried, "Weel done, my brave man!" That was the hindmost word, and I hae good right to mind it. [242]

The battle thickened, and thickened round us, and we were borne back; for there was sic a rush made by the English to the rescue, that, an their captain had been living, they wad hae tramped him to pieces. I was driven clean stupid, and cared nae ae preen for my life, after I saw the ranks rush over my father; but the skrae-shankit Laidlaws defendit me, and did most excellent work. I never saw ony men that thought less about fleeing or retreating than the Laidlaws. Pell-mell, swap for swap, was a' that they countit on. I heard Davie o' Craik saying to his brother, "Take care o' that lang swabble Charlie, and keep by his side. Deil hae him, gin he be nae better than he looks like." The grim Potts were mair cunning than rash; and the hard-headed Olivers could be led but never driven. The Laidlaws were the men for me. Pell-mell, yank for yank. "Thresh on, Will!" "Ay, here's w'ye, Davie; deil tak the hindmost!" I hae stood mony a stoure wi' the Laidlaws, and never wished for better lads—lang-shanks and a' thegither. [243]

But I'm forgetting my tale; for aince I get into the mids o' a battle, it's no easy getting me out again. I canna tell you a' the feats that were done that day, especially by the warden. When he saw the great brulzie in front, he came up with the Scotts, and the Johnstons, and the Grahams o' Drife,—and hearing that my father had fallen, and that the English captain was also slain, he took the front himself, and scattered the English commoners like crows. [244]

When we had thus fairly broke through the centre, we turned to the right, and drove that division of the army before us till they took shelter in Jed forest; but seeing the rest, who formed the strongest wing, marshalling up behind us, we drew off to the hills, and encamped that night at the Brae of Rule.

There was heavy mourning for the loss of my father, and we buried him next day at Hassendean.

The English were as much exasperated. Dick Neville, the brother of Sir Robert, took the command, and up Teviot they came, laying all waste behind them. We durst not engage them again in close battle, for they were by far too numerous; but we kept hovering around them, and harrassing them whenever we could get a chance. In spite of all we could do, they took the town of Hawick, plundered it, and burnt it to ashes. The warden was neither to haud nor to bind wi' anger then; and, as he durst not leave the country, nor tine sight o' them for an hour himself, he sent off Hab Elliot and me, wi' our hunder and fifty horse, to plunder the castle and lands of Ravensworth, by way of retaliation.

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"Now, Charlie," said he to me at parting, "Mind what the Nevilles hae done baith to you and me, and neither leave them cow nor ewe, man, woman, nor bairn, blanket nor sheet, dish nor spoon."

Aweel, aff Habby and I set; he wi' his Elliots, and me wi' my hard-headed Olivers, my grimy Potts, my skrae-shankit Laidlaws, and auld Will Nicol,—that was my army, and a gay queer ane it was: I hadna a man o' my ain name but mysel; for the warden kept them a' about him: He wadna part wi' the Scotts at no rate. It was clear moonlight, sae we set off before sun-set and rade a' the night, keeping aye the height between Tyne and Reid; and at daylight we fand oursels at the place where the twa Tynes meet. We were terrified for raising the country, and were obliged to ride out to a little hollow place in a wild moor, and hide oursels a' the day, where our horses got nothing but a rive o' heather, but they had plenty o' water, pur things! Habby kept watch himsel, and let us a' sleep; and there was ae camstary English chap that wad be up to the tap o' the hill reason or nane, Habby chappit aff his head—he wasna very sticking that way.

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The next morning after that, we gae the castle o' Ravensworth and the rich domains o' the Nevilles an unco surprise. Habby gaed up by himsel to the gate, and asked a word o' the porter. The man came snooving out half sleeping. Habby had him dead, and the keys in his ain hand, in half a minute. It was a shamefu' morning that; for we killed, and harried, and burnt a' that came afore us; and Lady Ravensworth was burnt, and her bairn was trowed to be burnt. That sat sair on my conscience, for she came to me and beggit her life. I had nae thought o' taking her life; but I was sae intent on the spulzie, that I lost her again, and never saw mair o' her. It was rather cruel o' Habby to lock every door when he set fire to the castle. I saved ae little chap that morning, though I wasna muckle the better. We were flinging blankets, and sheets, and thousands o' things out at a large window, when I hears a bairnie greeting most bitterlie, and aye crying out, "Daddy, daddy! O daddy, daddy!" "Poor little English brat," says I to mysel, "there's nae daddy near you." Sae I could nae help rinning into the room to see what kind o' creature it was; and there lay a fine bonnie callant on the bare bed-strae, for they had pu'ed the down bed, and blankets, and sheets, and a' off him; and when he saw me, he held out baith his hands, and cried, "O daddy, daddy!" I could nae think to leave him to be burnt, sae I rowed him in some blankets and tossed him out at the window; and when I lookit out after him to see if he wasna killed, I heard him crying louder than ever, "Daddy's boy fa'en! Take ye up, take ye up! O daddy, daddy! take ye up, take ye up!"

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When we came to pack up our goods he was still lying sprawling amang the blankets, and insisting on his daddy taking him up as fervently as before. I was wae for the poor thing, and didna ken what to do, for I didna like to be nursing a bairn afore my new warriors. But as luck wad hae had it, up comes Will Laidlaw o' Craik. Will cared nae what ony body thought.

"What, lad?" says he to the boy: "What's the matter, billy? What are ye lying yammering there for? Eh?"

"Daddy's good boy fa'en," says the child; "O take ye up! take ye up!"

"Poor deevil!" says Will, wi' his muckle een wauling till they were like to come out; "Poor deevil! Indeed and I will take ye up, though I should get nae mair o' the spoil for my share but yoursel."

Will fauldit a blankit, and rowed the callant carefully up in't like a web. He didna come weel behand at rowing up a bairn; but he did as he could, and had the sense to leave the head out, which was a main concern. Just at that very moment, when Will was at the thrangest, by comes ane o' the Olivers in a great haste wi' his sword drawn, and it was a' bloody. Now, thinks I to mysel', the pur bairn's gane; for I saw what kind o' chap he was that Oliver. Will unluckily had the boy's head out o' the blanket, and was busy speaking to him without regarding ony thing else; and ere ever he was aware Oliver heaved his bloody sword, and was just coming down wi' a swap on the boy's neck, and he wad hae cuttit it through like a kail castock. Will's e'e caught a glimpse o' the sword as it was coming down, and with a dash of his elbow he drove it aside. "Eh? What are ye about, min?" said Will, speaking over his shoulder, and keeping his body between Oliver's sword and the child.

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"Ooh? What are ye about min?" returned the other, mimicking Will's voice and manner: "Hae ye nought ado but to work on a dirty English paddock like that? Cut the neck o't."

"Will I, min?" says Laidlaw: "I'll see you d—d first, and a' the Olivers atween Jed head and Tyot stane—humph? A bonnie trick to come and meddle wi' me and my bit bairn!"

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Oliver went away laughing at Laidlaw, leaving him to manage his nursing concern as he could.

I had witnessed Will's undaunted bravery, and yet I canna say but I was as weel pleased wi' this bit kind turn as ought I had seen him do. I think I see him yet wi' the child in his arms foussoomly rowed up in a blanket, like a web—the head o' the boy out, a great neuk o' the blanket hinging down to the ground, and Will glowering back at Oliver's face: "Eh? What are ye about, min? A bonnie story, to come and meddle wi' me and my bit bairn!" Ha! ha! ha! Honest Laidlaw! I can never forget him and his bairn. "Cut the neck o't," says the other. "Will I, min? I'll see you d—d

first," says Will. Ha! ha! ha! ha!—But then his look! that was the best sport ava; wi' his bendit face and muckle great wulcat een turned o'er his shoulder. "Cut the neck o't," says Oliver. They that had seen Laidlaw then! ha! ha! ha! "Will I, min?" Ha! ha! ha!

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"My son, is there not a time for every thing?" said the friar. "If thou thinkest at all on our condition and thine own, surely thou wilt refrain from such a torrent of vain jesting. Remember that the words of thy mouth are for death or life; for the possession of maiden beauty, and love, and pleasure; or for the most dismal, and miserable, and wretched of all fates—to be killed and eaten up of thy brethren, the companions of thy journey."

"Gude faith, the thing's hardly to be thought of, let be spoken about," said Charlie. "But I beg your pardon, callants, I maun get on wi' my tale; for if I stick it in the middle, ye ken it is a' ower wi' me."

"I wish you would get on with it then," said Tam; "for if ye maun aye stop to laugh at your ain jests, we'll be a' dead o' hunger or ever the votes be ta'en. Nane but fools laugh at their ain sports."

"Whisht, whisht, Tam," returned Charlie,— "I hae a gay wide wizen when I am amang friends, but there are some things that I canna swallow for a' that—Where was I at? Aye at the sacking o' Ravensworth."

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We drave the richest prey that morning that I ever yet saw liftit, if we had gotten it a' hame. We had thirty horses laden wi' stuff, and other thirty led anes, besides thirteen score o' good cattle; and we gae the banks o' the Teme and the Blackburn an unco singe afore we left them. I was rather against the burning, but Habby wadna be stayed; "Na, na; tit for tat, Charlie. That will stand for Hawick and Abbotrule."

We drave on, and drave on, as fast as the cattle could gang, and some o' the heavy soft anes we were obliged to leave behind sair against our wills. We were terrified for raising the country, for we had sic a far drive: but luckily the Nevilles had ta'en amaist every man with them in their expedition into Scotland; and the first time that we hovered was on Tersit-moor in Northumberland, a little before the break o' day. At that place there was the strangest thing happened to us that ever happened to men,—and it was for that that I began my tale.

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My heart had been unco sair a' the night wi' thinking about the bonnie Lady Neville o' Ravensworth; and I had often been sae grieved about her death, and her bairn's death, that I hardly kend what I was doing. I thought I saw her kneeling on her knee, and begging of me to spare her life, and the life o' her child; and then how cruel it was in me to rin away rummaging up the stair, and lose the opportunity of preserving her. These thoughts had made my heart wholly inclined to pity, and, as soon as we lighted, I sought out Will Laidlaw o' Craik, to see if he had still been able, amang a' the confusion, to preserve the life of the child. Will had had a great deal o' trouble wi' him, chiefly from his associates, but he had him still safe an' sound. He had stuffed him in a horse's pack o' blankets and sheets, *wi' his head out*, and had kept beside him a' the gate; and now when I found him he had laid the boy down on the heather to sleep, and had him weel happit up, and Will himsel was lying streekit beside him. He thought that I wad gibe him about the business, and tried to waive the subject; but when I told him how much I was pleased wi' what he had done, he grew rather crouser, and could speak about naething else but the boy and his little sayings to him by the way. "Poor little dear soul!" said Will; "I think some body had flung him o'er the castle wa' in an armfu' claes, and never kend; and wha kens but he may be the heir o' Ravensworth himsel. He has been sae miraculously saved that he will surely come to something. But do ye ken, Charlie, my heart is already sae closely knitted to that bit helpless bairn, that I wadna see ony ill come ower him for a' the kye on the Crib-Law."

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"Laidlaw, you shall never rue your kindness o' heart and attentions to that puir misfortunate bairn," quo' I: "The moment that I saw you take him up, and row him in a blanket, *wi' his head out*, as ye had been rowing up a wab, I resolved to reward you wi' my hale share o' the spulzie."

"Never speak about that, Charlie; if we get safe hame wi' every thing we'll no differ about the spulzie."

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"Ha, but Will, your rowing up o' the bairn was a rare scene! ony other body but you, ye ken, wad hae taken the creature up in their arms and rowed a blanket about it: but instead o' that you doubled a pair o' blankets their hale length on the green, laid the bairn across the one end o' them, and rowed it ower the body, and ower the body, and ower the body, till ye came to the far end; and it was but ill rowed up after a'—ha! ha! ha!"

"Hout, Charlie! deil a bit but ye're ower muckle ta'en up about trifles. I wish ye wad think mair about the perilous situation we are in. Watch a wee while, and let me get a sleep."

Will then laid his arm over the boy and the hott o' claes, and fell sound asleep. Our men were a' placed two and three around the hale muir to guard the cattle, and all were resting on their arms, to be ready to rush together on any alarm. I was sitting and keeping a good look out a' round about, and Will he was swuffing and sleeping. Every thing was quiet, except now and then that the hum of an ox was to be heard which missed his neighbour, or the eiry whistle o' the moss-plover. It was a while before the day-sky, and I was just beginning to turn drowsy, when I thought I saw something white on the muir, about two hundred strides from me. "St Mary be my buckler!" said I to mysel: "What can you be? It is surely a flight o' white mist risen out o' the earth, for I see it moving. If it be a mist fawn, as I dare say it can be naething else, it has drawn itself up into a

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form the likest that of a woman of ought ever I saw." As I was mumbling and speaking this to mysel, I perceived that it still drew nearer, and that it wasna ane o' the fairy fawns o' mist whiles to be seen stealing about i' the night-time, but a lady a' clad in white. It glided athort the moor, and athort the moor, as if it had been looking for something it had lost; and at last I saw it spring away from one point to another at a considerable distance, as swift as a flash o' fire, as if something had startled or offended it. I learned after that the point from which it fled was the very spot where Habby Elliot lay, and who at that time was lying in a sound and troubled sleep. When it again stopped, its motions were very extraordinary,—for though the morning was dark, there was such a pale and a pure whiteness about it, that I saw it the better. It was like a streamer o' light, or the reflection of a starn in the water, that aye in the darkest nights appears brightest. When it paused at the place I mentioned, it bent its body backward, its arms were crossed on its breast, and I saw like its hair streaming in the air behind it. Then it spread both its hands toward heaven, as in the act of making fervent supplication. From that point it came straight toward me, after giving a shiver that made all my een dazzle.

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"Will Laidlaw!" cried I, but in a violent whisper below my breath; "Will Laidlaw o' Craik! for God's sake waken up, and see what this is."

I was sitting, but Will sprang to his feet, and seized his sword. "Where? where? where? Where is it, Charlie? Where is it, callant?" whispered he. I pointed to it, but durst not speak. Will rubbed his een and rubbed his een, and at length perceived it. "I do believe, lad, that is some hizzy—and a weel dressed ane she is," said he; still speaking in a whisper, and sitting down close beside me. "What on God's earth can she be seeking on this waste at sic an untimely hour?" I durst hardly draw my breath, let be to answer him; and sae he continued, "I think it wad hae been as decent-like an she had lain still in her bed rather as comed ralking out amang a when wild men on sic a wild height. Oho! I'll wager my neck it is some spy in disguise."

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She was by this time within ten paces o' us, and we both sat still in breathless suspense till she came close to us. I thought I had seen the face before, but couldna tell where, till she kneeled on one knee at my feet, crossed her hands, and looked me in the face with the most piteous expression of countenance. Then I saw it was the lady o' Ravensworth, and in the very posture that I had seen her for the first and last time. Yet there was no anger in her face; it seemed merely a look of supplication; and at length she touched her lips three times, as an intimation that she wished to speak and could not. As for me, my mouth was sealed; and that I might see nae mair than I had seen, I threw mysel agroof, wi' my face to the ground, and held by the heather firmly wi' baith my hands.

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Honest Will had nae suspicions o' ony thing beyond nature; and at length he says, "What are you wanting wi' us, Madam, that ye're making a' thae murgeons?"

"You do not know me," returned she, "but that young warrior beside you does. He has been guilty of a neglect that he will rue till the day of his death. But, for another deed of mercy that you and he have done, your fates are averted, and your heads shall be covered in the hour of danger, which is fast approaching. You have saved a child from the devouring flames;—if you dare to wrong a hair of that child's head, how dreadful will be your doom! There is a terrible hour approaching;—look at his breast that you may know him again, for I cannot see the fate of the day. But if you would thrive on earth and be admitted into heaven, guard and preserve that dear child—That child is mine—"

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"Say nae mair, honest woman," says Will, perfectly undismayed, "an the child be yours you're perfectly welcome to him. It was to save his bit innocent life that I brought him away, and no for ony greed o' other folks bairns. I kendna wha was aught him, but sin he be yours I'll deliver him safe into your hands. Take care an' no let him get cauld, for the morning air is no gude for a bairn."

So saying, Will howked the boy out o' the mids o' a great heap o' claes, rowed him up as weel as he could, and then said, after two or three sobs, "I like ill to part wi' him, but a mother's aye a mother." Then he kissed him, and added, "Fare-ye weel, my wee man! You and I will may-be never meet again; but, whether or no, you will be nae the waur o' a trooper's blessing. An ye be spared ye'll be a man when auld Will Laidlaw's head is laid i' the grave. Hae, honest woman, there's your son, and God bless you baith!"

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She bent her body over him in the most affectionate way, and stretched her arms as if to embrace him, but she neither touched him nor any part of Laidlaw's claes. The boy had awakened, and when Will held him out to give him up to his mother, he cried out, "No-no-no-no. No go ty'e, no go t'ye. Daddy's boy feared, daddy's boy feared."

"Gude faith, sae ye may, my man! thinks I to mysel, "an ye kend about a' this as weel as I do!"

I saw naething that was passing, for I was lying close on my face, and hinging by the heather; but I heard a that was said, and Will tauld me the rest afterwards. He said, she made the sign of the cross above her child's breast, then over his own head, as he stooped forward with him in his arms. Then she glided aside, and made the cross over my head and shoulders, and it was heaven's grace that I didna ken, else I wad hae swarfed away. Last of all, she again bent herself over her child, and stretched out her arms on each side of him; then, leaning herself back on the air, she arose gently from the ground, and sailed away through the dim shades of the morning toward the verge of the heaven.

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I wondered what was asteer then, for I heard Will crying on the Virgin Mary to preserve him, and rhaming o'er the names o' a' the saints he had ever heard of; and at length he gae a great gluther, like a man drowning, and fell down wi' sic a dunt he gart a' the moss shake again. The

bairn screamed and grat; and I didna ken what to do, for I durstna look up for fear o' seeing the ghost; till at length I heard that the rest of the sentinels had caught the alarm, and were passing the watch-word frae ane to another, and then I ventured to set up my head. But, gude and gracious, sic a grip as I did haud by the heather!

I took up the child, covered him with my cloak, and soothed him; and the poor little harassed thing hid his face in my bosom. Will lay quivering and struggling like ane in a dream, or under the influence of the night-mare; and, after I had rolled him three times over, he awoke in the most horrid consternation. "Charlie, where are ye? Speak to me, Charlie, and tell me where I am." Then a whole string o' saints and angels were a' invoked, one after another, ower and ower again. "Mercy on us, Charlie! I hae had sic a dream as never mortal man had; and a' sae plain and sae particular, I could amaist swear it was real. What do ye think, Charlie? Didna this bairn's mother come to me in my sleep? and she says to me, 'That bairn's mine.'—Na, that wasna what she said first. 'Ye dinna ken me,' says she." And then Will began and told me all that I had heard pass between them before, and all that I had seen, and some part that I had not seen; but a' that I could do, I couldna persuade him that it wasna a dream. And it was better it was sae; for if he had kend and believed that he had conversed with a spirit, it wad hae put him daft. It pat me clean out o' my judgment; and for that day, and mony a day and night after, I kend nae mair what I was doing than ane dreaming, and remembered nae mair what I had been doing than if I had been asleep all the time. I can therefore gie but a puir and a lame account o' what followed, for it is maistly from hearsay, although I was tauld that I bure a principal hand in the fray.

We started at the scraigh o' day, and drove on. There were always four or five light horsemen, well mounted, who rode before our array to see if the coast was clear; and as we went round the head of the Gowan Burn, about mid-day, ane o' these came galloping back, and told us that the English were awaiting us at the fords of Keilder, with an army of a thousand horse.

"Aha!" quo' Habby Elliot! "I thought we warna to get hame this way. We hae just twa choices, callants, either to fight or flee."

There was not a man in all our little army that could think of scampering off for bare life, and leaving such a prey behind him; so, with one assent, we rode forward in a body to the brow of the hill that overlooks the fords of Keilder. The English were stationed on a rising ground to the west of the river, and that being passable only by one ford, which was very rough, we could not attack them without the certainty of being cut to pieces; so we kept our station on the steep brae over against them, and sent some few of our oldest and weakliest men to be moving the prey out toward Keilder-head.

We calculated the English to be about five hundred; but neither durst they cross the ford to come to us. They sent a few flights of arrows among our men, which we regarded very little, and determined, if possible, to keep them at bay there till our rich prey had crossed the border fell. But just at the fall of the evening, to our great surprise, the English rushed at once into the ford, with loud and reiterated shouts; and scarcely had we begun to advance down the steep to meet them, when we were attacked by another body of horsemen behind.

These men were led by a great priest whose name was Bishop Boldone, but who was always called Bloody-Sark; and at the very first encounter Hab Elliot rushed among the English ranks and slew the Bishop with his own hand at the first blow. But it cost Habby dear, for he was cut down in endeavouring to retreat, and fell under a dozen of spears. In short, our small band, being inclosed between two stronger bodies, was literally hewed in pieces, but not before they had slain a great number of our enemies. Will Laidlaw and I fought side by side; and though enclosed in the very middle of our foes, we cut our way through, and escaped without a wound, and with short pursuit.

Our prey was gone. We saw a great part of them scattered on the hills, and heard them lowing, as they returned toward their native pastures. Our drivers, having watched the fate of the day, made their escape when they saw us surrounded, abandoning the spoil. We two fled in silence toward the north-east, and could not even get time to look for the child, in whom we were both so much interested. We had lost our well earned prey; we had lost our friends and companions in arms, and we had lost our honour by suffering ourselves to be surprised by the ambush behind; yet we both felt as if the loss of the child sat heavier on our hearts than all. There was something so mysterious in our connection with him, that it could not fail making a deep impression on our minds. The vision that we had seen, and the promise that had been made to us,—that "for what we had done our heads should be shielded in the day of battle,"—soon recurred to us, and we both agreed that our escape was miraculous, and perfectly unaccountable to ourselves. There were not two in the battle who exposed themselves more, and Laidlaw averred that he sometimes saw twenty weapons raised against us at once, and that still, as we approached, the bearers of them seemed to lose the power of striking. It was no wonder that we were impressed with deep awe, nor that we both wished it had been in our power to have preserved the boy, over whose life there seemed to be some good guardian spirit permitted or appointed to watch. Our conversation was all about him. There had been a nest made for him in a pack of clothes. Laidlaw had led the horse himself all the way, and the child had chatted to him, till the alarm was given that we were waylaid, and he had then given the horse in charge to one of the drivers, with particular injunctions to take care of the child; but he could not even remember who that driver was. I came up immediately after, and charged the lad to take care of the child; and, in the hearing of several of my followers, said that I would rather they lost the whole drove than that ought should happen to him. But now we had lost him; we had lost all but our horses and our swords.

We jogged on all the night in melancholy mood, crossed the Border, and then turned westward

toward the Cowd-Peel, which we reached about sun-rise. A little after the break of day, as we were coming through a hollow of the height, called the Spreddy-Grain, we perceived something before us that appeared to be moving, and of a prodigious bulk, which, after some hesitation we made up to, and found that the phenomenon consisted of eight horses, all well loaden, and every one with its head yerked to the tail of the one before him; and all these were driven by one yeoman on horseback, who rode beside them with a long goad in his hand.

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We soon overtook and examined him; and never was I so much astonished in my life as when I found it was my own henchman auld Will Nicol. He was very dour and shy of communication at first.

"Will Nicol! Is it you?" said I. "How in the name of wonder did you escape?"

"Humph! I think I may as weel speir that question at you: Humph!" says Will.

"I thought you had fallen with the rest in the battle," said I.

"Humph! but I'm here," says Will. "And I think there's mae here nor me: humph! and I rather think I hae brought mair wi' me nor some fock: humph! I'm comed as fu' handit as some fock, I think. Humph!"

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"But, Will, were you in the engagement?"

"What need ye speir that? humph! Where was I else but in the engagement?"

"And did you stay till it was over?"

"Humph! I stayed lang aneuch, I think! humph! It is needless to wait ower lang on a seen bad job. Humph!"

But the real truth of the story was, that instead of staying till the battle was ower, Will didna stay till it began, nor near that time. He was an auld-farrant chap Will, and had a great deal o' foresight; and when he saw us begin to stop, and the English standing peaceably before us, *herding us*, as he ca'ed it, he was sure there were more enemies coming up behind.

"Will, if I were sure that ye deserted our cause, and came off before the engagement began," said I, "although I have not a man left that I ken o', but Will o' Craik and yoursel, may I be a coward and a traitor if I wadna cut you down i' the place where you stand."

Will had nothing to say for himself but "Humph! humph!" and he scratched his head and grumbled. I was quite indignant at the old fellow, and was getting into a greater rage than ever I hae been in at a friend sinsyne, when all at once I heard a weak tremulous voice say, "Daddy's boy cold."

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"Aih-hay-hay!" shouted Will Laidlaw, as loud as he could yell: "Hilloa, hilloa, hilloa!"—and he sprang first on the back of his own horse with his feet, and from that he darted upon one of those that carried the packs. When I rode up he was sitting on the rumple o' the beast, hugging the child, that he had deemed lost, in his bosom, kissing him, and exclaiming,—"Aih, my man! my dear man, are ye safe? are ye safe? God bless auld Will Nicol! God bless auld Will Nicol!"

It was impossible for two down-cast and broken-hearted warriors to be more uplifted at any incident than Will Laidlaw and I were, at discovering that the boy was safe; and even auld Will Nicol began to recover some confidence.—"I heard you giving a chap some charges about him, that I kend weel caredna if his head were off,—od, he was ane o' the hard-headed Olivers. What cares an Oliver for a man's life, or a bairn's either?—Sae I thinks, sin my young master has ta'en a liking for the bairn, I's e'en gang and look after him. It is a good sign of a young warrior to like to save women and bairns. Sae I gangs, and sae I thinks sin I is bringing away this wee chap out o' danger, I may as weel bring something wi' me as naething; sae I brings aught o' the best horses, and the best laden anes that I could wale, and bound for the Border. A fashous job I hae had wi' them a' night."

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It is needless to tell how frankly auld Will was forgiven.

The Cowd-Peel being a rallying point on all Border raides, we stayed there a whole day and a night, in hopes that some part of our men wad come up; but out of all my fifty men there were none appeared but three of the Potts. The hard-headed Olivers had been slain to a man, and all the Laidlaws save my brave companion. Out of ninety valiant Elliots there were only twelve remaining, and some of these were of the drivers.

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There were fifty-seven Scots, and nearly as many English, with Bloody-Sark at their head, buried in one cairn; and, for the sake of the Bishop, the English raised a heap of stones above them as huge as an abbey church, which will be seen on the height above the ford of Keilder for ever.

Laidlaw slept that night in a good bed with the boy in his arms, for we had no lack of the finest blankets and sheets; and that night the white lady appeared to him again, claiming her child, yet still declining to accept of him, and promising Will protection on earth and a reward in heaven if he continued to guard and protect that boy. Whether this was in a dream or not, Laidlaw could not be positive; but he rather inclined to think he was wide awake, for he remembered of speaking to her audibly. Among other things, she asked him if he knew it was the child that had slept by him on the waste the night before the battle. Will said he was sure. She asked him how. He answered, that "unless the fairies had changed him it could nae be ony other."

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"But the fairies or some one else may change him," said she. "You may be separated amid the confusion and uproar now on the Border; and when you meet again, you may not be able to prove the identity of my child. I bade you the other night examine his bosom, but you neglected to do

so. If you had, you would there have found the spur of Ravensworth, testifying his lineage and descent to all the world."

Will came to me in a great ferment the next day, and told me of all this. I had heard the same words the night before the battle, but had quite forgot them among other matters, and wist as little what they meant as Will did.

"I hae lookit a' his bits o' claes, and graepit them a'," said he; "but I can find nae spur. How could there be a spur about a nakit bairn? It is may be in amang the blankets."

"It is perhaps some private mark," said I. "Let us examine the child's body very narrowly."

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On doing so we found a slight mark on his breast, that seemed to have been made by applying a hot iron at some time previous, and it was exactly in the form of a V with the wrang end uppermost. So we both concluded that this was a private mark of some family, that neither fairies nor men kend o', and that it was perhaps a stamp that keepit them a' away.

"It is the stamp of the heirs lineal of the house of Neville," said the friar; "I have impressed it with my own hand, after many masses and Ave Marias said. What became of that child? or whither is he gone? I pray thee to inform us in the words of truth not lengthened out."

Alas, I cannot tell! He was visited by the white lady of Ravensworth every night, and when the gloaming came she would be seen hovering on the skirts of the wood near to him. I grew that I durstna sleep a night within ten miles o' him, and Will Laidlaw turned clean bumbazed about the thing; sae we were obliged to send him to board wi' auld Lady Lawder, her that was put out o' the convent for witchery and the ill arts. She cared nought about spirits, and conversed wi' the white lady as she had been her door neighbour; and it was said there were strange mysterious sayings past between them. She book-learned the boy, pen-learned the boy, and learned him many other things foreby that were thought to be nae better than they should hae been. She chauntit sangs til him, and tauld him tales, and, there was little doubt, meant to breed him up to be a terrible enchanter; but afore that could be effeekit, the white lady came and took him away a' thegither.

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From that day he has never been seen or heard of in this world, neither as boy nor man. And now, sirs, I find that my story's worn to a head hair, and that I maun cut it short. So it is done, and that's an end til't.

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CHAPTER VIII.

I have been a skipper in my time,
And something more. Anon, I'll tell it you.

OGILVIE.

"It is nae worth the name of a story that," said Tam Craik; "for, in the first place, it is a lang story; in the second place, it is a confused story; and, in the third place, it ends ower abruptly, and rather looks like half a dozen o' stories linkit to ane anither's tails."

The poet was by this time on his feet, and, coming forward to Charlie, he looked him sublimely in the face, stretched out his hand, and spoke as follows: "There is some being, wheresoe'er he dwells, that watches o'er the fates of mortal men: now do I know it. Yea, and that same being has spirits of all casts at his command, that run, and fly, and trim, and trim, and trim about this world. And it is even true that I have seen of these, yet knew them not. Look here, brave hero, man of heart and hand! and see if thou canst note thy mark once seen? Thy spur; thy A without the crossing stroke; thy V with the wrong end upmost,—is it here?"

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The poet bowed his breast, and exposed it to Charlie's eye, which, at the first scrutinizing look, discerned the mark he had formerly seen,—the mark of the spur of Ravensworth. Charlie's visage altered into lengthened amazement. It could scarcely have been more strongly marked when he was visited by the white lady on Tersit moor, even when he was glad to hide his face in the moss, and hold by the heather with both his hands.

"And are you really the chap that I threw out at the window in the castle of Ravensworth," said he, "and boarded wi' auld lady Lawder? The creature that had a ghaist for its guardian, and a witch for its nurse? But what need I spier? My ain een convinces me. Gude faith but we are a queer set that are prickit up on the top o' this tower thegither! I am amaist terrified to enquire where you have been since the white lady took you away; for ye must have been in the fairy land, or the country o' the gruesome ghaists, or perhaps in a waur place than either."

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"We are a queerer set than you are thinking of," said Tam; "for here am I standing, Tam Craik, liege man and true to the brave Scottish Warden, and I carena wha kens it now; but I am neither less nor mair a man than just Marion's Jock o' the Dod-Shiel, that sliced the fat bacon, ate the pet lamb, and killed the auld miser, Goodman Niddery. Here's the same whittle yet, and ready at the service of ony ane that requires it for the same end. Od, we seem to ken mair about ane anither than ony ane o' us kens about ourselves."

"The day wears on apace," said the Master; "and I foresee that there is relief approaching from more quarters than one." (This made all the party spring to the windows to look.)—"It is not yet visible to your eyes, but it will come time enough. In the meanwhile, it would be as well to get through with the stories, that we may know and fix on our victim, for, perhaps, we may need a mart this night. And, it being now your turn, liegeman Thomas, or John, by right of seniority, if you know of nothing better I should like much to hear the adventures of such a promising youth, from the day that you made away with the farmer to this present time."

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"Better, Master Michael Scott?" said Tam. "Better, does your honour say? Nay, by my sooth I ken o' naething half sae good. I hae been an ill-guided chap a' my life; but, as you will hear, I hae guided others at times but in a middling way."

Tam Craik's Tale.

My friend, the laird, has given you my early history, perhaps better than I could hae done myself, but that is to judge of. He hath added and diminished,—but yet he told his story wi' some life, and a' the better that he didna ken wha heard him. In one thing he was wrong informed, for I was not seen on Kirtle-common that night I fled from the slaughter of the old inveterate wretch. I ran in a contrary direction, and slept that night in a moss-hagg, at the head of a water called Lanshaw Burn. Many a hard night I have had, but that was one of the bitterest of them all. I did not rue having killed the goodman, for I rejoiced at having let out his dirty miserable life and saved my own,—but then I was sure to be taken up and hanged for a murderer; and I was chased away from my mother and my country, and durst not face a human being. I saw some goats and some sheep, and would gladly have killed one to have eaten, for I saw hunger staring me in the face; but they would not let me come near them. I likewise saw a shepherd's or forester's house, but kept aloof; and going up into a wild bushy glen, I cried myself asleep, half naked as I was, and slept till about the break of day. When I awakened, starving with hunger and cold, I had no shift but to pull rashes and eat the white ends of them, which I continued to do all that day whenever I came to a rash bush. The next night I came to a solitary house, where I ventured to go in, and there I first gave myself the name of Tam Craik, telling abundance of lies as to my origin. The master of the house was a wealthy vassal, and had great numbers of fat oxen, with cows and calves, besides a few sheep, and he kept me to help him to herd these, promising me a grey coat if I attended to his satisfaction. He was a most extraordinary man, and none of the best,—for his words and actions were at variance: Though he conversed with me, or any one, with the utmost familiarity, I never found out that he had told me one word of truth. The first friend that came to visit him after my arrival, he overloaded so with kindness, professions of friendship, and respect, that I believed he loved him as his own soul; and, after he was gone, as my master and I went out to the fields, I observed what a treasure it was to have so good and so valued a friend as he had in that neighbour of his. What was my astonishment to hear from the same tongue that had lauded him to the skies, that he was a cheat, a liar, and a scoundrel;—a greedy sordid wretch that robbed his own hinds, and such wandering pedlars as came by that road, not daring to venture on higher game; one who seduced men's wives and daughters indiscriminately; and was, in short, a perfect demon, and a pest to the whole neighbourhood. "But, master, why did you caress and commend him so much to his face?" "O! that is all very well; that goes all for nothing. He is to be sure a vile scoundrel!" "There are queer people in this world," thought I: "There is nothing for it, I see, but, *Tam, mind yoursel.*"

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The farmer continued very kind to me in his own deceitful way; but the meat that we got was very bad. It consisted of lean beef, and venison as black as soot, with plenty of milk; but as for bread we had none of any description. So, from the day that I entered to his service, I determined to kill a lamb, or a sheep of any sort, the first time I could get one; but I never could get the least chance, and might as well have tried to get hold of a deer. I could not help thinking of the delicious feasting that I had in my little shieling, dear as it had like to have cost me; and every day my appetite for fat flesh became more insufferable, till at last, by a grand expedient, I got satisfaction of it. I had thirty fat stots in my herd, and I observed that, in hurrying them through a bog, they sunk, and stuck quite fast: so, having no other resource, I drove a few of them one day, when I was very hungry, into a mire in a wood, and rushing forward on them while they were struggling, I stuck the fattest among them to the heart, so that he floundered and bled to death in the slough. "Well done again, Marion's Jock!" said I to myself. "Here is feasting for you now! Here is a feast that will last you a twelve month at odd times, if you can but preserve it." I declare when I began to cut up that huge animal, I almost trembled at my atrocity; but these kind of feelings soon wear off. I was obliged to eat some collops that day without any cooking, and never relished ought better; I wish we saw such a meal again! My thin yellow beard was a little discoloured to be sure, but that was nothing; I washed it, and went home as boldly among the rest as if nothing wrong had been done.

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When I returned to my prey, I found to my great grief that the foxes, dogs, ravens, and every savage beast and hind on these mountains, were determined to share with me; they had actually eaten more in that one night than would have served me a week;—so the next day I employed myself in cutting off all the good, fat, and savoury pieces, and secreted them in well-springs, covering them up with stones; this I did to preserve them from the beasts and from putrefaction; and that day I am sure I had at least ten stones weight of excellent beef,—the white and red were so beautifully mixed, it did one's heart good to look at it.

Pleasures are of short date, and the greatest pleasures have the shortest! My master went over the lake next day to look at my herd, and I knew the ox would be missed. Had it not been for my

beloved beef I would have made my escape forthwith; but my heart was knit to it, and for my life I could not leave it. I went home at night in great terror, but to my joy I never saw my master half so kind. He told me I had suffered one of my stots to be stolen, but what could the like of me help it: he had a rough guess who had taken him, and would perhaps make him repent it. I was perfectly overjoyed at this construction, and resolved to revel in feasting and gladness; but next day when I went back to my ox, the hide was neatly taken off him, so also was the head, and both were taken away. This was perfectly unaccountable to me; and I saw the marks of men's feet in the mire, confirming the fact that some body had been there stealing the head and the skin of my ox, which were in my eyes not worth half the labour of taking them off. I knew not what to make of this, but it was evident that my prey had been discovered by some one; and all that I could calculate farther on was, that the hide had been stolen by some body who stood in need of it for shoes, and the head by one who wanted bugle-horns. It was all one to me, as I grew more and more a favourite with my master, who now began to caress me more than his own sons. No young lad in the land could be more thrifty about meat than I was. Being anxious to have the remainder of my bullock out of sight, I stole salt and a small barrel, and salted my stuff in a hole below ground; then, when no very good meat was going by day at my master's house, I often fasted the greater part of it, and then taking a coal by night, I stole away into the wood, and roasted, and boiled, and feasted the whole night. The beef was delicious, and it was amazing what great quantities I sometimes snapped up at once; for even after I thought I could eat no more, there was a part of white marrowy substance about the joints, and the sides of the bones, that I could not give over—no man could give it over. Marry, how delicious it was! I account that fine meat mixed with white, that lies wedged in along the doublings and shelves of the bones, as the most glorious species of man's food;—round the broad shoulder-bone, for instance, the spool-bone,—that through which we look for the storms. Think but of the layers of the red and the white that lie bedded around that. Peatstacknowe, let me feel your shoulder. I suppose a man has no spool-bone,—ah no!—none! Blessed Virgin! when shall I again shire the long crooked slices of the red meat, mixed with white, from the flats and the hollows of a broad spool-bone!

"He is hungering and yearning to pick my bones, the cannibal dog," said Gibby. "But it brings me in mind of a good saying and a true: The swine that is most eager to feed itself is the first slaughtered to feed others."

"The horse-leach hath drawn thee aside from thy onward relation, thou froward and voracious one," said the friar: "Verily, it is better for thee that thou return to thy tale, before thy strength be consumed within thee."

The loss of this sturdy ox of my master's gave rise to strange matters; matters which quite confounded my judgment, and which to this day I do not comprehend. My master went away to the sheriff, and the lord of the manor, and made a complaint that his neighbour before-mentioned had stolen one of his cattle, the best that he had on his farm. This was the man that he caressed so much, yet knew to be a scoundrel. The complaint was attended to, and the injury deeply resented. My master returned with a strong body of men, and orders to seize Glendairg, and search all his premises; and if evidence appeared against him, he was to be carried before Lord William, called the Severe, and there imprisoned in the dungeon till time should be given him to clear himself, which, if he failed to do in a certain period, he was to be swung. All my master's servants, men and women, were ordered to proceed with the party; I went among the rest, and certainly never witnessed so curious a scene. Glendairg came out and met the party with all the consciousness of innocence; and even when he was seized and bound, he still appeared to doubt of the sincerity of the men, especially when they told him it was at the instance of my master.

"If that is all, it is well," said he; "I am sure my kind friend and neighbour can mean me no ill by it."

My master took him aside, and said to him in the kindest and most soothing manner, "Do not be the least disheartened, my dear friend: You know how far I would be from injuring you. I would not do it for all the cows in my byre. I ken weel wha has the ox. There is little doubt but he is in our neighbour Bauldy's beef stand. I have long suspected him, and many is the good beast I have lost. You little know how many good beasts I have lost, and was still so loth to make it public. But I can suffer it no longer. Let the skaith fall upon the skaither. In the mean time I know you are quite innocent, but I instituted this search as a blind to him: You must just submit and never mind it."

"O, very well, neighbour, very well," said Glendairg; "I knew you could not intend me any ill,—search all out and in, and welcome."

They did so; they searched all out and in, and at last, when about to give up, they found the individual ox's hide that I slew in the bog, lying hid deep below some hay and corn in the corner of a barn. In another place still more unfeasible, they found the ox's head. They were both laid upon the green, and my master and all his servants, myself included, swore to their identity, as we could not do otherwise. Glendairg looked like one bewildered, and said there was a plot laid against his life, which he neither understood, suspected, nor merited. The shrieve's officers laughed him to scorn, and proposed to hang him up on the nearest tree; and I believed they would have done it, had it not been for the kindness of my master, who came forward with tears in his eyes, and addressed them somewhat thus:

"Alas, my masters, this is a heavy and a sorrowful sight for me! This is the bitterest day of my life! I have lost many and many good cattle, and yet I would not,—I could not, let myself suspect

my intimate friend. Think how I am grieved to see these proofs. Yet perhaps he may be innocent, and this may be some vile plot laid against his life. I beg, therefore, that he may be set at liberty, and the whole business hushed up."

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"You are a good man and a kind," said the men; "but this thing must not be. With our lord and master, justice must have sway; but we will report your goodness and generosity to him, and be sure it will not go unrewarded. We can assure you, that this man has not only forfeited his life, but all his farms, as well as his stock of cattle and sheep to yourself."

For all this my master refused to be comforted, but wept and followed after the men, pleading for the life and the freedom of his friend, but he pleaded in vain; the men bound him on a horse, and carried him away with them to the dungeon of the castle of Coombe. I marvelled greatly at the great kindness and generosity of my master, knowing, as he did, that the man was a scoundrel; but I wondered far more what could induce the man to steal the hide and the head from off my ox.

My master was a married man, and had four children; and though he was apparently a kind husband, his wife seemed quite unhappy and discontented, which I thought highly unreasonable on her part. She knew more, however, than I did; and there are some small matters that women never patiently put up with. He had a number of servant-maids for the purpose of milking cows, making hay, and cheeses, and such things; and among them there was a very pretty one named Kelly, with whom he had fallen in love; and, after long toying and courting, he had seduced her. I knew nothing about these sorts of concerns; but I thought Kell, as we called her, the most beautiful, sprightly, and innocent being that lived, and I liked to look at her and hear her speak; and whenever she came near me, I was like to fall a-trembling. She slept with a little child in a large open loft, above the room where my master and mistress slept; and it so happened that something came by night and frightened her, and she refused to sleep there any longer without some one beside her. I slept by myself in one of the out-houses; and it was immediately proposed by my master that my bed should be removed, and put up in the loft beside Kell's. I was drunken with delight at hearing this intelligence; yet I pretended to be very averse to the plan, hanging my head, and turning about my back, when any one spoke of it, nor would I answer a word to one of them but "Tutt," or "tutts."

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"Tam Nosey, it seems ye're gaun to be bedded wi' bonny Kell the night?"

"Tutt!"

"Ye're gaun up to sleep beside her, and do ye think ye'll never brik lair?"

"Tutt!"

"She's a bonny burd yon, Tam, ye maun tak care."

"Tutts!"

Well, up I went the next night to sleep in a bed that stood side by side, or rather end by end, with that of Kell. Oh I was so terrified for her, or for having any communication with her, that I would not speak a word even when she spoke to me, but covered myself over the head with the bed-clothes, and lay puffing till I was like to choak for want of breath. I did not sleep well at all. I could not sleep, for she was always yawning, and then saying, "Heigh-ho!" and then hushing the child to sleep. The next night I ventured to lye with my head out from beneath the clothes, unless when she spoke, which alarmed me exceedingly; and so I did the next night again, behaving myself with great magnanimity. At length I came to that pass, that when she spake to me I did not creep down beneath the bed-clothes, but only made a great bustle and flinging as if I *had been* hiding myself. This practice of deception I continued for several nights, always making more and more pouncing and scraping every time she addressed me. She laughed at me, and seemed highly amused, which made me still the worse. At length she said one night, "Pray do not creep through the house for fright; what makes you so afraid of me? what ill do you think I will do to you? Heigh-ho, Nosey! I wish the bogle may not come to-night. I am afraid it will come, for I thought I heard it. Look that it do not rise at the back of your bed, for that is a very dangerous place. If it come, Nosey, I must either come in beside you, or you must come in beside me."—"Tutts!" said I, and that was my first word of courting; the first syllable that I spoke to Kell in that luckless loft. I said, "Tutts!"

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I suspected no evil intention on the part of my kind and indulgent master, and far less on that of Kell; indeed, how could I suspect either? One day he said to me in the fields, "I do not know what to do about you and that wench Kell: for both your sakes I believe I must separate you. She is fallen in love with you, quite over head and ears, and has been complaining to our dame of your unkindness to her. We have a great regard for the girl, and cannot part with her,—but, out of respect for you both, you must be separated. I will, however, trust you together until next week; and if she do not complain any more, you may remain where you are; but I suppose I will be obliged to part with you then, though against my will."

This was a terrible stound to my heart, and shewed my master's masterly policy; for, notwithstanding of all my pretended aversion to the company of women, and to that of pretty Kell in particular, I would not have been parted from her at that time for all the world, not even for all the beef and bacon that was in it. I did not know well how to make up matters with her so as to retain my place, but I thought I would try. So that night I sat down on my own bed-side with my clothes on, and scratched my head, and beat with my bare heel against the loft; but she had lost all hope of gaining me to the measures agreed on between her and her master, and took no heed of me till I was obliged to speak first myself, when the following highly interesting dialogue

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passed between us:

"I'm unco feared the bogle come the night, Kell."

"So am I!"

"I wasna sure, but I thought I heard it yestreen!"

"I aince thought that I heard it a wee too!"

"How does it play when it is gaun to rise?"

"It begins a scart, scarting, like a rattan, making holes, I fancy, to come out and take us away."

"Aih! then it has just been it that I heard!"

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"Oh! I'se warrant it was, and that I heard too!"

"Ay; O it's terrible! we're ill, ill set here! but I'll watch a' night, and keep it aff you, Kelly."

With that I came and sat down on the side of her bed, to keep the invidious scratching bogle away from her; but I soon became drowsy, and was like to fall down. She begged me to lay down my head on her pillow, but I would not hear of that. Oh! no, no, I durst not lie down there; so I stretched me on the loft at her bed-side, and fell asleep. Awakening before day, the first thing I heard was the bogle scratching. Kell had stretched her arm below the bed, on the side opposite to me, and was scratching slowly and fearfully; then, pretending to awake, she hid herself among the bed-clothes, muttered prayers, and cried, "Heigh-ho!" I groaned; and, stretching my hand round the corner, scratched on the other side, even more solemnly, and at more awful intervals than she had affected; so that we lay in great tribulation till the dawning of the day.

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Afraid that I had still been too slightly obliging, and that I run the risk of being separated from her, I studied the whole day on the most becoming way of conducting myself, and entered on several most amorous resolutions; but the higher my resolves were, the more pusillanimous was my behaviour when put to the test. I durst not even touch the side of her bed that night; but the wicked unsousy bogle still continued its scratchings, sometimes on the one side of the bed, and sometimes on the other, I was therefore obliged once more to sit down on her bed side, to guard her from its inroads. In sitting there I dropt asleep, and my head fell down on her pillow—it was impossible I could help that; and then she kindly laid the uppermost coverlet over me for fear of my catching cold; but I was by far too sound asleep to perceive it. She had to pull the covering from below me, in order that she might lay it above me,—for all that I did not awake, which was a great pity, but always as she made the greatest stir, I sniffed the louder. A while after, I turned myself about, and gave my head a ketch toward the back of the bed, till my cheek came in contact with something soft; but it was in my sleep,—and I was in one so so profound, that I could not possibly know what that thing was. What a fright I got next morning on perceiving my situation! I sprung from the bed, and ran away to the hills to my charge, without speaking a word.

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I was, however, quite intoxicated with delight, and endeavoured to ingratiate myself with my master, by paying every possible attention to his behests, lest I should lose so delightful a place both for stolen meat and approaching pleasures, which I perceived would still grow more and more sublime, and was glad when he said to me one day that Kell had given over complaining of my rudeness and incivility, and he would trust me as her companion for a little while longer. In the mean while, I was to take care and do nothing improper; but he had such trust to put in me, he was not afraid of that.

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He was informed every day by this subservient beauty how matters proceeded; so he let them go on by degrees till they arrived at such a crisis as he desired, which was no more than a boy lying on a girl's bed-side with his clothes on. He then came up with a light one night at midnight to see how his child was resting, pretending that he thought her ill, and found me lying sound asleep, where perhaps I should not have been, though I was as innocent and as free of his mistress as the child that lay in her bosom. He was in great wrath, and pulled me over the bed, giving me two or three gentle thwacks with his open hand: he also rebuked her very sharply, but said to us before going away: "Keep your own secret. For both your sakes I will conceal what I have seen, although you have acted so *very* improperly; but let me never catch you in the like fault again. If the church get hold of you, you are both undone."

I was dreadfully ashamed; and thence-forward felt my heart quite reckless and desperate, disregarding of all danger or propriety; and my master made me still worse by telling me that I was to part from Kell in a few days, but that he did not like to put me away just then, for fear of awakening suspicions against us, for he had a great regard for us both! I laid all these things to heart, and could not then have staid from Kell's bed-side a night, if my head had been to answer for it next day. One night we were informed that some strangers had come to the house and were making merry, and before we went to bed our master sent us something to eat and drink. I thought there was something going on that night, for I heard a great deal of muttering and saying of paternosters till a late hour. However, I took up my old birth, and after a while fell sound asleep. About midnight we were awaked by four or five gruff looking fellows, with long beards, and staves in their hands, who ordered us both to get up and dress ourselves. Our master made a speech to them, lamenting our guilt, and, with tears in his eyes, beseeching their clemency toward us; but at the same time said, that he could not suffer such immoralities under his roof: he had a family of his own coming up, and bad example was pernicious. Then he related what strict injunctions he had given us, yet we had continued to persist in our wicked unlawful courses; that, therefore, he had been obliged to give us up as lawless and irreclaimable delinquents.

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All that he could now do was to intreat theirs and the holy fathers' merciful clemency towards the youthful offenders; for that, although we had both mocked and set at defiance the statutes of holy church, he had hopes of our repentance and amendment: And with that he delivered us over to the officers of the church, whom he had trysted and suborned for that purpose. They said he was a good man, but that the offenders must needs suffer a heavy penance, in order that they might be again rendered pure and without blame, in the eyes of their fostering and protecting parent.

When Kell saw that she was betrayed and abandoned, her grief and despair knew no bounds, and she would doubtless have accused her master to his face had she been able to articulate aught distinctly,—but she fell into fits, and they hurried her away. We were confined to cells in different religious houses, but both in the same ward. It is well known what tyranny prevails here, and what vengeance is wreaked against all those guilty of breaches of morality, especially if those possessed of riches or power desire it; but it is nothing to that which predominates over the west country, where I then was. They fed me on bread and water, though I asked for fat flesh, and longed for it every hour of the day: and always when the people assembled to worship, I was put in the jugs; that is, I was chained to the kirk wall with an iron collar about my neck, and every boy brought a rotten egg, or some filth, and threw at me, till I was all over bedaubed and plastered like a rough stone wall. The men gave me a kick, and the old maids spit upon me as they passed, but the young women looked on me with pity; and the old wives, before my time of penance was expired, espoused my cause, and defended me from the rabble. I heard them saying to one another, "Poor fellow, somebody may be the better o' him yet. What wad the mother that bore him say if she saw him standing in that guise? Surely she wad think the punishment far outwent the crime."

One day, just when I was about to be set at liberty, I saw my kind master speaking to some of the holy brethren, and was glad when I saw him, thinking I saw the face of the only man on earth that cared for me. But he came with a different intent from what I supposed, namely, with the benevolent one of getting me hanged. He said he had missed some money out of his house ever since I came away; and though he should be sorry indeed to find any part of it on me, for his own satisfaction he requested to search my clothes in their presence, to which I submitted without reluctance, being conscious of my innocence. But he that hides knows best where to seek. It was not long before my kind master took out from between several of the button-holes in the breast of my grey coat, two gold moudiwarts, three silver merks, and several placks and bodles. In vain did I protest that I knew nothing about them; the brethren pronounced me the most incorrigible wretch and vagabond that traversed the face of the earth; and, as their jurisdiction extended not to such crimes as this, they sent me off with the proofs of my guilt to Lord William for judgment and execution. I shall never forget the figure I cut that day when brought before Lord William, and accused. I was in a wretched state as to clothes, having stood so long in the jugs. I had been hungered almost to death, and maltreated in every way, and altogether looked extremely ill. He asked them to go over the charges against me, when one of the brethren came forward and spoke to him as follows:

"My noble Lord and benefactor, a worthy gentleman within our bounds of censure and controul, lodged a complaint with us against two of his servants that had been tempted by the devil to fall into lawless and sinful communication; and notwithstanding of all his admonitions and threatenings of church discipline, they not only continued in their mal-practices, but every day grew worse and more abandoned. He therefore prayed us to take cognizance of the offence, which, for the sake of their souls, and the general benefit of our community, we undertook. Accordingly, my lord, as he suggested, we went disguised as strangers, and at midnight we found this same young gentleman lying snugly in bed beside our friend's principal maid-servant, the very maiden to whom he had entrusted the care of his children, one of whom lay in the bed with them. Think of the atrocity of this my lord, and look at the man!"

The judge did so, and could not help smiling.

"What do you say to that master?" said he, "Is it truth?"

"Yes," said I.

This answer made him burst out a laughing. "Upon my word," said he, "you are a most extraordinary youth! Was the girl pretty, say you, monk?"

"The woman was indeed very beautiful, my lord."

"She has been blessed, however, with a singular taste. I think the stripling may almost be excused for this crime."

The monk then related the circumstances of the stolen money having been found on me, at which the judge shook his head, and said, "Alak, it is all over with him. He is unfit to live. What do you say to this, sirrah? Is it true?"

"Yes," said I.

"True that you stole your master's money?" said he.

"No, I never stole it, but it is true that it was there."

"What? you found it I suppose? Tell me the truth, did not you find it?"

"No, I never found it, nor ever saw it till it was taken out of my coat yesterday. I never had either gold or silver in my hand in my life."

"Your woman took it and sewed it in for you, then, I suppose?"

"I do not know who took it, or how it came there, but there it certainly was."

"Did you ever part with your coat to your sweetheart? Did you ever lend her it to mend, or leave it at home with her?"

"I have often on warm weather left my coat at home for three or four days running."

"But you declare you did not take the money?"

"I never saw the money, nor heard of it till yesterday."

When I said this, he looked stedfastly on me as if he had discovered something he saw not before. There was no man on earth could discover truth like Lord William. "Who is this youth's accuser?" said he. They told him it was sleeky Tam.

"I have observed of late," said he, "that that gentleman never searches that he does not find, and never accuses that he does not bring proof. I have caused several to be executed on the evidences raised by him, and have always remarked that he is the only profiter by their being put down. We must move with more caution. Let that wench be brought before me, and stop the execution of Jock's Sandy, whom I ordered to be hanged to-morrow."

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My late benevolent master was watching the course of these events with punctuality, and was terribly chagrined when he heard that his neighbour Jock's Sandy was reprieved. He was almost beside himself; but, having great influence with the holy brethren, he persuaded them to retain Kell under their jurisdiction, and not give her up to Lord William. In the course of his scrutiny he had likewise discovered some of his gold pieces on her, and had doomed her to destruction with the rest; yet, at the same time, he told the holy fathers to be lenient, and altogether to overlook that fault, which had originated from the first, and that was one to which youth was liable. He conjured them not to give her up to William the Severe, who would infallibly doom her to an ignominious death. If she had deserved that, he said, it was much better that she should die privately, in which case he would pay seventy merks annually to the church for the securing of her soul. He was frightened for the meeting of so many criminals before Lord William, wicked as we were; and so high was the influence of the convent, of which this was a branch, that the brethren refused to give up the offender to Lord William's officers.

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After my first examination was over, I was thrust into a dungeon beside Jock's Sandy, who had been cast to die for stealing the ox which I myself slew; and, when we began to converse freely together, what a tissue of deceit was unraveled! He asked me if I knew any thing about that ox for which he was to lose his life! I said I knew very well about the ox, for I had killed him myself: "And what a great fool you were," said I, "to incur so much danger for the sake of a nout's hide and a pair of horns, for these you certainly did steal."

The man was perfectly amazed when I told him all the truth, and promised to procure me as much fat flesh as I could eat every day, if I would tell the truth of the story to Lord William. I caught at the offer, for I had suffered so much in my stomach of late, that I would have done far more than he required of me for such an advantage. Indeed I would have done any thing, or said any thing in the world, that I might once more enjoy my beloved mess. He proved as good as his word, for before night the keeper brought me a whole apron full of bits and scraps of the fattest meat that I ever saw,—beef, mutton, and pork. There were some square pieces of perfect, pure white fat, that I sliced down like cheese! They were from the flanks of fat beeves, the briskets of wedders, and the ribs of fatted hogs; and I could not but admire the want of good taste among the gentles who had left these savoury bits to their slaves and prisoners. I was so delighted that I could not sleep by night, but always awakened from my straw and fell a-munching. I wish we saw such a feast again; but, indeed I saw nothing, for our house was in utter darkness; but it was a good meat-house, and I could have been content to have lived in it all my life.

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In a few days I was once more carried above ground for examination, where I told the whole truth boldly, but was not believed. No one would give credit to the tale, that I had slain one of my master's fattest oxen for the sake of good cheer; such a thing, they said, would never come into a stripling's head, and I had been suborned to my evidence by my fellow prisoner. Lord William asked if there was any proof remaining that I could produce in support of my assertion? I said I had a part of the beef remaining, well salted up in a barrel below ground, and covered with a moss divot; and that I had likewise some hid for fresh meat in some cold well springs, and I would shew them these if they liked. I was sent with a guard, and shewed them the remains of my ox; and when this was reported to Lord William, he called me a rogue and a glutton, and caused them to tie a rope about my neck and lead me through the streets of the town naked, lashing me with a whip all the way. He then bade me make off with myself, for if I was found within twenty miles of that place where I stood, he would cause me to be hewed in pieces.

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My late master was taken up, and examined face to face with those he had accused; but how he contrived to elude justice I never knew: ten years after, one informed me that the dame Kelly had accused him before Lord William of having seduced her, and that in the most disgraceful way, and then of forcing me into the situation in which I was caught, for a screen to his own guilt and shame. For all that, it seems poor Kell was returned to the convent, and never more heard of, and sleeky Tam possesses both his own and his neighbour's farm at this day.

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I had begun to think that ill deeds thrive best; but I now conceived that I had paid very dearly indeed for my late pleasures of feasting and love, being almost flayed alive. I cried bitterly as I fled, and cursed Lord William and his raggamuffians that had scourged me, and vowed to myself, if I lived to be a man, that I would be revenged on them. I likewise cursed my deceitful master, but I did not curse poor Kell; indeed I found that it was for her I wept most bitterly, thinking

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myself the cause of all her shame and suffering.

I fled next into a country called Galloway, a place which some of you may have heard of by chance; but I found it the worst meat country, and the worst country altogether, that I had ever seen. I lived there for a number of years, leading a sort of vagabond life, but quite an honourable one. I learned naturally among them to be a great thief, and an acute liar; but I never stole any thing but fat flesh, nor do I account any thing else worthy of running the risk for—from that no danger ever could, or ever shall debar me. I care not much what sort it be, provided it be juicy, and a layer of white next the bone. I wonder whether men's flesh is likest to beef, or mutton, or venison?

"I wish ye wadna always turn your green een on me that gate when you speak about your fat flesh," said Gibbie. "I assure you, mine is neither like beef, nor mutton, nor venison; and, what is more, you shall never taste it. I appeal to you all, masters and friends, if this man has not fairly fallen through his tale." [316]

"I suppose it must be very like veal, then," continued Tam; "and if so, I have seen a joint of cold veal very excellent meat, more especially that adjoining the white gristly part; with a little salt, a man can eat a great deal of that without being any thing the worse."

"My masters, I do protest against these carnivorous looks of the story-teller," rejoined Gibbie; "they make ane feel so queerly. It is as if he were tearing my flesh quick from the banes with his teeth. And I call you to note that he has sticked a story, which, from the beginning, is no story."

"Stay till it be done, an you please," said Tam; "the best of my tale is yet to come; and any man may be allowed a breathing space and a little refreshment."

At Castle-Fern I fell in with an old man called the Gorb, an itinerant fencer, who travelled the country teaching the art of the sword. To him I attached myself, somewhat against his will; for I saw that, though he was not everywhere a welcome guest, he was nevertheless a privileged one, and always admitted. He was six feet high, with a beard that hung to his middle, and his frame was entirely composed of bones and sinews. The feats that he described to me of warrior prowess first raised in me a desire to learn his noble art; and as soon as I began to manifest a partiality for his profession, he began to attach himself to me, but in a manner so ungracious, that if I had not been a being quite desperate, I never could have borne it. We moved on from place to place; the young men of the country assembled in parties, as we passed, to attend his lessons; and at night we had free-quarters wherever we went; that is, the Gorb was a free man,—but many pointed inuendos were thrown out against my introduction as an additional burden. These people had better have let the matter pass over, for he did not fail to pay them back with interest in bitter and sarcastic retorts. On some of these occasions he gave me a terrible character of the country and its inhabitants. [317]

"You are come, poor man, to sojourn in the worst country under the cope of heaven," said he, "into a place where there is no faith, no honour, no money, and very little meat." [318]

"What do they live on in general?" said I.

"On some wretched roots, pulse, and black corn," said he; "some lean unhealthy fish, and still more lean and sapless cattle."

"I like the country a great deal the worse," said I. "Is the flesh here so very lean?"

"Why ask?" said he; "have you not witnessed it?"

"No, I am very sorry I have not," said I. "I supposed it had been lent in this country. As for their faith or honour I care not a pin. Their money is of little avail to me; but I hate to stay in a country where there is no meat: and how they can transact business without money is beyond my comprehension."

"They have none, however," said he, "nor was there ever any in this country. They transact all their business on a thing called credit, which commonly attaches itself to a man for a number of years, sometimes for a long, and sometimes a very short term. This enables him to cheat his neighbours for a time, and all his exertions tend only to this, namely, how many he can take in, and to what amount; and when he has gone as far as this ideal quality of his can carry him, he takes to the bent, and leaves them all in the lurch. This is the exact state of this blessed country called Galloway, and will be its state as long as it continues to exist. The only rational hope concerning it is, that, as it is a sort of butt-end of the creation, it will perhaps sink in the ocean, and mankind will be rid of it." [319]

He then took a hearty fiendish laugh at the conceit of the country being sunk, and went on.—

"After all, I cannot help being amazed at the rascally crew. Do not you see how suspicion and distrust are stamped on every countenance? Every man makes a bargain with apparent reluctance, and with a dread that his neighbour is going to cheat him; and he is never mistaken. Such is the country, and such are the people to whom you have now come, and such must they ever continue to remain. It is in their nature to be so, and they cannot be otherwise. Here am I, their master and benefactor, who have spent my life in teaching them the noblest of all sciences, without which they could not have defended their country. I have taught every chief in the country, and every one of their vassals, and how am I requited? Ill-clothed, worse fed, and not a bodle in my purse. All my recompense is the freedom of living a life of fatigue and wretchedness." [320]

"I will not stay another night in the country of such a parcel of rogues," said I.

"You are wrong," answered he: "It is the best country you can be in. You have nothing to lose, and you may gain much. Experience is a man's greatest riches; and of that you will gain abundance. You will here learn hourly how to oppose cunning to cunning; and I will teach you the noble art of opposing masterly skill to brutal force, until you may haply be established as my assistant and successor."

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"I would rather dispense with the honour," said I: "You are too lean for me to think of being your successor. Were you a fat full-fed man, I would not say what I might do to attain the distinction; but I have made up my mind to one thing, which is, always to have my meat, honestly if I can, but at all events to have it."

"You are so far right in your principle," said he: "For when we consider of it, a man can have very little more than his meat in this world, for all the struggling and strife there is in it. But since you set so high a value on good living, I can, if I please, assist you to it; for, poor and wretched as I appear, and as I am, I have a right to call for and command the best in every house. I could likewise take their clothes, for money they have none; but it would be like tearing the hearts out of the dogs,—so I content myself with the meanest fare, rather than humble myself to ask ought of them."

"You are an extraordinary man," said I: "But when I look at you, I cannot conceive this privilege of yours to exist in aught but in theory."

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"You shall see," said he. "What sort of meat would you prefer?"

"Fat flesh at all times and all seasons," said I: "There is nothing like that. Whether it be the flesh of bullock, hog, or wedder, the fattest is always the best."

"What a kite! What a raven! What a dog!" exclaimed he: "Well, you shall have it, if it were but to kill you of a surfeit."

We were lying in a barn when this discourse occurred, and I could not but wonder what the old fellow would do. It was customary for us to take our breakfast at the place where we lodged, and if I might judge from our supper, the place where we then were gave no prospect of very rich fare.

The breakfast was produced; a quantity of black brochen and lentiles. The master of defence wist not how to break the ice by introducing a refusal of the proffered meal! but he considered himself as pledged to me, and his haughty spirit would not succumb. His looks were particularly embarrassed and amusing, and I saw that he would gladly have been free of his engagement, as he began a long palaver of general remarks. I kept up my good hopes, and gave him always an expecting look now and then, to make him hold to his resolution. The people of the house paid little attention to his harangue, till at length he concluded with these words:

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"Such being the case, and such the state of the country, I am obliged now to claim all my rights, privileges, and dues from every vassal of my lord of Galloway, as well as from every subject of our liege lord the king, whose commission I bear. Goodman Latchie, I accept no more of black croudy and lentiles for breakfast: I claim, order, and command the best that is in this house. In place of that hog's meat, let us have a rasher on the coals, if you so please."

"The muckle fiend be atween your teeth, then, to choak you wi' the first bite!" said the goodwife.

"Farmer Latchie, I contend not with women," said the man of the sword: "Are you aware of my rights, or do you know and dispute them?"

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"I consider yours as merely a nominal right," said he, "which no man is bound to fulfil, because no man does it. All my lord's vassals treat you with common fare. Why should I do more?"

With that a raw-boned young man stepped forward, with a black beard and a ruffian look. He was the farmer's eldest son, and his name was John.

"What is all this din about," said he: "Let me speak, will ye, Master Gorb? Either take that which is set before you, or go away without it. I say that."

"You say that? Do you, sir?" said my master.

"Yes; sure I do," said he: "I says that, and I'll say it again too, to be sure I will."

"Then there is my gage, sir. Do you know to what you have subjected yourself?" said my master, pulling out his sword, and laying it on the board: "You have given the king's ordained swordsman the denial; you must fight him, or find one on the instant to do it for you. If he kills you, he is entitled to take off your head and send it to the king; and if you kill him, you lose your head, and all the goods and chattels of your house are to be confiscate. Rescue or no rescue? Draw, craven! or yield me up the keys of your pantry, your chest, and your sunken cellar, you dog."

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"I does nae see the sense o' that, Master Gorb," said John, with a countenance right sorely altered: "that a man maunna say his awn's his awn, or what's his father's is his father's, but that he maun tak up sword and swordsman. I does nae fear thee. It's no to say that I fears thee; but I winna be bullied intil aught; and I just tells thee, that I'll neither fight thee nor suffer thee to get a scrap o' aught better than is set afore thee; and gang and seek thy mends. Now I says that."

"Thou art a craven and a nincompoop," said my master, with the highest indignation; "and I lift my pledge, and will report thee to thy betters."

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"Do if thou mayest," cried old Latchie, running to an armour chest, and taking from thence a sword and buckler. "Disgrace of my house! To give the challenge, and then to flinch. Have with

thee, Bellwether! I will give you to know, that old masons are the best barrowmen."

"I ground my pledge again, and I take thee," said my master. But now the old woman came running between them, crying out, "Deil be i' your teeth! deil be i' your teeth! Tak a' that's i' the house an' haud you wi't: there are the keys; there are the keys! deil be i' your teeth, take a'—and let us alane o' your din." The Gorb waved the keys aside with his arm in high indignation; but the wife clung to her point. "I take you a' witnesses," cried she, "I take you a' witnesses, I have offered him the keys, and he has refused them. Here, young Gorb; young hing-by-the-gut, take ye them, take ye them. Deil be i' your teeth, take a' that's i' the house."

I took the keys lest they should be forgot in the hurry; the two old fellows took to the field with sword and buckler, while both the old dame and her son John strove to interfere; but the old yeoman silenced them both with a word, and I thought he would have struck his son down with the sword, so much was he enraged at his behaviour.

I had seen much sword play by this time in the way of amusement, or lesson-taking; but I had never seen two men meet in deadly foil, and I trembled for the event; for I judged, that if the old Gorb was killed, it would fare hardly with me, being conscious that I was the moving cause of the combat. My master's demeanour was altogether inimitable. He went through every thing as if it had been a matter of mere ceremony, first slipping gracefully to one side, crossing his hands on his breast, bowing profoundly, and then shaking hands with Latchie: then swimming gracefully to the other side, and repeating the same manœuvre. Last of all, he wheeled about, cut some wild flourishes with his sword, and took his distance. The yeoman bit his lip, and appeared to be viewing all these things with disdain; but he set himself firm on his legs with his left foot foremost, and setting up his broad bonnet before, waited the onset. The Gorb on the contrary advanced with his right foot foremost; and, instead of availing himself of the buckler as the former did, he came forward bearing it up behind him as high as his head. He seemed to wear it merely because the other did, but he was too proud to make any use of it. Nothing ever did, or ever will exceed the singularity of that combat: the figures of the men, and their manner of fighting, being so different. Latchie was short and squat, the Gorb somewhat like the skeleton of a giant. The art of fighting which the former pursued was to shield himself behind his broad buckler, peep over it, and now and then make dreadful blows around it with the full swing of his body, as if he meant to cut my master through the middle, or shear off both his thighs. On such occasions the Gorb, beside parrying the stroke, made such tremendous springs off at a side, that he rather appeared like a spirit than any thing of bones, sinews, and blood, for as to flesh there was none on him; and at every one of these leaps he uttered a loud "Hoh!" as if he had been mortally wounded, or in great danger of having been so; yet all the while his face was so sublimely grave and serious as if every movement were to have been his last. He never attempted to hit the yeoman, and had apparently no other aim in fighting, than merely to show his dexterity in fencing, retreating, and advancing. I deemed that all was over with him, and began to be mortally afraid of myself; and any man would have acknowledged what good reason I had, if he had witnessed with what looks the wife and son regarded me. Every one of them thought the Gorb had the worst of it, and that the farmer was sure of the day. Indeed by this time there was little doubt of it. The old wife thrice clapped her hands, and screamed out, "Weel proven, goodman! that gars him scamper? Weel proven, Daniel Maclatchie! Lie to the breastleather." At these words I began to look over my shoulder, and meditate a most strenuous flight. But now the most novel scene of all occurred: my master still continued to change his ground, and to skip and fly about, until at length the yeoman, encouraged by his wife's words, came hard upon him, and, heaving up his shield a little, he came with a deadly stroke round below it, etting to cut off both my master's legs. "Hoh!" cried the Gorb, as loud as he could vociferate; and as the little squat yeoman stooped to the stroke, he made such a spring into the air that he leaped fairly over his head; and as he passed like a meteor over above him, he gave him such a slap with the broad side of his sword on the hind cants of the head, that it made the farmer run forward and fall with his nose on the ground. He was again on his feet, however, in an instant, and faced about, while his eyes streamed with water from the sharpness of the stroke. This feat astonished the Latches; but the wife cried out, "A barley! a barley! foul play!—he's fighting on springs."

"Emblem true of thy accursed country!" cried the Gorb, and kicking off his sandals at her head, he took his ground on his bare soles. The combatants set to it again; but the yeoman was now on his guard, and fought shy, standing on the defensive. My master soon grew tired of this way of fighting; and, after two or three flying feints at an attack, in a moment he wrenched Latchie's sword from his grasp, and threw it into the air like a sling-stone. The lookers on gazed in amazement,—and the astonished yeoman traced the course of his erratic weapon, which, after forming an arch like a rainbow, lighted at the distance of forty yards. John, the farmer's son, was the first who ventured a remark on the phenomenon, which he did with his accustomed shrewdness, and in the Cumberland brogue, which he had learned by living some years in that district.

"Feyther, I thinks thou hast thrown away thee sward."

"Ay," said his father, biting his lip, and looking after it.

By this time the Gorb had his sword at Latchie's throat, crying, "Rescue, or no rescue, I say? Yield, traitor, or die."

Latchie paid no regard to him. He only bit his lip, looked after his sword, and stood his ground firm without moving, showing a most unyielding and dauntless spirit.

The Gorb repeated his threat, but the yeoman paid no further attention to it than before.

"What an unlucky accident!" said he. "Had I not thrown away my sword, I would have humbled you."

"Do you regret the loss of your sword so much?" said the Gorb. "Will you promise, on the honour of a good yeoman, not to throw it away in like manner again?"

"Promise?" said the other: "I will swear on it, and by it, never to part with it in like manner again."

"Young man," said my master to me, "run and bring me this brave yeoman's sword."

I brought it, and he took it by the point, and delivered it back to the owner with all manner of courtesy. Latchie took it in his hand, and let the point of it slant towards the ground in token of submission. [333]

"Nay, nay, I deliver it," cried my master. "I would not see such a man show fear or pusillanimity for any thing. Exchange me three times three, and no more; and God stand by the right. I counsel thee, moreover, to assume thy best defence, as I propose to do thee all manner of injury."

"So be it. I defy you still," said Latchie, and took his ground a second time. His wife and son spoke a great deal by way of interference, but were totally disregarded. The combat began again with more fury than ever; but at the second or third time of crossing their weapons, Daniel Maclatchie's sword betook itself again into the firmament, and after tracing nearly the same course as formerly, alighted on the same spot.

"You are the devil and none else," said Latchie, "and I yield to my conqueror. I am at your disposal."

"And I will use my advantage, as in duty and in honour bound," said the Gorb: "Rise up my friend and brother; you are a man of true genuine spirit. I honour you, and I estimate your country more this morning, for your sake, than I have hitherto done. I claim your friendship as a brother in arms. You shall not have cause to repent this spirited encounter." [334]

The farmer was greatly flattered by this speech. I gave up the keys; and there was no end of kindness and endearment between the two old fellows. We had our rasher on the coals; and I think I have scarcely risen from a better diet than I did that day. I got the greater part to myself, for the rest were all so busy talking and drinking cold ale, that they hardly thought of the bacon. It was nicely toasted, and the fat stood on it like small drops of honey. But I must not dwell on the recollection else I shall faint.

At our meal the yeoman offered my master a new war cloak, with belts, bands, and haversack, if he would tell him by what means he disarmed him with such ease, and in so extraordinary a manner; but the other absolutely refused. [335]

"It is allowable in chivalry," said he, "to learn and practice any mode of manual defence, and to keep that mode a secret till you prove it on your opponent. That is my secret, and by that mode I would forfeit my life, nay my character itself, to disarm any man that ever pointed a two-edged sword at my breast."

"I should have liked very much to have known that secret of his," said Charlie Scott.

I found it out privately with the most perfect certainty, continued Tam; but durst never let him know that I understood aught of the matter. It was owing to his sword's handle, which was made for the purpose. It had an inner shell of steel polished like glass; then an outer one of basket-work, formed with rounded bars in such a manner that, by turning his hand in a slight degree to humour the position of the opponent's sword, and dashing his hilt against the point of it, that entered between those of the cross-bars, and, running up the polished steel within, bent and fixed itself; then by a sudden wrench against his opponent's thumb, of which he was a perfect master, he not only disarmed him to a certainty, but generally left his arm powerless. After I had discovered it, I went by myself to try the experiment, fixed my own sword, and taking my master's in my hand, I pushed the basket of that slightly against the point of the other, and behold it fixed in it so close, that with all my might, and all my art, I could not extricate it without breaking it in two, and, in that case, I saw I would leave the point sticking where it was, which I durst not do for my life. At length it came into my head to do as my master did. This had the effect at once; the vibration in the blade caused by the swing and jerk, made it loosen, and it flew away through the air like a fiery dragon. [336]

"Master Michael Scott," said Gibbie, "and my friends, I again appeal to you all if this man has not fallen through his tale. It is turning out no tale at all, but merely an offputting of time, till we shall all perish of hunger." [337]

"The story of the hapless maiden Kell, and of our hero's first essays in love, I did admire and prize," said the poet.

"Od help your crazed head," said Charlie: "I wadna gie that duel atween the twa auld chaps for a creelfu' o' love stories."

"Lo, the tale is good," said the friar; "but it goeth here and there, without bound or limit; and wherefore should not a man relate all that befalleth unto him. I suppose it behoveth our friend to go on, without turning aside to the right hand or to the left."

"My tale is indeed long, but to me it is momentous. I should stop here pleasantly; but life is sweet,—and, to give me a fair chance for mine, I beg to be permitted to relate one adventure more." This, after some demur, was granted, and Tam went on:

After spending several years among the hills of Galloway, and being approved of by the Gorb (as he was called by every body, though his name was Macdougald) for a good swordsman, I tired of the country, being persuaded that the ground did not fatten the cattle properly; and from the moment I began to suspect that, I had no more satisfaction in the place, but utterly despised it. I perceived that their beef was never above an inch thick in the ribs, and what was worse, it was not properly mixed with white layers of fat; even the doubles in the broad bone of the shoulder were nothing but pure red lire. This will never do, thought I. How I despise the people that can put up with such a country as this!

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"Master," says I, one day, "I am quite tired of this country, and am going to leave it."

"Wherefore are you going to leave it, Thomas? Have not I been better and kinder to you than to myself?"

"For all that, master, I am resolved not to sojourn another week in it."

"I warned you that they were a deceitful people before," said he; "but we must take them as they are. We cannot make mankind as we would wish to have them."

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"It is not for the men, nor for the women either, that I dislike the country so much," said I.

"What is it then for?" said he.

"It is," said I, "because I suspect that their grass is not of a good quality."

I will never forget the look that the Gorb turned on me. He was walking somewhat before me, but when he heard my reason for disliking Galloway he wheeled about, and, taking one of his most striking upright positions, with his lean shoulders set up like two pins, he stared at me with his mouth wide open; and then put the following questions to me at long intervals.

"Grass! eh! How do you mean?"

"Look at it," said I; "What substance is in that wiry stuff, and on these hills of black heather!"

The Gorb's jaws fell down with dismay. He visibly thought that I was deranged, but he answered me mildly to humour my malady.

"True, the grass is not good; it never was, and never will be so. But I have not observed that you ever eat much of it; nor can I see how a man's happiness any way depends upon the quality of the grass of a country."

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"If that be all the sense that you have," thought I, "I will disdain for my part to exchange another word with you on the subject. Since you think that a man's happiness can depend on *any thing else* but good grass, you shall be followed no longer by me."

"Well," continued he, after waiting a while for an answer, "I see you are sulky about this whim, but I will humour it. I have nearly finished my terms among the mountains, and we shall descend upon the shores, where there is as good grass as any in Scotland, and I promise you full liberty to go into every field that you chuse, and take your bellyful of it. I have likewise many things to teach you, which will amuse you in the highest degree, and which belong to the sublime art of legerdemain."

"What is that?" said I.

"It is the art," said he "that enables us to see things and people as they really are. There is scarcely any thing on this earth really what it appears to be; and this art I have yet to teach you."

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From that day forward he began and performed feats that entirely bewildered my senses, but which furnished, wherever we were, a great fund of amusement; all the young people believed him to be in compact with the devil. I have forgot them all but one, which I will remember as long as I live.

We came to a wealthy yeoman's house on the river Urr, where we were to remain several days; and while he exercised the farmer's sons in fencing, I kept the young peasants in exercise—and then in the hall in the evenings he went on with his cantrips. There was a delicious shoulder of bacon hanging up on the farmer's brace, among many meaner hams and pieces of wretched dried flesh. I believe I had fixed my eyes on it, and perhaps my heart a little too. Whether the Gorb noticed this and dreaded the consequences or not, I cannot tell, but he began a speech about things not being what they appeared to be, and offered to give us a striking instance."

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"Take down the choicest and best ham among all these above the fire," said he. I did so, taking down the shoulder of bacon with great alacrity.

"Take down the worst," said he. I did so; it was one of venison dried like a crooked stick.

"Which do you account the best?" said he. I told him. "Well, you are mistaken," said he; "and I'll convince you of it. Roll them both neatly up in straw, or as you will."

I did so.

"Now, do you know the one from the other?"

"Yes."

"Very well: heave them up again that you may not be mistaken in the weight. Now, cross your hands, and heave them with different hands. Quite sensible they are the same?"

"Quite sensible."

"Very well. Take them aside by yourself and look at them. You will now see them as they really are, not as they appeared to your eyes."

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I hastened and opened out the shoulder of bacon. It was nothing but three dried bones, hanging together by tendons, and stuffed up into the shape of an overgrown shoulder of bacon with brawn, which was covered round with a piece of a sow's hide. I shed some tears at this blighting discovery; for though the bacon was not mine, I felt in my heart that I did not know how matters were to come about. I hung the two hams up as they were, and was cured of my itching eye; but no man can tell how things will come round to the advantage of an acute and clever fellow.

While we were at that house, the country was raised to follow the Lord of Galloway into Cumberland. It was a great rising, the utmost quota being demanded of every yeoman in the country, in terms of his villanage. Our landlord got a charge to find five, whereas he had none to send save three, unless he and his eldest son both went, which would have been grievously against him at that time; so he applied to my master and me to go on his behalf, offering large conditions, which were soon accepted. The principal, if not the sole thing that induced me to go out on that raide, was the stipulation that I was to have my choice of all the meat in the house, to the amount of what I could conveniently carry on my back in a march. After a great deal of choosing, I fixed on a small beef-ham, because it was solid, and no bones in it, and blest my master's ingenuity that had let me into the secret of the deceitful shoulder of bacon. The next that came after me was a blade of endless frolic and humour, named Harestanes. He instantly snapped at the bacon-ham, and popped it into his goatskin wallet, nodding his head, and twisting his mouth at me, as much as if he had said, "What a taste you have! I am glad you had not the sense to take this." I could easily have prevented him, by revealing the secret; but he had always been trying to make a fool of me, therefore I could scarcely contain my mirth at his mistake, and resolved to enjoy his disappointment in full. He was a sprightly handsome youth, and had such a forward and impertinent manner that he contrived to make friends in every family that we passed by, particularly with the women, so that he lacked nothing that he desired; and tho' I watched him night and day for fear of losing the sport, he never took out his bacon to break it up till the fourth day after our departure. My beef-ham was by that time more than half done. It was a most wretched piece of meat, being as hard as wood, and bitter as gall; but I was still comforted with this, that it was so much better than my comrade's.

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It was about eight o'clock on a morning, on the English side of the Border, that Harestanes first loosed out his wallet to make a breakfast of his bacon; and he being very hungry, I sat down beside him to enjoy the sport, taking out my black beef likewise. All that I could do I could not retain my gravity while he was loosening the cords, and taking the straw from about his ham, which made him look wistfully at me, and ask what the fool meant? But when I saw him look seriously and greedily at it, and then take out his knife to cut off a great slice, I lost all power, and fell on the ground in a convulsion of laughter, while my voice went away to a perfect wheeze. He could not comprehend me in the least degree, and actually began to cut! yes, he actually began to cut through the bristly skin, while I lay spurring the ground, and screaming with anticipation of the grand joke that was to ensue. Before I could recover my sight from amid the tears of extravagant mirth, the scene was changed; and I shall never forget the position in which the puppy sat, when my eyes cleared. No, it is impossible I ever can forget it! Conceive a wicked impertinent frolicsome whelp of a tailor, for he was nothing better, who had been with Sir Robert Graham's maids all the night, and was so hungry that you might almost have cast a knot on him, sit down to take a hearty luncheon of his bacon ham; and then conceive his looks when he found he had nothing but rubbish and dry bones. If you conceive these, you will conceive the very scene that I saw, at least that I conceived and saw in my mind's eye. How could I but laugh? No! It was impossible I could abstain from laughter;—but yet, for all that, things turned out quite the reverse. He had actually sliced off a rasher of bacon, the fattest, the whitest, and the most beautiful rasher of bacon ever I had seen in my life! There were three distinct layers of lire and fat, curving alternately through it like quarter moons. No man ever beheld such a sight! He sliced out another piece, which was still more perfectly beautiful than the preceding one. My eyes darkened. I had seen enough to shew me the enormity of my folly, and my irreparable loss! He roasted his rashers on the fire. The fat fried out of them, and flamed among the embers; and when he laid them on his bread, they soaked it all with pure liquid fat. And there was I sitting beside him, gnawing at my piece of infernal beef, the sinewy hip of some hateful Galloway stott that had died of the blackleg, and, having been unfit for ought else, had been dried till the hateful substance was out of it. Yet I had my choice of both, and took this. I shall never wish any friend of mine to suffer such pangs as I did that morning; for all that I had suffered in my dangers and disappointments was nothing to them. I would fain have slain the Gorb privately; but not daring to do that, I resolved never to see his face again, after the vile trick he had played. All my hopes and all my enjoyments of the foray being now ended, I resolved on taking my departure, and that by the time my enemy had the first slice of bacon eaten.

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We had orders to halt all that day, for the Johnstons and the Jardines were a day's march before us. Their advanced columns had fallen back; and as the troops were sleeping or straggling about, I prepared for my departure. My comrade having been with the knight's women all the night, a set of creatures madder than himself, he was quite worn out; and as soon as he got his inside lined with the salutary beverage, he fell fast asleep. An inward light now began to dawn on my heart, brighter than the sun at noon day, and lighting my steps forward to future felicity. My

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breath cut short with ecstatic delight, and my knees trembled as I formed the resolution of changing hams with my hopeful comrade. His wallet was lying open—not so the tailor's eyes: I might have exchanged coats, and shoes too, for him. The great work was done in an instant. I whipped out his shoulder of bacon, and put my piece of black timber in its place. "Take you that, honest man," said I to myself: "Time about is fair play. I have given you something that will exercise your jaws for a while."

When I found that I had this most delicious of all morsels on my back, I was so light that I scarcely felt my feet touch the ground; and there being no time now to lose, I made straight away into England, for I durst not turn towards Scotland, the sentinels being so very thick on that quarter. Our advanced guard was composed of the Gordons from the Ken,—a set of desperate raggamuffins whom I durst not have gone among had it not been fair forenoon. I had my wallet on my back and my sword by my side; and when I saw any of them eying me, I went up to them and asked how far the Johnstons were before us?

"What the devil was I wanting with the Johnstons?"

"O, I was afraid there might be a battle fought before I saw it, which I would not should happen for any thing in the world."

"Hear to the coulter-nibbit piper," said one.

"He is as like supping a pint o' fat brose as killing an Englishman," said another.

"I wadna trust him wi' ought beyond a litter o' English pigs," said a third.

"Let him gang forrit, and fiend that he get his chafts clawn the first sword that's drawn! I wadna that his name were Gordon for a hunder civis."

Accordingly I got liberty to pass; but as soon as I got out of sight, I turned to the left, and escaped to the moors of Bewcastle. I had now found out the invaluable art of flint and frizzle, and could kindle a fire whenever I pleased. So I sought out a lonely wild dell, and lighting a fire of birns and strong heather, roasted two slashing slices of my shoulder of bacon. I also took a good shave of bread from my friend the tailor's hearth-bannock; but after all I could not think of adulterating the savoury delicious fare by any unnatural intermixture,—so I ate up the dry bread by itself, and then smacked up the bacon afterwards. I cannot describe my sensations of delight, not only in my meal, but in contemplating the beauty of the object. I sat long feasting my eyes on the beauty of the slices before I committed them to the coals. They were curved so beautifully in semi-circles, the fat and the lire time about, that, unless for such an object, the term *beauty* would have no meaning. They lay alternately, as if it were this way, and this way, and this way.

"I protest against your drawing of your pictures on my shoulder," cried Gibbie; "and also against the party being any longer mocked with such fulsome trash in place of a story. Do you not perceive, Sir Master, and do you not all perceive, that he is havoring and speaking without end or aim? He is sensible that he has failed in his story; and that a dismal fate awaits him, and all that he is now intent on is driving of time."

"I confess that I am sick of the bacon and other fat things," said Charlie.

"My soul disdains the abject theme," said the poet: "Its tantalizing sight is like the marshfire's vacant gleam to the bewildered wight. 'Tis throwing meat to hungry souls, with fainting sore opprest; or drink unto the parched lips, whereof they may not taste."

"Let us show some spirit, wretched as we are," said Gibbie, "and protest with one assent against being farther sickened, as well as mocked by such loathsome stuff."

This is unfair, and using undue influence," cried Tam. "None of you were thus interrupted, but got time to finish your stories as you liked. Mine is not done; the best part of it is yet to come, and I say it is unfair. Great Master, you sit as judge; I appeal to you. My life has been varied. Let them chuse what sort of a theme they want, and I will fit them, only suffer me to relate one other exploit."

The Master, on whom hunger seemed to make no impression, thought the request was reasonable; but in making choice, every one of them, young and old, pitched on a different subject, so that Tam could not get proceeded; neither can this chapter, as an extraordinary incident befel, which naturally brings it to an end.

END OF VOL. II.

Transcriber's Notes

This text is a reproduction of the 1822 edition. It includes many dialect and archaic words and spellings, as well as many typographical errors and inconsistencies which have not been changed.

Chapters are inconsistently headed "CHAPTER" or "CHAP."

Inconsistently spelled words include:

- Corby and Corbie
- Gibby and Gibbie
- collie and colley
- chace and chase
- inclosed and enclosed
- raggamuffians, raggamuffins, and ragamuffin
- spier and speer
- camstairy and camstary

The text includes many examples of inconsistent hyphenation. The following are inconsistently hyphenated or printed as two words:

- bacon ham and bacon-ham
- bed side and bed-side
- dare say and dare-say (the latter was hyphenated over a line break)
- day light and day-light
- hind legs and hind-legs
- look out and look-out
- pike staff and pike-staff
- Tersit moor and Tersit-moor
- well springs and well-springs

The following are inconsistently hyphenated or printed as one word:

- goatskin and goat-skin
- gunpowder and gun-powder
- outdone and out-done
- staircase and stair-case (one occurrence of the latter hyphenated over a line break)
- weatherbeaten and weather-beaten

The following are inconsistently printed as one or two words:

- has na and hasna
- liege man and liegeman
- maybe be, maybe, and may-be (some hyphenated over line breaks)
- mean time and meantime
- mean while and meanwhile
- some body and somebody

The text contains the following apparent errors:

- p. 10 mis-spelling "ignominous"
- p. 27 missing space ("the shapes o'men?")
- p. 55 missing full stop ("behold he was wanting")
- p. 59 missing quotation mark ("till I speak t'ye, said")
- p. 104 mis-spelling "cutfing"
- p. 113 missing comma "Come away/Elfin grey,")
- p. 121 mis-spelling "quite" ("all was quite and gloomy")
- p. 124 comma instead of full stop ("the whole party in its consequences,")
- p. 137 comma instead of full stop ("exclamatory sound, Charlie had")
- p. 172 "22" instead of "21" ("22. So I borrowed me")
- p. 179 "she" instead of "he" ("21. And she said, Blessed")
- p. 188 missing space ("or a good shareo' ilka")
- p. 197 missing quotation mark ("afore I gi'e my gully")
- p. 212 comma instead of full stop ("thorns above them, "Now!""")
- p. 226 duplicate word ("all mankind it must must shock;")
- p. 229 extra quotation mark ("ane o' the best.""")
- p. 229 duplicate word ("how to take care care o'")
- p. 261 mis-spelling "ty'e"
- p. 261 missing quotation mark ("sae ye may, my man!")
- p. 289 mis-spelling "espepecially"
- p. 300 duplicate word ("I was in one so so profound,")
- p. 337 missing quotation mark (" to the right hand or to the left.")
- p. 341 missing comma ("said he "that enables")
- p. 342 extra quotation mark ("give us a striking instance.""")
- p. 352 missing quotation mark ("This is unfair, and")

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE THREE PERILS OF MAN; OR, WAR, WOMEN, AND WITCHCRAFT, VOL. 2 (OF 3) ***

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