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MALCOLM DOUGLAS ;

OR, THE

SIBYLLINE PROPHECY.



MALCOLM DOUGLAS ;

OR, THE

SIBYLLINE PROPHECY.

A ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLS.

“ Dii quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque silentes,
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia latè,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui.”

VIRGIL.

VOL I.

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MALCOLM DOUGLAS.

CHAP. I.

THE marquis of Chiviot was descended from one of the most ancient and illustrious houses in Scotland. His general residence was in an immense castle, very strongly fortified, in a remote part of that country, surrounded by scenery, grand, romantic, and truly picturesque, the terrific and awful mingling with the beautiful and cultivated, in an endless succession of pleasing variety.

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The marquis himself strongly possessed the marking characteristics of his nation ; to enthusiasm, he was partial to his country ; warmly attached to his clan, brave, haughty, and tenacious ; but withal, excelling in hospitality and generosity : and though his understanding was highly cultivated for the period in which he lived, he was not entirely free from the long cherished and early imbibed prejudices of superstition ; the traditional stories of infancy had made an impression on his mind never to be erased, and, indeed, the situation he was so extremely fond of. The precincts of his own castle and domain were in themselves sufficient to inspire the idea of supernatural agency, even in minds much less susceptible of its doctrines and affects than the marquis's.

This nobleman had married in his twenty-second year lady Margaret, the rich heiress of the Earl of Mar. She was

even more anciently descended than the marquis; and the principal mental quality which she inherited from nature, was national and family pride: these passions in the marchioness's breast knew no bounds; on all occasions it testified itself: the haughty lady Margaret scarcely conceiving any of less dignity than the royal blood qualified to be her associate; and when first the marquis was proposed as an alliance, she had disdained him as an inferior: but extensive as were her ideas of her rank and importance, yet her heart was not proof against the numerous graces of mind and person the marquis possessed; love removed the obstacles she had raised, and induced her to yield a sacrifice to her inclinations, when she gave her hand to the marquis of Chiviot.

Fourteen years had now passed since this union had taken place, and one son, the lord Melrose, and two lovely daughters, the ladies Grace and Catharine

Douglas, were, at this time, the only surviving children left to the marquis of a numerous family ; these he doated on with the tenderest affection ; and from the frequent losses he had had in his family, guarded with the strictest care and attention.

The marquis's two brothers, lord Charles and lord William Douglas, were now visitors at Chiviot castle ; they were both young gentlemen of great merit, personal courage, and beauty of person. They had both arrived a few days previous to the commencement of this story, for the purpose of inviting the marquis and marchioness to the approaching nuptials of lord Charles, which were soon to be celebrated in Edinburgh, in a style of princely magnificence, for the lady of his selection being a distant branch of the royal line, he conceived no arrangement which could be made, would be too costly for his beauteous partner. The beautiful and

unfortunate Mary, in whose reign these events took place, had graciously promised that herself and the lord Darnley would honor the nuptials of their kinswoman with their presence ; and the queen's taste for splendour and gaiety being universally known, lord Charles resolved it should be such as should well content his royal visitors. To acquaint the marquis with these particulars was the occasion of their visit at this time ; and lord Charles, in the most earnest manner, requested the company of these dear friends to witness his approaching happiness, and to introduce to their love and friendship his beloved Arabella Stuart.

The presence of the queen, added to every other inducement lord Charles made use of, had an influence on the marchioness which was irresistible ; she longed for the peculiar favor of royalty, and embraced with avidity every occasion

which presented an opportunity to bring forward her pretensions to particular notice from the queen ; and had her inclinations alone been consulted, the principal part of her time would have been spent in the metropolis, in pursuit of ambitious chimeras, and the perplexity of state affairs.

But the marquis, delighted in his old family mansion, and though by no means deficient in ambition himself, yet he felt his passion for it, and his pride much more gratified in being the king of his own castle, than in being brought upon a level at court with a numerous set of equals, where neither his rank or his merits were more noticed than the rest of his peers ; and he was better pleased to be looked up to by his vassals and dependents as their head, protector, and law-giver, than to follow the same course himself, and look up to a superior.— Added to this, the extreme love he bore

his children, and the many hours more to devote to them this retirement gave, than a more active life near the throne would permit, strengthened the preference he gave. And here, indeed, it must in justice be allowed, that the very great maternal affection of the marchioness in this instance, fully coincided with her husband's opinion. She had nurtured her children at her breast, had in every respect been a most exemplary mother, and the solicitude she felt for her children, had reconciled her to the solitude of inactive life, though her mind possessed all the dormant faculties which, if called into exertion, might have formed a great and enterprising politician.

The impatient lord Charles urged his brother to a speedy departure, for the marquis had given a ready assent to accompany him on this joyous occasion ; but it so happened, that some particular business respecting his estate at this time

claimed his attention for a few days ; therefore he could not possibly prepare himself in so short a period as lord Charles proposed. But the marchioness having no such claim upon her time, or any impediment to prevent her, and having likewise many articles to prepare for so magnificent a ceremony, it was agreed the marchioness should proceed, under the escort of lord Charles and lord William, to their house in Edinburgh ; and that the marquis should follow, with all expedition, the moment his affairs would permit him ; and his preparations being of a more limited nature, less time, it was supposed, would answer his purpose to provide them.

The delighted lady Chiviot, almost as impatient as the ardent lover, hastened the preparations for their journey with all imaginable dispatch ; and every requisite being settled, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties, for the important journey,

the next morning was fixed on for its commencement. But now a new trouble arose in the marchioness's mind—the separation from her beloved children, which had never before taken place, with the anxiety of the most affectionate parent, she dreaded to leave them behind her ; and yet their tender years, she conceived, would not permit their taking so long and so fatiguing a journey as she was going to undertake ; but already had her cares provided a governess for her daughters of the most irreproachable morals, and polished education, to form their minds and manners, and a tutor of the most distinguished abilities had been appointed by the marquis the last four years, to superintend the studies of lord Melrose. These amiable persons the marchioness well knew she might trust with so precious a charge, as the care of dear children during her absence : yet a thousand times did she, in the most earnest manner, recommend them to their special care. With

ardent embraces she folded them alternately to her heart, with streaming tears imploring the blessings of heaven on them, repeatedly declaring, should any accident happen to them, her last, her only, comforts, she could not for a moment survive them.

The marquis was greatly affected by her earnest manner; the native superstition of his mind induced him to conceive it was an ominous prognostic of approaching danger; and as she bid her last adieu when her extreem emotion almost overpowered her, he trembled with apprehension. However, concealing his sentiments, he gently reprov'd her for her want of fortitude; he stated to her very ably and philosophically the great impropriety of letting affection conquer reason, assuring her, that though his love for those dear objects equalled hers, he should leave them with tranquillity, in full confidence on the protection of hea-

ven, and the assiduous attention of the worthy persons under whom he had intrusted them.

Lady Chiviot acknowledged her weakness, which, she said, she would use her best endeavours to conquer, and collect all her resolution to enable her to bear this temporary parting ; and, at the appointed hour, left the castle in much better spirits than the marquis expected, accompanied by lord Charles and lord William, and a numerous retinue, and arrived safely in the metropolis in as small a space of time as, in those days, so long a journey could possibly be accomplished in ; and they mutually congratulated each other that no accident had happened to retard their haste, or injure them, as they took possession of the marquis's magnificent mansion in Edinburgh.

A messenger, according to promise, was instantly dispatched back again to

Chiviot, to inform the marquis of this pleasing intelligence, and with an account of their health, spirits, and united earnest requests, that he would join them as soon as possible, as their happiness was incomplete whilst he was absent.

This duty fulfilled, each party engaged in the different avocations each had in view. Lord Charles's time was entirely devoted to his charming Arabella, and the necessary preparations for the fast approaching ceremony of his marriage; lord Williams, in an endeavour to select a partner for himself, equally high born and deserving as the lovely lady of his brother's choice; and already had the interesting graces of Alice Graham, one of the queen's most distinguished favorites, a lady of high birth, but of slender fortune, insinuated themselves into the hitherto insensible heart of lord William; and he began to think his pursuits would here terminate, if his addresses were

received according to his hopes by the beautiful Alice ; and the marchioness's time was as fully, and to her as agreeably, employed in plans of decoration, dress, and splendor, which she determined should surpass all competitors.

CHAP. II.



THE marquis, who felt himself extremely dejected and lonely on the departure of his family, and who was equally as solicitous to join them as they could possibly be to have him in their society, determined to dispatch the business with all the expedition he could which had hitherto detained him. For this purpose he sent for his steward, to consult with him concerning the time he might reasonably expect to be ready to join his

family, for, from his unusual want of society, his resolution was fixed, rather to neglect some trifling points, than to continue long by himself.

Donald Macdonald, the steward of the marquis, had long held that distinguished trust in this noble family. In the time of the late marquis he filled the place with great advantage to himself, which ever was the first consideration with Macdonald : his second, to give such accounts to his lord as were perfectly satisfactory, and by the warmest professions of attachment and fidelity, to convince him how greatly he had his interest at heart, and how truly devoted to him.

He was a man of a prepossessing person and manners, and shrewd penetration ; he had great command of temper, and was fertile in every expedient, which could by any means promote his own emolument. For upwards of twenty years, at this time, he

had had the sole management of the Chiviot estates, and the unbounded confidence and partiality of the late marquis to him, might have been a sufficient temptation to a more scrupulous man than Macdonald was, to have availed himself of it.

For this extraordinary degree of regard and attachment in the late marquis, many reasons were given ; and the scandalous chronicle of those days did not scruple to hint, that a very near affinity subsisted between them—this was much strengthened by the father of Macdonald not being known to any, and his mother dying in his infancy. The helpless state of the poor orphan by some mysterious means becoming known to the marquis, he expressed great pity for its early misfortunes, and from that hour took him under his immediate protection, and placed him for proper care and education in the house of his steward, desiring the

infancy of Macdonald might have every care, and as he advanced in age, to be brought forward according to his capacity.

This command that worthy man had great pleasure in obeying; for having no child of his own, and soon finding that the boy had a quick and ready conception, and likewise a vast deal of respect and attention in his behaviour to him, he soon ingratiated himself into this good open-hearted old man's affections. He always spoke of him to the marquis in the highest strain of encomium; instructed him in every necessary branch of his profession; and, finally, was himself the person who humbly and earnestly entreated the marquis to let Macdonald succeed him in the management of the domain, as the best qualified, and most able and truly successor, he could nominate.

Such was the person whom the marquis

had now summoned to his presence, for the purpose of consulting with him on what caused his delay. Macdonald, who soon found from the tenor of the marquis's conversation how impatient he was to be gone, assured him he had been so very assiduous in arranging the affairs to permit the marquis's absence, that he hoped there would be no occasion for his remaining at the castle beyond the next day ; his attaching his name to some deeds, which were ready for that purpose, would be all that was now required of him.

The marquis was highly gratified to hear the business was so far completed, and had the pleasure the next day fully to settle it to his satisfaction. He then gave orders for his setting off early in the morning ; and he now, like the marchioness, experienced how severe the pang is of parting from beloved and lovely children. The marquis was obliged to collect all his fortitude as he gave his

parting benediction and last embrace to his darling offspring previous to their retiring for the night, as his early departure would prevent his seeing them again.

He begged with tender caution that all his household would pay them the most guarded care and attention during the absence of the marchioness and himself; of which he received the reiterated promises of all, to strictly obey these commands.

Too much oppressed in spirits by the recent scene with his children, he dismissed Macdonald from his attendance on him, who had awaited his return from their apartments in the library, as the marquis had been accustomed, since the absence of the family, to permit Macdonald to share the evening repast with him, for he was well skilled in entertaining anecdote; and when business was over, none could more artfully or agree-

ably amuse a vacant hour. This the marquis had frequently with pleasure experienced : and Macdonald with delight had found, for to make himself of consequence to the marquis was his darling ambition—and at this juncture he had most effectually succeeded in it.

But in the present state of his mind, the marquis wished for no society ; therefore, kindly wishing Macdonald health, again repeating his cautions in regard to his family, and adding, that as he should set out so early in the morning, it was his wish to retire to bed almost immediately, and that, therefore, he had no further commands for him at this time.

Macdonald then, with every hope for the continued health of the family, and the most solemn assurances of exerting every care in the charge committed to his trust, with low and respectful bows retired.

The marquis then walked up to one of the windows of the library, which was standing open, and stood for some time ruminating on a variety of subjects which presented themselves to his ideas. It was a fine autumnal evening—he thought he had never recollected a finer ; and the moon suddenly breaking from behind an obscuring cloud, illuminated with her silver light the broad terrace under the window at which he was standing, in earnest contemplation of its wonderous beauties : charmed by that, and the pleasing prospect its bright beams disclosed, and not being at all disposed for sleep, he opened the folding doors of the library, which led to the terrace, determined to indulge his pleasingly melancholy reveries in a moonlight ramble.

Though not by nature much of a reasoner on causes and effects, the marquis could not look on the beauty of the scene before him without experiencing sensa-

tions of the most ineffable delight, or without contrasting it to the very different ones in which he was going so shortly to engage.

This thought naturally led him to reflections on the different orders of society, and the variety which place, time, and circumstances made in the human frame. And who shall determine, said he, as he slowly paced the terrace, whether man is more happy from civilization, society, and order, or in the rude uncultivated state in which nature first placed him? Is the wild and unlettered savage, who, hunting for his daily sustenance, and unconscious of any other want or deficiency, when the calls of hunger are appeased, lays down to rest under the protecting shelter of a rock or tree, undisturbed by apprehension of midnight dangers, less happy than the indulged children of luxury in all their elegances, where envy, malice, and deceit but too frequently intrude their

hateful presence, and poison the cup of pleasure? Can the embroidered canopy of gold and of velvet, which I shall presently behold, elevated over the head of the most beautiful princess in the world, equal in splendor that at this moment suspended over mine? Or, can the yellow and suffocating glare of numerous wax tapers, vie with that clear, pelucid, and brilliant light reflected from that heavenly orb? Can decorations of artificial foilage equal in symmetry and perfume, that given by the elegant and bounteous hand of nature, whose fair patterns we vainly endeavour to rival or imitate? Or, can the cloying midnight banquet give the health and strength which temperance bestows?

Lost in speculations of this nature, the unconscious feet of the marquis had led him far beyond the terrace; and as he was on the verge of a beautiful wood, by which it was bounded, and on which the moon shining with unclouded majesty,

and the mild and gentle breezes fanning the branches, which waved in graceful motions, induced the marquis to prolong his pleasing walk and studies till he should be warned by the castle clock of the hour when he should think proper to retire.

Occupied by a similar train of reflections, he had wandered far in the wood, without attending to the length of time he had been walking, when a slight rustling amongst the underwood excited his notice, and caused a slight degree of alarm ; but instantly recollecting himself, he stood still, endeavouring to distinguish what it was which had disturbed his meditations ; but all continuing silent, and the moon still illuminating every object, he conceived it best to return, apprehensive that some noxious animal or reptile might be concealed in the wood, which had the power of being injurious, and that the moon would not much longer

lend her friendly assistance to discover it.

He had proceeded but a few paces on his return, when he was much astonished by observing a bright gleam of fire issuing from between two large trees, though its foundation was too much obscured by the interwoven thick boughs and grass, for him to have a perfect sight of it.

Struck with amaze at this extraordinary phenomenon, at such a time, and in such a place, with light and cautious steps he bent his way towards it, to trace the source of the flame, and the purposes it was designed for, which, at present, he could form no reasonable conjecture of: but in a few minutes, by the favorable assistance of the wind waving the luxuriant branches just before it, he had a perfect view of it; and his heart recoiled with horror as he beheld, sitting before the glowing embers, the shivering figure of

the most deformed and uncouth mortal which he had ever seen.

It was a female, whose parched and shrivelled hands were extended over the blaze, in seeming expectation of a warmth being communicated to them, which the palsied and trembling bones refused to retain. Over her lank and tawny bosom, from which the eye of health turned with disgust and amaze, was fastened, with a small skewer, the tattered remnants of a tartan plaid—her wild flowing locks yet retained the raven's hue, in contradiction to the deep furrows on her cheeks and brow, which might have justly owned them in the most silvered state—and her toothless gums appeared to mutter some inarticulate phrases, whilst her dark and fiery eyes, in which every malignant passion was expressed, were turned upward, as though in the act of some ejaculation : by her side lay a crutch, denoting the difficulty she must have experienced

in coming to a place so little calculated for her comfort or convenience, at such an hour ; and the marquis's surprise did not lessen, when he questioned himself as to the possibility of her getting where she then was, without her having been seen or heard by himself, or any of his people.

Wonder, indeed, appeared for some time to have sealed his lips, as he gazed on her strange appearance, which filled him with an indescribable dread : but not long could disgust or horror sway so noble a mind as the marquis possessed, when a miserable object was placed before him, evidently in want of his humane assistance ; he therefore immediately turned in his mind in what manner it was best to render service to the miserable creature thus accidentally made known to him.

The information of her crutch made it

evident to him, how utterly impossible it would be for her to walk to the castle, particularly after the fatigue she must have already endured by being where she then was, and he rapidly determined on sending some servants with a conveyance for her; when, conceiving this intelligence would be highly gratifying to the poor forlorn object, and likewise anxious to ask some questions as to the causes which had brought her there, he was endeavouring to discover the nearest way to effect this, by coming round to where she sat, when, without waiting the friendly aid which he expected she must require from her crutch, she suddenly jumped up with juvenile activity; and, in a deep and steady tone, and in the most distinct and clear manner, repeated these words, whilst the flame glowing more brightly, revealed to the immovable marquis the gigantic and unnatural figure of the speaker.

Chiviot's marquis, hence, beware !
Seek and find thy house's heir ;
High o'er mountains, low in dells,
Seek thy heir, for there he dwells.

High born, low born, both is he,
Who thy future heir shall be ;
Chiviot's marquis, haste away,
Seek thy heir—make no delay.

Notwithstanding every effort the marquis made to the contrary, a cold shivering seized him, as in awful silence he listened to these mysterious words ; they sank into his heart, and filled it with fear and apprehension, and many minutes passed before he was sufficiently collected to know how to act ; some interrogatories, however, he resolved to put to the Syble before he parted from her.

The broad beam of the totally unclouded moon now cast so bright a lustre, as nearly to obscure the place from whence the fire had but a moment before

blazed with so strong a light, and revealed the complete figure of the female to his astonished eyes—but it had sunk ; and though he made the best haste he could to the spot where she had stood, it was already abandoned ;—no object repaid his enterprising curiosity, but the scattered and smoking embers, which alone bore testimony of the reality of what he had witnessed.

Gracious heaven ! ejaculated the marquis, what may this horrid vision mean ? Seek my heir ! what heir have I to seek ? surely my darling Theodore is safe ! and heaven, in its mercy, will grant him to my prayers. Whom, then, is there to seek ? What meaning, what connection, can these alarming words have with me ? And even should so dire a misfortune await me, as the loss of my beloved son, should we have to mourn him torn from our hopes ? And if the reasonable expectation of other sons

should be denied me, I have brothers in the prime of youth ; that should my line fail, their's surely will succeed ; how, then, can I seek what is not yet called into existence ? it cannot be ; some mystical and incomprehensible meaning is couched in the words which never can be deciphered by reflecting on. The heirs existing I will duly nourish, and hope to my great comfort ; but who can seek what is not to be found ? Yet sure, continued the marquis, this strange scene has totally bewildered my imagination ! in my Theodore the Chiviot heir exists ; and while he lives no other claim can be : him will I seek, him will I guard, and trust in providence for his good guidance.

Thus for some time argued the marquis with himself on this night's singular occurrences, but he could not conquer, by all his endeavours, the horrors impressed on his mind by them ; and though dissatisfied with his weakness, he exerted

himself to banish the circumstance from his recollection—he could not effect it. At this moment, hearing the castle clock, which the wind bore strong upon his ear, proclaim the hour of midnight, he hastily took the way to the castle, in hopes when he reached it, he should be able to banish all unpleasant retrospections.

Whatever the marquis's intentions on this head might be, they were not so easily put into execution, as he imagined the circumstances would occur with encreasing alarm to his mind; and the words "seek thy heir," reverberated in painful recollection on his ear.

His first enquiry as he entered the castle was after lord Melrose and his sisters: the domestics looked on their lord with astonishment at such a question at such a time, but answered, they had been several hours in their beds: he then said he would by no means have them dis-

turbed, as he should immediately retire to his apartment; where entering—on his knees, he recommended them to the protection of heaven, and all the blessed saints. He then threw himself on his couch, and resigned himself to sleep.

At the dawn of day he commenced his journey, with his mind still occupied by the events of the preceding evening, which he vainly endeavoured to interpret.

CHAP. III.



GREAT was the joy of the Chiviot family when the arrival of the marquis was announced ; and the happiness he felt in again embracing them, drove from his remembrance the mystic words which had so greatly discomposed his mind ; or if they did occasionally occur to his recollection, it was but as the faint impression of a troubled dream, which, to prevent any comments being made on either

of alarm or ridicule, he determined never to divulge to any.

The marchioness, in genuine maternal anxiety, overpowered him with enquiries respecting the health, the spirits, and the looks of her darling children ; and being repeatedly assured that all was according to her wishes, in full content, and perfect security, on their account, she gave up her entire attention to the preparation for the happy moment when she should entertain her lovely sovereign, as the celebration of the marriage was to be, by the marquis's most earnest request, at his house.

Every splendid decoration which taste and liberality could procure, already graced the marquis's mansion, in honor of the long-expected day. It now arrived when the lovely Arabella Stuart was to bestow her fair hand on the faithful lord Charles ; and the expected guests ar-

riving, they were ushered into a long suite of the most magnificent apartments by numerous attendants, arrayed in the most costly liveries that country had ever witnessed.

An apartment of more peculiar richness was fitted up for the reception of the king and queen, where a superb throne and finely embroidered canopy, bearing the arms of Scotland and England quartered, in particular compliment to the beautiful queen, attracted all eyes, from its extraordinary beauty of workmanship, and expensive materials. Every other preparation for these royal visitors being in a correspondent style of magnificence, afforded a spectacle of grandeur far beyond the expectation of the company.

The queen, punctual to the hour appointed, graced the bridal apartments with her enlivening presence, and with the affability and condescension which

always adorned her, graciously paid her compliments to all the surrounding nobility then present. The earl Darnley likewise, was particularly pleasing and entertaining, he paid his devoirs to the ladies with the most agreeable vivacity, and was universally admired ; that rancorous jealousy which so soon after involved himself and family in ruin, not yet having established itself in his breast.

Every elegant and expensive luxury was presented to the royal and noble visitors assembled on this happy occasion ; which was followed by every amusement the riches and hospitality of the host could furnish, aided by the fertile invention of the most ingenious and experienced directors and contrivers of public entertainments.

Though the charming Mary, in the most engaging manner, bestowed attention on all, yet the marchioness' assiduous cares

to attract her particular notice, in a great measure succeeded, and claimed a return she could not withhold; she, therefore, honored her by marks of great regard; and next the bride, her beauteous kinswoman obtained her most distinguished kindness.

The nuptial ceremony over, which, was performed in the presence of all the illustrious visitors, the happy pair received the congratulation the occasion called for, as a union which appeared to promise so much felicity, had seldom taken place in so elevated a situation; it was founded on the basis of esteem and affection, and gave every reasonable expectation of a long continued happiness.

Whilst a succession of pleasures and amusements were engaging the hours of the Chiviot family in Edinburgh, and the marchioness was rapidly obtaining that most enviable situation, the highest favor with her royal mistress. The innocent and

peaceful inmates of Chiviot castle were pursuing the usual routine of their accustomed occupations.

Mr. Carr, the gentleman who had the care of lord Melrose's education, was a scholar, and a man of the most elegant manners; some domestic misfortunes, early in life, had compelled him to have recourse to the acquirements he possessed, for his support; and he had it in agitation to have given instruction at his own habitation, to a select number of pupils; but the marquis, who had known his family and himself in more prosperous circumstances, and who, likewise, was well assured of the probity of character, his capacity and goodness of heart, generously made him the condescending offer to put lord Melrose under his tuition; an offer, so liberal and so unexpected, was, with joy and gratitude, accepted; and the marquis, from that time, had had great reason to be well satisfied with his own judgment and dis-

crimination, in procuring so well qualified an instructor for his beloved son ; a person so every way fitted to form the young mind for the attainment of every noble virtue, and every elegant accomplishment, and one who, from having been himself an early scholar in affliction's school, had that kind of experience, which can more strongly inculcate the precepts of moderation, fortitude and philosophy, and the instability of all earthly happiness, but what results from the consciousness of a just and faithful performance of our duty in life, and in a full reliance on an Almighty Protector.

Such were the principles and character of the person the marquis had selected for this important office, and particularly happy was he in having the charge of a pupil so docile and well-disposed as was lord Melrose, and of so tender and affectionate a disposition ; he possessed every amiable propensity, but he was of a frame

extremely delicate, which, at present, had prevented his application to any very abstruse studies.

The lady appointed to the same situation with the young ladies, was equally well qualified for it; but the cares she had to attend to, did not exactly promise the same success, which the cultivation of the mind and talents of lord Melrose gave expectation of, for though lady Grace, the eldest daughter of the marquis, was as gentle in temper as her brother, and as attentive to the instructions given her; the younger (lady Catherine) was past all her exertions to form, by any management which she could adopt, the vehemence of her temper was uncontrolable; what she had once set her heart on doing, or not doing; no reasoning, no punishment, no reward could alter, or dissuade her from; from the earliest infancy, this disposition had manifested itself, and now in her tenth year, it was in no respect corrected. The

extraordinary degree of pride she likewise was possessed of, the imperious answers she gave to the most respectful address, and the astonishingly high notions she had already imbibed of her rank and consequence, filled the hearers with astonishment, when she made her sentiments known, and the heart of her worthy governess with sorrow, and despair of ever being able, by any effort of duty, to curb so refractory a spirit ; her tender age alone, giving some faint degree of encouraging hope of a favorable change, when she should herself become more sensible of the great disadvantage of her bad propensities and habits, and how ill they caused her to appear to all.

Yet, notwithstanding her unfortunate disposition, she had much nobleness of heart ; and her attachments, like her passions, were vehement ; mediocrity could never be understood by lady Catherine ; it was love, or hate, every propensity was

in extremes ; in person she was extremely beautiful, but her's was that kind of beauty which a painter would have chosen for an infant Bellona, her hair was of so bright an auburn, it was in general called red, her eyes dark, and full of that sparkling vivacity, which, though it excited admiration, yet it was not unmixed with apprehension, that the slightest occasion would kindle them into a flame of passion, neither her manners or her discourse were infantine ; and her wit, and her great desire to attract notice, were already so conspicuous, that she was frequently supposed to be two or three years older than her sister, and contrast ; the feminine and gentle lady Grace, the delicacy of whose form, and unobtruding beauties were eclipsed and overpowered by the fire and vivacity of lady Catherine ; but she, as yet, unconscious of personal preference, confined all her ideas of happiness to the affection she experienced from her dear pa-

rents, and to the constant approbation of her beloved governess.

This was the situation of these important persons, in this story ; and such their persons and merits, whilst Macdonald found himself in the height of his glory in having all under his special protection. It was seldom the family were absent for any length of time, and therefore, he now, more fully enjoyed the consequence naturally attendant on being the principal person on so extensive a domain : the humble respect his presence always inspired, was now, he flattered himself, converted into the greatest reverence ; and the extensive advantages and priviledges he now enjoyed, had their usual effect, in encreasing his wishes for more, and to those which he never could obtain. But his ideas, when contemplating the pleasing prospect of his increasing wealth, encountered some little alloy when he reflected he had no son to inherit it, or to succeed to his lucrative employment ;

however, he would mentally add, my poor girl will be the better for my money ; and the consoling thought brought comfort to his mind.

Avarice and ambition were the sole passions which agitated the mind of Macdonald ; his ambition was gratified in his supposed or real affinity to the marquis ; and by the attainment of the situation which he filled in his establishment, which being the highest and of the greatest consequence, was gratifying to his vanity ; and the foundation of his highly-prized wealth, which, to add still more to, he had married a person many years older than himself, and extremely disagreeable in person and manners, for the sake of a large property which she possessed ; by whom he had one daughter ; but the ill health of the mother from the period of her child's birth, had prevented the expectation of any further increase of the family, and she continued a lingering impediment

to his wish of adding to his fortune and his family by another marriage.

This subject had long been a source of great regret to him ; but finding regrets vain, he resolved to confine all his hopes and all his views to the agrandizement of his daughter, whom he loved with the tenderest affection, and indeed this was the only gentle affection which had ever entered into his heart.

My dear girl, said he, (whilst communing with himself in the midst of a solitary walk, amongst the mountains which lay behind the castle) will find enough at my death, to make her hold up her head with the best, and why should she not ? who has a better right ? if family is required, the marquis knows my origin, and the name of Macdonald has never been disgraced. If money is the fortune, what young lady will boast a better than my Janet ? Then why is not my Janet as good

as lady Grace, or lord Melrose ; and what should prevent her from becoming his wife ?

Though this idea, now suddenly, and for the first time, burst on the brain of Macdonald, and though he asked himself such a succession of questions, he well knew, and deeply felt what there was to hinder and prevent the completion of such excentric and improbable chimeras ; and the ten thousand obstacles which presented themselves in quick succession to his imagination, for some time interrupted the progress of his soliloquy. However, continued he, after some time given to serious reflection, they are as yet but children ; much may be brought about by persevering industry, and too soon the foundation of future grandeur cannot be laid. I have heard of attachments formed in childhood lasting through life, and surmounting the greatest difficulties which opposed their union ; and though these re-

finements are far above my comprehension, yet, as they have been so, they may be again ; and I will lose no time, now so good an opportunity presents itself, to introduce my Janet ; and I will trust to nature, and my own strict attention to my child's interest, for the perfecting my plans for her future welfare.

With this resolve, he quitted the rude, uncultivated mountain he was traversing, and with hasty steps, sought the pleasure-grounds, well knowing it was the usual hour in which the ladies walked ; and he had been but a short time there before he saw Mrs. Moreton the governess, approaching, attended by her beauteous charge.

The moment lady Catherine saw him, she broke from her conductor, and running to him, with all the vivacity inspired in her breast, by every change of place or person, eagerly enquired of him whether

he had heard any thing of the marquis and marchioness.

Macdonald, who well knew the disposition of this extraordinary child, conceived she could be made (by his good management) the vehicle for the execution of all his schemes; therefore, making a slight compliment to Mrs. Morton, he turned to lady Catherine, and said, yes, my lady; my lord and lady, I hear, are highly caressed by the queen, none are so highly honored by her as they are; and the grand entertainments which they have given in honor of lord Charles Douglas's marriage, are the most costly which have ever been given in this kingdom; and the profusion of jewels and splendid ornaments which were worn by the marchioness, report says, exceeded, in magnificence, even those which adorned the queen herself.

Oh! how I wish I were a woman, exultingly exclaimed lady Catherine, my dress

and my magnificence shall, then, exceed all this. I dare say, I shall be a queen ; so do, dear Mr. Macdonald, tell me all about it, how the queen was dressed—what she did—what she said—that I may judge how much I shall be superior when I am one myself.

Bless you, my dear lady, replied the wily Macdonald ; I know nothing of these matters. I have other kind of business to attend to ; but, continued he, (anxious to keep awake her curiosity) my poor Janet's head is full of nothing else, she teizes her mother and me to death with what she has heard. I'll warrant she could tell every particular your ladyship would wish to know ; if Mrs. Morton will permit her paying her respects to your ladyship, and if honored by your enquiries, I am sure she will be happy in giving every information in her power.

Oh ! my good dear Mrs. Morton, said

lady Catherine, in an extacy, do, let Miss Macdonald come—I will be so attentive to my studies, if you consent, you can't imagine—and I am sure you will be glad to hear of my dear father and mother; and it will make me so happy, I know not how to express it.

I shall always have pleasure in doing what contributes to your happiness, lady Catherine, answered Mrs. Morton, rather gravely, and I trust, in return, your ladyship will so far consult mine, by that propriety of behaviour and condescending affability (if I comply with your request) which should ever be the attendant of true nobility; this was said by Mrs. Morton from the apprehension she was under that lady Catherine, the moment her curiosity was gratified by Janet's communication, would behave in a haughty and disdainful manner to her, and wound her sensibility, by making her feel her inferiority.

Oh certainly, madam, answered lady Catherine, I hope I shall never forget my rank, or what is proper for a woman of quality, as I shall be, to do ; but will you give leave for Janet to come directly ?

As the morning studies are over, replied Mrs. Morton, if it is agreeable and convenient to Mr. Macdonald and his daughter, I certainly can have no possible objection.

But it was neither agreeable nor convenient to Macdonald for the visit to take place so soon ; he had his daughter to tutor, for though she was far too young to be let into his deep plans, yet it was absolutely necessary to give her some general lines of conduct, which could not be done if the visit was immediate, therefore bowing low to the ladies, he expressed the great sense he had of the honor conferred on his daughter, but begged permission to decline it for that day : adding, my poor girl has not the advantages which you la-

dies have, for she is obliged to study very hard for the few acquirements which she will be mistress of, this remote place not furnishing the means to assist her much ; and her mother's partiality and ill health, preventing her leaving us for better instruction ; early and late, continued he, is she endeavouring to obtain a little knowledge, with what assistance I can give her ; but if your ladyship will allow my putting off the engagement till to-morrow, she will then be most happy to obey your commands.

Then let her come early in the morning, Mr. Macdonald, said lady Grace, who had hitherto been silent, let her come soon, and then she will have the same advantages which we have ; she will hear Mrs. Morton's instructions.

The different turn of mind exhibited in this little discourse in her two pupils, was not unobserved by the attentive Mrs. Mor-

ton ; but without appearing to notice it, she said, if the arrangement made by lady Catherine and lady Grace met Mr. Macdonald's approbation, it was perfectly agreeable to her.

Lady Catherine made a great merit of waiting this delay, assuring Macdonald she should be miserable till she saw Janet, and should dream of all the fine things she expected to hear of when she saw her, and begged of him to desire his daughter not to forget the least circumstance which she had heard of taking place.

And let her be sure likewise, added lady Grace, not to forget her books, that Mrs. Morton may have an opportunity to judge of her improvement.

They now separated, Macdonald delighted beyond measure, by his having thus laid the first part of the foundation of his airy castle ; the young ladies equally

so in the idea of the amusement they should derive from their new companion ; and Mrs. Morton pleased with the hope of pointing out some regulations in the education, and an endeavour to promote the improvement of a very promising child, for whom she had often felt much interested.

CHAP. IV.



JANET MACDONALD, who is now about to be introduced to the reader's attention, was in her thirteenth year, one year older than lord Melrose, but considerably taller, and far more forward in general knowledge : and though her father was a man of great art and address, he was but a novice in dissimulation when compared with her. Nature had, in her bosom, implanted a double portion of her father's cunning and artifice ; she was most insi-

nuating, observant and aspiring; and young as she was, the same notion respecting her future establishment, which now continually flitted through her father's imagination, had an embryo formation in her own, like her father; the world, to her, centered in *self*, and for the gratification of *self*, all other considerations were to be stifled, specious and deceitful on every occasion where the least personal advantage was to be obtained, but imperious and disobliging where no expectations were to be formed. Such was the heart, such were the sentiments of Janet Macdonald:

One circumstance, respecting her, must not, here, be omitted, as it was by every one remarked as most extraordinary, which was her very strong resemblance, in exterior, to lady Grace, though so widely different in character, the striking likeness she bore to lady Grace, in person, was too obvious to be overlooked by the slightest

observer ; in figure, in complexion, eyes, turn of countenance ; in short, altogether it was uncommon to remark so perfect a resemblance, except in twins. This similarity had been a matter of great triumph to the ambitious Macdonald ; and though, when it was spoken of, he affected not to be able to perceive the likeness himself ; none was so quick-sighted as he was to what gave him so much pleasure, as it both served to strengthen his reported consanguinity to the marquis, and not a little to flatter the vanity of all the family, when it was so generally observed, and excited so much surprize in all who witnessed it ; and this resemblance it was, which first influenced the good heart of Mrs. Morton to a partiality in favor of Janet, as from her being so like her darling favorite, lady Grace, she doubted not she had her amiable disposition, her facility in receiving instruction, and a correspondent goodness of heart.

According to the appointment of the young ladies, Janet waited on them at an early hour, lady Catherine, with eager joy, flew to embrace her, and instantly called on her for all the information her superior knowledge furnished ; when the ready-witted and artful girl, improved by her father's instructions, told her intelligence so well, gave so eloquent an account of all the transactions, dwelling with so much strength on the marchioness's superior and magnificent taste, the high regard and approbation she had met with from the queen, and the grandeur and dignity acquired by the illustrious alliance lord Charles had made, magnifying every trifle to so great a degree, that the raptures of lady Catherine, from this recital, were unbounded ; the modest lady Grace blushed from a pleasing consciousness of being the daughter of so great a lady ; and Mrs. Morton listened with pleasure and surprize at the animated and energetic description Janet gave.

At the dinner hour, lord Melrose and his tutor joined the ladies, and though he well knew Janet Macdonald, yet she was now particularly introduced to him by lady Catherine, as her most intimate friend, and the cleverest girl in the world.

But lord Melrose was too young to pay much attention to the flattering distinction of these titles ; he seemed to have but little pleasure in this addition to the society, was extremely cool to Janet ; whatever she said to him, scarcely making any answer ; and when Mrs. Morton asked him if he did not think Miss Macdonald very like lady Grace, not in the least, was his reply, with such quickness and asperity, as convinced her lord Melrose had an aversion to Janet ; which, she could, by no means, account for : he appeared particularly impatient for the conclusion of dinner, and to return to his own apartment, which he did the moment Mr. Car permitted him.

His tutor had observed, with some little degree of pain, the marked rudeness of lord Melrose's behaviour to Janet during dinner, which he naturally attributed to the inherent pride of the Douglas's, which he began to fear, no cultivation would restrain within proper bounds ; and he conceived it necessary to make a remark to his lordship on his observation on his behaviour, the moment they were alone, and of his suspicion of its origin ; at the same time expatiating on the merits of Janet's father, and the condescension the marquis always treated him with, which, certainly, entitled his daughter to the notice of her superiors, independent of the propriety of her own conduct, and her being the particular guest of the young ladies, his sisters.

I knew sir, answered lord Melrose, with tears fast mounting to his eyes, I knew you would think it was pride which makes me not like Janet Macdonald, but indeed

it is not ; it is because I cannot help it— I cannot bear to be told she is like my sister —I can see their faces look alike, they bear some little resemblance, but I am always angry when any body mentions it,—it is this, I believe, which makes me almost hate Janet, for she never will be half so good or so pretty as lady Grace, nor so gentle, nor so kind ; but indeed, sir, believe me, it is not pride, but something which I cannot describe, which makes me dislike Janet Macdonald.

The artless explanation of his sentiments, which lord Melrose had made, conveyed to the mind of his tutor evident marks of strong, natural discernment in so young a child ; for he had himself observed a keen expression in the eyes of Janet, not entirely agreeing with his ideas of female simplicity and bashfulness, at so early a period of life. He, therefore, only said, he was happy to find his lordship's behaviour did not proceed from the motive

to which he had attributed it : at the same time observing, that pride, under the proper restrictions of good sense and humanity, was a passion absolutely necessary to render mankind happy and respectable ; but that it had a substitute (in general), which was a mean and contemptible opinion of superiority over our fellow-creatures, unwarrantable and ridiculous, not at all calculated for the possession of a noble mind ; and was seldom seen the attendant on true nobility and worth ; but invariably with those who, by sudden turns of fortune from a state of obscurity, by that means obtrude themselves on public notice ; and, added he, it is equally wrong to conceive a hasty prejudice against any person for trifling causes, or accidents which do not depend on themselves ; as this resemblance which your lordship speaks of ; for dislike should never be entertained without just and honorable reasons.

But in a very different light did Janet appear to the female part of the family ; the ardent Catherine could hardly bear a separation from her new friend, and earnestly begged permission to see her again the next day ; the addition of Janet's lively society, had likewise been extremely agreeable to lady Grace, who, though not so ready to express her sentiments without reserve as her sister, yet felt a very strong partiality in favor of Janet, and was equally desirous of a renewal of the pleasure of her company ; and Mrs. Morton could not see any impropriety in allowing the daughter of so respectable a man, and one so highly in the marquis's confidence, to visit the young ladies. The high gratification this permission communicated to Janet, can only be comprehended by designing people, who joyfully foresee the accomplishment of their most fervent wishes promoted by the unsuspecting victim's confidence in them.

CHAP. V.



THUS passed the time at the castle, during the absence of the marquis and his lady. Janet daily gaining ground in favor with all but lord Melrose, whose aversion to her, however unaccountable it was, appeared to encrease in the same proportion as she was acceptable to the other branches of the family, not in the least from obstinacy of disposition, but entirely proceeding from a rooted dislike, that all her attentions to him, or her entertaining faculties, could not conquer.

Mrs. Morton perceiving in Janet a very good genius, and much docility, determined to cultivate it as much as her leisure permitted ; she admired Janet much, and thought her worthy the labor she intended to bestow on her, as she well knew, without her friendly aid, for all her father's riches, her education must be greatly neglected.

Leaving these young people now to the maternal care and management of Mrs. Morton, and to those pursuits she judged proper for them, we will return to Edinburgh, where the marquis and marchioness still found themselves immersed in pleasure and gaiety, and high in royal estimation.

“ About this time it was, that the unhappy disposition of the king began to discover itself in a way, which all the queen's doating affection for him, could not entirely occasion her to overlook, or

prevent her interpreting to his disadvantage. The slights and neglect which so strongly marked his conduct towards her, she felt with all the dignity of wounded pride, and ill-requited love. The honors which she had conferred on him, the sacrifices she had made for him, and the extravagant affection which she had borne him, served the more to place his ingratitude in the strongest and most aggravating point of view. But what favors, what sacrifices can create gratitude in a bad heart? which, the more it receives, the less it regards; and perhaps, at last, reproaches the generous giver for having nothing more to bestow."

Little doubt can be entertained, but that at this period, many designing and interested persons about the king and queen, observing the sentiments that each were imbibing, inflamed and magnified the imaginary, or real insults which each complained of, as there are never wanting those

who, on all occasions, delight in fomenting family contentions, even where no other end is to be gratified than what an intermeddling disposition feels in mischief; how many more than might be expected on this occasion, where the contending parties were of such great consequence, and the enemies of each were numerous; more particularly Mary's. The bigots in the reformed religion, hating, despising, and dreading a Catholic sovereign; and even the Catholics themselves, whose manners were strict, dignified, and severe, disapproved of the ease and gaiety of the queen; declaring openly their dislike of her French education and behaviour, estimated lightly the many shining accomplishments she was mistress of; and consequently each was on the watch for the unguarded moments of a lively young woman who, without suspicion of the spies she had about her, said, and did many things which, however innocent in themselves, and in her intention, were constantly miscon-

strued, and the utmost force added to whatever could be turned to her disadvantage.

The queen, who, from the marchioness's first introduction to her, had distinguished her by peculiar marks of her favor, had now, for some time done her the honor of inviting her to her private parties ; to one of these it was, that together with the countess of Argyle, another lady high in royal estimation, she received an invitation from the queen, to sup with her ; to which also was invited David Rizzio, the queen's secretary.

The favor this person was once in with the lord Darnley, was the first means of his introduction to Mary. The great and very extravagant praises bestowed on him by that nobleman, induced the queen to notice him, and he had so well improved this great advantage, that he soon became a distinguished favorite with her, and she

was very soon so indiscreet as to appoint him her secretary ; a situation which he was by no means fitted for ; and it was likewise, extremely impolitic in Mary to do it : for, independent of his being a person of very obscure birth, and mean talents, his being a foreigner, and more particularly an Italian, rendered him obnoxious to the proud and tenacious Scots.

His knowledge in music, and entertaining qualities, however, continued him in the queen's regard, for the being herself well skilled in the science of music, and Rizzio's having, in that department, no rival or competitor, induced the queen to shew him favors and distinctions, of which no doubt can remain of his being totally unworthy. This it was which filled the breast of the king with the most deadly hatred and jealousy ; his proud spirit could not brook the constant marks of regard the queen condescended to bestow on so insignificant an object ; and he made a fixed

determination to destroy him the first favorable opportunity. This design he communicated to some of his friends, and soon found a number of ready confederates to join in any plan for the destruction of one so universally hated. The resolve, once made, the opportunity soon presented itself, and the eventful evening on which the marchioness was invited, was fixed on by the enraged husband for the assassination.

Mary being far advanced in pregnancy, as much as possible avoided public and crowded assemblies; but in the retirement of her own private apartment, greatly delighted in the society of her particular friends and favorites; and during the course of this evening, had been more cheerful than was even her usual custom; it was a scene of social intercourse with confidential friends, when all distinctions of rank and dignity were laid aside, suspicion banished, and innocent mirth and lively

conversation taking place without apprehension of danger, or future consequences.

At such a moment what must have been the feelings of the queen, of the ladies, her companions, but, above all, the unhappy victim himself? to see the door of a private passage to the queen's apartment suddenly burst open, and the king enter with the complicated passions, of jealousy, fury, and hatred flaming in his eyes, and on his cheek. In the dark entrance, at his back stood the lord Ruthven, his stern associate in the horrid deed, he was clad in complete and shining armour, his countenance exhibited that gastly and horrid appearance, which a long confinement, in a dangerous illness, would naturally give, and which was heightened by the diabolical design he was now come on, to an almost demoniac appearance; unrelenting, and unpitying, he entered next, whilst three or four of his most trusty accomplices hastily followed

him, whilst an unnumbered quantity more appeared to be rapidly approaching.

The unusual phenomenon of armed men in the queen's private apartment, created all that alarm which must be supposed to arise from such a terrific circumstance. But Rizzio, instantly and rightly, apprehending that he was the victim at whom this dreadful blow was aimed, in the utmost consternation clung fast to the queen, and earnestly besought her interference; but fruitless was the terror and distress of Mary, unavailing the lamentation or entreaties of the wretched Rizzio; to her tears, to her supplications, to her threats, no regard was paid; her rank as a queen, her situation as a female, were alike forgot and unnoticed by the conspirators; as were likewise the future consequences which might result to themselves: they had proceeded too far to retreat, or to be restrained by any consideration of that nature. Numbers of armed men now rushed impetu-

ously into the apartment, ready to lend their aid to the most desperate deeds.— Lord Ruthven drew his dagger, and, in a voice of thunder, commanded Rizzio to leave a place of which he was unworthy, and which he had too long usurped. But finding he still continued to hang on the queen's robe, and implore mercy from her, wishing and hoping, even yet, to avail himself of her protection, he was torn from her with violence; and before he could be dragged from her presence into the next apartment, the fierce and violent rage of his enemies put an end to his existence, by piercing his body with fifty-six wounds.

During the remainder of this dreadful night, the horrid circumstances of which has employed the pens of the best historians, the distracted queen was confined to her chamber a close prisoner, without the consolation of one commiserating friend, no eye of pity or of consolation was turned on her; the harsh and rigid

countenances of ferocious assassins alone forming the groupe who attended on the most delicate, beautiful, and illustrious female of her time ; under circumstances, and in a situation which might have been supposed capable of moving the hardest heart to compassion ; and to have called for the most assiduous and tender care from females.

In a horror of mind which no language can delineate, the marchioness returned to her house, and, in an incoherent manner, related the dire events which had taken place ; but already had the breath of fame magnified the circumstances, and the danger ; and the marquis had flown to the palace in trembling apprehension for the fate of his beloved wife ; but finding, to his great joy, that she was safe, he quickly returned to congratulate her and himself, on her fortunate escape ; and together lament the cruel fate and sufferings of their royal mistress, whose present troubles and

situation their affectionate loyalty could not mitigate, but whom they found consolation in thinking would soon exert her power to revenge, and punish in an exemplary manner the degradation and ignominy she had sustained. This hope reconciled their minds to the present irreparable insult and misfortune.

CHAP. VI.



WHEN the horror and agitation occasioned by this dreadful and cruel circumstance had, in some measure, subsided, and tranquility appeared again to be restored, lord Darnley hoped, by an apparent acquiescence to the queen's will, and by a declaration which, with his usual duplicity, he made, of being totally unacquainted with, and entirely unconnected in the late unfortunate action, that he should be received by Mary with the same affection which

she once bore him ; but the charm, which had at first attached her to the king, was broke : that happy union, which had once held influence over their hearts, was dissolved, never more to be restored, and love no longer covering his vices and his follies, with his friendly veil, they appeared to Mary in their full and frightful dimensions, and black deformity.

The proclamation which at this time he published, disclaiming in the most solemn and positive manner, any knowledge of the conspiracy against Rizzio, and his abandoning his accomplices to the queen's resentment, so far from promoting his fallen interest with her, had only the contrary effect ; encreasing the contempt and disgust with which her heart was filled against him ; as it was utterly impossible for her one moment to forget, that he himself was the first person who broke into her apartment on that murderous occasion, and who, without any fear of the consequences

to her life, or the life of his future heir, headed the conspirators, encouraged the bloody deed, and forcibly held her in his arms that she might not escape from the horrible scene, apparently enjoying a savage pleasure in witnessing, alike, the assassination, and her unavailing distress.— These were occurrences which she too painfully felt could not be palliated; and the endeavours he now attempted to make in his excuse, must certainly have caused him to appear contemptibly mean and hypocritical; and for ever shut her heart against him.

His base ingratitude too, must have still added to his disgrace; for even the very power, which, with a liberal and unsuspecting fondness, she had conferred on him at her marriage, he had employed to insult her authority, to limit her prerogative, and to endanger her person; such injuries it was impossible any woman could bear, or forgive; and therefore cold civilites, se-

cret disgust, and frequent quarrels, succeeded to those transports of affection and confidence, which used to attend their hours ; the queen's favours were now no longer conveyed through lord Darnley's hands ; the crowds of expectants no longer courted his patronage and interest—for it was now found of no avail by all ; and in himself he neither possessed political abilities, insinuating manners, or any other requisite for forming a party in his favour ; for amongst the nobles, some dreaded his furious temper, others complained of his perfidiousness, whilst all despised the weakness of his understanding, and the fickle inconstancy of his heart ; even the commonest people observed his conduct, and condemned it, as unbecoming the dignity of a king, and disgraceful to the noble ancestors he was descended from.

He was addicted to drunkenness beyond what the manners of the age would bear. He indulged in irregular passions in an

extent, which even the licentiousness of youth could not excuse : and by his negligent and disrespectful behaviour he provoked the queen to the utmost ; and the conflict of passions it occasioned often forced tears of bitterest anguish from her eyes, both in public and in private, her aversion to him increased daily, and could no longer be concealed, in spite of every prudent endeavour on her part, who dreaded an undeserved censure ; these sentiments of the queen soon becoming known to all, her indifference and neglect of him, set an example which was rapidly followed ; and lord Darnley was, in consequence, not considered as a king, but was left, in almost a deserted state of unpitied solitude.

The hour of the queen's delivery was now fast approaching, and as many factions in religious and other concerns, distracted the country, it was judged necessary for the best security for the person of

the queen during her confinement, that she should remove to the castle of Edinburgh, where both duty and affection called on the marchioness of Chiviot, to attend her during this hour of severe trial ; and by every effort in her power she essayed to cheer and comfort the drooping and alarmed spirits of the unhappy Mary. But ineffectual was every endeavour for that purpose ; a deep melancholy preyed on her continually ; the spirit of good humour and gaiety, which was her characteristic, had fled, and the rashness and levity of the choice she had so unfortunately made of an husband, contrary to the wishes and advice of those who formed a better judgment than herself, and who saw him in the true light which he must ever have appeared in, except to one under the influence of so powerful an infatuation as she had been.

The king's obstinacy and inconsistency filled her breast with shame and despair ;

a variety of passions preyed at once on a mind, all of whose sensations were exquisite, and emotions strong ; and their united aggravating affliction often extorted from her the last wish of the unfortunate, that life itself would terminate.

Under these distresses of mind, and these circumstances, was Mary delivered of a prince, whose birth filled the kingdom with joy ; and at that moment communicated the same to his before disconsolate mother : all about the queen rejoiced at the happy change effected by this most desirable event ; and from that circumstance, added to the assiduous care of all her faithful attendants, and more particularly the marchioness, the social, grateful and lively mind of the queen returned to its usual habits, the gloom was banished ; and in caressing her infant, and in prospects of the future joy and comfort his birth would afford her, she appeared to have discarded from her recollection all the horrors which,

before that event, had so powerfully possessed it.

But alas ! these pleasing chimeras were but of short duration, too soon the flattering vision vanished from her eyes,—her son was born to be to her alone unfortunate ; for though a great number of advantages to his country were the consequence of his birth, the wretched mother shared them not ; for she, torn early from her beloved son, by the cruelty of her fate, was never allowed to indulge those tender passions which fill the heart of the tender and anxious mother.

As Mary loved splendor and magnificence, she now determined to manifest her taste, and to celebrate the baptism of the young prince with the utmost pomp such a ceremony would admit of : and for that purpose sent invitations, by her ambassadors, to queen Elizabeth, the king of France, and the duke of Savoy, requesting

them to be sponsors to the illustrious infant.

The marchioness, who had watched the recovery of the queen with every possible tenderness, with revived spirits saw the preparations making for this happy occasion ; not only from the pleasure she herself enjoyed in such costly entertainments, where the first and greatest personages in Europe would personally, or by proxy assist ; but likewise from the hope she entertained that it would be the means of effecting a reconciliation between the king and queen ; though Mary, as yet, discovered no change of sentiments towards him to justify such a suggestion. The death of Rizzio, and the countenance he had given to an action so cruel, so insolent, and so unjustifiable, was still too recent, and too fresh in her memory for such an opinion to be reasonably formed. She still treated him with the utmost reserve, and his presence never failed to inspire

her with a dejection and melancholy, which were unconquerable.

About this time it was that the earl of Bothwell, who had long been a growing favourite with the queen, began to gain an intire ascendancy over all her actions ; and many now began to suspect that the dutiful respect which should have guided his conduct as a true and loyal subject, was fast changing to the sentiments of a lover ; of this change, even Mary herself did not appear insensible, nor, indeed, inclined to wish discountenanced.

The bold, aspiring, and adventurous Bothwell was not long unconscious that he had a warm advocate in the breast of Mary ; and however the following unhappy events of her wretched life are to be deplored or censured, it must be considered that she was now young, gay, and affable, possessing great sensibility of temper, and capable of the utmost tender-

ness of affection. She had placed her first love on an unworthy object, who requited it with neglect and ingratitude, and who had not only treated her with indifference, but with brutality, scorn, and insolence. All this she felt, and feeling, must resent. In this situation, the unremitting attentions and complaisance of a nobleman, who, on all occasions, had vindicated her authority, protected her person, who soothed all her passions, who watched and improved every opportunity of insinuating his designs, and recommending his passion, would scarcely fail of making an impression of the most lasting nature on a heart of such a frame as Mary's.

At this critical period, when the visible advance Bothwell made in the queen's affections, furnished sufficient matter of speculation to her enemies, and distressed her friends, the king was seized with a dangerous malady, which was, in general,

supposed to be the small-pox ; as he was judged to be in great danger, and as the fear of infection in that dreadful disorder in those days was very great, it was thought proper, both on that account, and for the benefit of a purer air for the sufferer himself, to remove him out of the city ; and by the queen's particular persuasion and advice, he was removed to a lone solitary house in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh.

On this melancholy occasion Mary appeared to have forgot all her former animosity, and to have forgiven all the former ill-treatment of Darnley, in his present repentance and promises of future amendment. As she attended him in this illness with all the assiduous attention which would have been the consequence of her first ardent passion for him, she seldom was absent from him in the day, she slept several nights together in the chamber under his apartment ; she heaped on him

so many marks of tenderness and confidence, as gave him the highest satisfaction, as from it he began to hope for the return of his former happiness, and that that affection which he had so long had reason to find he had forfeited from his own bad conduct, was on the point of being restored to him in its original warmth ; and already was his mind engaged in schemes of future felicity, in which the queen constantly encouraged him.

But alas ! frail is the foundation of all human hope, for even at the moment, when the glowing imagination presents the most flattering prospects to our view, and the mind in perfect security, thinks happiness on the very point of possession, we are, perhaps, standing on the brink of sudden destruction, or of death, and all our fairy dreams of felicity fade from our grasp : it was even so with the wretched Henry Darnley, who now conceived all his troubles would terminate when his

amending health was perfectly restored, and that with returning convalescence, he should find returning honours and happiness.

A masque being to be presented at the palace in Edinburgh, in honor of the nuptials of a favorite attendant ; the queen expressed a desire to be present at it ; and for that one night she left lord Darnley to the care of his attendants, with the strictest injunctions of attention to him till her return, but she never more returned ; for at an early hour in the morning, the house which the king inhabited was blown up with gun-powder.

The noise and shock which this sudden explosion occasioned (as must have been expected) alarmed the whole city. The inhabitants ran in crowds to the place from whence it came, and, to their utter dismay, found the dead body of the king, with that of a servant who slept in the

same room with him, lying in an adjacent garden without the city wall, untouched by fire, and without marks of bruise or violence.

Such was the dreadful catastrophe of Henry Stuart, earl of Darnley, in the twenty-first year of his age. His very great external beauty, without any other merit, had raised him to an height of dignity of which he was altogether unworthy, and his vices, follies, and ingratitude lost him the affections of a woman who once adored him. His insolence and caprice alienated the nobles from him; and his levity exposed him to the scorn of the common people, who would have gladly revered him as the descendant of their ancient kings and heroes. Had he died a natural death, his end would have been unlamented, and his memory have soon been lost in obscurity. But his cruel murder, attended with all its horrid and aggravating circumstances, and the slack-

ness with which it was avenged, have made his name to be remembered with regret, and served to render him an object of commiseration to succeeding ages.

Every one's imagination was at work to guess who had contrived and executed the execrable deed; the suspicion fell with almost general consent upon the earl of Bothwell; and of this opinion was even the marquis of Chiviot himself, who, before this dreadful transaction, had been attached to him by the strictest bonds of friendship: but as it was a point yet doubtful and undecided, he was unwilling to entertain so injurious and cruel a suspicion of a friend he had so much regarded, however circumstances might appear to warrant it, till it should really appear that he was criminal; and the marchioness's decided declaration of her firm assurance of his innocence, had great influence in favor of Bothwell on lord Chiviot's wavering resolutions concerning this horrible event.

The earl of Bothwell alone, was not the only person at whom suspicion pointed the finger. Reflections were not sparingly thrown out, that the queen herself was no stranger to the full extent of Bothwell's crime. Of this, no doubt, there was as clear an evidence as the nature of such a case would admit. The queen's known sentiments in regard to her husband, gave but too great a degree of probability to the imputation, which at that period, and ever since, her memory has sustained.

An event of such great consequence must well be supposed to have agitated the minds of all ranks of people to an extreme degree; and the most inflammatory papers were distributed against Bothwell, and his abettors; and that Mary did not trace the murderers of her husband, has ever, and ever will be alledged against her: but it must also be recollected that she had but little power amongst her factious and turbulent nobility. And it ap-

pears highly probable that Bothwell, when he was brought forward to his farce of a trial, had for his judges those, (whom together with his own ambitious views) had first instigated him to act the part he had done in the plot : therefore the result of an examination of this nature may easily be imagined. Bothwell was declared by the court to be perfectly innocent of the king's death, having any hand in it, or by any means contriving it ; but a decision of this partial nature, and the manner the trial had been conducted in, so far from appeasing the minds of the people, inflamed them to a still increased degree of rage against the supposed murderer and his associates, and they broke out into expressions and threats of the most alarming nature.

But the intrepid earl of Bothwell, perfectly inattentive to the general opinion of his actions, and elated by his success, and by the affection which the queen so evi-

dently had for him, and which even the stigma and suspicions he laboured under did not at all seem to diminish, encouraged him in the most daring hopes, even to the uniting himself to her: but as he could not be insensible, however he might brave it, how obnoxious he was at present to all ranks of people, and how impossible it would be for the queen to accept of his proposals, both on that account, and from the death of the lord Darnley being so recent, he determined on a shorter way of accomplishing his wishes, and of adding fresh disgust to the general odium, by a second outrage: for he contrived to seize the queen, and her attendants, as she was on a short excursion, and conveying her to his castle, he there confined her for several days, supposed forcibly; in consequence, it became necessary to her wounded honor, that she should immediately marry Bothwell, and the marriage accordingly took place very soon after her return to Edinburgh. How far she was to blame

respecting this most unfortunate transaction of her life, must be reserved for the historian to prove. But from this unhappy period, continual disorder and confusion ensued, loyalty and obedience to the royal authority were no longer regarded, but despised and abused. No entreaties to the queen could induce her to separate herself from the hated Bothwell; and she frequently declared that she would relinquish her crown and kingdom rather than forego his society. Unhappy or infatuated Mary!—the consequences of such a resolution could not fail of being fatal; and subsequent events proved how dreadfully so.—

The extraordinary circumstances, and wonderful revolutions which had filled Mary's short but eventful reign, had so quickly succeeded each other, that they had scarcely admitted time to lord and lady Chiviot to think of the castle's beloved inhabitants; whose health and welfare they

however heard of as frequently as was possible ; and the marquis often congratulated himself, that his highly prized children were so far removed from the turbulent scene of continual contention Edinburgh exhibited ; and the marchioness's attachment was so warm to the falling Mary, that notwithstanding the great extent of her maternal feelings, as she well knew her children were well and happy, she could not bring herself to leave her dear sovereign in the distressing difficulties she was now in, nor could she bear the idea of implied ingratitude, which might naturally have been supposed, had she now quitted her when the consolation of a true and faithful friend was so great a comfort, and so absolutely necessary.

Added to this, the marchioness had a natural turn for political intrigue, and often suggested, to her royal mistress, ideas which were beneficial to her ; and was, on all occasions, an able adviser, and in-

defatigable friend, and never forsook her in every subsequent misery which she had to encounter, till all was lost ; and that the forlorn, wretched, and deserted Mary, deprived of her crown, of her kingdom, of her child, and all she held dear on earth, threw herself into the false protection of the cruel, hypocritical Elizabeth, her mortal enemy, her unjust and inexorable persecutor : and that the government was firmly settled on the infant king, nothing then remained, no attachment, no advice, no friendship could now assist the hapless sufferer, no power could release her from the fatal asylum she had so precipitately chosen.

Ill-fated queen! if a little longer you had endured in your own kingdom, the hearts of your own subjects would have commiserated your afflictions, and would have relieved the burthen of them. But it was not to be. Over the faults and errors of your life, let charity and humanity draw a

veil ; let the circumstances which urged them be duly weighed, and well considered ; let the time and manners of the age they were transacted in be recollected ; let the education which you had received, the examples you had witnessed, and the principles, in consequence, imbibed, be remembered ; and, above all, let the dreadful retribution which you have experienced, balance and extenuate all your blemishes : and, when again, your youth, your beauty, your accomplishments, and many princely endowments are reflected on, where is the heart so cold, or mind so inflexible, which can refuse the tribute of a sigh to the memory of one so lovely, so illustrious in birth, and so unfortunate ?

Nothing, now, was left to the marchioness, but to retire, and deplore a destiny in no human power to alter or alleviate ; for the marchioness was too well versed in politics to be deceived for one moment, by the specious and ostentatious display

of Elizabeth's friendship and pity for the forlorn, and forsaken queen, who had taken refuge in her dominions. Happy would it have been for Mary had her discernment been equally acute ; for, though at that time, no idea entered lady Chiviot's thoughts of personal danger to Mary, she yet did not entertain the least doubt but that she would be for ever considered by Elizabeth as a state prisoner.

This distressing apprehension embittered every hour, and the thought of shortly embracing her dear children, was the only comfort she was capable of attending to ; and she earnestly urged the marquis to return to the castle, for two years had now elapsed since she had beheld those dear objects of her affection ; and so much had her time and her thoughts been engrossed by the important transitions, which, during that period had taken place, that she could scarcely believe so long a space had intervened since their separation. But now

that all hope of the restoration of Mary was for ever extinguished, and those being in power whose principles and interests were inimical to the marquis,—they resolved immediately to leave Edinburgh, the seat of so much anarchy;—and turned their thoughts now only on the pleasure they should experience, in seeing the great improvements which had taken place in their children, and the surprize they expected to find in their increased growth and improved looks.

The numerous distractions which at this time divided and disturbed the nobility, the various opinions and interests which each adopted according to his ideas, and the extraordinary current of public affairs, had caused so much alination amongst those who had originally been friends; and the extreme jealousies and animosities religious controversies occasioned, prevented the Chiviot family from having so many regrets as might have been

expected at leaving the capital, where they had so long resided ; and when the preparations for that purpose were complete, they bid adieu to it without regret ; one only pang they felt, and that was inflicted by the mournful recollection of the unhappy Mary.

CHAP. XV.



ALL that the marquis and his lady had pictured to themselves of the improvement of their children, fell short, far short of the pleasing reality, which when they were presented to them on their arrival at Chiviot, they observed and repeatedly declared ; the joy which this gave to the hearts of the fond parents, can only be conceived by those who have experienced a similar sensation ; and the mutual joy they testified at seeing their loved and respected parents, added

to their delight. Lady Grace still retained her usual sweetness of disposition and simplicity of manners, and the extreme and overbearing vivacity of lady Catherine appeared to be corrected in a great measure, by the prudent and good management of Mrs. Morton; who, with unwearied application, had done all that was in the power of cultivation to render lady Catherine what she wished her to be.

But if their joy was great at the manifest improvement of the young ladies, it amounted to rapture when they embraced their darling and only boy, lord Melrose, who was so greatly altered, and his health so much amended, that they could hardly recognize, in the full-grown form, and rosy cheeks, which now presented themselves to their view, the pale, delicate, and sickly child they had left; and in this happy moment, all the political toils they had been so long engaged in were forgot; and the blooming looks of their darling

Theodore (now in his fifteenth year) seemed amply to repay all the anxieties which they had undergone, and they truly felt, and gratefully to heaven acknowledged, their sense of it, for they found (a truth which no sophistry can controvert) domestic happiness is the greatest earthly felicity.

The introduction of Janet Macdonald, and the subsequent intimacy it had occasioned, was now mentioned to the marchioness, when lady Catherine broke forth into such extravagant praises of her dear Janet, and of her own great affection for her, that lady Chiviot expressed a desire to see Janet, whom it was now so long since she had noticed, both on account of the warm manner lady Catherine expressed herself in, and likewise to observe whether nature had been more liberal to her children than she had been to Janet Macdonald; she, therefore, according to lady

Chiviot's desire, immediately entered the room.

So much struck was the marchioness by the appearance of this young girl, that she was some minutes before she spoke,—but when she did, it was in terms of great encouragement and condescension; for notwithstanding the marchioness's high ideas, there was a fascination about Janet, which even she defied by all her consequence, could not resist; the very strong likeness which she bore to lady Grace, was the thing which had so greatly astonished the marchioness at the moment of her introduction; for though she had, before, frequently remarked it in her childhood, two years and upwards since she had seen her, had so confirmed and increased it, that it filled her with amaze, and greatly added to the favorable impression Mrs. Morton's account had made on her mind.

Neither was the marchioness unac-

quainted with the generally received opinion respecting Macdonald's birth, and the circumstance she was then contemplating; the similarity of form and feature Janet bore to lady Grace, seemed to put the matter past dispute, confirming so substantially every report of that nature.

This circumstance served more to establish Janet in the marchioness's good graces — and she likewise knew that as Macdonald was rich, and this his only child, she would always be enabled to hold a genteel situation in life; and that from the great probability of her being allied to the family, she thought it a kind of duty to permit a continuance of the friendship professed by her daughters for Janet; and that her own personal merit deserved the countenance given to her: she therefore did not express any disapprobation when she was informed how much of Janet's time had been spent with the young ladies, or of Mrs. Morton's attention to her edu-

cation ; and with great kindness and condescension, gave a general permission to Janet, to be with the young ladies in the same manner that she had, before her return from Edinburgh.

The happy and triumphant Macdonald, on hearing this intelligence, congratulated himself warmly on the success of his plans, and in the notice the marchioness had already taken of his beloved Janet, hailed more than the dawn, of his future greatness, as he conceived it rapidly approaching its meridian ; joyfully he caressed Janet, loaded her with praises on the propriety of her behaviour, and gave her the strictest charges to cultivate the friendship of the young ladies with the greatest assiduity ; to pay the utmost respect to the marchioness, who had done her so much honour ; and to improve herself to the utmost of her abilities, from the opportunities she now had the advantage of ending his instructions and advice, by observing

she did not know what might be her future fate ; and that it was most probable, if she minded what she was about now, she might be as good a lady as the best of them.

This was not lost upon the penetrating Janet ; she felt the justness of the observations, and her own designing mind already conceived her father's ideas ; the consequence of which was a fixed determination to exert her utmost efforts to preserve that situation in the estimation of the family she had already had possession of.

The great variety of circumstances which had so rapidly taken place during the marquis's residence in Edinburgh, and the many distresses which had befallen the illustrious Mary, had been of so serious a nature, that they, ever since he had left Chiviot Castle, had so entirely engaged his attention, that the extraordinary event

which had taken place the night before he left it, was nearly banished from his memory ; and even though the wood, where the mystic scene had taken place, bounded the prospect from his chamber windows, it had never occurred to him since his return, till forcibly recalled by a chance walk near the spot, with the marchioness and the rest of his family ; when, to his utter consternation, he observed some dying embers exactly in the same spot, and in the same state he had witnessed them on that memorable night.—Gracious heaven ! said he, starting with astonishment, as he beheld this emblem of the horror he had suffered.—Gracious Providence, what can this mean ?

The marchioness turned her eyes on her husband, and the paleness of his cheek filled her with alarm.—What causes this agitation, my dear lord, replied the marchioness, has any sudden disorder affected you ?

The marquis had by this time recovered his composure of mind, and resolved, let what would be the consequence, not to fill her mind with imaginary fears ; and at the same time knowing he must account for his sudden exclamation, availed himself of her enquiry, and replied that a sudden pain had darted through his heart, so excruciating it had caused him to speak as he had done, but assured her it was now nearly removed.

Her fears, on this account, made her pass the spot without observing the embers, or if she had, most probably she would not have thought them worth a remark or question ; and finding that his spirits appeared much altered, and that the paleness continued, entreated him to return to the castle for some cordial to revive him.

The marquis was glad of an excuse to return, and saying he would rest a while upon his couch ; they then, wishing him

a repose which would perfectly restore him, left him to his meditations.

Glad was the marquis of the relief of being left to himself, that he might freely reflect on the circumstance which caused him an alarm which he could not conquer.

There can remain no doubt, said the marquis, that the wood is the scene of some nightly incantation, and the horrid hag I saw, whose hideous figure can never be erased from my ideas, and whose dreadful words make my blood chill to reflect on, is one who joins these rights; detested beings whose only delight, whose only business is, to perplex and bewilder, ever distressing and harrassing the imagination, without ever giving a clue to your mysterious and mischiveous denunciation: but I will not, continued the marquis, be the dupe of artful deceptions and ambiguous inuendoes.—I will, without delay, tho-

roughly investigate the business, and I hope discover the source of their contrivances, and the origin of the prediction which, at the time, gave me so much uneasiness.

The marquis here paused—he paced his room, deeply ruminating on the subject, and at last determined, without giving the slightest intimation to any one of the past circumstances, or his present suspicions, at midnight to return to the wood, and watch for the mysterious and supernatural flame, for such he denominated it, and did not entertain a doubt but it was.

In some degree composed by this resolve, the marquis again joined his family, and said he found himself perfectly recovered from the trifling indisposition which he had complained of, which gave them great pleasure, but he was abstracted and silent; he longed for the approach of night, and never had hours appeared so

long to him ; for, having formed his design, which nothing could have dissuaded him from, he was impatient for its execution ; and time had never before appeared so irksome to him.

At length the castle clock proclaimed the long-wished and welcome hour of retiring, which he trusted was the prelude to his mind being relieved from the perplexing doubts which filled it ; therefore, making an excuse to the marchioness for his not retiring at the same hour which she did, which was perfectly satisfactory, he took an affectionate leave of her, and with a palpitating heart entered his study, there to remain till all was quiet, and the family gone to their repose.

Not long had he remained there, when the universal silence which prevailed assured him all were in their respective apartments ; he then, with great caution, unbared the folding doors which led to the

terrace, and hastily bent his way to the mystic wood.

But far different were the sensations with which he now pursued the walk, to what they were the first night he went it, then allured by the bright lustre of the full orb'd moon, whose softened beams stole over the beauteous landscape, beguiling his steps to pleasure, and the fragrant breath of an autumnal evening, cheering him with its sweetness, and inspiring the most pleasing ideas: but now, how changed the scene; it was winter, chilling and bleak; the richly-furred plaid which he had thrown over his shoulders, was scarcely sufficient to protect him from the howling blast which whistled round him, and from the inclemency of its influence: the trees stripped of that verdure which had before charmed his eye, presented only a distressing memento of the fleeting joys of frail mortality; even circumstances and his own ideas were changed like the times,

and like the season ; his sovereign was *then* at the summit of her glory, lovely and beloved ; happiness and prosperity went hand in hand ; at that time he had pursued this walk unconscious of fear, and without apprehension ; but now, sad reverse in every particular: he had to mourn the royal Mary's cruel fate, and most likely, at this moment, it might be his destiny to meet a confirmation of the worst fears, which could be presented to his imagination. Yet, notwithstanding these unpleasant cogitations, the beating of the winter's tempest, and the unknown and indescribable horrors he might encounter, he still went on,—insatiable curiosity, that resistless pleader, urging him on, regardless of the storm, or future consequences.

He had gained the wood, and now with increased caution, and a less degree of susceptibility of cold, as his attention became more engaged, he entered it—he paused—fearful to advance—and yet de-

terminated not to retreat ; all was silent and dear, but collecting all his resolution, he proceeded further into it, and as he conceived, proceeded towards the place where the trees were situated from whence he had observed the flame to issue, for this he trusted entirely to chance, as no friendly gleam of light directed his gloomy way ; and finding his steps much impeded by the shrubs and dry sticks which lay in abundance on the ground, he stopped a while to consider which way he should proceed ; when, instantaneously, to his appaled sight, the terrific fire broke forth, with a clear, bright and blue flame, casting a broad reflection on all around, and discovering to the marquis's fixed and astonished eyes, that he was on the exact spot where he had first witnessed it ; and that the same tremendous, and gigantic figure he had at first seen, stood opposite him, with eyes of malignant pleasure earnestly fixed on him, whilst she repeated, in the same wild strain as before, the following

words, which the petrified marquis attended to, the statue of horror :

Sluggard marquis—hence away,
Seek thy heir, without delay ;
But hark, I hear the raven sing,
To-morrow's dawn, will tidings bring.

From foster'd vipers—harms ensue,
A foster'd viper ! may sting you :
The mystic fire, may mischief bring,
Avoid thou that—and viper's sting.

Enough of destiny—you know
Man's short life—is toil and woe ;
Sluggard marquis—haste away,
Sorrow waits the coming day.

At the conclusion of these words, the fire suddenly vanished, and left the marquis in total obscurity. Overpowered beyond the bounds of description, he stood for some minutes deprived of the powers of speech or motion. The awful silence which reigned around, the apparently increased gloom, from the great contrast of

the glowing light which had but a moment before illuminated the scene, increased the terrors and apprehensions of his mind, whilst the strange and fatal prophecies, the dire mystical words conveyed, sank into his heart, and filled it with doubt and sorrow.

Again his thoughts rested on his dear Theodore: I must lose that beloved youth, said he, that certainly must be implied, else why so often commanded to seek my heir? but sure, continued he, convulsed with agony as the thought crossed his mind, surely he will be spared to me beyond to-morrow. What direful misfortune do these words portend?—what viper's sting—have I to dread?—can that imply some secret enemy which I have, who, perhaps, at this moment, meditates my destruction! a nearer calamity may probably now threaten me. My Theodore! he retired to his bed well and healthy—but a thousand dangers may attend him

in his slumbers ; fits, assassins, fire, some human viper may now assail him, some dreadful malady effect him, whilst I, his father, stand here ruminating on possibilities, and not at hand, to protect him from the midnight dangers which may approach his couch.

This supposition instantly banished from the marquis's mind, all further fear of supernatural appearances ; and though his steps were not firm, a universal trembling having seized his whole frame, from the great agitation of his mind ; yet the ready suggestions of danger which might affect his Theodore, so far conquered it, and added such rapidity to his steps, that in a very short time he regained the castle ; where, to his infinite satisfaction, he found all things just exactly as he had left them, and all in the same state of quiet and repose ; nothing gave him any reason to suppose that the family had had the most trifling disturbance since his absence ; no

symptom of fire, assassins, or other nightly horrors appearing to have taken place ; in a great measure tranquilized by this favorable circumstance, he took the light which he had left burning upon his table, and with cautious tip-toe steps, ascended the stairs which led to lord Melrose's apartment ; in breathless silence and anxiety he listened at his door, all was still ; but his apprehensions not yet being appeased, he gently tried the lock, which, to his infinite joy, did not resist his efforts ; and though he mentally blamed the carelessness of his attendants for leaving the door unsecured, it was a very great happiness to him to find it so. He entered the room with the same caution with which he had before proceeded, to prevent alarm, and soon saw the object of all his care, of all his terrors, in a calm and profound sleep, perfectly unconscious of, and unannoyed with the least idea of his father's wretchedness on his account.

The marquis clasped his hands together, in fervent thanks to heaven for the blessing it presented to his delighted eyes, his dear Theodore in perfect safety, and sinking on his knees by the bed-side of his son, earnestly implored the blessing of the Almighty on him, and to preserve him from every threatening danger; then pressing a fervent kiss on his glowing cheek, and finding the night far spent, and no appearance of the least interruption of repose, he gently, and with the same precaution he had entered, withdrew; and closing the door as securely as he could, left him in the same undisturbed repose in which he had found him.

Greatly relieved by these circumstances, the marquis again began severely to reproach himself for his folly and credulity, for letting so strange a deception (for such he now wished to persuade himself it was) so far get the better of his judgment and reason, as to fill his mind with such un-

manly trepidations and terrors. Every argument which his own good sense could furnish him with he brought forward, to stagger the validity of what he had seen and heard, and to comfort his truly harassed and depressed spirits; and being in reality much fatigued, and the approach of day near, he sought his bed, and soon in nature's sweet oblivion, forgot all which had so recently distressed and agitated his mind.

CHAP. VIII.



THE morning no sooner dawned, than the marquis started from his repose, for, with redoubled force, the horrid circumstances of the preceding night rushed on his recollection ; and he wondered how it had been possible for him to compose himself to sleep, when matters of so great importance filled his thoughts. Hastily calling on one of his domestics, his first anxious enquiry was after lord Melrose ; and he heard, with heart-felt satisfaction, that he

was perfectly well, and about to prepare to receive his morning lessons ; but the anxious father, fearful of trusting him one minute out of his sight on this portentous day, sent back immediately to request his tutor would oblige him by omitting the morning studies, and that he would permit lord Melrose to come to him immediately. This message was instantly obeyed, and the agitated parent beheld his loved Theodore enter his apartment in all the gaiety of youthful sprightliness.

At this joyful sight the marquis again blamed himself for giving way to such ideal distress ; he folded his boy to his heart, in all the fondness of paternal love, and with that kind of extasy, as though just delivered from some dreadful situation, or rescued from the brink of a precipice ; repeatedly he enquired after his health, with an earnestness of solicitude which astonished the hearers ; and whilst he mentally accused himself of weakness and credulity,

he found it impossible to conquer the dread he had conceived of the terrific denunciation which still sounded in his ears : the horror of which still operating on his mind, caused him again more firmly to resolve not to let his treasure be for one moment out of his sight till this dreaded day had passed.

They now descended to the breakfast-room, where the marchioness soon joined them ; and by lord Chiviot's particular request, the young ladies were sent for, to come and partake the meal.

Never had the marquis's heart expanded with such genuine pleasure—never had he experienced such supreme delight as at this moment, when he beheld his blooming children in health and cheerfulness, seated by his side ; his mind had been wound up to the highest pitch of terror and alarm ; he had dreaded the return of day as the harbinger of misery ; and he

now beheld and enjoyed its return with ten-fold happiness, surrounded, as at this moment, by all which constituted his felicity : the great and mutual satisfaction all felt had induced them to prolong the breakfast far beyond the usual time allotted for it : and the marquis was deeply engaged in recounting some entertaining juvenile adventure of his, to his attentive and delighted auditors, when a messenger in the Chiviot livery, breathless with haste, rode up to the castle gate, and loudly blew the bugle ; the marquis, who was all eye and ear, and ready to catch at the most trivial cause of alarm, was the first to observe him, and starting up, in the greatest perturbation, loudly called for his instant admission ; but already had the porter opened the gate, and the messenger was admitted ; who being, by his desire, instantly conducted to the presence of the marquis, bowing low, with great respect, but in profound silence, he delivered into his hands a sealed paper, and then retired

to a distant part of the room, to wait his commands.

With trembling fingers the marquis tore it open ; he fixed his extended eyes upon the letter ; in a few moments it fell from his hands, which, clasping together on his forehead in the greatest agony, he sunk down on the sofa behind him, without uttering a word, or breathing a groan.

The alarmed marchioness and attendants flew to his assistance with such restoratives as the moment offered, but some minutes elapsed before the marquis exhibited any signs of recovery : but when in some degree restored, he motioned the servants from his presence, and then addressed lady Chiviot :

My dear Margaret, said he, in the most pathetic accents, we have lost our dear, our beloved brother Charles !—he paused, for grief choaked his utterance ;—read,

continued he, that fatal billet, which communicates the distressing, the heart-rending intelligence.

The marchioness now nearly experienced the same emotion as her lord,—twice she perused the distressing paper before she was convinced she was correct, but still the same statement was presented, which was, that lord Charles Douglas, having been in company where he had been greatly irritated, by some severe and cruel reflections on his royal mistress, had warmly resented it ; aggravation on each side having proceeded to the last extremity, a duel was the consequence, in which lord Charles had fallen the unfortunate victim of his faithful and sincere attachment to his oppressed and unhappy queen, leaving his widowed lady inconsolably for his loss.

When the marquis had a little recovered from the first shock this intelligence had

given him, (which was doubly severe from the enervated state his mind was in from the horrors of the preceding night) and had given some vent to his fraternal sorrow, tenderly taking the hand of lady Chiviot, —This, my beloved, said he, is but the dawn of those sorrows for which it is necessary we should prepare ourselves ; little do you now conceive for what we are reserved, and unwilling am I to wound your affectionate heart with the dire presages which distract mine ; but we shall soon loose——I plainly see it is heaven's decree—we shall lose our adored Theodore ; and every other known and valued branch of our family.

The astonished marchioness trembled at the strange and incoherent words of her lord, and could by no means account for so dreadful and singular a declaration, but from supposing the sudden shock had, for the moment, affected his brain with a slight degree of delirium ; in the most soothing

accents, she therefore said, do not, my most dear lord, let this grievous misfortune which we have met with, however unexpected and distressing, cause you impatiently to murmur at the dispensations of Providence, which are always just and proper ; for though, by his permission, we are now deprived of a dear and amiable friend, in the prime of life cut off, from our hopes ;—yet repine not beyond the limits of reason and discretion, but turning your eyes on the blessings which you yet enjoy, know the value of them, and be thankful,—recal to your recollection, how much more severe is the fate of our dear queen, whose fame your valued brother so nobly, though fatally, defended ; we have our darling children in our care, and have liberty and affluence, whilst our wretched and disconsolate sovereign mourns alike her imprisonment ; and being denied a mother's comfort to embrace her only child. Contrast then, my love,

our situations, and let it fortify us to bear our lot with patience.

Ah ! little, dear Margaret, answered the marquis, can you judge the sorrow which preys upon my mind ! but, checking himself, he forbore to add what might raise her curiosity, and lead to an explanation, which would add so greatly to her affliction, without in any respect mitigating the severity of what he felt ; hastily, therefore, dropping the subject, as fearing to trust himself to say more, he requested the messenger might again be called into his presence, to enquire of him more particularly into the nature of this misfortune. The servant instantly attending ; the marquis was by him informed that lord Charles had been provoked by his antagonist beyond the limits of human forbearance, that not only the most sarcastic observations had been cast on the queen, but many had glanced likewise on his beloved Arabella, for no other reason than being allied to

Mary. This last provocation, added to all the other insults which he had received, could not be any longer endured, and no alternative was left but what lord Charles had chosen; and in the re-encounter which immediately took place, lord Charles was run through the heart, and instantly expired.

With the most fixed attention and deepest grief, the marquis listened to this recital; he loved his brother with the tenderest affection, and they had always lived together in the strictest terms of amity; his sudden loss then must naturally be supposed greatly to affect him; and it was not this loss alone, which now distracted his mind. His alarms and grief were heightened by the dreaded apprehension of the future; one branch of his family was now for ever severed from the tree; and the fatal prognostications of the mystic wood, every moment appeared with accu-

mulated horrors to his distressed imagination.

The unhappy state of the widowed Arabella now claimed his regard, and he resolved immediately to set out for her residence, and to offer every consolation in his power ; but on this occasion he was equally determined to take lord Melrose with him, as he never more intended to leave him for one moment, without his own particular protection.

Having written a letter, in which he said all his own distracted heart could dictate, by way of consolation to the afflicted and amiable widow, he sent off the messenger, ordering him to say, that the marchioness and himself, in two days, would follow ; that they might mutually render every service, and administer every comfort in their power, and arrange plans for conducting the remains of lord Charles to the family vault, in the chapel of Chi-

viot castle ; after which awful ceremony, they hoped she would remain their guest until the first effusions of her sorrow was mitigated.

This temporary relief given to the disturbance of his mind, the marquis ordered Macdonald to be called to him ; his intention was to make enquiry of him whether he knew of any remote, or poor relation of his house, of whose circumstances and relationship he might be enabled to give some particulars ; but when Macdonald, in consequence of the marquis's orders, attended, his resolution failed, the words faltered and died on his tongue ; it appeared to him the completion of his destiny, the death of his son ; and he felt, that if he should ask Macdonald the necessary questions, and any person he named, that he should be so much affected by it, as to be totally incapable of those exertions which he was now called on for ; and for the discharge of those duties humanity required

towards lady Arabella Douglas : he therefore merely said, that he had intended to consult with him on a subject of some importance ; but as yet, it was time enough, and that he should defer the intended discourse till more convenient leisure offered ; he then acquainted him with his intention of going to lady Arabella, to attend the mournful procession of his brother's funeral back to Chiviot castle ; and recommended the peculiar care of his family to him during his absence ; which he added, should be but for as short a space as possible, or the nature of the unhappy business permitted ; and he desired that all the preparation for receiving the respected remains of his brother, might be such as became his affection, and the high rank of lord Charles Douglas.

With great attention and respect, Macdonald promised to see these things properly and faithfully performed. He expressed his unfeigned affliction at this me-

lancholy and untimely event, and his distress when he contemplated lady Arabella's loss ; with his earnest hope that time would sooth the sufferings of the whole family. He then humbly thanked the marquis for the very great honor he had conferred on him, by permitting his daughter to associate so much with the young ladies, and the very great advantage which she had derived from it, both from the improvement of their conversation, and by the kind attentions of Mrs. Morton ; for which he never could sufficiently express his gratitude : and requested to know whether his lord and lady would still continue to her so high and estimable a favor during the absence which was about to take place.

By all means, Macdonald, replied the marquis ; it always gives me pleasure to render you a service, for I ever have considered you as having peculiar claims upon me, independent of what the good services

of your situation in my family has merited; but setting all that aside, I hear so very favorable an account of your daughter from all parties, that, on her own account alone, and as a reward for her good qualities, I am perfectly well disposed, and I am sure so is lady Chiviot, to give her every possible encouragement.

With the most obsequious acknowledgments, Macdonald retired, but inwardly swelling with increased pride, and strengthened hopes of future greatness, so tacit an avowal as the marquis had now made of his claims upon him, he had never expected to hear; he supposed it proceeded from his heart being softened, and humbled by affliction; but whatever the cause, the effect was the same: he concluded it nothing less than the marquis's acknowledging him for a brother, and determined from this time forward to consider himself such, and in no other light, and as his elder, so his superior; and whatever in-

terest he might have in his attention to the duties of his employment, should henceforward be exerted only in the prospect of promoting his own expectations, and the only warm wish his heart was capable of, or had ever formed, that of seeing his daughter future marchioness of Chiviot. In Janet he had ever yet found a most apt and ready scholar, and a true, though unconscious, promoter of all his plans, for a similarity of sentiment caused her to act as much in unison with her father's wishes, as though she were fully acquainted with them. Her daily care was, to render herself acceptable to all the family; and she would have been happy to have been particularly so to the young lord; but, by some fatality attendant on her exertions, he proved the only one of the family on whom her attractions, attentions, and fascinations, were lost and ineffectual.

But Janet was not of a disposition to

give way to despair at trifling disappointments; and though she could not help feeling how different lord Melrose's behaviour to her was from the rest, yet she attributed it to his being a rude, unthinking boy, but that in a short time, his sentiments towards her might be very different; and that she would still continue every method in her power to obtain his regard.

Macdonald, when he reflected on his late conversation with the marquis, almost despised him for not having sufficient penetration to fathom his plans; he repeatedly congratulated himself on his superior understanding, and how much greater his merit would be in acquiring titles and riches by his own good management, than in having them in consequence of birth; and he found infinite satisfaction in the idea that, though the laws had made the marquis his superior in society; that na-

ture, unrestrained by those punctilios, had given him powers of imagination sufficient to circumvent the legitimate line, and place himself and family in their deserted situation.

The marquis and his family set out on their painful visit, according to appointment, to the house of the afflicted mourner, lady Arabella, and in two weeks afterwards, the pensive cavalcade, who with slow and solemn steps advanced, bearing the body of the amiable nobleman, whose loyalty to his deserted sovereign his death had so fatally and incontestibly proved, entered the court-yard of the castle of Chiviot.

Magnificently awful was the solemnity; no honor, which could be shewn to his memory, was omitted; and he was consigned to the earth amidst such heart-felt exclamations of sorrow, from all his family

and dependants, as fully and more honorably proved his true nobility, than the numerous escutchions which adorned the velvet herse ; and the grief of his heart-broken lady, of the sorrowing brother, and lady Chiviot, (in a manner superior to all other panegerics) bespoke his domestic virtues.

This melancholy ceremony concluded, and lord Charles deposited in his premature grave, each tender connection endeavoured as much as possible to conceal his own particular grief, fearful of encreasing the affliction of each other ; this resolution was mutually serviceable, as each really exerted himself to conquer the feelings of a misfortune for which there was no remedy ; the pleasure too, which each found in the society of the charming children, was the grand source from whence (at this moment of distress) the stream of comfort and of consolation flowed ; their innocent and

enlivening conversation, often chased the tears from the fine eyes of lady Arabella, and caused a smile of love and approbation—and often drove from the marquis's the corroding apprehension, which but too much, and too greatly oppressed it.

CHAP. IX.



LORD WILLIAM DOUGLAS, the marquis's youngest brother, who had attended with truly fraternal affection lord Charles's funeral, had lately sustained so great an affliction, that his mind, as yet, had by no means recovered from its effects ; and this second calamity added so greatly to it, that it appeared to him insupportable It has been before observed, that he had fixed his affections on Alice Graham, a young lady who was about the person of the queen.

She was a model of beauty, and goodness of heart, and the admiration which her charms had excited, soon became a confirmed and settled affection, when the many amiable qualities she possessed became fully known to him, and a mutual passion subsisting, and every part of each family highly approving: the time appointed for their nuptials was fast approaching, when (a few months previous to the untimely death of lord Charles) this amiable and lovely lady was seized with the small pox, and had fallen a victim to that devastating disorder, and the late blooming and beautiful Alice died a figure so changed, that even the fond and partial eyes of her adoring lover could not recognize.

The consequences of this loss had been of the most fatal nature to lord William; at the moment he was on the point of calling the lovely Alice his, to see her snatched from his hopes by so cruel a disease, was a wound no time could heal,

his grief had been deep, silent and unobtrusive, but it had preyed on his vitals, and exhibited the most alarming symptoms in his person; his family were shocked when they beheld his sunk and fireless eyes, and emaciated frame, which, at first, they attributed to the excess of his sorrow, but hoped that time would alleviate and restore his usual looks of health and composure, but for this favorable change they looked in vain: the marquis, in trembling apprehension, beheld his care-worn brother with an anxiety the most distressing. The health of his dear brother became a consideration of the utmost importance to him; and as every sense of danger to his family was in the marquis doubly acute, he was ever in dread, ever distressing his mind with unfounded terrors, and paying attention to minute trifles which, though his affection would ever have been equally great, he would never have regarded; but from the mysterious warning in the wood, this filled his heart with more than feme-

nine weakness, in observing every minutia respecting the health of his highly-prized relatives : this filled him with horrors on the most insignificant complaint, and he was continually conceiving, in dreadful perspective, the dreary tomb again opening, to receive some other of his most dearly loved family.

Urged on by these distressing ideas, and the fear of losing his now only brother, he endeavoured to rouse and amuse lord William.

The marchioness too, alarmed on his account, from not observing any amendment in him, but on the contrary, an increased dejection of spirits (though totally unacquainted with her lord's dreadful surmises), exerted herself to the utmost in every kind effort and tender office which might be likely to contribute towards the re-establishment of his health ; for as she was a stranger to the source of the marquis's

fears, she had better spirits and more resolution : even the grief, oppressed, and heart-broken lady Arabella Douglas, joined in the charitable task of striving to cheer the drooping lord William ; and well did she know how to sympathize with him. She, too, had experienced the pang of separation from the object of a first and ardent affection, she therefore strove earnestly to give that consolation she herself so greatly needed, and found so difficult to attend to.

But with lord William, though perfectly sensible of, and full of gratitude for the kindness of his family, every act of friendship, or affection proved ineffectual towards removing the weight of sorrow from his heart ; grief and disappointment had made so rapid an inroad on a constitution naturally delicate, which the loss of his Alice, so soon followed by the unhappy and unexpected death of his best beloved brother, so far increased the malignity of

the effects of the first sorrow, that he fell into a deep decline, which baffled every care, assistance, or advice, the almost frantic marquis's most liberal rewards could procure or administer: and six months after the death of lord Charles, the lamented lord William breathed his last sigh, in the arms of the agonized marquis, who, totally overcome by mental horrors, present and future, and by bodily exertions in watchings and attendance on his beloved brother, fainted away on the inanimate body he had been for the last two hours sustaining in his arms, and whose expiring convulsions his bursting heart had felt.

With difficulty was the marquis removed from this melancholy scene to his his own apartment. The lady Chiviot's distress was beyond description; for she dreaded the effect these multiplied calamities would have on the mind of her husband; but had she known the full extent of what he suffered, how much more would

her terrors have been excited?—how much worse than him would she have supported herself?

The wretched marquis rested his form on the couch where they had laid him, but his distracted mind was torn with trouble too great for human fortitude.

One only tie now remained, one only prop of hope—if that failed—he durst not think—he could not turn his ideas to so black, so dire an alternative;—and he groaned in anguish over the fallen hopes and honors of his house; not one moment now doubting the fulfilment of the cruel destiny predicted.

Again the silent, gloomy vault of Chiviot chapel opened, to receive the deeply deplored remains of the beloved lord William; again its venerable walls were hung with sable, and the long procession, with the same awful solemnity as before, slowly

paced its aisles, to deposit in its last mansion the mouldering clay. Humiliating idea! when we reflect that the most exquisite masterpiece of nature's beauty, the most benevolent heart, the rarest genius, the most profound scholar, and the most lively and entertaining, alike are condemned to this oblivious state, with the most despicable and unworthy, no merit, no talents, claiming the pity of that inexorable tyrant death—who, triumphing over all, renders unavailing the sigh of bitter anguish, the tear of heart-rending distress; so was lord William consigned to his tomb: such were the tributes paid to his memory, to his merits, and to his misfortunes.

CHAP. X.



It was now that the marquis, more deeply than ever ruminating on a fate which appeared to him inevitable, resolved to call forth all his fortitude and philosophy, and set on foot the necessary investigation which had been so strangely commanded; and though the implied consequence of such an enquiry were far worse than a sentence of death to himself, he yet conceived it was a duty impossible for him to omit performing, or if he did,

some still more terrific circumstance might take place.

Having fixed this resolve, his next resolution was, as he had experienced such a succession of domestic distresses since his return to Chiviot, to leave it for a time, and return to Edinburgh with all his family; for though so warmly attached to the queen, and in general disliking the parties in power, as either knowing or supposing them her enemies; yet he conceived the recent misfortunes of his family would be sufficient excuse for his declining taking part, or opinion in any public affairs, and for the excluding manner in which he meant to live for retirement and solitude, which was now best suited to the late gay and magnificent marquis of Chiviot. The horrifying words "Seek thy heir," were for ever sounding in his ears; they haunted his nightly dreams, and were his daily meditation; and the burthen of his thoughts on this subject became so insupportable,

that he found it became absolutely necessary for the preservation of his reason, that he should ease his heart, by communicating the harrowing cause of his affliction : and again Macdonald appeared the only proper person for his confidence, and one the best qualified to assist him, and direct his search after the 'obscure branches of his family, and likewise to feel for, and sooth his sorrows by sympathy and commiseration.

A trembling seized the whole frame of the marquis as he, the next day, falteringly gave orders for Macdonald's instant attendance ; it again appeared to his tortured imagination, that the desire to make this investigation was the death-blow to his beloved Theodore. The next moment he would cheer himself with the hope that no other legitimate branch of his family existed ; and that in lord Melrose, the only true heir be found ; and thus the perplexing words of the cruel

syble be interpreted : but this favorable representation the sentence would not long admit of ; it was too pointed to allow so soothing a deception ; all therefore which he could now hope for, was some slight relief, from his unbosoming himself to Macdonald, and in him to obtain a faithful confident and adviser.

Macdonald, now entering, roused the marquis from the train of melancholy thoughts which he had sunk into ; but the words died on the lips of lord Chiviot, as he wished to introduce the interesting discourse ; at last, after a violent effort, and recollecting the dreadful origin of his misery, Macdonald, said he, tell me without reserve, have you ever heard any particular story or traditional legend concerning the wood which bounds the castle terrace ?

I have heard many ridiculous ones, my lord, answered Macdonald, much too trifl-

ing to make any impression on the mind of a rational person, or even were I to recollect them, to attempt to repeat to your lordship.

I am, at present, in a humour, returned the marquis, to listen with patience to any anecdote you can recollect, however inconsistent or ridiculous ; I have particular reasons for it, and you will oblige me by relating any thing which you may have heard or seen.

I have heard then very often, my lord, returned Macdonald, but never with the least degree of credit, that the wood is the haunt of a witch of the most formidable art, and demoniac appearance, and of a disposition more malignant than even her detestable form can convey the idea of: it is recorded of her that her predictions are infallible ; and that whoever has once seen her, can never be happy afterwards.

I firmly believe it, returned the marquis, with an emphasis, which greatly astonished Macdonald—proceed, I conjure you :

Your lordship is, I perceive, laughing at the folly of this recital, continued Macdonald, which I never should have presumed to take the liberty of mentioning, but in obedience to your lordship's commands ; but I can assure your lordship, that though I was born on the estate, and have at all hours passed the wood, I never in my life saw any thing for which I could not fully account ; but sometimes a light like a flame, which I knew not from what cause it proceeded ; but as there is a pool of water near the place where I have observed it, I have always imagined it some vapour which proceeded from it, and never felt the least curiosity to examine its source.

It is of a nature very different to what you suppose, replied the greatly agitated marquis. Now more firmly than ever con-

vinced of the reality of what he had seen seen and heard : the light which you have seen is from a fire, but whether a real one, or raised by the incantations of witchcraft, I shall leave to your own judgment to decide, when I have recounted to you a circumstance which happened to myself, and which I shall now commit to your discretion.

The marquis, then very faithfully and circumstancially recounted to the wonder-struck steward all which had taken place in the wood both before he left the castle, and since his return ; all that he had suffered in consequence ; the fatal events which had since taken place in his family, correspondent to the warnings which he had received ; his horrors for fear of any accident to lord Melrose ; and finally, his fixed intention of complying with the repeated injunction, to seek out those who, in any degree, belonged to his family ; to discover their situation, and endeavour to

render them worthy of the honors which might be theirs, if it was the decree of his hard and cruel fate to deprive him of his beloved child.

For some minutes after the marquis had ceased speaking, Macdonald answered not, so deeply was he absorbed in surprize and meditation on this most wonderful relation ; and lord Chiviot himself was so much affected by what he had been saying, that he paid no attention to Macdonald's long continued silence, but patiently sat expecting his answer, but not appearing at all surprized at its delay.

At length Macdonald having collected himself, and being a little recovered from the confusion that a quick succession of ideas which the marquis's discourse had given rise to, said, I beg your lordship's pardon, but this strange relation has filled me with so much amaze, I knew not what answer immediately to make.—But

I am just now struck by a sudden recollection which may throw some light on the matter your lordship wishes to enquire into.

I have heard my late dear lord, your father—(on these words he put a particular stress, as implying the word *our*, ought to be substituted) speak of a circumstance which had taken place in his family, though many years before his remembrance, which may have some connection with this affair. I have heard him say (and I dare say your lordship will remember it) that a younger brother of his great grandfather's——

Gracious heaven! interrupted the marquis hastily, how is it possible the circumstance you are going to allude to, could escape my memory thus long? the younger brother of my great grandfather, which you now revive in my mind, married a person of great beauty and merit, but of an origin so obscure, that his whole family were so

much offended, that they universally determined to take no notice of his wife.— This I have heard my father speak of as a remote family anecdote ; but know no particulars, and never troubled myself to enquire further about it, nor indeed ever recollected the event, till now that you recall it to my recollection, but now every thing is of importance ; every thing alarms me—do, good Macdonald, inform me of every incident, of every particular you know.

I am but ignorant on this subject, my lord, answered Macdonald, yet what I have heard will quickly inform you, though it is very little in addition to what your lordship has been saying.

I have heard that lord Archibald Douglas, which was the name of the nobleman who degraded his family by an unequal alliance, when he found the resolution of all his relations to treat with disrespect

the object of his tenderest affections ; in deep resentment of their conduct, positively declared they never more should receive either of them ; that he should forever disown and renounce a family who rejected the most valuable ornament of it, his beloved wife ; and that he would retire with her to some remote part of the world, where they never should trace them, or know what became of them.

This threat of lord Archibald's, which was communicated to the marquis, his father, rather alarmed him ; and he had it in consideration to make some conciliatory advances to lord Archibald, he being his peculiar favorite : but before they could be announced, lord Archibald and his lady had privately left the paternal domain, and the place of his retreat was never discovered during his father's life time, which happened very shortly after lord Archibald's absence ; and it was supposed the uneasiness that event gave his father, rather

accelerated his death. After the marquis died, no one gave himself the trouble to enquire after the fugitives ; as the elder brother, who succeeded, had ever borne a great jealousy to lord Archibald ; and, it was imagined, had irritated his father against him ; and, by his machinations, to have encreased the resentment of the other branches of the family against him, by misrepresentations, and insinuating, false, and disadvantageous suggestion of his wife.

This, my lord, is the extent of my knowledge of this family. I never heard wherè they settled, or that any enquiry was ever made on either side ; it is possible some male heir of this stock yet remains ; if so, and your lordship wishes a search made after him, I am ready to pursue any method your lordship may think adviseable for that purpose.

Ah ! Macdonald, returned the marquis, whilst an agonizing sigh burst from his

heart ;—too surely you have discovered the clue of this distracting business ; I have no doubt remaining but that this is the heir which I must seek.—Alas ! beloved Theodore, can I possibly support this trial, and hear the sentence which interdicts your succession ; it is too much, heaven strengthen me to bear my affliction with fortitude ; for in the uncertainty and suspence I suffer, in the cruel and distracting fears I am haunted with, I lose you daily ; and more dreadful is the constant apprehension of a dreadful, unknown fate, than in the decided certitude, however bad.

Be comforted, my lord, returned Macdonald, and do not let a vague and unconnected prediction thus effect your mind ; many are the deceptions and delusion which are practised by these wily wretches to extort charity, or excite wonder and alarm. Your lordship will not, I am persuaded, permit your good sense to become the victim of such mean artifice. I am

convinced your lordship has too much penetration to be imposed on in any respect, much less, by tricks which may, perhaps, be practised for some sinister purpose, or merely for wanton mischief; for it is by no means unlikely, that as the family which I have been speaking of have never been heard of since the time lord Archibald and his lady went away, that they are all long since extinct; or it is more than probable some branch of the family would, e'er this, have sought out so distinguished a head as the marquis of Chiviot.

No, no Macdonald, answered the marquis—I am convinced they are not extinct—the horrid and tremendous figure I saw in the wood, particularly mentioned “high-born, low-born, both is he.” Your account has fully explained the meaning of that sentence; and I resign to your good management and trusty care, to make every enquiry after any of the family which may remain of my long-forgotten, fugitive

relations. This intricate affair I totally resign to you ; but mark me, it is a subject which (at present) must be entirely confined to our knowledge only.

I shall now go for some time to Edinburgh, in which place I will, to the utmost of my power, endeavour to banish the gloomy ideas ; these scenes serve only to cherish, and leave the whole of this important concern to your entire transacting.

The marquis, too much overcome by this great exertion of resolution, to add more to the conversation, now left the room ; whilst the absorbed Macdonald remained in deep study and contemplation on what had passed. Many minutes he mused thus, before he could sufficiently compose the variety of ideas presented to his mind to quit the library.

A new field of action, and a new source of hope, now sprang up in the fertile brain

of Macdonald: he was appointed to the important commission of seeking a new and unexpected heir to the house of Chiviot, his demands for which service were unlimited; but here for the first time in his life, money was but a secondary consideration,—his Janet, there was the principal; there rested every hope; she now was presented to his mind's eye, as unquestionably marchioness of Chiviot; that very puny, sickly child, lord Melrose, ejaculated he, though now apparently improving in health, every body must be sensible, will never live to inherit his father's honors; and if he did, he would be so surrounded by observers, innumerable difficulties would have attended the pursuit of my arduous design in favor of my dear girl; and though I should have been content to have braved them all for her advantage; yet, if a shorter way of going to work presents itself in the most unexpected and extraordinary manner, shall I not avail myself of it; that hag who makes

others wretched, will cause my happiness and honor ; in her predictions, fatal to the marquis, dawns my greatness ; by that, titles which the laws withhold from me, however they may be my natural right, shall return ten-fold to my posterity ; revenge and jealousy will stimulate me with all diligence to seek this predicted heir ; and if such a one is found, I will ingratiate myself into his confidence, and Janet shall into his love. Whilst lord Melrose lives, these manœuvres will not be attended to ; as the new heir will appear insignificant, and be but little attended to ; when he dies, it will be too late to alter a fixed affection ; for long before that event may take place, I hope Janet will have fixed herself in his heart ; for every thing which the art or industry of a man can do to accomplish the warmest wish of his heart, aided by all the advantages which riches can lend to his aid, are in my power, and in my most fixed intention to the utmost to exert ; my genius and perseverance shall

triumph over my imputed father's neglect, and the oppressive and unnatural rules of society which deny my being marquis of Chiviot ; but all shall yet be subservient to my views ; I shall see success crown my efforts ; and my grandson enjoy that envied distinction which never can be mine.

But a short time elapsed, after the interesting conversation which took place between the marquis and his confidential steward, before the whole family removed to Edinburgh. The children's more advanced age permitting them to accompany their parents, where, in due time, arriving, the marquis hoped, by this change of scene, to cheer his disturbed mind, and the rest of the family all entertained the same wish, though each concealed from the other their observations of the marquis's increasing melancholy, unwilling, by any comment, to add to it.

Macdonald now, in accordance to his own ardent desire, and to the particular orders of his lord, began his enquiries for the person who, by one side, was so much dreaded, by the other, so much hoped for ; on whom so much depended, on whom so many anxious and varied ideas rested.

CHAP. XI.



THE marquis's family were now settled in their mansion in Edinburgh, as comfortably as the nature of circumstances would allow. But the unsettled and distracted government, where mutual jealousies and factions were continually taking place during the minority of the king, disturbed all ranks of society; and engaged, almost, all in contentions and animosity: but the marquis, availing himself of his domestic losses and misfortunes, lived with all the

privacy his rank would permit ; far different to the eclat his late appearance had occasioned ; engaging now as little in public affairs and opinions, as he possibly could. The unhappy fate of his brother he painfully recalled, and from that recollection restrained the warmth of his natural disposition, which he often found much worked on by a variety of provocations ; and he fully acquitted lord Charles of impetuosity, when he found with what difficulty he conquered and restrained his own passions.

The young people were highly amused by the change of scene the capital afforded, and could not forbear, doubly, to deplore the family misfortunes which deprived them of so many pleasures they would otherwise have shared. But no deprivation could possibly grieve lady Catherine so much as the loss of Janet Macdonald's society ; the attachment this ardent, though volatile girl, had formed for

her, was extreme, and earnestly, though unavailingly, had she solicited for her accompanying her to Edinburgh ; but great as was the partiality of the marchioness to Janet, and much as it was her wish to gratify her children, affliction had not yet so far conquered her natural pride, that she could reconcile the idea of taking an obscure young person with her, whom every stranger would, at first sight, conceive to be the twin-sister of lady Grace ; and she found that the supposition of Janet's being her daughter, would be extremely mortifying and degrading to her feelings ; and this would most naturally have been the case when the ladies were all seen together, under the superintendance of the same preceptress.

The artful Macdonald had himself, too, strenuously opposed the proposal of Janet's going to Edinburgh, which, but a few weeks before, he would have so anxiously strove to obtain ; but now having

other views, with great appearance of modesty and humility, he urged the great impropriety of such girls as his daughter associating in public, or in any way too much, with those so greatly their superiors, as it tended to render them unfit for their proper sphere in life, and averse to such views as their parents might have for them.

The marchioness warmly coincided with Macdonald in these sentiments, and praised him very highly for his judicious sentiments ; but the true fact was, that being now perfectly indifferent about lord Melrose, he wished to have her entirely under his own care and tuition, that he might model her to his own opinions and interests ; and though he had never found her refractory, but always remarkably docile whenever any plan for her advantage or pleasure was proposed, yet, this being an affair of so much consequence, and if an heir should be found, uncertain what kind of

person he might be, whether old or young, beautiful or deformed, he conceived it best, at all events, to keep her under his own eye, whilst he was paving her way to nobility and grandeur.

Janet, who at this time could not fathom her father's schemes, or form the most distant prospect of his views, was inconsolable, and overcome by disappointment, when she saw the travellers depart, and that she was again a lonely inmate in her father's house, and she sorrowfully reflected how soon she might be forgot, and all the laborious foundation of friendship she had so long been laying, be, perhaps, overturned by the first new face.

But her father comforted her by saying, foolish girl, why all this nonsensical grief? if they forget you, there are more lords and ladies yet left in the world besides lord Melrose and his sisters. Cheer up, my girl, you know not yet what plans I

have in my head for your advantage ; and if you are a good girl, and act in every thing as I would have you, I make no doubt but you will be a lady yourself, and as great as any of them.

Elated by this flattering prognostic, Janet eagerly promised in all things to obey him, if he thought such a reward would ever be hers ; when Macdonald, very emphatically, adding, far more unlikely things have happened ; left her to the pleasing rumination of future grandeur ; though by what means to be accomplished, she could form no conjecture, as she was now separated, and apparently by her father's wish, from the persons where the only reasonable hope could be formed, as likely to promote her future expectations.

It was now that Macdonald began his earnest enquiries after the long-forgotten wanderers, with the most anxious desire to find out the track of the self-banished lord.

Archibald ; and being extremely assiduous in the employ, and making use of every means for information which money and industry could effect, it was not long before he obtained some satisfactory intelligence ; for he had the great pleasure to hear, that a few years previous to this enquiry, a family of the name of Douglas, and probably related to the marquis, had for many years resided in a town in the north of Ireland ; but whether they were the identical family he was in search of, or no, at present could not be determined : gratified, however, with any clue which gave a probability of success, Macdonald's enterprizing spirit resolved not to leave the negotiating so important a concern to any enquiries but his own ; fearful of deception, and ardent for information, his own minute investigation he alone could depend on ; he, therefore, had nearly come to a resolution of setting out for the obscure town where this family were, without communicating his intentions to any,

not even the marquis ; but on further deliberation, he conceived he had better receive the marquis's further instructions before he commenced his journey ; and in what manner he would wish him to act, if the persons he was going in pursuit of should really prove those he was empowered to find.

For this purpose he dispatched a messenger to Lord Chiviot, stating the intelligence already received, his own great inclination personally to trace the matter to its source, and his desire to receive the marquis's final instructions on this head.

The marquis immediately returned an answer of approbation of Macdonald's indefatigable zeal and industry ; coincided in his idea of going in person to prevent imposition ; and added, that it was his wish it, should he find any, however distantly related to him, in any difficulties or distress, to render every pecuniary aid.

their necessities demanded ; and if a young lad should be discovered, whose pretensions gave any probable, or possible chance of his succeeding to the title of Chiviot, to endeavour to persuade him to accompany him back, that the marquis might be assured he received that kind of education as ought to adorn his future situation in life.

With these instructions Macdonald commenced his journey, in a multitude of perplexing doubts, fears, and hopes. He was now throwing for the grand stake on the success of which all his present hopes rested.

Had the production of the expected heir only depended on his fidelity, that passion in him was not so incorruptible but what he would very willingly have substituted a surreptitious one, but he well knew the proofs which would be required ; and for his own sake, he wished

his Janet to wed no other than the undisputed, the true and genuine heir of Chiviot, therefore, in this case he neither intended to practice deceit himself, nor let it be practiced on him by others.

With this disposition, arriving safe at the place of his destination, it was neither a long or a difficult matter to hear of Archibald Douglas, (the original christian name having been still preserved in the elder male branches), who was esteemed and loved by all of whom Macdonald made enquiries in the small and miserable town which had so long been the residence of this illustrious, though reduced, family ; and Macdonald's first questions to the neighbours convinced him he had not laboured in vain : for that this was the true descendant of lord Archibald Douglas, as every person could abundantly inform him, for the family he found had made it their residence in a succession from father to son, ever since lord Archibald and his

slighted lady first made it their refuge, down to the present Archibald, and his only son Malcolm, of whom every tongue was eloquent in praise.

Lord Archibald, the haughty and inflexible founder of this obscure family, could never brook, or pardon the ill treatment his lady, whom he tenderly loved, had received from his family : and though he had a very great affection for his father, and most probably, had he lived, would have made some concession ; yet, soon after his residence here, by accident hearing of his death, which he imagined had taken place without any enquiry after him, or any desire to discover him ; or, for reconciliation, it encreased the cause of offence he before conceived he had received, into a settled antipathy to all his family, more particularly his brother, the then marquis, from whose want of affection to him he attributed the unkindness of his father.

It is thus, that but too often violent people argue, whose irritable tempers, whatever offence they give, never will be sufficiently composed to permit them to discover how much they themselves are wrong, and that it is proper submission should be made to the offended party; for lord Archibald never for one moment considered the disappointment it is to the hopes of the fond and careful parent when his child unites himself to one whom his experience conceives will not contribute to his happiness; and however this opinion may be erroneous, and the parent forgetting the passions of his youth, may wish a plan pursued repugnant to the wishes of his son; still, as a parent, some little concession is due, some little apology, for a difference so material in opinion. Had lord Archibald's high spirit submitted to this very proper humiliation, he would have had the pleasure to know (for the reward of his humility) that his father's affections were unchanged, and

that the ready pardon hung upon his lips, and that he need not to have banished himself and his posterity to a wretched residence, amongst a set of people who were, in every respect, so very different to what he had been accustomed to associate with, and where his posterity must be deprived of those advantages and distinctions their rank demanded; however, lord Archibald reconciled himself to this change of situation extremely well. He grew familiar with the manners of the people, he was charmed with their genuine hospitality and kindness; and the very great respect which was paid him, he contrasted with the slights he had received from his own family; and the consequence was, that he was determined to settle amongst those hardy and almost uncivilized, though affectionate people, rather than enter again into all the perplexities of more refined life. For several generations they had continued here, conforming to all the privations and hardships endured

by the people amongst whom they were established, entirely independent of, and indifferent about the illustrious line from which they had descended : the only ambition which had invariably been inherited by them was, a desire to do all the good they had an opportunity of doing, and to preserve the reputation of brave, worthy, and honorable men. Such now was the character, such the virtues, of the man whom the indefatigable researches of Macdonald had discovered.

The present Archibald Douglas was the inhabitant of a very humble dwelling, he had lost his wife, and one son about sixteen, was his only child ; and this son and one old female servant constituted the whole of his family. At the time of Macdonald's arrival, Mr. Douglas was confined to his bed by severe indisposition, and his dutiful and affectionate son Malcolm was watching by his bed-side, with true filial solicitude.

The enquiries of Macdonald after this insolated family, having been attended with the success he wished, he was soon conducted to the little habitation which he had so anxiously sought, and on requesting to speak to Mr. Douglas, Malcolm immediately attended to enquire the stranger's business.

I am the son, sir, of that gentleman, said the youth, and my father's present extreme illness must plead his excuse for not permitting him the pleasure of seeing you ; but if you will please to inform me of the cause of your coming here, I will directly let him know your business, and return his answer.

During this speech, the astonished Macdonald gazed on the youth who addressed him with wonder and delight. Never had so interesting, so charming a figure presented itself before his scarcely crediting eyes. The beauty of his face was ex-

treme, but that was forgotten in the grace and dignity of his person ; his manner of address was elegant, yet modest and diffident ; the abundance of his auburn locks fell in such profusion over his ivory forehead, that several times whilst he was speaking he was under the necessity of shaking back the obtruding, rich, and glossy curls, and his intelligent eyes, in colour and beauty, bore testimony of his consanguinity to the Chiviot family. He ceased speaking, and in respectful silence awaited the answer of Macdonald.

Dear young gentleman, replied Macdonald, (whose heart really felt warmed by the extraordinary beauty of Malcolm), I have a matter of great importance both to your father and yourself to communicate : I pray you, therefore, to entreat his permission for an interview ; believe me, what I have to declare to him, will be of great benefit to you both ; I will rest here, whilst you deliver this message, and I en-

treat you, to use your interest, and endeavour to prevail on your father to see me, and to give a patient hearing to what I have to say.

I shall acquaint my father with your request, sir, returned Malcolm, and am persuaded he will exert himself to oblige you ; so saying, he left Macdonald, to deliver his message to his father.

CHAP. XII.



Lost in deep reflection on the form and manners of the prepossessing youth who had just left him, and the probable consequences which might result to himself from the discovery of such a valuable jewel, Macdonald did not observe that some length of time had elapsed since the departure of Malcolm with his message ; however, he was roused from his reverie by his re-appearance ; when, apologizing for his long absence, he said it was owing

to his father's wish to sit up to receive him, and that his weakness rendered this a laborious task.

Tears of tender apprehension started into his bright eyes as he made this declaration ; but quickly passing his hand over them, to conceal them from Macdonald, he led the way, and soon conducted him into the small, ill-furnished bed-chamber, in which sat the now only relative of the great marquis of Chiviot, sinking under illness, which required the ablest care and assistance, without any other attendant than his beloved son, and the ancient female before mentioned, except what was offered by the kindness and friendly attention of the few scattered neighbours, who indeed, to the best of their abilities, vied with each other which should do most for the respected invalid and his idolized son, whose beauty, whose affection to his father, and whose affable

and obliging behaviour, won the hearts of all who knew him.

Immediately on his introduction, Macdonald informed Mr. Douglas of the purport of his visit. I am, said he, steward to the marquis of Chiviot, who is one of the best noblemen in the world, and who has done me the great honor to commission me to make enquiries after his most distant relations, with the intention to render them any service his ample means permit, or their circumstances may require ; and this, sir, is the cause of my present visit to you. In my lord's name, I am authorised to do any thing which you may think will contribute to your comfort ; and I am convinced, nothing would give the marquis of Chiviot greater pleasure, than to have this young gentleman committed to his care, that his education might be cultivated with the same attention as that of his only son—lord Melrose.

I feel highly obliged to the marquis, replied the languid Douglas, for his friendship and kindness ; but it has been too long delayed ; I mean not on my own account, for to me it is now of little moment, but in respect to the former parts of my family, who are now extinct, myself and this dear child being the only survivors : and I cannot help expressing my surprise, that the family have been suffered to remain here for such a number of years, from generation to generation, in obscurity and poverty, without one friend ever enquiring the fate of those so nearly connected with them.

Of this the present marquis is entirely guiltless, returned Macdonald, with great quickness, and I should conceive some blame attached to your ancestors for never letting their situation be known. I entreat your pardon for this liberty of speech, but this much I must say in defence of my lord's conduct, and the

rest of his family ; and even now, had it not been for the means which I have taken, he would have still remained in ignorance of having such a relation as yourself. But to do away with all retrospection of past neglects, and to convince you beyond a doubt of my lord's kind and honorable intentions, behold here his signet as a proof of friendship and good faith, and as his request that you will resign your son to his care ; he will hold him next in affection to his only son, and in every respect do the duty of a father to him : refuse not, then, to commit him to my lord's protection, and to my care.

Macdonald, in this speech, rather exceeded his commission ; for he well knew the marquis dreaded to hear of, or to see, a person whom he had such reason to suppose would supplant his adored child ; however, Macdonald's ardent desire to get this lad into his hands was so vehement, he conceived he was acting right

to do whatever had a tendency to complete his schemes.

What ! said Malcolm, starting from his seat, with great emotion, as Macdonald concluded, whilst fire flashed from his indignant eyes ; does the lord who sent you, or you yourself, suppose, that for any earthly consideration, for any advantage to myself, I would leave my father ? leave him in his illness, without one friend—without one consolation ? Oh no, no ; not for his title—not for his land—not to save my own life.

The pale countenance of Archibald Douglas flushed for a moment with a glow of health, as he strained his beloved son to his heart, in speechless ecstasy, whilst Macdonald, who could not behold the scene quite unmoved, said, You mistake me, sir ; the marquis would be equally as anxious for the happiness of his cousin, your respected father, as for

yours ; and would not wish, on any consideration, to separate you from him, without, at the same time, making every arrangement for his comfort, here, if he preferred it, or in any other situation he might express a wish to be removed to. It is your advantage alone which would be consulted in the proposition ; for you must feel, there are many requisites which your future prospects demand, which in this place cannot be acquired.

I am too impetuous, said the blushing Malcolm ; but your goodness will, I trust, forgive me, sir. I am fully sensible of the obligations which I am under to the marquis for his liberal offer to me, and his good intentions to my father ; and likewise to you, for the kind wish you appear to have for my advantage : but for myself, I must again answer, that no inducement which the world could offer, would tempt me from my dear father at this time. When his health is restored,

which I trust in heaven it will soon be, I shall then be guided by his opinion ; but even his request at this moment, added to yours, (could he be so cruel as to desire me to leave him, and accompany you) would be disregarded ; I could not comply with it ; and that is the only thing in this world which I would deny to my father's wishes.

Dearest Malcolm ! replied the delighted father, your affection and duty to me is too rare a cordial to my heart to relinquish for the short time allotted for me to enjoy it, and never, never will I resign it. Bear back then, sir, to your lord, our united grateful acknowledgments for his kind intentions toward us ; but at this time there is not any thing which he can do to serve us, or to render us more happy.

I cannot return, said Macdonald, addressing himself to Douglas, without

your solemn promise, that should you recover your health, you will, as soon as your strength will permit, visit Chiviot castle, for the marquis to have the happiness of seeing and acknowledging you as his relation and friend, and consulting with you on a future establishment more consistent than this solitary abode. And for you, sir, he added, taking the hand of Malcolm, let me earnestly beseech you to attend to what I am about to say : if it should be the will of heaven to deprive you of your valuable parent, recollect you have one in the marquis ; should he fail, I will be a father to you—I will protect you—I will support you ; and do not delay one moment (should such a calamity attend you) to dispatch a messenger to the marquis. Inculcate this injunction, my dear sir, continued he, turning to Douglas, on the mind of your son, for well you must know the necessity of its being attended to.

Macdonald, finding his mission thus ended, and that the inflexible affection of Malcolm was not to be allured by any hope of personal advantage to forsake his father, or the hereditary haughtiness of Douglas to be induced to accept of any pecuniary assistance, he was compelled to quit them in a manner very different to his first expectations. He, therefore, took a most respectful leave of them, as their virtues could not fail of inspiring sentiments of respect and admiration, even in hearts where no amiable quality inhabited. And the next day, much disappointed at the little success he had had with the Douglasses, Macdonald commenced his journey back, alone, to communicate to the marquis the particulars of his negotiation.

CHAP. XIII.



As soon as Macdonald had quitted the house of Douglas, the languid inhabitant of it, whom this visit and its consequences had greatly agitated and affected, called his beloved Malcolm to his bed-side, and taking his hand with the most affectionate emotion, said, the time is now arrived, my most dear child, when you ought to be made acquainted with the history of your family, for I feel assured that by you, its honours will be transmitted to posterity; and well, my dear Malcolm, do you de-

serve this reward for all your goodness of heart; your virtues will ennoble the highest rank, and your conduct will ever merit your own, and the world's approbation.— What I have to say of our family adventures, will be compressed into a very small compass; as, for many years no circumstance has taken place amongst them out of the common course of occurrences, or what happens to the generality of people; I only excepted.

I alone, of all my posterity, have suffered affliction's keenest arrows. I have experienced sorrows never to be overcome, and am now sinking into an early grave, far more the victim of mental distresses than of bodily infirmity.

The astonished Malcolm, at this unexpected discourse, fixed his expressive eyes on his father's face, fearful that the late visit from Macdonald, and the circumstances attending it, had deranged his fa-

culties ; but he observed no change of countenance indicative of such a misfortune ; the same resigned composure was manifest, heightened only by a stronger expression of melancholy than he had ever before witnessed in it.

He therefore was eagerly going to enquire the import of words so alarming, when his father, interrupting him, continued thus :

I see your surprize and impatience, my dear Malcolm, and, as I before promised, will acquaint you with all which has happened necessary for you to be acquainted with, since our first settling in this country. The attentive Malcolm drawing his seat still closer, to prevent, as much as possible, the exertions of his father, fearful it should exhaust his debilitated frame, sat in silent expectation of what was to follow : but a dreadful apprehension mixed with his curiosity from the affecting pre-

face his father had given, this sentiment was further encreased as his father proceeded in these words :

I have often wished to lay before you the particular grief which has for so many years preyed upon my heart, and what must so deeply affect the tender feelings of your own, but it now admits of no longer delay ;—we must soon part, my Malcolm, for ever !—I daily feel the conviction stronger ; we part, my beloved son, but I trust we shall be reunited again where pain and sorrow never approach ; but, e'er I go, I am doomed to leave you the fatal legacy a knowledge of my sufferings must be to you, and the share of my afflictions which you must inherit.

The first of our race who settled in this remote spot, was lord Archibald Douglas, whose story, and whose particular reasons for so doing, as you have heard recited by lord Chiviot's steward, there is no neces-

sity again to repeat ; but you are not yet informed that this nobleman, whose spirit was inflexible and austere, conceiving that the treatment which he had received ought never to be forgiven ; or, perhaps, greatly disappointed that ~~the~~ search and enquiry after him, which he had expected to take place, was not set on foot ; and that all his family were so easily reconciled to his loss ; swore, in the full resentment of his heart, in the most solemn and binding manner, that neither himself, or any of his descendants (if he could prevent it) should ever, directly or indirectly acknowledge a connection with the Chiviot family, except they first condescended to solicit a reunion : and any of those of his immediate posterity who deviated from his wishes, or the oath which it was his desire to impose upon all, he prayed, might be heir to all the calamities attendant on broken faith, and a violation of the most sacred request.

From father to son, ever since, has this been transmitted, as the living and dying charge of our great ancestor, lord Archibald; and most religiously has it been performed, which fully accounts for the great obscurity we have continued in, and the little knowledge our family had of us: but the interdiction is now done away; the moment of emancipation is arrived; you, my son, are sought out by the proud head of our house; and you, dearest Malcolm, (mark and remember my prophecy, when I shall be no more), you shall become the head of it yourself; a strange presentiment assures my mind, that in you, the honors of our ancient race shall centre. And when that time shall come, then well remember my last, my most earnest advice to you—let not, my dear Malcolm, do not permit prosperity to harden your feelings, or obscure those tender sentiments which now mantle in your heart. Reflect that you yourself were brought up in obscurity, (though not in neglect, for the small abi-

lity which I possessed to instruct you, has been fully exerted); and from that most probably fortunate circumstance, you have obtained a knowledge and judgment which few great people ever can arrive at;—you have been an eye witness of all the hardships and sufferings the indigent daily sustain, and the good humour, the fortitude, and patience, with which it is in general supported.

Do not, therefore, let a change of fortune ever induce you to forget a knowledge so very necessary to your own happiness, as well as to others, which that will ever convey, if properly considered, as I hope you, my dear child, ever will do, and through life endeavour to lighten the burden as frequently as you can, that you find your fellow-creature doomed to bear; and in your own heart, you will find the rich reward of your benevolence; for the reflection on your silent couch, that you have wiped the tear from the eye of affliction, provided for the

fatherless, and smoothed the pillow of death, are genuine pleasures, are consolations to the mind, are jewels to adorn the fame, for which no price is too high.

Exhausted by this exertion, and the energy with which he inculcated the precepts which he knew his son would so readily imbibe, from the impulse of his own humanity, he paused for a few minutes, and then continued :

I feel, my dear Malcolm, that I must decline entering on the particulars of my disastrous story till to-morrow, when I hope I shall be recovered from the fatigue which I now feel, and be more composed to relate it.

The dutiful Malcolm therefore restrained his ardent desire to hear it at this moment, and waited with the utmost anxiety for the next day, when he hoped nothing would happen to prevent the promised re-

cial, though he dreaded some melancholy catastrophe, yet, of what nature he had no idea.

The next day, in due course arrived, and Douglas finding himself equal to the effort, did not wait for his son to make a request for his story, but of himself began as follows :

You have already been informed, Malcolm, of the uniform life which, for some ages, your ancestors have lived, and may easily judge how little variety could take place in the way they have all been situated ever since the days of lord Archibald ; and, most certain, it was his prohibition which alone could have restrained the many enterprising spirits which, since that time, have borne his name, of which number I am one, who, with difficulty, have submitted to the cruelly imposed restrictions ; and I devoutly thank heaven, that you, my beloved Malcolm, are no longer

subject to such unnecessary and ridiculous ties : but whatever my own private opinion of them, you, likewise, must have been bound by them, had they not been broken by the marquis of Chiviot's voluntary invitation to you : that being now all passed, I shall make no further comment on it, but proceed to the distressing particulars of my own life.

I was then in my youth, extremely active, full of fire, and gave promise of not so tranquilly submitting to the very restrained rules which had been so long and so regularly observed, as the rest had done ; and when I became acquainted with the rank of my family, could still worse brook the confinement of talent and person, which had been so invariably pursued, and often was in amaze to think how it had possibly been endured. I longed for the exercise of arms. My whole thoughts were filled with military achievements. My whole time devoted to the few books which came

in my way, which mostly treated of arms, or chivalric adventures. These studies adding fuel to my romantic disposition, rendered my situation more irksome, and, I believe, likewise inspired in my mind an additional degree of courage and intrepidity; which, if it ever had been called into action, might have been serviceable.

One day, according to my usual custom, I took my horse, and directing him amongst the mountains, with which you know this country abounds, I let the bridle fall on his neck, and at his leisure he pursued what track he chose, all being equally indifferent to me, who, lost in deep contemplations on my useless and inactive life, cared but little which way he carried me. For some time we had thus proceeded, when I was suddenly roused from a romantic dream of ideal heroism, by the loud screams of a female; I instantly put my horse forward at his utmost speed, towards the place from whence the sound

proceeded, and soon discovered three ruffians, who were forcibly endeavouring to place a lady on horseback, whilst another female near her appeared nearly suffocated, from a handkerchief being tightly fixed over her mouth. Warm and romantic as I then was, an incident like this, you may be assured, inspired me with sufficient ardour to attempt the rescue of the distressed ladies ; but observing how well armed the men were, and myself entirely defenceless, I instantly conceived that I must depend more on stratagem, than on strength ; and before they had time for a moment's reflection (after they saw me) applying a little bugle horn which I always carried about me to my lips, I blew it with great vehemence, and when I had finished the blast, I loudly exclaimed, haste my friends, haste !—and let us take vengeance on this cowardly bánditti !—again I loudly blew the horn, and rode forward, and strange as it may appear to you, the action and the words had the desired effect. The con-

science-struck villains doubted not that a hunting party were near, to whom they would be unequal, (for they could not suppose one single unarmed man would have dared to have acted so), fled precipitately, and left their victims. But I who fully knew my weakness, and how impossible it would be, should they discover it, to protect the wretched ladies ; lost no time in conversation, in questions, or remarks, but releasing the bound female with all expedition, I placed them both on my horse, and led him as fast as I could back to my father's, who then inhabited this house, and whom you, my dear Malcolm, well remember.

Safely arrived here, without the smallest interruption from the ravishers, I had time for observation and enquiry ; and soon found, that the young lady was the daughter of sir James Hamilton, our near neighbour and particular friend, though I had never before seen her, in

consequence of her having nearly all her life resided with an aunt in Dublin ; who having lately died, and left her a genteel patrimony, she had, but a few days previous to this time, returned to her father's house—the other female was her attendant.

I found the lady was not unacquainted with the person who had committed so daring an outrage—his name was O'Hara : he had visited at her aunt's, and had followed her against her positive orders to the contrary, to make proposals to her father on her account ; for, imagining her fortune very great, as sole heiress to her aunt and sir James Hamilton, it had so far influenced him, as to render him totally so callous to the lady's unequivocal and decided dislike, as still to persevere in addressing himself to her father. But being of an abandoned character, a professed gambler, and a man of ruined fortune, the answer which he would receive

from sir James Hamilton may easily be conceived ; and which was still more pointed, from his being the young lady's utter aversion.

Yet, unabashed by these reiterated refusals, he had, with his associates, laid wait for her, as she and her maid, without apprehension of danger, were taking a walk, at but a trifling distance from sir James's house, with an intention to force her to some priest he had hired and prepared for the occasion, to perform the marriage ceremony as soon as he arrived with her, in defiance of every opposition in her power to make ; by which means he would have been enabled to claim her fortune ; with which, most probably, he would have absconded.

Shocked beyond expression by hearing of such depravity, I listened to the fair speaker, and thought I had never beheld such loveliness, or heard such eloquence ;

my eyes were rivetted on her ; and though the little history of her dangerous adventures was concluded, I still continued to gaze on her, till the crimson blush, which mantled over her face and neck, first informed me of the impropriety of my conduct, and I instantly withdrew, in a state of confusion nearly equal to hers.

But I will not prolong this part of my story, my dear Malcolm, further than to say, that from this hour my heart was devoted to the lovely Eliza ; and as all successful love adventures are nearly the same, and furnish but little amusement in the recital, shall only add, that as my sincere affection to her was tenderly returned on her part, and as her parents and my father highly approved our mutual passion, in a very short time I had the happiness of calling this most amiable woman my wife ; and in one year afterwards, you, my most dear Malcolm, in-

creased our felicity (if that were possible) by your birth.

Malcolm raised the hand of his father to his lips, in grateful acknowledgment of the kind and pleasing observation ; but he found the hand which he pressed so affectionately trembled with emotion, whilst he thus proceeded :

At the period of time which I have been describing, and which to reflect on fills my heart even now with the keenest anguish, I thought myself the most favored and most happy of heaven's creatures ; but before one short year more elapsed, my wretched doom was fixed, and I became the most miserable.

A deep sigh, and long pause followed this sentence ; which, though it pierced the heart of Malcolm, he did not speak one word, but sat attentively watching his father's varying countenance, and

dreading the sequel of a story which so greatly affected him.

It was in the second year of my marriage, continued Douglas, (collecting all his fortitude to proceed) that a gentleman came to pay a visit to my wife's father, Sir James Hamilton ; he was a Bohemian nobleman, called the count Osburgh. Many years previous to this time they had been acquainted, though, I believe, but slightly ; but, however that was, so long a time had intervened since they had met, and so great was the alteration it had made in his person, (for when he was first introduced to sir James he was but a youth travelling for his improvement), that it was with some difficulty sir James recognized him when first announced. However, when recollection took place, he welcomed him with all that hospitality and kindness natural to the general manners of the country, and more particularly to his generous heart.

He felt highly gratified and pleased by the count's remembrance of him so many years, and more so, when he found he had travelled from a distant part of the kingdom, where he had come from Germany, on particular business, to the north, for the sole pleasure of seeing him, and renewing the friendship which had, on their first acquaintance, subsisted between them, and now so many years interrupted.

Out of respect and affection to sir James Hamilton, my Eliza and myself received the count Osburgh as a friend; and, as a nobleman of high rank, shewed him every distinction in our power; these incidental attentions were entirely owing to the advantages which I mention, for, independent of them, certainly the count possessed no personal merits to claim the least degree of regard; for there was a haughty reserve about him, which rendered his manners extremely repulsive,

and prevented that genuine cordiality which must ever be the attendant of esteem and friendship. He was in stature much above the common size ; his countenance, though handsome, was dark, severe, and penetrating ; he had a forbidding downcast glance, seldom raising his eyes to the face of the person whom he addressed ; and from his not speaking the language fluently, his conversation was embarrassed and unengaging ; yet, notwithstanding, he was a man of great good sense and learning, had seen much of the world, and was of a very noble family.

Unbending as were the manners of the count, and apparently unlikely to estimate the value of female excellence, for, on the contrary, he seemed to have a very contemptible notion of their abilities and capacities, it cannot be supposed he was at all calculated to charm delicate and sensible females ; and, indeed, it appeared

so far from his wish or intention, that he paid no respect to them beyond the bounds of what civility demanded.

A man so disposed, and of such manners and person, was by no means likely to create the least degree of alarm or jealousy, wherever he might be introduced ; for to have admired him, would most surely have acquired a strange depravity of taste : and so very trifling was the degree of regard which he had inspired in the breast of my Eliza and her mother, that they both spoke to me with great satisfaction of the count Osburgh's visit terminating in two days more ; and added, how happy it would make them when this disagreeable and consequential man was gone.

Though I was entirely of their opinion, I slightly reprov'd the manner they spoke of a man so highly esteemed by sir James, and one who had much merit,

if not of pleasing exterior or manners, now we were on the point of parting, never to meet again. They both laughed at my serious reproof, and said they were well convinced I liked the count no more than they did, and would be equally glad when he was gone.

On the evening of the day in which this conversation took place, it was agreed that we should take a ride the next morning to show the count a part of the country which he had not yet seen, but expressed a desire to visit before he left the place he now was in, as hearing it was deserving observation. Your mother, who was an excellent housewoman, was to be of the party, with sir James and lady Hamilton, two other gentlemen, and myself.

We passed this evening with a greater degree of conviviality than any one since the count Osburgh had been our guest ;

contrary to his usual mode, he was gay, cheerful, and politely attentive ; and my beloved Eliza remarked, when we retired, that she thought the count improved on acquaintance ; and that she was perfectly astonished at his unaccustomed politeness, in expressing a wish for her mother and herself to be of the party the next day, having never before, during his visit, made a request of the like nature, therefore, she never should have imagined he would have made a proposition so obliging. I acknowledged the justice of her observation, again moralized on the caution necessary to be attended to in our description of characters, and added, how utterly impossible it was to form a just and true judgment of any person on a slight acquaintance, the very little intercourse which I had had with society having been sufficient to inculcate that lesson. And at this moment I piqued myself on my nice discernment, and admired my own temperate prudence,

which had not been entirely influenced by my wife's opinion, to think ill of the count, for I had frequently found the most unpleasant deportment concealed a valuable heart ; and I doubted not that was the case with the count, who, evidently, possessed many advantages, both from nature and education.

As we had promised to meet at an early hour, at the house of my wife's father's, we accordingly went, where we found every thing in perfect readiness for our little excursion. The ladies mounted, and as I was extremely anxious about them, particularly my Eliza, whose situation required attention, and whom I endeavoured to accommodate in the most comfortable manner I could ; this little delay caused me to be the last to mount, and just as I was about to spring into my saddle, a worthy old man, whom I had known from my infancy, approached with a letter in his hand ; joy and eagerness

were in his looks, which appeared to be considerably checked when he observed me just going to set out.

I had hoped, sir, said he, to have been time enough to have got you to read this letter ; it is from my dear son, who is in England, and whom I have not heard of for many a year. How unfortunate I am, he continued, whilst his eyes filled with tears ; you will be gone all day, and nobody else can read it to me : a person has just brought it to me so unexpectedly it quite overpowered me with joy, but now—well, I must wait with patience.

I saw the poor old man's disappointment strongly painted in his face ; it affected me deeply ; I could not bear to keep him so long in suspense ; I said to the party, who had obligingly waited the result of our conference, ride on, I will soon overtake you, I cannot deny my old friend the trifling boon which he asks.

Let us wait for you, they all said with one voice ; by no means, returned I ; go on, I insist upon it, and in a very few minutes I will join you. I then returned into the house, where the old man followed me, with blessings on my kindness and feeling for him.

Alas ! no blessings followed his prayers ; that fatal compliance was my ruin ; and from that dreadfully remembered hour have I been completely miserable.

I opened the letter, and found it very long, and written in the most perplexed and difficult hand to decipher I had ever before met with. I several times determined to give it up ; but finding how greatly the poor old man was interested in the contents, which appeared to me extremely prolix and vague, I still continued to proceed in it for some time longer ; and was near approaching the conclusion, to my very great joy, when I

found a sudden faintness come over me, which, for some moments, totally deprived me of sense and motion ; this was quickly succeeded by a violent sickness of the stomach, which increased so rapidly, as to cause great alarm to myself, the old man, and the few people I had about me. Deadly ill, and fainting as I was, to keep my appointment was not in nature ; instead, therefore, of mounting my horse, in quest of my companions, I was conveyed, almost lifeless, to my bed, where I continued so ill, as scarcely to be able to think what would be conjectured from my absence.

END OF VOL. I.

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