THE BLACK DWARF

by

Walter Scott
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I. TALES OF MY LANDLORD

COLLECTED AND REPORTED BY JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM,

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INTRODUCTION.

As I may, without vanity, presume that the name and official
description prefixed to this Proem will secure it, from the
sedate and reflecting part of mankind, to whom only I would be
understood to address myself, such attention as is due to the
sedulous instructor of youth, and the careful performer of my
Sabbath duties, I will forbear to hold up a candle to the
daylight, or to point out to the judicious those recommendations
of my labours which they must necessarily anticipate from the
perusal of the title-page. Nevertheless, I am not unaware, that,
as Envy always dogs Merit at the heels, there may be those who
will whisper, that albeit my learning and good principles cannot
(lauded be the heavens) be denied by any one, yet that my
situation at Gandercleugh hath been more favourable to my acquisitions in learning than to the enlargement of my views of the ways and works of the present generation. To the which objection, if, peradventure, any such shall be started, my answer shall be threefold:

First, Gandercleugh is, as it were, the central part—the navel (SI FAS SIT DICERE) of this our native realm of Scotland; so that men, from every corner thereof, when travelling on their concerns of business, either towards our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh, or towards our metropolis and mart of
gain, whereby I insinuate Glasgow, are frequently led to make

Gandercleugh their abiding stage and place of rest for the night.

And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical, that I, who

have sat in the leathern armchair, on the left-hand side of the

fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer,

for every evening in my life, during forty years bypast (the

Christian Sabbaths only excepted), must have seen more of the

manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if I had

sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labour. Even

so doth the tollman at the well-frequented turn-pike on the
Wellbraehead, sitting at his ease in his own dwelling, gather more receipt of custom, than if, moving forth upon the road, he were to require a contribution from each person whom he chanced to meet in his journey, when, according to the vulgar adage, he might possibly be greeted with more kicks than halfpence.

But, secondly, supposing it again urged, that Ithacus, the most wise of the Greeks, acquired his renown, as the Roman poet hath assured us, by visiting states and men, I reply to the Zoilus who shall adhere to this objection, that, DE FACTO, I have seen states and men also; for I have visited the famous cities of
Edinburgh and Glasgow, the former twice, and the latter three
times, in the course of my earthly pilgrimage. And, moreover, I
had the honour to sit in the General Assembly (meaning, as an
auditor, in the galleries thereof), and have heard as much goodly
speaking on the law of patronage, as, with the fructification
thereof in mine own understanding, hath made me be considered as
an oracle upon that doctrine ever since my safe and happy return
to Gandercleugh.

Again—and thirdly, If it be nevertheless pretended that my
information and knowledge of mankind, however extensive, and
however painfully acquired, by constant domestic enquiry, and by
foreign travel, is, natheless, incompetent to the task of
recording the pleasant narratives of my Landlord, I will let
these critics know, to their own eternal shame and confusion as
well as to the abashment and discomfiture of all who shall rashly
take up a song against me, that I am NOT the writer, redacter, or
compiler, of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single
iota, answerable for their contents, more or less. And now, ye
generation of critics, who raise yourselves up as if it were
brazen serpents, to hiss with your tongues, and to smite with
your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust, and

acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance, and

the words of vain foolishness. Lo! ye are caught in your own

snare, and your own pit hath yawned for you. Turn, then, aside

from the task that is too heavy for you; destroy not your teeth

by gnawing a file; waste not your strength by spurning against a

castle wall; nor spend your breath in contending in swiftness

with a fleet steed; and let those weigh the Tales of my Landlord,

who shall bring with them the scales of candour cleansed from the

rust of prejudice by the hands of intelligent modesty. For these
alone they were compiled, as will appear from a brief narrative

which my zeal for truth compelled me to make supplementary to the

present Proem.

It is well known that my Landlord was a pleasing and a facetious

man, acceptable unto all the parish of Ganderclough, excepting

only the Laird, the Exciseman, and those for whom he refused to

draw liquor upon trust. Their causes of dislike I will touch

separately, adding my own refutation thereof.

His honour, the Laird, accused our Landlord, deceased, of having
encouraged, in various times and places, the destruction of

hares, rabbits, fowls black and grey, partridges, moor-pouts,

roe-deer, and other birds and quadrupeds, at unlawful seasons,

and contrary to the laws of this realm, which have secured, in

their wisdom, the slaughter of such animals for the great of the

everth, whom I have remarked to take an uncommon (though to me, an

unintelligible) pleasure therein. Now, in humble deference to

his honour, and in justifiable defence of my friend deceased, I

reply to this charge, that howsoever the form of such animals

might appear to be similar to those so protected by the law, yet
it was a mere DECEPTIO VISUS; for what resembled hares were, in

fact, HILL-KIDS, and those partaking of the appearance of moor-

fowl, were truly WOOD PIGEONS and consumed and eaten EO NOMINE,

and not otherwise.

Again, the Exciseman pretended, that my deceased Landlord did

to encourage that species of manufacture called distillation,

without having an especial permission from the Great, technically
called a license, for doing so. Now, I stand up to confront this

falsehood; and in defiance of him, his gauging-stick, and pen and

inkhorn, I tell him, that I never saw, or tasted, a glass of...
unlawful aqua vitae in the house of my Landlord; nay, that, on

the contrary, we needed not such devices, in respect of a

pleasing and somewhat seductive liquor, which was vended and

consumed at the Wallace Inn, under the name of MOUNTAIN DEW. If

there is a penalty against manufacturing such a liquor, let him

show me the statute; and when he does, I'll tell him if I will

obey it or no.

Concerning those who came to my Landlord for liquor, and went

thirsty away, for lack of present coin, or future credit, I
cannot but say it has grieved my bowels as if the case had been mine own. Nevertheless, my Landlord considered the necessities of a thirsty soul, and would permit them, in extreme need, and when their soul was impoverished for lack of moisture, to drink to the full value of their watches and wearing apparel, exclusively of their inferior habiliments, which he was uniformly inexorable in obliging them to retain, for the credit of the house. As to mine own part, I may well say, that he never refused me that modicum of refreshment with which I am wont to recruit nature after the fatigues of my school. It is true, I taught his five sons English and Latin, writing, book-keeping,
with a tincture of mathematics, and that I instructed his
daughter in psalmody. Nor do I remember me of any fee or
HONORARIUM received from him on account of these my labours,
except the compotations aforesaid. Nevertheless this
compensation suited my humour well, since it is a hard sentence
to bid a dry throat wait till quarter-day.

But, truly, were I to speak my simple conceit and belief, I think
my Landlord was chiefly moved to waive in my behalf the usual
requisition of a symbol, or reckoning, from the pleasure he was
wont to take in my conversation, which, though solid and edifying

in the main, was, like a well-built palace, decorated with

facetious narratives and devices, tending much to the enhancement

and ornament thereof. And so pleased was my Landlord of the

Wallace in his replies during such colloquies, that there was no

district in Scotland, yea, and no peculiar, and, as it were,

distinctive custom therein practised, but was discussed betwixt

us; insomuch, that those who stood by were wont to say, it was

worth a bottle of ale to hear us communicate with each other.

And not a few travellers, from distant parts, as well as from the

remote districts of our kingdom, were wont to mingle in the
conversation, and to tell news that had been gathered in foreign lands, or preserved from oblivion in this our own.

Now I chanced to have contracted for teaching the lower classes with a young person called Peter, or Patrick, Pattieson, who had been educated for our Holy Kirk, yea, had, by the license of presbytery, his voice opened therein as a preacher, who delighted in the collection of olden tales and legends, and in garnishing them with the flowers of poesy, whereof he was a vain and frivolous professor. For he followed not the example of those
strong poets whom I preposed to him as a pattern, but formed

versification of a flimsy and modern texture, to the compounding

whereof was necessary small pains and less thought. And hence I

have chid him as being one of those who bring forward the fatal

revolution prophesied by Mr. Robert Carey, in his Vaticination on

the Death of the celebrated Dr. John Donne:

Now thou art gone, and thy strict laws will be

Too hard for libertines in poetry;

Till verse (by thee refined) in this last age

Turn ballad rhyme.
I had also disputations with him touching his indulging rather a
flowing and redundant than a concise and stately diction in his
prose exercitations. But notwithstanding these symptoms of
inferior taste, and a humour of contradicting his betters upon
passages of dubious construction in Latin authors, I did
grievously lament when Peter Pattieson was removed from me by
death, even as if he had been the offspring of my own loins. And
in respect his papers had been left in my care (to answer funeral
and death-bed expenses), I conceived myself entitled to dispose
of one parcel thereof, entitled, "Tales of my Landlord," to one
cunning in the trade (as it is called) of bookselling. He was a
mirthful man, of small stature, cunning in counterfeiting of
voices, and in making facetious tales and responses, and whom I
have to laud for the truth of his dealings towards me.

Now, therefore, the world may see the injustice that charges me
with incapacity to write these narratives, seeing, that though I
have proved that I could have written them if I would, yet, not
having done so, the censure will deservedly fall, if at all due,

upon the memory of Mr. Peter Pattieson; whereas I must be justly
entitled to the praise, when any is due, seeing that, as the Dean

of St. Patrick’s wittily and logically expresseth it,

That without which a thing is not,

Is CAUSA SINE QUA NON.

The work, therefore, is unto me as a child is to a parent; in the

which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honour and

praise; but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to

itself alone.
I have only further to intimate, that Mr. Peter Pattieson, in

arranging these Tales for the press, hath more consulted his own

fancy than the accuracy of the narrative; nay, that he hath

sometimes blended two or three stories together for the mere

grace of his plots. Of which infidelity, although I disapprove

and enter my testimony against it, yet I have not taken upon me

to correct the same, in respect it was the will of the deceased,

that his manuscript should be submitted to the press without

diminution or alteration. A fanciful nicety it was on the part

of my deceased friend, who, if thinking wisely, ought rather to
have conjured me, by all the tender ties of our friendship and common pursuits, to have carefully revised, altered, and augmented, at my judgment and discretion. But the will of the dead must be scrupulously obeyed, even when we weep over their pertinacity and self-delusion. So, gentle reader, I bid you farewell, recommending you to such fare as the mountains of your own country produce; and I will only farther premise, that each Tale is preceded by a short introduction, mentioning the persons by whom, and the circumstances under which, the materials thereof were collected.
JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

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II. INTRODUCTION to THE BLACK DWARF.

The ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude,

and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity, and a
suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow-men, is not altogether imaginary. An individual existed many years since, under the author's observation, which suggested such a character. This poor unfortunate man's name was David Ritchie, a native of Tweeddale. He was the son of a labourer in the slate-quarries of Stobo, and must have been born in the misshapen form which he exhibited, though he sometimes imputed it to ill-usage when in infancy. He was bred a brush-maker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention
which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever

He came. The author understood him to say he had even been in

Dublin.

Tired at length of being the object of shouts, laughter, and

derision, David Ritchie resolved, like a deer hunted from the

herd, to retreat to some wilderness, where he might have the

least possible communication with the world which scoffed at him.

He settled himself, with this view, upon a patch of wild moorland

at the bottom of a bank on the farm of Woodhouse, in the

sequestered vale of the small river Manor, in Peebleshire. The
few people who had occasion to pass that way were much surprised,

and some superstitious persons a little alarmed, to see so

strange a figure as Bow’d Davie (i.e. Crooked David) employed in

a task, for which he seemed so totally unfit, as that of erecting

a house. The cottage which he built was extremely small, but the

walls, as well as those of a little garden that surrounded it,

were constructed with an ambitious degree of solidity, being

composed of layers of large stones and turf; and some of the

corner stones were so weighty, as to puzzle the spectators how

such a person as the architect could possibly have raised them.
In fact, David received from passengers, or those who came attracted by curiosity, a good deal of assistance; and as no one knew how much aid had been given by others, the wonder of each individual remained undiminished.

The proprietor of the ground, the late Sir James Naesmith, baronet, chanced to pass this singular dwelling, which, having been placed there without right or leave asked or given, formed an exact parallel with Falstaff’s simile of a "fair house built on another’s ground;" so that poor David might have lost his edifice by mistaking the property where he had erected it. Of
course, the proprietor entertained no idea of exacting such a

forfeiture, but readily sanctioned the harmless encroachment.

The personal description of Elshender of Mucklestane-Moor has

been generally allowed to be a tolerably exact and unexaggerated

portrait of David of Manor Water. He was not quite three feet

and a half high, since he could stand upright in the door of his

mansion, which was just that height. The following particulars

concerning his figure and temper occur in the SCOTS MAGAZINE for

1817, and are now understood to have been communicated by the
ingenious Mr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, who has recorded with much spirit the traditions of the Good Town, and, in other publications, largely and agreeably added to the stock of our popular antiquities. He is the countryman of David Ritchie, and had the best access to collect anecdotes of him.

"His skull," says this authority, "which was of an oblong and rather unusual shape, was said to be of such strength, that he could strike it with ease through the panel of a door, or the end of a barrel. His laugh is said to have been quite horrible; and his screech-owl voice, shrill, uncouth, and dissonant,
corresponded well with his other peculiarities.

“There was nothing very uncommon about his dress. He usually

wore an old slouched hat when he went abroad; and when at home, a

sort of cowl or night-cap. He never wore shoes, being unable to

adapt them to his mis-shapen finlike feet, but always had both

feet and legs quite concealed, and wrapt up with pieces of cloth.

He always walked with a sort of pole or pike-staff, considerably

taller than himself. His habits were, in many respects,

singular, and indicated a mind congenial to its uncouth
A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper, was his prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom. And the insults and scorn to which this exposed him, had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other points in his character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men.

"He detested children, on account of their propensity to insult and persecute him. To strangers he was generally reserved, crabbed, and surly; and though he by no means refused assistance
or charity, he seldom either expressed or exhibited much gratitude. Even towards persons who had been his greatest benefactors, and who possessed the greatest share of his good-will, he frequently displayed much caprice and jealousy. A lady who had known him from his infancy, and who has furnished us in the most obliging manner with some particulars respecting him, says, that although Davie showed as much respect and attachment to her father's family, as it was in his nature to show to any, yet they were always obliged to be very cautious in their deportment towards him. One day, having gone to visit him with
another lady, he took them through his garden, and was showing

them, with much pride and good-humour, all his rich and
tastefully assorted borders, when they happened to stop near a

plot of cabbages which had been somewhat injured by the
caterpillars. Davie, observing one of the ladies smile,

instantly assumed his savage, scowling aspect, rushed among the

cabbages, and dashed them to pieces with his KENT, exclaiming, 'I

hate the worms, for they mock me!'

"Another lady, likewise a friend and old acquaintance of his,

very unintentionally gave David mortal offence on a similar
occasion. Throwing back his jealous glance as he was ushering

her into his garden, he fancied he observed her spit, and

exclaimed, with great ferocity, ‘Am I a toad, woman! that ye spit

at me--that ye spit at me?’ and without listening to any answer

or excuse, drove her out of his garden with imprecations and

insult. When irritated by persons for whom he entertained little

respect, his misanthropy displayed itself in words, and sometimes

in actions, of still greater rudeness; and he used on such

occasions the most unusual and singularly savage imprecations and

Nature maintains a certain balance of good and evil in all her works; and there is no state perhaps so utterly desolate, which does not possess some source of gratification peculiar to itself,

This poor man, whose misanthropy was founded in a sense on his own preternatural deformity, had yet his own particular enjoyments. Driven into solitude, he became an admirer of the beauties of nature. His garden, which he sedulously cultivated, and from a piece of wild moorland made a very productive spot, was his pride and his delight; but he was also an admirer of more natural beauty: the soft sweep of the green hill, the bubbling
of a clear fountain, or the complexities of a wild thicket, were

scenes on which he often gazed for hours, and, as he said, with

inexpressible delight. It was perhaps for this reason that he

was fond of Shenstone's pastorals, and some parts of PARADISE

LOST. The author has heard his most unmusical voice repeat the

celebrated description of Paradise, which he seemed fully to

appreciate. His other studies were of a different cast, chiefly

polemical. He never went to the parish church, and was therefore

suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions, though his

objection was probably to the concourse of spectators, to whom he
must have exposed his unseemly deformity. He spoke of a future
state with intense feeling, and even with tears. He expressed
disgust at the idea, of his remains being mixed with the common
rubbish, as he called it, of the churchyard, and selected with
his usual taste a beautiful and wild spot in the glen where he
had his hermitage, in which to take his last repose. He changed
his mind, however, and was finally interred in the common burial-
ground of Manor parish.

The author has invested Wise Elshie with some qualities which
made him appear, in the eyes of the vulgar, a man possessed of
supernatural power. Common fame paid David Ritchie a similar

compliment, for some of the poor and ignorant, as well as all the

children, in the neighbourhood, held him to be what is called

uncanny. He himself did not altogether discourage the idea; it

enlarged his very limited circle of power, and in so far

gratified his conceit; and it soothed his misanthropy, by

increasing his means of giving terror or pain. But even in a

rude Scottish glen thirty years back, the fear of sorcery was

very much out of date.
David Ritchie affected to frequent solitary scenes, especially such as were supposed to be haunted, and valued himself upon his courage in doing so. To be sure he had little chance of meeting anything more ugly than himself. At heart, he was superstitious, and planted many rowans (mountain ashes) around his hut, as a certain defence against necromancy. For the same reason, doubtless, he desired to have rowan-trees set above his grave.

We have stated that David Ritchie loved objects of natural beauty. His only living favourites were a dog and a cat, to which he was particularly attached, and his bees, which he
treated with great care. He took a sister, latterly, to live in

a hut adjacent to his own, but he did not permit her to enter it.

She was weak in intellect, but not deformed in person; simple, or

rather silly, but not, like her brother, sullen or bizarre.

David was never affectionate to her; it was not in his nature;

but he endured her. He maintained himself and her by the sale of

the product of their garden and bee-hives; and, latterly, they

had a small allowance from the parish. Indeed, in the simple and

patriarchal state in which the country then was, persons in the

situation of David and his sister were sure to be supported.
They had only to apply to the next gentleman or respectable farmer, and were sure to find them equally ready and willing to supply their very moderate wants. David often received gratuities from strangers, which he never asked, never refused, and never seemed to consider as an obligation. He had a right, indeed, to regard himself as one of Nature's paupers, to whom she gave a title to be maintained by his kind, even by that deformity which closed against him all ordinary ways of supporting himself by his own labour. Besides, a bag was suspended in the mill for David Ritchie's benefit; and those who were carrying home a melder of meal, seldom failed to add a GOWPEN [Handful] to the
alms-bag of the deformed cripple. In short, David had no occasion for money, save to purchase snuff, his only luxury, in which he indulged himself liberally. When he died, in the beginning of the present century, he was found to have hoarded about twenty pounds, a habit very consistent with his disposition; for wealth is power, and power was what David Ritchie desired to possess, as a compensation for his exclusion from human society.

His sister survived till the publication of the tale to which
this brief notice forms the introduction; and the author is sorry to learn that a sort of "local sympathy," and the curiosity then expressed concerning the Author of Waverley and the subjects of his Novels, exposed the poor woman to enquiries which gave her pain. When pressed about her brother’s peculiarities, she asked, in her turn, why they would not permit the dead to rest? To others, who pressed for some account of her parents, she answered in the same tone of feeling.

The author saw this poor, and, it may be said, unhappy man, in autumn 1797 being then, as he has the happiness still to remain,
connected by ties of intimate friendship with the family of the venerable Dr. Adam Fergusson, the philosopher and historian, who then resided at the mansion-house of Halyards, in the vale of Manor, about a mile from Ritchie’s hermitage, the author was upon a visit at Halyards, which lasted for several days, and was made acquainted with this singular anchorite, whom Dr. Fergusson considered as an extraordinary character, and whom he assisted in various ways, particularly by the occasional loan of books.

Though the taste of the philosopher and the poor peasant did not, it may be supposed, always correspond, [I remember David was
particularly anxious to see a book, which he called, I think,

LETTERS TO ELECT LADIES, and which, he said, was the best composition he had ever read; but Dr. Fergusson's library did not supply the volume.] Dr. Fergusson considered him as a man of a powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just bias by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt, and avenging itself upon society, in idea at least, by a gloomy misanthropy.

David Ritchie, besides the utter obscurity of his life while in
existence, had been dead for many years, when it occurred to the

author that such a character might be made a powerful agent in

fictitious narrative. He, accordingly, sketched that of Elshie

of the Mucklestane-Moor. The story was intended to be longer,

and the catastrophe more artificially brought out; but a friendly

critic, to whose opinion I subjected the work in its progress,

was of opinion, that the idea of the Solitary was of a kind too

revolting, and more likely to disgust than to interest the

reader. As I had good right to consider my adviser as an

excellent judge of public opinion, I got off my subject by
hastening the story to an end, as fast as it was possible; and,

by huddling into one volume, a tale which was designed to occupy two, have perhaps produced a narrative as much disproportioned and distorted, as the Black Dwarf who is its subject.

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III. THE BLACK DWARF.
CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

Hast any philosophy in thee, Shepherd? AS YOU LIKE IT.

It was a fine April morning (excepting that it had snowed hard

the night before, and the ground remained covered with a dazzling

mantle of six inches in depth) when two horsemen rode up to the
Wallace Inn. The first was a strong, tall, powerful man, in a grey riding-coat, having a hat covered with waxcloth, a huge silver-mounted horsewhip, boots, and dreadnought overalls. He was mounted on a large strong brown mare, rough in coat, but well in condition, with a saddle of the yeomanry cut, and a double-bitted military bridle. The man who accompanied him was apparently his servant; he rode a shaggy little grey pony, had a blue bonnet on his head, and a large check napkin folded about his neck, wore a pair of long blue worsted hose instead of boots, had his gloveless hands much stained with tar, and observed an air of deference and respect towards his companion, but without
any of those indications of precedence and punctilio which are

preserved between the gentry and their domestics. On the

contrary, the two travellers entered the court-yard abreast, and

the concluding sentence of the conversation which had been

carrying on betwixt them was a joint ejaculation, "Lord guide us,

an this weather last, what will come o' the lambs!" The hint was

sufficient for my Landlord, who, advancing to take the horse of

the principal person, and holding him by the reins as he

dismounted, while his ostler rendered the same service to the

attendant, welcomed the stranger to Gandercleugh, and, in the
same breath, enquired, "What news from the south hielands?"

"News?" said the farmer, "bad eneugh news, I think;--an we can carry through the yowes, it will be a’ we can do; we maun e’en leave the lambs to the Black Dwarfs care."

"Ay, ay," subjoined the old shepherd (for such he was), shaking his head, "he’ll be unco busy amang the morts this season."

"The Black Dwarf!" said MY LEARNED FRIEND AND PATRON, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, "and what sort of a personage may he be?"
[We have, in this and other instances, printed in italics

(CAPITALS in this etext) some few words which the worthy editor,

Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, seems to have interpolated upon the

text of his deceased friend, Mr. Pattieson. We must observe,

once for all, that such liberties seem only to have been taken by

the learned gentleman where his own character and conduct are

concerned; and surely he must be the best judge of the style in

which his own character and conduct should be treated of.]
"Hout awa, man," answered the farmer, "ye'll hae heard o' Canny Elshie the Black Dwarf, or I am muckle mistaen--A' the warld tells tales about him, but it's but daft nonsense after a'--I dinna believe a word o't frae beginning to end."

"Your father believed it unco stievely, though," said the old man, to whom the scepticism of his master gave obvious displeasure.

"Ay, very true, Bauldie, but that was in the time o' the blackfaces--they believed a hantle queer things in thae days,
that naebody heeds since the lang sheep cam in."

"The mair's the pity, the mair's the pity," said the old man.

"Your father, and sae I have aften tell'd ye, maister, wad hae

been sair vexed to hae seen the auld peel-house wa's pu'd down to

make park dykes; and the bonny broomy knowe, where he liked sae

weel to sit at e'en, wi' his plaid about him, and look at the kye

as they cam down the loaning, ill wad he hae liked to hae seen

that braw sunny knowe a' riven out wi' the pleugh in the fashion

it is at this day."
"Hout, Bauldie," replied the principal, "tak ye that dram the landlord's offering ye, and never fash your head about the changes o' the warld, sae lang as ye're blithe and bien yoursell."

"Wussing your health, sirs," said the shepherd; and having taken off his glass, and observed the whisky was the right thing, he continued, "It's no for the like o' us to be judging, to be sure; but it was a bonny knowe that broomy knowe, and an unco braw shelter for the lambs in a severe morning like this."

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"Ay," said his patron, "but ye ken we maun hae turnips for the lang sheep, billie, and muckle hard wark to get them, baith wi’ the pleugh and the howe; and that wad sort ill wi’ sitting on the broomy knowe, and cracking about Black Dwarfs, and siccan clavers, as was the gate lang syne, when the short sheep were in the fashion."

"Aweel, aweel, maister," said the attendant, "short sheep had short rents, I’m thinking."
Here my WORTHY AND LEARNED patron again interposed, and observed,

"that he could never perceive any material difference, in point

of longitude, between one sheep and another."

This occasioned a loud hoarse laugh on the part of the farmer,

and an astonished stare on the part of the shepherd.

"It's the woo', man,—it's the woo', and no the beasts themsells,

that makes them be ca'd lang or short. I believe if ye were to

measure their backs, the short sheep wad be rather the langer-
bodied o' the twa; but it's the woo' that pays the rent in thae
days, and it had muckle need."

"Odd, Bauldie says very true,—short sheep did make short rents--

my father paid for our steading just threescore punds, and it

stands me in three hundred, plack and bawbee.—And that's very

true—I hae nae time to be standing here clavering.—Landlord,

get us our breakfast, and see an' get the yauds fed—I am for
doun to Christy Wilson's, to see if him and me can gree about the

luckpenny I am to gie him for his year-aulds. We had drank sax
mutchkins to the making the bargain at St. Boswell’s fair, and

some gate we canna gree upon the particulars preceesely, for as

muckle time as we took about it--I doubt we draw to a plea--But

hear ye, neighbour,” addressing my WORTHY AND LEARNED patron, "if

ye want to hear onything about lang or short sheep, I will be

back here to my kail against ane o’clock; or, if ye want ony

auld-warld stories about the Black Dwarf, and sic-like, if ye’ll

ware a half mutchkin upon Bauldie there, he’ll crack t’ye like a

pen-gun. And I’se gie ye a mutchkin mysell, man, if I can settle

weel wi’ Christy Wilson.”
The farmer returned at the hour appointed, and with him came

Christy Wilson, their difference having been fortunately settled

without an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. My LEARNED AND WORTHY patron failed not to attend, both on account of the

refreshment promised to the mind and to the body, ALTHOUGH HE IS

KNOWN TO PARTAKE OF THE LATTER IN A VERY MODERATE DEGREE; and the

party, with which my Landlord was associated, continued to sit

late in the evening, seasoning their liquor with many choice

tales and songs. The last incident which I recollect, was my

LEARNED AND WORTHY patron falling from his chair, just as he
Walter Scott – The black dwarf

concluded a long lecture upon temperance, by reciting, from the

"Gentle Shepherd," a couplet, which he RIGHT HAPPILY transferred

from the vice of avarice to that of ebriety:

He that has just eneugh may soundly sleep,

The overcome only fashes folk to keep.

In the course of the evening the Black Dwarf had not been

forgotten, and the old shepherd, Bauldie, told so many stories of

him, that they excited a good deal of interest. It also

appeared, though not till the third punch-bowl was emptied, that
much of the farmer's scepticism on the subject was affected, as

evincing a liberality of thinking, and a freedom from ancient

prejudices, becoming a man who paid three hundred pounds a-year

of rent, while, in fact, he had a lurking belief in the

traditions of his forefathers. After my usual manner, I made

farther enquiries of other persons connected with the wild and

pastoral district in which the scene of the following narrative

is placed, and I was fortunate enough to recover many links of

the story, not generally known, and which account, at least in

some degree, for the circumstances of exaggerated marvel with
which superstition has attired it in the more vulgar traditions.

[The Black Dwarf, now almost forgotten, was once held a formidable personage by the dalesmen of the Border, where he got the blame of whatever mischief befell the sheep or cattle. "He was," says Dr. Leyden, who makes considerable use of him in the ballad called the Cowt of Keeldar, "a fairy of the most malignant order--the genuine Northern Duergar." The best and most authentic account of this dangerous and mysterious being occurs in a tale communicated to the author by that eminent antiquary, Richard Surtees, Esq. of Mainsforth, author of the HISTORY OF THE
According to this well-attested legend, two young Northumbrians were out on a shooting party, and had plunged deep among the mountainous moorlands which border on Cumberland. They stopped for refreshment in a little secluded dell by the side of a rivulet. There, after they had partaken of such food as they brought with them, one of the party fell asleep; the other, unwilling to disturb his friend's repose, stole silently out of the dell with the purpose of looking around him, when he was
astonished to find himself close to a being who seemed not to

belong to this world, as he was the most hideous dwarf that the

sun had ever shone on. His head was of full human size, forming

a frightful contrast with his height, which was considerably

under four feet. It was thatched with no other covering than

long matted red hair, like that of the felt of a badger in

consistence, and in colour a reddish brown, like the hue of the

heather-blossom. His limbs seemed of great strength; nor was he

otherwise deformed than from their undue proportion in thickness

to his diminutive height. The terrified sportsman stood gazing

on this horrible apparition, until, with an angry countenance,
the being demanded by what right he intruded himself on those

hills, and destroyed their harmless inhabitants. The perplexed

stranger endeavoured to propitiate the incensed dwarf, by

offering to surrender his game, as he would to an earthly Lord of

the Manor. The proposal only redoubled the offence already taken

by the dwarf, who alleged that he was the lord of those

mountains, and the protector of the wild creatures who found a

retreat in their solitary recesses; and that all spoils derived

from their death, or misery, were abhorrent to him. The hunter

humbled himself before the angry goblin, and by protestations of
his ignorance, and of his resolution to abstain from such intrusion in future, at last succeeded in pacifying him. The gnome now became more communicative, and spoke of himself as belonging to a species of beings something between the angelic race and humanity. He added, moreover, which could hardly have been anticipated, that he had hopes of sharing in the redemption of the race of Adam. He pressed the sportsman to visit his dwelling, which he said was hard by, and plighted his faith for his safe return. But at this moment, the shout of the sportsman's companion was heard calling for his friend, and the dwarf, as if unwilling that more than one person should be
cognisant of his presence, disappeared as the young man emerged from the dell to join his comrade.

It was the universal opinion of those most experienced in such matters, that if the shooter had accompanied the spirit, he would, notwithstanding the dwarf's fair pretences, have been either torn to pieces, or immured for years in the recesses of some fairy hill.

Such is the last and most authentic account of the apparition of
CHAPTER II.

Will none but Hearne the Hunter serve your turn?

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

In one of the most remote districts of the south of Scotland,

where an ideal line, drawn along the tops of lofty and bleak
mountains, separates that land from her sister kingdom, a young man, called Halbert, or Hobbie Elliot, a substantial farmer, who boasted his descent from old Martin Elliot of the Preakin-tower, noted in Border story and song, was on his return from deer-stalking. The deer, once so numerous among these solitary wastes, were now reduced to a very few herds, which, sheltering themselves in the most remote and inaccessible recesses, rendered the task of pursuing them equally toilsome and precarious. There were, however, found many youth of the country ardently attached to this sport, with all its dangers and fatigues. The sword had
been sheathed upon the Borders for more than a hundred years, by the peaceful union of the crowns in the reign of James the First of Great Britain. Still the country retained traces of what it had been in former days; the inhabitants, their more peaceful avocations having been repeatedly interrupted by the civil wars of the preceding century, were scarce yet broken in to the habits of regular industry, sheep-farming had not been introduced upon any considerable scale, and the feeding of black cattle was the chief purpose to which the hills and valleys were applied. Near to the farmer's house, the tenant usually contrived to raise such a crop of oats or barley, as afforded meal for his family; and
the whole of this slovenly and imperfect mode of cultivation left

much time upon his own hands, and those of his domestics. This

was usually employed by the young men in hunting and fishing; and

the spirit of adventure, which formerly led to raids and forays

in the same districts, was still to be discovered in the

eagerness with which they pursued those rural sports.

The more high-spirited among the youth were, about the time that

our narrative begins, expecting, rather with hope than

apprehension, an opportunity of emulating their fathers in their
military achievements, the recital of which formed the chief part

of their amusement within doors. The passing of the Scottish act

of security had given the alarm of England, as it seemed to point

at a separation of the two British kingdoms, after the decease of

Queen Anne, the reigning sovereign. Godolphin, then at the head

of the English administration, foresaw that there was no other

mode of avoiding the probable extremity of a civil war, but by

carrying through an incorporating union. How that treaty was

managed, and how little it seemed for some time to promise the

beneficial results which have since taken place to such extent,

may be learned from the history of the period. It is enough for
our purpose to say, that all Scotland was indignant at the terms

on which their legislature had surrendered their national

independence. The general resentment led to the strangest

leagues and to the wildest plans. The Cameronians were about to

take arms for the restoration of the house of Stewart, whom they

regarded, with justice, as their oppressors; and the intrigues of

the period presented the strange picture of papists, prelatists,

and presbyterians, caballing among themselves against the English

government, out of a common feeling that their country had been

treated with injustice. The fermentation was universal; and, as
the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms,

under the act of security, they were not indifferently prepared

for war, and waited but the declaration of some of the nobility

to break out into open hostility. It was at this period of

public confusion that our story opens.

The cleugh, or wild ravine, into which Hobbie Elliot had followed

the game, was already far behind him, and he was considerably

advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close

upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great

indifference to the experienced sportsman, who could have walked
blindfold over every inch of his native heaths, had it not

happened near a spot, which, according to the traditions of the
country, was in extremely bad fame, as haunted by supernatural
appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had, from his
childhood, lent an attentive ear; and as no part of the country
afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply
read in their fearful lore than Hobbie of the Heugh-foot; for so
our gallant was called, to distinguish him from a round dozen of
Elliots who bore the same Christian name. It cost him no
efforts, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents
connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.

This dreary common was called Mucklestane-Moor, from a huge column of unhewn granite, which raised its massy head on a knell near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, which is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a
supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon

Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewed, or

rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same

consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they

lay scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese

of Mucklestane-Moor. The legend accounted for this name and

appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable

witch who frequented these hills in former days, causing the ewes

to KEB, and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the

feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor
she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were
still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf
being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their
diabolical partners.

Once upon a time this old hag is said to have crossed the moor,
driving before her a flock of geese, which she proposed to sell
to advantage at a neighbouring fair;--for it is well known that
the fiend, however liberal in imparting his powers of doing
mischief, ungenerously leaves his allies under the necessity of
performing the meanest rustic labours for subsistence. The day
was far advanced, and her chance of obtaining a good price

depended on her being first at the market. But the geese, which

had hitherto preceded her in a pretty orderly manner, when they

came to this wide common, interspersed with marshes and pools of

water, scattered in every direction, to plunge into the element

in which they delighted. Incensed at the obstinacy with which

they defied all her efforts to collect them, and not remembering

the precise terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound to

obey her commands for a certain space, the sorceress exclaimed,

"Deevil, that neither I nor they ever stir from this spot more!"
The words were hardly uttered, when, by a metamorphosis as sudden

as any in Ovid, the hag and her refractory flock were converted

into stone, the angel whom she served, being a strict formalist,

grasping eagerly at an opportunity of completing the ruin of her

body and soul by a literal obedience to her orders. It is said,

that when she perceived and felt the transformation which was

about to take place, she exclaimed to the treacherous fiend, "Ah,

thou false thief! lang hast thou promised me a grey gown, and

now I am getting ane that will last for ever." The dimensions of

the pillar, and of the stones, were often appealed to, as a proof

of the superior stature and size of old women and geese in the
days of other years, by those praisers of the past who held the comfortable opinion of the gradual degeneracy of mankind.

All particulars of this legend Hobbie called to mind as he passed along the moor. He also remembered, that, since the catastrophe had taken place, the scene of it had been avoided, at least after night-fall, by all human beings, as being the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies, and other demons, once the companions of the witch's diabolical revels, and now continuing to rendezvous upon the same spot, as if still in attendance on their transformed
mistress. Hobbie's natural hardihood, however, manfully combated

with these intrusive sensations of awe. He summoned to his side

the brace of large greyhounds, who were the companions of his

sports, and who were wont, in his own phrase, to fear neither dog

nor devil; he looked at the priming of his piece, and, like the

clown in Hallowe'en, whistled up the warlike ditty of Jock of the

Side, as a general causes his drums be beat to inspirit the

doubtful courage of his soldiers.

In this state of mind, he was very glad to hear a friendly voice

shout in his rear, and propose to him a partner on the road. He
slackened his pace, and was quickly joined by a youth well known to him, a gentleman of some fortune in that remote country, and who had been abroad on the same errand with himself. Young Earnscliff, "of that ilk," had lately come of age, and succeeded to a moderate fortune, a good deal dilapidated, from the share his family had taken in the disturbances of the period. They were much and generally respected in the country; a reputation which this young gentleman seemed likely to sustain, as he was well educated, and of excellent dispositions.
"Now, Earnscliff;" exclaimed Hobbie, "I am glad to meet your
honour ony gate, and company's blithe on a bare moor like this

--it's an unco bogilly bit--Where hae ye been sporting?"

"Up the Carla Cleugh, Hobbie," answered Earnscliff, returning his
greeting. "But will our dogs keep the peace, think you?"

"Deil a fear o' mine," said Hobbie, "they hae scarce a leg to
stand on.--Odd! the deer's fled the country, I think! I have

been as far as Inger-fell-foot, and deil a horn has Hobbie seen,
excepting three red-wud raes, that never let me within shot of
them, though I gaed a mile round to get up the wind to them, an’

a’. Deil o’ me wad care muckle, only I wanted some venison to

our auld gude-dame. The carline, she sits in the neuk yonder,

upbye, and cracks about the grand shooters and hunters lang syne

--Odd, I think they hae killed a’ the deer in the country, for my

part.”

"Well, Hbbie, I have shot a fat buck, and sent him to Earnscliff

this morning--you shall have half of him for your grandmother."
"Mony thanks to ye, Mr. Patrick, ye’re kend to a’ the country for a kind heart. It will do the auld wife’s heart gude—mair by token, when she kens it comes frae you—and maist of a’ gin ye’ll come up and take your share, for I reckon ye are lonesome now in the auld tower, and a’ your folk at that weary Edinburgh. I wonder what they can find to do amang a wheen ranks o’ stane-houses wi’ slate on the tap o’ them, that might live on their ain bonny green hills."

"My education and my sisters’ has kept my mother much in Edinburgh for several years," said Earnscliff; "but I promise you
I propose to make up for lost time."

"And ye’ll rig out the auld tower a bit," said Hobbie, "and live hearty and neighbour-like wi’ the auld family friends, as the Laird o’ Earnscliff should? I can tell ye, my mother--my grandmother I mean--but, since we lost our ain mother, we ca’ her sometimes the tane, and sometimes the tother--but, ony gate, she conceits hersell no that distant connected wi’ you."

"Very true, Hobbie, and I will come to the Heugh-foot to dinner
"Weel, that's kindly said! We are auld neighbours, an we were
nae kin--and my gude-dame's fain to see you--she clavers about
your father that was killed lang syne."

"Hush, hush, Hobbie--not a word about that--it's a story better
forgotten."

"I dinna ken--if it had chanced amang our folk, we wad hae keepit
it in mind mony a day till we got some mends for't--but ye ken
your ain ways best, you lairds--I have heard say that Ellieslaw's friend stickit your sire after the laird himsell had mastered his sword."

"Fie, fie, Hobbie; it was a foolish brawl, occasioned by wine and politics--many swords were drawn--it is impossible to say who struck the blow."

"At ony rate, auld Ellieslaw was aiding and abetting; and I am sure if ye were sae disposed as to take amends on him, naebody
could say it was wrang, for your father's blood is beneath his
nails--and besides there's naebody else left that was concerned
to take amends upon, and he's a prelatist and a jacobite into the
bargain--I can tell ye the country folk look for something atween
ye."

"O for shame, Hobbie!" replied the young Laird; "you, that
profess religion, to stir your friend up to break the law, and
take vengeance at his own hand, and in such a bogilly bit too,
where we know not what beings may be listening to us!"
"Hush, hush!" said Hobbie, drawing nearer to his companion, "I was nae thinking o' the like o' them--But I can guess a wee bit what keeps your hand up, Mr. Patrick; we a' ken it's no lack o' courage, but the twa grey een of a bonny lass, Miss Isabel Vere, that keeps you sae sober."

"I assure you, Hobbie," said his companion, rather angrily, "I assure you you are mistaken; and it is extremely wrong of you, either to think of, or to utter, such an idea; I have no idea of permitting freedoms to be carried so far as to connect my name
with that of any young lady."

"Why, there now--there now!" retorted Elliot; "did I not say it was nae want o' spunk that made ye sae mim?--Weel, weel, I meant nae offence; but there's just ae thing ye may notice frae a friend. The auld Laird of Ellieslaw has the auld riding blood far better at his heart than ye hae--troth, he kens naething about thae newfangled notions o' peace and quietness--he's a' for the auld-warld doings o' lifting and laying on, and he has a wheen stout lads at his back too, and keeps them weel up in heart, and as fu' o' mischief as young colts. Where he gets the
gear to do't nane can say; he lives high, and far abune his rents

here; however, he pays his way--Sae, if there's ony out-break in

the country, he's likely to break out wi' the first--and weel

does he mind the auld quarrels between ye, I'm surmizing he'll be

for a touch at the auld tower at Earnscliff."

"Well, Hobbie," answered the young gentleman, "if he should be so

ill advised, I shall try to make the old tower good against him,

as it has been made good by my betters against his betters many a

day ago."
"Very right--very right--that's speaking like a man now," said the stout yeoman; "and, if sae should be that this be sae, if ye'll just gar your servant jow out the great bell in the tower, there's me, and my twa brothers, and little Davie of the Stenhouse, will be wi' you, wi' a' the power we can make, in the snapping of a flint."

"Many thanks, Hbbie," answered Earnscliff; "but I hope we shall have no war of so unnatural and unchristian a kind in our time."
"Hout, sir, hout," replied Elliot; "it wad be but a wee bit

neighbour war, and Heaven and earth would make allowances for it

in this uncultivated place--it's just the nature o' the folk and

the land--we canna live quiet like Loudon folk--we haena sae

muckle to do. It's impossible."

"Well, Hobbie," said the Laird, "for one who believes so deeply

as you do in supernatural appearances, I must own you take Heaven

in your own hand rather audaciously, considering where we are

walking."
"What needs I care for the Mucklestane-Moor ony mair than ye do yoursell, Earnscliff?" said Hobbie, something offended; "to be sure, they do say there's a sort o' worricows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them? I hae a good conscience, and little to answer for, unless it be about a rant amang the lasses, or a splore at a fair, and that's no muckle to speak of. Though I say it mysell, I am as quiet a lad and as peaceable--"

"And Dick Turnbull's head that you broke, and Willie of Winton
whom you shot at?” said his travelling companion.

"Hout, Earnscliff, ye keep a record of a’ men’s misdoings

--Dick’s head’s healed again, and we’re to fight out the quarrel

at Jeddart, on the Rood-day, so that’s like a thing settled in a

peaceable way; and then I am friends wi' Willie again, puir

child—it was but twa or three hail draps after a’. I wad let

onnybody do the like o’t to me for a pint o’ brandy. But Willie’s

lowland bred, poor fallow, and soon frighted for himsell—And,

for the worricows, were we to meet ane on this very bit—"
"As is not unlikely," said young Earnscliff, "for there stands your old witch, Hobbie."

"I say," continued Elliot, as if indignant at this hint--"I say, if the auld carline hersell was to get up out o' the grund just before us here, I would think nae mair--But, gude preserve us, Earnscliff; what can yon, be!"
CHAPTER III.

Brown Dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,

Thy name to Keeldar tell!

"The Brown Man of the Moor, that stays

Beneath the heather-bell."  JOHN LEYDEN

The object which alarmed the young farmer in the middle of his

valorous protestations, startled for a moment even his less

prejudiced companion. The moon, which had arisen during their
conversation, was, in the phrase of that country, wading or struggling with clouds, and shed only a doubtful and occasional light. By one of her beams, which streamed upon the great granite column to which they now approached, they discovered a form, apparently human, but of a size much less than ordinary, which moved slowly among the large grey stones, not like a person intending to journey onward, but with the slow, irregular, flitting movement of a being who hovers around some spot of melancholy recollection, uttering also, from time to time, a sort of indistinct muttering sound. This so much resembled his idea of the motions of an apparition, that Hobbie Elliot, making a
dead pause, while his hair erected itself upon his scalp,

whispered to his companion, "It's Auld Ailie hersell! Shall I
gie her a shot, in the name of God?"

"For Heaven's sake, no," said his companion, holding down the
weapon which he was about to raise to the aim--"for Heaven's
sake, no; it's some poor distracted creature."

"Ye're distracted yoursell, for thinking of going so near to

her," said Elliot, holding his companion in his turn, as he
prepared to advance. "We'll aye hae time to pit ower a bit

prayer (an I could but mind ane) afore she comes this length

--God! she's in nae hurry," continued he, growing bolder from

his companion's confidence, and the little notice the apparition

seemed to take of them. "She hirples like a hen on a het girdle.

I redd ye, Earnscliff" (this he added in a gentle whisper), "let

us take a cast about, as if to draw the wind on a buck--the bog

is no abune knee-deep, and better a saft road as bad company."

[The Scots use the epithet soft, IN MALAM PARTEM, in two cases,

at least. A SOFT road is a road through quagmire and bogs; and

SOFT weather signifies that which is very rainy.]
Earnscliff, however, in spite of his companion's resistance and remonstrances, continued to advance on the path they had originally pursued, and soon confronted the object of their investigation.

The height of the figure, which appeared even to decrease as they approached it, seemed to be under four feet, and its form, as far as the imperfect light afforded them the means of discerning, was very nearly as broad as long, or rather of a spherical shape,
which could only be occasioned by some strange personal deformity. The young sportsman hailed this extraordinary appearance twice, without receiving any answer, or attending to the pinches by which his companion endeavoured to intimate that their best course was to walk on, without giving farther disturbance to a being of such singular and preternatural exterior. To the third repeated demand of "Who are you? What do you here at this hour of night?"--a voice replied, whose shrill, uncouth, and dissonant tones made Elliot step two paces back, and startled even his companion, "Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you."
"What do you do here so far from shelter? Are you benighted on your journey? Will you follow us home ('God forbid!' ejaculated Hobbie Elliot, involuntarily), and I will give you a lodging?"

"I would sooner lodge by mysell in the deepest of the Tarras-flow," again whispered Hobbie.

"Pass on your way," rejoined the figure, the harsh tones of his voice still more exalted by passion. "I want not your guidance
--I want not your lodging--it is five years since my head was under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time."

"He is mad," said Earnscliff.

"He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne," answered his superstitious companion; "but Humphrey wasna that awfu' big in the bouk."

"Pass on your way," reiterated the object of their curiosity,
"the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me--the

sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp

bodkins"

"Lord safe us!" whispered Hobbie, "that the dead should bear such

fearful ill-will to the living!--his soul may be in a purer way,

I'm jealous."

"Come, my friend," said Earnscliff, "you seem to suffer under

some strong affliction; common humanity will not allow us to
"Common humanity!" exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, "where got ye that catch-word--that noose for woodcocks--that common disguise for man-traps--that bait which the wretched idiot who swallows, will soon find covers a hook with barbs ten times sharper than those you lay for the animals which you murder for your luxury!"

"I tell you, my friend," again replied Earnscliff, "you are incapable of judging of your own situation--you will perish in
this wilderness, and we must, in compassion, force you along with

us."

"I'll hae neither hand nor foot in't," said Hobbie; "let the

ghaist take his ain way, for God's sake!"

"My blood be on my own head, if I perish here," said the figure;

and, observing Earnscliff meditating to lay hold on him, he

added, "And your blood be upon yours, if you touch but the skirt

of my garments, to infect me with the taint of mortality!"
The moon shone more brightly as he spoke thus, and Earnscliff observed that he held out his right hand armed with some weapon of offence, which glittered in the cold ray like the blade of a long knife, or the barrel of a pistol. It would have been madness to persevere in his attempt upon a being thus armed, and holding such desperate language, especially as it was plain he would have little aid from his companion, who had fairly left him to settle matters with the apparition as he could, and had proceeded a few paces on his way homeward. Earnscliff, however, turned and followed Hobbie, after looking back towards the
supposed maniac, who, as if raised to frenzy by the interview,

roamed wildly around the great stone, exhausting his voice in

shrieks and imprecations, that thrilled wildly along the waste

heath.

The two sportsmen moved on some time in silence, until they were

out of hearing of these uncouth sounds, which was not ere they

had gained a considerable distance from the pillar that gave name

to the moor. Each made his private comments on the scene they

had witnessed, until Hobbie Elliot suddenly exclaimed, "Weel,
I'll uphold that yon ghaist, if it be a ghaist, has baith done and suffered muckle evil in the flesh, that gars him rampauge in that way after he is dead and gane."

"It seems to me the very madness of misanthropy," said Earnscliff; following his own current of thought.

"And ye didna think it was a spiritual creature, then?" asked Hobbie at his companion.

"Who, I?--No, surely."
"Weel, I am partly of the mind mysell that it may be a live

thing--and yet I dinna ken, I wadna wish to see ony thing look

liker a bogle."

"At any rate," said Earnscliff, "I will ride over to-morrow and

see what has become of the unhappy being."

"In fair daylight?" queried the yeoman; "then, grace o' God,

I' se be wi' ye. But here we are nearer to Heugh-foot than to
your house by twa mile,--hadna ye better e'en gae hame wi' me,

and we'll send the callant on the powny to tell them that you are

wi' us, though I believe there's naebody at hame to wait for you

but the servants and the cat."

"Have with you then, friend Hobbie," said the young hunter; "and

as I would not willingly have either the servants be anxious, or

puss forfeit her supper, in my absence, I'll be obliged to you to

send the boy as you propose."

"Aweel, that IS kind, I must say. And ye'll gae hame to Heugh-
foot? They'll be right blithe to see you, that will they."

This affair settled, they walked briskly on a little farther,

when, coming to the ridge of a pretty steep hill, Hobbie Elliot exclaimed, "Now, Earnscliff, I am aye glad when I come to this very bit--Ye see the light below, that's in the ha' window, where grannie, the gash auld carline, is sitting birling at her wheel

--and ye see yon other light that's gaun whiddin' back and forrit through amang the windows? that's my cousin, Grace Armstrong,

--she's twice as clever about the house as my sisters, and sae
they say themsells, for they're good-natured lasses as ever trode

on heather; but they confess themsells, and sae does grannie,

that she has far maist action, and is the best goer about the
toun, now that grannie is off the foot hersell.--My brothers, ane

o' them's away to wait upon the chamberlain, and ane's at Moss-

phadraig, that's our led farm--he can see after the stock just as

weel as I can do."

"You are lucky, my good friend, in having so many valuable

relations."
"Troth am I--Grace make me thankful, I'se never deny it.--But

will ye tell me now, Earnscliff, you that have been at college,

and the high-school of Edinburgh, and got a' sort o' lair where

it was to be best gotten--will ye tell me--no that it's ony

concern of mine in particular,--but I heard the priest of St.

John's, and our minister, bargaining about it at the Winter fair,

and troth they baith spak very weel--Now, the priest says it's

unlawful to marry ane's cousin; but I cannot say I thought he

brought out the Gospel authorities half sae weel as our minister-

--our minister is thought the best divine and the best preacher
atween this and Edinburgh--Dinna ye think he was likely to be right?"

"Certainly marriage, by all protestant Christians, is held to be as free as God made it by the Levitical law; so, Hobbie, there can be no bar, legal or religious, betwixt you and Miss Armstrong."

"Hout awa' wi' your joking, Earnscliff," replied his companion, --" ye are angry aneugh yoursell if ane touches you a bit, man, on the sooth side of the jest--No that I was asking the question
about Grace, for ye maun ken she’s no my cousin-germain out and

out, but the daughter of my uncle’s wife by her first marriage,

so she’s nae kith nor kin to me--only a connexion like. But now

we’re at the Sheeling-hill--I’ll fire off my gun, to let them ken

I’m coming, that’s aye my way; and if I hae a deer I gie them twa

shots, ane for the deer and ane for mysell.”

He fired off his piece accordingly, and the number of lights were

seen to traverse the house, and even to gleam before it. Hobbie

Elliot pointed out one of these to Earnscliff, which seemed to
glide from the house towards some of the outhouses—"That's Grace hersell," said Hobbie. "She'll no meet me at the door, I se warrant her--but she'll be awa', for a' that, to see if my hounds' supper be ready, poor beasts."

"Love me, love my dog," answered Earnscliff. "Ah, Hobbie, you are a lucky young fellow!"

This observation was uttered with something like a sigh, which apparently did not escape the ear of his companion.
"Hout, other folk may be as lucky as I am—O how I have seen Miss Isabel Vere's head turn after somebody when they passed ane another at the Carlisle races! Wha kens but things may come round in this world?"

Earnscliff muttered something like an answer; but whether in assent of the proposition, or rebuking the application of it, could not easily be discovered; and it seems probable that the speaker himself was willing his meaning should rest in doubt and obscurity. They had now descended the broad loaning, which,
winding round the foot of the steep bank, or heugh, brought them

in front of the thatched, but comfortable, farm-house, which was

the dwelling of Hobbie Elliot and his family.

The doorway was thronged with joyful faces; but the appearance of

a stranger blunted many a gibe which had been prepared on

Hobbie's lack of success in the deer-stalking. There was a

little bustle among three handsome young women, each endeavouring

to devolve upon another the task of ushering the stranger into

the apartment, while probably all were anxious to escape for the

purpose of making some little personal arrangements, before
presenting themselves to a young gentleman in a dishabille only intended for their brother.

Hobbie, in the meanwhile, bestowing some hearty and general abuse upon them all (for Grace was not of the party), snatched the candle from the hand of one of the rustic coquettes, as she stood playing pretty with it in her hand, and ushered his guest into the family parlour, or rather hall; for the place having been a house of defence in former times, the sitting apartment was a vaulted and paved room, damp and dismal enough compared with the
lodgings of the yeomanry of our days, but which, when well

lighted up with a large sparkling fire of turf and bog-wood,

seemed to Earnscliff a most comfortable exchange for the darkness

and bleak blast of the hill. Kindly and repeatedly was he

welcomed by the venerable old dame, the mistress of the family,

who, dressed in her coif and pinners, her close and decent gown

of homespun wool, but with a large gold necklace and ear-rings,

looked, what she really was, the lady as well as the farmer’s

wife, while, seated in her chair of wicker, by the corner of the

great chimney, she directed the evening occupations of the young

women, and of two or three stout serving wenches, who sate plying
their distaffs behind the backs of their young mistresses.

As soon as Earnscliff had been duly welcomed, and hasty orders issued for some addition to the evening meal, his grand-dame and sisters opened their battery upon Hobbie Elliot for his lack of success against the deer.

"Jenny needna have kept up her kitchen-fire for a' that Hobbie has brought hame," said one sister.
"Troth no, lass," said another; "the gathering peat, if it was weel blawn, wad dress a’ our Hobbie’s venison." [The gathering peat is the piece of turf left to treasure up the secret seeds of fire, without any generous consumption of fuel; in a word, to keep the fire alive.]

"Ay, or the low of the candle, if the wind wad let it hide steady," said a third; "if I were him, I would bring hame a black craw, rather than come back three times without a buck’s horn to blaw on."
Hobbie turned from the one to the other, regarding them alternately with a frown on his brow, the augury of which was confuted by the good-humoured laugh on the lower part of his countenance. He then strove to propitiate them, by mentioning the intended present of his companion.

"In my young days," said the old lady, "a man wad hae been ashamed to come back frae the hill without a buck hanging on each side o' his horse, like a cadger carrying calves."
"I wish they had left some for us then, grannie," retorted Hobbie; "they've cleared the country o' them, thae auld friends o' yours, I'm thinking."

"We see other folk can find game, though you cannot, Hobbie," said the eldest sister, glancing a look at young Earnscliff.

"Weel, weel, woman, hasna every dog his day, begging Earnscliff's pardon for the auld saying--Mayna I hae his luck, and he mine, another time?--It's a braw thing for a man to be out a' day, and frightened--na, I winna say that neither but mistrysted wi' bogles
in the hame-coming, an' then to hae to flyte wi' a wheen women

that hae been doing naething a' the live-lang day, but whirling a

bit stick, wi' a thread trailing at it, or boring at a clout."

"Frighted wi' bogles!" exclaimed the females, one and all,—for

great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these

glens, to all such fantasies.

"I did not say frightened, now— I only said mis-set wi' the thing

--And there was but ae bogle, neither—Earnscliff, ye saw it; as
weel as I did?"

And he proceeded, without very much exaggeration, to detail, in

his own way, the meeting they had with the mysterious being at

Mucklestane-Moor, concluding, he could not conjecture what on

earth it could be, unless it was either the Enemy himself, or

some of the auld Peghts that held the country lang syne.

"Auld Peght!" exclaimed the grand-dame; "na, na--bless thee frae

scathe, my bairn, it's been nae Peght that--it's been the Brown

Man of the Moors! O weary fa' thae evil days!--what can evil
beings be coming for to distract a poor country, now it's peacefully settled, and living in love and law--O weary on him!

he ne'er brought gude to these lands or the indwellers. My father aften tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bloody fight at Marston-Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar, and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell-Brigg, and they said the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely--it was far in the west.--O, bairns, he's never permitted but in an
ill time, sae mind ilka ane o’ ye to draw to Him that can help in
the day of trouble."

Earnscliff now interposed, and expressed his firm conviction that
the person they had seen was some poor maniac, and had no
commission from the invisible world to announce either war or
evil. But his opinion found a very cold audience, and all joined
to deprecate his purpose of returning to the spot the next day.

"O, my bonny bairn," said the old dame (for, in the kindness of
her heart, she extended her parental style to all in whom she was
interested)---"You should beware mair than other folk--there's

been a heavy breach made in your house wi' your father's

bloodshed, and wi' law-pleas, and losses sinsyne;--and you are

the flower of the flock, and the lad that will build up the auld

bigging again (if it be His will) to be an honour to the country,

and a safeguard to those that dwell in it--you, before others,

are called upon to put yoursell in no rash adventures--for yours

was aye ower venturesome a race, and muckle harm they have got by

it."
"But I am sure, my good friend, you would not have me be afraid of going to an open moor in broad daylight?"

"I dinna ken," said the good old dame; "I wad never bid son or friend o’ mine haud their hand back in a gude cause, whether it were a friend’s or their ain--that should be by nae bidding of mine, or of ony body that’s come of a gentle kindred--But it winna gang out of a grey head like mine, that to gang to seek for evil that’s no fashing wi’ you, is clean against law and Scripture."
Earnscliff resigned an argument which he saw no prospect of maintaining with good effect, and the entrance of supper broke off the conversation. Miss Grace had by this time made her appearance, and Hobbie, not without a conscious glance at Earnscliff, placed himself by her side. Mirth and lively conversation, in which the old lady of the house took the good-humoured share which so well becomes old age, restored to the cheeks of the damsels the roses which their brother's tale of the apparition had chased away, and they danced and sung for an hour after supper as if there were no such things as goblins in the
world.

CHAPTER IV.

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind;

For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,

That I might love thee something. TIMON OF ATHENS

On the following morning, after breakfast, Earnscliff took leave
of his hospitable friends, promising to return in time to partake

of the venison, which had arrived from his house. Hobbie, who

apparently took leave of him at the door of his habitation, slunk

out, however, and joined him at the top of the hill.

"Ye'll be gaun yonder, Mr. Patrick; feind o' me will mistryst you

for a' my mother says. I thought it best to slip out quietly

though, in case she should mislippen something of what we're gaun

to do--we maunna vex her at nae rate--it was amaist the last word

my father said to me on his deathbed."
"By no means, Hobbie," said Earnscliff; "she well merits all your attention."

"Troth, for that matter, she would be as sair vexed amaist for you as for me. But d'ye really think there's nae presumption in venturing back yonder?--We hae nae special commission, ye ken."

"If I thought as you do, Hobbie," said the young gentleman, "I would not perhaps enquire farther into this business; but as I am of opinion that preternatural visitations are either ceased
altogether, or become very rare in our days, I am unwilling to

leave a matter uninvestigated which may concern the life of a

poor distracted being."

"Aweel, aweel, if ye really think that," answered Hobbie

doubtfully--"And it's for certain the very fairies--I mean the

very good neighbours themsells (for they say folk suldna ca' them

fairies) that used to be seen on every green knowe at e'en, are

no half sae often visible in our days. I canna depone to having

ever seen ane myself, but, I ance heard ane whistle ahint me in
the moss, as like a whaup [Curlew] as ae thing could be like

anither. And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e'en, wi' a drap drink in his head, honest man."

Earnscliff was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another which was inferred in this last observation; and they continued to reason on such subjects, until they came in sight of the upright stone which gave name to the moor.
"As I shall answer," says Hobbie, "yonder's the creature creeping about yet!--But it's daylight, and you have your gun, and I brought out my bit whinger--I think we may venture on him."

"By all manner of means," said Earnscliff; "but, in the name of wonder, what can he be doing there?"

"Biggin a dry-stane dyke, I think, wi' the grey geese, as they ca' thae great loose stanes--Odd, that passes a' thing I e'er heard tell of!"
As they approached nearer, Earnscliff could not help agreeing with his companion. The figure they had seen the night before seemed slowly and toilsomely labouring to pile the large stones one upon another, as if to form a small enclosure. Materials lay around him in great plenty, but the labour of carrying on the work was immense, from the size of most of the stones; and it seemed astonishing that he should have succeeded in moving several which he had already arranged for the foundation of his edifice. He was struggling to move a fragment of great size when the two young men came up, and was so intent upon executing his
purpose, that he did not perceive them till they were close upon him. In straining and heaving at the stone, in order to place it according to his wish, he displayed a degree of strength which seemed utterly inconsistent with his size and apparent deformity.

Indeed, to judge from the difficulties he had already surmounted, he must have been of Herculean powers; for some of the stones he had succeeded in raising apparently required two men's strength to have moved them. Hobbie's suspicions began to revive, on seeing the preternatural strength he exerted.
"I am amaist persuaded it's the ghaist of a stane-mason--see siccan band-statnes as he's laid i--An it be a man, after a', I wonder what he wad take by the rood to build a march dyke.

There's ane sair wanted between Cringlehope and the Shaws.--

Honest man" (raising his voice), "ye make good firm wark there?"

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small
dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled

with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity.

The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp,

with which a painter would equip a giant in romance; to which was

added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression, so often seen

in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His

body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was

mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten

the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be

hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and
brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms and the iron strength of his frame correspond with the shortness of his stature. His clothing was a sort of coarse brown tunic, like a monk's frock, girt round him with a belt of seal-skin. On his head he had a cap made of badger's skin, or some other rough fur, which added considerably to the grotesque effect of his whole appearance, and overshadowed
features, whose habitual expression seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy.

This remarkable Dwarf gazed on the two youths in silence, with a dogged and irritated look, until Earnscliff, willing to soothe him into better temper, observed, "You are hard tasked, my friend; allow us to assist you."

Elliot and he accordingly placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the
eye of a taskmaster, and testified, by peevish gestures, his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone.

He pointed to another--they raised it also--to a third, to a fourth--they continued to humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near.

"And now, friend," said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indicated another stone larger than any they had moved,

"Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man or be ye waur, deil be in my fingers if I break my back wi' heaving thae stanes ony
langer like a barrow-man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains."

"Thanks!" exclaimed the Dwarf, with a motion expressive of the utmost contempt--"There--take them, and fatten upon them! Take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me--as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile! Hence--either labour or begone!"

"This is a fine reward we have, Earnscliff, for building a
tabernacle for the devil, and prejudicing our ain souls into the
bargain, for what we ken."

"Our presence," answered Earnscliff, "seems only to irritate his
frenzy; we had better leave him, and send some one to provide him
with food and necessaries."

They did so. The servant dispatched for this purpose found the
Dwarf still labouring at his wall, but could not extract a word
from him. The lad, infected with the superstitions of the
country, did not long persist in an attempt to intrude questions
or advice on so singular a figure, but having placed the articles
which he had brought for his use on a stone at some distance, he
left them at the misanthrope’s disposal.

The Dwarf proceeded in his labours, day after day, with an

assiduity so incredible as to appear almost supernatural. In one
day he often seemed to have done the work of two men, and his

building soon assumed the appearance of the walls of a hut,

which, though very small, and constructed only of stones and
turf, without any mortar, exhibited, from the unusual size of the
stones employed, an appearance of solidity very uncommon for a
cottage of such narrow dimensions and rude construction.

Earnscliff; attentive to his motions, no sooner perceived to what
they tended, than he sent down a number of spars of wood suitable
for forming the roof, which he caused to be left in the
neighbourhood of the spot, resolving next day to send workmen to
put them up. But his purpose was anticipated, for in the
evening, during the night, and early in the morning, the Dwarf
had laboured so hard, and with such ingenuity, that he had nearly
completed the adjustment of the rafters. His next labour was to
cut rushes and thatch his dwelling, a task which he performed
As he seemed averse to receive any aid beyond the occasional assistance of a passenger, materials suitable to his purpose, and tools, were supplied to him, in the use of which he proved to be skilful. He constructed the door and window of his cot, he adjusted a rude bedstead, and a few shelves, and appeared to become somewhat soothed in his temper as his accommodations increased.
His next task was to form a strong enclosure, and to cultivate
the land within it to the best of his power; until, by
transporting mould, and working up what was upon the spot, he
formed a patch of garden-ground. It must be naturally supposed,
that, as above hinted, this solitary being received assistance
occasionally from such travellers as crossed the moor by chance,
as well as from several who went from curiosity to visit his
works. It was, indeed, impossible to see a human creature, so
unfitted, at first sight, for hard labour, toiling with such
unremitting assiduity, without stopping a few minutes to aid him
in his task; and, as no one of his occasional assistants was
acquainted with the degree of help which the Dwarf had received

from others, the celerity of his progress lost none of its

marvels in their eyes. The strong and compact appearance of the

cottage, formed in so very short a space, and by such a being,

and the superior skill which he displayed in mechanics, and in

other arts, gave suspicion to the surrounding neighbours. They

insisted, that, if he was not a phantom,—an opinion which was

now abandoned, since he plainly appeared a being of blood and

bone with themselves,—yet he must be in close league with the

invisible world, and have chosen that sequestered spot to carry
on his communication with them undisturbed. They insisted,

though in a different sense from the philosopher's application of

the phrase, that he was never less alone than when alone; and

that from the heights which commanded the moor at a distance,

passengers often discovered a person at work along with this

dweller of the desert, who regularly disappeared as soon as they

approached closer to the cottage. Such a figure was also

occasionally seen sitting beside him at the door, walking with

him in the moor, or assisting him in fetching water from his

fountain. Earnscliff explained this phenomenon by supposing it

to be the Dwarf's shadow.
"Deil a shadow has he," replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a

strenuous defender of the general opinion; "he's ower far in wi'

the Auld Ane to have a shadow. Besides," he argued more

logically, "wha ever heard of a shadow that cam between a body

and the sun? and this thing, be it what it will, is thinner

and taller than the body himsell, and has been seen to come

between him and the sun mair than anes or twice either."

These suspicions, which, in any other part of the country, might
have been attended with investigations a little inconvenient to the supposed wizard, were here only productive of respect and awe. The recluse being seemed somewhat gratified by the marks of timid veneration with which an occasional passenger approached his dwelling, the look of startled surprise with which he surveyed his person and his premises, and the hurried step with which he pressed his retreat as he passed the awful spot. The boldest only stopped to gratify their curiosity by a hasty glance at the walls of his cottage and garden, and to apologize for it by a courteous salutation, which the inmate sometimes deigned to return by a word or a nod. Earnscliff often passed that way, and
seldom without enquiring after the solitary inmate, who seemed
now to have arranged his establishment for life.

It was impossible to engage him in any conversation on his own
personal affairs; nor was he communicative or accessible in
talking on any other subject whatever, although he seemed to have
considerably relented in the extreme ferocity of his misanthropy,
or rather to be less frequently visited with the fits of
derangement of which this was a symptom. No argument could
prevail upon him to accept anything beyond the simplest
necessaries, although much more was offered by Earnscliff out of charity, and by his more superstitious neighbours from other motives. The benefits of these last he repaid by advice, when consulted (as at length he slowly was) on their diseases, or those of their cattle. He often furnished them with medicines also, and seemed possessed, not only of such as were the produce of the country, but of foreign drugs. He gave these persons to understand, that his name was Elshender the Recluse; but his popular epithet soon came to be Canny Elshie, or the Wise Wight of Mucklestane-Moor. Some extended their queries beyond their bodily complaints, and requested advice upon other matters, which
he delivered with an oracular shrewdness that greatly confirmed the opinion of his possessing preternatural skill. The querists usually left some offering upon a stone, at a distance from his dwelling; if it was money, or any article which did not suit him to accept, he either threw it away, or suffered it to remain where it was without making use of it. On all occasions his manners were rude and unsocial; and his words, in number, just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and he shunned all communication that went a syllable beyond the matter in hand. When winter had passed away, and his garden began to
afford him herbs and vegetables, he confined himself almost entirely to those articles of food. He accepted, notwithstanding, a pair of she-goats from Earnscliff, which fed on the moor, and supplied him with milk.

When Earnscliff found his gift had been received, he soon afterwards paid the hermit a visit. The old man was seated on a broad flat stone near his garden door, which was the seat of science he usually occupied when disposed to receive his patients or clients. The inside of his hut, and that of his garden, he kept as sacred from human intrusion as the natives of Otaheite do.
their Morai;—apparently he would have deemed it polluted by the
step of any human being. When he shut himself up in his
habitation, no entreaty could prevail upon him to make himself
visible, or to give audience to any one whomsoever.

Earnscliff had been fishing in a small river at some distance.

He had his rod in his hand, and his basket, filled with trout, at
his shoulder. He sate down upon a stone nearly opposite to the
Dwarf who, familiarized with his presence, took no farther notice
of him than by elevating his huge mis-shapen head for the purpose
of staring at him, and then again sinking it upon his bosom, as

if in profound meditation. Earnscliff looked around him, and

observed that the hermit had increased his accommodations by the

construction of a shed for the reception of his goats.

You labour hard, Elshie," he said, willing to lead this singular

being into conversation.

"Labour," re-echoed the Dwarf, "is the mildest evil of a lot so

miserable as that of mankind; better to labour like me, than

sport like you."
"I cannot defend the humanity of our ordinary rural sports,

Elshie, and yet--"

"And yet," interrupted the Dwarf" they are better than your

ordinary business; better to exercise idle and wanton cruelty on

mute fishes than on your fellow-creatures. Yet why should I say

so? Why should not the whole human herd butt, gore, and gorge

upon each other, till all are extirpated but one huge and over-

fed Behemoth, and he, when he had throttled and gnawed the bones
of all his fellows--he, when his prey failed him, to be roaring whole days for lack of food, and, finally, to die, inch by inch, of famine--it were a consummation worthy of the race!"

"Your deeds are better, Elshie, than your words," answered Earnscliff; "you labour to preserve the race whom your misanthropy slanders."

"I do; but why?--Hearken. You are one on whom I look with the least loathing, and I care not, if, contrary to my wont, I waste a few words in compassion to your infatuated blindness. If I
cannot send disease into families, and murrain among the herds,

can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of

those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually?--

If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have

been slain for her love the last spring?--Who thought of penning

their cattle beneath the tower when the Red Reiver of

Westburnflat was deemed to be on his death-bed?--My draughts, my

skill, recovered him. And, now, who dare leave his herd upon the

lea without a watch, or go to bed without unchaining the sleuth-
hound?"
"I own," answered Earnscliff; "you did little good to society by

the last of these cures. But, to balance the evil, there is my

friend Hobbie, honest Hobbie of the Heugh-foot, your skill

relieved him last winter in a fever that might have cost him his

life."

"Thus think the children of clay in their ignorance," said: the

Dwarf, smiling maliciously, "and thus they speak in their folly.

Have you marked the young cub of a wild cat that has been

domesticated, how sportive, how playful, how gentle,—but trust
him with your game, your lambs, your poultry, his inbred ferocity

breaks forth; he gripes, tears, ravages, and devours."

"Such is the animal’s instinct," answered Earnscliff; "but what

has that to do with Hobbie?"

"It is his emblem—it is his picture," retorted the Recluse. "He

is at present tame, quiet, and domesticated, for lack of

opportunity to exercise his inborn propensities; but let the

trumpet of war sound—let the young blood-hound snuff blood, he
will be as ferocious as the wildest of his Border ancestors that

ever fired a helpless peasant’s abode. Can you deny, that even

at present he often urges you to take bloody revenge for an

injury received when you were a boy?”--Earnscliff started; the

Recluse appeared not to observe his surprise, and proceeded--“The

trumpet WILL blow, the young blood-hound WILL lap blood, and I

will laugh and say, For this I have preserved thee!” He paused,

and continued,--“Such are my cures;--their object, their purpose,

perpetuating the mass of misery, and playing even in this desert

my part in the general tragedy. Were YOU on your sick bed, I

might, in compassion, send you a cup of poison.”
"I am much obliged to you, Elshie, and certainly shall not fail
to consult you, with so comfortable a hope from your assistance."

"Do not flatter yourself too far," replied the Hermit, "with the

hope that I will positively yield to the frailty of pity. Why

should I snatch a dupe, so well fitted to endure the miseries of

life as you are, from the wretchedness which his own visions, and

the villainy of the world, are preparing for him? Why should I

play the compassionate Indian, and, knocking out the brains of
the captive with my tomahawk, at once spoil the three days' amusement of my kindred tribe, at the very moment when the brands were lighted, the pincers heated, the cauldrons boiling, the knives sharpened, to tear, scorch, seethe, and scarify the intended victim?"

"A dreadful picture you present to me of life, Elshie; but I am not daunted by it," returned Earnscliff. "We are sent here, in one sense, to bear and to suffer; but, in another, to do and to enjoy. The active day has its evening of repose; even patient sufferance has its alleviations, where there is a consolatory..."
“I spurn at the slavish and bestial doctrine,” said the Dwarf, his eyes kindling with insane fury,—“I spurn at it, as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you.”

He rose hastily; but, ere he withdrew into the hut, he added, with great vehemence, "Yet, lest you still think my apparent benefits to mankind flow from the stupid and servile source,
called love of our fellow-creatures, know, that were there a man

who had annihilated my soul's dearest hope--who had torn my heart

to mammocks, and seared my brain till it glowed like a volcano,

and were that man's fortune and life in my power as completely as

this frail potsherd" (he snatched up an earthen cup which stood

beside him), "I would not dash him into atoms thus"--(he flung

the vessel with fury against the wall),--"No!" (he spoke more

composedly, but with the utmost bitterness), "I would pamper him

with wealth and power to inflame his evil passions, and to fulfil

his evil designs; he should lack no means of vice and villainy;

he should be the centre of a whirlpool that itself should know
neither rest nor peace, but boil with unceasing fury, while it
wrecked every goodly ship that approached its limits! he should
be an earthquake capable of shaking the very land in which he
dwelt, and rendering all its inhabitants friendless, outcast, and
miserable--as I am!"

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last
words, shutting the door with furious violence, and rapidly
drawing two bolts, one after another, as if to exclude the
intrusion of any one of that hated race, who had thus lashed his
soul to frenzy. Earnscliff left the moor with mingled sensations of pity and horror, pondering what strange and melancholy cause could have reduced to so miserable a state of mind, a man whose language argued him to be of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information a person who had lived in that country so short a time, and in so recluse a manner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

"It is no wonder," he said to himself, "that with such extent of
information, such a mode of life, so uncouth a figure, and

sentiments so virulently misanthropic, this unfortunate should be

regarded by the vulgar as in league with the Enemy of Mankind."

CHAPTER V.

The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath

Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;
And, in the April dew, or beam of May,

Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;

And thus the heart, most sear'd to human pleasure,

Melts at the tear, joys in the smile, of woman.    BEAUMONT

As the season advanced, the weather became more genial, and the

Recluse was more frequently found occupying the broad flat stone

in the front of his mansion. As he sate there one day, about the

hour of noon, a party of gentlemen and ladies, well mounted, and

numerously attended, swept across the heath at some distance from

his dwelling. Dogs, hawks, and led-horses swelled the retinue,
and the air resounded at intervals with the cheer of the hunters,

and the sound of horns blown by the attendants. The Recluse was about to retire into his mansion at the sight of a train so joyous, when three young ladies, with their attendants, who had made a circuit, and detached themselves from their party, in order to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Wise Wight of Mucklestane-Moor, came suddenly up, ere he could effect his purpose. The first shrieked, and put her hands before her eyes,

at sight of an object so unusually deformed. The second, with a hysterical giggle, which she intended should disguise her
terrors, asked the Recluse, whether he could tell their fortune.

The third, who was best mounted, best dressed, and incomparably

the best-looking of the three, advanced, as if to cover the

incivility of her companions.

"We have lost the right path that leads through these morasses,

and our party have gone forward without us," said the young lady.

"Seeing you, father, at the door of your house, we have turned

this way to--"

"Hush!" interrupted the Dwarf; "so young, and already so artful?
You came--you know you came, to exult in the consciousness of your own youth, wealth, and beauty, by contrasting them with age, poverty, and deformity. It is a fit employment for the daughter of your father; but O how unlike the child of your mother!"

"Did you, then, know my parents, and do you know me?"

"Yes; this is the first time you have crossed my waking eyes, but I have seen you in my dreams."
"Your dreams?"

"Ay, Isabel Vere. What hast thou, or thine, to do with my waking thoughts?"

"Your waking thoughts, sir," said the second of Miss Vere's companions, with a sort of mock gravity, "are fixed, doubtless, upon wisdom; folly can only intrude on your sleeping moments."

"Over thine," retorted the Dwarf, more splenetically than became a philosopher or hermit, "folly exercises an unlimited empire,
asleep or awake."

"Lord bless us!" said the lady, "he's a prophet, sure enough."

"As surely," continued the Recluse," as thou art a woman.--A

woman!--I should have said a lady--a fine lady. You asked me to
tell your fortune--it is a simple one; an endless chase through

life after follies not worth catching, and, when caught,

successively thrown away--a chase, pursued from the days of
tottering infancy to those of old age upon his crutches. Toys
and merry-makings in childhood--love and its absurdities in

youth--spadille and basto in age, shall succeed each other as

objects of pursuit--flowers and butterflies in spring--

butterflies and thistle-down in summer--withered leaves in autumn

and winter--all pursued, all caught, all flung aside.

--Stand apart; your fortune is said."

"All CAUGHT, however," retorted the laughing fair one, who was a
cousin of Miss Vere's; "that's something, Nancy," she continued,

turning to the timid damsel who had first approached the Dwarf;

"will you ask your fortune?"
"Not for worlds," said she, drawing back; "I have heard enough of yours."

"Well, then," said Miss Ilderton, offering money to the Dwarf,

"I'll pay for mine, as if it were spoken by an oracle to a princess."

“Truth,” said the Soothsayer, “can neither be bought nor sold;”

and he pushed back her proffered offering with morose disdain.
"Well, then," said the lady, "I'll keep my money, Mr. Elshender, to assist me in the chase I am to pursue."

"You will need it," replied the cynic; "without it, few pursue successfully, and fewer are themselves pursued.--Stop!" he said to Miss Vere, as her companions moved off, "With you I have more to say. You have what your companions would wish to have, or be thought to have,—beauty, wealth, station, accomplishments."

"Forgive my following my companions, father; I am proof both to
flattery and fortune-telling."

"Stay," continued the Dwarf, with his hand on her horse's rein,

"I am no common soothsayer, and I am no flatterer. All the

advantages I have detailed, all and each of them have their

corresponding evils--unsuccessful love, crossed affections, the

gloom of a convent, or an odious alliance. I, who wish ill to

all mankind, cannot wish more evil to you, so much is your course

of life crossed by it."
"And if it be, father, let me enjoy the readiest solace of adversity while prosperity is in my power. You are old; you are poor; your habitation is far from human aid, were you ill, or in want; your situation, in many respects, exposes you to the suspicions of the vulgar, which are too apt to break out into actions of brutality. Let me think I have mended the lot of one human being! Accept of such assistance as I have power to offer; do this for my sake, if not for your own, that when these evils arise, which you prophesy perhaps too truly, I may not have to reflect, that the hours of my happier time have been passed altogether in vain."
The old man answered with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady,—

"Yes, 'tis thus thou shouldst think--'tis thus thou shouldst speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with each other! They do not--they do not--Alas! they cannot. And yet--wait here an instant--stir not till my return." He went to his little garden, and returned with a half-blown rose. "Thou hast made me shed a tear, the first which has wet my eyelids for many
a year; for that good deed receive this token of gratitude. It

is but a common rose; preserve it, however, and do not part with

it. Come to me in your hour of adversity. Show me that rose, or

but one leaf of it, were it withered as my heart is--if it should

be in my fiercest and wildest movements of rage against a hateful

world, still it will recall gentler thoughts to my bosom, and

perhaps afford happier prospects to thine. But no message," he

exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy,--"no

message--no go-between! Come thyself; and the heart and the

doors that are shut against every other earthly being, shall open

to thee and to thy sorrows. And now pass on."
He let go the bridle-rein, and the young lady rode on, after expressing her thanks to this singular being, as well as her surprise at the extraordinary nature of his address would permit, often turning back to look at the Dwarf, who still remained at the door of his habitation, and watched her progress over the moor towards her father's castle of Ellieslaw, until the brow of the hill hid the party from his sight.

The ladies, meantime, jested with Miss Vere on the strange
interview they had just had with the far-famed wizard of the Moor. "Isabella has all the luck at home and abroad! Her hawk strikes down the black-cock; her eyes wound the gallant; no chance for her poor companions and kinswomen; even the conjuror cannot escape the force of her charms. You should, in compassion, cease to be such an engrosser, my dear Isabel, or at least set up shop, and sell off all the goods you do not mean to keep for your own use."

"You shall have them all," replied Miss Vere, "and the conjuror to boot, at a very easy rate."
"No! Nancy shall have the conjuror," said Miss Ilderton, "to supply deficiencies; she's not quite a witch herself, you know."

"Lord, sister," answered the younger Miss Ilderton, "what could I do with so frightful a monster? I kept my eyes shut, after once glancing at him; and, I protest, I thought I saw him still, though I winked as close as ever I could."

"That's a pity," said her sister; "ever while you live, Nancy,
choose an admirer whose faults can be hid by winking at them.--

Well, then, I must take him myself, I suppose, and put him into

mamma's Japan cabinet, in order to show that Scotland can produce

a specimen of mortal clay moulded into a form ten thousand times

uglier than the imaginations of Canton and Pekin, fertile as they

are in monsters, have immortalized in porcelain."

"There is something," said Miss Vere, "so melancholy in the

situation of this poor man, that I cannot enter into your mirth,

Lucy, so readily as usual. If he has no resources, how is he to

exist in this waste country, living, as he does, at such a
distance from mankind? and if he has the means of securing

occur occasional assistance, will not the very suspicion that he is

possessed of them, expose him to plunder and assassination by

some of our unsettled neighbours?"

"But you forget that they say he is a warlock," said Nancy

Ilderton.

"And, if his magic diabolical should fail him," rejoined her

sister, "I would have him trust to his magic natural, and thrust
his enormous head, and most preternatural visage, out at his door

or window, full in view of the assailants. The boldest robber

that ever rode would hardly bide a second glance of him. Well, I

wish I had the use of that Gorgon head of his for only one half

hour."

"For what purpose, Lucy?" said Miss Vere.

"O! I would frighten out of the castle that dark, stiff, and

stately Sir Frederick Langley, that is so great a favourite with

your father, and so little a favourite of yours. I protest I
shall be obliged to the Wizard as long as I live, if it were only

for the half hour’s relief from that man’s company which we have

gained by deviating from the party to visit Elshie."

"What would you say, then," said Miss Vere, in a low tone, so as

not to be heard by the younger sister, who rode before them, the

narrow path not admitting of their moving all three abreast,--"

What would you say, my dearest Lucy, if it were proposed to you

to endure his company for life?"
“Say? I would say, NO, NO, NO, three times, each louder than another, till they should hear me at Carlisle.”

“And Sir Frederick would say then, nineteen nay-says are half a grant.”

“That,” replied Miss Lucy, "depends entirely on the manner in which the nay-says are said. Mine should have not one grain of concession in them, I promise you.”

“But if your father,” said Miss Vere, "were to say,--Thus do, or
"I would stand to the consequences of his OR, were he the most cruel father that ever was recorded in romance, to fill up the alternative."

"And what if he threatened you with a catholic aunt, an abbess, and a cloister?"

"Then," said Miss Ilderton, "I would threaten him with a
protestant son-in-law, and be glad of an opportunity to disobey him for conscience' sake. And now that Nancy is out of hearing,

let me really say, I think you would be excusable before God and man for resisting this preposterous match by every means in your power. A proud, dark, ambitious man; a caballer against the state; infamous for his avarice and severity; a bad son, a bad brother, unkind and ungenerous to all his relatives--Isabel, I would die rather than have him."

"Don't let my father hear you give me such advice," said Miss Vere, "or adieu, my dear Lucy, to Ellieslaw Castle."
"And adieu to Ellieslaw Castle, with all my heart," said her friend, "if I once saw you fairly out of it, and settled under some kinder protector than he whom nature has given you. O, if my poor father had been in his former health, how gladly would he have received and sheltered you, till this ridiculous and cruel persecution were blown over!"

"Would to God it had been so, my dear Lucy!" answered Isabella;

"but I fear, that, in your father's weak state of health, he
would be altogether unable to protect me against the means which

would be immediately used for reclaiming the poor fugitive."

"I fear so indeed," replied Miss Ilderton; "but we will consider

and devise something. Now that your father and his guests seem

so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot, to judge from the

passing and returning of messages, from the strange faces which

appear and disappear without being announced by their names, from

the collecting and cleaning of arms, and the anxious gloom and

bustle which seem to agitate every male in the castle, it may not

be impossible for us (always in case matters be driven to
extremity) to shape out some little supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves; and there is one associate that I would gladly admit to our counsel."

"Not Nancy?"

"O, no!" said Miss Ilderton; "Nancy, though an excellent good girl, and fondly attached to you, would make a dull conspirator --as dull as Renault and all the other subordinate plotters in
VENICE PRESERVED. No; this is a Jaffier, or Pierre, if you like
the character better; and yet though I know I shall please you, I
am afraid to mention his name to you, lest I vex you at the same
time. Can you not guess? Something about an eagle and a rock--
it does not begin with eagle in English, but something very like
it in Scotch."

"You cannot mean young Earnscliff, Lucy?" said Miss Vere,
blushing deeply.

"And whom else should I mean" said Lucy. "Jaffiers and Pierres
are very scarce in this country, I take it, though one could find

Renaults and Bedamars enow."

"How call you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and romances have

positively turned your brain. You know, that, independent of my

father's consent, without which I never will marry any one, and

which, in the case you point at, would never be granted;

independent, too, of our knowing nothing of young Earnscliff's

inclinations, but by your own vivid conjectures and fancies--

besides all this, there is the fatal brawl!"
"When his father was killed?" said Lucy. "But that was very long ago; and I hope we have outlived the time of bloody feud, when a quarrel was carried down between two families from father to son, like a Spanish game at chess, and a murder or two committed in every generation, just to keep the matter from going to sleep. We do with our quarrels nowadays as with our clothes; cut them out for ourselves, and wear them out in our own day, and should no more think of resenting our fathers' feuds, than of wearing their slashed doublets and trunk-hose."
"You treat this far too lightly, Lucy," answered Miss Vere.

"Not a bit, my dear Isabella," said Lucy. "Consider, your father, though present in the unhappy affray, is never supposed to have struck the fatal blow; besides, in former times, in case of mutual slaughter between clans, subsequent alliances were so far from being excluded, that the hand of a daughter or a sister was the most frequent gage of reconciliation. You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving
heroine, the well-judging reader would set you down for the lady

and the love of Earnscliff; from the very obstacle which you

suppose so insurmountable."

"But these are not the days of romance, but of sad reality, for

there stands the castle of Ellieslaw."

"And there stands Sir Frederick Langley at the gate, waiting to

assist the ladies from their palfreys. I would as lief touch a

toad; I will disappoint him, and take old Horsington the groom

for my master of the horse."
So saying, the lively young lady switched her palfrey forward,
and passing Sir Frederick with a familiar nod as he stood ready
to take her horse's rein, she cantered on, and jumped into the
arms of the old groom. Fain would Isabella have done the same
had she dared; but her father stood near, displeasure already
darkening on a countenance peculiarly qualified to express the
harsher passions, and she was compelled to receive the unwelcome
assiduities of her detested suitor.
CHAPTER VI.

Let not us that are squires of the night’s body be called

thieves of the day’s booty; let us be Diana’s foresters,

gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon.

HENRY THE FOURTH, PART I.

The Solitary had consumed the remainder of that day in which he

had the interview with the young ladies, within the precincts of
his garden. Evening again found him seated on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate spot. The Dwarf sate watching the clouds as they lowered above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its
approach. As he sate thus, with his dark eye turned towards the
scowling and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly up to
him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an instant,
made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an air betwixt
effrontery and embarrassment.

The figure of the rider was thin, tall, and slender, but
remarkably athletic, bony, and sinewy; like one who had all his
life followed those violent exercises which prevent the human
form from increasing in bulk, while they harden and confirm by
habit its muscular powers. His face, sharp-featured, sun-burnt,
and freckled, had a sinister expression of violence, impudence,

and cunning, each of which seemed alternately to predominate over

the others. Sandy-coloured hair, and reddish eyebrows, from

under which looked forth his sharp grey eyes, completed the

inauspicious outline of the horseman's physiognomy. He had

pistols in his holsters, and another pair peeped from his belt,

though he had taken some pains to conceal them by buttoning his

doublet. He wore a rusted steel head piece; a buff jacket of

rather an antique cast; gloves, of which that for the right hand

was covered with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet;
and a long broadsword completed his equipage.

"So," said the Dwarf," rapine and murder once more on horseback."

"On horseback?" said the bandit; "ay, ay, Elshie, your leech-craft has set me on the bonny bay again."

"And all those promises of amendment which you made during your illness forgotten?" continued Elshender.

"All clear away, with the water-saps and panada," returned the
unabashed convalescent. "Ye ken, Elshie, for they say ye are

weel acquent wi' the gentleman,

"When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,

When the devil was well, the devil a monk was he."

"Thou say'st true," said the Solitary; "as well divide a wolf

from his appetite for carnage, or a raven from her scent of

slaughter, as thee from thy accursed propensities."
"Why, what would you have me to do? It's born with me--lies in

my very blude and bane. Why, man, the lads of Westburnflat, for
ten lang descents, have been reivers and lifters. They have all
drank hard, lived high, taking deep revenge for light offence,

and never wanted gear for the winning."

"Right; and thou art as thorough-bred a wolf," said the Dwarf,

"as ever leapt a lamb-fold at night. On what hell's errand art

thou bound now?"

"Can your skill not guess?"
"Thus far I know," said the Dwarf, "that thy purpose is bad, thy deed will be worse, and the issue worst of all."

"And you like me the better for it, Father Elshie, eh?" said Westburnflat; "you always said you did."

"I have cause to like all," answered the Solitary, "that are scourges to their fellow-creatures, and thou art a bloody one."
"No--I say not guilty to that--lever bluidy unless there's

resistance, and that sets a man's bristles up, ye ken. And this

is nae great matter, after a'; just to cut the comb of a young

cock that has been crawing a little ower crousely."

"Not young Earnscliff?" said the Solitary, with some emotion.

"No; not young Earnscliff--not young Earnscliff YET; but his time

may come, if he will not take warning, and get him back to the

burrow-town that he's fit for, and no keep skelping about here,

destroying the few deer that are left in the country, and
pretending to act as a magistrate, and writing letters to the

great folk at Auld Reekie, about the disturbed state of the land.

Let him take care o' himsell."

"Then it must be Hobbie of the Heugh-foot," said Elshie.

"What harm has the lad done you?"

"Harm! nae great harm; but I hear he says I staid away from the

Ba'spiel on Fastern's E'en, for fear of him; and it was only for

fear of the Country Keeper, for there was a warrant against me."
I'll stand Hobbie's feud, and a' his clan's. But it's not so much for that, as to gie him a lesson not to let his tongue gallop ower freely about his betters. I trow he will hae lost the best pen-feather o' his wing before to-morrow morning.--

Farewell, Elshie; there's some canny boys waiting for me down amang the shaws, owerby; I will see you as I come back, and bring ye a blithe tale in return for your leech-craft."

Ere the Dwarf could collect himself to reply, the Reiver of Westburnflat set spurs to his horse. The animal, starting at one of the stones which lay scattered about, flew from the path. The
rider exercised his spurs without moderation or mercy. The horse

became furious, reared, kicked, plunged, and bolted like a deer,

with all his four feet off the ground at once. It was in vain;

the unrelenting rider sate as if he had been a part of the horse

which he bestrode; and, after a short but furious contest,

compelled the subdued animal to proceed upon the path at a rate

which soon carried him out of sight of the Solitary.

"That villain," exclaimed the Dwarf,--"that cool-blooded,

hardened, unrelenting ruffian,--that wretch, whose every thought
is infected with crimes,—has thewes and sinews, limbs, strength,

and activity enough, to compel a nobler animal than himself to

carry him to the place where he is to perpetrate his wickedness;

while I, had I the weakness to wish to put his wretched victim on

his guard, and to save the helpless family, would see my good

intentions frustrated by the decrepitude which chains me to the

spot.—Why should I wish it were otherwise? What have my

screech-owl voice, my hideous form, and my mis-shapen features,

to do with the fairer workmanship of nature? Do not men receive

even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed

disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which
accounts me a prodigy and an outcast, and which has treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have reaped--by all the wrongs which I have sustained--by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity!

I will not be the fool I have been, to swerve from my principles whenever there was an appeal, forsooth, to my feelings; as if I, towards whom none show sympathy, ought to have sympathy with any one. Let Destiny drive forth her scythed car through the overwhelmed and trembling mass of humanity! Shall I be the idiot to throw this decrepit form, this mis-shapen lump of mortality,
under her wheels, that the Dwarf, the Wizard, the Hunchback, may

save from destruction some fair form or some active frame, and

all the world clap their hands at the exchange? No, never!--And

yet this Elliot--this Hobbie, so young and gallant, so frank, so

--I will think of it no longer. I cannot aid him if I would, and

I am resolved--firmly resolved, that I would not aid him, if a

wish were the pledge of his safety!"

Having thus ended his soliloquy, he retreated into his hut for

shelter from the storm which was fast approaching, and now began

to burst in large and heavy drops of rain. The last rays of the
sun now disappeared entirely, and two or three claps of distant

thunder followed each other at brief intervals, echoing and

re-echoing among the range of heathy fells like the sound of a
distant engagement.

CHAPTER VII.

Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn!—
Return to thy dwelling; all lonely, return;

For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,

And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood. CAMPBELL.

The night continued sullen and stormy; but morning rose as if refreshed by the rains. Even the Mucklestane-Moor, with its broad bleak swells of barren grounds, interspersed with marshy pools of water, seemed to smile under the serene influence of the sky, just as good-humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance. The heath was in its

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thickest and deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut, his two she-goats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. "You, at least," he said—"you, at least, see no differences in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor—to you, the finest shape that ever statuary moulded would be an object of indifference or of alarm, should it present itself instead of the mis-shapen trunk to whose
services you are accustomed. While I was in the world, did I

ever meet with such a return of gratitude? No; the domestic whom

I had bred from infancy made mouths at me as he stood behind my

chair; the friend whom I had supported with my fortune, and for

whose sake I had even stained--(he stopped with a strong

convulsive shudder), even he thought me more fit for the society

of lunatics--for their disgraceful restraints--for their cruel

privations, than for communication with the rest of humanity.

Hubert alone--and Hubert too will one day abandon me. All are of

a piece, one mass of wickedness, selfishness, and ingratitude--

wretches, who sin even in their devotions; and of such hardness
of heart, that they do not, without hypocrisy, even thank the

Deity himself for his warm sun and pure air."

As he was plunged in these gloomy soliloquies, he heard the tramp

of a horse on the other side of his enclosure, and a strong clear

bass voice singing with the liveliness inspired by a light heart,

Canny Hobbie Elliot, canny Hobbie now,

Canny Hobbie Elliot, I'se gang alang wi' you.
At the same moment, a large deer greyhound sprung over the hermit's fence. It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds, that the appearance and scent of the goat so much resemble those of their usual objects of chase, that the best-broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them. The dog in question instantly pulled down and throttled one of the hermit's she-goats, while Hobbie Elliot, who came up, and jumped from his horse for the purpose, was unable to extricate the harmless animal from the fangs of his attendant until it was expiring.

The Dwarf eyed, for a few moments, the convulsive starts of his dying favourite, until the poor goat stretched out her limbs with
the twitches and shivering fit of the last agony. He then

started into an access of frenzy, and unsheathing a long sharp

knife, or dagger, which he wore under his coat, he was about to

launch it at the dog, when Hobbie, perceiving his purpose,

interposed, and caught hold of his hand, exclaiming, "Let a be

the hound, man--let a be the hound!--Na, na, Killbuck maunna be

guided that gate, neither."

The Dwarf turned his rage on the young farmer; and, by a sudden

effort, far more powerful than Hobbie expected from such a
person, freed his wrist from his grasp, and offered the dagger at
his heart. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye, and the
incensed Recluse might have completed his vengeance by plunging
the weapon in Elliot's bosom, had he not been checked by an
internal impulse which made him hurl the knife to a distance.

"No," he exclaimed, as he thus voluntarily deprived himself of
the means of gratifying his rage; "not again--not again!"

Hobbie retreated a step or two in great surprise, discomposure,
and disdain, at having been placed in such danger by an object
apparently so contemptible.

"The deil's in the body for strength and bitterness!" were the first words that escaped him, which he followed up with an apology for the accident that had given rise to their disagreement. "I am no justifying Killbuck a'thegither neither, and I am sure it is as vexing to me as to you, Elshie, that the mischance should hae happened; but I'll send you twa goats and twa fat gimmers, man, to make a' straight again. A wise man like you shouldna bear malice against a poor dumb thing; ye see that a
goat's like first-cousin to a deer, sae he acted but according to

his nature after a'. Had it been a pet-lamb, there wad hae been

mair to be said. Ye suld keep sheep, Elsie, and no goats, where

there's sae mony deerhounds about--but I'll send ye baith."

"Wretch!" said the Hermit, "your cruelty has destroyed one of

the only creatures in existence that would look on me with

kindness!"

"Dear Elsie," answered Hobbie, "I'm wae ye suld hae cause to say

sae; I'm sure it wasna wi' my will. And yet, it's true, I should
hae minded your goats, and coupled up the dogs. I'm sure I would

rather they had worried the primest wether in my faulds.--Come,

man, forget and forgie. I'm e'en as vexed as ye can be--But I am

da bridegroom, ye see, and that puts a' things out o' my head, I

think. There's the marriage-dinner, or gude part o't, that my

twa brithers are bringing on a sled round by the Riders' Slack,

three goodly bucks as ever ran on Dallomlea, as the sang says;

they couldn'a come the straight road for the saft grund. I wad

send ye a bit venison, but ye wadna take it weel maybe, for

Killbuck catched it."
During this long speech, in which the good-natured Borderer endeavoured to propitiate the offended Dwarf by every argument he could think of, he heard him with his eyes bent on the ground, as if in the deepest meditation, and at length broke forth--

"Nature?--yes! it is indeed in the usual beaten path of Nature. The strong gripe and throttle the weak; the rich depress and despoil the needy; the happy (those who are idiots enough to think themselves happy) insult the misery and diminish the consolation of the wretched.--Go hence, thou who hast contrived to give an additional pang to the most miserable of human beings
--thou who hast deprived me of what I half considered as a source of comfort. Go hence, and enjoy the happiness prepared for thee at home!"

"Never stir," said Hobbie, "if I wadna take you wi' me, man, if ye wad but say it wad divert ye to be at the bridal on Monday. There will be a hundred strapping Elliots to ride the brouze--the like's no been seen sin' the days of auld Martin of the Preakin-
tower--I wad send the sled for ye wi' a canny powny."
"Is it to me you propose once more to mix in the society of the common herd?" said the Recluse, with an air of deep disgust.

"Commons!" retorted Hobbie, "nae siccan commons neither; the Elliots hae been lang kend a gentle race."

"Hence! begone!" reiterated the Dwarf; "may the same evil luck attend thee that thou hast left behind with me! If I go not with you myself, see if you can escape what my attendants, Wrath and Misery, have brought to thy threshold before thee."
"I wish ye wadna speak that gate," said Hobbie. "Ye ken

yoursell, Elshie, naebody judges you to be ower canny; now, I'll
tell ye just ae word for a'--ye hae spoken as muckle as wussing

ill to me and mine; now, if ony mischance happen to Grace, which

God forbid, or to mysell; or to the poor dumb tyke; or if I be

skaithed and injured in body, gudes, or gear, I'll no forget wha

it is that it's owing to."

"Out, hind!" exclaimed the Dwarf; "home! home to your dwelling,

and think on me when you find what has befallen there."
"Aweel, aweel," said Hobbie, mounting his horse, "it serves
naething to strive wi' cripples,—they are aye cankered; but I'll
just tell ye ae thing, neighbour, that if things be otherwise
than weel wi' Grace Armstrong, I'se gie you a scouther if there
be a tar-barrel in the five parishes."

So saying, he rode off; and Elshie, after looking at him with a
scornful and indignant laugh, took spade and mattock, and
occupied himself in digging a grave for his deceased favourite.
A low whistle, and the words, "Hisht, Elshie, hisht!" disturbed
him in this melancholy occupation. He looked up, and the Red
Reiver of Westburnflat was before him. Like Banquo's murderer,
there was blood on his face, as well as upon the rowels of his
spurs and the sides of his over-ridden horse.

"How now, ruffian!" demanded the Dwarf, "is thy job chared?"

"Ay, ay, doubt not that, Elshie," answered the freebooter; "When
I ride, my foes may moan. They have had mair light than comfort
at the Heugh-foot this morning; there's a toom byre and a wide,

and a wail and a cry for the bonny bride."

"The bride?"

"Ay; Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, as we ca' him, that's Charlie

Foster of Tinning Beck, has promised to keep her in Cumberland
till the blast blaw by. She saw me, and kend me in the splore,

for the mask fell frae my face for a blink. I am thinking it wad

concern my safety if she were to come back here, for there's mony

o' the Elliots, and they band weel thegither for right or wrang.
Now, what I chiefly come to ask your rede in, is how to make her

sure?"

"Wouldst thou murder her, then?"

"Umph! no, no; that I would not do, if I could help it. But they

say they can whiles get folk cannily away to the plantations from

some of the outports, and something to boot for them that brings

a bonny wench. They’re wanted beyond seas thae female cattle,

and they’re no that scarce here. But I think o’ doing better for
this lassie. There’s a leddy, that, unless she be a’ the better bairn, is to be sent to foreign parts whether she will or no; now, I think of sending Grace to wait on her--she’s a bonny lassie. Hobbie will hae a merry morning when he comes hame, and misses baith bride and gear."

"Ay; and do you not pity him?" said the Recluse.

"Wad he pity me were I gaeing up the Castle hill at Jeddart? [ The place of execution at that ancient burgh, where many of Westburnflat’s profession have made their final exit.] And yet I
rue something for the bit lassie; but he'll get anither, and

little skaith dune--ane is as gude as anither. And now, you that

like to hear o' splores, heard ye ever o' a better ane than I hae

had this morning?"

"Air, ocean, and fire," said the Dwarf, speaking to himself, "the

earthquake, the tempest, the volcano, are all mild and moderate,

compared to the wrath of man. And what is this fellow, but one

more skilled than others in executing the end of his existence?

--Hear me, felon, go again where I before sent thee."
"To the Steward?"

"Ay; and tell him, Elshender the Recluse commands him to give thee gold. But, hear me, let the maiden be discharged free and uninjured; return her to her friends, and let her swear not to discover thy villainy."

"Swear" said Westburnflat; "but what if she break her aith? Women are not famous for keeping their plight. A wise man like you should ken that.--And uninjured--wha kens what may happen were
she to be left lang at Tinning-Beck? Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie is a rough customer. But if the gold could be made up to twenty pieces, I think I could ensure her being wi' her friends within the twenty-four hours."

The Dwarf took his tablets from his pocket, marked a line on them, and tore out the leaf. "There," he said, giving the robber the leaf--"But, mark me; thou knowest I am not to be fooled by thy treachery; if thou darest to disobey my directions, thy wretched life, be sure, shall answer it."
"I know," said the fellow, looking down, "that you have power on earth, however you came by it; you can do what nae other man can do, baith by physic and foresight; and the gold is shelled down when ye command, as fast as I have seen the ash-keys fall in a frosty morning in October. I will not disobey you."

"Begone, then, and relieve me of thy hateful presence."

The robber set spurs to his horse, and rode off without reply.
Hobbie Elliot had, in the meanwhile, pursued his journey rapidly,

harassed by those oppressive and indistinct fears that all was not right, which men usually term a presentiment of misfortune.

Ere he reached the top of the bank from which he could look down on his own habitation, he was met by his nurse, a person then of great consequence in all families in Scotland, whether of the higher or middling classes. The connexion between them and their foster-children was considered a tie far too dearly intimate to be broken; and it usually happened, in the course of years, that the nurse became a resident in the family of her foster-son,
assisting in the domestic duties, and receiving all marks of

attention and regard from the heads of the family. So soon as

Hobbie recognised the figure of Annaple, in her red cloak and

black hood, he could not help exclaiming to himself, "What ill

luck can hae brought the auld nurse sae far frae hame, her that

never stirs a gun-shot frae the door-stane for ordinar?--Hout, it

will just be to get crane-berries, or whortle-berries, or some

such stuff, out of the moss, to make the pies and tarts for the

feast on Monday.--I cannot get the words of that cankered auld

cripple deil's-buckie out o' my head--the least thing makes me

dread some ill news.--O, Killbuck, man! were there nae deer and
goats in the country besides, but ye behoved to gang and worry

his creature, by a’ other folk’s?”

By this time Annaple, with a brow like a tragic volume, had hobbled towards him, and caught his horse by the bridle. The despair in her look was so evident as to deprive even him of the power of asking the cause. "O my bairn!” she cried, "gang na forward--gang na forward--it’s a sight to kill onybody, let alane thee.”
"In God's name, what's the matter?" said the astonished horseman, endeavouring to extricate his bridle from the grasp of the old woman; "for Heaven's sake, let me go and see what's the matter."

"Ohon! that I should have lived to see the day!--The steading's a' in a low, and the bonny stack-yard lying in the red ashes, and the gear a' driven away. But gang na forward; it wad break your young heart, hinny, to see what my auld een hae seen this morning."
"And who has dared to do this? let go my bridle, Annaple--where

is my grandmother--my sisters?--Where is Grace Armstrong?--God!--

the words of the warlock are knelling in my ears!"

He sprang from his horse to rid himself of Annaple's

interruption, and, ascending the hill with great speed, soon came

in view of the spectacle with which she had threatened him. It

was indeed a heart-breaking sight. The habitation which he had

left in its seclusion, beside the mountain-stream, surrounded

with every evidence of rustic plenty, was now a wasted and
blackened ruin. From amongst the shattered and sable walls the

smoke continued to rise. The turf-stack, the barn-yard, the

offices stocked with cattle, all the wealth of an upland cultivator of the period, of which poor Elliot possessed no

common share, had been laid waste or carried off in a single night. He stood a moment motionless, and then exclaimed, "I am

ruined--ruined to the ground!--But curse on the warld's gear--Had it not been the week before the bridal--But I am nae babe, to sit

down and greet about it. If I can but find Grace, and my

grandmother, and my sisters weel, I can go to the wars in

Flanders, as my gude-sire did, under the Bellenden banner, wi'
auld Buccleuch. At ony rate, I will keep up a heart, or they will lose theirs a'thegither."

Manfully strode Hobbie down the hill, resolved to suppress his own despair, and administer consolation which he did not feel.

The neighbouring inhabitants of the dell, particularly those of his own name, had already assembled. The younger part were in arms and clamorous for revenge, although they knew not upon whom; the elder were taking measures for the relief of the distressed family. Annaple's cottage, which was situated down the brook, at
some distance from the scene of mischief, had been hastily adapted for the temporary accommodation of the old lady and her daughters, with such articles as had been contributed by the neighbours, for very little was saved from the wreck.

"Are we to stand here a' day, sirs," exclaimed one tall young man, "and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon us! Let us to horse, and take the chase.--Who has the nearest bloodhound?"

"It's young Earnscliff," answered another; "and he's been on and
away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can track them."

"Let us follow him then, and raise the country, and mak mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumberland reivers! Take, burn,

and slay--they that lie nearest us shall smart first."

"Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants," said an old man, "ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! wad ye raise war atween two pacificated countries?"
"And what signifies deaving us wi’ tales about our fathers,"

retorted the young man, "if we’re to sit and see our friends’ houses burnt ower their heads, and no put out hand to revenge them? Our fathers did not do that, I trow?"

"I am no saying onything against revenging Hobbie’s wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the law wi’ us in thae days, Simon,"

answered the more prudent elder.

"And besides," said another old man, "I dinna believe there’s ane now living that kens the lawful mode of following a fray across
the Border. Tam o' Whittram kend a' about it; but he died in the hard winter."

"Ay," said a third, "he was at the great gathering, when they chased as far as Thirlwall; it was the year after the fight of Philiphaugh."

"Hout," exclaimed another of these discording counsellors, "there's nae great skill needed; just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear, or hayfork, or siclike, and blaw a horn, and cry
the gathering-word, and then it's lawful to follow gear into

England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae

some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than's been

lifted frae you. That's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan,

in the days of the Black Douglas, Deil ane need doubt it. It's

as clear as the sun."

"Come away, then, lads," cried Simon, "get to your geldings, and

we'll take auld Cuddie the muckle tasker wi' us; he kens the

value o' the stock and plenishing that's been lost. Hobbie's

stalls and stakes shall be fou again or night; and if we canna
big up the auld house sae soon, we'se lay an English ane as low

as Heugh-foot is--and that's fair play, a' the warld ower."

This animating proposal was received with great applause by the

younger part of the assemblage, when a whisper ran among them,

"There's Hobbie himself, puir fallow! we'll be guided by him."

The principal sufferer, having now reached the bottom of the

hill, pushed on through the crowd, unable, from the tumultuous

state of his feelings, to do more than receive and return the
grasps of the friendly hands by which his neighbours and kinsmen

mutely expressed their sympathy in his misfortune. While he

pressed Simon of Hackburn's hand, his anxiety at length found

words. "Thank ye, Simon--thank ye, neighbours--I ken what ye wad

a' say. But where are they?--Where are--" He stopped, as if

afraid even to name the objects of his enquiry; and with a

similar feeling, his kinsmen, without reply, pointed to the hut,

into which Hobbie precipitated himself with the desperate air of

one who is resolved to know the worst at once. A general and

powerful expression of sympathy accompanied him. "Ah, puir

fallow--puir Hobbie!"
"He'll learn the warst o't now!"

"But I trust Earnscliff will get some speerings o' the puir lassie."

Such were the exclamations of the group, who, having no acknowledged leader to direct their motions, passively awaited the return of the sufferer, and determined to be guided by his directions.
The meeting between Hobbie and his family was in the highest degree affecting. His sisters threw themselves upon him, and almost stifled him with their caresses, as if to prevent his looking round to distinguish the absence of one yet more beloved.

"God help thee, my son! He can help when worldly trust is a broken reed."--Such was the welcome of the matron to her unfortunate grandson. He looked eagerly round, holding two of his sisters by the hand, while the third hung about his neck--"I see you--I count you--my grandmother, Lilias, Jean, and Annot;
but where is—" (he hesitated, and then continued, as if with an effort), "Where is Grace? Surely this is not a time to hide herself frae me—there's nae time for daffing now."

"O, brother!" and "Our poor Grace!" was the only answer his questions could procure, till his grandmother rose up, and gently disengaged him from the weeping girls, led him to a seat, and with the affecting serenity which sincere piety, like oil sprinkled on the waves, can throw over the most acute feelings, she said, "My bairn, when thy grandfather was killed in the wars,
and left me with six orphans around me, with scarce bread to eat,

or a roof to cover us, I had strength,—not of mine own—but I

had strength given me to say, The Lord’s will be done!—My son,

our peaceful house was last night broken into by moss-troopers,

armed and masked; they have taken and destroyed all, and carried

off our dear Grace. Pray for strength to say, His will be done!"

"Mother! mother! urge me not—I cannot—not now I am a sinful

man, and of a hardened race. Masked armed—Grace carried off!

Gie me my sword, and my father’s knapsack—I will have vengeance,

if I should go to the pit of darkness to seek it!"
"O my bairn, my bairn! be patient under the rod. Who knows when

He may lift His hand off from us? Young Earnscliff, Heaven bless

him, has taen the chase, with Davie of Stenhouse, and the first

comers. I cried to let house and plenishing burn, and follow the

reivers to recover Grace, and Earnscliff and his men were ower

the Fell within three hours after the deed. God bless him! he's

a real Earnscliff; he's his father's true son--a leal friend."

"A true friend indeed; God bless him!" exclaimed Hobbie; "let's
on and away, and take the chase after him."

"O, my child, before you run on danger, let me hear you but say,

HIS will be done!"

"Urge me not, mother--not now." He was rushing out, when,

looking back, he observed his grandmother make a mute attitude of

affliction. He returned hastily, threw himself into her arms,

and said, "Yes, mother, I CAN say, HIS will be done, since it

will comfort you."
"May He go forth--may He go forth with you, my dear bairn; and O,

may He give you cause to say on your return, HIS name be

praised!"

"Farewell, mother!--farewell, my dear sisters!" exclaimed

Elliot, and rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII.
Now horse and hattock, cried the Laird,--

Now horse and hattock, speedilie;

They that winna ride for Telfer’s kye,

Let them never look in the face o’ me. Border Ballad.

"Horse! horse! and spear!" exclaimed Hobbie to his kinsmen.

Many a ready foot was in the stirrup; and, while Elliot hastily

collected arms and accoutrements, no easy matter in such a

c confusion, the glen resounded with the approbation of his younger

friends.
"Ay, ay!" exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, "that's the gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, men must do as they have been done by; it's the Scripture says't."

"Haud your tongue, sir," said one of the seniors, sternly; "dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye speak about."

"Hae ye ony tidings?--Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie?--O, callants, dinna be ower hasty," said old Dick of the Dingle.
"What signifies preaching to us, e'enow?" said Simon; "if ye canna make help yoursell, dinna keep back them that can."

"Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha has wrang'd ye?"

"D'ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel as our fathers before us?--All evil comes out o' thereaway--it's an auld saying and a true; and we'll e'en away there, as if the devil was blowin us south."
"We'll follow the track o' Earnscliff's horses ower the waste,"

cried one Elliot.

"I'll prick them out through the blindest moor in the Border, an there had been a fair held there the day before," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn, "for I aye shoe his horse wi' my ain hand."

"Lay on the deer-hounds," cried another "where are they?"
"Hout, man, the sun's been lang up, and the dew is aff the grund

--the scent will never lie."

Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were roving about

the ruins of their old habitation, and filling the air with their

doleful howls.

"Now, Killbuck," said Hobbie, "try thy skill this day" and then,

as if a light had suddenly broke on him,--"that ill-faur'd goblin

spak something o' this! He may ken mair o't, either by villains
on earth, or devils below--I’ll hae it frae him, if I should cut it out o’ his mis-shapen bouk wi’ my whinger." He then hastily gave directions to his comrades: "Four o’ ye, wi’ Simon, haud right forward to Graeme’s-gap. If they’re English, they’ll be for being back that way. The rest disperse by twosome and threesome through the waste, and meet me at the Trysting-pool. Tell my brothers, when they come up, to follow and meet us there. Poor lads, they will hae hearts weelnigh as sair as mine; little think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their venison to! I’ll ride ower Mucklestan-Moor mysell.”
"And if I were you," said Dick of the Dingle, "I would speak to Canny Elshie. He can tell you whatever betides in this land, if he’s sae minded."

"He SHALL tell me," said Hobbie, who was busy putting his arms in order, "what he kens o' this night's job, or I shall right weel ken wherefore he does not."

"Ay, but speak him fair, my bonny man--speak him fair Hobbie; the like o' him will no bear thrawing. They converse sae muckle wi'
thae fractious ghaists and evil spirits, that it clean spoils

their temper."

"Let me alane to guide him," answered Hobbie; "there's that in my breast this day, that would ower-maister a' the warlocks on earth, and a' the devils in hell."

And being now fully equipped, he threw himself on his horse, and spurred him at a rapid pace against the steep ascent.
Elliot speedily surmounted the hill, rode down the other side at the same rate, crossed a wood, and traversed a long glen, ere he at length regained Mucklestane-Moor. As he was obliged, in the course of his journey, to relax his speed in consideration of the labour which his horse might still have to undergo, he had time to consider maturely in what manner he should address the Dwarf, in order to extract from him the knowledge which he supposed him to be in possession of concerning the authors of his misfortunes. Hobbie, though blunt, plain of speech, and hot of disposition, like most of his countrymen, was by no means deficient in the shrewdness which is also their characteristic. He reflected,
that from what he had observed on the memorable night when the Dwarf was first seen, and from the conduct of that mysterious being ever since, he was likely to be rendered even more obstinate in his sullenness by threats and violence.

"I'll speak him fair," he said, "as auld Dickon advised me.

Though folk say he has a league wi’ Satan, he canna be sic an incarnate devil as no to take some pity in a case like mine; and folk threep he'll whiles do good, charitable sort o’ things.

I'll keep my heart doun as weel as I can, and stroke him wi’ the
hair; and if the warst come to the warst, it's but wringing the
head o' him about at last."

In this disposition of accommodation he approached the hut of the
Solitary.

The old man was not upon his seat of audience, nor could Hobbie
perceive him in his garden, or enclosures.

"He's gotten into his very keep," said Hobbie, "maybe to be out
o' the gate; but I' se pu' it doun about his lugs, if I canna win
at him otherwise."

Having thus communed with himself, he raised his voice, and

invoked Elshie in a tone as supplicating as his conflicting

feelings would permit. "Elshie, my gude friend!" No reply.

"Elshie, canny Father Elshie!" The Dwarf remained mute. "Sorrow

be in the crooked carcass of thee!" said the Borderer between

his teeth; and then again attempting a soothing tone,--"Good

Father Elshie, a most miserable creature desires some counsel of

your wisdom."
"The better!" answered the shrill and discordant voice of the Dwarf through a very small window, resembling an arrow slit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without the possibility of their looking in upon him.

"The better!" said Hobbie impatiently; "what is the better, Elshie? Do you not hear me tell you I am the most miserable wretch living?"
"And do you not hear me tell you it is so much the better! and did I not tell you this morning, when you thought yourself so happy, what an evening was coming upon you?"

"That ye did e'en," replied Hobbie, "and that gars me come to you for advice now; they that foresaw the trouble maun ken the cure."

"I know no cure for earthy trouble," returned the Dwarf "or, if I did, why should I help others, when none hath aided me? Have I not lost wealth, that would have bought all thy barren hills a
hundred times over? rank, to which thine is as that of a

peasant? society, where there was an interchange of all that was

amiable--of all that was intellectual? Have I not lost all this?

Am I not residing here, the veriest outcast on the face of

Nature, in the most hideous and most solitary of her retreats,

myself more hideous than all that is around me? And why should

other worms complain to me when they are trodden on, since I am

myself lying crushed and writhing under the chariot-wheel?"

"Ye may have lost all this," answered Hbbie, in the bitterness

of emotion; "land and friends, goods and gear; ye may hae lost
them a',--but ye ne'er can hae sae sair a heart as mine, for ye

ne'er lost nae Grace Armstrong. And now my last hopes are gane,

and I shall ne'er see her mair."

This he said in the tone of deepest emotion--and there followed a

long pause, for the mention of his bride's name had overcome the

more angry and irritable feelings of poor Hobbie. Ere he had

again addressed the Solitary, the bony hand and long fingers of

the latter, holding a large leathern bag, was thrust forth at the

small window, and as it unclutched the burden, and let it drop
with a clang upon the ground, his harsh voice again addressed

Elliot.

"There--there lies a salve for every human ill; so, at least,

each human wretch readily thinks.--Begone; return twice as

wealthy as thou wert before yesterday, and torment me no more

with questions, complaints, or thanks; they are alike odious to

me."

"It is a' gowd, by Heaven!" said Elliot, having glanced at the

contents; and then again addressing the Hermit, "Muckle obliged
for your goodwill; and I wad blithely gie you a bond for some o’

the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o’ Wideopen. But I dinna

ken, Elshie; to be free wi’ you, I dinna like to use siller

unless I kend it was decently come by; and maybe it might turn

into slate-stanes, and cheat some poor man.”

"Ignorant idiot!” retorted the Dwarf; "the trash is as genuine

poison as ever was dug out of the bowels of the earth. Take it

--use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!”
"But I tell you," said Elliot, "it wasna about the gear that I was consulting you,—it was a braw barn-yard, doubtless, and thirty head of finer cattle there werena on this side of the Catrail; but let the gear gang,—if ye could but gie me speerings o' puir Grace, I would be content to be your slave for life, in onything that didna touch my salvation. O, Elshie, speak, man, speak!"

"Well, then," answered the Dwarf, as if worn out by his importunity, "since thou hast not enough of woes of thine own, but must needs seek to burden thyself with those of a partner,
seek her whom thou hast lost in the WEST."

"In the WEST? That’s a wide word."

"It is the last," said the Dwarf, which I design to utter;" and

he drew the shutters of his window, leaving Hobbie to make the

most of the hint he had given.

The west! the west!--thought Elliot; the country is pretty quiet

down that way, unless it were Jock o’ the Todholes; and he’s ower
auld now for the like o’ thae jobs.--West!--By My life, it must

be Westburnflat. "Elshie, just tell me one word. Am I right?

Is it Westburnflat? If I am wrang, say sae. I wadna like to

wyte an innocent neighbour wi’ violence--No answer?--It must be

doing the Red Reiver--I didna think he wad hae ventured on me, neither,

and sae mony kin as there’s o’ us--I am thinking he’ll hae some

better backing than his Cumberland friends.--Fareweel to you, Elshie, and mony thanks--I downa be fashed wi’ the siller e’en

now, for I maun awa’ to meet my friends at the Trysting-place--

Sae, if ye carena to open the window, ye can fetch it in after

I’m awa’.”
Still there was no reply.

"He's deaf, or he's daft, or he's baith; but I hae nae time to stay to claver wi' him."

And off rode Hobbie Elliot towards the place of rendezvous which he had named to his friends.

Four or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting pool.
They stood in close consultation together, while their horses

were permitted to graze among the poplars which overhung the

broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from

the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and his party, who had

followed the track of the cattle as far as the English border,

but had halted on the information that a considerable force was

drawn together under some of the Jacobite gentlemen in that

district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different

parts of Scotland. This took away from the act which had been

perpetrated the appearance of private animosity, or love of

plunder; and Earnscliff was now disposed to regard it as a
symptom of civil war. The young gentleman greeted Hbbie with

the most sincere sympathy, and informed him of the news he had

received.

"Then, may I never stir frae the bit," said Elliot, "if auld

Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o’ the haill villainy! Ye see

he’s leagued wi’ the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel

wi’ what Elshie hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye

protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country

about his ain hand before he breaks out."
Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII., and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast, in drinking parties, that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the Jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him, and that they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff; and all that stood out for the established government. The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat had headed the party under Ellieslaw's orders; and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person.
They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends, that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanding about half a mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and, from being a lively brisk-running mountain-torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings,
through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly

about the centre of the plain, arose the tower of Westburnflat,

one of the few remaining strongholds formerly so numerous upon

the Borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated

above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording

an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate

neighbourhood of the tower; but, beyond which, the surface

presented to strangers was that of an impassable and dangerous

bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the

winding and intricate paths, which, leading over ground that was

comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But
among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff’s
directions, there was more than one person qualified to act as a
guide. For although the owner’s character and habits of life
were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to
property prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with
which he must have been regarded in a more civilized country. He
was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much
as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey would be regarded at
the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be
condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could
not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to

his profession, where laws have been habitually observed. And

their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion,

not so much on account of the general nature of the transaction,

which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as

that the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against

whom he had no cause of quarrel,—against a friend of their own,

--above all, against one of the name of Elliot, to which clan

most of them belonged. It was not, therefore, wonderful, that

there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with

the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such
directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the
open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER IX.

So spak the knicht; the geaunt sed,

Lend forth with the, the sely maid,

And mak me quile of the and sche;
For glaunsing ee, or brow so breet,

Or cheek with rose and lilye blent,

Me lists not ficht with the.       ROMANCE OF THE FALCON.

The tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square

building, of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great

thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of

windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the

means of employing missile weapons, than for admitting air or

light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected

over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of
defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof,

flagged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended

by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the

battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the

spiral staircase which it enclosed. It seemed to the party that

their motions were watched by some one concealed within this

turret; and they were confirmed in their belief when, through a

narrow loophole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief,

as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his

senses with joy and eagerness.
"It was Grace’s hand and arm," he said; "I can swear to it amang

ea thousand. There is not the like of it on this side of the

Lowdens--We’ll have her out, lads, if we should carry off the

Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane."

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognising a

fair maiden’s hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover,

would say nothing to damp his friend’s animated hopes, and it was

resolved to summon the garrison.
The shouts of the party, and the winding of one or two horns, at length brought to a loophole, which flanked the entrance, the haggard face of an old woman.

"That's the Reiver's mother," said one of the Elliots; "she's ten times waur than himsell, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country."

"Wha are ye? what d'ye want here?" were the queries of the respectable progenitor.
"We are seeking William Graeme of Westburnflat," said Earnscliff.

"He’s no at hame," returned the old dame.

"When did he leave home?" pursued Earnscliff.

"I canna tell," said the portress.

"When will he return?" said Hbbie Elliot.
"I dinna ken naething about it," replied the inexorable guardian of the keep.

"Is there anybody within the tower with you?" again demanded Earnscliff.

"Naebody but mysell and baudrons," said the old woman.

"Then open the gate and admit us," said Earnscliff; "I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony."
"Deil be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye," retorted the portress; "for mine shall never do it. Thinkna ye shame o' yoursells, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your swords, and spears, and steel-caps, to frighten a lone widow woman?"

"Our information," said Earnscliff; "is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount."

"And a young woman, that's been cruelly made prisoner, that's worth mair than a' the gear, twice told," said Hobbie.
"And I warn you." continued Earnscliff, "that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house."

"And what will ye do, if I carena to thraw the keys, or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clamjamfrie?" said the old dame, scoffingly.

"Force our way with the king's keys, and break the neck of every
living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna gie it ower

"forthwith!" menaced the incensed Hbbie.

"Threatened folks live lang," said the hag, in the same tone of irony; "there's the iron grate--try your skeel on't, lads--it has kept out as gude men as you or now."

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had held the parley.

The besiegers now opened a serious consultation. The immense
thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might, for a time, have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first, by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. "Pinches or forehammers will never pick upon’t," said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; "ye might as weel batter at it wi’ pipe-staples."

Within the doorway, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak,
crossed, both breadth and lengthways, with clenched bars of iron,

and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these
defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old
dame’s assertion, that she alone composed the garrison. The more

knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by

which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that

several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties was added their want of means for

attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long

enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides being
very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore

out of the question; mining was still more so, for want of tools

and gunpowder; neither were the besiegers provided with food,

means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled

them to convert the siege into a blockade; and there would, at

any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder’s

comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as, walking

round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible

entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, "And what for no do as

our fathers did lang syne?--Put hand to the wark, lads. Let us
cut up bushes and briers, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil’s dam as if she were to be reested for bacon."

All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack, properly disposed for burning, as close to the iron-grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was
already advancing to the pile with a kindled brand, when the

surly face of the robber, and the muzzle of a musquetoon, were

partially shown at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. "Mony

thanks to ye," he said, scoffingly, "for collecting sae muckle

winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi’ that

lunt, it’s be the dearest step ye ever made in your days."

"We’ll sune see that," said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the

torch.
The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber’s face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner?

"We want your prisoner," said Earnscliff, "to be delivered up to
us in safety,"

"And what concern have you with her?" replied the marauder.

"That," retorted Earnscliff, "you, who are detaining her by

force, have no right to enquire."

"Aweel, I think I can gie a guess," said the robber. "Weel,

sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling

ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine
--and he can hit a mark to a groat's breadth--so, to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you."

"And Hobbie's gear?" cried Simon of Hackburn. "D'ye think you're to be free to plunder the faulds and byres of a gentle Elliot, as if they were an auld wife's hens'-cavey?"

"As I live by bread," replied Willie of Westburnflat "As I live by bread, I have not a single cloot o' them! They're a' ower the march lang syne; there's no a horn o' them about the tower. But
I'll see what o' them can be gotten back, and I'll take this day
twa days to meet Hbbie at the Castleton wi' twa friends on ilka
side, and see to make an agreement about a' the wrang he can wyte
me wi'."

"Ay, ay," said Elliot, "that will do weel eneugh."--And then
aside to his kinsman, "Murrain on the gear! Lordsake, man! say
nought about them. Let us but get puir Grace out o' that auld
hellicat's clutches."
"Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff," said the marauder, who
still lingered at the shot-hole, "your faith and troth, with hand
and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five
minutes to open the grate, and five minutes to steek it and to
draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly.

Will ye do this?"

"You shall have full time," said Earnscliff; "I plight my faith
and troth, my hand and my glove."

"Wait there a moment, then," said Westburnflat; "or hear ye, I
wad rather ye wad fa' back a pistol-shot from the door. It's no

that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff; but it's best to be sure."

O, friend, thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, an I had

you but on Turner's-holm, [There is a level meadow, on the very

margin of the two kingdoms, called Turner's-holm, just where the

brook called Crissop joins the Liddel. It is said to have

derived its name as being a place frequently assigned for

tourneys, during the ancient Border times.] and naebody by but

twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had

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broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belonged to me!

"He has a white feather in his wing this same Westburnflat, after a,'" said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalized by his ready surrender.—"He'll ne'er fill his father's boots."

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen, leading forth a female, and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind
them, remained on the post as a sort of sentinel.

"Ony ane or twa o' ye come forward," said the outlaw, "and take

her frae my hand hail and sound."

Hobbie advanced eagerly, to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff

followed more slowly, to guard against treachery. Suddenly

Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while

that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was

not Grace Armstrong, but Miss Isabella Vere, whose liberation had
been effected by their appearance before the tower.

"Where is Grace? where is Grace Armstrong?" exclaimed Hobbie,

in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

"Not in my hands," answered Westburnflat; "ye may search the

tower, if ye misdoubt me."

"You false villain, you shall account for her, or die on the

spot," said Elliot, presenting his gun.
But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming, all at once, "Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a care, Hobbie we maun keep our faith wi' Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode."

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

"I have kept my word, sirs," he said, "and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. If this is no the prisoner ye sought," he said,
addressing Earnscliff, "ye'll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her."

"For God's sake, Mr. Earnscliff, protect me!" said Miss Vere, clinging to her deliverer; "do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned."

"Fear nothing," whispered Earnscliff, "I will protect you with my life." Then turning to Westburnflat, "Villain!" he said, "how dared you to insult this lady?"
"For that matter, Earnscliff," answered the freebooter, "I can answer to them that has better right to ask me than you have; but if you come with an armed force, and take her awa' from them that her friends lodged her wi', how will you answer THAT--But it's your ain affair--Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty

--A' the men o' the Mearns downa do mair than they dow."

"He lies most falsely," said Isabella; "he carried me off by violence from my father."
"Maybe he only wanted ye to think sae, hinny," replied the robber; "but it's nae business o' mine, let it be as it may.--So ye winna resign her back to me?"

"Back to you, fellow? Surely no," answered Earnscliff; "I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed."

"Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already," said Willie of Westburnflat.
"And Grace?" interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe-conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower;--"Where's Grace" and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.

Westburnflat, thus pressed, after calling out, "Godsake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!" fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered with so much force, that the sword made
a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is

still shown as a memorial of the superior strength of those who

lived in the days of yore. Ere Hobbie could repeat the blow, the

door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his

companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of

Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their

return.

"Ye hae broken truce already," said old Dick of the Dingle; "an

we takena the better care, ye'll play mair gowk’s tricks, and

make yoursell the laughing-stock of the haill country, besides
having your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide

till the meeting at Castleton, as ye hae greed; and if he disna

make ye amends, then we'll hae it out o' his heart's blood. But

let us gang reasonably to wark and keep our tryst, and I'se

warrant we get back Grace, and the kye an' a'.'

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate

lover; but, as he could only obtain the assistance of his

neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to

acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.
Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father’s castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted; and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart-broken by the events of the day, and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the sustenance and protection of his family, and to arrange with his neighbours the farther steps which should be adopted for the recovery of Grace Armstrong. The rest of the party dispersed in different
directions, as soon as they had crossed the morass. The outlaw and his mother watched them from the tower, until they entirely disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

I left my ladye's bower last night--

It was clad in wreaths of snaw,--
I'll seek it when the sun is bright,

And sweet the roses blaw.          OLD BALLAD.

Incensed at what he deemed the coldness of his friends, in a

cause which interested him so nearly, Hobbie had shaken himself

free of their company, and was now on his solitary road homeward.

"The fiend founder thee!" said he, as he spurred impatiently his

over-fatigued and stumbling horse; "thou art like a' the rest o'

them. Hae I not bred thee, and fed thee, and dressed thee wi'

mine ain hand, and wouldst thou snapper now and break my neck at

my utmost need? But thou'rt e'en like the lave--the farthest off

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o’ them a’ is my cousin ten times removed, and day or night I wad

hae served them wi’ my best blood; and now, I think they show

mair regard to the common thief of Westburnflat than to their ain

kinsman. But I should see the lights now in Heugh-foot—Wae's

me!” he continued, recollecting himself, “there will neither

c coal nor candle-light shine in the Heugh-foot ony mair! An it

werena for my mother and sisters, and poor Grace, I could find in

my heart to put spurs to the beast, and loup ower the scaur into

the water to make an end o’t a’.”—In this disconsolate mood he

turned his horse’s bridle towards the cottage in which his family
had found refuge.

As he approached the door, he heard whispering and tittering amongst his sisters. "The deevil's in the women," said poor Hobbie; "they would nicker, and laugh, and giggle, if their best friend was lying a corp--and yet I am glad they can keep up their hearts sae weil, poor silly things; but the dirdum fa's on me, to be sure, and no on them."

While he thus meditated, he was engaged in fastening up his horse in a shed. "Thou maun do without horse-sheet and surcingle now,
lad," he said, addressing the animal; "you and me hae had a
downcome alike; we had better hae fa'en i, the deepest pool o'
Terras."

He was interrupted by the youngest of his sisters, who came
running out, and, speaking in a constrained voice, as if to
stifle some emotion, called out to him, "What are ye doing there,
Hobbie, fiddling about the naig, and there's ane frae Cumberland
been waiting here for ye this hour and mair? Haste ye in, man;
I'll take off the saddle."
"Ane frae Cumberland!" exclaimed Elliot; and putting the bridle of his horse into the hand of his sister, he rushed into the cottage. "Where is he? where is he!" he exclaimed, glancing eagerly around, and seeing only females; "Did he bring news of Grace?"

"He doughtna bide an instant langer," said the elder sister, still with a suppressed laugh.

"Hout fie, bairns!" said the old lady, with something of a good-
humoured reproof, "ye shouldna vex your billy Hobbie that way.--

Look round, my bairn, and see if there isna ane here mair than ye left this morning."

Hobbie looked eagerly round. "There's you, and the three titties."

"There's four of us now, Hobbie, lad," said the youngest, who at this moment entered.
In an instant Hobbie had in his arms Grace Armstrong, who, with one of his sister's plaids around her, had passed unnoticed at his first entrance. "How dared you do this?" said Hobbie.

"It wasna my fault," said Grace, endeavouring to cover her face with her hands to hide at once her blushes, and escape the storm of hearty kisses with which her bridegroom punished her simple stratagem,—"It wasna my fault, Hobbie; ye should kiss Jeanie and the rest o' them, for they hae the wyte o' t."

"And so I will," said Hobbie, and embraced and kissed his sisters.
and grandmother a hundred times, while the whole party half-laughed, half-cried, in the extremity of their joy. "I am the happiest man," said Hobbie, throwing himself down on a seat, almost exhausted,"I am the happiest man in the world!"

"Then, O my dear bairn," said the good old dame, who lost no opportunity of teaching her lesson of religion at those moments when the heart was best open to receive it,"Then, O my son, give praise to Him that brings smiles out o' tears and joy out o' grief, as He brought light out o' darkness and the world out o'
naething. Was it not my word, that if ye could say His will be
done, ye might hae cause to say His name be praised?”

"It was--it was your word, grannie; and I do praise Him for His
mercy, and for leaving me a good parent when my ain were gane,"
said honest Hobbie, taking her hand, "that puts me in mind to
think of Him, baith in happiness and distress."

There was a solemn pause of one or two minutes employed in the
exercise of mental devotion, which expressed, in purity and
sincerity, the gratitude of the affectionate family to that
Providence who had unexpectedly restored to their embraces the friend whom they had lost.

Hobbie's first enquiries were concerning the adventures which Grace had undergone. They were told at length, but amounted in substance to this:--That she was awaked by the noise which the ruffians made in breaking into the house, and by the resistance made by one or two of the servants, which was soon overpowered; that, dressing herself hastily, she ran downstairs, and having seen, in the scuffle, Westburnflat's vizard drop off, imprudently
named him by his name, and besought him for mercy; that the

ruffian instantly stopped her mouth, dragged her from the house,

and placed her on horseback, behind one of his associates.

"I'll break the accursed neck of him," said Hobbie, "if there

werena another Graeme in the land but himsell!"

She proceeded to say, that she was carried southward along with

the party, and the spoil which they drove before them, until they

had crossed the Border. Suddenly a person, known to her as a

kinsman of Westburnflat, came riding very fast after the
marauders, and told their leader, that his cousin had learnt from

a sure hand that no luck would come of it, unless the lass was

restored to her friends. After some discussion, the chief of the

party seemed to acquiesce. Grace was placed behind her new

guardian, who pursued in silence, and with great speed, the

least-frequented path to the Heugh-foot, and ere evening closed,

set down the fatigued and terrified damsel within a quarter of a

mile of the dwelling of her friends. Many and sincere were the

congratulations which passed on all sides.
As these emotions subsided, less pleasing considerations began to
intrude themselves.

"This is a miserable place for ye a'," said Hobbie, looking
around him; "I can sleep weel eneugh mysell outby beside the
naig, as I hae done mony a lang night on the hills; but how ye
are to put yoursells up, I canna see! And what's waur, I canna
mend it; and what's waur than a', the morn may come, and the day
after that, without your being a bit better off."

"It was a cowardly cruel thing," said one of the sisters, looking
round, "to harry a puir family to the bare wa's this gate."

"And leave us neither stirk nor stot," said the youngest brother, who now entered, "nor sheep nor lamb, nor aught that eats grass and corn."

"If they had ony quarrel wi' us," said Harry, the second brother, "were we na ready to have fought it out? And that we should have been a' frae hame, too,--ane and a' upon the hill--Odd, an we had been at hame, Will Graeme's stamach shouldna hae wanted its
morning; but it's biding him, is it na, Hbbie?"

"Our neighbours hae taen a day at the Castleton to gree wi' him at the sight o' men," said Hbbie, mournfully; "they behoved to have it a' their ain gate, or there was nae help to be got at their hands."

"To gree wi' him!" exclaimed both his brothers at once, "after siccan an act of stoutrife as hasna been heard o' in the country since the auld riding days!"
"Very true, billies, and my blood was e'en boiling at it; but the sight o' Grace Armstrong has settled it brawly."

"But the stocking, Hobbie" said John Elliot; "we're utterly ruined. Harry and I hae been to gather what was on the outby land, and there's scarce a cloot left. I kenna how we're to carry on--We maun a' gang to the wars, I think. Westburnflat hasna the means, e'en if he had the will, to make up our loss; there's nae mends to be got out o' him, but what ye take out o' his banes. He hasna a four-footed creature but the vicious blood
thing he rides on, and that's sair trash'd wi' his night wark.

We are ruined stoop and roop."

Hobbie cast a mournful glance on Grace Armstrong, who returned it with a downcast look and a gentle sigh.

"Dinna be cast down, bairns," said the grandmother, "we hae gude friends that winna forsake us in adversity. There's Sir Thomas Kittleloof is my third cousin by the mother's side, and he has come by a hantle siller, and been made a knight-baronet into the bargain, for being ane o' the commissioners at the Union."
"He wadna gie a bodle to save us frae famishing," said Hobbie;

"and, if he did, the bread that I bought wi't would stick in my throat, when I thought it was part of the price of puir auld Scotland's crown and independence."

"There's the Laird o' Dunder, ane o' the auldest families in Tiviotdale."

"He's in the tolbooth, mother--he's in the Heart of Mid-Louden
for a thousand merk he borrowed from Saunders Wyliecoat the

writer."

"Poor man!" exclaimed Mrs. Elliot, "can we no send him

something, Hobbie?"

"Ye forget, grannie, ye forget we want help oursells," said

Hobbie, somewhat peevishly.

"Troth did I, hinny," replied the good-natured lady, "just at the

instant; it's sae natural to think on ane's blude relations
before themsells;--But there's young Earnscliff."

"He has ower little o' his ain; and siccan a name to keep up, it wad be a shame," said Hobbie, "to burden him wi' our distress.

And I'll tell ye, grannie, it's needless to sit rhyming ower the style of a' your kith, kin, and allies, as if there was a charm in their braw names to do us good; the grandees hae forgotten us,

and those of our ain degree hae just little eneugh to gang on wi' themsells; ne'er a friend hae we that can, or will, help us to stock the farm again."
"Then, Hobbie, me maun trust in Him that can raise up friends and

fortune out o' the bare moor, as they say."

Hobbie sprung upon his feet. "Ye are right, grannie!" he

exclaimed; "ye are right. I do ken a friend on the bare moor,

that baith can and will help us--The turns o' this day hae dung

my head clean hirdie-girdie. I left as muckle gowd lying on

Mucklestane-Moor this morning as would plenish the house and

stock the Heugh-foot twice ower, and I am certain sure Elsie

wadna grudge us the use of it."
"Elshie!" said his grandmother in astonishment; "what Elshie do you mean?"

"What Elshie should I mean, but Canny Elshie, the Wight o' Mucklestane," replied Hobbie.

"God forfend, my bairn, you should gang to fetch water out o' broken cisterns, or seek for relief frae them that deal wi' the Evil One! There was never luck in their gifts, nor grace in
their paths. And the haill country kens that body Elshie's an unco man. O, if there was the law, and the douce quiet administration of justice, that makes a kingdom flourish in righteousness, the like o' them suldna be suffered to live! The wizard and the witch are the abomination and the evil thing in the land."

"Troth, mother," answered Hobbie, "ye may say what ye like, but I am in the mind that witches and warlocks havena half the power they had lang syne; at least, sure am I, that ae ill-deviser,

like auld Ellieslaw, or ae ill-doer, like that d--d villain
Westburnflat, is a greater plague and abomination in a country-side than a haill curnie o’ the warst witches that ever capered on a broomstick, or played cantrips on Eastern’s E’en. It wad hae been lang or Elshie had burnt down my house and barns, and I am determined to try if he will do aught to build them up again.

He’s weel kend a skilfu’ man ower a’ the country, as far as Brough under Stanmore."

"Bide a wee, my bairn; mind his benefits havena thriven wi’ a’body. Jock Howden died o’ the very same disorder Elshie
pretended to cure him of, about the fa' o' the leaf; and though

he helped Lambside's cow weel out o' the moor-ill, yet the

louping-ill's been sairer amane; his sheep than ony season

before. And then I have heard he uses sic words abusing human

nature, that's like a fleeing in the face of Providence; and ye

mind ye said yoursell, the first time ye ever saw him, that he

was mair like a bogle than a living thing."

"Hout, mother," said Hobbie, "Elshie's no that bad a chield; he's

a grewsome spectacle for a crooked disciple, to be sure, and a

rough talked, but his bark is waur than his bite; sae, if I had
anes something to eat, for I havena had a morsel ower my throat

this day, I wad streek mysell down for twa or three hours aside

the beast, and be on and awa' to Mucklestane wi' the first skreigh o' morning."

"And what for no the night, Hobbie," said Harry, "and I will ride wi' ye?"

"My naig is tired," said Hobbie.
"Ye may take mine, then," said John.

"But I am a wee thing wearied myself."

"You wearied?" said Harry; "shame on ye! I have kend ye keep

the saddle four-and-twenty hours thegither, and ne'er sic a word

as weariness in your wame."

"The night's very dark," said Hobbie, rising and looking through

the casement of the cottage; "and, to speak truth, and shame the

deil, though Elshie's a real honest fallow, yet somegate I would
rather take daylight wi’ me when I gang to visit him.”

This frank avowal put a stop to further argument; and Hobbie,

having thus compromised matters between the rashness of his brother’s counsel, and the timid cautions which he received from his grandmother, refreshed himself with such food as the cottage afforded; and, after a cordial salutation all round, retired to the shed, and stretched himself beside his trusty palfrey. His brothers shared between them some trusses of clean straw,

disposed in the stall usually occupied by old Annaple’s cow; and
the females arranged themselves for repose as well as the accommodations of the cottage would permit.

With the first dawn of morning, Hobbie arose; and, having rubbed down and saddled his horse, he set forth to Mucklestane-Moor. He avoided the company of either of his brothers, from an idea that the Dwarf was most propitious to those who visited him alone.

"The creature," said he to himself, as he went along, "is no neighbourly; ae body at a time is fully mair than he weel can abide. I wonder if he's looked out o' the crib o' him to gather
up the bag o' siller. If he hasna done that, it will hae been a

braw windfa' for somebody, and I'll be finely flung.--Come,

Tarras," said he to his horse, striking him at the same time with

his spur, "make mair fit, man; we maun be first on the field if

we can."

He was now on the heath, which began to be illuminated by the

beams of the rising sun; the gentle declivity which he was

descending presented him a distinct, though distant view, of the

Dwarf's dwelling. The door opened, and Hobbie witnessed with his
own eyes that phenomenon which he had frequently heard mentioned.

Two human figures (if that of the Dwarf could be termed such)

issued from the solitary abode of the Recluse, and stood as if in

converse together in the open air. The taller form then stooped,

as if taking something up which lay beside the door of the hut,

then both moved forward a little way, and again halted, as in

deep conference. All Hobbie's superstitious terrors revived on

witnessing this'spectacle. That the Dwarf would open his

dwelling to a mortal guest, was as improbable as that any one

would choose voluntarily to be his nocturnal visitor; and, under

full conviction that he beheld a wizard holding intercourse with
his familiar spirit, Hobbie pulled in at once his breath and his bridle, resolved not to incur the indignation of either by a hasty intrusion on their conference. They were probably aware of his approach, for he had not halted for a moment before the Dwarf returned to his cottage; and the taller figure who had accompanied him, glided round the enclosure of the garden, and seemed to disappear from the eyes of the admiring Hobbie.

"Saw ever mortal the like o' that!" said Elliot; "but my case is desperate, sae, if he were Beelzebub himsell, I'se venture down
Yet, notwithstanding his assumed courage, he slackened his pace,
when, nearly upon the very spot where he had last seen the tall
figure, he discerned, as if lurking among the long heather, a
small black rough-looking object, like a terrier dog.

"He has nae dog that ever I heard of," said Hobbie, "but mony a
deil about his hand--lord forgie me for saying sic a word!--It
keeps its grund, be what it like--I'm judging it's a badger; but
whae kens what shapes thae bogies will take to fright a body? it
Will maybe start up like a lion or a crocodile when I come nearer. I'se e'en drive a stage at it, for if it change its shape when I'm ower near, Tarras will never stand it; and it will be ower muckle to hae him and the deil to fight wi' baith at ance."

He therefore cautiously threw a stone at the object, which continued motionless. "It's nae living thing, after a'," said Hobbie, approaching, "but the very bag o' siller he flung out o' the window yesterday! and that other queer lang creature has
just brought it sae muckle farther on the way to me. He then
advanced and lifted the heavy fur pouch, which was quite full of
gold. "Mercy on us!" said Hobbie, whose heart fluttered between
glee at the revival of his hopes and prospects in life, and
suspicion of the purpose for which this assistance was afforded
him—"Mercy on us! it's an awfu' thing to touch what has been
sae lately in the claws of something no canny, I canna shake
mysell loose o' the belief that there has been some jookery-
paukery of Satan's in a' this; but I am determined to conduct
mysell like an honest man and a good Christian, come o't what
will."
He advanced accordingly to the cottage door, and having knocked repeatedly without receiving any answer, he at length elevated his voice and addressed the inmate of the hut. "Elshie! Father Elshie! I ken ye're within doors, and wauking, for I saw ye at the door-cheek as I cam ower the bent; will ye come out and speak just a gliff to ane that has mony thanks to gie ye?--It was a’ true ye tell’d me about Westburnflat; but he's sent back Grace safe and skaithless, sae there's nae ill happened yet but what may be suffered or sustained;--Wad ye but come out a gliff; man,
or but say ye're listening?--Aweel, since ye winna answer, I'se

e'en proceed wi' my tale. Ye see I hae been thinking it wad be a

sair thing on twa young folk, like Grace and me, to put aff our

marriage for mony years till I was abroad and came back again wi'

some gear; and they say folk maunna take booty in the wars as

they did lang syne, and the queen's pay is a sma' matter; there's

nae gathering gear on that--and then my grandame's auld--and my

sisters wad sit peengin' at the ingle-side for want o' me to ding

them about--and Earnscliff, or the neighbourhood, or maybe your

ainsell, Elshie, might want some good turn that Hob Elliot could

do ye--and it's a pity that the auld house o' the Heugh-foot
should be wrecked a'thegither. Sae I was thinking--but deil hae me, that I should say sae," continued he, checking himself, "if I can bring mysell to ask a favour of ane that winna sae muckle as ware a word on me, to tell me if he hears me speaking till him."

"Say what thou wilt--do what thou wilt," answered the Dwarf from his cabin, "but begone, and leave me at peace."

"Weel, weel," replied Elliot, "since ye are willing to hear me, I'se make my tale short. Since ye are sae kind as to say ye are
content to lend me as muckle siller as will stock and plenish the

Heugh-foot, I am content, on my part, to accept the courtesy wi'

mony kind thanks; and troth, I think it will be as safe in my

hands as yours, if ye leave it flung about in that gate for the

first loon body to lift, forbye the risk o' bad neighbours that

can win through steekit doors and lockfast places, as I can tell

to my cost. I say, since ye hae sae muckle consideration for me,

I'se be blithe to accept your kindness; and my mother and me

(she's a life-renter, and I am fiar, o' the lands o' Wideopen)

would grant you a wadset, or an heritable bond, for the siller,

and to pay the annual rent half-yearly; and Saunders Wyliecoat to
draw the bond, and you to be at nae charge wi’ the writings.”

"Cut short thy jargon, and begone," said the Dwarf; "thy

loquacious bull-headed honesty makes thee a more intolerable

plague than the light-fingered courtier who would take a man’s

all without troubling him with either thanks, explanation, or

apology. Hence, I say! thou art one of those tame slaves whose

word is as good as their bond. Keep the money, principal and

interest, until I demand it of thee.”
"But," continued the pertinacious Borderer, "we are a' life-like and death-like, Elshie, and there really should be some black and white on this transaction. Sae just make me a minute, or missive, in ony form ye like, and I'se write it fair ower, and subscribe it before famous witnesses. Only, Elshie, I wad wuss ye to pit naething in't that may be prejudicial to my salvation; for I'll hae the minister to read it ower, and it wad only be exposing yoursell to nae purpose. And now I'm ganging awa', for ye'll be wearied o' my cracks, and I am wearied wi' cracking without an answer--and I'se bring ye a bit o' bride's-cake ane o' thae days, and maybe bring Grace to see you. Ye wad like to see
Grace, man, for as dour as ye are--Eh, Lord I I wish he may be well, that was a sair grane!  or, maybe, he thought I was speaking of heavenly grace, and no of Grace Armstrong.  Poor man, I am very doubtful o' his condition; but I am sure he is as kind to me as if I were his son, and a queer-looking father I wad hae had, if that had been e'en sae."

Hobbie now relieved his benefactor of his presence, and rode blithely home to display his treasure, and consult upon the means of repairing the damage which his fortune had sustained through
the aggression of the Red Reiver of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER XI.

Three ruffians seized me yester morn,

Alas! a maiden most forlorn;

They choked my cries with wicked might,

And bound me on a palfrey white:

As sure as Heaven shall pity me,
I cannot tell what men they be. CHRISTABELLE.

The course of our story must here revert a little, to detail the circumstances which had placed Miss Vere in the unpleasant situation from which she was unexpectedly, and indeed unintentionally liberated, by the appearance of Earnscliff and Elliot, with their friends and followers, before the Tower of Westburnflat.

On the morning preceding the night in which Hobbie’s house was
plundered and burnt, Miss Vere was requested by her father to accompany him in a walk through a distant part of the romantic grounds which lay round his castle of Ellieslaw. "To hear was to obey," in the true style of Oriental despotism; but Isabella trembled in silence while she followed her father through rough paths, now winding by the side of the river, now ascending the cliffs which serve for its banks. A single servant, selected perhaps for his stupidity, was the only person who attended them.

From her father's silence, Isabella little doubted that he had chosen this distant and sequestered scene to resume the argument which they had so frequently maintained upon the subject of Sir
Frederick’s addresses, and that he was meditating in what manner he should most effectually impress upon her the necessity of receiving him as her suitor. But her fears seemed for some time to be unfounded. The only sentences which her father from time to time addressed to her, respected the beauties of the romantic landscape through which they strolled, and which varied its features at every step. To these observations, although they seemed to come from a heart occupied by more gloomy as well as more important cares, Isabella endeavoured to answer in a manner as free and unconstrained as it was possible for her to assume,
amid the involuntary apprehensions which crowded upon her imagination.

Sustaining with mutual difficulty a desultory conversation, they at length gained the centre of a small wood, composed of large oaks, intermingled with birches, mountain-ashes, hazel, holly, and a variety of underwood. The boughs of the tall trees met closely above, and the underwood filled up each interval between their trunks below. The spot on which they stood was rather more open; still, however, embowered under the natural arcade of tall trees, and darkened on the sides for a space around by a great
and lively growth of copse-wood and bushes.

"And here, Isabella," said Mr. Vere, as he pursued the conversation, so often resumed, so often dropped, "here I would erect an altar to Friendship."

"To Friendship, sir!" said Miss Vere; "and why on this gloomy and sequestered spot, rather than elsewhere?"

"O, the propriety of the LOCALE is easily vindicated," replied
her father, with a sneer. "You know, Miss Vere (for you, I am
well aware, are a learned young lady), you know, that the Romans
were not satisfied with embodying, for the purpose of worship,
each useful quality and moral virtue to which they could give a
name; but they, moreover, worshipped the same under each variety
of titles and attributes which could give a distinct shade, or
individual character, to the virtue in question. Now, for
example, the Friendship to whom a temple should be here
dedicated, is not Masculine Friendship, which abhors and despises
duplicity, art, and disguise; but Female Friendship, which
consists in little else than a mutual disposition on the part of
the friends, as they call themselves, to abet each other in

obscure fraud and petty intrigue."

"You are severe, sir," said Miss Vere.

"Only just," said her father; "a humble copier I am from nature,

with the advantage of contemplating two such excellent studies as

Lucy Ilderton and yourself."

"If I have been unfortunate enough to offend, sir, I can
conscientiously excuse Miss Ilderton from being either my
counsellor or confidante."

"Indeed! how came you, then," said Mr. Vere, "by the flippancy
of speech, and pertness of argument, by which you have disgusted
Sir Frederick, and given me of late such deep offence?"

"If my manner has been so unfortunate as to displease you, sir,
it is impossible for me to apologize too deeply, or too
sincerely; but I cannot confess the same contrition for having
answered Sir Frederick flippantly when he pressed me rudely.
Since he forgot I was a lady, it was time to show him that I am
at least a woman."

"Reserve, then, your pertness for those who press you on the
topic, Isabella," said her father coldly; "for my part, I am
weary of the subject, and will never speak upon it again."

"God bless you, my dear father," said Isabella, seizing his
reluctant hand "there is nothing you can impose on me, save the
task of listening to this man's persecution, that I will call, or
think, a hardship."

"You are very obliging, Miss Vere, when it happens to suit you to be dutiful," said her unrelenting father, forcing himself at the same time from the affectionate grasp of her hand; "but henceforward, child, I shall save myself the trouble of offering you unpleasant advice on any topic. You must look to yourself."

At this moment four ruffians rushed upon them. Mr. Vere and his servant drew their hangers, which it was the fashion of the time to wear, and attempted to defend themselves and protect Isabella.
But while each of them was engaged by an antagonist, she was forced into the thicket by the two remaining villains, who placed her and themselves on horses which stood ready behind the copse-wood. They mounted at the same time, and, placing her between them, set off at a round gallop, holding the reins of her horse on each side. By many an obscure and winding path, over dale and down, through moss and moor, she was conveyed to the tower of Westburnflat, where she remained strictly watched, but not otherwise ill-treated, under the guardianship of the old woman, to whose son that retreat belonged. No entreaties could prevail
upon the hag to give Miss Vere any information on the object of her being carried forcibly off, and confined in this secluded place. The arrival of Earnscliff, with a strong party of horsemen, before the tower, alarmed the robber. As he had already directed Grace Armstrong to be restored to her friends, it did not occur to him that this unwelcome visit was on her account; and seeing at the head of the party, Earnscliff, whose attachment to Miss Vere was whispered in the country, he doubted not that her liberation was the sole object of the attack upon his fastness. The dread of personal consequences compelled him to deliver up his prisoner in the manner we have already related.
At the moment the tramp of horses was heard which carried off the
daughter of Ellieslaw, her father fell to the earth, and his
servant, a stout young fellow, who was gaining ground on the
ruffian with whom he had been engaged, left the combat to come to
his master's assistance, little doubting that he had received a
mortal wound, Both the villains immediately desisted from farther
combat, and, retreating into the thicket, mounted their horses,
and went off at full speed after their companions. Meantime,
Dixon had the satisfaction to find Mr. Vere not only alive, but
unwounded. He had overreached himself, and stumbled, it seemed,

over the root of a tree, in making too eager a blow at his

antagonist. The despair he felt at his daughter's disappearance,

was, in Dixon's phrase, such as would have melted the heart of a

whin stane, and he was so much exhausted by his feelings, and the

vain researches which he made to discover the track of the

ravishers, that a considerable time elapsed ere he reached home,

and communicated the alarm to his domestics.

All his conduct and gestures were those of a desperate man.
"Speak not to me, Sir Frederick," he said impatiently; "You are no father--she was my child, an ungrateful one! I fear, but still my child--my only child. Where is Miss Ilderton? she must know something of this. It corresponds with what I was informed of her schemes. Go, Dixon, call Ratcliffe here. Let him come without a minute's delay." The person he had named at this moment entered the room.

"I say, Dixon," continued Mr. Vere, in an altered tone, "let Mr. Ratcliffe know, I beg the favour of his company on particular
business.--Ah! my dear sir," he proceeded, as if noticing him for the first time, "you are the very man whose advice can be of the utmost service to me in this cruel extremity."

"What has happened, Mr. Vere, to discompose you?" said Mr, Ratcliffe, gravely; and while the Laird of Ellieslaw details to him, with the most animated gestures of grief and indignation, the singular adventure of the morning, we shall take the opportunity to inform our readers of the relative circumstances in which these gentlemen stood to each other.
In early youth, Mr. Vere of Ellieslaw had been remarkable for a career of dissipation, which, in advanced life, he had exchanged for the no less destructive career of dark and turbulent ambition. In both cases, he had gratified the predominant passion without respect to the diminution of his private fortune, although, where such inducements were wanting, he was deemed close, avaricious, and grasping. His affairs being much embarrassed by his earlier extravagance, he went to England, where he was understood to have formed a very advantageous matrimonial connexion. He was many years absent from his family.
estate. Suddenly and unexpectedly he returned a widower,

bringing with him his daughter, then a girl of about ten years

old. From this moment his expense seemed unbounded, in the eyes

of the simple inhabitants of his native mountains. It was

supposed he must necessarily have plunged himself deeply in debt.

Yet he continued to live in the same lavish expense, until some

months before the commencement of our narrative, when the public

opinion of his embarrassed circumstances was confirmed, by the

residence of Mr. Ratcliffe at Ellieslaw Castle, who, by the tacit

consent, though obviously to the great displeasure, of the lord

of the mansion, seemed, from the moment of his arrival, to assume
and exercise a predominant and unaccountable influence in the

management of his private affairs.

Mr. Ratcliffe was a grave, steady, reserved man, in an advanced

period of life. To those with whom he had occasion to speak upon

business, he appeared uncommonly well versed in all its forms.

With others he held little communication; but in any casual

intercourse, or conversation, displayed the powers of an active

and well-informed mind. For some time before taking up his final

residence at the castle, he had been an occasional visitor there,
and was at such times treated by Mr. Vere (contrary to his
general practice towards those who were inferior to him in rank)

with marked attention, and even deference. Yet his arrival

always appeared to be an embarrassment to his host, and his

departure a relief; so that, when he became a constant inmate of

the family, it was impossible not to observe indications of the

displeasure with which Mr. Vere regarded his presence. Indeed,

their intercourse formed a singular mixture of confidence and

constraint. Mr. Vere’s most important affairs were regulated by

Mr. Ratcliffe; and although he was none of those indulgent men of

fortune, who, too indolent to manage their own business, are glad
to devolve it upon another, yet, in many instances, he was

observed to give up his own judgment, and submit to the contrary

opinions which Mr. Ratcliffe did not hesitate distinctly to

express.

Nothing seemed to vex Mr. Vere more than when strangers indicated

any observation of the state of tutelage under which he appeared

to labour. When it was noticed by Sir Frederick, or any of his

intimates, he sometimes repelled their remarks haughtily and

indignantly, and sometimes endeavoured to evade them, by saying,
with a forced laugh, "That Ratcliffe knew his own importance, but

that he was the most honest and skilful fellow in the world; and

that it would be impossible for him to manage his English affairs

without his advice and assistance." Such was the person who

entered the room at the moment Mr. Vere was summoning him to his

presence, and who now heard with surprise, mingled with obvious

incredulity, the hasty narrative of what had befallen Isabella.

Her father concluded, addressing Sir Frederick and the other

gentlemen, who stood around in astonishment, "And now, my

friends, you see the most unhappy father in Scotland. Lend me
your assistance, gentlemen--give me your advice, Mr. Ratcliffe.

I am incapable of acting, or thinking, under the unexpected violence of such a blow."

"Let us take our horses, call our attendants, and scour the country in pursuit of the villains," said Sir Frederick.

"Is there no one whom you can suspect," said Ratcliffe, gravely, "of having some motive for this strange crime? These are not the days of romance, when ladies are carried off merely for their
"I fear," said Mr. Vere, "I can too well account for this strange incident. Read this letter, which Miss Lucy Ilderton thought fit to address from my house of Ellieslaw to young Mr. Earnscliff; whom, of all men, I have a hereditary right to call my enemy.

You see she writes to him as the confidant of a passion which he has the assurance to entertain for my daughter; tells him she serves his cause with her friend very ardently, but that he has a friend in the garrison who serves him yet more effectually. Look particularly at the pencilled passages, Mr. Ratcliffe, where this
meddling girl recommends bold measures, with an assurance that
his suit would be successful anywhere beyond the bounds of the
barony of Ellieslaw."

"And you argue, from this romantic letter of a very romantic
young lady, Mr. Vere," said Ratcliffe, "that young Earnscliff has
carried off your daughter, and committed a very great and
criminal act of violence, on no better advice and assurance than
that of Miss Lucy Ilderton?"
"What else can I think?" said Ellieslaw.

"What else CAN you think?" said Sir Frederick; "or who else could have any motive for committing such a crime?"

"Were that the best mode of fixing the guilt," said Mr. Ratcliffe, calmly, "there might easily be pointed out persons to whom such actions are more congenial, and who have also sufficient motives of instigation. Supposing it were judged advisable to remove Miss Vere to some place in which constraint might be exercised upon her inclinations to a degree which cannot
at present be attempted under the roof of Ellieslaw Castle—What

says Sir Frederick Langley to that supposition?"

"I say," returned Sir Frederick, "that although Mr. Vere may

choose to endure in Mr. Ratcliffe freedoms totally inconsistent

with his situation in life, I will not permit such license of

innuendo, by word or look, to be extended to me, with impunity."

"And I say," said young Mareschal of Mareschal-Wells, who was

also a guest at the castle, "that you are all stark mad to be
standing wrangling here, instead of going in pursuit of the ruffians."

"I have ordered off the domestics already in the track most likely to overtake them," said Mr. Vere "if you will favour me with your company, we will follow them, and assist in the search."

The efforts of the party were totally unsuccessful, probably because Ellieslaw directed the pursuit to proceed in the direction of Earnscliff Tower, under the supposition that the
owner would prove to be the author of the violence, so that they

followed a direction diametrically opposite to that in which the

ruffians had actually proceeded. In the evening they returned,

harassed and out of spirits. But other guests had, in the

meanwhile, arrived at the castle; and, after the recent loss

sustained by the owner had been related, wondered at, and

lamented, the recollection of it was, for the present, drowned in

the discussion of deep political intrigues, of which the crisis

and explosion were momentarily looked for.
Several of the gentlemen who took part in this divan were Catholics, and all of them stanch Jacobites, whose hopes were at present at the highest pitch, as an invasion, in favour of the Pretender, was daily expected from France, which Scotland, between the defenceless state of its garrisons and fortified places, and the general disaffection of the inhabitants, was rather prepared to welcome than to resist. Ratcliffe, who neither sought to assist at their consultations on this subject, nor was invited to do so, had, in the meanwhile, retired to his own apartment. Miss Ilderton was sequestered from society in a sort of honourable confinement, "until," said Mr. Vere, "she
should be safely conveyed home to her father’s house,” an opportunity for which occurred on the following day.

The domestics could not help thinking it remarkable how soon the loss of Miss Vere, and the strange manner in which it had happened, seemed to be forgotten by the other guests at the castle. They knew not, that those the most interested in her fate were well acquainted with the cause of her being carried off, and the place of her retreat; and that the others, in the anxious and doubtful moments which preceded the breaking forth of
a conspiracy, were little accessible to any feelings but what 

arose immediately out of their own machinations.

CHAPTER XII.

Some one way, some another--Do you know

Where we may apprehend her?

The researches after Miss Vere were (for the sake of appearances,
perhaps) resumed on the succeeding day, with similar bad success,

and the party were returning towards Ellieslaw in the evening.

"It is singular," said Mareschal to Ratcliffe, "that four

horsemen and a female prisoner should have passed through the

country without leaving the slightest trace of their passage.

One would think they had traversed the air, or sunk through the

ground."

"Men may often," answered Ratcliffe, "arrive at the knowledge of
that which is, from discovering that which is not. We have now

scoured every road, path, and track leading from the castle, in

all the various points of the compass, saving only that intricate

and difficult pass which leads southward down the Westburn, and

through the morasses."

"And why have we not examined that?" said Mareschal.

"O, Mr. Vere can best answer that question," replied his

companion, dryly.
"Then I will ask it instantly," said Mareschal; and, addressing Mr. Vere, "I am informed, sir," said he, "there is a path we have not examined, leading by Westburnflat."

"O," said Sir Frederick, laughing, "we know the owner of Westburnflat well—a wild lad, that knows little difference between his neighbour's goods and his own; but, withal, very honest to his principles: he would disturb nothing belonging to Ellieslaw."
"Besides," said Mr. Vere, smiling mysteriously, "he had other tow on his distaff last night. Have you not heard young Elliot of the Heugh-foot has had his house burnt, and his cattle driven away, because he refused to give up his arms to some honest men that think of starting for the king?"

The company smiled upon each other, as at hearing of an exploit which favoured their own views.

"Yet, nevertheless," resumed Mareschal, "I think we ought to ride in this direction also, otherwise we shall certainly be blamed
for our negligence."

No reasonable objection could be offered to this proposal, and

the party turned their horses' heads towards Westburnflat.

They had not proceeded very far in that direction when the

trampling of horses was heard, and a small body of riders were

perceived advancing to meet them.

"There comes Earnscliff," said Mareschal; "I know his bright bay
with the star in his front."

"And there is my daughter along with him," exclaimed Vere, furiously. "Who shall call my suspicions false or injurious now? Gentlemen--friends--lend me the assistance of your swords for the recovery of my child."

He unsheathed his weapon, and was imitated by Sir Frederick and several of the party, who prepared to charge those that were advancing towards them. But the greater part hesitated.
"They come to us in all peace and security," said Mareschal-Wells; "let us first hear what account they give us of this mysterious affair. If Miss Vere has sustained the slightest insult or injury from Earnscliff, I will be first to revenge her; but let us hear what they say."

"You do me wrong by your suspicions, Mareschal," continued Vere;

"you are the last I would have expected to hear express them."

"You injure yourself, Ellieslaw, by your violence, though the
cause may excuse it."

He then advanced a little before the rest, and called out, with a loud voice,--"Stand, Mr. Earnscliff; or do you and Miss Vere advance alone to meet us. You are charged with having carried that lady off from her father's house; and we are here in arms to shed our best blood for her recovery, and for bringing to justice those who have injured her."

"And who would do that more willingly than I, Mr. Mareschal?"

said Earnscliff, haughtily,--"than I, who had the satisfaction
this morning to liberate her from the dungeon in which I found

her confined, and who am now escorting her back to the Castle of

Ellieslaw?"

"Is this so, Miss Vere?" said Mareschal.

"It is," answered Isabella, eagerly, --"it is so; for Heaven's

sake sheathe your swords. I will swear by all that is sacred,

that I was carried off by ruffians, whose persons and object were

alike unknown to me, and am now restored to freedom by means of
this gentleman's gallant interference."

"By whom, and wherefore, could this have been done?" pursued Mareschal.--"Had you no knowledge of the place to which you were conveyed?--Earnscliff, where did you find this lady?"

But ere either question could be answered, Ellieslaw advanced,

and, returning his sword to the scabbard, cut short the conference.

"When I know," he said, "exactly how much I owe to Mr.
Earnscliff, he may rely on suitable acknowledgments; meantime,

taking the bridle of Miss Vere's horse, "thus far I thank him for

replacing my daughter in the power of her natural guardian."

A sullen bend of the head was returned by Earnscliff with equal

haughtiness; and Ellieslaw, turning back with his daughter upon

the road to his own house, appeared engaged with her in a

conference so earnest, that the rest of the company judged it

improper to intrude by approaching them too nearly. In the

meantime, Earnscliff, as he took leave of the other gentlemen
belonging to Ellieslaw's party, said aloud, "Although I am

unconscious of any circumstance in my conduct that can authorize

such a suspicion, I cannot but observe, that Mr. Vere seems to

believe that I have had some hand in the atrocious violence which

has been offered to his daughter. I request you, gentlemen, to

take notice of my explicit denial of a charge so dishonourable;

and that, although I can pardon the bewildering feelings of a

father in such a moment, yet, if any other gentleman" (he looked

hard at Sir Frederick Langley) "thinks my word and that of Miss

Vere, with the evidence of my friends who accompany me, too

slight for my exculpation, I will be happy--most happy--to repel
the charge, as becomes a man who counts his honour dearer than his life."

"And I'll be his second," said Simon of Hackburn, "and take up ony twa o' ye, gentle or semple, laird or loon; it's a' ane to Simon."

"Who is that rough-looking fellow?" said Sir Frederick Langley, "and what has he to do with the quarrels of gentlemen?"
"I'se be a lad frae the Hie Te'iot," said Simon, "and I'se

quarrel wi' ony body I like, except the king, or the laird I live

under."

"Come," said Mareschal, "let us have no brawls.--Mr. Earnscliff;

although we do not think alike in some things, I trust we may be

opponents, even enemies, if fortune will have it so, without

losing our respect for birth, fair-play, and each other. I

believe you as innocent of this matter as I am myself; and I will

pledge myself that my cousin Ellieslaw, as soon as the perplexity

attending these sudden events has left his judgment to its free
exercise, shall handsomely acknowledge the very important service

you have this day rendered him."

"To have served your cousin is a sufficient reward in itself--

Good evening, gentlemen," continued Earnscliff; "I see most of

your party are already on their way to Ellieslaw."

Then saluting Mareschal with courtesy, and the rest of the party

with indifference, Earnscliff turned his horse and rode towards

the Heugh-foot, to concert measures with Hobbie Elliot for
farther researches after his bride, of whose restoration to her friends he was still ignorant.

"There he goes," said Mareschal; "he is a fine, gallant young fellow, upon my soul; and yet I should like well to have a thrust with him on the green turf. I was reckoned at college nearly his equal with the foils, and I should like to try him at sharps."

"In my opinion," answered Sir Frederick Langley, "we have done very ill in having suffered him, and those men who are with him, to go off without taking away their arms; for the Whigs are very
likely to draw to a head under such a sprightly young fellow as that."

"For shame, Sir Frederick!" exclaimed Mareschal; "do you think that Ellieslaw could, in honour, consent to any violence being offered to Earnscliff; when he entered his bounds only to bring back his daughter? or, if he were to be of your opinion, do you think that I, and the rest of these gentlemen, would disgrace ourselves by assisting in such a transaction? No, no, fair play and auld Scotland for ever! When the sword is drawn, I will be
as ready to use it as any man; but while it is in the sheath, let
us behave like gentlemen and neighbours."

Soon after this colloquy they reached the castle, when Ellieslaw,
who had been arrived a few minutes before, met them in the court-
yard.

"How is Miss Vere? and have you learned the cause of her being
carried off?" asked Mareschal hastily.

"She is retired to her apartment greatly fatigued; and I cannot
expect much light upon her adventure till her spirits are somewhat recruited," replied her father. "She and I were not the less obliged to you, Mareschal, and to my other friends, for their kind enquiries. But I must suppress the father's feelings for a while to give myself up to those of the patriot. You know this is the day fixed for our final decision--time presses--our friends are arriving, and I have opened house, not only for the gentry, but for the under spur-leathers whom we must necessarily employ. We have, therefore, little time to prepare to meet them.--Look over these lists, Marchie (an abbreviation by which
Mareschal-Wells was known among his friends). Do you, Sir

Frederick, read these letters from Lothian and the west--all is

ripe for the sickle, and we have but to summon out the reapers."

"With all my heart," said Mareschal; "the more mischief the

better sport."

Sir Frederick looked grave and disconcerted.

"Walk aside with me, my good friend," said Ellieslaw to the

sombre baronet; "I have something for your private ear, with
which I know you will be gratified."

They walked into the house, leaving Ratcliffe and Mareschal standing together in the court.

"And so," said Ratcliffe, "the gentlemen of your political persuasion think the downfall of this government so certain, that they disdain even to throw a decent disguise over the machinations of their party?"
"Faith, Mr. Ratcliffe," answered Mareschal, "the actions and

sentiments YOUR friends may require to be veiled, but I am better

pleased that ours can go barefaced."

"And is it possible," continued Ratcliffe, "that you, who,

notwithstanding your thoughtlessness and heat of temper (I beg

pardon, Mr. Mareschal, I am a plain man)--that you, who,

notwithstanding these constitutional defects, possess natural

good sense and acquired information, should be infatuated enough

to embroil yourself in such desperate proceedings? How does your

head feel when you are engaged in these dangerous conferences?"
"Not quite so secure on my shoulders," answered Mareschal, "as if I were talking of hunting and hawking. I am not of so indifferent a mould as my cousin Ellieslaw, who speaks treason as if it were a child's nursery rhymes, and loses and recovers that sweet girl, his daughter, with a good deal less emotion on both occasions, than would have affected me had I lost and recovered a greyhound puppy. My temper is not quite so inflexible, nor my hate against government so inveterate, as to blind me to the full danger of the attempt."
"Then why involve yourself in it?" said Ratcliffe.

"Why, I love this poor exiled king with all my heart; and my father was an old Killiecrankie man, and I long to see some amends on the Unionist courtiers, that have bought and sold old Scotland, whose crown has been so long independent."

"And for the sake of these shadows," said his monitor, "you are going to involve your country in war and yourself in trouble?"
"I involve? No!—but, trouble for trouble, I had rather it came
to-morrow than a month hence. Come, I know it will; and, as your
country folks say, better soon than syne—It will never find me
younger—and as for hanging, as Sir John Falstaff says, I can
become a gallows as well as another. You know the end of the old
ballad;

"Sae dauntonly, sae wantonly,

Sae rantingly gaed he,

He play'd a spring, and danced a round,
Beneath the gallows tree."

"Mr. Mareschal, I am sorry for you," said his grave adviser.

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; but I would not have you judge of our enterprise by my way of vindicating it; there are wiser heads than mine at the work."

"Wiser heads than yours may lie as low," said Ratcliffe, in a warning tone.
"Perhaps so; but no lighter heart shall; and, to prevent it being

made heavier by your remonstrances, I will bid you adieu, Mr.

Ratcliff, till dinner-time, when you shall see that my

apprehensions have not spoiled my appetite."

CHAPTER XIII.

To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour, that may please the eye

Of fickle changelings, and poor discontents,

Which gape and rub the elbow at the news

Of hurlyburly innovation. HENRY THE FOURTH, PART II.

There had been great preparations made at Ellieslaw Castle for the entertainment on this important day, when not only the gentlemen of note in the neighbourhood, attached to the Jacobite interest, were expected to rendezvous, but also many subordinate malecontents, whom difficulty of circumstances, love of change, resentment against England, or any of the numerous causes which
inflamed men's passions at the time, rendered apt to join in

perilous enterprise. The men of rank and substance were not many

in number; for almost all the large proprietors stood aloof, and

most of the smaller gentry and yeomanry were of the Presbyterian

persuasion, and therefore, however displeased with the Union,

unwilling to engage in a Jacobite conspiracy. But there were

some gentlemen of property, who, either from early principle,

from religious motives, or sharing the ambitious views of

Ellieslaw, had given countenance to his scheme; and there were,

also, some fiery young men, like Mareschal, desirous of
signalizing themselves by engaging in a dangerous enterprise, by

which they hoped to vindicate the independence of their country.

The other members of the party were persons of inferior rank and
desperate fortunes, who were now ready to rise in that part of

the country, as they did afterwards in the year 1715, under

Forster and Derwentwater, when a troop, commanded by a Border
gentleman, named Douglas, consisted almost entirely of

freebooters, among whom the notorious Luck-in-a-bag, as he was
called, held a distinguished command. We think it necessary to

mention these particulars, applicable solely to the province in

which our scene lies; because, unquestionably, the Jacobite
party, in the other parts of the kingdom, consisted of much more formidable, as well as much more respectable, materials.

One long table extended itself down the ample hall of Ellieslaw Castle, which was still left much in the state in which it had been one hundred years before, stretching, that is, in gloomy length, along the whole side of the castle, vaulted with ribbed arches of freestone, the groins of which sprung from projecting figures, that, carved into all the wild forms which the fantastic imagination of a Gothic architect could devise, grinned, frowned,
and gnashed their tusks at the assembly below. Long narrow

windows lighted the banqueting room on both sides, filled up with

stained glass, through which the sun emitted a dusky and

discoloured light. A banner, which tradition averred to have been

taken from the English at the battle of Sark, waved over the

chair in which Ellieslaw presided, as if to inflame the courage

of the guests, by reminding them of ancient victories over their

neighbours. He himself, a portly figure, dressed on this occasion

with uncommon care, and with features, which, though of a stern

and sinister expression, might well be termed handsome, looked

the old feudal baron extremely well. Sir Frederick Langley was
placed on his right hand, and Mr. Mareschal of Mareschal-Wells on 

his left. Some gentlemen of consideration, with their sons, 

brothers, and nephews, were seated at the upper end of the table, 

and among these Mr. Ratcliffe had his place. Beneath the salt-

cellar (a massive piece of plate which occupied the midst of the 

table) sate the SINE NOMINE TURBA, men whose vanity was gratified 

by holding even this subordinate space at the social board, while 

the distinction observed in ranking them was a salve to the pride 

of their superiors. That the lower house was not very select 

must be admitted, since Willie of Westburnflat was one of the
party. The unabashed audacity of this fellow, in daring to present himself in the house of a gentleman, to whom he had just offered so flagrant an insult, can only be accounted for by supposing him conscious that his share in carrying off Miss Vere was a secret, safe in her possession and that of her father.

Before this numerous and miscellaneous party was placed a dinner, consisting, not indeed of the delicacies of the season, as the newspapers express it, but of viands, ample, solid, and sumptuous, under which the very board groaned. But the mirth was not in proportion to the good cheer. The lower end of the table
were, for some time, chilled by constraint and respect on finding
themselves members of so august an assembly; and those who were
placed around it had those feelings of awe with which P. P.,
clerk of the parish, describes himself oppressed, when he first
uplifted the psalm in presence of those persons of high worship,
the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the good Lady Jones, and the great
Sir Thomas Truby. This ceremonious frost, however, soon gave way
before the incentives to merriment, which were liberally
 supplied, and as liberally consumed by the guests of the lower
description. They became talkative, loud, and even clamorous in
their mirth.

But it was not in the power of wine or brandy to elevate the

spirits of those who held the higher places at the banquet. They

experienced the chilling revulsion of spirits which often takes

place, when men are called upon to take a desperate resolution,

after having placed themselves in circumstances where it is alike

difficult to advance or to recede. The precipice looked deeper

and more dangerous as they approached the brink, and each waited

with an inward emotion of awe, expecting which of his

confederates would set the example by plunging himself down.
This inward sensation of fear and reluctance acted differently, according to the various habits and characters of the company.

One looked grave; another looked silly; a third gazed with apprehension on the empty seats at the higher end of the table, designed for members of the conspiracy whose prudence had prevailed over their political zeal, and who had absented themselves from their consultations at this critical period; and some seemed to be reckoning up in their minds the comparative rank and prospects of those who were present and absent. Sir Frederick Langley was reserved, moody, and discontented.
Ellieslaw himself made such forced efforts to raise the spirits of the company, as plainly marked the flagging of his own.

Ratcliffe watched the scene with the composure of a vigilant but uninterested spectator. Mareschal alone, true to the thoughtless vivacity of his character, ate and drank, laughed and jested, and seemed even to find amusement in the embarrassment of the company.

"What has damped our noble courage this morning?" he exclaimed.

"We seem to be met at a funeral, where the chief mourners must not speak above their breath, while the mutes and the saulies
(looking to the lower end of the table) are carousing below.

Ellieslaw, when will you LIFT? [To LIFT, meaning to lift the coffin, is the common expression for commencing a funeral.]

where sleeps your spirit, man? and what has quelled the high hope of the Knight of Langley-dale?"

"You speak like a madman," said Ellieslaw; "do you not see how many are absent?"

"And what of that?" said Mareschal. "Did you not know before,
that one-half of the world are better talkers than doers? For my part, I am much encouraged by seeing at least two-thirds of our friends true to the rendezvous, though I suspect one-half of these came to secure the dinner in case of the worst."

"There is no news from the coast which can amount to certainty of the King's arrival," said another of the company, in that tone of subdued and tremulous whisper which implies a failure of resolution.

"Not a line from the Earl of D→, nor a single gentleman from the
southern side of the Border," said a third.

"Who is he that wishes for more men from England," exclaimed Mareschal, in a theatrical tone of affected heroism,

"My cousin Ellieslaw? No, my fair cousin,

If we are doom'd to die--"

"For God's sake," said Ellieslaw, "spare us your folly at present, Mareschal."
"Well, then," said his kinsman, "I'll bestow my wisdom upon you instead, such as it is. If we have gone forward like fools, do not let us go back like cowards. We have done enough to draw upon us both the suspicion and vengeance of the government; do not let us give up before we have done something to deserve it.

--What, will no one speak? Then I'll leap the ditch the first."

And, starting up, he filled a beer-glass to the brim with claret,

and waving his hand, commanded all to follow his example, and to rise up from their seats. All obeyed—the more qualified guests as if passively, the others with enthusiasm "Then, my friends, I
give you the pledge of the day—The independence of Scotland, and

the health of our lawful sovereign, King James the Eighth, now

landed in Lothian, and, as I trust and believe, in full

possession of his ancient capital!"

He quaffed off the wine, and threw the glass over his head.

"It should never," he said, "be profaned by a meaner toast."

All followed his example, and, amid the crash of glasses and the
shouts of the company, pledged themselves to stand or fall with

the principles and political interest which their toast

expressed.

"You have leaped the ditch with a witness," said Ellieslaw, apart
to Mareschal; "but I believe it is all for the best; at all

events, we cannot now retreat from our undertaking. One man

alone" (looking at Ratcliffe) "has refused the pledge; but of

that by and by."

Then, rising up, he addressed the company in a style of
inflammatory invective against the government and its measures,

but especially the Union; a treaty, by means of which, he

affirmed, Scotland had been at once cheated of her independence,

her commerce, and her honour, and laid as a fettered slave at the

foot of the rival against whom, through such a length of ages,

through so many dangers, and by so much blood, she had honourably

defended her rights. This was touching a theme which found a

responsive chord in the bosom of every man present.

"Our commerce is destroyed," hollowed old John Rewcastle, a
Jedburgh smuggler, from the lower end of the table.

"Our agriculture is ruined," said the Laird of Broken-girth-flow,

a territory which, since the days of Adam, had borne nothing but

ling and whortle-berries.

"Our religion is cut up, root and branch," said the pimple-nosed

pastor of the Episcopal meeting-house at Kirkwhistle.

"We shall shortly neither dare shoot a deer nor kiss a wench,

without a certificate from the presbytery and kirk-treasurer,"
said Mareschal-Wells.

"Or make a brandy jeroboam in a frosty morning, without license from a commissioner of excise," said the smuggler.

"Or ride over the fell in a moonless night," said Westburnflat,

"without asking leave of young Earnscliff; or some Englified justice of the peace: thae were gude days on the Border when there was neither peace nor justice heard of."
"Let us remember our wrongs at Darien and Glencoe," continued Ellieslaw, "and take arms for the protection of our rights, our fortunes, our lives, and our families."

"Think upon genuine episcopal ordination, without which there can be no lawful clergy," said the divine.

"Think of the piracies committed on our East-Indian trade by Green and the English thieves," said William Willieson, half-owner and sole skipper of a brig that made four voyages annually between Cockpool and Whitehaven.
"Remember your liberties," rejoined Mareschal, who seemed to take

a mischievous delight in precipitating the movements of the

enthusiasm which he had excited, like a roguish boy, who, having

lifted the sluice of a mill-dam, enjoys the clatter of the wheels

which he has put in motion, without thinking of the mischief he

may have occasioned. "Remember your liberties," he exclaimed;

"confound cess, press, and presbytery, and the memory of old

Willie that first brought them upon us!"
"Damn the gauger!" echoed old John Rewcastle; "I'll cleave him wi' my ain hand."

"And confound the country-keeper and the constable!" re-echoed Westburnflat; "I'll weize a brace of balls through them before morning."

"We are agreed, then," said Ellieslaw, when the shouts had somewhat subsided, "to bear this state of things no longer?"

"We are agreed to a man," answered his guests.
"Not literally so," said Mr. Ratcliffe; "for though I cannot hope
to assuage the violent symptoms which seem so suddenly to have
seized upon the company, yet I beg to observe, that so far as the
opinion of a single member goes, I do not entirely coincide in
the list of grievances which has been announced, and that I do
utterly protest against the frantic measures which you seem
disposed to adopt for removing them. I can easily suppose much
of what has been spoken may have arisen out of the heat of the
moment, or have been said perhaps in jest. But there are some
jests of a nature very apt to transpire; and you ought to

remember, gentlemen, that stone-walls have ears."

"Stone-walls may have ears," returned Ellieslaw, eyeing him with

a look of triumphant malignity, "but domestic spies, Mr. Ratcliffe, will soon find themselves without any, if any such

dares to continue his abode in a family where his coming was an

unauthorized intrusion, where his conduct has been that of a

presumptuous meddler, and from which his exit shall be that of a

baffled knave, if he does not know how to take a hint."
"Mr. Vere," returned Ratcliffe, with calm contempt, "I am fully aware, that as soon as my presence becomes useless to you, which it must through the rash step you are about to adopt, it will immediately become unsafe to myself, as it has always been hateful to you. But I have one protection, and it is a strong one; for you would not willingly hear me detail before gentlemen, and men of honour, the singular circumstances in which our connexion took its rise. As to the rest, I rejoice at its conclusion; and as I think that Mr. Mareschal and some other gentlemen will guarantee the safety of my ears and of my throat
(for which last I have more reason to be apprehensive) during the

course of the night, I shall not leave your castle till to-morrow

morning."

"Be it so, sir," replied Mr. Vere; "you are entirely safe from my

resentment, because you are beneath it, and not because I am

afraid of your disclosing my family secrets, although, for your

own sake, I warn you to beware how you do so. Your agency and

intermediation can be of little consequence to one who will win

or lose all, as lawful right or unjust usurpation shall succeed

in the struggle that is about to ensue. Farewell, sir."
Ratcliffe arose, and cast upon him a look, which Vere seemed to sustain with difficulty, and, bowing to those around him, left the room.

This conversation made an impression on many of the company, which Ellieslaw hastened to dispel, by entering upon the business of the day. Their hasty deliberations went to organize an immediate insurrection. Ellieslaw, Mareschal, and Sir Frederick Langley were chosen leaders, with powers to direct their farther
measures. A place of rendezvous was appointed, at which all

agreed to meet early on the ensuing day, with such followers and

friends to the cause as each could collect around him. Several

of the guests retired to make the necessary preparations; and

Ellieslaw made a formal apology to the others, who, with

Westburnflat and the old smuggler, continued to ply the bottle

stanchly, for leaving the head of the table, as he must

necessarily hold a separate and sober conference with the

coadjutors whom they had associated with him in the command. The

apology was the more readily accepted, as he prayed them, at the

same time, to continue to amuse themselves with such refreshments
as the cellars of the castle afforded. Shouts of applause

followed their retreat; and the names of Vere, Langley, and,

above all, of Mareschal, were thundered forth in chorus, and

bathed with copious bumpers repeatedly, during the remainder of
the evening.

When the principal conspirators had retired into a separate

apartment, they gazed on each other for a minute with a sort of

embarrassment, which, in Sir Frederick's dark features, amounted
to an expression of discontented sullenness. Mareschal was the
first to break the pause, saying, with a loud burst of laughter,

--"Well! we are fairly embarked now, gentlemen--VOGUE LA

GALERÉ!"

"We may thank you for the plunge," said Ellieslaw.

"Yes; but I don't know how far you will thank me," answered

Mareschal, "when I show you this letter which I received just

before we sat down. My servant told me it was delivered by a man

he had never seen before, who went off at the gallop, after

charging him to put it into my own hand."
Ellieslaw impatiently opened the letter, and read aloud--

EDINBURGH,--

HOND. SIR,

Having obligations to your family, which shall be nameless, and learning that you are one of the company of, adventurers doing business for the house of James and Company, late merchants in London, now in Dunkirk, I think it right to send you this early
and private information, that the vessels you expected have been

driven off the coast, without having been able to break bulk, or

to land any part of their cargo; and that the west-country

partners have resolved to withdraw their name from the firm, as

it must prove a losing concern. Having good hope you will avail

yourself of this early information, to do what is needful for

your own security, I rest your humble servant,

NIHIL NAMELESS.

FOR RALPH MARESCHAL, OF MARESCHAL-WELLS

--THESE WITH CARE AND SPEED.
Sir Frederick’s jaw dropped, and his countenance blackened, as

the letter was read, and Ellieslaw exclaimed,--"Why, this

affects the very mainspring of our enterprise. If the French

fleet, with the king on board, has been chased off by the

English, as this d--d scrawl seems to intimate, where are we?"

"Just where we were this morning, I think," said Mareschal, still

laughing.
"Pardon me, and a truce to your ill-timed mirth, Mr. Mareschal; this morning we were not committed publicly, as we now stand committed by your own mad act, when you had a letter in your pocket apprising you that our undertaking was desperate."

"Ay, ay, I expected you would say so. But, in the first place, my friend Nihil Nameless and his letter may be all a flam; and, moreover, I would have you know that I am tired of a party that does nothing but form bold resolutions overnight, and sleep them away with their wine before morning. The government are now unprovided of men and ammunition; in a few weeks they will have
enough of both: the country is now in a flame against them; in a few weeks, betwixt the effects of self-interest, of fear, and of lukewarm indifference, which are already so visible, this first fervour will be as cold as Christmas. So, as I was determined to go the vole, I have taken care you shall dip as deep as I; it signifies nothing plunging. You are fairly in the bog, and must struggle through."

"You are mistaken with respect to one of us, Mr. Mareschal," said Sir Frederick Langley; and, applying himself to the bell, he
desired the person who entered to order his servants and horses instantly.

"You must not leave us, Sir Frederick," said Ellieslaw; it we have our musters to go over."

"I will go to-night, Mr. Vere," said Sir Frederick, "and write you my intentions in this matter when I am at home."

"Ay," said Mareschal, "and send them by a troop of horse from Carlisle to make us prisoners? Look ye, Sir Frederick, I for one
will neither be deserted nor betrayed; and if you leave Ellieslaw

Castle to-night, it shall be by passing over my dead body."

"For shame! Mareschal," said Mr. Vere, "how can you so hastily

misinterpret our friend's intentions? I am sure Sir Frederick

can only be jesting with us; for, were he not too honourable to

dream of deserting the cause, he cannot but remember the full

proofs we have of his accession to it, and his eager activity in

advancing it. He cannot but be conscious, besides, that the

first information will be readily received by government, and
that if the question be, which can first lodge intelligence of the affair, we can easily save a few hours on him."

"You should say you, and not we, when you talk of priorities in such a race of treachery; for my part, I won't enter my horse for such a plate," said Mareschal; and added betwixit his teeth, "A pretty pair of fellows to trust a man's neck with!"

"I am not to be intimidated from doing what I think proper," said Sir Frederick Langley; "and my first step shall be to leave Ellieslaw. I have no reason to keep faith with one" (looking at
"In what respect," said Ellieslaw, silencing, with a motion of his hand, his impetuous kinsman—"how have I disappointed you, Sir Frederick?"

"In the nearest and most tender point--you have trifled with me concerning our proposed alliance, which you well knew was the gage of our political undertaking. This carrying off and this bringing back of Miss Vere,—the cold reception I have met with
from her, and the excuses with which you cover it, I believe to
be mere evasions, that you may yourself retain possession of the
estates which are hers by right, and make me, in the meanwhile, a
tool in your desperate enterprise, by holding out hopes and
expectations which you are resolved never to realize."

"Sir Frederick, I protest, by all that is sacred--"

"I will listen to no protestations; I have been cheated with them
too long," answered Sir Frederick.
"If you leave us," said Ellieslaw, "you cannot but know both your
ruin and ours is certain; all depends on our adhering together."

"Leave me to take care of myself," returned the knight; "but were
what you say true, I would rather perish than be fooled any
farther."

"Can nothing--no surety convince you of my sincerity?" said
Ellieslaw, anxiously; "this morning I should have repelled your
unjust suspicions as an insult; but situated as we now are--"
"You feel yourself compelled to be sincere?" retorted Sir Frederick. "If you would have me think so, there is but one way to convince me of it--let your daughter bestow her hand on me this evening."

"So soon?--impossible," answered Vere; "think of her late alarm--of our present undertaking."

"I will listen to nothing but to her consent, plighted at the altar. You have a chapel in the castle--Doctor Hobbler is
present among the company—this proof of your good faith to-night,

and we are again joined in heart and hand. If you refuse me when

it is so much for your advantage to consent, how shall I trust

you to-morrow, when I shall stand committed in your undertaking,

and unable to retract?"

"And I am to understand, that, if you can be made my son-in-law
to-night, our friendship is renewed?" said Ellieslaw.

"Most infallibly, and most inviolably," replied Sir Frederick.
"Then," said Vere, "though what you ask is premature, indelicate, and unjust towards my character, yet, Sir Frederick, give me your hand--my daughter shall be your wife."

"This night?"

"This very night," replied Ellieslaw, "before the clock strikes twelve."

"With her own consent, I trust," said Mareschal; "for I promise
you both, gentlemen, I will not stand tamely by, and see any

violence put on the will of my pretty kinswoman."

"Another pest in this hot-headed fellow," muttered Ellieslaw;

and then aloud, "With her own consent? For what do you take me,

Mareschal, that you should suppose your interference necessary to

protect my daughter against her father? Depend upon it, she has

no repugnance to Sir Frederick Langley."

"Or rather to be called Lady Langley? faith, like enough--there
are many women might be of her mind; and I beg your pardon, but

these sudden demands and concessions alarmed me a little on her

account."

"It is only the suddenness of the proposal that embarrasses me,"

said Ellieslaw; "but perhaps if she is found intractable, Sir

Frederick will consider--"

"I will consider nothing, Mr. Vere--your daughter's hand to-

night, or I depart, were it at midnight--there is my ultimatum."
"I embrace it," said Ellieslaw; "and I will leave you to talk
upon our military preparations, while I go to prepare my daughter
for so sudden a change of condition."

So saying, he left the company.

CHAPTER XIV.
He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows.

O dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond.

TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

Mr. Vere, whom long practice of dissimulation had enabled to

to model his very gait and footsteps to aid the purposes of

deception, walked along the stone passage, and up the first

flight of steps towards Miss Vere's apartment, with the alert,

firm, and steady pace of one who is bound, indeed, upon important

business, but who entertains no doubt he can terminate his

affairs satisfactorily. But when out of hearing of the gentlemen
whom he had left, his step became so slow and irresolute, as to correspond with his doubts and his fears. At length he paused in an antechamber to collect his ideas, and form his plan of argument, before approaching his daughter.

"In what more hopeless and inextricable dilemma was ever an unfortunate man involved!" Such was the tenor of his reflections.--"If we now fall to pieces by disunion, there can be little doubt that the government will take my life as the prime agitator of the insurrection. Or, grant I could stoop to save
myself by a hasty submission, am I not, even in that case,

utterly ruined? I have broken irreconcilably with Ratcliffe, and

can have nothing to expect from that quarter but insult and

persecution. I must wander forth an impoverished and dishonoured

man, without even the means of sustaining life, far less wealth

sufficient to counterbalance the infamy which my countrymen, both

those whom I desert and those whom I join, will attach to the

name of the political renegade. It is not to be thought of. And

yet, what choice remains between this lot and the ignominious

scaffold? Nothing can save me but reconciliation with these men;

and, to accomplish this, I have promised to Langley that Isabella
shall marry him ere midnight, and to Mareschal, that she shall do
so without compulsion. I have but one remedy betwixt me and
ruin—her consent to take a suitor whom she dislikes, upon such
short notice as would disgust her, even were he a favoured lover
--But I must trust to the romantic generosity of her disposition;
and let me paint the necessity of her obedience ever so strongly,
I cannot overcharge its reality."

Having finished this sad chain of reflections upon his perilous
condition, he entered his daughter's apartment with every nerve
bent up to the support of the argument which he was about to sustain. Though a deceitful and ambitious man, he was not so devoid of natural affection but that he was shocked at the part he was about to act, in practising on the feelings of a dutiful and affectionate child; but the recollections, that, if he succeeded, his daughter would only be trepanned into an advantageous match, and that, if he failed, he himself was a lost man, were quite sufficient to drown all scruples.

He found Miss Vere seated by the window of her dressing-room, her head reclining on her hand, and either sunk in slumber, or so
deeply engaged in meditation, that she did not hear the noise he
made at his entrance. He approached with his features composed
to a deep expression of sorrow and sympathy, and, sitting down
beside her, solicited her attention by quietly taking her hand, a
motion which he did not fail to accompany with a deep sigh.

"My father!" said Isabella, with a sort of start, which
expressed at least as much fear, as joy or affection.

"Yes, Isabella," said Vere, "your unhappy father, who comes now
as a penitent to crave forgiveness of his daughter for an injury
done to her in the excess of his affection, and then to take
leave of her for ever."

"Sir? Offence to me take leave for ever? What does all this
mean?" said Miss Vere.

"Yes, Isabella, I am serious. But first let me ask you, have you
no suspicion that I may have been privy to the strange chance
which befell you yesterday morning?"
"You, sir?" answered Isabella, stammering between a consciousness that he had guessed her thoughts justly, and the shame as well as fear which forbade her to acknowledge a suspicion so degrading and so unnatural.

"Yes!" he continued, "your hesitation confesses that you entertained such an opinion, and I have now the painful task of acknowledging that your suspicions have done me no injustice.

But listen to my motives. In an evil hour I countenanced the addresses of Sir Frederick Langley, conceiving it impossible that
you could have any permanent objections to a match where the advantages were, in most respects, on your side. In a worse, I entered with him into measures calculated to restore our banished monarch, and the independence of my country. He has taken advantage of my unguarded confidence, and now has my life at his disposal."

"Your life, sir?" said Isabella, faintly.

"Yes, Isabella," continued her father, "the life of him who gave life to you. So soon as I foresaw the excesses into which his
headlong passion (for, to do him justice, I believe his unreasonable conduct arises from excess of attachment to you) was likely to hurry him, I endeavoured, by finding a plausible pretext for your absence for some weeks, to extricate myself from the dilemma in which I am placed. For this purpose I wished, in case your objections to the match continued insurmountable, to have sent you privately for a few months to the convent of your maternal aunt at Paris. By a series of mistakes you have been brought from the place of secrecy and security which I had destined for your temporary abode. Fate has baffled my last
chance of escape, and I have only to give you my blessing, and

send you from the castle with Mr. Ratcliffe, who now leaves it;

my own fate will soon be decided."

"Good Heaven, sir! can this be possible?" exclaimed Isabella.

"O, why was I freed from the restraint in which you placed me?

or why did you not impart your pleasure to me?"

"Think an instant, Isabella. Would you have had me prejudice in

your opinion the friend I was most desirous of serving, by

communicating to you the injurious eagerness with which he
pursued his object? Could I do so honourably, having promised to

assist his suit?--But it is all over, I and Mareschal have made

up our minds to die like men; it only remains to send you from

hence under a safe escort."

"Great powers! and is there no remedy?" said the terrified

young woman.

"None, my child," answered Vere, gently, "unless one which you

would not advise your father to adopt--to be the first to betray
his friends."

"O, no! no!" she answered, abhorrently yet hastily, as if to reject the temptation which the alternative presented to her.

"But is there no other hope--through flight--through mediation--through supplication?--I will bend my knee to Sir Frederick!"

"It would be a fruitless degradation; he is determined on his course, and I am equally resolved to stand the hazard of my fate.

On one condition only he will turn aside from his purpose, and that condition my lips shall never utter to you."
"Name it, I conjure you, my dear father!" exclaimed Isabella.

"What CAN he ask that we ought not to grant, to prevent the hideous catastrophe with which you are threatened?"

"That, Isabella," said Vere, solemnly, "you shall never know, until your father's head has rolled on the bloody scaffold; then, indeed, you will learn there was one sacrifice by which he might have been saved."
"And why not speak it now?" said Isabella; "do you fear I would flinch from the sacrifice of fortune for your preservation? or would you bequeath me the bitter legacy of life-long remorse, so oft as I shall think that you perished, while there remained one mode of preventing the dreadful misfortune that overhangs you?"

"Then, my child," said Vere, "since you press me to name what I would a thousand times rather leave in silence, I must inform you that he will accept for ransom nothing but your hand in marriage, and that conferred before midnight this very evening!"
"This evening, sir?" said the young lady, struck with horror at the proposal—"and to such a man!—A man?—a monster, who could wish to win the daughter by threatening the life of the father--it is impossible!"

"You say right, my child," answered her father, "it is indeed impossible; nor have I either the right or the wish to exact such a sacrifice—It is the course of nature that the old should die and be forgot, and the young should live and be happy."
"My father die, and his child can save him!—but no—no—my dear father, pardon me, it is impossible; you only wish to guide me to your wishes. I know your object is what you think my happiness, and this dreadful tale is only told to influence my conduct and subdue my scruples."

"My daughter," replied Ellieslaw, in a tone where offended authority seemed to struggle with parental affection, "my child suspects me of inventing a false tale to work upon her feelings!

Even this I must bear, and even from this unworthy suspicion I must descend to vindicate myself. You know the stainless honour
of your cousin Mareschal—mark what I shall write to him, and 

judge from his answer, if the danger in which we stand is not 

real, and whether I have not used every means to avert it.”

He sate down, wrote a few lines hastily, and handed them to 

Isabella, who, after repeated and painful efforts, cleared her 

eyes and head sufficiently to discern their purport.

"Dear cousin," said the billet, "I find my daughter, as I 

expected, in despair at the untimely and premature urgency of Sir
Frederick Langley. She cannot even comprehend the peril in which we stand, or how much we are in his power--Use your influence with him, for Heaven's sake, to modify proposals, to the acceptance of which I cannot, and will not, urge my child against all her own feelings, as well as those of delicacy and propriety, and oblige your loving cousin,--R. V."

In the agitation of the moment, when her swimming eyes and dizzy brain could hardly comprehend the sense of what she looked upon, it is not surprising that Miss Vere should have omitted to remark that this letter seemed to rest her scruples rather upon the form

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and time of the proposed union, than on a rooted dislike to the

suitor proposed to her. Mr. Vere rang the bell, and gave the

letter to a servant to be delivered to Mr. Mareschal, and, rising

from his chair, continued to traverse the apartment in silence

and in great agitation until the answer was returned. He glanced

it over, and wrung the hand of his daughter as he gave it to her.

The tenor was as follows:--

"My dear kinsman, I have already urged the knight on the point

you mention, and I find him as fixed as Cheviot. I am truly
sorry my fair cousin should be pressed to give up any of her

maidenly rights. Sir Frederick consents, however, to leave the

castle with me the instant the ceremony is performed, and we will

raise our followers and begin the fray. Thus there is great hope

the bridegroom may be knocked on the head before he and the bride

can meet again, so Bell has a fair chance to be Lady Langley

A TRES BON MARCHE. For the rest, I can only say, that if she can

make up her mind to the alliance at all—it is no time for mere

maiden ceremony—my pretty cousin must needs consent to marry in

haste, or we shall all repent at leisure, or rather have very

little leisure to repent; which is all at present from him who
rests your affectionate kinsman,--R. M."

"P.S.--Tell Isabella that I would rather cut the knight’s throat after all, and end the dilemma that way, than see her constrained to marry him against her will."

When Isabella had read this letter, it dropped from her hand, and she would, at the same time, have fallen from her chair, had she not been supported by her father.
"My God, my child will die!" exclaimed Vere, the feelings of

nature overcoming, even in HIS breast, the sentiments of selfish

policy; "look up, Isabella--look up, my child--come what will,

you shall not be the sacrifice--I will fall myself with the

consciousness I leave you happy--My child may weep on my grave,

but she shall not--not in this instance--reproach my memory." He

called a servant.--"Go, bid Ratcliffe come hither directly."

During this interval, Miss Vere became deadly pale, clenched her

hands, pressing the palms strongly together, closed her eyes, and

drew her lips with strong compression, as if the severe
constraint which she put upon her internal feelings extended even
to her muscular organization. Then raising her head, and drawing
in her breath strongly ere she spoke, she said, with firmness,

"Father, I consent to the marriage."

"You shall not--you shall not,--my child--my dear child--you
shall not embrace certain misery to free me from uncertain
danger."

So exclaimed Ellieslaw; and, strange and inconsistent beings that
we are! he expressed the real though momentary feelings of his heart.

"Father," repeated Isabella, "I will consent to this marriage."

"No, my child, no--not now at least--we will humble ourselves to obtain delay from him; and yet, Isabella, could you overcome a dislike which has no real foundation, think, in other respects, what a match!--wealth--rank--importance."

"Father!" reiterated Isabella, "I have consented."
It seemed as if she had lost the power of saying anything else, or even of varying the phrase which, with such effort, she had compelled herself to utter.

"Heaven bless thee, my child!--Heaven bless thee!--And it WILL bless thee with riches, with pleasure, with power."

Miss Vere faintly entreated to be left by herself for the rest of the evening.
"But will you not receive Sir Frederick?" said her father, anxiously.

"I will meet him," she replied, "I will meet him--when I must, and where I must; but spare me now."

"Be it so, my dearest; you shall know no restraint that I can save you from. Do not think too hardly of Sir Frederick for this,--it is an excess of passion."
Isabella waved her hand impatiently.

"Forgive me, my child--I go--Heaven bless thee. At eleven--if you call me not before--at eleven I come to seek you."

"When he left Isabella she dropped upon her knees--"Heaven aid me to support the resolution I have taken--Heaven only can--O, poor Earnscliff! who shall comfort him? and with what contempt will he pronounce her name, who listened to him to-day and gave herself to another at night! But let him despise me--better so.
than that he should know the truth--let him despise me; if it
will but lessen his grief, I should feel comfort in the loss of
his esteem."

She wept bitterly; attempting in vain, from time to time, to
commence the prayer for which she had sunk on her knees, but
unable to calm her spirits sufficiently for the exercise of
devotion. As she remained in this agony of mind, the door of her
apartment was slowly opened.
CHAPTER XV.

The darksome cave they enter, where they found

The woful man, low sitting on the ground,

Musing full sadly in his sullen mind.  FAERY QUEEN.

The intruder on Miss Vere's sorrows was Ratcliffe.  Ellieslaw

had, in the agitation of his mind, forgotten to countermand the

order he had given to call him thither, so that he opened the
door with the words, "You sent for me, Mr. Vere." Then looking
around—"Miss Vere, alone! on the ground! and in tears!"

"Leave me—leave me, Mr. Ratcliffe," said the unhappy young lady.

"I must not leave you," said Ratcliffe; "I have been repeatedly
requesting admittance to take my leave of you, and have been
refused, until your father himself sent for me. Blame me not, if
I am bold and intrusive; I have a duty to discharge which makes
me so."
"I cannot listen to you--I cannot speak to you, Mr. Ratcliffe;
take my best wishes, and for God’s sake leave me."

"Tell me only," said Ratcliffe, "is it true that this monstrous
match is to go forward, and this very night? I heard the
servants proclaim it as I was on the great staircase--I heard the
directions given to clear out the chapel."

"Spare me, Mr. Ratcliffe," replied the luckless bride; "and from
the state in which you see me, judge of the cruelty of these
questions."

"Married? to Sir Frederick Langley? and this night? It must not cannot--shall not be."

"It MUST be, Mr. Ratcliff, or my father is ruined."

"Ah! I understand," answered Ratcliffe; "and you have sacrificed yourself to save him who--But let the virtue of the child atone for the faults of the father it is no time to rake them up.--What CAN be done? Time presses--I know but one remedy--with four-and-
twenty hours I might find many--Miss Vere, you must implore the

protection of the only human being who has it in his power to

control the course of events which threatens to hurry you before

it."

"And what human being," answered Miss Vere, "has such power?"

"Start not when I name him," said Ratcliffe, coming near her, and

speaking in a low but distinct voice. "It is he who is called

Elshender the Recluse of Mucklestane-Moor."
"You are mad, Mr. Ratcliffe, or you mean to insult my misery by an ill-timed jest!"

"I am as much in my senses, young lady," answered her adviser, "as you are; and I am no idle jester, far less with misery, least of all with your misery. I swear to you that this being (who is other far than what he seems) actually possesses the means of redeeming you from this hateful union."

"And of insuring my father's safety?"
"Yes! even that," said Ratcliffe, "if you plead his cause with him--yet how to obtain admittance to the Recluse!"

"Fear not that," said Miss Vere, suddenly recollecting the incident of the rose; "I remember he desired me to call upon him for aid in my extremity, and gave me this flower as a token. Ere it faded away entirely, I would need, he said, his assistance:

is it possible his words can have been aught but the ravings of insanity?"
"Doubt it not fear it not--but above all," said Ratcliffe, "let

us lose no time--are you at liberty, and unwatched?"

"I believe so," said Isabella: "but what would you have me to
do?"

"Leave the castle instantly," said Ratcliffe, "and throw yourself

at the feet of this extraordinary man, who in circumstances that

seem to argue the extremity of the most contemptible poverty,

possesses yet an almost absolute influence over your fate.--
Guests and servants are deep in their carouse--the leaders

sitting in conclave on their treasonable schemes--my horse stands

ready in the stable--I will saddle one for you, and meet you at

the little garden-gate--O, let no doubt of my prudence or

fidelity prevent your taking the only step in your power to

escape the dreadful fate which must attend the wife of Sir

Frederick Langley!"

"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Miss Vere, "you have always been esteemed a

man of honour and probity, and a drowning wretch will always
catch at the feeblest twig,—I will trust you—I will follow your

advice—I will meet you at the garden-gate."

She bolted the outer-door of her apartment as soon as Mr.

Ratcliffe left her, and descended to the garden by a separate

stair of communication which opened to her dressing-room. On the

way she felt inclined to retract the consent she had so hastily

given to a plan so hopeless and extravagant. But as she passed

in her descent a private door which entered into the chapel from

the back-stair, she heard the voice of the female-servants as

they were employed in the task of cleaning it.
"Married! and to sae bad a man--Ewhow, sirs! onything rather than that."

"They are right--they are right," said Miss Vere, "anything rather than that!"

She hurried to the garden. Mr. Ratcliffe was true to his appointment--the horses stood saddled at the garden-gate, and in a few minutes they were advancing rapidly towards the hut of the
Solitary.

While the ground was favourable, the speed of their journey was

such as to prevent much communication; but when a steep ascent

compelled them to slacken their pace, a new cause of apprehension

occurred to Miss Vere’s mind.

"Mr. Ratcliffe," she said, pulling up her horse’s bridle, "let us

prosecute no farther a journey, which nothing but the extreme

agitation of my mind can vindicate my having undertaken--I am

well aware that this man passes among the vulgar as being
possessed of supernatural powers, and carrying on an intercourse

with beings of another world; but I would have you aware I am

neither to be imposed on by such follies, nor, were I to believe

in their existence, durst I, with my feelings of religion, apply

to this being in my distress."

"I should have thought, Miss Vere," replied Ratcliffe, "my

character and habits of thinking were so well known to you, that

you might have held me exculpated from crediting in such

absurdity."
"But in what other mode," said Isabella, "can a being, so miserable himself in appearance, possess the power of assisting me?"

"Miss Vere." said Ratcliffe, after a momentary pause, "I am bound by a solemn oath of secrecy--You must, without farther explanation, be satisfied with my pledged assurance, that he does possess the power, if you can inspire him with the will; and that, I doubt not, you will be able to do."
"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Miss Vere, "you may yourself be mistaken; you ask an unlimited degree of confidence from me."

"Recollect, Miss Vere," he replied, "that when, in your humanity, you asked me to interfere with your father in favour of Haswell and his ruined family--when you requested me to prevail on him to do a thing most abhorrent to his nature--to forgive an injury and remit a penalty--I stipulated that you should ask me no questions concerning the sources of my influence--You found no reason to distrust me then, do not distrust me now."
"But the extraordinary mode of life of this man," said Miss Vere;

"his seclusion--his figure--the deepness of misanthropy which he

is said to express in his language--Mr. Ratcliffe, what can I

think of him if he really possesses the powers you ascribe to

him?"

"This man, young lady, was bred a Catholic, a sect which affords

a thousand instances of those who have retired from power and

affluence to voluntary privations more strict even than his."
"But he avows no religious motive," replied Miss Vere.

"No," replied Ratcliffe; "disgust with the world has operated his retreat from it without assuming the veil of superstition. Thus far I may tell you--he was born to great wealth, which his parents designed should become greater by his union with a kinswoman, whom for that purpose they bred up in their own house.

You have seen his figure; judge what the young lady must have thought of the lot to which she was destined--Yet, habituated to his appearance, she showed no reluctance, and the friends of--of
the person whom I speak of, doubted not that the excess of his
attachment, the various acquisitions of his mind, his many and
amiable qualities, had overcome the natural horror which his
destined bride must have entertained at an exterior so dreadfully
inauspicious."

"And did they judge truly?" said Isabella.

"You shall hear. He, at least, was fully aware of his own
deficiency; the sense of it haunted him like a phantom. 'I am,'

was his own expression to me,--I mean to a man whom he trusted,--
'I am, in spite of what you would say, a poor miserable outcast,
fitter to have been smothered in the cradle than to have been
brought up to scare the world in which I crawl.' The person whom
he addressed in vain endeavoured to impress him with the
indifference to external form which is the natural result of
philosophy, or entreat him to recall the superiority of mental
talents to the more attractive attributes that are merely
personal. 'I hear you,' he would reply; 'but you speak the voice
of cold-blooded stoicism, or, at least, of friendly partiality.

But look at every book which we have read, those excepted of that
abstract philosophy which feels no responsive voice in our

natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at least can be
tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as

essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is not

such a mis-shapen monster as I am, excluded, by the very fiat of

Nature, from her fairest enjoyments? What but my wealth prevents

all--perhaps even Letitia, or you--from shunning me as something

foreign to your nature, and more odious, by bearing that

distorted resemblance to humanity which we observe in the animal

tribes that are more hateful to man because they seem his

caricature?"
"You repeat the sentiments of a madman," said Miss Vere.

"No," replied her conductor, "unless a morbid and excessive sensibility on such a subject can be termed insanity. "Yet I will not deny that this governing feeling and apprehension carried the person who entertained it, to lengths which indicated a deranged imagination. He appeared to think that it was necessary for him, by exuberant, and not always well-chosen instances of liberality, and even profusion, to unite himself to
the human race, from which he conceived himself naturally
dissevered. The benefits which he bestowed, from a disposition
naturally philanthropical in an uncommon degree, were exaggerated
by the influence of the goading reflection, that more was
necessary from him than from others,--lavishing his treasures as
if to bribe mankind to receive him into their class. It is
scarcely necessary to say, that the bounty which flowed from a
source so capricious was often abused, and his confidence
frequently betrayed. These disappointments, which occur to all,
more or less, and most to such as confer benefits without just
discrimination, his diseased fancy set down to the hatred and
contempt excited by his personal deformity.-- But I fatigue you,

Miss Vere?"

"No, by no means; I--I could not prevent my attention from

wandering an instant; pray proceed."

"He became at length," continued Ratcliffe, "the most ingenious

self-tormentor of whom I have ever heard; the scoff of the

rabble, and the sneer of the yet more brutal vulgar of his own

rank, was to him agony and breaking on the wheel. He regarded
the laugh of the common people whom he passed on the street, and

the suppressed titter, or yet more offensive terror, of the young

girls to whom he was introduced in company, as proofs of the true

sense which the world entertained of him, as a prodigy unfit to

be received among them on the usual terms of society, and as

vindicating the wisdom of his purpose in withdrawing himself from

among them. On the faith and sincerity of two persons alone, he

seemed to rely implicitly--on that of his betrothed bride, and of

a friend eminently gifted in personal accomplishments, who

seemed, and indeed probably was, sincerely attached to him. He

ought to have been so at least, for he was literally loaded with
benefits by him whom you are now about to see. The parents of

the subject of my story died within a short space of each other.

Their death postponed the marriage, for which the day had been

fixed. The lady did not seem greatly to mourn this delay,—

perhaps that was not to have been expected; but she intimated no

change of intention, when, after a decent interval, a second day

was named for their union. The friend of whom I spoke was then a

constant resident at the Hall. In an evil hour, at the earnest

request and entreaty of this friend, they joined a general party,

where men of different political opinions were mingled, and where
they drank deep. A quarrel ensued; the friend of the Recluse
drew his sword with others, and was thrown down and disarmed by a
more powerful antagonist. They fell in the struggle at the feet
of the Recluse, who, maimed and truncated as his form appears,
possesses, nevertheless, great strength, as well as violent
passions. He caught up a sword, pierced the heart of his
friend's antagonist, was tried, and his life, with difficulty,
redeemed from justice at the expense of a year's close
imprisonment, the punishment of manslaughter. The incident
affected him most deeply, the more that the deceased was a man of
excellent character, and had sustained gross insult and injury
ere he drew his sword. I think, from that moment, I observed--I

beg pardon--The fits of morbid sensibility which had tormented

this unfortunate gentleman, were rendered henceforth more acute

by remorse, which he, of all men, was least capable of having

incurred, or of sustaining when it became his unhappy lot. His

paroxysms of agony could not be concealed from the lady to whom

he was betrothed; and it must be confessed they were of an

alarming and fearful nature. He comforted himself, that, at the

expiry of his imprisonment, he could form with his wife and

friend a society, encircled by which he might dispense with more
extensive communication with the world. He was deceived; before

that term elapsed, his friend and his betrothed bride were man

and wife. The effects of a shock so dreadful on an ardent

temperament, a disposition already soured by bitter remorse, and

loosened by the indulgence of a gloomy imagination from the rest

of mankind, I cannot describe to you; it was as if the last cable

at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her

abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest. He was placed

under medical restraint. As a temporary measure this might have

been justifiable; but his hard-hearted friend, who, in

consequence of his marriage, was now his nearest ally, prolonged
his confinement, in order to enjoy the management of his immense

estates. There was one who owed his all to the sufferer, an

humble friend, but grateful and faithful. By unceasing exertion,

and repeated invocation of justice, he at length succeeded in

obtaining his patron's freedom, and reinstatement in the

management of his own property, to which was soon added that of

his intended bride, who having died without male issue, her

estates reverted to him, as heir of entail. But freedom and

wealth were unable to restore the equipoise of his mind; to the

former his grief made him indifferent--the latter only served him
as far as it afforded him the means of indulging his strange and

wayward fancy. He had renounced the Catholic religion, but

perhaps some of its doctrines continued to influence a mind, over

which remorse and misanthropy now assumed, in appearance, an

unbounded authority. His life has since been that alternately of

a pilgrim and a hermit, suffering the most severe privations, not

indeed in ascetic devotion, but in abhorrence of mankind. Yet no

man's words and actions have been at such a wide difference, nor

has any hypocritical wretch ever been more ingenious in assigning

good motives for his vile actions, than this unfortunate in

reconciling to his abstract principles of misanthropy, a conduct
which flows from his natural generosity and kindness of feeling."

"Still, Mr. Ratcliffe--still you describe the inconsistencies of

a madman."

"By no means," replied Ratcliffe. "That the imagination of this
gentleman is disordered, I will not pretend to dispute; I have

already told you that it has sometimes broken out into paroxysms

approaching to real mental alienation. But it is of his common

state of mind that I speak; it is irregular, but not deranged;
the shades are as gradual as those that divide the light of
noonday from midnight. The courtier who ruins his fortune for
the attainment of a title which can do him no good, or power of
which he can make no suitable or creditable use, the miser who
hoards his useless wealth, and the prodigal who squanders it, are
all marked with a certain shade of insanity. To criminals who
are guilty of enormities, when the temptation, to a sober mind,
bears no proportion to the horror of the act, or the probability
of detection and punishment, the same observation applies; and
every violent passion, as well as anger, may be termed a short
madness."
"This may be all good philosophy, Mr. Ratcliffe," answered Miss Vere; "but, excuse me, it by no means emboldens me to visit, at this late hour, a person whose extravagance of imagination you yourself can only palliate."

"Rather, then," said Ratcliffe, "receive my solemn assurances, that you do not incur the slightest danger. But what I have been hitherto afraid to mention for fear of alarming you is, that now when we are within sight of his retreat, for I can discover it
through the twilight, I must go no farther with you; you must

proceed alone."

"Alone?--I dare not."

"You must," continued Ratcliffe; "I will remain here and wait for

you."

"You will not, then, stir from this place," said Miss Vere "yet

the distance is so great, you could not hear me were I to cry for

assistance."
"Fear nothing," said her guide; "or observe, at least, the utmost caution in stifling every expression of timidity. Remember that his predominant and most harassing apprehension arises from a consciousness of the hideousness of his appearance. Your path lies straight beside yon half-fallen willow; keep the left side of it; the marsh lies on the right. Farewell for a time.

Remember the evil you are threatened with, and let it overcome at once your fears and scruples."
"Mr. Ratcliffe," said Isabella, "farewell; if you have deceived one so unfortunate as myself, you have for ever forfeited the fair character for probity and honour to which I have trusted."

"On my life--on my soul," continued Ratcliffe, raising his voice as the distance between them increased, "you are safe--perfectly safe."

CHAPTER XVI.
--'Twas time and griefs

That framed him thus: Time, with his fairer hand,

Offering the fortunes of his former days,

The former man may make him.--Bring us to him,

And chance it as it may. OLD PLAY.

The sounds of Ratcliffe's voice had died on Isabella's ear; but

as she frequently looked back, it was some encouragement to her

to discern his form now darkening in the gloom. Ere, however,
she went much farther, she lost the object in the increasing
shade. The last glimmer of the twilight placed her before the
hut of the Solitary. She twice extended her hand to the door,
and twice she withdrew it; and when she did at length make the
effort, the knock did not equal in violence the throb of her own
bosom. Her next effort was louder; her third was reiterated, for
the fear of not obtaining the protection from which Ratcliffe
promised so much, began to overpower the terrors of his presence
from whom she was to request it. At length, as she still
received no answer, she repeatedly called upon the Dwarf by his
assumed name, and requested him to answer and open to her.
"What miserable being is reduced," said the appalling voice of the Solitary, "to seek refuge here? Go hence; when the heath-fowl need shelter, they seek it not in the nest of the night-raven."

"I come to you, father," said Isabella, "in my hour of adversity, even as you yourself commanded, when you promised your heart and your door should be open to my distress; but I fear--"
"Ha!" said the Solitary, "then thou art Isabella Vere? Give me a

token that thou art she."

"I have brought you back the rose which you gave me; it has not

had time to fade ere the hard fate you foretold has come upon

me!"

"And if thou hast thus redeemed thy pledge," said the Dwarf, "I

will not forfeit mine. The heart and the door that are shut

against every other earthly being, shall be open to thee and to

thy sorrows."
She heard him move in his hut, and presently afterwards strike a light. One by one, bolt and bar were then withdrawn, the heart of Isabella throbbing higher as these obstacles to their meeting were successively removed. The door opened, and the Solitary stood before her, his uncouth form and features illuminated by the iron lamp which he held in his hand.

"Enter, daughter of affliction," he said,—"enter the house of misery."
She entered, and observed, with a precaution which increased her
trepidation, that the Recluse’s first act, after setting the lamp
upon the table, was to replace the numerous bolts which secured
the door of his hut. She shrunk as she heard the noise which
accompanied this ominous operation, yet remembered Ratcliffe’s
cautions, and endeavoured to suppress all appearance of
apprehension. The light of the lamp was weak and uncertain; but
the Solitary, without taking immediate notice of Isabella,
otherwise than by motioning her to sit down on a small settle
beside the fireplace, made haste to kindle some dry furze, which
presently cast a blaze through the cottage. Wooden shelves,

which bore a few books, some bundles of dried herbs, and one or
two wooden cups and platters, were on one side of the fire; on

the other were placed some ordinary tools of field-labour,

mingled with those used by mechanics. Where the bed should have

been, there was a wooden frame, strewed with withered moss and

rushes, the couch of the ascetic. The whole space of the cottage

did not exceed ten feet by six within the walls; and its only

furniture, besides what we have mentioned, was a table and two

stools formed of rough deals.
Within these narrow precincts Isabella now found herself enclosed with a being, whose history had nothing to reassure her, and the fearful conformation of whose hideous countenance inspired an almost superstitious terror. He occupied the seat opposite to her, and dropping his huge and shaggy eyebrows over his piercing black eyes, gazed at her in silence, as if agitated by a variety of contending feelings. On the other side sate Isabella, pale as death, her long hair uncurled by the evening damps, and falling over her shoulders and breast, as the wet streamers droop from the mast when the storm has passed away, and left the vessel
stranded on the beach. The Dwarf first broke the silence with the sudden, abrupt, and alarming question,--"Woman, what evil fate has brought thee hither?"

"My father's danger, and your own command," she replied faintly, but firmly.

"And you hope for aid from me?"

"If you can bestow it," she replied, still in the same tone of
mild submission.

"And how should I possess that power?" continued the Dwarf, with a bitter sneer, "Is mine the form of a redresser of wrongs? Is this the castle in which one powerful enough to be sued to by a fair suppliant is likely to hold his residence? I but mocked thee, girl, when I said I would relieve thee."

"Then must I depart, and face my fate as I best may!"

"No!" said the Dwarf, rising and interposing between her and the
door, and motioning to her sternly to resume her seat—"No! you

leave me not in this way; we must have farther conference. Why

should one being desire aid of another? Why should not each be

sufficient to itself? Look round you—I, the most despised and

most decrepit on Nature's common, have required sympathy and help

from no one. These stones are of my own piling; these utensils I

framed with my own hands; and with this"—and he laid his hand

with a fierce smile on the long dagger which he always wore

beneath his garment, and unsheathed it so far that the blade

glimmered clear in the fire-light—"with this," he pursued, as he
thrust the weapon back into the scabbard, "I can, if necessary, 

defend the vital spark enclosed in this poor trunk, against the 

fairest and strongest that shall threaten me with injury."

It was with difficulty Isabella refrained from screaming out 

aloud; but she DID refrain.

"This," continued the Recluse, "is the life of nature, solitary, 

self-sufficing, and independent. The wolf calls not the wolf to 

aid him in forming his den; and the vulture invites not another 

to assist her in striking down her prey."
"And when they are unable to procure themselves support," said Isabella, judiciously thinking that he would be most accessible to argument couched in his own metaphorical style, "what then is to befall them?"

"Let them starve, die, and be forgotten; it is the common lot of humanity."

"It is the lot of the wild tribes of nature," said Isabella, "but
chiefly of those who are destined to support themselves by
rapine, which brooks no partner; but it is not the law of nature
in general; even the lower orders have confederacies for mutual
defence. But mankind--the race would perish did they cease to
aid each other.--From the time that the mother binds the child's
head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-
damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual
help. All, therefore, that need aid, have right to ask it of
their fellow-mortals; no one who has the power of granting can
refuse it without guilt."
"And in this simple hope, poor maiden," said the Solitary, "thou hast come into the desert, to seek one whose wish it were that the league thou hast spoken of were broken for ever, and that, in very truth, the whole race should perish? Wert thou not frightened?"

"Misery," said Isabella, firmly, "is superior to fear."

"Hast thou not heard it said in thy mortal world, that I have leagued myself with other powers, deformed to the eye and
malevolent to the human race as myself? Hast thou not heard
this--And dost thou seek my cell at midnight?"

"The Being I worship supports me against such idle fears," said
Isabella; but the increasing agitation of her bosom belied the
affected courage which her words expressed.

"Ho! ho!" said the Dwarf, "thou vauntest thyself a philosopher?
Yet, shouldst thou not have thought of the danger of intrusting
thyself, young and beautiful, in the power of one so spited
against humanity, as to place his chief pleasure in defacing,
destroying, and degrading her fairest works?"

Isabella, much alarmed, continued to answer with firmness,

"Whatever injuries you may have sustained in the world, you are incapable of revenging them on one who never wronged you,

nor, wilfully, any other."

"Ay, but, maiden," he continued, his dark eyes flashing with an expression of malignity which communicated itself to his wild and distorted features, "revenge is the hungry wolf, which asks only
to tear flesh and lap blood. Think you the lamb's plea of

innocence would be listened to by him?"

"Man!" said Isabella, rising, and expressing herself with much
dignity, "I fear not the horrible ideas with which you would

impress me. I cast them from me with disdain. Be you mortal or

fiend, you would not offer injury to one who sought you as a

suppliant in her utmost need. You would not--you durst not."

"Thou say'st truly, maiden," rejoined the Solitary; "I dare not

--I would not. Begone to thy dwelling. Fear nothing with which
they threaten thee. Thou hast asked my protection—thou shalt find it effectual."

"But, father, this very night I have consented to wed the man that I abhor, or I must put the seal to my father's ruin."

"This night?—at what hour?"

"Ere midnight."
"And twilight," said the Dwarf, "has already passed away. But fear nothing, there is ample time to protect thee."

"And my father?" continued Isabella, in a suppliant tone.

"Thy father," replied the Dwarf, "has been, and is, my most bitter enemy. But fear not; thy virtue shall save him. And now, begone; were I to keep thee longer by me, I might again fall into the stupid dreams concerning human worth from which I have been so fearfully awakened. But fear nothing—at the very foot of the altar I will redeem thee. Adieu, time presses, and I must act!"
He led her to the door of the hut, which he opened for her departure. She remounted her horse, which had been feeding in the outer enclosure, and pressed him forward by the light of the moon, which was now rising, to the spot where she had left Ratcliffe. 

"Have you succeeded?" was his first eager question.

"I have obtained promises from him to whom you sent me; but how
can he possibly accomplish them?"

"Thank God!" said Ratcliffe; "doubt not his power to fulfil his

promise."

At this moment a shrill whistle was heard to resound along the

heath.

"Hark!" said Ratcliffe, "he calls me--Miss Vere, return home,

and leave unbolted the postern-door of the garden; to that which

opens on the back-stairs I have a private key."
A second whistle was heard, yet more shrill and prolonged than the first.

"I come, I come," said Ratcliffe; and setting spurs to his horse, rode over the heath in the direction of the Recluse's hut. Miss Vere returned to the castle, the mettle of the animal on which she rode, and her own anxiety of mind, combining to accelerate her journey.
She obeyed Ratcliffe's directions, though without well apprehending their purpose, and leaving her horse at large in a paddock near the garden, hurried to her own apartment, which she reached without observation. She now unbolted her door, and rang her bell for lights. Her father appeared along with the servant who answered her summons.

"He had been twice," he said, "listening at her door during the two hours that had elapsed since he left her, and, not hearing her speak, had become apprehensive that she was taken ill.”
"And now, my dear father," she said, "permit me to claim the promise you so kindly gave; let the last moments of freedom which I am to enjoy be mine without interruption; and protract to the last moment the respite which is allowed me."

"I will," said her father; "nor shall you be again interrupted.

But this disordered dress—this dishevelled hair—do not let me find you thus when I call on you again; the sacrifice, to be beneficial, must be voluntary."
"Must it be so?" she replied; "then fear not, my father! the victim shall be adorned."

CHAPTER XVII.

This looks not like a nuptial. MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

The chapel in the castle of Ellieslaw, destined to be the scene of this ill-omened union, was a building of much older date than
the castle itself, though that claimed considerable antiquity.

Before the wars between England and Scotland had become so common

and of such long duration, that the buildings along both sides of

the Border were chiefly dedicated to warlike purposes, there had

been a small settlement of monks at Ellieslaw, a dependency, it

is believed by antiquaries, on the rich Abbey of Jedburgh. Their

possessions had long passed away under the changes introduced by

war and mutual ravage. A feudal castle had arisen on the ruin of

their cells, and their chapel was included in its precincts.
The edifice, in its round arches and massive pillars, the simplicity of which referred their date to what has been called the Saxon architecture, presented at all times a dark and sombre appearance, and had been frequently used as the cemetery of the family of the feudal lords, as well as formerly of the monastic brethren. But it looked doubly gloomy by the effect of the few and smoky torches which were used to enlighten it on the present occasion, and which, spreading a glare of yellow light in their immediate vicinity, were surrounded beyond by a red and purple halo reflected from their own smoke, and beyond that again by a zone of darkness which magnified the extent of the chapel, while
it rendered it impossible for the eye to ascertain its limits.

Some injudicious ornaments, adopted in haste for the occasion,

rather added to the dreariness of the scene. Old fragments of

tapestry, torn from the walls of other apartments, had been

hastily and partially disposed around those of the chapel, and

mingled inconsistently with scutcheons and funeral emblems of the

dead, which they elsewhere exhibited. On each side of the stone

altar was a monument, the appearance of which formed an equally

strange contrast. On the one was the figure, in stone, of some

grim hermit, or monk, who had died in the odour of sanctity; he
was represented as recumbent, in his cowl and scapulaire, with

his face turned upward as in the act of devotion, and his hands

folded, from which his string of beads was dependent. On the

other side was a tomb, in the Italian taste, composed of the most

beautiful statuary marble, and accounted a model of modern art.

It was erected to the memory of Isabella's mother, the late Mrs.

Vere of Ellieslaw, who was represented as in a dying posture,

while a weeping cherub, with eyes averted, seemed in the act of

extinguishing a dying lamp as emblematic of her speedy

dissolution. It was, indeed, a masterpiece of art, but misplaced

in the rude vault to which it had been consigned. Many were
surprised, and even scandalized, that Ellieslaw, not remarkable for attention to his lady while alive, should erect after her death such a costly mausoleum in affected sorrow; others cleared him from the imputation of hypocrisy, and averred that the monument had been constructed under the direction and at the sole expense of Mr. Ratcliffe.

Before these monuments the wedding guests were assembled. They were few in number; for many had left the castle to prepare for the ensuing political explosion, and Ellieslaw was, in the
circumstances of the case, far from being desirous to extend

invitations farther than to those near relations whose presence

the custom of the country rendered indispensable. Next to the

altar stood Sir Frederick Langley, dark, moody, and thoughtful,

even beyond his wont, and near him, Mareschal, who was to play

the part of bridesman, as it was called. The thoughtless humour

of this young gentleman, on which he never deigned to place the

least restraint, added to the cloud which overhung the brow of

the bridegroom

"The bride is not yet come out of her chamber," he whispered to
Sir Frederick; "I trust that we must not have recourse to the

violent expedients of the Romans which I read of at College. It

would be hard upon my pretty cousin to be run away with twice in

two days, though I know none better worth such a violent

compliment."

Sir Frederick attempted to turn a deaf ear to this discourse,

humming a tune, and looking another may, but Mareschal proceeded

in the same wild manner.
"This delay is hard upon Dr. Hobbler, who was disturbed to accelerate preparations for this joyful event when he had successfully extracted the cork of his third bottle. I hope you will keep him free of the censure of his superiors, for I take it this is beyond canonical hours.--But here come Ellieslaw and my pretty cousin--prettier than ever, I think, were it not she seems so faint and so deadly pale--Hark ye, Sir Knight, if she says not YES with right good-will, it shall be no wedding, for all that has come and gone yet."

"No wedding, sir?" returned Sir Frederick, in a loud whisper,
the tone of which indicated that his angry feelings were suppressed with difficulty.

"No--no marriage," replied Mareschal, "there's my hand and glove on't."

Sir Frederick Langley took his hand, and as he wrung it hard, said in a lower whisper, "Mareschal, you shall answer this," and then flung his hand from him.
"That I will readily do," said Mareschal, "for never word escaped my lips that my hand was not ready to guarantee.- So, speak up, my pretty cousin, and tell me if it be your free will and unbiased resolution to accept of this gallant knight for your lord and husband; for if you have the tenth part of a scruple upon the subject, fall back, fall edge, he shall not have you."

"Are you mad, Mr. Mareschal?" said Ellieslaw, who, having been this young man's guardian during his minority, often employed a tone of authority to him. "Do you suppose I would drag my daughter to the foot of the altar, were it not her own choice?"
"Tut, Ellieslaw," retorted the young gentleman, "never tell me of the contrary; her eyes are full of tears, and her cheeks are whiter than her white dress. I must insist, in the name of common humanity, that the ceremony be adjourned till to-morrow."

"She shall tell you herself, thou incorrigible intermeddler in what concerns thee not, that it is her wish the ceremony should go on--Is it not, Isabella, my dear?"
It is," said Isabella, half fainting--"since there is no help, 

either in God or man."

The first word alone was distinctly audible. Mareschal shrugged 

up his shoulders and stepped back. Ellieslaw led, or rather 

supported, his daughter to the altar. Sir Frederick moved 

forward and placed himself by her side. The clergyman opened his 

prayer-book, and looked to Mr. Vere for the signal to commence 

the service.

"Proceed," said the latter.
But a voice, as if issuing from the tomb of his deceased wife,
called, in such loud and harsh accents as awakened every echo in
the vaulted chapel, "Forbear!"

All were mute and motionless, till a distant rustle, and the
clash of swords, or something resembling it, was heard from the
remote apartments. It ceased almost instantly.

"What new device is this?" said Sir Frederick, fiercely, eyeing
Ellieslaw and Mareschal with a glance of malignant suspicion.

"It can be but the frolic of some intemperate guest," said

Ellieslaw, though greatly confounded; "we must make large

allowances for the excess of this evening's festivity. Proceed

with the service."

Before the clergyman could obey, the same prohibition which they

had before heard, was repeated from the same spot. The female

attendants screamed, and fled from the chapel; the gentlemen laid

their hands on their swords. Ere the first moment of surprise
had passed by, the Dwarf stepped from behind the monument, and
placed himself full in front of Mr. Vere. The effect of so
strange and hideous an apparition in such a place and in such
circumstances, appalled all present, but seemed to annihilate the
Laird of Ellieslaw, who, dropping his daughter’s arm, staggered
against the nearest pillar, and, clasping it with his hands as if
for support, laid his brow against the column.

"Who is this fellow?" said Sir Frederick; ”and what does he mean
by this intrusion?"
"It is one who comes to tell you," said the Dwarf, with the peculiar acrimony which usually marked his manner, "that, in marrying that young lady, you wed neither the heiress of Ellieslaw, nor of Mauley Hall, nor of Polverton, nor of one furrow of land, unless she marries with MY consent; and to thee that consent shall never be given. Down--down on thy knees, and thank Heaven that thou art prevented from wedding qualities with which thou hast no concern--portionless truth, virtue, and innocence--thou, base ingrate," he continued, addressing himself to Ellieslaw, "what is thy wretched subterfuge now? Thou, who
wouldst sell thy daughter to relieve thee from danger, as in

famine thou wouldst have slain and devoured her to preserve thy

own vile life!--Ay, hide thy face with thy hands; well mayst thou

blush to look on him whose body thou didst consign to chains, his

hand to guilt, and his soul to misery. Saved once more by the

virtue of her who calls thee father, go hence, and may the pardon

and benefits I confer on thee prove literal coals of fire, till

thy brain is seared and scorched like mine!"

Ellieslaw left the chapel with a gesture of mute despair.
"Follow him, Hubert Ratcliffe," said the Dwarf, "and inform him

of his destiny. He will rejoice—for to breathe air and to

handle gold is to him happiness,"

"I understand nothing of all this," said Sir Frederick Langley;

"but we are here a body of gentlemen in arms and authority for

King James; and whether you really, sir, be that Sir Edward

Mauley, who has been so long supposed dead in confinement, or

whether you be an impostor assuming his name and title, we will

use the freedom of detaining you, till your appearance here, at
this moment, is better accounted for; we will have no spies among
us--Seize on him, my friends."

But the domestics shrunk back in doubt and alarm. Sir Frederick
himself stepped forward towards the Recluse, as if to lay hands
on his person, when his progress was suddenly stopped by the

glittering point of a partisan, which the sturdy hand of Hbbie

Elliot presented against his bosom.

"I'll gar daylight shine through ye, if ye offer to steer him!"
said the stout Borderer; "stand back, or I'll strike ye through!

Naebody shall lay a finger on Elshie; he's a canny neighbourly man, aye ready to make a friend help; and, though ye may think him a lamiter, yet, grippie for grippie, friend, I'll wad a wether he'll make the bluid spin frae under your nails. He's a teugh carle Elshie! he grips like a smith's vice."

"What has brought you here, Elliot?" said Mareschal; "who called on you for interference?"

"Troth, Mareschal-Wells," answered Hobbie, "I am just come here,
wi' twenty or thretty mair o' us, in my ain name and the King's

--or Queen's, ca' they her? and Canny Elshie's into the bargain,

to keep the peace, and pay back some ill usage Ellieslaw has gien

me. A bonny breakfast the loons gae me the ither morning, and

him at the bottom on't; and trow ye I wasna ready to supper him

up?--Ye needna lay your hands on your swords, gentlemen, the

house is ours wi' little din; for the doors were open, and there

had been ower muckle punch amang your folk; we took their swords

and pistols as easily as ye wad shiel pea-cods."
Mareschal rushed out, and immediately re-entered the chapel.

"By Heaven! it is true, Sir Frederick; the house is filled with armed men, and our drunken beasts are all disarmed. Draw, and let us fight our way."

"Binna rash--binna rash," exclaimed Hobbie; "hear me a bit, hear me a bit. We mean ye nae harm; but, as ye are in arms for King James, as ye ca’ him, and the prelates, we thought it right to keep up the auld neighbour war, and stand up for the t’other ane and the Kirk; but we’ll no hurt a hair o’ your heads, if ye like
to gang hame quietly. And it will be your best way, for there's

sure news come frae Loudoun, that him they ca' Bang, or Byng, or

what is't, has bang'd the French ships and the new king aff the

coast however; sae ye had best bide content wi' auld Nanse for

want of a better Queen."

Ratcliffe, who at this moment entered, confirmed these accounts

so unfavourable to the Jacobite interest. Sir Frederick, almost

instantly, and without taking leave of any one, left the castle,

with such of his attendants as were able to follow him.
"And what will you do, Mr. Mareschal?" said Ratcliffe.

"Why, faith," answered he, smiling, "I hardly know; my spirit is too great, and my fortune too small, for me to follow the example of the doughty bridegroom. It is not in my nature, and it is hardly worth my while."

"Well, then, disperse your men, and remain quiet, and this will be overlooked, as there has been no overt act."
"Hout, ay," said Elliot, "just let byganes be byganes, and a' friends again; deil ane I bear malice at but Westburnflat, and I hae gien him baith a het skin and a cauld ane. I hadna changed three blows of the broadsword wi' him before he lap the window into the castle-moat, and swattered through it like a wild-duck. He's a clever fallow, indeed! maun kilt awa wi' ae bonny lass in the morning, and another at night, less wadna serve him! but if he disna kilt himsell out o' the country, I'se kilt him wi' a tow, for the Castleton meeting's clean blawn ower; his friends will no countenance him."
During the general confusion, Isabella had thrown herself at the feet of her kinsman, Sir Edward Mauley, for so we must now call the Solitary, to express at once her gratitude, and to beseech forgiveness for her father. The eyes of all began to be fixed on them, as soon as their own agitation and the bustle of the attendants had somewhat abated. Miss Vere kneeled beside the tomb of her mother, to whose statue her features exhibited a marked resemblance. She held the hand of the Dwarf, which she kissed repeatedly and bathed with tears. He stood fixed and motionless, excepting that his eyes glanced alternately on the
marble figure and the living suppliant. At length, the large
drops which gathered on his eye-lashes compelled him to draw his
hand across them.

"I thought," he said, "that tears and I had done; but we shed
them at our birth, and their spring dries not until we are in our
grapes. But no melting of the heart shall dissolve my
resolution. I part here, at once, and for ever, with all of

which the memory" (looking to the tomb), "or the presence" (he

pressed Isabella's hand), "is dear to me.--Speak not to me!
attempt not to thwart my determination! it will avail nothing;

you will hear of and see this lump of deformity no more. To you

I shall be dead ere I am actually in my grave, and you will think

of me as of a friend disencumbered from the toils and crimes of

existence."

He kissed Isabella on the forehead, impressed another kiss on the

brow of the statue by which she knelt, and left the chapel

followed by Ratcliffe. Isabella, almost exhausted by the

emotions of the day, was carried to her apartment by her women.

Most of the other guests dispersed, after having separately
endeavoured to impress on all who would listen to them their disapprobation of the plots formed against the government, or their regret for having engaged in them. Hobbie Elliot assumed the command of the castle for the night, and mounted a regular guard. He boasted not a little of the alacrity with which his friends and he had obeyed a hasty summons received from Elshie through the faithful Ratcliffe. And it was a lucky chance, he said, that on that very day they had got notice that Westburnflat did not intend to keep his tryste at Castleton, but to hold them at defiance; so that a considerable party had assembled at the
Heugh-foot, with the intention of paying a visit to the robber's
tower on the ensuing morning, and their course was easily
directed to Ellieslaw Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

--Last scene of all,

To close this strange eventful history. AS YOU LIKE IT.
On the next morning, Mr. Ratcliffe presented Miss Vere with a letter from her father, of which the following is the tenor:--

"MY DEAREST CHILD,

The malice of a persecuting government will compel me, for my own safety, to retreat abroad, and to remain for some time in foreign parts. I do not ask you to accompany, or follow me; you will attend to my interest and your own more effectually by remaining where you are. It is unnecessary to enter into a minute detail concerning the causes of the strange events which yesterday took
place. I think I have reason to complain of the usage I have received from Sir Edward Mauley, who is your nearest kinsman by the mother's side; but as he has declared you his heir, and is to put you in immediate possession of a large part of his fortune, I account it a full atonement. I am aware he has never forgiven the preference which your mother gave to my addresses, instead of complying with the terms of a sort of family compact, which absurdly and tyrannically destined her to wed her deformed relative. The shock was even sufficient to unsettle his wits (which, indeed, were never over-well arranged), and I had, as the husband of his nearest kinswoman and heir, the delicate task of
taking care of his person and property, until he was reinstated in the management of the latter by those who, no doubt, thought they were doing him justice; although, if some parts of his subsequent conduct be examined, it will appear that he ought, for his own sake, to have been left under the influence of a mild and salutary restraint.

"In one particular, however, he showed a sense of the ties of blood, as well as of his own frailty; for while he sequestered himself closely from the world, under various names and
disguises, and insisted on spreading a report of his own death

(in which to gratify him I willingly acquiesced), he left at my
disposal the rents of a great proportion of his estates, and

especially all those, which, having belonged to your mother,

reverted to him as a male fief. In this he may have thought that

he was acting with extreme generosity, while, in the opinion of

all impartial men, he will only be considered as having fulfilled

a natural obligation, seeing that, in justice, if not in strict

law, you must be considered as the heir of your mother, and I as

your legal administrator. Instead, therefore, of considering

myself as loaded with obligations to Sir Edward on this account,
I think I had reason to complain that these remittances were only
doled out to me at the pleasure of Mr. Ratcliffe, who, moreover,

exacted from me mortgages over my paternal estate of Ellieslaw

for any sums which I required as an extra advance; and thus may

be said to have insinuated himself into the absolute management

and control of my property. Or, if all this seeming friendship

was employed by Sir Edward for the purpose of obtaining a

complete command of my affairs, and acquiring the power of

ruining me at his pleasure, I feel myself, I must repeat, still

less bound by the alleged obligation.
"About the autumn of last year, as I understand, either his own
crazed imagination, or the accomplishment of some such scheme as
I have hinted, brought him down to this country. His alleged
motive, it seems, was a desire of seeing a monument which he had
directed to be raised in the chapel over the tomb of your mother.
Mr. Ratcliffe, who at this time had done me the honour to make my
house his own, had the complaisance to introduce him secretly
into the chapel. The consequence, as he informs me, was a frenzy
of several hours, during which he fled into the neighbouring
moors, in one of the wildest spots of which he chose, when he was
somewhat recovered, to fix his mansion, and set up for a sort of
country empiric, a character which, even in his best days, he was
fond of assuming. It is remarkable, that, instead of informing
me of these circumstances, that I might have had the relative of
my late wife taken such care of as his calamitous condition
required, Mr. Ratcliffe seems to have had such culpable
indulgence for his irregular plans as to promise and even swear
secrecy concerning them. He visited Sir Edward often, and
assisted in the fantastic task he had taken upon him of
constructing a hermitage. Nothing they appear to have dreaded
more than a discovery of their intercourse.

"The ground was open in every direction around, and a small subterranean cave, probably sepulchral, which their researches had detected near the great granite pillar, served to conceal Ratcliffe, when any one approached his master. I think you will be of opinion, my love, that this secrecy must have had some strong motive. It is also remarkable, that while I thought my unhappy friend was residing among the Monks of La Trappe, he should have been actually living, for many months, in this bizarre disguise, within five miles of my house, and obtaining
regular information of my most private movements, either by

Ratcliffe, or through Westburnflat or others, whom he had the

means to bribe to any extent. He makes it a crime against me

that I endeavoured to establish your marriage with Sir Frederick.

I acted for the best; but if Sir Edward Mauley thought otherwise,

why did he not step manfully forward, express his own purpose of

becoming a party to the settlements, and take that interest which

he is entitled to claim in you as heir to his great property?

"Even now, though your rash and eccentric relation is somewhat
tardy in announcing his purpose, I am far from opposing my

authority against his wishes, although the person he desires you
to regard as your future husband be young Earnscliff; the very

last whom I should have thought likely to be acceptable to him,

considering a certain fatal event. But I give my free and hearty

consent, providing the settlements are drawn in such an

irrevocable form as may secure my child from suffering by that

state of dependence, and that sudden and causeless revocation of

allowances, of which I have so much reason to complain. Of Sir

Frederick Langley, I augur, you will hear no more. He is not

likely to claim the hand of a dowerless maiden. I therefore
commit you, my dear Isabella, to the wisdom of Providence and to
your own prudence, begging you to lose no time in securing those
advantages, which the fickleness of your kinsman has withdrawn
from me to shower upon you.

"Mr. Ratcliffe mentioned Sir Edward's intention to settle a
considerable sum upon me yearly, for my maintenance in foreign
parts; but this my heart is too proud to accept from him. I told
him I had a dear child, who, while in affluence herself, would
never suffer me to be in poverty. I thought it right to intimate
this to him pretty roundly, that whatever increase be settled
upon you, it may be calculated so as to cover this necessary and
natural encumbrance. I shall willingly settle upon you the
castle and manor of Ellieslaw, to show my parental affection and
disinterested zeal for promoting your settlement in life. The
annual interest of debts charged on the estate somewhat exceeds
the income, even after a reasonable rent has been put upon the
mansion and mains. But as all the debts are in the person of Mr.
Ratcliffe, as your kinsman’s trustee, he will not be a
troublesome creditor. And here I must make you aware, that
though I have to complain of Mr. Ratcliffe’s conduct to me
personally, I, nevertheless, believe him a just and upright man,

with whom you may safely consult on your affairs, not to mention

that to cherish his good opinion will be the best way to retain

that of your kinsman. Remember me to Marchie--I hope he will not

be troubled on account of late matters. I will write more fully

from the Continent. Meanwhile, I rest your loving father,

RICHARD VERE."

The above letter throws the only additional light which we have

been able to procure upon the earlier part of our story. It was
Hobbie’s opinion, and may be that of most of our readers, that the Recluse of Mucklestane-Moor had but a kind of a gleaming, or twilight understanding; and that he had neither very clear views as to what he himself wanted, nor was apt to pursue his ends by the clearest and most direct means; so that to seek the clew of his conduct, was likened, by Hobbie, to looking for a straight path through a common, over which are a hundred devious tracks, but not one distinct line of road.

When Isabella had perused the letter, her first enquiry was after her father. He had left the castle, she was informed, early in
the morning, after a long interview with Mr. Ratcliffe, and was

already far on his way to the next port, where he might expect to

find shipping for the Continent.

"Where was Sir Edward Mauley?"

No one had seen the Dwarf since the eventful scene of the

preceding evening.

"Odd, if onything has befa’en puir Elshie," said Hobbie Elliot,
"I wad rather I were harried ower again."

He immediately rode to his dwelling, and the remaining she-goat came bleating to meet him, for her milking time was long past.

The Solitary was nowhere to be seen; his door, contrary to wont, was open, his fire extinguished, and the whole hut was left in the state which it exhibited on Isabella's visit to him. It was pretty clear that the means of conveyance which had brought the Dwarf to Ellieslaw on the preceding evening, had removed him from it to some other place of abode. Hobbie returned disconsolate to the castle.
"I am doubting we hae lost Canny Elsie for gude an' a'."

"You have indeed," said Ratcliffe, producing a paper, which he put into Hobbie's hands; "but read that, and you will perceive you have been no loser by having known him."

It was a short deed of gift, by which "Sir Edward Mauley, otherwise called Elshender the Recluse, endowed Halbert or Hobbie Elliot, and Grace Armstrong, in full property, with a
considerable sum borrowed by Elliot from him."

Hobbie's joy was mingled with feelings which brought tears down his rough cheeks.

"It's a queer thing," he said; "but I canna joy in the gear, unless I kend the puir body was happy that gave it me."

"Next to enjoying happiness ourselves," said Ratcliffe, "is the consciousness of having bestowed it on others. Had all my master's benefits been conferred like the present, what a
different return would they have produced! But the

indiscriminate profusion that would glut avarice, or supply

prodigality, neither does good, nor is rewarded by gratitude. It

is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind."

"And that wad be a light har’st," said Hobbie; "but, wi’ my young

leddie’s leave, I wad fain take down Eishie’s skeps o’ bees, and

set them in Grace’s bit flower yard at the Heugh-foot--they shall

ne’er be smeekit by ony o’ huz. And the puir goat, she would be

negleckit about a great toun like this; and she could feed
bonnily on our lily lea by the burn side, and the hounds wad ken

her in a day's time, and never fash her, and Grace wad milk her

ilka morning wi' her ain hand, for Elshie's sake; for though he

was thrawn and cankered in his converse, he likeit dumb creatures

weel."

Hobbie's requests were readily granted, not without some wonder

at the natural delicacy of feeling which pointed out to him this

mode of displaying his gratitude. He was delighted when

Ratcliffe informed him that his benefactor should not remain

ignorant of the care which he took of his favourite.
"And mind be sure and tell him that grannie and the titties, and,
abune a’, Grace and mysell, are weel and thriving, and that it’s
a’ his doing--that canna but please him, ane wad think."

And Elliot and the family at Heugh-foot were, and continued to
be, as fortunate and happy as his undaunted honesty, tenderness,
and gallantry so well merited.

All bar between the marriage of Earnscliff and Isabella was now
removed, and the settlements which Ratcliffe produced on the part of Sir Edward Mauley, might have satisfied the cupidity of Ellieslaw himself. But Miss Vere and Ratcliffe thought it unnecessary to mention to Earnscliffe that one great motive of Sir Edward, in thus loading the young pair with benefits, was to expiate his having, many years before, shed the blood of his father in a hasty brawl. If it be true, as Ratcliffe asserted, that the Dwarf’s extreme misanthropy seemed to relax somewhat, under the consciousness of having diffused happiness among so many, the recollection of this circumstance might probably be one of his chief motives for refusing obstinately ever to witness
their state of contentment.

Mareschal hunted, shot, and drank claret--tired of the country,

went abroad, served three campaigns, came home, and married Lucy

Ilderton.

Years fled over the heads of Earnscliff and his wife, and found

and left them contented and happy. The scheming ambition of Sir

Frederick Langley engaged him in the unfortunate insurrection of

1715. He was made prisoner at Preston, in Lancashire, with the
Earl of Derwentwater, and others. His defence, and the dying speech which he made at his execution, may be found in the State Trials. Mr. Vere, supplied by his daughter with an ample income, continued to reside abroad, engaged deeply in the affair of Law’s bank during the regency of the Duke of Orleans, and was at one time supposed to be immensely rich. But, on the bursting of that famous bubble, he was so much chagrined at being again reduced to a moderate annuity (although he saw thousands of his companions in misfortune absolutely starving), that vexation of mind brought on a paralytic stroke, of which he died, after lingering under its effects a few weeks.
Willie of Westburnflat fled from the wrath of Hobbie Elliot, as

his betters did from the pursuit of the law. His patriotism

urged him to serve his country abroad, while his reluctance to

leave his native soil pressed him rather to remain in the beloved

island, and collect purses, watches, and rings on the highroads

at home. Fortunately for him, the first impulse prevailed, and

he joined the army under Marlborough; obtained a commission to

which he was recommended by his services in collecting cattle for

the commissariat; returned home after many years, with some money
(how come by Heaven only knows),—demolished the peel-house at Westburnflat, and built, in its stead, a high narrow ONSTEAD, of three stories, with a chimney at each end—drank brandy with the neighbours, whom, in his younger days, he had plundered—died in his bed, and is recorded upon his tombstone at Kirkwhistle (still extant), as having played all the parts of a brave soldier, a discreet neighbour, and a sincere Christian.

Mr. Ratcliffe resided usually with the family at Ellieslaw, but regularly every spring and autumn he absented himself for about a month. On the direction and purpose of his periodical journey he
remained steadily silent; but it was well understood that he was
then in attendance on his unfortunate patron. At length, on his
return from one of these visits, his grave countenance, and deep
mourning dress, announced to the Ellieslaw family that their
benefactor was no more. Sir Edward’s death made no addition to
their fortune, for he had divested himself of his property during
his lifetime, and chiefly in their favour. Ratcliffe, his sole
confidant, died at a good old age, but without ever naming the
place to which his master had finally retired, or the manner of
his death, or the place of his burial. It was supposed that on
all these particulars his patron had enjoined him strict secrecy.

The sudden disappearance of Elshie from his extraordinary hermitage corroborated the reports which the common people had spread concerning him. Many believed that, having ventured to enter a consecrated building, contrary to his paction with the Evil One, he had been bodily carried off while on his return to his cottage; but most are of opinion that he only disappeared for a season, and continues to be seen from time to time among the hills. And retaining, according to custom, a more vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language, than of the
benevolent tendency of most of his actions, he is usually
identified with the malignant demon called the Man of the Moors,
whose feats were quoted by Mrs. Elliot to her grandsons; and,
accordingly, is generally represented as bewitching the sheep,
causing the ewes to KEB, that is, to cast their lambs, or seen
loosening the impending wreath of snow to precipitate its weight
on such as take shelter, during the storm, beneath the bank of a
torrent, or under the shelter of a deep glen. In short, the
evils most dreaded and deprecated by the inhabitants of that
pastoral country, are ascribed to the agency of the BLACK DWARF.
End