JOHN GALT

THE ENTAIL

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Galt J.

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Содержание

INTRODUCTION 5
TO THE KING 9
CHAPTER I 10
CHAPTER II 12
CHAPTER III 14
CHAPTER IV 16
CHAPTER V 18
CHAPTER VI 20
CHAPTER VII 21
CHAPTER VIII 23
CHAPTER IX 25
CHAPTER X 27
CHAPTER XI 29
CHAPTER XII 31
CHAPTER XIII 33
CHAPTER XIV 35
CHAPTER XV 37
CHAPTER XVI 39
CHAPTER XVII 41
CHAPTER XVIII 44
CHAPTER XIX 48
CHAPTER XX 51
CHAPTER XXI 53
CHAPTER XXII 55
CHAPTER XXIII 58
CHAPTER XXIV 60
CHAPTER XXV 63
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 65

John Galt
The Entail / or The Lairds of Grippy

INTRODUCTION

For many years I have been wondering why John Galt's works are fallen into such neglect: that they should be almost wholly forgotten, even by readers to whom Scott and Jane Austen, Fanny Burney and Miss Edgeworth are indispensable, is what I cannot understand. If his Autobiography were not a rare book, an explanation might suggest itself. For supposing that the public, before reading *The Entail*, *Annals of the Parish*, or *The Ayrshire Legatees*, had been so unfortunate as to attempt the reading of the Autobiography, no one could be surprised that it made up its mind to read no more of him. A more tedious, flat, and dull book was never written by a man of genius: it is never interesting, never amusing, and always exasperating to any one who knows what he could do, and has done. To wade through it is very nearly impossible, and there is nothing to be gained by the achievement. Galt's life was not particularly interesting in itself, but many lives less eventful have been so written as to be worth reading, and easy to read.

There is, however, little danger of Galt's now losing possible admirers by the unlucky accident of their stumbling on his Autobiography before making his acquaintance in the right way – by reading his really excellent works of fiction: for copies of the Autobiography are not at all easy to come at. I suppose they have mostly been burned by his admirers.

There is not much to be told about him; his life does not matter to my purpose. John Galt was one of the sons of a sea-captain, in the West India trade, and was born on May 2, 1779, at Irvine in Ayrshire. When he was ten years old the family moved to Greenock, where the boy had his schooling and became a clerk in the Custom House. At five and twenty he carried himself and an epic poem to London, in quest of literary fame. The epic, on the Battle of Largs, he had printed, but it did not establish his repute as a poet, and, to judge by the specimens I have read, the indifference of the public was not a malicious affectation. Later on he produced half a dozen dramas, which deserved, and met with, as much success as the epic. Falling into bad health he made a tour through the Mediterranean and Levant, and had Byron and Hobhouse for fellow-travellers during a part of it. In the Autobiography he does not heap flattery on either 'Orestes or Pylades': perhaps, though he does not confess it, he extracted from his brother poet an opinion on his own muse. His experiences of travel were given to the world in *Letters from the Levant*, and the book was by no means a failure, and is much easier reading than the Autobiography. In 1820 appeared, in *Blackwood*, *The Ayrshire Legatees*: and in it he first showed the real power that was in him. It has been reprinted in recent years and can easily be read, and should be read by every one. The book has the rather tiresome form of letters: and the letters of the young lady and young gentleman are not always particularly entertaining: those of Dr. Pringle and his wife are invariably excellent. None better of the sort exist anywhere in fiction. It is astounding that a man of genius, whose fiction is so extraordinarily real, could, when writing of his own real life, make it inhumanly dull and artificial. In the Autobiography there is nothing quaint, and nothing witty: Dr. and Mrs. Pringle are inimitably quaint and funny. It would seem that when Galt looked at life, at men and manners, and things, through imaginary eyes he could see everything there was to be seen, and see it in a light intensely simple and vivid and real: that when he looked at anything through his own eyes he saw nothing at all. The doctor and Mrs. Pringle are indispensable to all readers who love dear oddities, and they are Galt's very own: you shall not find them anywhere else. He borrowed them nowhere, but made them himself in a jocund humour of affectionate creation.

In 1821 *The Ayrshire Legatees* was followed up by the *Annals of the Parish*, which displayed Galt's singular and original genius in fuller perfection. That his epic failed, and the *Annals* marked a literary success, is much to the credit of his contemporaries. Perhaps if Crabbe had not perversely insisted on being a poet we might have had country tales of his as worthy of immortality as the *Annals of the Parish*. The book is commonly said to be Galt's masterpiece: which it is not. But it is unique and perfect. That *The Entail* is really Galt's masterpiece seems to me clear: nevertheless there are weak parts in it, and the less good chapters are lamentably unequal to the best: whereas the *Annals of the Parish* has no weak chapters, and the balance of excellence is maintained throughout. But there is no story in the *Annals*; and, though it is a long gallery of perfect portraits, it has no characters that can even be compared with Watty and the Leddy o' Grippy.

Where the *Annals* peculiarly excel is in the rare quality of *charm*: it has no hero, and the central figure is enriched with foibles that do not lean to heroism's side: but they are quaintly attractive, and no one but Galt has given to literature any one like him. Of pathos Galt is shy in the *Annals*; nowhere is he at all disposed to 'wallow' in it: but he draws reverently near, and moves away as reverently. Nor is he boisterously funny: his wit is all his own, and it crops up at every corner, but not noisily: it cuts few capers, and has a pawky discretion. It is singularly void of malice and haughtiness, and has a Shakespearian humanity and blandness that fails to remind one of Thackeray. The *Annals of the Parish* prove that a great writer can make a whole book intensely amusing and extraordinarily amiable: that perfectly clear sight need not be merciless, nor wit remorselessly cruel.

The great and just success of the *Annals of the Parish* made Galt prolific: and in rapid sequence came *Sir Andrew Wylie*, *The Entail*, *The Steamboat*, *The Provost*, *Ringan Gilhaize*, *The Spaewife*, *Rothelan*, and *The Omen*.

Almost all of these are worth reading, and to read them is no trouble: but they are of very unequal merit: and only one of them is worthy of being grouped with *The Ayrshire Legatees* and the *Annals*. *Sir Andrew Wylie* is extremely good, and much of it shows Galt in his best vein. The more romantic tales, *Ringan Gilhaize*, *The Spaewife*, *Rothelan*, and *The Omen*, have the defects of their qualities, and the more Galt submits to those qualities the less we are pleased. To be romantic was, perhaps, a pardonable compliance with fashion: but Galt had little to make with romance, and idealism was his easiest road to failure. To be Ossianic may have seemed to him a literary duty, but the performance of some duties is hard on the public: as the district-visited might plead, to whom the perfecting of district-visitors appeals less than it ought. Galt had not a rich imagination; what he possessed in a rare degree was the faculty of representation. In his works of fiction we find a gallery of portraits of singular variety and perfection: of all of them he had seen the originals. When he chose to add characters invented by himself his success was not great. It must not, however, be supposed that he could only reproduce with pedestrian fidelity: there can be no doubt that from a mere hint in actual experience he could draw a vivid portrait of absolute and convincing reality.

He himself placed *The Provost* higher than the *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees*, but no one will agree with him. Almost the only interesting thing he tells us in the Autobiography is that the *Annals*, though published in 1821, the year following the appearance of *The Ayrshire Legatees*, were written in 1813, and laid aside and forgotten. Of *The Entail* he tells us little, except that the scene of the storm was introduced to admit of the description of a part of Scotland he had never seen. He speaks complacently of the praise accorded to that description, but betrays no pride in Watty or the Leddy, whom, indeed, he does not mention. He has plenty to say about *Ringan Gilhaize*, and evidently believes that the book was not accorded its due proportion of praise; chiefly, it would seem, because the thing he tried to do in it was difficult, and success the more meritorious. Probably Watty and the Leddy were thoroughly spontaneous, as they are inimitably real, and Galt thought the less of them on that account.

He left England for Canada in 1826, *The Last of the Lairds* appearing just before his departure. Three years later he came back ruined, and set to work again, his pen being as industrious as ever.

Lawrie Todd was followed by *Southennan*, and these two novels by his *Life of Lord Byron*. In 1839, on April 11, he died at Greenock.

Anthony Trollope injured himself with critics of a certain class by a too frank disclosure of his methods of production: and Galt may well have done his literary reputation harm by his oft-repeated assertion that with him literature was always a secondary interest. Commerce, he would have us believe, was what came first. He never depreciates his own literary work, but he so speaks of it as to tempt others to belittle it: this was not modesty but sheer blundering. Congreve in his old age was more eager to shine in Voltaire's eyes as a social personage than as a famous dramatist; and Galt appears to have cared more to be regarded as a statistician than as an unequalled master of fiction in his own region of it. These perversities in men of genius are not so rare as they are provoking.

The Entail was published in 1822, and, disregarded as it has long been, its merit was not ignored then. Gifford, Mackenzie, Lord Jeffrey, and Sir Walter Scott helped to spread its fame. In January, 1823, 'Christopher North' reviewed it at great length in *Blackwood*, and declared it 'out of all sight the best thing he [Galt] has done' —*The Ayrshire Legatees* and the *Annals of the Parish*, be it remembered, having already appeared. The Professor says that he had read 'the work on its first publication through from beginning to end in one day', and about a fortnight afterwards devoured 'all the prime bits' again.

The conclusion of the whole matter, in Professor Wilson's opinion, was that Galt had now proved himself 'inferior only to two living writers of fictitious narratives – to him whom we need not name, and to Miss Edgeworth'.

That Galt was inferior to Scott as a romanticist is what no one would deny. As a romanticist he should not be brought in comparison with Sir Walter at all; but as a painter of *genre* he is not surpassed even by him whom 'Christopher North' would not name. That Miss Edgeworth was a romanticist of high rank does not appear: *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee* are unequalled, but as presentations of original, quaint, and absolutely living Irish character: Galt was not inferior to her, or a rival of her, for his realm and hers were far apart: in his presentation of certain types of Scottish character he is equally original, equally quaint, and equally true and vivid. Scottish humour and Irish wit are singularly unlike; to compare them must be a barren labour; perhaps the same reader will never fully appreciate both; but to no critic who knows and loves Scots types of character will it be easy to confess that Galt had an inferior revelation to that of the inestimable Maria: the subject-matter was different, that was all. To try and pose them as rivals is the folly. In Galt is none of the rollicking pathos that is the miracle of *Castle Rackrent*: Scots pathos is as different from Irish as flamboyant Irish wit is different from Scottish pawkiness. But if the daft laird of Grippy be not pathetic then I know of no pathos outside the pathos that exposes itself naked to the public to obtain recognition. If the Leddy o' Grippy be not inimitably comic, then can there be no comedy short of screaming farce.

The reader is asked to remember that any comparison of Galt with Scott, or of Galt with Maria Edgeworth, was not initiated by the present writer, but by 'Christopher North'.

Sir Walter Scott himself gave the best proof possible of appreciation by reading *The Entail* three times: and Byron had read it three times within a year of its appearance. To the Earl of Blessington he said that 'the portraiture of Leddy Grippy was perhaps the most complete and original that had been added to the female gallery since the days of Shakespeare'.

Were this an essay on *The Entail* it would not suffice to quote the criticism of great writers upon the work: the essayist would need to justify his own admiration of it by quotation from the book itself. And this he has done at full length in (as Cousin Feenix said) another place. But in an Introduction there can be no occasion to detain the reader from making acquaintance on his own account with the Leddy and Watty, Claud, and the Milrookits. He will not, with the book in his hand, need to be told which scenes are inimitable. There are many which he will never be content to read but once: though I venture to think that he will not arrive at Lord Jeffrey's conclusion that the drowning of George Walkinshaw is the most powerful single sketch in the work. Powerful all the same it is; and, since

Lord Byron's dictum concerning the Leddy has given the hint, we may be the more readily forgiven for thinking that there is, in that grim passage, something Shakespearian about the little cabin-boy.

JOHN AYSCOUGH.

TO THE KING

SIRE,

With the profoundest sense of your Majesty's gracious condescension, the Author of this work has now the honour to lay it, by permission, at your Majesty's feet.

It belongs to a series of sketches, in which he has attempted to describe characters and manners peculiar to the most ancient, and most loyal, portion of all your Majesty's dominions; – it embraces a great part of the last century, the most prosperous period in the annals of Scotland, and singularly glorious to the administration of your Majesty's Illustrious Family; – it has been written since the era of your Majesty's joyous Visit to the venerable home of your Royal Ancestors; – and it is presented as a humble memorial of the feelings with which the Author, in common with all his countrymen, did homage to the King at Holyrood.

He has the happiness to be,
SIRE,
Your Majesty's
Most dutiful and most faithful
Subject and Servant.

Edinburgh, 3d December 1822.

CHAPTER I

Claud Walkinshaw was the sole surviving male heir of the Walkinshaws of Kittlestonheugh. His grandfather, the last Laird of the line, deluded by the golden visions that allured so many of the Scottish gentry to embark their fortunes in the Darien Expedition, sent his only son, the father of Claud, in one of the ships fitted out at Cartsdyke, and with him an adventure in which he had staked more than the whole value of his estate. But, as it is not our intention to fatigue the reader with any very circumstantial account of the state of the Laird's family, we shall pass over, with all expedient brevity, the domestic history of Claud's childhood. He was scarcely a year old when his father sailed, and his mother died of a broken heart, on hearing that her husband, with many of his companions, had perished of disease and famine among the swamps of the Mosquito shore. The Kittlestonheugh estate was soon after sold, and the Laird, with Claud, retired into Glasgow, where he rented the upper part of a back house, in Aird's Close, in the Drygate. The only servant whom, in this altered state, he could afford to retain, or rather the only one that he could not get rid of, owing to her age and infirmities, was Maudge Dobbie, who, in her youth, was bairnswoman to his son. She had been upwards of forty years in the servitude of his house; and the situation she had filled to the father of Claud did not tend to diminish the kindliness with which she regarded the child, especially when, by the ruin of her master, there was none but herself to attend him.

The charms of Maudge had, even in her vernal years, been confined to her warm and affectionate feelings; and, at this period, she was twisted east and west, and hither and yont, and Time, in the shape of old age, hung so embracingly round her neck, that his weight had bent her into a hoop. Yet, thus deformed and aged, she was not without qualities that might have endeared her to a more generous boy. Her father had been schoolmaster in the village of Kittleston; and under his tuition, before she was sent, as the phrase then was, to seek her bread in the world, she had acquired a few of the elements of learning beyond those which, in that period, fell to the common lot of female domestics: and she was thus enabled, not only to teach the orphan reading and writing, but even to supply him with some knowledge of arithmetic, particularly addition and the multiplication table. She also possessed a rich stock of goblin lore and romantic stories, the recital of which had given the father of Claud the taste for adventure that induced him to embark in the ill-fated expedition. These, however, were not so congenial to the less sanguine temperament of the son, who early preferred the history of Whittington and his Cat to the achievements of Sir William Wallace; and 'Tak your auld cloak about you,' ever seemed to him a thousand times more sensible than 'Chevy Chace.' As for that doleful ditty, the 'Flowers of the Forest,' it was worse than the 'Babes in the Wood'; and 'Gil Morrice' more wearisome than 'Death and the Lady'.

The solitary old Laird had not been long settled in his sequestered and humble town-retreat, when a change became visible both in his appearance and manners. He had been formerly bustling, vigorous, hearty, and social; but from the first account of the death of his son, and the ruin of his fortune, he grew thoughtful and sedentary, and shunned the approach of strangers, and retired from the visits of his friends. Sometimes he sat for whole days, without speaking, and without even noticing the kitten-like gambols of his grandson; at others he would fondle over the child, and caress him with more than a grandfather's affection; again, he would peevishly brush the boy away as he clasped his knees, and hurry out of the house with short and agitated steps. His respectable portliness disappeared; his clothes began to hang loosely upon him; his colour fled; his face withered; and his legs wasted into meagre shanks. Before the end of the first twelve months, he was either unwilling or unable to move unassisted from the old arm chair, in which he sat from morning to night, with his grey head drooping over his breast; and one evening, when Maudge went to assist him to undress, she found he had been for some time dead.

After the funeral, Maudge removed with the penniless orphan to a garret-room in the Saltmarket, where she endeavoured to earn for him and herself the humble aliment of meal and salt, by working stockings; her infirmities and figure having disqualified her from the more profitable industry of the spinning-wheel. In this condition she remained for some time, pinched with poverty, but still patient with her lot, and preserving, nevertheless, a neat and decent exterior.

It was only in the calm of the summer Sabbath evenings that she indulged in the luxury of a view of the country; and her usual walk on those occasions, with Claud in her hand, was along the brow of Whitehill, which she perhaps preferred, because it afforded her a distant view of the scenes of her happier days; and while she pointed out to Claud the hills and lands of his forefathers, she exhorted him to make it his constant endeavour to redeem them, if possible, from their new possessors, regularly concluding her admonition with some sketch or portrait of the hereditary grandeur of his ancestors.

One afternoon, while she was thus engaged, Provost Gorbals and his wife made their appearance.

The Provost was a man in flourishing circumstances, and he was then walking with his lady to choose a site for a country-house which they had long talked of building. They were a stately corpulent couple, well befitting the magisterial consequence of the husband.

Mrs. Gorbals was arrayed in a stiff and costly yellow brocade, magnificently embroidered with flowers, the least of which was peony; but the exuberance of her ruffle cuffs and flounces, the richness of her lace apron, with the vast head-dress of catgut and millinery, together with her blue satin mantle, trimmed with ermine, are items in the gorgeous paraphernalia of the Glasgow ladies of that time, to which the pencil of some abler limner can alone do justice.

The appearance of the Provost himself became his dignity, and corresponded with the affluent garniture of his lady: it was indeed such, that, even had he not worn the golden chains of his dignity, there would have been no difficulty in determining him to be some personage dressed with at least a little brief authority. Over the magisterial vestments of black velvet, he wore a new scarlet cloak, although the day had been one of the sultriest in July; and, with a lofty consequential air, and an ample display of the corporeal acquisition which he had made at his own and other well furnished tables, he moved along, swinging at every step his tall golden-headed cane with the solemnity of a mandarin.

Claud was filled with wonder and awe at the sight of such splendid examples of Glasgow pomp and prosperity, but Maudge speedily rebuked his juvenile admiration.

'They're no worth the looking at,' said she; 'had ye but seen the last Leddy Kittlestonheugh, your ain muckle respekit grandmother, and her twa sisters, in their hench-hoops, with their fans in their han's – the three in a row would hae soopit the whole breadth o' the Trongate – ye would hae seen something. They were nane o' your new-made leddies, but come o' a pedigree. Foul would hae been the gait, and drooking the shower, that would hae gart them jook their heads intil the door o' ony sic thing as a Glasgow bailie – Na; Claudie, my lamb, thou maun lift thy een aboon the trash o' the town, and ay keep mind that the hills are standing yet that might hae been thy ain; and so may they yet be, an thou can but master the pride o' back and belly, and seek for something mair solid than the bravery o' sic a Solomon in all his glory as yon Provost Gorbals. – Heh, sirs, what a kyteful o' pride's yon'er! and yet I would be nane surprised the morn to hear that the Nebuchadnezzar was a' gane to pigs and whistles, and driven out wi' the divors bill to the barren pastures of bankruptcy.'

CHAPTER II

After taking a stroll round the brow of the hill, Provost Gorbals and his lady approached the spot where Maudge and Claud were sitting. As they drew near, the old woman rose, for she recognized in Mrs. Gorbals one of the former visitors at Kittlestonheugh. The figure of Maudge herself was so remarkable, that, seen once, it was seldom forgotten, and the worthy lady, almost at the same instant, said to the Provost, —

'Eh! Megsty, gudeman, if I dinna think yon's auld Kittlestonheugh's crookit bairnswoman. I won'er what's come o' the Laird, poor bodie, sin' he was rookit by the Darien. Eh! what an alteration it was to Mrs. Walkinshaw, his gudedochter. She was a bonny bodie; but frae the time o' the sore news, she croynt awa, and her life gied out like the snuff o' a can'le. Hey, Magdalene Dobbie, come hither to me, I'm wanting to speak to thee.'

Maudge, at this shrill obstreperous summons, leading Claud by the hand, went forward to the lady, who immediately said, —

'Ist t'ou ay in Kittlestonheugh's service, and what's come o' him, sin' his lan' was roupit?'

Maudge replied respectfully, and with the tear in her eye, that the Laird was dead.

'Dead!' exclaimed Mrs. Gorbals, 'that's very extraordinare. I doubt he was ill off at his latter end. Whar did he die, poor man?'

'We were obligated,' said Maudge, somewhat comforted by the compassionate accent of the lady, 'to come intil Glasgow, where he fell into a decay o' nature.' And she added, with a sigh that was almost a sob, "Deed, it's vera true, he died in a sare straitened circumstance, and left this helpless laddie upon my hands.'

The Provost, who had in the meantime been still looking about in quest of a site for his intended mansion, on hearing this, turned round, and putting his hand in his pocket, said, —

'An' is this Kittlestonheugh's oe? I'm sure it's a vera pitiful thing o' you, lucky, to take compassion on the orphan; hae, my laddie, there's a saxpence.'

'Saxpence, gudeman!' exclaimed the Provost's lady, 'ye'll ne'er even your han' wi' a saxpence to the like of Kittlestonheugh, for sae we're bound in nature to call him, landless though his lairdship now be; poor bairn, I'm wae for't. Ye ken his mother was sib to mine by the father's side, and blood's thicker than water ony day.'

Generosity is in some degree one of the necessary qualifications of a Glasgow magistrate, and Provost Gorbals being as well endowed with it as any of his successors have been since, was not displeased with the benevolent warmth of his wife, especially when he understood that Claud was of their own kin. On the contrary, he said affectionately, —

'Really it was vera thoughtless o' me, Liezy, my dear; but ye ken I have na an instinct to make me acquaint wi' the particulars of folk, before hearing about them. I'm sure no living soul can have a greater compassion than mysel' for gentle blood come to needcessity.'

Mrs. Gorbals, however, instead of replying to this remark – indeed, what could she say, for experience had taught her that it was perfectly just – addressed herself again to Maudge.

'And whar dost t'ou live? and what hast t'ou to live upon?'

'I hae but the mercy of Providence,' was the humble answer of honest Maudge, 'and a garret-room in John Sinclair's lan'. I ettle as weel as I can for a morsel, by working stockings; but Claud's a rumbling laddie, and needs mair than I hae to gi'e him: a young appetite's a growing evil in the poor's aught.'

The Provost and his wife looked kindly at each other, and the latter added, —

'Gudeman, ye maun do something for them. It'll no fare the waur wi' our basket and our store.'

And Maudge was in consequence requested to bring Claud with her that evening to the Provost's House in the Bridgegate. 'I think,' added Mrs. Gorbals, 'that our Hughoc's auld claes will just do for

him; and Maudge, keep a good heart, we'll no let thee want. I won'er t'ou did na think of making an application to us afore.'

'No,' replied the old woman, 'I could ne'er do that – I would hae been in an unco strait before I would hae begget on my own account; and how could I think o' disgracing the family? Any help that the Lord may dispose your hearts to gi'e, I'll accept wi' great thankfulness, but an almous is what I hope He'll ne'er put it upon me to seek; and though Claud be for the present a weight and burden, yet, an he's sparet, he'll be able belyve to do something for himsel'.'

Both the Provost and Mrs. Gorbals commended her spirit; and, from this interview, the situation of Maudge was considerably improved by their constant kindness. Doubtless, had Mr. Gorbals lived, he would have assisted Claud into business, but, dying suddenly, his circumstances were discovered to be less flourishing than the world had imagined, and his widow found herself constrained to abridge her wonted liberality.

Maudge, however, wrestled with poverty as well as she could, till Claud had attained his eleventh year, when she thought he was of a sufficient capacity to do something for himself. Accordingly, she intimated to Mrs. Gorbals that she hoped it would be in her power to help her with the loan of a guinea to set him out in the world with a pack. This the lady readily promised, but advised her to make application first to his relation, Miss Christiana Heritage.

'She's in a bien circumstance,' said Mrs. Gorbals, 'for her father, auld Windywa's, left her weel on to five hundred pounds, and her cousin, Lord Killycrankie, ane of the fifteen that ay staid in our house when he rode the Circuit, being heir of entail to her father, alloos her the use of the house, so that she's in a way to do muckle for the laddie, if her heart were so inclined.'

Maudge, agreeably to this suggestion, went next day to Windywalls; but we must reserve our account of the mansion and its mistress to enrich our next chapter, for Miss Christiana was, even in our day and generation, a personage of no small consequence in her own eyes: indeed, for that matter, she was no less in ours, if we may judge by the niche which she occupies in the gallery of our recollection, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

CHAPTER III

In the course of the same summer in which we commenced those grammar-school acquirements, that, in after-life, have been so deservedly celebrated, our revered relative, the late old Lady Havers, carried us in her infirm dowagerian chariot to pay her annual visit to Miss Christiana Heritage. In the admiration with which we contemplated the venerable mansion and its ancient mistress, an indistinct vision rises in our fancy of a large irregular whitewashed house, with a tall turnpike staircase; over the low and dwarfish arched door of which a huge cable was carved in stone, and dropped in a knotted festoon at each side. The traditions of the neighbourhood ascribed this carving to the Pictish sculptors, who executed the principal ornaments of the High Kirk of Glasgow.

On entering under this feudal arch we ascended a spiral stair, and were shown into a large and lofty room, on three sides of which, each far in a deep recess, was a narrow window glazed with lozens of yellow glass, that seemed scarcely more transparent than horn. The walls were hung with tapestry, from which tremendous forms, in warlike attitudes and with grim aspects, frowned in apparitional obscurity.

But of all the circumstances of a visit, which we must ever consider as a glimpse into the presence-chamber of the olden time, none made so deep and so vivid an impression upon our young remembrance as the appearance and deportment of Miss Christiana herself. She had been apprised of Lady Havers' coming, and was seated in state to receive her, on a large settee adorned with ancestral needlework. She rose as our venerable relation entered the room. Alas! we have lived to know that we shall never again behold the ceremonial of a reception half so solemnly performed.

Miss Christiana was dressed in a courtly suit of purple Genoese velvet; her petticoat, spread by her hoop, extended almost to arms-length at each side. The ruffle cuffs which hung at her elbows loaded with lead, were coëval with the Union, having been worn by her mother when she attended her husband to that assembly of the States of Scotland, which put an end to the independence and poverty of the kingdom. But who, at this distance of time, shall presume to estimate the altitude of the Babylonian tower of toupees and lappets which adorned Miss Christiana's brow?

It is probable that the reception which she gave to poor Maudge and Claud was not quite so ceremonious as ours; for the substantial benison of the visit was but half-a-crown. Mrs. Gorbals, on hearing this, exclaimed with a just indignation against the near-be-gawn Miss Christiana, and setting herself actively to work, soon collected, among her acquaintance, a small sum sufficient to enable Maudge to buy and furnish a pack for Claud. James Bridle the saddlemaker, who had worked for his father, gave him a present of a strap to sling it over his shoulder; and thus, with a judicious selection of godly and humorous tracts, curtain rings, sleeve buttons, together with a compendious assortment of needles and pins, thimbles, stay-laces and garters, with a bunch of ballads and excellent new songs, Claud Walkinshaw espoused his fortune.

His excursions at first were confined to the neighbouring villages, and as he was sly and gabby, he soon contrived to get in about the good-will of the farmers' wives, and in process of time, few pedlars in all the west country were better liked, though every one complained that he was the dearest and the gairest.

His success equalled the most sanguine expectations of Maudge, but Mrs. Gorbals thought he might have recollected, somewhat better than he did, the kindness and care with which the affectionate old creature had struggled to support him in his helplessness. As often, however, as that warm-hearted lady inquired if he gave her any of his winnings, Maudge was obliged to say, 'I hope, poor lad, he has more sense than to think o' the like o' me. Is na he striving to make a conquest of the lands of his forefathers? Ye ken he's come o' gentle blood, and I am nae better than his servan'.'

But although Maudge spoke thus generously, still sometimes, when she had afterwards become bedrid, and was left to languish and linger out the remnant of age in her solitary garret, comforted

only by the occasional visits and charitable attentions of Mrs. Gorbals, the wish would now and then rise, that Claud, when he was prospering in the traffic of the Borders, would whiles think of her forlorn condition. But it was the lambent play of affection, in which anxiety to see him again before she died was stronger than any other feeling, and as often as she felt it moving her to repine at his inattention, she would turn herself to the wall, and implore the Father of Mercies to prosper his honest endeavours, and that he might ne'er be troubled in his industry with any thought about such a burden as it had pleased Heaven to make her to the world.

After having been bedrid for about the space of two years, Maudge died. Claud, in the meantime, was thriving as well as the prigging wives and higgling girls in his beat between the Nith and the Tyne would permit. Nor was there any pedlar better known at the fairs of the Border towns, or who displayed on those occasions such a rich assortment of goods. It was thought by some, that, in choosing that remote country for the scene of his itinerant trade, he was actuated by some sentiment of reverence for the former consequence of his family. But, as faithful historians, we are compelled to remind the reader, that he was too worldly-wise to indulge himself with any thing so romantic; the absolute fact being, that, after trying many other parts of the country, he found the Borders the most profitable, and that the inhabitants were also the most hospitable customers, – no small item in the arithmetical philosophy of a pedlar.

CHAPTER IV

About twenty years after the death of Maudge, Claud returned to Glasgow with five hundred pounds above the world, and settled himself as a cloth-merchant, in a shop under the piazza of a house which occupied part of the ground where the Exchange now stands. The resolution which he had early formed to redeem the inheritance of his ancestors, and which his old affectionate benefactress had perhaps inspired, as well as cherished, was grown into a habit. His carefulness, his assiduity, his parsimony, his very honesty, had no other object nor motive; it was the actuating principle of his life. Some years after he had settled in Glasgow, his savings and gathering enabled him to purchase the farm of Grippy, a part of the patrimony of his family.

The feelings of the mariner returning home, when he again beholds the rising hills of his native land, and the joys and fears of the father's bosom, when, after a long absence, he approaches the abode of his children, are tame and calm, compared to the deep and greedy satisfaction with which the persevering pedlar received the earth and stone that gave him infeftment of that cold and sterile portion of his forefathers' estate. In the same moment he formed a resolution worthy of the sentiment he then felt, – a sentiment which, in a less sordid breast, might have almost partaken of the pride of virtue. He resolved to marry, and beget children, and entail the property, that none of his descendants might ever have it in their power to commit the imprudence which had brought his grandfather to a morsel, and thrown himself on the world. And the same night, after maturely considering the prospects of all the heiresses within the probable scope of his ambition, he resolved that his affections should be directed towards Miss Girzy Hypel, the only daughter of Malachi Hypel, the Laird of Plealands.

They were in some degree related, and he had been led to think of her from an incident which occurred on the day he made the purchase. Her father was, at the time, in Glasgow, attending the Circuit; for, as often as the judges visited the city, he had some dispute with a neighbour or a tenant that required their interposition. Having heard of what had taken place, he called on Claud to congratulate him on the recovery of so much of his family inheritance.

'I hear,' said the Laird, on entering the shop, and proffering his hand across the counter, 'that ye hae gotten a sappy bargain o' the Grippy. It's true some o' the lands are but cauld; howsever, cousin, ne'er fash your thumb, Glasgow's on the thrive, and ye hae as many een in your head, for an advantage, as ony body I ken. But now that ye hae gotten a house, wha's to be the leddy? I'm sure ye might do waur than cast a sheep's e'e in at our door; my dochter Girzy's o' your ain flesh and blood; I dinna see ony moral impossibility in her becoming, as the Psalmist says, "bone of thy bone."'

Claud replied in his wonted couthy manner:

'Nane o' your jokes, Laird, – me even mysel to your dochter? Na, na, Plealands, that canna be thought o' nowadays. But, no to make a ridicule of sic a solemn concern, it's vera true that, had na my grandfather, when he was grown doited, sent out a' the Kittlestonheugh in a cargo o' playocks to the Darien, I might hae been in a state and condition to look at Miss Girzy; but, ye ken, I hae a lang clue to wind before I maun think o' playing the ba' wi' Fortune, in ettling so far aboun my reach.'

'Snuffs o' tobacco,' exclaimed the Laird, – 'are nae ye sib to oursels? and, if ye dinna fail by your ain blateness, our Girzy's no surely past speaking to. Just lay your leg, my man, o'er a side o' horse flesh, and come your ways, some Saturday, to speer her price.'

It was upon this delicate hint that Grippy was induced to think of Miss Girzy Hypel; but finding that he was deemed a fit match for her, and might get her when he would, he deferred the visit until he had cast about among the other neighbouring lairds' families for a better, that is to say, a richer match. In this, whether he met with repulsive receptions, or found no satisfactory answers to his inquiries, is not quite certain; but, as we have said, in the same night on which he took legal possession of his purchase, he resolved to visit Plealands; and in order that the family might not be taken unawares,

he sent a letter next day by the Ayr carrier to apprise the Laird of his intention, provided it was convenient to receive him for a night. To this letter, by the return of Johnny Drizen, the carrier, on the week following, he received such a cordial reply, that he was induced to send for Cornelius Luke, the tailor, a douce and respectable man, and one of the elders of the Tron Kirk.

'Come your ways, Cornie,' said the intending lover; 'I want to speak to you anent what's doing about the new kirk on the Green Know.'

'Doing, Mr. Walkinshaw! – it's a doing that our bairns' bairns will ne'er hear the end o' – a rank and carnal innovation on the spirit o' the Kirk o' Scotland,' replied the elder – 'It's to be after the fashion o' some prelatic Babel in Lon'on, and they hae christened it already by the papistical name o' St. Andrew – a sore thing that, Mr. Walkinshaw; but the Lord has set his face against it, and the builders thereof are smitten as wi' a confusion o' tongues, in the lack o' siller to fulfil their idolatrous intents – Blessed be His name for evermore! But was na Mr. Kilfuddy, wha preached for Mr. Anderson last Sabbath, most sweet and delectable on the vanities of this life, in his forenoon lecture? and did na ye think, when he spoke o' that seventh wonder o' the world, the temple of Diana, and enlarged wi' sic pith and marrow on the idolaters in Ephesus, that he was looking o'er his shouther at Lowrie Dinwiddie and Provost Aiton, who are no wrang't in being wytid wi' the sin o' this inordinate superstructure? – Mr. Walkinshaw, am nae prophet, as ye will ken, but I can see that the day's no far aff, when ministers of the gospel in Glasgow will be seen chambering and wantoning to the sound o' the kist fu' o' whistles, wi' the seven-headed beast routing its choruses at every o'ercome o' the spring.'

Which prediction was in our own day and generation to a great degree fulfilled; at the time, however, it only served to move the pawkie cloth-merchant to say,

'Nae doubt, Cornie, the world's like the tod's whelp, ay the aulder the waur; but I trust we'll hear news in the land before the like o' that comes to pass. Howsever, in the words of truth and holiness, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" and let us hope, that a regenerating spirit may go forth to the ends o' the earth, and that all the sons of men will not be utterly cut up, root and branch.'

'No: be thankit,' said Cornelius, the tailor – 'even of those that shall live in the latter days, a remnant will be saved.'

'That's a great comfort, Mr. Luke, to us a',' replied Claud; – 'but, talking o' remnants, I hae a bit blue o' superfine; it has been lang on hand, and the moths are beginning to meddle wi't – I won'er if ye could mak me a coat o't?'

The remnant was then produced on the counter, and Cornelius, after inspecting it carefully, declared, that, 'with the help of a steek or twa of darning, that would na be percep, it would do very well.' The cloth was accordingly delivered to him, with strict injunctions to have it ready by Friday, and with all the requisite et ceteras to complete a coat, he left the shop greatly edified, as he told his wife, by the godly salutations of Mr. Walkinshaw's spirit; 'wherein,' as he said, 'there was a kithing of fruit meet for repentance; a foretaste o' things that pertain not to this life; a receiving o' the erls of righteousness and peace, which passeth all understanding, and endureth for evermore.'

'I'm blithe to hear't,' was the worthy woman's answer, 'for he's an even down Nabal – a perfect penure pig, that I ne'er could abide since he would na lend poor old Mrs. Gorbals, the provost's widow, that, they say, set him up in the world, the sma' soom o' five pounds, to help her wi' the outfit o' her oe, when he was gaun to Virginia, a clerk to Bailie Cross.'

CHAPTER V

When Claud was duly equipped by Cornelius Luke, in the best fashion of that period, for a bien cloth-merchant of the discreet age of forty-seven, a message was sent by his shop lad, Jock Gleg, to Rob Wallace, the horse-couper in the Gallowgate, to have his beast in readiness next morning by seven o'clock, the intending lover having, several days before, bespoke it for the occasion.

Accordingly, at seven o'clock on Saturday morning, Rob was with the horse himself, at the entry to Cochran's Land, in the Candleriggs, where Claud then lodged, and the wooer, in the sprucest cut of his tailor, with a long silver-headed whip in his hand, borrowed from his friend and customer, Bailie Murdoch, attended by Jock Gleg, carrying a stool, came to the close mouth.

'I'm thinking, Mr. Walkinshaw,' said Rob, the horse-couper, 'that ye would na be the waur of a spur, an it were only on the ae heel.'

'We maun do our best without that commodity, Rob,' replied Claud, trying to crack his whip in a gallant style, but unfortunately cutting his own leg through the dark blue rig-and-fur gamashins; for he judiciously considered, that, for so short a journey, and that, too, on speculation, it was not worth his while to get a pair of boots.

Rob drew up the horse, and Jock having placed the stool, Claud put his right foot in the stirrup, at which Rob and some of the students of the college, who happened to be attracted to the spot, with diverse others then and there present, set up a loud shout of laughter, much to his molestation. But surely no man is expected to know by instinct the proper way of mounting a horse; and this was the first time that Claud had ever ascended the back of any quadruped.

When he had clambered into the saddle, Rob led the horse into the middle of the street, and the beast, of its own accord, walked soberly across the Trongate towards the Stockwell. The conduct of the horse, for some time, was indeed most considerate, and, in consequence, although Claud hung heavily over his neck, and held him as fast as possible with his knees, he passed the bridge, and cleared the buildings beyond, without attracting, in any particular degree, the admiration of the public towards his rider. But, in an unguarded moment, the infatuated Claud rashly thought it necessary to employ the Bailie's whip, and the horse, so admonished, quickened his pace to a trot. 'Heavens, ca' they this riding?' exclaimed Claud, and almost bit his tongue through in the utterance. However, by the time they reached Cathcart, it was quite surprising to see how well he worked in the saddle; and, notwithstanding the continued jolting, how nobly he preserved his balance. But, on entering that village, all the dogs, in the most terrifying manner, came rushing out from the cottage doors, and pursued the trotting horse with such bark and bay, that the poor animal saw no other for't, but to trot from them faster and faster. The noise of the dogs, and of a passenger on horseback, drew forth the inhabitants, and at every door might be seen beldams with flannel caps, and mothers with babies in their arms, and clusters of children around them. It was the general opinion among all the spectators, on seeing the spruce new clothes of Claud, and his vaulting horsemanship, that he could be no less a personage than the Lord Provost of Glasgow.

Among them were a few country lads, who, perceiving how little the rider's seat of honour was accustomed to a saddle, had the wickedness to encourage and egg on the dogs to attack the horse still more furiously; but, notwithstanding their malice, Claud still kept his seat, until all the dogs but one devil of a terrier had retired from the pursuit: nothing could equal the spirit and pertinacity with which that implacable cur hung upon the rear, and snapped at the heels of the horse. Claud, who durst not venture to look behind, lest he should lose his balance, several times damned the dog with great sincerity, and tried to lash him away with Bailie Murdoch's silver-headed whip, but the terrier would not desist.

How long the attack might have continued, there is certainly no telling, as it was quickly determined by one of those lucky hits of fortune which are so desirable in life. The long lash of the

Bailie's whip, in one of Claud's blind attempts, happily knotted itself round the neck of the dog. The horse, at the same moment, started forward into that pleasant speed at which the pilgrims of yore were wont to pass from London to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury (which, for brevity, is in vulgar parlance called, in consequence, a canter); and Claud dragged the terrier at his whip-string end, like an angler who has hooked a salmon that he cannot raise out of the water, until he met with Johnny Drizen, the Ayr carrier, coming on his weekly journey to Glasgow.

'Lordsake, Mr. Walkinshaw!' exclaimed the carrier, as he drew his horse aside – 'in the name of the Lord, whare are ye gaun, and what's that ye're hauling ahint you?'

'For the love of Heaven, Johnny,' replied the distressed cloth-merchant, pale with apprehension, and perspiring at every pore, – 'for the love of Heaven, stop this desperate beast!'

The tone of terror and accent of anguish in which this invocation was uttered, had such an effect on the humanity and feelings of the Ayr carrier, that he ran towards Claud with the ardour of a philanthropist, and seized the horse by the bridle rings. Claud, in the same moment, threw down the whip, with the strangled dog at the lash; and, making an endeavour to vault out of the saddle, fell into the mire, and materially damaged the lustre and beauty of his new coat. However, he soon regained his legs, but they so shook and trembled, that he could scarcely stand, as he bent forward with his feet widely asunder, being utterly unable for some time to endure in any other position the pain of that experience of St. Sebastian's martyrdom which he had locally suffered.

His first words to the carrier were, 'Man, Johnny, this is the roughest brute that ever was created. Twa dyers wi' their beetles could na hae done me mair detriment. I dinna think I'll e'er be able to sit down again.'

This colloquy was, however, speedily put an end to, by the appearance of a covered cart, in which three ministers were returning from the synod to their respective parishes in Ayrshire; for at that time neither post-chaise nor stage-coach was numbered among the luxuries of Glasgow. One of them happened to be the identical Mr. Kilfuddy of Braehill, who had lectured so learnedly about the Temple of Diana on the preceding Sunday in the Tron Church; and he, being acquainted with Claud, said, as he looked out and bade the driver to stop, —

'Dear me, Mr. Walkinshaw, but ye hae gotten an unco cowp. I hope nae banes are broken?'

'No,' replied Claud a little pawkily, 'no; thanks be and praise – the banes, I believe, are a' to the fore; but it's no to be expressed what I hae suffer't in the flesh.'

Some further conversation then ensued, and the result was most satisfactory, for Claud was invited to take a seat in the cart with the ministers, and induced to send his horse back to Rob Wallace by Johnny Drizen the carrier. Thus, without any material augmentation of his calamity, was he conveyed to the gate which led to Plealands. The Laird, who had all the morning been anxiously looking out for him, on seeing the cart approaching, left the house, and was standing ready at the yett to give him welcome.

CHAPTER VI

Plealands House stood on the bleak brow of a hill. It was not of great antiquity, having been raised by the father of Malachi; but it occupied the site of an ancient fortalice, the materials of which were employed in its construction; and as no great skill of the sculptor had been exerted to change the original form of the lintels and their ornaments, it had an air of antiquity much greater than properly belonged to its years.

About as much as the habitation had been altered from its primitive character, the master too had been modernized. But, in whatever degree he may have been supposed to have declined from the heroic bearing of his ancestors, he still inherited, in unabated vigour, the animosity of their spirit; and if the coercive influence of national improvement prevented him from being distinguished in the feud and foray, the books of sederunt, both of the Glasgow Circuit and of the Court of Session, bore ample testimony to his constancy before them in asserting supposed rights, and in vindicating supposed wrongs.

In his personal appearance, Malachi Hypel had but few pretensions to the gallant air and grace of the gentlemen of that time. He was a coarse hard-favoured fresh-coloured carl, with a few white hairs thinly scattered over a round bald head. His eyes were small and grey, quick in the glance, and sharp in the expression. He spoke thickly and hurriedly, and although his words were all very cogently strung together, there was still an unaccountable obscurity in the precise meaning of what he said. In his usual style of dress he was rude and careless, and he commonly wore a large flat-brimmed blue bonnet; but on the occasion when he came to the gate to receive Claud, he had on his Sunday suit and hat.

After the first salutations were over, he said to Claud, on seeing him walking lamely and uneasily, 'What's the matter, Grippy, that ye seem sae stiff and sair?'

'I met wi' a bit accident,' was Claud's reply: 'Rob Wallace, the horse-couper, gied me sic a deevil to ride as, I believe, never man before mounted. I would na wish my sworn enemy a greater ill than a day's journey on that beast's back, especially an he was as little used to riding as me.'

The latter clause of the sentence was muttered inwardly, for the Laird did not hear it; otherwise he would probably have indulged his humour a little at the expense of his guest, as he had a sort of taste for caustic jocularity, which the hirpling manner of Claud was, at the moment, well calculated to provoke.

On reaching the brow of the rising ground where the house stood, the leddy, as Mrs. Hypel was emphatically called by the neighbouring cottars, with Miss Girzy, came out to be introduced to their relative.

Whether the leddy, a pale, pensive, delicate woman, had been informed by the Laird of the object of Claud's visit, we do not thoroughly know, but she received him with a polite and friendly respectfulness. Miss Girzy certainly was in total ignorance of the whole business, and was, therefore, not embarrassed with any virgin palpitations, nor blushing anxieties; on the contrary, she met him with the ease and freedom of an old acquaintance.

It might here be naturally expected that we should describe the charms of Miss Girzy's person, and the graces of her mind; but, in whatever degree she possessed either, she had been allowed to reach the discreet years of a Dumbarton youth in unsolicited maidenhood; indeed, with the aid of all the prospective interest of the inheritance around her, she did not make quite so tender an impression on the heart of her resolved lover as he himself could have wished. But why should we expatiate on such particulars? Let the manners and virtues of the family speak for themselves, while we proceed to relate what ensued.

CHAPTER VII

'Girzy,' said the Laird to his daughter, as they entered the dining-room, 'gae to thy bed and bring a cod for Mr. Walkinshaw, for he'll no can thole to sit down on our hard chairs.'

Miss Girzy laughed as she retired to execute the order, while her mother continued, as she had done from the first introduction, to inspect Claud from head to foot, with a curious and something of a suspicious eye; there was even an occasional flush that gleamed through the habitual paleness of her thoughtful countenance, redder and warmer than the hectic glow of mere corporeal indisposition. Her attention, however, was soon drawn to the spacious round table, in the middle of the room, by one of the maids entering with a large pewter tureen, John Drappie, the manservant, having been that morning sent on some caption and horning business of the Laird's to Gabriel Beagle, the Kilmarnock lawyer. But, as the critics hold it indelicate to describe the details of any refectionary supply, however elegant, we must not presume to enumerate the series and succession of Scottish fare, which soon crowned the board, all served on pewter as bright as plate. Our readers must endeavour, by the aid of their own fancies, to form some idea of the various forms in which the head and harigals of the sheep, that had been put to death for the occasion, were served up, not forgetting the sonsy, savoury, sappy haggis, together with the gude fat hen, the float whey, which, in a large china punch-bowl, graced the centre of the table, and supplied the place of jellies, tarts, tartlets, and puddings.

By the time the table was burdened, Miss Girzy had returned with the pillow, which she herself placed in one of the armchairs, shaking and patting it into plumpness, as she said, —

'Come round here, Mr. Walkinshaw, – I trow ye'll fin' this a saft easy seat, – well do I ken what it is to be saddle-sick mysel'. Lordsake, when I gaed in ahint my father to see the robber hanged at Ayr, I was for mair than three days just as if I had sat doun on a heckle.'

When the cloth was removed, and the ladies had retired, the Laird opened his mind by stretching his arm across the table towards his guest, and, shaking him again heartily by the hand, —

'Weel, Grippy,' said he, 'but am blithe to see you here; and, if am no mistaen, Girzy will no be ill to woo. – Is na she a coothy and kind creature? – She'll make you a capital wife. – There's no another in the parish that kens better how to manage a house. – Man, it would do your heart gude to hear how she rants among the servan' lasses, lazy sluts, that would like nothing better than to live at heck and manger, and bring their master to a morsel; but I trow Girzy gars them keep a trig house and a birring wheel.'

'No doubt, Laird,' replied Claud, 'but it's a comfort to hae a frugal woman for a helpmate; but ye ken nowadays it's no the fashion for bare legs to come thegither. – The wife maun hae something to put in the pot as well as the man. – And, although Miss Girzy may na be a'thegither objectionable, yet it would still be a pleasant thing baith to hersel' and the man that gets her, an ye would just gi'e a bit inkling o' what she'll hae.'

'Is na she my only dochter? That's a proof and test that she'll get a', – naebody needs to be teld mair.'

'Vera true, Laird,' rejoined the suitor, 'but the leddy's life's in her lip, and if ony thing were happening to her, ye're a hale man, and wha kens what would be the upshot o' a second marriage?'

'That's looking far ben,' replied the Laird, and he presently added, more briskly, 'My wife, to be sure, is a frail woman, but she's no the gear that 'ill traike.'

In this delicate and considerate way, the overture to a purpose of marriage was opened; and, not to dwell on particulars, it is sufficient to say, that, in the course of little more than a month thereafter, Miss Girzy was translated into the Leddy of Grippy; and in due season presented her husband with a son and heir, who was baptized by the name of Charles.

When the birth was communicated to the Laird, he rode expressly to Grippy to congratulate his son-in-law on the occasion; and, when they were sitting together, in the afternoon, according to

the fashion of the age, enjoying the contents of the gardevin entire, Claud warily began to sound him on a subject that lay very near his heart.

'Laird,' said he, 'ye ken the Walkinshaws of Kittlestonheugh are o' a vera ancient blood, and but for the doited prank o' my grandfather, in sending my father on that gouk's errand to the Darien, the hills are green and the land broad that should this day hae been mine; and, therefore, to put it out o' the power of posterity to play at any sic wastrie again, I mean to entail the property of the Grippy.'

'That's a very good conceit,' replied the Laird, 'and I hae mysel' had a notion of entailing the Plealands likewise.'

'So I hae heard you say,' rejoined Claud, 'and now that the bairn's born, and a laddie too, we may make ae work o't.'

'Wi' a' my heart,' replied the Laird, 'nothing can be more agreeable to me; but as I wish to preserve the name of my family, than whilk there's no a more respectit in Scotland, I'll only covenant that when Charlie succeeds me, that he'll take the name o' Hypel.'

'Ye surely, Laird, would ne'er be so unreasonable,' replied Grippy, a little hastily; 'ye can ne'er be sae unreasonable as to expect that the lad would gie up his father's name, the name o' Walkinshaw, and take only that of Hypel.'

"Deed would I,' said the Laird, 'for no haeing a son o' my own to come after me, it's surely very natural that I would like the Hypels to kittle again in my oe through my only dochter.'

'The Walkinshaws, I doubt,' replied Claud emphatically, 'will ne'er consent to sic an eclipse as that.'

'The lands of Plealands,' retorted the Laird, 'are worth something.'

'So it was thought, or I doubt the heir o't would nae hae been a Walkinshaw,' replied Claud, still more pertinaciously.

'Weel, weel,' said the Laird, 'dinna let us argol bargol about it; entail your own property as ye will, mine shall be on the second son; ye can ne'er object to that.'

'Second son, and the first scarce sax days auld! I tell you what it is, an ye'll no make the entail on the first, that is, on Charlie Walkinshaw, to be Walkinshaw, mind that, I'll no say what may happen in the way o' second sons.'

'The Plealands' my ain, and though I canna weel will it awa', and ne'er will sell't, yet get it wha will, he maun tak the name o' Hypel. The thing's sae settled, Grippy, and it's no for you and me to cast out about it.'

Claud made several attempts to revive the subject, and to persuade the Laird to change his mind, but he was inflexible. Still, however, being resolved, as far as in him lay, to anticipate the indiscretion of his heirs, he executed a deed of entail on Charles; and for a considerable time after the Laird was not a little confirmed in his determination not to execute any deed in favour of Charles, but to reserve his lands for the second son, by the very reason that might have led another sort of person to act differently, namely, that he understood there was no prospect of any such appearing.

Towards the end, however, of the third year after the birth of Charles, Claud communicated to the Laird, that, by some unaccountable dispensation, Mrs. Walkinshaw was again in the way to be a mother, adding, 'Noo, Laird, ye'll hae your ain way o't;' and, accordingly, as soon as Walter, the second son, was born, and baptized, the lands of Plealands were entailed on him, on condition, as his grandfather intended, that he should assume the name of Hypel.

CHAPTER VIII

For several years after the birth of Walter, no event of any consequence happened in the affairs of Claud. He continued to persevere in the parsimonious system which had so far advanced his fortune. His wife was no less industrious on her part, for, in the meantime, she presented him with a daughter and another son, and had reared calves and grumphies innumerable, the profit of which, as she often said, was as good as the meal and malt o' the family. By their united care and endeavours, Grippy thus became one of the wealthiest men of that age in Glasgow; but although different desirable opportunities presented themselves for investing his money in other and more valuable land, he kept it ever ready to redeem any portion of his ancestral estate that might be offered for sale.

The satisfaction which he enjoyed from his accumulative prospects was not, however, without a mixture of that anxiety with which the cup of human prosperity, whether really full, or only foaming, is always embittered. The Laird, his father-in-law, in the deed of entail which he executed of the Plealands, had reserved to himself a power of revocation, in the event of his wife dying before him, in the first instance, and of Walter and George, the two younger sons of Grippy, either dying under age, or refusing to take the name of Hypel, in the second. This power, both under the circumstances, and in itself, was perfectly reasonable; and perhaps it was the more vexatious to the meditations of Claud, that it happened to be so. For he often said to his wife, as they sat of an evening by the fire-side in the dark, for as the leddy was no seamstress, and he had as little taste for literature, of course, they burned no candles when by themselves, and that was almost every night, – 'I marvel, Girzy, what could gar your father put that most unsafe claw in his entail. I would na be surprised if out o' it were to come a mean of taking the property entirely frae us. For ye see, if your mither was dead, and, poor woman, she has lang been in a feckless way, there's no doubt but your father would marry again, – and married again, there can be as little doubt that he would hae childer, – so what then would become o' ours – '

To this the worthy leddy of Grippy would as feelingly reply, —

'I'm thinking, gudeman, that ye need na tak the anxieties sae muckle to heart; for, although my mither has been, past the memory o' man, in a complaining condition, I ken nae odds o' her this many a year; her ail's like water to leather; it makes her life the tougher; and I would put mair confidence in the durability of her complaint than in my father's health; so we need na fash ourselves wi' controverting anent what may come o' the death o' either the t'ane or the t'ither.'

'But then,' replied Claud, 'ye forget the other claw about Watty and Geordie. Supposing, noo, that they were baith dead and gone, which, when we think o' the frush green kail-custock-like nature of bairns, is no an impossibility in the hands of their Maker. Will it no be the most hardest thing that ever was seen in the world for Charlie no to inherit the breadth o' the blade of a cabaudge o' a' his father's matrimonial conquest? But even should it please the Lord to spare Watty, is't no an afflicting thing, to see sic a braw property as the Plealands destined to a creature that I am sure his brother Geordie, if he lives to come to years o' discretion, will no fail to tak the law o' for a haverel?'

'I won'er to hear you, gudeman,' exclaimed the leddy, 'ay mislikening Watty at that gait. I'm sure he's as muckle your ain as ony o' the ither bairns; and he's a weel-tempered laddie, lilting like a linty at the door-cheek frae morning to night, when Charlie's rampaging about the farm, riving his claes on bush and brier a' the summer, tormenting the birds and mawkins out o' their vera life.'

'Singing, Girzy, I'm really distressed to hear you,' replied the father; 'to ca' yon singing; it's nothing but lal, lal, lal, lal, wi' a bow and a bend, backwards and forwards, as if the creature had na the gumpshion o' the cuckoo, the whilk has a note mair in its sang, although it has but twa.'

'It's an innocent sang for a' that; and I wish his brothers may ne'er do waur than sing the like o't. But ye just hae a spite at the bairn, gudeman, 'cause my father has made him the heir to the Plealands. That's the gospel truth o' your being so fain to gar folk trow that my Watty's daft.'

'Ye're daft, gudewife – are na we speaking here in a rational manner anent the concerns o' our family? It would be a sair heart to me to think that Watty, or any o' my bairns, were na like the lave o' the warld; but ye ken there are degrees o' capacity, Girzy, and Watty's, poor callan, we maun alloo, between oursels, has been meted by a sma' measure.'

'Weel, if ever I heard the like o' that – if the Lord has dealt the brains o' our family in mutchkins and chapins, it's my opinion, that Watty got his in the biggest stoup; for he's farther on in every sort of education than Charlie, and can say his questions without missing a word, as far as "What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?" And I ne'er hae been able to get his brother beyond "What is effectual calling?" Though, I'll no deny, he's better at the Mother's Carritches; but that a' comes o' the questions and answers being so vera short.'

'That's the vera thing, Girzy, that disturbs me,' replied the father, 'for the callan can get ony thing by heart, but, after all, he's just like a book, for every thing he learns is dead within him, and he's ne'er a prin's worth the wiser o't. But it's some satisfaction to me, that, since your father would be so unreasonably obstinate as to make away the Plealands past Charlie, he'll be punished in the gouk he's chosen for heir.'

'Gude guide us; is na that gouk your ain bairn?' exclaimed the indignant mother. 'Surely the man's fey about his entails and his properties, to speak o' the illess laddie, as if it were no better than a stirk or a stot. – Ye'll no hae the power to wrang my wean, while the breath o' life's in my body; so, I redde ye, tak tent to what ye try.'

'Girzy, t'ou has a head, and so has a nail.'

'Gudeman, ye hae a tongue, and so has a bell.'

'Weel, weel, but what I was saying a' concerns the benefit and advantage o' our family,' said Claud, 'and ye ken as it is our duty to live for one another, and to draw a' thegither, it behoves us twa, as parents, to see that ilk is properly yocket, sin' it would surely be a great misfortune, if, after a' our frugality and gathering, the cart were cowpit in the dirt at last by ony neglek on our part.'

'That's ay what ye say,' replied the lady, – 'a's for the family, and nothing for the dividual bairns – noo that's what I can never understand, for is na our family, Charlie, Watty, Geordie, and Meg?' —

'My family,' said Claud emphatically, 'was the Walkinshaws of Kittlestonheugh, and let me tell you, Girzy Hypel, if it had na been on their account, there would ne'er hae been a Charlie nor a Watty either between you and me to plea about.'

'I'm no denying your parentage – I ne'er said a light word about it, but I canna comprehend how it is, that ye would mak step-bairns o' your ain blithesome childer on account o' a wheen auld dead patriarchs that hae been rotten, for aught I ken to the contrary, since before Abraham begat Isaac.'

'Haud thy tongue, woman, haud thy tongue. It's a thrashing o' the water, and a raising o' bells, to speak to ane o' thy capacity on things so far aboon thy understanding. Gae but the house, and see gin the supper's ready.'

In this manner, the conversations between Grippy and his leddy were usually conducted to their natural issue, a quarrel, which ended in a rupture that was only healed by a peremptory command, which sent her on some household mission, during the performance of which the bickering was forgotten.

CHAPTER IX

In the meantime, as much friendliness and intercourse was maintained between the families of Grippy and Plealands as could reasonably be expected from the characters and dispositions of the respective inmates. Shortly, however, after the conversation related in the preceding chapter had taken place, it happened that, as Malachi was returning on horseback from Glasgow, where he had lost a law-suit, long prosecuted with the most relentless pertinacity against one of his tenants, he was overtaken on the Mairns Moor by one of those sudden squalls and showers, which the genius of the place so often raises, no doubt purposely, to conceal from the weary traveller the dreariness of the view around, and being wetted into the skin, the cold which he caught in consequence, and the irritation of his mind, brought on a fever, that terminated fatally on the fifth day.

His funeral was conducted according to the fashion of the age; but the day appointed was raw, windy, and sleety; not, however, so much so as to prevent the friends of the deceased from flocking in from every quarter. The assemblage that arrived far transcended all that can be imagined, in these economical days, of the attendance requisite on any such occasion. The gentry were shown into the dining-room, and into every room that could be fitted up with planks and deals for their reception. The barn received the tenantry, and a vast multitude – the whole clanjamphry from all the neighbouring parishes – assembled on the green in front of the house.

The Laird in his lifetime maintained a rough and free hospitality; and, as his kindred and acquaintance expected, there was neither scant nor want at his burial. The profusion of the services of seed-cake and wine to the in-door guests was in the liberalest spirit of the time; and tobacco-pipes, shortbread, and brandy, unadulterated by any immersion of the gauger's rod, were distributed, with unmeasured abundance, to those in the barn and on the green.

Mr. Kilfuddy, the parish minister, said grace to the gentry in the dining-room; and the elders, in like manner, performed a similar part in the other rooms. We are not sure if we may venture to assert that grace was said to the company out of doors. Mr. Taws, the dominie of Bodleton, has indeed repeatedly declared, that he did himself ask a blessing; but he has never produced any other evidence that was satisfactory to us. Indeed, what with the drinking, the blast, and the sleet, it was not reasonable to expect much attention would be paid to any prayer; and therefore we shall not insist very particularly on this point.

The Braehill church-yard was at a considerable distance from Plealands-house, and hearses not being then in fashion in that part of the country, one of the Laird's own carts was drawn out, and the coffin placed on it for conveyance, while the services were going round the company. How it happened, whether owing to the neglect of Thomas Cabinet, the wright, who acted the part of undertaker, and who had, with all his men, more to attend to than he could well manage, in supplying the multitude with refreshments; or whether John Drappie, the old servant that was to drive the cart, had, like many others, got a service overmuch, we need not pause to inquire: – it, however, so happened, that, by some unaccountable and never explained circumstance, the whole body of the assembled guests arranged themselves in funereal array as well and as steadily as the generality of them could, and proceeded towards the church-yard – those in the van believing that the cart with the coffin was behind, and their followers in the rear committing a similar mistake, by supposing that it was before them in front. Thus both parties, in ignorance of the simple fact, that the coffin and cart were still standing at the house door, proceeded, with as much gravity and decorum as possible, to the church-yard gate, where they halted. As the gentlemen in front fell back to the right and left, to open an avenue for the body to be brought up, the omission was discovered, and also that there was no other way of performing the interment but by returning, as expeditiously as possible, to the house for the body.

By this time the weather, which had been all the morning cold and blustering, was become quite tempestuous. The wind raved in the trees and hedges – the sleet was almost thickened into a blinding snow, insomuch, that, when the company reached the house, the greater number of them were so chilled that they stood in need of another service, and another was of course handed round on the green; of which the greater number liberally and freely partaking, were soon rendered as little able to wrestle against the wind as when they originally set out. However, when the procession was formed a second time, Thomas Cabinet taking care to send the cart with the coffin on before, the whole moved again towards the church-yard, it is said, with a degree of less decorum than in their former procession. Nay, there is no disguising the fact, that more than two or three of the company, finding themselves, perhaps, unable to struggle against the blast, either lay down of their own voluntary accord on the road, or were blown over by the wind.

When the procession had a second time reached the church-yard, and Thomas Cabinet, perspiring at every pore, was wiping his bald head with his coat sleeve, his men got the coffin removed from the cart, and placed on the spokes, and the relatives, according to their respective degrees of propinquity, arranged themselves to carry it. The bearers, however, either by means of the headstones and the graves over which their path lay, or by some other cause, walked so unevenly, that those on the one side pushed against their corresponding kindred on the other, in such a manner, that the coffin was borne rollingly along for some time, but without any accident, till the relations on the right side gave a tremendous lurch, in which they drew the spokes out of the hands of the mourners on the left, and the whole pageant fell with a dreadful surge to the ground.

This accident, however, was soon rectified; the neighbours, who were not bearers, assisted the fallen to rise, and Thomas Cabinet, with his men, carried the coffin to its place of rest, and having laid it on the two planks which were stretched across the grave, assembled the nearest kin around, and gave the cords into their hands, that they might lower the Laird into his last bed. The betherel and his assistant then drew out the planks, and the sudden jerk of the coffin, when they were removed, gave such a tug to those who had hold of the cords, that it pulled them down, head foremost, into the grave after it. Fortunately, however, none were buried but the body; for, by dint of the best assistance available on the spot, the living were raised, and thereby enabled to return to their respective homes, all as jocose and as happy as possible.

CHAPTER X

On examining the Laird's papers after the funeral, Mr. Keelevin, the father of the celebrated town-clerk of Gudetoun, the lawyer present on the occasion, discovered, in reading over the deed which had been executed by the deceased, in favour of Walter, the second son of Claud, that it was, in some essential points, imperfect as a deed of entail, though in other respects valid as a testamentary conveyance. The opinion of counsel, as in all similar cases, was in consequence forthwith taken; and the suspicions of Mr. Keelevin being confirmed, Walter was admitted as heir to the estate, but found under no legal obligation to assume his grandfather's name, – the very obligation which the old gentleman had been most solicitous to impose upon him.

How it happened that the clause respecting so important a point should have been so inaccurately framed, remains for those gentlemen of the law, who commit such inadvertencies, to explain. The discovery had the effect of inducing Claud to apply to our old master, the late Gilbert Omit, writer, to examine the entail of the Grippy, which he had himself drawn up; and it too was found defective, and easily to be set aside. Really, when one considers how much some lawyers profit by their own mistakes, one might almost be tempted to do them the injustice to suspect that they now and then have an eye to futurity, and carve out work for themselves. There have, however, been discoveries of legal errors, which have occasioned more distress than this one; for, instead of giving the old man any uneasiness, he expressed the most perfect satisfaction on being informed, in answer to a plain question on the subject, that it was still in his power to disinherit his first-born. Well do we recollect the scene, being seated at the time on the opposite side of Mr. Omit's desk, copying a codicil which Miss Christiana Heritage, then in her ninety-second year, was adding to her will, for the purpose of devising, as heir-looms, the bedstead and blankets in which Prince Charles Edward slept, when he passed the night in her house, after having levied that contribution on the loyal and godly city of Glasgow, for which the magistrates and council were afterwards so laudably indemnified by Parliament. We were not then quite so well versed in the secrets of human nature as experience has since so mournfully taught us, and the words of Claud at the time sounded strangely and harshly in our ear, especially when he inquired, with a sharp, and as it were a greedy voice, whether it was practicable to get Walter to conjoin with him in a deed that would unite his inheritance of Plealands to the Grippy, and thereby make a property as broad and good as the ancestral estate of Kittlestonheugh?

'Ye ken, Mr. Omit,' said he, 'how I was defrauded, as a bodie may say, of my patrimony, by my grandfather; and now, since it has pleased Providence to put it in my power, by joining the heritage of Plealands and Grippy, to renew my ancestry, I would fain mak a settlement with Watty to that effek.'

Mr. Omit, with all that calm and methodical manner which a long experience of those devices of the heart, to which lawyers in good practice, if at all men of observation, generally attain, replied, —

'Nothing can be done in that way while Walter is under age. But certainly, when the lad comes to majority, if he be then so inclined, there is no legal impediment in the way of such an arrangement; the matter, however, would require to be well considered, for it would be an unco-like thing to hear of a man cutting off his first-born for no fault, but only because he could constitute a larger inheritance by giving a preference to his second.'

Whatever impression this admonitory remark made on the mind of Claud at the moment, nothing further took place at that time; but he thoughtfully gathered his papers together, and, tying them up with a string, walked away from the office, and returned to Grippy, where he was not a little surprised to see Mr. Allan Dreghorn's wooden coach at the door; the first four-wheeled gentleman's carriage started in Glasgow, and which, according to the praiseworthy history of Bailie Cleland, was made by Mr. Dreghorn's own workmen, he being a timber merchant, carpenter, and joiner. It was borrowed for the day by Mr. and Mrs. Kilfuddy, who were then in Glasgow, and who, in consequence of their parochial connexion with the Plealands family, had deemed it right and proper to pay the

Leddy of Grippy a visit of sympathy and condolence, on account of the loss she had sustained in her father.

CHAPTER XI

The Reverend Mr. Kilfuddy was a little, short, erect, sharp-looking, brisk-tempered personage, with a red nose, a white powdered wig, and a large cocked hat. His lady was an ample, demure, and solemn matron, who, in all her gestures, showed the most perfect consciousness of enjoying the supreme dignity of a minister's wife in a country parish.

According to the Scottish etiquette of that period, she was dressed for the occasion in mourning; but the day being bleak and cold, she had assumed her winter mantle of green satin, lined with grey rabbit skin, and her hands ceremoniously protruded through the loop-holes, formed for that purpose, reposed in full consequentiality within the embraces of each other, in a large black satin muff of her own making, adorned with a bunch of flowers in needlework, which she had embroidered some thirty years before, as the last and most perfect specimen of all her accomplishments. But, although they were not so like the blooming progeny of Flora, as a Linwood might, perhaps, have worked, they possessed a very competent degree of resemblance to the flowers they were intended to represent, insomuch that there was really no great risk of mistaking the roses for lilies. And here we cannot refrain from ingeniously suspecting that the limner who designed those celebrated emblematic pictures of the months which adorned the drawing-room of the Craiglands, and on which the far-famed Miss Mysie Cunningham set so great a value, must have had the image of Mrs. Kilfuddy in his mind's eye, when he delineated the matronly representative of November.

The minister, after inquiring with a proper degree of sympathetic pathos into the state of the mourner's health, piously observed, 'That nothing is so uncertain as the things of time. This dispensation,' said he, 'which has been vouchsafed, Mrs. Walkinshaw, to you and yours, is an earnest of what we have all to look for in this world. But we should not be overly cast down by the like o't, but lippen to eternity; for the sorrows of perishable human nature are erls given to us of joys hereafter. I trust, therefore, and hope, that you will soon recover this sore shock, and in the cares of your young family, find a pleasant pastime for the loss of your worthy father, who, I am blithe to hear, has died in better circumstances than could be expected, considering the trouble he has had wi' his lawing; leaving, as they say, the estate clear of debt, and a heavy soom of lying siller.'

'My father, Mr. Kilfuddy,' replied the lady, 'was, as you well know, a most worthy character, and I'll no say has na left a nest egg – the Lord be thankit, and we maun compose oursels to thole wi' what He has been pleased, in his gracious ordinances, to send upon us for the advantage of our poor sinful souls. But the burial has cost the gudeman a power o' money; for my father being the head o' a family, we hae been obligated to put a' the servants, baith here, at the Grippy, and at the Plealands, in full deep mourning; and to hing the front o' the laft in the kirk, as ye'll see next Sabbath, wi' very handsome black cloth, the whilk cost twentypence the ell, first cost out o' the gudeman's ain shop; but, considering wha my father was, we could do no less in a' decency.'

'And I see,' interfered the minister's wife, 'that ye hae gotten a bombazeen o' the first quality; nae doubt ye had it likewise frae Mr. Walkinshaw's own shop, which is a great thing, Mrs. Walkinshaw, for you to get.'

'Na, Mem,' replied the mourner, 'ye dinna know what a misfortune I hae met wi'. I was, as ye ken, at the Plealands when my father took his departal to a better world, and sent for my mournings frae Glasgow, and frae the gudeman, as ye would naturally expek, and I had Mally Trimmings in the house ready to mak them when the box would come. But it happened to be a day o' deluge, so that my whole commodity, on Baldy Slowgaun's cart, was drookit through and through, and baith the crape and bombazeen were rendered as soople as pudding-skins. It was, indeed, a sight past expression, and obligated me to send an express to Kilmarnock for the things I hae on, the outlay of whilk was a clean total loss, besides being at the dear rate. But, Mr. Kilfuddy, every thing in this howling wilderness is

ordered for the best; and, if the gudeman has been needcessited to pay for twa sets o' mournings, yet, when he gets what he'll get frae my father's gear, he ought to be very well content that it's nae waur.'

'What ye say, Mrs. Walkinshaw,' replied the minister, 'is very judicious; for it was spoken at the funeral, that your father, Plealands, could nae hae left muckle less than three thousand pounds of lying money.'

'No, Mr. Kilfuddy, it's no just so muckle; but I'll no say it's ony waur than twa thousand.'

'A braw soom, a braw soom,' said the spiritual comforter: – but what further of the customary spirituality of this occasion might have ensued is matter of speculative opinion; for, at this juncture, Watty, the heir to the deceased, came rumbling into the room, crying,

'Mither, mither, Meg Draiks winna gie me a bit of auld daddy's burial bread, though ye brought o'er three farls wi' the sweeties on't, and twa whangs as big as peats o' the fine sugar seed-cake.'

The composity of the minister and his wife were greatly tried, as Mrs. Kilfuddy herself often afterwards said, by this 'outstrapolous intrusion;' but quiet was soon restored by Mrs. Walkinshaw ordering in the bread and wine, of which Walter was allowed to partake. The visitors then looked significantly at each other; and Mrs. Kilfuddy, replacing her hands in her satin muff, which, during the refectionary treat from the funeral relics, had been laid on her knees, rose and said, —

'Noo, I hope, Mrs. Walkinshaw, when ye come to see the leddy, your mither, at the Plealands, that ye'll no neglek to gie us a ca' at the Manse, and ye'll be sure to bring the young Laird wi' you, for he's a fine spirity bairn – every body maun alloo that.'

'He's as he came frae the hand o' his Maker,' replied Mrs. Walkinshaw, looking piously towards the minister; 'and it's a great consolation to me to think he's so weel provided for by my father.'

'Then it's true,' said Mr. Kilfuddy, 'that he gets a' the Plealands property?'

"Deed is't, sir, and a braw patrimony I trow it will be by the time he arrives at the years o' discretion.'

'That's a lang look,' rejoined the minister a little slyly, for Walter's defect of capacity was more obvious than his mother imagined; but she did not perceive the point of Mr. Kilfuddy's sarcasm, her attention at the moment being drawn to the entrance of her husband, evidently troubled in thought, and still holding the papers in his hand as he took them away from Mr. Omit's desk.

CHAPTER XII

Experience had taught Mrs. Walkinshaw, as it does most married ladies, that when a husband is in one of his moody fits, the best way of reconciling him to the cause of his vexation is to let him alone, or, as the phrase is, to let him come again to himself. Accordingly, instead of teasing him at the moment with any inquiries about the source of his molestation, she drew Mrs. Kilfuddy aside, and retired into another room, leaving him in the hands of the worthy divine, who, sidling up to him, said, —

'I'm weel content to observe the resigned spirit of Mrs. Walkinshaw under this heavy dispensation, – and it would be a great thing to us a' if we would lay the chastisement rightly to heart. For wi' a' his faults, and no mere man is faultless, Plealands was na without a seasoning o' good qualities, though, poor man, he had his ain tribulation in a set of thrawn-natured tenants. But he has won away, as we a' hope, to that pleasant place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary rest in peace. Nae doubt, Mr. Walkinshaw, it maun hae been some sma' disappointment to you, to find that your second son is made the heir, but it's no an affliction past remedy, so ye should na let it fash you oure muckle.'

'No, be thankit,' replied Claud, 'it's no past remede, as Gibby Omit tells me; but I'm a thought troubled anent the means, for my auld son Charlie's a fine callan, and I would grudge to shove him out o' the line o' inheritance. It's an unco pity, Mr. Kilfuddy, that it had na pleased the Lord to mak Watty like him.'

The minister, who did not very clearly understand this, said, 'A' thing considered, Mr. Walkinshaw, ye'll just hae to let the law tak its course, and though ye canna hae the lairdship in ae lump, as ye aiblins expekit, it's nevertheless in your ain family.'

'I'm no contesting that,' rejoined Claud, 'but I would fain hae the twa mailings in ae aught, for if that could be brought about, I would na doubt of making an excambio o' the Plealands for the Divethill and Kittleston, the twa farms that wi' the Grippy made up the heritage o' my forefathers; for Mr. Auchincloss, the present propreeator, is frae the shire o' Ayr, and I hae had an inklin that he would na be ill pleased to mak a swap, if there was ony possibility in law to alloo't.'

'I canna say,' replied the Reverend Mr. Kilfuddy, 'that I hae ony great knowledge o' the laws o' man; I should, however, think it's no impossible; but still, Mr. Walkinshaw, ye would hae to mak a reservation for behoof of your son Walter, as heir to his grandfather. It would be putting adders in the creel wi' the eggs if ye did na.'

'That's the very fasherie o' the business, Mr. Kilfuddy, for it would be na satisfaction to me to leave a divided inheritance; and the warst o't is, that Watty, haverel though it's like to be, is no sae ill as to be cognos't; and what maks the case the mair kittle, even though he were sae, his younger brother Geordie, by course o' law and nature, would still come in for the Plealands afore Charlie. In short, I see nothing for't, Mr. Kilfuddy, but to join the Grippy in ae settlement wi' the Plealands, and I would do sae outright, only I dinna like on poor Charlie's account. – Do ye think there is ony sin in a man setting aside his first-born? Ye ken Jacob was alloo't to get the blessing and the birthright o' his elder brother Esau.'

Mr. Kilfuddy, notwithstanding a spice of worldly-mindedness in his constitution, was, nevertheless, an honest and pious Presbyterian pastor; and the quickness of his temper at the moment stirred him to rebuke the cold-hearted speculations of this sordid father.

'Mr. Walkinshaw,' said he severely, 'I can see no point o' comparison between the case o' your twa sons and that o' Jacob and Esau; and what's mair, the very jealousing that there may be sin in what ye wish to do, is a clear demonstration that it is vera sinful; for, O man! it's a bad intent indeed that we canna excuse to oursels. But to set you right in ae point, and that ye may hae nae apology drawn from scriptural acts, for the unnatural inclination to disinherit your first-born, out o' the prideful phantasy

of leaving a large estate, I should tell you that there was a mystery of our holy religion hidden in Jacob's mess o' porridge, and it's a profane thing to meddle with that which appertaineth to the Lord, for what He does, and what He permits, is past the understanding o' man, and woe awaits on all those that would bring aught to pass contrary to the manifest course of his ordained method. For example, he taketh the breath of life away at his pleasure, but has he not commanded that no man shall commit murder? – Mr. Walkinshaw, Mr. Walkinshaw, ye maun strive against this sin of the flesh, ye maun warsle wi' the devil, and hit him weel on the hip till ye gar him loosen the grip that he has ta'en to draw you on to sic an awful sin. Heh, man! an ye're deluded on to do this thing, what a bonny sight it will be to see your latter end, when Belzebub, wi' his horns, will be sitting upon your bosom, boring through the very joints and marrow o' your poor soul wi' the red-het gimlets o' a guilty conscience.'

Claud shuddered at the picture, and taking the reproving minister by the hand, said, 'We canna help the wicked thoughts that sometimes rise, we dinna ken whar frae, within us.'

'Ye dinna ken whar frae? – I'll tell you whar frae – frae hell; sic thoughts are the cormorants that sit on the apple-trees in the devil's kail-yard, and the souls o' the damned are the carcasses they mak their meat o'.'

'For Heaven's sake, Mr. Kilfuddy,' exclaimed Claud, trembling in every limb; 'be patient, and no speak that gait, ye gar my hair stand on end.'

'Hair! O man, it would be weel for you, if your precious soul would stand on end, and no only on end, but humlet to the dust, and that ye would retire into a corner, and scrape the leprosy of sic festering sins wi' a potsherd o' the gospel, till ye had cleansed yourself for a repentance unto life.'

These ghostly animadversions may, perhaps, sound harsh to the polite ears of latter days, but denunciation was, at that time, an instrument of reasoning much more effectual than persuasion, and the spiritual guides of the people, in warning them of the danger of evil courses, made no scruple, on any occasion, to strengthen their admonitions with the liveliest imagery that religion and enthusiasm supplied. Yet, with all the powerful aid of such eloquence, their efforts were often unavailing, and the energy of Mr. Kilfuddy, in this instance, had, perhaps, no other effect than to make Claud for a time hesitate, although, before they parted, he expressed great contrition for having, as he said, yielded to the temptation of thinking that he was at liberty to settle his estate on whom he pleased.

CHAPTER XIII

At the death of the Laird of Plealands, the Grippy family, as we have already stated, consisted of three sons and a daughter. Charles, the eldest, was, as his father intimated to Mr. Kilfuddy, a fine, generous, open-hearted, blithe-faced boy. Towards him Claud cherished as much affection as the sterile sensibilities of his own bosom could entertain for any object; but Mrs. Walkinshaw, from some of those unaccountable antipathies with which nature occasionally perplexes philosophy, almost hated her first-born, and poured the full flow of her uncouth kindness on Walter, who, from the earliest dawnings of observation, gave the most indubitable and conclusive indications of being endowed with as little delicacy and sense as herself. The third son, George, was, at this period, too young to evince any peculiar character; but, in after life, under the appearance of a dull and inapt spirit, his indefatigable, calculating, and persevering disposition demonstrated how much he had inherited of the heart and mind of his father. The daughter was baptized Margaret, which her mother elegantly abbreviated into Meg; and, as the course of our narrative requires that we should lose sight of her for some time, we may here give a brief epitome of her character. To beauty she had no particular pretensions, nor were her accomplishments of the most refined degree; indeed, her chief merit consisted in an innate predilection for thrift and household management; and what few elements of education which she had acquired were chiefly derived from Jenny Hirple, a lameter woman, who went round among the houses of the heritors of the parish with a stilt, the sound of which, and of her feet on the floors, plainly pronounced the words one pound ten. Jenny gave lessons in reading, knitting, and needlework, and something that resembled writing; and under her tuition, Miss Meg continued till she had reached the blooming period of sixteen, when her father's heart was so far opened, that, in consideration of the fortune he found he could then bestow with her hand, he was induced to send her for three months to Edinburgh; there, and in that time, to learn manners, 'and be perfited,' as her mother said, 'wi' a boarding-school education.'

But, to return to Charles, the first-born, to whose history it is requisite our attention should at present be directed, nothing could seem more auspicious than the spring of his youth, notwithstanding the lurking inclination of his father to set him aside in the order of succession. This was principally owing to his grandmother, who had, during the life of the Laird, her husband, languished, almost from her wedding-day, in a state of uninterested resignation of spirit, so quiet, and yet so melancholy, that it partook far more of the nature of dejection than contentment. Immediately after his death, her health and her spirits began to acquire new energy; and before he was six months in the earth, she strangely appeared as a cheerful old lady, who delighted in society, and could herself administer to its pleasures.

In the summer following she removed into Glasgow, and Charles, being then about ten years old, was sent to reside with her for the advantages of attending the schools. Considering the illiterate education of his father, and the rough-spun humours and character of his mother, this was singularly fortunate; for the old lady had, in her youth, been deemed destined for a more refined sphere than the householdry of the Laird of Plealands.

Her father was by profession an advocate in Edinburgh, and had sat in the last assembly of the States of Scotland. Having, however, to the last, opposed the Union with all the vehemence in his power, he was rejected by the Government party of the day; and in consequence, although his talents and acquirements were considered of a superior order, he was allowed to hang on about the Parliament-house, with the empty celebrity of abilities, that, with more prudence, might have secured both riches and honours.

The leisure which he was thus obliged to possess was devoted to the cultivation of his daughter's mind, and the affection of no father was ever more tender, till about the period when she attained her twentieth year. Her charms were then in full blossom, and she was seen only to be followed and

admired. But, in proportion as every manly heart was delighted with the graces and intelligence of the unfortunate girl, the solicitude of her father to see her married grew more and more earnest, till it actually became his exclusive and predominant passion, and worked upon him to such a degree, that it could no longer be regarded but as tinctured with some insane malady; insomuch, that his continual questions respecting the addresses of the gentlemen, and who or whether any of them sincerely spoke of love, embittered her life, and deprived her of all the innocent delight which the feminine heart, in the gaiety and triumph of youth, naturally enjoys from the homage of the men.

At this juncture Malachi Hypel was in Edinburgh, drinking the rounds of an advocate's studies; for he had no intention to practise, and with students of that kind the bottle then supplied the place of reviews and magazines. He was a sturdy, rough, hard-riding and free-living fellow, entitled by his fortune and connexions almost to the best society; but qualified by his manners and inclinations to relish the lowest more joyously. Unluckily he was among the loudest and the warmest admirers of the ill-fated girl, and one night after supper, flushed with claret and brandy, he openly, before her father, made her a tender of his hand. The old man grasped it with an avaricious satisfaction, and though the heart of the poor girl was ready to burst at the idea of becoming the wife of one so coarse and rugged, she was nevertheless induced, in the space of little more than a month after, to submit to her fate.

The conduct of her father was at that time quite inexplicable, but when he soon afterwards died, unable to witness the misery to which he had consigned his beloved child, the secret came out. His circumstances were in the most ruinous condition; his little patrimony was entirely consumed, and he acknowledged on his death-bed, while he implored with anguish the pardon of his daughter, that the thought of leaving her in poverty had so overset his reason, that he could think of nothing but of securing her against the horrors of want. A disclosure so painful should have softened the harsh nature of her husband towards her, but it had quite a contrary effect. He considered himself as having been in some degree overreached, and although he had certainly not married her with any view to fortune, he yet reviled her as a party to her father's sordid machination. This confirmed the sadness with which she had yielded to become his bride, and darkened the whole course of her wedded life with one continued and unvaried shade of melancholy.

The death of her husband was in consequence felt as a deliverance from thraldom. The event happened late in the day, but still in time enough to allow the original brightness of her mind to shine out in the evening with a serene and pleasing lustre, sufficient to show what, in happier circumstances, she might have been. The beams fell on Charles with the cherishing influence of the summer twilight on the young plant, and if the tears of memory were sometimes mingled with her instructions, they were like the gracious dews that improve the delicacy of the flower, and add freshness to its fragrance. Beneath her care, his natural sensibility was exalted and refined, and if it could not be said that he was endowed with genius, he soon appeared to feel, with all the tenderness and intelligence of a poet. In this respect his ingenuous affections served to recall the long vanished happiness of her juvenile hopes, and yielding to the sentiments which such reflections were calculated to inspire, she devoted, perhaps, too many of her exhortations in teaching him to value Love as the first of earthly blessings and of human enjoyments. 'Love', she often said to the wondering boy, who scarcely understood the term, 'is like its emblem fire; it comes down from Heaven, and when once kindled in two faithful bosoms, grows brighter and stronger as it mingles its flames, ever rising and pointing towards the holy fountain-head from whence it came.' – These romantic lessons were ill calculated to fit him to perform that wary part in the world which could alone have enabled him to master the malice of his fortune, and to overcome the consequences of that disinheritance which his father had never for a moment ceased to meditate, but only waited for an appropriate opportunity to carry into effect.

CHAPTER XIV

Charles, in due time, was sent to College, and while attending the classes, formed an intimate friendship with a youth of his own age, of the name of Colin Fatherlans, the only son of Fatherlans of that Ilk. He was at this time about eighteen, and being invited by his companion to spend a few weeks at Fatherlans House in Ayrshire, he had soon occasion to feel the influence of his grandmother's lectures on affection and fidelity.

Colin had an only sister, and Charles, from the first moment that he saw her, felt the fascinations of her extraordinary beauty, and the charms of a mind, still more lovely in its intelligence than the bloom and graces of her form. Isabella Fatherlans was tall and elegant, but withal so gentle, that she seemed, as it were, ever in need of protection; and the feeling which this diffidence of nature universally inspired, converted the homage of her admirers into a sentiment of tenderness, which, in the impassioned bosom of Charles Walkinshaw, was speedily warmed into love.

For several successive years, he had the gratification of spending some weeks in the company of Isabella; and the free intercourse permitted between them soon led to the disclosure of a mutual passion. No doubt at that time clouded the sunshine that shone along the hopes and promises in the vista of their future years. Every thing, on the contrary, was propitious. His lineage and prospects rendered him acceptable to her parents, and she was viewed by his father as a match almost beyond expectation desirable. Time alone seemed to be the only adversary to their affection; but with him Fortune was in league, and the course of true love never long runs smooth.

The father of Isabella was one of those unfortunate lairds who embarked in the Mississippian project of the Ayr Bank, the inevitable fate of which, at the very moment when the hopes of the lovers were as gay as the apple boughs with blossoms in the first fine mornings of spring, came like a nipping frost, and blighted their happiness for ever. Fatherlans was ruined, and his ruin was a sufficient reason, with the inflexible Claud, to command Charles to renounce all thoughts of that fond connexion which he had himself considered as the most enviable which his son could hope to obtain. But the altered fortunes of Isabella only served to endear her more and more to her lover; and the interdict of his father was felt as a profane interference with that hallowed enthusiasm of mingled love and sorrow with which his breast was at the moment filled.

'It is impossible,' said he; 'and even were it in my power to submit to the sacrifice you require, honour, and every sentiment that makes life worthy, would forbid me. No, sir; I feel that Isabella and I are one; Heaven has made us so, and no human interposition can separate minds which God and Nature have so truly united. The very reason that you urge against the continuance of my attachment, is the strongest argument to make me cherish it with greater devotion than ever. You tell me she is poor, and must be penniless. Is not that, sir, telling me that she has claims upon my compassion as well as on my love? You say her father must be driven to the door. Gracious Heaven! and in such a time shall I shun Isabella? A common stranger, one that I had never before known, would, in such adversity and distress, be entitled to any asylum I could offer; but Isabella – in the storm that has unroofed her father's house – shall she not claim that shelter which, by so many vows, I have sworn to extend over her through life?'

'Weel, weel, Charlie,' replied the old man, 'rant awa, and tak thy tocherless bargain to thee, and see what thou'll mak o't. But mind my words – when Poverty comes in at the door, Love jumps out at the window.'

'It is true,' said the lover, a little more calmly, 'that we cannot hope to live in such circumstances as I had so often reason to expect; but still, you will not refuse to take me into partnership, which, in the better days of her father, you so often promised?'

'We'll hae twa words about that,' replied the father; 'it's ae thing to take in a partner young, clever, and sharp, and another to take a needful man with the prospect o' a family. But, Charlie, I'll

no draw back in my word to you, if ye'll just put off for a year or twa this calf-love connexion. Maybe by and by ye'll think better o' my counsel; at ony rate, something for a sair foot may be gathered in the meantime; and neither you nor Bell Fatherlans are sae auld but ye can afford to bide a while.'

This was said in the old man's most reflective and sedate manner, and after some further conversation, Charles did consent to postpone for that time his marriage, on condition of being immediately admitted into partnership, with an understanding, that he should be free to marry at the end of twelve months, if he still continued so inclined. Both parties in this arrangement calculated without their host. The father thought that the necessary change in the exterior circumstances of Isabella would, in the course of the year, have a tendency to abate the ardour of her lover, and the son gave too much credit to his own self-denial, supposing, that, although the ruin of Fatherlans was declared, yet, as in similar cases, twelve months would probably elapse before the sequestration and sale of his estate would finally reduce the condition of his family. From the moment, however, that the affairs of the banking company were found irretrievable, Mr. Fatherlans zealously bestirred himself to place his daughter above the hazards of want, even while he entertained the hope that it might not be necessary. He carried her with him to Glasgow, and, before calling at Claud's shop, secured for her an asylum in the house of Miss Mally Trimmings, a celebrated mantua-maker of that time. When he afterwards waited on the inexorable pedlar, and communicated the circumstance, the latter, with unfeigned pleasure, commended the prudence of the measure, for he anticipated that the pride of his son would recoil at the idea of connecting himself with Isabella in her altered state. What the lover himself felt on hearing the news, we shall not attempt to describe, nor shall we so far intrude beyond the veil which should ever be drawn over the anxieties and the sorrows of young affection, under darkened prospects, as to relate what passed between the lovers when they next met. The resolution, however, with which they both separated, was worthy of the purity of their mutual affections, and they agreed to pass the probationary year in a cheerful submission to their lot.

CHAPTER XV

When Charles parted from Isabella, he returned thoughtfully towards Grippy, which was situated on the south side of the Clyde, at the foot of the Cathkin hills. His road, after passing the bridge, lay across the fields as far as Rutherglen, where it diverged towards the higher ground, commanding at every winding a rich and variegated prospect.

The year was waning into autumn, and the sun setting in all that effulgence of glory, with which, in a serene evening, he commonly at that season terminates his daily course behind the distant mountains of Dumbartonshire and Argyle. A thin mist, partaking more of the lacy character of a haze than the texture of a vapour, spreading from the river, softened the nearer features of the view, while the distant were glowing in the golden blaze of the western skies, and the outlines of the city on the left appeared gilded with a brighter light, every window sparkling as if illuminated from within. The colour of the trees and hedges was beginning to change, and here and there a tuft of yellow leaves, and occasionally the berries of the mountain ash, like clusters of fiery embers, with sheaves of corn, and reapers in a few of the neighbouring fields, showed that the summer was entirely past, and the harvest time begun.

The calm diffused over the face of the landscape – the numerous images of maturity and repose everywhere around – were calculated to soothe the spirit, to inspire gentle thoughts, and to awaken pleasing recollections; and there was something in the feelings with which the lovers had separated, if not altogether in unison with the graciousness of the hour, still so much in harmony with the general benignity of nature, that Charles felt his resolution and self-denial elevated with a sentiment of devotion, mingled with the fond enthusiasm of his passion. 'It is but a short time – a few months – and we shall be happy,' he exclaimed to himself; 'and our happiness will be the dearer that we shall have earned it by this sacrifice to prudence and to duty.'

But Charles and Isabella had estimated their fortitude too highly. They were both inexperienced in what the world really is; and her tender and sensitive spirit was soon found incapable of withstanding the trials and the humiliation to which she found herself subjected.

It was part of her business to carry home the dresses made up for Miss Mally's customers; and although the Glasgow ladies of that time were perhaps not more difficult to please with the style or fashion of their gowns and millinery than those of our own day, yet some of them were less actuated by a compassionate consideration for the altered fortunes of Isabella than all our fair contemporaries would undoubtedly have been. The unfortunate girl was, in consequence, often obliged to suffer taunts and animadversions, which, though levelled against the taste or inattention of her mistress, entered not the less painfully into her young and delicate bosom. Still, however, she struggled against the harsh circumstances to which she was exposed; but her sensibilities were stronger than her courage, and her beauty betrayed what she felt, and soon began to fade.

Charles was in the practice of accompanying her in the evenings when she commonly performed her disagreeable errands, and relieved her of the burden of her band-box, joyfully counting how much of the probationary year was already past, and cheering her with the assurance that her misfortunes had only endeared her to him the more. It happened, however, that, one Saturday, being late of reaching the place of rendezvous – the foot of the staircase which led to Miss Mally's dwelling – Isabella had gone away before he arrived, with a new dress to Mrs. Jarvie, the wife of the far-famed Bailie Nicol, the same Matty who lighted the worthy magistrate to the Tolbooth, on that memorable night when he, the son of the deacon, found his kinsman Rob Roy there.

Matty at this time was a full-blown lady; the simple, modest, bare-footed lassie, having developed into a crimson, gorgeous, high-heeled madam, – well aware of the augmented width and weight of the bailie's purse, and jealous a little too much of her own consequence, perhaps, by recollecting the condition from which she had been exalted. The dress made up for her was a costly

negligée; it not only contained several yards of the richest brocade more than any other Miss Mally Trimmings had ever made, but was adorned with cuffs and flounces in a style of such affluent magnificence, that we question if any grander has since been seen in Glasgow. Nor was it ordered for any common occasion, but to grace a formal dinner party, which Provost Anderson and his lady intended to give the magistrates and their wives at the conclusion of his eighth provostry. It was therefore not extraordinary that Mrs. Jarvie should take particular interest in this dress; but the moment she began to try it on, poor Isabella discovered that it would not fit, and stood trembling from head to heel, while the bailie's wife, in great glee and good humour with the splendour of the dress, was loud in her praises of the cut of the ruffle-cuffs and the folds of the flounces. Having contemplated the flow of the *negligée* on both sides, and taken two or three stately steps across the room, to see how it would sweep behind, Mrs. Jarvie took the wings of the body in her hands, and, drawing them together, found they would not nearly meet.

Isabella, with a beating heart and a diffident hand, approached to smooth the silk, that it might expand; but all would not do. Mrs. Jarvie stood a monument of consternation, as silent as Lot's wife, when she looked back, and thought of the charming dresses she had left behind.

'O Chrystal!' were the first words to which the ci-devant Matty could give utterance. 'O Chrystal! My God, is nae this moving? Your mistress, doited devil, as I maun ca' her, ought to be skelpit wi' nettles for this calamity. The goun's ruin't – my gude silk to be clippit in this nearbegaun way – past a' redemption. Gang out o' the gait, ye cutty, and no finger and meddle wi' me. This usage is enough to provoke the elect! as am a living soul, and that's a muckle word for me to say, I'll hae the old craighling scoot afore the Lords. The first cost was mair than five and twenty guineas. If there's law and justice atween God and man, she shall pay for't, or I'll hae my satisfaction on her flesh. Hither, maiden, and help me off wi' it. Siccan beauty as it was! Tak it wi' you; tak it to you; out o' the house and my presence. How durst ye dare to bring sic a disgrace to me? But let me look at it. Is't no possible to put in a gushet or a gore, and to make an eik?'

'I'll take it home and try,' said Isabella, timidly folding up the gown, which she had removed from Mrs. Jarvie.

'Try,' said the bailie's wife, relapsing; 'a pretty like story, that sic a gown should stand in the jeopardy o' a try; but how could Miss Mally presume to send a silly thing like t'ee on this occasion? Lay down the gown this precious moment, and gae hame, and order her to come to me direkilty: it's no to seek what I hae to say.'

The trembling and terrified girl let the unfortunate *negligée* fall, and hastily, in tears, quitted the room, and, flying from the house, met, in the street, her lover, who, having learnt where she was, had followed her to the house. A rapid and agitated disclosure of her feelings and situation followed. Charles, on the spot, resolved, at all hazards, rather to make her his wife at once, and to face the worst that might in consequence happen from his father's displeasure, than allow her to remain exposed to such contumelious treatment. Accordingly, it was agreed that they should be married, and on the Monday following, the ceremony was performed, when he conducted her to a lodging which he had provided in the interval.

CHAPTER XVI

On the morning after his marriage, Charles was anxious, doubtful, and diffident. His original intention was to go at once to his father, to state what he had done, and to persuade him, if possible, to overlook a step, that, from its suddenness, might be deemed rash, but, from the source and motives from which it proceeded, could, he thought, be regarded only as praiseworthy. Still, though this was his own opinion, he, nevertheless, had some idea that the old gentleman would not view it exactly in the same light; and the feeling which this doubt awakened made him hesitate at first, and finally to seek a mediator.

He had long remarked, that 'the leddy,' his grandmother, sustained a part of great dignity towards his father; and he concluded, from the effect it appeared to produce, that her superiority was fully acknowledged. Under this delusion, after some consideration of the bearings and peculiarities of his case, he determined to try her interference, and, for that purpose, instead of going to Grippy, as he had originally intended, when he left Isabella, he proceeded to the house of the old lady, where he found her at home and alone.

The moment he entered her sitting-room, she perceived that his mind was laden with something which pressed heavily on his feelings; and she said,

'What has vext you, Charlie? has your father been severe upon you for ony misdemeanour, or hae ye done any thing that ye're afeared to tell?'

In the expression of these sentiments, she had touched the sensitive cord, that, at the moment, was fastened to his heart.

'I'm sure,' was his reply, 'that I hae done no ill, and dinna ken why I should be frightened in thinking on what every bodie that can feel and reflect will approve.'

'What is't?' said the leddy, thoughtfully: 'What is't? If it's aught good, let me partake the solace wi' you; and if it's bad speak it out, that a remedy may be, as soon as possible, applied.'

'Bell Fatherlans,' was his answer; but he could only articulate her name.

'Poor lassie,' said the venerable gentlewoman, 'her lot's hard, and I'm wae both for your sake and hers, Charlie, that your father's so dure as to stand against your marriage in the way he does. But he was ay a bargainer; alack! the world is made up o' bargainers; and a heart wi' a right affection is no an article o' meikle repute in the common market o' man and woman. Poor genty Bell! I wish it had been in my power to hae sweetened her lot; for I doubt and fear she's oure thin-skinned to thole long the needles and prins o' Miss Mally Trimmings' short temper; and, what's far waur, the tawpy taunts of her pridefu' customers.'

'She could suffer them no longer, nor would I let her,' replied the bridegroom, encouraged by these expressions to disclose the whole extent of his imprudence.

Mrs. Hypel did not immediately return any answer, but sat for a few moments thoughtful, we might, indeed, say sorrowful – she then said,

'Ye should na, Charlie, speak to me. I canna help you, my dear, though I hae the will. Gang to your father and tell him a', and if he winna do what ye wish, then, my poor bairn, bravely trust to Providence, that gars the heart beat as it should beat, in spite o' a' the devices o' man.'

'I fear,' replied Charles, with simplicity, 'that I hae done that already, for Bell and me were married yesterday. I could na suffer to see her snooled and cast down any longer by every fat-pursed wife that would triumph and glory in a new gown.'

'Married, Charlie!' said the old lady with an accent of surprise, mingled with sorrow; 'Married! weel, that's a step that canna be untrodden, and your tribulation is proof enough to me that you are awakened to the consequence. But what's to be done?'

'Nothing, Mem, but only to speak a kind word for us to my father,' was the still simple answer of the simple young husband.

‘I’ll speak for you, Charlie, I can do that, and I’ll be happy and proud to gie you a’ the countenance in my power; but your father, Charlie – the gude forgie me because he is your father – I’m darkened and dubious when I think o’ him.’

‘I hae a notion,’ replied Charles, ‘that we need be no cess on him: we’re content to live in a sma’ way; only I would like my wife to be countenanced as becomes her ain family, and mair especially because she is mine, so that, if my father will be pleased to tak her, and regard her as his gude-dochter, I’ll ask nothing for the present, but do my part, as an honest and honourable man, to the very uttermost o’ my ability.’

The kind and venerable old woman was profoundly moved by the earnest and frank spirit in which this was said; and she assured him, that so wise and so discreet a resolution could not fail to make his father look with a compassionate eye on his generous imprudence. ‘So gae your ways home to Bell,’ said she, ‘and counsel and comfort her; the day’s raw, but I’ll even now away to the Grippy to intercede for you, and by the gloaming be you here wi’ your bonny bride, and I trust, as I wish, to hae glad tidings for you baith.’

Charles, with great ardour and energy, expressed the sense which he felt of the old lady’s kindness and partiality, but still he doubted the successful result of the mission she had undertaken. Nevertheless, her words inspired hope, and hope was the charm that spread over the prospects of Isabella and of himself, the light, the verdure, and the colours which enriched and filled the distant and future scenes of their expectations with fairer and brighter promises than they were ever destined to enjoy.

CHAPTER XVII

Claud was sitting at the window when he discovered his mother-in-law coming slowly towards the house, and he said to his wife, —

'In the name o' gude, Girzy, what can hae brought your mother frae the town on sic a day as this?'

'I hope,' replied the Leddy of Grippy, 'that nothing's the matter wi' Charlie, for he promised to be out on Sabbath to his dinner, and never came.'

In saying these words, she went hastily to the door to meet her mother, the appearance of whose countenance at the moment was not calculated to allay her maternal fears. Indeed, the old lady scarcely spoke to her daughter, but walking straight into the dining-room where Grippy himself was sitting, took a seat on a chair, and then threw off her cloak on the back of it, before she uttered a word.

'What's wrang, grannie?' said Claud, rising from his seat at the window, and coming towards her. – 'What's wrang, ye seem fashed?'

'In truth, Mr. Walkinshaw, I hae cause,' was the reply – 'poor Charlie!' —

'What's happen'd to him?' exclaimed his mother.

'Has he met wi' ony misfortunate accident?' inquired the father.

'I hope it's no a misfortune,' said the old lady, somewhat recovering her self-possession. 'At the same time, it's what I jealouse, Grippy, ye'll no be vera content to hear.'

'What is't?' cried the father sharply, a little tantalized.

'Has he broken his leg?' said the mother.

'Haud that clavering tongue o' thine, Girzy,' exclaimed the Laird peevishly; 'wilt t'ou ne'er devaul' wi' sca'ding thy lips in other folks' kail?'

'He had amaist met wi' far waur than a broken leg,' interposed the grandmother. 'His heart was amaist broken.'

'It maun be unco brittle,' said Claud, with a hem. 'But what's the need o' this summering and wintering anent it? – Tell us what has happened?'

'Ye're a parent, Mr. Walkinshaw,' replied the old lady seriously, 'and I think ye hae a fatherly regard for Charlie; but I'll be plain wi' you. I doubt ye hae na a right consideration for the gentle nature of the poor lad; and it's that which gars me doubt and fear that what I hae to say will no be agreeable.'

Claud said nothing in answer to this, but sat down in a chair on the right side of his mother-in-law, his wife having in the meantime taken a seat on the other side. – The old lady continued, —

'At the same time, Mr. Walkinshaw, ye're a reasonable man, and what I'm come about is a matter that maun just be endured. In short, it's nothing less than to say, that, considering Fatherlans' misfortunes, ye ought to hae alloo't Charlie and Isabella to hae been married, for it's a sad situation she was placed in – a meek and gentle creature like her was na fit to bide the flyte and flights o' the Glasgow leddies.'

She paused, in the expectation that Claud would make some answer, but he still remained silent. – Mrs. Walkinshaw, however, spoke, —

"Deed, mither, that's just what I said – for ye ken it's an awfu' thing to thwart a true affection. Troth is't, gudeman; and ye should think what would hae been your ain tender feelings had my father stoppit our wedding after a' was settled.'

'There was some difference between the twa cases,' said the Dowager of Plealands dryly to her daughter; – 'neither you nor Mr. Walkinshaw were so young as Charlie and Miss Fatherlans – that was something – and maybe there was a difference, too, in the character of the parties. Hows'ever, Mr. Walkinshaw, marriages are made in heaven; and it's no in the power and faculty of man to controvert the coming to pass o' what is ordained to be. Charlie Walkinshaw and Bell Fatherlans were a couple marrowed by their Maker, and it's no right to stand in the way of their happiness.'

'I'm sure,' said Claud, now breaking silence, 'it can ne'er be said that I'm ony bar till't. I would only fain try a year's probation in case it's but calf-love.'

Mrs. Hypel shook her head as she said, – 'It's vera prudent o' you, but ye canna put auld heads on young shouthers. In a word, Mr. Walkinshaw, it's no reasonable to expek that young folk, so encouraged in their mutual affection as they were, can thole so lang as ye would wish. The days o' sic courtships as Jacob's and Rachel's are lang past.'

'I but bade them bide a year,' replied Claud.

'A year's an unco time to love; but to make a lang tale short, what might hae been foreseen has come to pass, the fond young things hae gotten themselves married.'

'No possible!' exclaimed Claud, starting from his chair, which he instantly resumed. —

'Weel,' said Mrs. Walkinshaw, – 'if e'er I heard the like o' that! – Our Charlie a married man! the head o' a family!'

The old lady took no notice of these and other interjections of the same meaning, which her daughter continued to vent, but looking askance and steadily at Claud, who seemed for a minute deeply and moodily agitated, she said, —

'Ye say nothing, Mr. Walkinshaw.'

'What can I say?' was his answer. – 'I had a better hope for Charlie, – I thought the year would hae cooled him, – and am sure Miss Betty Bodle would hae been a better bargain.'

'Miss Betty Bodle!' exclaimed the grandmother, 'she's a perfect tawpy.'

'Weel, weel,' said Grippy, 'it mak's no odds noo what she is, – Charlie has ravelled the skein o' his own fortune, and maun wind it as he can.'

'That will be no ill to do, Mr. Walkinshaw, wi' your helping hand. He's your first born, and a better-hearted lad never lived.'

'Nae doubt I maun help him, – there can be nae doubt o' that; but he canna expek, and the world can ne'er expek, that I'll do for him what I might hae done had he no been so rash and disobedient.'

'Very true, Mr. Walkinshaw,' said the gratified old lady, happy to find that the reconciliation was so easily effected; and proud to be the messenger of such glad tidings to the young couple, she soon after returned to Glasgow. But scarcely had she left the house, when Claud appeared strangely disturbed, – at one moment he ran hastily towards his scrutoire, and opened it, and greedily seized the title-deeds of his property, – the next he closed it thoughtfully, and retreating to his seat, sat down in silence.

'What's the matter wi' you, gudeman? ye were na sae fashed when my mother was here,' said his wife.

'I'll do nothing rashly – I'll do nothing rashly,' was the mysterious reply.

'Eh, mither, mither,' cried Walter, bolting into the room, – 'what would you think, our Charlie's grown a wife's gudeman like my father.'

'Out o' my sight, ye ranting cuif,' exclaimed Claud, in a rapture of rage, which so intimidated Walter that he fled in terror.

'It's dreadfu' to be sae tempted, – and a' the gude to gang to sic a haverel,' added Claud, in a low troubled accent, as he turned away and walked towards the window.

'Nae doubt,' said his wife, 'it's an awfu' thing to hear o' sic disobedience as Charlie in his rashness has been guilty o'.'

'It is, it is,' replied her husband, 'and many a ane for far less hae disinherited their sons, – cut them off wi' a shilling.'

'That's true,' rejoined the Leddy of Grippy. 'Did na Kilmarkeckle gie his only daughter but the legacy o' his curse, for running away wi' the Englisher captain, and leave a' to his niece Betty Bodle?'

'And a' she has might hae been in our family but for this misfortune. – When I think o' the loss, and how pleased her father was when I proposed Charlie for her – It's enough to gar me tak' some desperate step to punish the contumacious reprobate. – He'll break my heart.'

‘Dear keep me, gudeman, but ye’re mair fashed than I could hae thought it was in the power o’ nature for you to be,’ – said Mrs. Walkinshaw, surprised at his agitation.

‘The scoundrel! the scoundrel!’ said Claud, walking quickly across the room – ‘To cause sic a loss! – To tak’ nae advice! – to run sic a ram-race! – I ought, I will, gar him fin’ the weight o’ my displeasure. Betty Bodle’s tocher would hae been better than the Grippy – But he shall suffer for’t – I see na why a father may na tak’ his own course as weel as a son – I’ll no be set at naught in this gait. I’ll gang in to Mr. Keelevin the morn.’

‘Dinna be oure headstrong, my dear, but compose yoursel’,’ – said the lady, perplexed, and in some degree alarmed at the mention of the lawyer’s name. —

‘Compose thysel, Girzy, and no meddle wi’ me,’ was the answer, in a less confident tone than the declaration he had just made, adding, —

‘I never thought he would hae used me in this way. I’m sure I was ay indulgent to him.’

‘Overly sae,’ interrupted Mrs. Walkinshaw, ‘and often I told you that he would gie you a het heart for’t, and noo ye see my words hae come to pass.’

Claud scowled at her with a look of the fiercest aversion, for at that moment the better feelings of his nature yearned towards Charles, and almost overcame the sordid avidity with which he had resolved to cut him off from his birthright, and to entail the estate of Grippy with the Plealands on Walter, – an intention which, as we have before mentioned, he early formed, and had never abandoned, being merely deterred from carrying it into effect by a sense of shame, mingled with affection, and a slight reverence for natural justice; all which, however, were loosened from their hold in his conscience, by the warranty which the imprudence of the marriage seemed to give him in the eyes of the world, for doing what he had so long desired to do. Instead, however, of making her any reply, he walked out into the open air, and continued for about half an hour to traverse the green in front of the house, sometimes with quick short steps, at others with a slow and heavy pace. Gradually, however, his motion became more regular, and ultimately ended in a sedate and firm tread, which indicated that his mind was made up on the question which he had been debating with himself.

CHAPTER XVIII

That abysm of legal dubieties, the office of Mr. Keelevin, the writer, consisted of two obscure apartments on the ground floor of M'Gregor's Land, in M'Whinnie's Close, in the Gallowgate. The outer room was appropriated to the clerks, and the inner for the darker mysteries of consultation. To this place Claud repaired on the day following the interesting communication, of which we have recorded the first impressions in the foregoing chapter. He had ordered breakfast to be ready an hour earlier than usual; and as soon as he had finished it, he went to his scrutoire, and taking out his title-deeds, put them in his pocket, and without saying any thing to his wife of what he intended to do, lifted his hat and stick from their accustomed place of repose, in the corner of the dining-room, and proceeded, as we have said, to consult Mr. Keelevin.

It is not the universal opinion of mankind, that the profession of the law is favourable to the preservation of simplicity of character or of benevolence of disposition; but this, no doubt, arises from the malice of disappointed clients, who, to shield themselves from the consequences of their own unfair courses, pretend that the wrongs and injustice of which they are either found guilty, or are frustrated in the attempt to effect, are owing to the faults and roguery of their own or their adversaries' lawyers. But why need we advocate any revision of the sentence pronounced upon the limbs of the law? for, grasping, as they do, the whole concerns and interests of the rest of the community, we think they are sufficiently armed with claws and talons to defend themselves. All, in fact, that we meant by this apologetic insinuation, was to prepare the reader for the introduction of Mr. Keelevin, on whom the corrosive sublimate of a long and thorough professional insight of all kinds of equivocation and chicanery had in no degree deteriorated from the purity of his own unsuspicious and benevolent nature. Indeed, at the very time that Claud called, he was rebuking his young men on account of the cruelty of a contrivance they had made to catch a thief that was in the nocturnal practice of opening the window of their office, to take away what small change they were so negligent as to leave on or in their desks; and they were not only defending themselves, but remonstrating with him for having rendered their contrivance abortive. For, after they had ingeniously constructed a trap within the window, namely, a footless table, over which the thief must necessarily pass to reach their desks, he had secretly placed a pillow under it, in order that, when it fell down, the robber might not hurt himself in the fall.

'Gude morning, gude morning, Mr. Keelevin; how're ye the day?' said Claud, as he entered.

'Gaily, gaily, Grippy; how're ye yoursel, and how's a' at hame? Come awa ben to my room,' was the writer's answer, turning round and opening the door; for experience had taught him that visits from acquaintances at that hour were not out of mere civility.

Claud stepped in, and seated himself in an old armed chair which stood on the inner side of the table where Mr. Keelevin himself usually wrote; and the lawyer followed him, after saying to the clerks, 'I redde ye, lads, tak tent to what I hae been telling you, and no encourage yourselves to the practice of evil that good may come o't. To devise snares and stratagems is most abominable – all that ye should or ought to do, is to take such precautions that the thief may not enter; but to wile him into the trap, by leaving the window unfastened, was nothing less than to be the cause of his sin. So I admonish you no to do the like o't again.'

In saying this he came in, and, shutting the door, took his own seat at the opposite side of the table, addressing himself to Claud, 'And so ye hae gotten your auld son married? I hope it's to your satisfaction.'

'An he has brewed good yill, Mr. Keelevin, he'll drink the better,' was the reply; 'but I hae come to consult you anent a bit alteration that I would fain make in my testament.'

‘That’s no a matter of great difficulty, Laird; for, sin’ we found out that the deed of entail that was made after your old son was born can never stand, a’ ye have is free to be destined as ye will, both heritable and moveable.’

‘And a lucky discovery that was; – many a troubled thought I hae had in my own breast about it; and now I’m come to confer wi’ you, Mr. Keelevin, for I would na trust the hair o’ a dog to the judgement o’ that tavert bodie, Gibby Omit, that gart me pay nine pounds seven shillings and saxpence too for the parchment; for it ne’er could be called an instrument, as it had na the pith o’ a windlestrae to bind the property; and over and aboon that, the bodie has lang had his back to the wa’, wi’ the ’poplexy; so that I maun put my trust in this affair into your hands, in the hope and confidence that ye’re able to mak something mair sicker.’

‘We’ll do our endeavour, Mr. Walkinshaw; hae ye made ony sort o’ scantling o’ what you would wish done?’

‘No, but I hae brought the teetles o’ the property in my pouch, and ye’ll just conform to them. As for the bit saving of lying money, we’ll no fash wi’ it for the present; I’m only looking to get a solid and right entail o’ the heritable.’

‘Nothing can be easier. Come as ye’re o’ an ancient family, no doubt your intent is to settle the Grippy on the male line; and, failing your sons and their heirs, then on the heirs of the body of your daughter.’

‘Just sae, just sae. I’ll make no change on my original disposition; only, as I would fain hae what cam by the gudewife made part and portion o’ the family heritage, and as her father’s settlement on Watty canna be broken without a great risk, I would like to begin the entail o’ the Grippy wi’ him.’

‘I see nothing to prevent that; ye could gie Charlie, the auld son, his liferent in’t, and as Watty, no to speak disrespectful of his capacity, may ne’er marry, it might be so managed.’

‘Oh, but that’s no what I mean, and what for may na Watty marry? Is na he o’ capacity to execute a deed, and surely that should qualify him to take a wife?’

‘But heavens preserve me, Mr. Walkinshaw, are ye sensible of the ill ye would do to that fine lad, his auld brother, that’s now a married man, and in the way to get heirs? Sic a settlement as ye speak o’ would be cutting him off a’ thegither: it would be most iniquitous!’

‘An it should be sae, the property is my own conquesting, Mr. Keelevin, and surely I may mak a kirk and a mill o’t an I like.’

‘Nobody, it’s true, Mr. Walkinshaw, has ony right to meddle wi’ how ye dispone of your own, but I was thinking ye maybe did na reflect that sic an entail as ye speak o’ would be rank injustice to poor Charlie, that I hae ay thought a most excellent lad.’

‘Excellent here, or excellent there, it was na my fault that he drew up wi’ a tocherless tawpy, when he might hae had Miss Betty Bodle.’

‘I am very sorry to hear he has displeased you; but the Fatherlans family, into whilk he has married, has ay been in great repute and estimation.’

‘Aye, afore the Ayr Bank; but the silly bodie the father was clean broken by that venture.’

‘That should be the greater reason, Mr. Walkinshaw, wi’ you to let your estate go in the natural way to Charlie.’

‘A’ that may be very true, Mr. Keelevin; I did na come here, however, to confer with you anent the like of that, but only of the law. I want you to draw the settlement, as I was saying; first, ye’ll entail it on Walter and his heirs-male, syne on Geordie and his heirs-male, and failing them, ye may gang back, to please yoursel, to the heirs-male o’ Charlie, and failing them, to Meg’s heirs-general.’

‘Mr. Walkinshaw,’ said the honest writer, after a pause of about a minute, ‘there’s no Christianity in this.’

‘But there may be law, I hope.’

‘I think, Mr. Walkinshaw, my good and worthy friend, that you should reflect well on this matter, for it is a thing by ordinare to do.’

'But ye ken, Mr. Keelevin, when Watty dies, the Grippy and the Plealands will be a' ae heritage, and will na that be a braw thing for my family?'

'But what for would ye cut off poor Charlie from his rightful inheritance?'

'Me cut him off frae his inheritance! When my grandfather brake on account o' the Darien, then it was that he lost his inheritance. He'll get frae me a' that I inherited frae our forbears, and may be mair; only, I'll no alloo he has ony heritable right on me, but what stands with my pleasure to gie him as an almous.'

'But consider, he's your own firstborn?' —

'Weel, then, what o' that?'

'And it stands with nature surely, Mr. Walkinshaw, that he should hae a bairn's part o' your gear.'

'Stands wi' nature, Mr. Keelevin? A coat o' feathers or a pair o' hairy breeks is a' the bairn's part o' gear that I ever heard o' in nature, as the fowls o' the air and the beasts o' the field can very plainly testify. – No, no, Mr. Keelevin, we're no now in a state o' nature but a state o' law, and it would be an unco thing if we did na make the best o't. In short, ye'll just get the settlements drawn up as soon as a possibility will alloo, for it does na do to lose time wi' sic things, as ye ken, and I'll come in wi' Watty neest market day and get them implemented.'

'Watty's no requisite,' said Mr. Keelevin, somewhat thoughtfully; 'it can be done without him. I really wish ye would think better o't before we spoil any paper.'

'I'm no fear't about the paper, in your hands, Mr. Keelevin, – ye'll do every thing right wi' sincerity, – and mind, an it should be afterwards found out that there are ony flaws in the new deed, as there were in the auld, which the doited creature Gibby Omit made out, I'll gar you pay for't yoursel; so tak tent, for your own sake, and see that baith Watty's deed and mine are right and proper in every point of law.'

'Watty's! what do you mean by Watty's?'

'Have na I been telling you that it's my wis that the Plealands and the Grippy should be made one heritage, and is na Watty concos mancos enough to be conjunct wi' me in the like o' that? Ye ken the flaw in his grandfather's settlement, and that, though the land has come clear and clean to him, yet it's no sae tethered but he may wise it awa as it likes him to do, for he's noo past one-and-twenty. Therefore, what I want is, that ye will mak a paper for him, by the whilk he's to 'gree that the Plealands gang the same gait, by entail, as the Grippy.'

'As in duty bound, Mr. Walkinshaw, I maun do your will in this business,' said Mr. Keelevin; 'but really I ken na when I hae been more troubled about the specialities of any settlement. It's no right o' you to exercise your authority oure Watty; the lad's truly no in a state to be called on to implement ony such agreement as what ye propose. He should na be meddled wi', but just left to wear out his time in the world, as little observed as possible.'

'I canna say, Mr. Keelevin, that I like to hear you misliken the lad sae, for did na ye yourself, with an ettling of pains that no other body could hae gane through but yoursel, prove, to the satisfaction of the Fifteen at Edinburgh, that he was a young man of a very creditable intellect, when Plealands' will was contested by his cousin?'

'Waes me, Mr. Walkinshaw, that ye should cast up to me the sincerity with which I did but my duty to a client. However, as ye're bent on this business, I'll say na mair in objection, but do my best to make a clear and tight entail, according to your instructions – trusting that I shall be accounted hereafter as having been but the innocent agent; and yet I beg you again, before it's oure late, to reflect on the consequence to that fine lad Charlie, who is now the head of a house, and in the way of having a family – It's an awfu' thing ye're doing to him.'

'Weel, weel, Mr. Keelevin, as I was saying, dinna ye fash your thumb, but mak out the papers in a sicker manner, – and may be though ye think sae ill o' me, it winna be the waur for Charlie after a's come and gane.'

'It's in the Lord's power certainly,' replied the worthy lawyer piously, 'to make it all up to him.'

‘And maybe it’s in my power too, for when this is done, I’ll hae to take another cast o’ your slight o’ hand in the way of a bit will for the moveables and lying siller, but I would just like this to be weel done first.’

‘Man, Laird, I’m blithe to hear that, – but ye ken that ye told me last year when you were clearing the wadset that was left on the Grippy, that ye had na meikle mair left – But I’m blithe to hear ye’re in a condition to act the part of a true father to a’ your bairns, though I maun say that I canna approve, as a man and a frien’, of this crotchet of entailing your estate on a haverel, to the prejudice of a braw and gallant lad like Charlie. Hows’ever, sin’ it is sae, we’ll say nae mair about it. The papers will be ready for you by Wednesday come eight days, and I’ll tak care to see they are to your wish.’

‘Na, an ye dinna do that, the cost shall be on your own risk, for the deil a plack or bawbee will I pay for them, till I hae a satisfaction that they are as they ought to be. Howsever, gude day, Mr. Keelevin, and we’ll be wi’ you on Wednesday by ten o’clock.’

In saying this, Claud, who had in the meantime risen from his seat, left the office without turning his head towards the desk where the clerks, as he walked through the outer room, were sitting, winking at one another, as he plodded past them, carrying his staff in his left hand behind him, a habit which he had acquired with his ellwand when he travelled the Borders as a pedlar.

CHAPTER XIX

On the Saturday evening after the instructions had been given to prepare the new deed of entail, Grippy was thoughtful and silent, and his wife observing how much he was troubled in mind, said,

'I'm thinking, gudeman, though ye hae no reason to be pleased with this match Charlie has made for himsel, ye ken, as it canna be helpit noo, we maun just put up wi't.'

To this observation, which was about one of the most sensible that ever the Leddy o' Grippy made in her life, Claud replied, with an ill-articulated grumph, that partook more of the sound and nature of a groan than a growl, and she continued, —

'But, poor laddie, bare legs need happing; I would fain hope ye'll no be oure dure; – ye'll hae to try an there be any moully pennies in the neuk o' your coffer that can be spar'd and no miss't.'

'I hae thought o' that, Girzy, my dawty,' said he somewhat more cordially than he was in the practice of doing to his wife; 'and we'll gang o'er the morn and speer for Charlie. I wis he had na been so headstrong; but it's a' his ain fault: howsever, it would na be canny to gang toom-handed, and I hae got a bit bill for five score pounds that I'm mindit to gie him.'

'Five score pounds, gudeman! that's the whole tot o' a hundred. Na, gudeman, I would hae thought the half o't an unco almous frae you. I hope it's no a fedam afore death. Gude preserve us! ye're really ta'en wi' a fit o' the liberalities; but Charlie, or am mista'en, will hae need o't a', for yon Flanders baby is no for a poor man's wife. But for a' that, I'm blithe to think ye're gaun to be sae kind, though I need na wonder at it, for Charlie was ay your darling chevalier, I'm sure nobody can tell what for, and ye ay lookit down on poor good-natured Watty.'

'Haud that senseless tongue o' thine, Girzy; Watty's just like the mither o't, a haverel; and if it were na more for ae thing than anither, the deil a penny would the silly gouk get frae me, aboon an aliment to keep him frae beggary. But what's ordain't will come to pass, and it's no my fault that the sumph Watty was na Charlie. But it's o' nae use to contest about the matter; ye'll be ready betimes the morn's morning to gang in wi' me to the town to see the young folks.'

Nothing more then passed, but Claud, somewhat to the surprise of his lady, proposed to make family worship that evening. 'It's time now, gudewife,' said he, 'when we're in a way to be made ancestors, that we should be thinking o' what's to come o' our sinful souls hereafter. Cry ben the servants, and I'll read a chapter to them and you, by way o' a change, for I kenna what's about me, but this rash action o' that thoughtless laddie fashes me, and yet it would na be right o' me to do any other way than what I'm doing.'

The big ha' Bible was accordingly removed by Mrs. Walkinshaw from the shelf where it commonly lay undisturbed from the one sacramental occasion to the other, and the dust being blown off, as on the Saturday night prior to the action sermon, she carried it to the kitchen to be more thoroughly wiped, and soon after returned with it followed by the servants. Claud, in the meantime, having drawn his elbow-chair close to the table, and placed his spectacles on his nose, was sitting, when the mistress laid the volume before him, ready to begin. As some little stir was produced by the servants taking their places, he accidentally turned up the cover, and looked at the page in which he had inserted the dates of his own marriage and the births of his children. Mrs. Walkinshaw observing him looking at the record, said, —

'Atweel, Charlie need na been in sic a haste, he's no auld enough yet to be the head o' a family. How auld were ye, gudeman, when we were marriet? But he's no blest wi' the forethought o' you.'

'Will that tongue o' thine, Girzy, ne'er be quiet? In the presence o' thy Maker, wheest, and pay attention, while I read a chapter of His holy word.'

The accent in which this was uttered imposed at once silence and awe, and when he added, 'Let us worship God, by reading a portion of the Scriptures of truth,' the servants often afterwards said, 'he spoke like a dreadfu' divine.'

Not being, as we have intimated, much in the practice of domestic worship, Claud had avoided singing a Psalm, nor was he so well acquainted with the Bible, as to be able to fix on any particular chapter or appropriate passage from recollection. In this respect he was, indeed, much inferior to the generality of the Glasgow merchants of that age, for, although they were considerably changed from the austerity by which their fathers had incurred the vengeance of Charles the Second's government, they were still regular in the performance of their religious domestic duties. Some excuse, however, might be made for Claud, on account of his having spent so many years on the English Borders, a region in no age or period greatly renowned for piety, though plentifully endowed, from a very ancient date, with ecclesiastical mansions for the benefit of the outlaws of the two nations. Not, however, to insist on this topic, instead of reverently waling a portion with judicious care, he opened the book with a degree of superstitious trepidation, and the first passage which caught his eye was the thirty-second verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis. He paused for a moment; and the servants and the family having also opened their Bibles, looked towards him in expectation that he would name the chapter he intended to read. But he closed the volume over upon his hand, which he had inadvertently placed on the text, and lay back on his chair, unconscious of what he had done, leaving his hand still within the book.

'We're a' ready,' said Mrs. Walkinshaw; 'whare's the place?'

Roused by her observation from the reverie into which he had momentarily sunk, without reflecting on what he did, he hastily opened the Bible, by raising his hand, which threw open the leaves, and again he saw and read, —

> And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? and he said, I am thy son, – thy first-born, Esau;
>
> And Isaac trembled very exceedingly.

'What's the matter wi' you, gudeman?' said the Leddy; 'are ye no weel?' as he again threw himself back in his chair, leaving the book open before him. He, however, made no reply, but only drew his hand over his face, and slightly rubbed his forehead.

'I'm thinking, gudeman,' added the Leddy, 'as ye're no used wi' making exercise, it may be as weel for us at the beginning to read a chapter intil oursels.'

'I'll chapse that place,' said Walter, who was sitting opposite to his father, putting, at the same time, unobserved into the book a bit of stick which he happened to be sillily gnawing.

Claud heard what his wife suggested, but for about a minute made no answer: shutting the Bible, without noticing the mark which Walter had placed in it, he said, —

'I'm thinking ye're no far wrang, gudewife. Sirs, ye may gae but the house, and ilk read a chapter wi' sobriety, and we'll begin the worship the morn's night, whilk is the Lord's.'

The servants accordingly retired; and Walter reached across the table to lay hold of the big Bible, in order to read his chapter where he had inserted the stick; but his father angrily struck him sharply over the fingers, saying, —

'Hast t'ou neither grace nor gumshion, that t'ou daurs to tak awa the word o' God frae before my very face? Look to thy ain book, and mind what it tells thee, an t'ou has the capacity of an understanding to understand it.'

Walter, rebuked by the chastisement, withdrew from the table; and, taking a seat sulkily by the fireside, began to turn over the leaves of his pocket Bible, and from time to time he read mutteringly a verse here and there by the light of the grate. Mrs. Walkinshaw, with Miss Meg, having but one book between them, drew their chairs close to the table; and the mother, laying her hand on her daughter's shoulder, overlooked the chapter which the latter had selected.

Although Claud had by this time recovered from the agitation into which he had been thrown, by the admonition he had as it were received from the divine oracle, he yet felt a profound emotion of awe as he again stretched his hand towards the sacred volume, which, when he had again opened,

and again beheld the selfsame words, he trembled very exceedingly, insomuch that he made the table shake violently.

'In the name of God, what's that?' cried his wife, terrified by the unusual motion, and raising her eyes from the book, with a strong expression of the fear which she then felt.

Claud was so startled, that he looked wildly behind him for a moment, with a ghastly and superstitious glare. Naturally possessing, however, a firm and steady mind, his alarm scarcely lasted a moment; but the pious business of the evening was so much disturbed, and had been to himself so particularly striking, that he suddenly quitted the table, and left the room.

CHAPTER XX

The Sabbath morning was calm and clear, and the whole face of Nature fresh and bright. Every thing was animated with glee; and the very flowers, as they looked up in the sunshine, shone like glad faces. Even the Leddy o' Grippy partook of the gladdening spirit which glittered and frolicked around her; and as she walked a few paces in front of her husband down the footpath from the house to the highway leading to Glasgow, she remarked, as their dog ran gambolling before them, that

'Auld Colley, wi' his daffing, looks as he had a notion o' the braw wissing o' joy Charlie is to get. The brute, gudeman, ay took up wi' him, which was a wonderfu' thing to me; for he did nothing but weary its life wi' garring it loup for an everlasting after sticks and chucky-stanes. Hows'ever, I fancy dogs are like men – leavened, as Mr. Kilfuddy says, wi' the leaven of an ungrateful heart – for Colley is as doddy and crabbit to Watty as if he was its adversary, although, as ye ken, he gathers and keeps a' the banes for't.'

'Wilt t'ou ne'er devaul' wi' thy havering tongue? I'm sure the dumb brute, in favouring Charlie, showed mair sense than his mother, poor fellow.'

'Aye, aye, gudeman, so ye say; but every body knows your most unnatural partiality.'

'Thy tongue, woman,' exclaimed her husband, 'gangs like the clatter-bane o' a goose's – '

'Eh, Megsty me!' cried the Leddy; 'wha's yon at the yett tirling at the pin?'

Claud, roused by her interjection, looked forward, and beheld, with some experience of astonishment, that it was Mr. Keelevin, the writer.

'We'll hae to turn and gang back with him,' said Mrs. Walkinshaw, when she observed who it was.

'I'll be damn'd if I do ony sic thing,' growled the old man, with a fierceness of emphasis that betrayed apprehension and alarm, while it at the same time denoted a riveted determination to persevere in the resolution he had taken; and, mending his pace briskly, he reached the gate before the worthy lawyer had given himself admittance.

'Gude day, Mr. Keelevin! – What's brought you so soon afield this morning?'

'I hae just ta'en a bit canter oure to see you, and to speak anent yon thing.'

'Hae ye got the papers made out?'

'Surely – it can never be your serious intent – I would fain hope – nay, really, Mr. Walkinshaw, ye maunna think o't.'

'Hoot, toot, toot; I thought ye had mair sense, Mr. Keelevin. But I'm sorry we canna gae back wi' you, for we're just sae far in the road to see Charlie and his lady landless.'

"Deed are we,' added Mrs. Walkinshaw; 'and ye'll no guess what the gudeman has in his pouch to gie them for hansel to their matrimony: the whole tot of a hundred pound, Mr. Keelevin – what think you o' that?'

The lawyer looked first at the Leddy, and then at the Laird, and said, 'Mr. Walkinshaw, I hae done you wrong in my thought.'

'Say nae mair about it, but hae the papers ready by Wednesday, as I directed,' replied Claud.

'I hope and trust, Mr. Keelevin,' said Mrs. Walkinshaw, 'that he's no about his will and testament: I redde ye, an he be, see that I'm no neglekit; and dinna let him do an injustice to the lave for the behoof of Charlie, wha is, as I say, his darling chevalier.'

Mr. Keelevin was as much perplexed as ever any member of the profession was in his life; but he answered cheerfully,

'Ye need na be fear't, Mrs. Walkinshaw, I'll no wrang either you or any one of the family;' and he added, looking towards her husband, 'if I can help it.'

'Na, thanks be an' praise, as I understand the law, that's no in your power; for I'm secured wi' a jointure on the Grippy by my marriage articles; and my father, in his testament, ordained me to hae

a hundred a year out of the barming o' his lying money; the whilk, as I have myself counted, brings in to the gudeman, frae the wadset that he has on the Kilmarkeckle estate, full mair than a hundred and twenty-seven pounds; so I would wis both you and him to ken, that I'm no in your reverence; and likewise, too, Mr. Keelevin, that I'll no faik a farthing o' my right.'

Mr. Keelevin was still more perplexed at the information contained in this speech; for he knew nothing of the mortgage, or, as the Leddy called it, the wadset which Claud had on his neighbour Kilmarkeckle's property, Mr. Omit having been employed by him in that business. Indeed, it was a regular part of Grippy's pawkie policy, not to let his affairs be too well known, even to his most confidential legal adviser; but, in common transactions, to employ any one who could be safely trusted in matters of ordinary professional routine. Thus the fallacious impression which Claud had in some degree made on the day in which he instructed the honest lawyer respecting the entail was, in a great measure, confirmed; so that Mr. Keelevin, instead of pressing the remonstrance which he had come on purpose from Glasgow that morning to urge, marvelled exceedingly within himself at the untold wealth of his client.

In the meantime, Grippy and his Leddy continued walking towards the city, but the lawyer remounted his horse, pondering on what he had heard, and almost persuaded that Claud, whom he knew to be so close and wary in worldly matters, was acting a very prudent part. He conceived that he must surely be much richer than the world supposed; and that, seeing the natural defects of his second son, Walter, how little he was superior to an idiot, and judging he could make no good use of ready money, but might, on the contrary, become the prey of knavery, he had, perhaps, determined, very wisely, to secure to him his future fortune by the entail proposed, meaning to indemnify Charles from his lying money. The only doubt that he could not clear off entirely to his satisfaction, was the circumstance of George, the youngest son, being preferred in the limitations of the entail to his eldest brother. But even this admitted of something like a reasonable explanation; for, by the will of the grandfather, in the event of Walter dying without male issue, George was entitled to succeed to the Plealands, as heir of entail; the effect of all which, in the benevolent mind of honest Mr. Keelevin, contributed not a little to rebuild the good opinion of his client, which had suffered such a shock from the harshness of his instructions, as to induce him to pay the visit which led to the rencounter described; and in consequence he walked his horse beside the Laird and Leddy, as they continued to pick their steps along the shady side of the road. – Mrs. Walkinshaw, with her petticoats lifted half-leg high, still kept the van, and her husband followed stooping forward in his gait, with his staff in his left hand behind him – the characteristic and usual position in which, as we have already mentioned, he was wont to carry his ellwand when a pedlar.

CHAPTER XXI

The young couple were a good deal surprised at the unexpected visit of their father and mother; for although they had been led to hope, from the success of the old lady's mission, that their pardon would be conceded, they had still, by hearing nothing further on the subject, passed the interval in so much anxiety, that it had materially impaired their happiness. Charles, who was well aware of the natural obduracy of his father's disposition, had almost entirely given up all expectation of ever being restored to his favour; and the despondency of the apprehensions connected with this feeling underwent but little alleviation when he observed the clouded aspect, the averted eye, and the momentary glances, with which his wife was regarded, and the troubled looks from time to time thrown towards himself. Nevertheless, the visit, which was at first so embarrassing to all parties, began to assume a more cordial character; and the generosity of Charles' nature, which led him to give a benevolent interpretation to the actions and motives of every man, soon mastered his anxieties; and he found himself, after the ice was broken, enabled to take a part in the raillery of his mother, who, in high glee and good humour, joked with her blooming and blushing daughter-in-law, with all the dexterity and delicacy of which she was so admirable a mistress.

'Eh!' said she, 'but this was a galloping wedding o' yours, Charlie. It was an unco-like thing, Bell – na, ye need na look down, for ye maunna expek me to ca' you by your lang-nebbit baptismal name, now that ye're my gude-dochter – for ceremony's a cauldrife commodity amang near frien's. But surely, Bell, it would hae been mair wiselike had ye been cried in the kirk three distink Sabbaths, as me and your gude-father was, instead o' gallanting awa under the scog and cloud o' night, as if ye had been fain and fey. Howsever, it's done noo; and the gudeman means to be vastly genteel. I'm sure the post should get a hag when we hear o' him coming wi' hundreds o' pounds in his pouch, to gi'e awa for deil-be-licket but a gratus gift o' gude will, in hansel to your matrimonial. But Charlie, your gudeman, Bell, was ay his pet, and so am nane surprised at his unnatural partiality, only I ken they'll hae clear e'en and bent brows that 'ill see him gi'eing ony sic almous to Watty.'

When the parental visitors had sat about an hour, during the great part of which the Leddy o' Grippy continued in this strain of clishmaclaver, the Laird said to her it was time to take the road homeward. Charles pressed them to stay dinner. This, however, was decidedly refused by his father, but not in quite so gruff a manner as he commonly gave his refusals, for he added, giving Charles the bank-bill, as he moved across the room towards the door, —

'Hae, there's something to help to keep the banes green, but be careful, Charlie, for I doubt ye'll hae need, noo that ye're the head o' a family, to look at baith sides o' the bawbee before ye part wi't.'

'It's for a whole hundred pound,' exclaimed Lady Grippy in an exulting whisper to her daughter-in-law – while the old man, after parting with the paper, turned briskly round to his son, as if to interrupt his thankfulness, and said, —

'Charlie, ye maun come wi' Watty and me on Wednesday; I hae a bit alteration to make in my papers; and, as we need na cry sic things at the Cross, I'm mindit to hae you and him for the witnesses.'

Charles readily promised attendance; and the old people then made their congées and departed.

In the walk homeward Claud was still more taciturn than in the morning; he was even sullen, and occasionally peevish; but his wife was in full pipe and glee; and, as soon as they were beyond hearing, she said, —

'Every body maun alloo that she's a well far't lassie yon; and, if she's as good as she's bonny, Charlie's no to mean wi' his match. But, dear me, gudeman, ye were unco scrimpit in your talk to her – I think ye might hae been a thought mair complaisant and jocose, considering it was a marriage occasion; and I wonder what came o'er mysel that I forgot to bid them come to the Grippy and tak their dinner the morn, for ye ken we hae a side o' mutton in the house; for, since ye hae made a conciliation free gratus wi' them, we need na be standing on stapping-stanes; no that I think the less

of the het heart that Charlie has gi'en to us baith; but it was his forton, and we maun put up wi't. Howsever, gudeman, ye'll alloo me to make an observe to you anent the hundred pound. I think it would hae been more prudent to hae gi'en them but the half o't, or ony smaller sum, for Charlie's no a very gude guide; – siller wi' him gangs like snaw aff a dyke; and as for his lilywhite-handit madam, a' the jingling o' her spinnit will ne'er make up for the winsome tinkle o' Betty Bodle's tocher purse. But I hae been thinking, gudeman, noo that Charlie's by hand and awa, as the ballad o' 'Woo't and Married and a" sings, could na ye persuade our Watty to mak up to Betty, and sae get her gear saved to us yet?'

This suggestion was the only wise thing, in the opinion of Claud, that ever he had heard his wife utter; it was, indeed, in harmonious accordance with the tenor of his own reflections, not only at the moment, but from the hour in which he was first informed of the marriage. For he knew, from the character of Miss Betty Bodle's father, that the entail of the Grippy, in favour of Walter, would be deemed by him a satisfactory equivalent for any intellectual defect. The disinheritance of Charles was thus, in some degree, palliated to his conscience as an act of family policy rather than of resentment; in truth, resentment had perhaps very little to say in the feeling by which it was dictated; – for, as all he did and thought of in life was with a view to the restoration of the Walkinshaws of Kittlestonheugh, we might be justified, for the honour of human nature, to believe, that he actually contemplated the sacrifice which he was making of his first-born to the Moloch of ancestral pride, with reluctance, nay, even with sorrow.

In the meantime, as he returned towards Grippy with his wife, thus discoursing on the subject of Miss Betty Bodle and Walter, Charles and Isabella were mutually felicitating themselves on the earnest which they had so unexpectedly received of what they deemed a thorough reconciliation. There had, however, been something so heartless in the behaviour of the old man during the visit, that, notwithstanding the hopes which his gift encouraged, it left a chill and comfortless sensation in the bosom of the young lady, and her spirit felt it as the foretaste of misfortune. Averse, however, to occasion any diminution of the joy which the visit of his parents had afforded to her husband, she endeavoured to suppress the bodement, and to partake of the gladdening anticipations in which he indulged. The effort to please others never fails to reward ourselves. In the afternoon, when the old dowager called, she was delighted to find them both satisfied with the prospect, which had so suddenly opened, and so far, too, beyond her most sanguine expectations, that she also shared in their pleasure, and with her grandson inferred, from the liberal earnest he had received, that, in the papers and deeds he was invited to witness, his father intended to make some provision to enable him to support the rank in society to which Isabella had been born, and in which his own taste prompted him to move. The evening, in consequence, was spent by them with all the happiness which the children of men so often enjoy with the freest confidence, while the snares of adversity are planted around them, and the demons of sorrow and evil are hovering unseen, awaiting the signal from destiny to descend on their blind and unsuspicious victims.

CHAPTER XXII

Grippy passed the interval between the visit and the day appointed for the execution of the deeds of entail with as much comfort of mind as Heaven commonly bestows on a man conscious of an unjust intention, and unable to excuse it to himself. Charles, who, in the meantime, naturally felt some anxiety to learn the precise nature of the intended settlement, was early afoot on the morning of Wednesday, and walked from the lodgings where he resided with his wife in Glasgow to meet his father and brother, on their way to the town. Being rather before the time appointed, he went forward to the house, on the green plot in front of which the old man was standing, with his hands behind, and his head thoughtfully bent downwards.

The approach of his son roused Claud from his reverie; and he went briskly forward to meet him, shaking him heartily by the hand, and inquiring, with more kindness than the occasion required, for the health of his young wife. Such unusual cordiality tended to confirm the delusion which the gift of the bank-bill on Sunday had inspired; but the paroxysm of affection produced by the effort to disguise the sense which the old man suffered of the irreparable wrong he was so doggedly resolved to commit, soon went off; and, in the midst of his congratulations, conscience smote him with such confusion, that he was obliged to turn away, to conceal the embarrassment which betrayed the insincerity of the warmth he had so well assumed. Poor Charles, however, was prevented from observing the change in his manner and countenance, by Walter appearing at the door in his Sunday clothes, followed by his mother, with his best hat in her hand, which she was smoothing at the same time with the tail of her apron.

'I redde ye, my bairn,' said she to Walter, as she gave him the hat, 'to take care o' thysel, for ye ken they're an unco crew ay in the Trongate on Wednesday; and mind what I hae been telling you, no to put your hand to pen and ink unless Mr. Keelevin tells you it's to be for your advantage; for Charlie's your father's ain chevalier, and nae farther gane than the last Lord's day, he gied him, as I telt you, a whole hundred pound for hansel to his tocherless matrimony.'

Charles, at this speech, reddened and walked back from the house, without speaking to his mother; but he had not advanced many steps towards the gate, when she cried, —

'Hey, Charlie! are ye sae muckle ta'en up wi' your bonny bride, that your mother's already forgotten?'

He felt the reproof, and immediately turned and went back to make some apology, but she prevented him by saying, —

'See that this is no a Jacob and Esau business, Charlie, and that ye dinna wrang poor Watty; for he's an easy good-natured lad, and will just do what either you or his father bids him.'

Charles laughed, and replied, —

'I think, mother, your exhortation should rather be to Watty than me; for ye ken Jacob was the youngest, and beguiled his auld brother of the birthright.'

The old man heard the remark, and felt it rush through his very soul with the anguish of a barbed and feathered arrow; and he exclaimed, with an accent of remorse as sharp and bitter as the voice of anger, —

'Hae done wi' your clavers, and come awa. Do ye think Mr. Keelevin has nothing mair to do than to wait for us, while ye're talking profanity, and taigling at this gait? Come awa, Watty, ye gumshionless cuif as ever father was plagued wi'; and Charlie, my lad, let us gang thegither, the haverel will follow; for if it has na the colley-dog's sense, it has something like its instinct.'

And so saying, he stepped on hastily towards the gate, swinging his staff in his right hand, and walking faster and more erectly than he was wont.

The two sons, seeing the pace at which their father was going forward, parted from their mother and followed him, Charles laughing and jeering at the beau which Walter had made of himself.

During the journey the old man kept aloof from them, turning occasionally round to rebuke their mirth, for there was something in the freedom and gaiety of Charles's laugh that reproached his spirit, and the folly of Walter was never so disagreeable to him before.

When they reached the office of Mr. Keelevin, they found him with the parchments ready on the desk; but before reading them over, he requested the Laird to step in with him into his inner-chamber.

'Noo, Mr. Walkinshaw,' said he, when he had shut the door, 'I hope ye have well reflected on this step, for when it is done, there's nae power in the law o' Scotland to undo it. I would, therefore, fain hope ye're no doing this out of any motive or feeling of resentment for the thoughtless marriage, it may be, of your auld son.'

Claud assured him, that he was not in the slightest degree influenced by any such sentiment; adding, 'But, Mr. Keelevin, though I employ you to do my business, I dinna think ye ought to catechize me. Ye're, as I would say, but the pen in this matter, and the right or the wrong o't's a' my ain. I would, therefore, counsel you, noo that the papers are ready, that they should be implemented, and for that purpose, I hae brought my twa sons to be the witnesses themselves to the act and deed.'

Mr. Keelevin held up his hands, and, starting back, gave a deep sigh as he said, – 'It's no possible that Charlie can be consenting to his own disinheritance, or he's as daft as his brother.'

'Consenting here, or consenting there, Mr. Keelevin,' replied the father, 'ye'll just bring in the papers and read them o'er to me; ye need na fash to ca' ben the lads, for that might breed strife atween them.'

'Na! as sure's death, Mr. Walkinshaw,' exclaimed the honest writer, with a warmth and simplicity rather obsolete among his professional brethren now-a-days, however much they may have been distinguished for those qualities in the innocent golden age; 'Na! as sure's death, Mr. Walkinshaw, this is mair than I hae the conscience to do; the lads are parties to the transaction, by their reversionary interest, and it is but right and proper they should know what they are about.'

'Mr. Keelevin,' cried the Laird, peevishly, 'ye're surely growing doited. It would be an uncolike thing if witnesses to our wills and testaments had a right to ken what we bequeathe. Please God, neither Charlie nor Watty sall be ony the wiser o' this day's purpose, as lang as the breath's in my body.'

'Weel, Mr. Walkinshaw,' replied the lawyer, 'ye'll tak your own way o't, I see that; but, as ye led me to believe, I hope an' trust it's in your power to make up to Charles the consequences of this very extraordinary entail; and I hope ye'll lose no time till ye hae done sae.'

'Mr. Keelevin, ye'll read the papers,' was the brief and abrupt answer which Claud made to this admonition; and the papers were accordingly brought in and read.

During the reading, Claud was frequently afflicted by the discordant cheerfulness of Charles's voice in the outer room, joking with the clerks at the expense of his fortunate brother; but the task of aforesaids and hereafters being finished, he called them in, with a sharp and peevish accent, and signed the deeds in their presence. Charles took the pen from his father, and also at once signed as witness, while Mr. Keelevin looked the living image of amazement; but, when the pen was presented to Watty, he refused to take it.

'What am I to get by this?' said the natural, mindful of his mother's advice. 'I would like to ken that. Nobody writes papers without payment.'

'T'ou's a born idiot,' said the father; 'wilt t'ou no do as t'ou's bidden?'

'I'll do ony other thing ye like, but I'll no sign that drum-head paper, without an advantage: ye would na get Mr. Keelevin to do the like o't without payment; and what for should ye get me? Have na I come in a' the gait frae the Grippy to do this; and am I no to get a black bawbee for my pains?'

The Laird masked the vexation with which this idiot speech of his destined heir troubled his self-possession, while Charles sat down in one of the chairs, convulsed with laughter. Claud was not, however, to be deterred from his purpose by the absurdity of his son: on the contrary, he was afraid

to make the extent of the fool's folly too evident, lest it might afterwards be rendered instrumental to set aside the entail. He called in one of the clerks from the outer-chamber, and requested him to attest his signature. Walter loudly complained of being so treated; and said, that he expected a guinea, at the very least, for the trouble he had been put to; for so he interpreted the advantage to which his mother had alluded.

'Weel, weel,' said his father, 'ha'd thy tongue, and t'ou sall get a guinea; but first sign this other paper,' presenting to him the second deed; by which, as possessor of the Plealands' estate, he entailed it in the same manner, and to the same line of succession, as he had himself destined the Grippy. The assurance of the guinea was effectual; Walter signed the deed, which was witnessed by Charles and the clerk; and the disinheritance was thus made complete.

CHAPTER XXIII

On leaving the office of Mr. Keelevin, Charles invited his father and brother to go home with him; but the old man abruptly turned away. Walter, however, appeared inclined to accept the invitation, and was moving off with Charles, when their father looked back, and chidingly commanded him to come along.

At any other time, this little incident would have been unnoticed by Charles, who, believing the old man had made some liberal provision for him or for his wife, was struck with the harsh contrast of such behaviour to the paternal affection by which he thought him actuated; and he paused, in consequence, thoughtfully looking after him as he walked towards the Cross, followed by Walter.

Grippy had not proceeded above twenty or thirty paces when he stopped, and turning round, called to his son, who immediately obeyed the summons.

'Charlie,' said he, 'I hope t'ou'll let nae daffing nor ploys about this marriage o' thine tak up thy attention frae the shop; for business maun be minded; and I'm thinking t'ou had as weel be making up a bit balance-sheet, that I may see how the counts stand between us.'

This touched an irksome recollection, and recalled to mind the observation which his father had made on the occasion of Fatherlans' ruin, with respect to the hazards of taking into partnership a man with the prospect of a family.

'I hope,' was his reply, 'that it is not your intention, sir, to close accounts with me?'

'No, Charlie, no,' was his answer. – 'I'll maybe mak things better for thee – t'ou'll no be out o' the need o't. But atween hands mak up the balance-sheet, and come doun on Saturday wi' thy wife to Grippy, and we'll hae some discourse anent it.'

With these words, the old man and Walter again went on towards the Cross, leaving Charles standing perplexed, and unable to divine the source and motives of his father's behaviour. It seemed altogether so unaccountable, that for a moment he thought of going back to Mr. Keelevin to ask him concerning the settlements; but a sense of propriety restrained him, and he thought it alike indelicate and dishonourable to pry into an affair which was so evidently concealed from him. But this restraint, and these considerations, did not in any degree tend to allay the anxiety which the mysteriousness of his father's conduct had so keenly excited; so that, when he returned home to Isabella, he appeared absent and thoughtful, which she attributed to some disappointment in his expectations, – an idea the more natural to her, as she had, from the visit on Sunday, been haunted with an apprehension that there was something unsound in the reconciliation.

Upon being questioned as to the cause of his altered spirits, Charles could give no feasible reason for the change. He described what had passed, he mentioned what his father had said, and he communicated the invitation, in all which there was nothing that the mind could lay hold of, nor aught to justify his strange and indescribable apprehension, if that feeling might be called an apprehension, to which his imagination could attach no danger, nor conjure up any thing to be feared. On the contrary, so far from having reason to suspect that evil was meditated against him, he had received a positive assurance that his circumstances would probably receive an immediate improvement; but for all that, there had been, in the reserve of the old man's manner, and in the vagueness of his promises, a something which sounded hollowly to his hope, and deprived him of confidence in the anticipations he had cherished.

While Isabella and he were sitting together conversing on the subject, the old Leddy Plealands came in, anxious to hear what had been done, having previously been informed of the intended settlements, but not of their nature and objects. In her character, as we have already intimated, there was a considerable vein, if not of romantic sentiment, unquestionably of morbid sensibility. She disliked her son-in-law from the first moment in which she saw him; and this dislike had made her so averse to his company, that, although their connexion was now nearly of four-and-twenty years'

standing, she had still but a very imperfect notion of his character. She regarded him as one of the most sordid of men, without being aware that avarice with him was but an agent in the pursuit of that ancestral phantom which he worshipped as the chief, almost the only, good in life; and, therefore, could neither imagine any possible ground for supposing, that, after being reconciled, he could intend his first-born any injury, nor sympathize with the anxieties which her young friends freely confessed both felt, while she could not but deplore the unsatisfactory state of their immediate situation.

In the meantime, Walter and his father were walking homeward. The old man held no communion with his son; but now and then he rebuked him for halloing at birds in the hedges, or chasing butterflies, a sport so unbecoming his years.

In their way they had occasion to pass the end of the path which led to Kilmarkeckle, where Miss Bodle, the heiress, resided with her father.

'Watty,' said Grippy to his son, 'gae thy ways hame by thysel, and tell thy mither that am gaun up to the Kilmarkeckle to hae some discourse wi' Mr. Bodle, so that she need na weary if I dinna come hame to my dinner.'

'Ye had better come hame,' said Watty, 'for there's a sheep's head in the pat, wi' a cuff o' the neck like ony Glasgow bailie's. – Ye'll no get the like o't at Kilmarkeckle, where the kail's sae thin that every pile o' barley runs roun' the dish, bobbing and bidding gude day to its neighbour.'

Claud had turned into the footpath from the main road, but there was something in this speech which did more than provoke his displeasure; and he said aloud, and with an accent of profound dread, – 'I hope the Lord can forgi'e me for what I hae done to this fool!'

Walter was not so void of sense as to be incapable of comprehending the substance of this contrite exclamation; and instantly recollecting his mother's admonition, and having some idea, imperfect as it was, of the peril of parchments with seals on them, he began, with obstreperous sobs and wails, to weep and cry, because, as he said, 'My father and our Charlie had fastened on me the black bargain o' a law plea to wrang me o' auld daddy's mailing.'

Grippy was petrified; it seemed to him that his son was that day smitten, in anger to him by the hand of Heaven, with a more disgusting idiocy than he had ever before exhibited, and, instigated by the aversion of the moment, he rushed towards him, and struck him so furiously with his stick, that he sent him yelling homeward as fast as he could run. The injustice and the rashness of the action were felt at once, and, overpowered for a few seconds by shame, remorse, and grief, the old man sat down on a low dry-stone wall that bounded the road on one side, and clasping his hands fervently together, confessed with bitter tears that he doubted he had committed a great sin. It was, however, but a transitory contrition, for, hearing some one approaching, he rose abruptly, and lifting his stick, which he had dropped in his agitation, walked up the footpath towards Kilmarkeckle; but he had not advanced many paces when a hand was laid on his shoulder. He looked round, and it was Walter, with his hat folded together in his hand.

'Father,' said the fool, 'I hae catched a muckle bum-bee; will ye help to haud it till I take out the honey blob?'

'I'll go hame, Watty – I'll go hame,' was the only answer he made, in an accent of extreme sorrow, 'I'll go hame; I daur do nae mair this day,' and he returned back with Walter to the main road, where, having again recovered his self-possession, he said, 'I'm dafter than thee to gang on in this fool gait; go, as I bade thee, hame and tell thy mother no to look for me to dinner, for I'll aiblins bide wi' Kilmarkeckle.' In saying which, he turned briskly round, and, without ever looking behind, walked with an alert step, swinging his staff courageously, and never halted till he reached Kilmarkeckle House, where he was met at the door by Mr. Bodle himself, who, seeing him approaching up the avenue, came out to meet him.

CHAPTER XXIV

Bodle of Kilmarkeckle, like all the lairds of that time, was come of an ancient family, in some degree related to the universal stock of Adam, but how much more ancient, no historian has yet undertaken to show. Like his contemporaries of the same station, he was, of course, proud of his lineage; but he valued himself more on his own accomplishments than even on the superior purity of his blood. We are, however, in doubt, whether he ought to be described as an artist or a philosopher, for he had equal claims to the honour of being both, and certainly without question, in the art of delineating hieroglyphical resemblances of birds and beasts on the walls of his parlour with snuff, he had evinced, if not talent or genius, at least considerable industry. In the course of more than twenty years, he had not only covered the walls with many a curious and grotesque form, but invented, – and therein lay the principle of his philosophy – a particular classification, as original and descriptive as that of Linnaeus.

At an early age he had acquired the habit of taking snuff, and in process of time became, as all regular snuff-takers are, acute in discriminating the shades and inflexions of flavour in the kind to which he was addicted. This was at once the cause and the principle of his science. For the nature of each of the birds and beasts which he modelled resembled, as he averred, some peculiarity in the tobacco of which the snuff that they severally represented had been made; and really, to do him justice, it was quite wonderful to hear with what ingenuity he could explain the discriminative qualities in which the resemblance of attributes and character consisted. But it must be confessed, that he sometimes fell into that bad custom remarkable among philosophers, of talking a great deal too much to every body, and on every occasion, of his favourite study. Saving this, however, the Laird of Kilmarkeckle was in other respects a harmless easy-tempered man, of a nature so kind and indulgent, that he allowed all about him to grow to rankness. The number of cats of every size and age which frisked in his parlour, or basked at the sunny side of the house, exceeded all reasonable credibility, and yet it was a common saying among the neighbours, that Kilmarkeckle's mice kittled twice as often as his cats.

In nothing was his easy and indulgent nature more shown than in his daughter, Miss Betty, who having, at an early age, lost her mother, he had permitted to run unbridled among the servants, till the habits which she had acquired in consequence rendered every subsequent attempt to reduce her into the requisite subjection of the sex totally unavailing.

She had turned her twentieth year, and was not without beauty, but of such a sturdy and athletic kind, that, with her open ruddy countenance, laughing eyes, white well-set teeth, and free and joyous step and air, justly entitled her to the nickname of Fun, bestowed by Charles Walkinshaw. She was fond of dogs and horses, and was a better shot than the Duke of Douglas's gamekeeper. Bold, boisterous, and frank, she made no scruple of employing her whip when rudely treated either by master or man; for she frequently laid herself open to freedoms from both, and she neither felt nor pretended to any of her sex's gentleness nor delicacy. Still she was not without a conciliatory portion of feminine virtues, and perhaps, had she been fated to become the wife of a sportsman or a soldier, she might possibly have appeared on the turf or in the tent to considerable advantage.

Such a woman, it may be supposed, could not but look with the most thorough contempt on Walter Walkinshaw; and yet, from the accidental circumstance of being often his playmate in childhood, and making him, in the frolic of their juvenile amusements, her butt and toy, she had contracted something like an habitual affection for the creature; in so much, that, when her father, after Claud's visit, proposed Walter for her husband, she made no serious objection to the match; on the contrary, she laughed, and amused herself with the idea of making him fetch and carry as whimsically as of old, and do her hests and biddings as implicitly as when they were children. Every thing thus seemed auspicious to a speedy and happy union of the properties of Kilmarkeckle and

Grippy, – indeed, so far beyond the most sanguine expectations of Claud, that, when he saw the philosophical Laird coming next morning, with a canister of snuff in his hand, to tell him the result of his communication to Miss Betty, his mind was prepared to hear a most decided, and even a menacing refusal, for having ventured to make the proposal.

'Come away, Kilmarkeckle,' said he, meeting him at the door; 'come in by – what's the best o' your news this morning? I hope nothing's wrang at hame, to gar you look sae as ye were fasht?'

'Troth,' replied Kilmarkeckle, 'I hae got a thing this morning that's very vexatious. Last year, at Beltane, ye should ken, I coft frae Donald M'Sneeshen, the tobacconist aboon the Cross of Glasgow, a canister of a kind that I ca'd the Linty. It was sae brisk in the smeddum, so pleasant to the smell, garring ye trow in the sniffling that ye were sitting on a bonny green knowe in hay time, by the side of a blooming whin-bush, hearkening to the blithe wee birdies singing sangs, as it were, to pleasure the summer's sun; and what would ye think, Mr. Walkinshaw, here is another canister of a sort that I'll defy ony ordinary nose to tell the difference, and yet, for the life o' me, I canna gie't in conscience anither name than the Hippopotamus.'

'But hae ye spoken to your dochter?' said Grippy, interrupting him, and apprehensive of a dissertation.

'O aye, atweel I hae done that.'

'And what did Miss Betty say?'

'Na, an ye had but seen and heard her, ye would just hae dee't, Mr. Walkinshaw. I'm sure I wonder wha the lassie taks her light-hearted merriment frae, for her mother was a sober and sedate sensible woman; I never heard her jocose but ance, in a' the time we were thegither, and that was when I expounded to her how Maccaba is like a nightingale, the whilk, as I hae seen and read in print, is a feathert fowl that has a great notion o' roses.'

'I was fear't for that,' rejoined Claud, suspecting that Miss Betty had ridiculed the proposal.

'But to gae back to the Linty and the Hippopotamus,' resumed Kilmarkeckle. 'The snuff that I hae here in this canister – tak a pree o't, Mr. Walkinshaw – it was sent me in a present frae Mr. Glassford, made out of the primest hogget in his last cargo – what think ye o't? Noo, I would just speer gin ye could tell wherein it may be likened to a hippopotamus, the which is a creature living in the rivers of Afrikaw, and has twa ivory teeth, bigger, as I am creditably informed, than the blade o' a scythe.'

Claud, believing that his proposal had been rejected, and not desirous of reverting to the subject, encouraged the philosopher to talk, by saying, that he could not possibly imagine how snuff could be said to resemble any such creature.

'That's a' that ye ken!' said Kilmarkeckle, chuckling with pleasure, and inhaling a pinch with the most cordial satisfaction. 'This snuff is just as like a hippopotamus as the other sort that was sae like it was like a linty; and nothing could be plainer; for even now when I hae't in my nostril, I think I see the creature wallowing and wantoning in some wide river in a lown sunny day, wi' its muckle glad e'en, wamling wi' delight in its black head, as it lies lapping in the clear caller water, wi' its red tongue, twirling and twining round its ivory teeth, and every now and then giving another lick.'

'But I dinna see any likeness in that to snuff, Mr. Bodle,' said Claud.

'That's most extraordinary, Mr. Walkinshaw; for surely there is a likeness somewhere in every thing that brings another thing to mind; and although as yet I'll no point out to you the vera particularity in a hippopotamus by which this snuff gars me think o' the beast, ye must, nevertheless, allow past a' dispute, that there is a particularity.'

Claud replied with ironical gravity, that he thought the snuff much more like a meadow, for it had the smell and flavour of new hay.

'Ye're no far frae the mark, Grippy; and now I'll tell you wherein the likeness lies. The hay, ye ken, is cut down by scythes in meadows; meadows lie by water-sides: the teeth of the hippopotamus

is as big as scythes; and he slumbers and sleeps in the rivers of Afrikaw; so the snuff, smelling like hay, brings a' thae things to mind; and therefore it is like a hippopotamus.'

After enjoying a hearty laugh at this triumph of his reasoning, the philosopher alighted from his hobby, and proceeded to tell Claud that he had spoken to his daughter, and that she had made no objection to the match.

'Heavens preserve us, Mr. Bodle!' exclaimed Grippy; 'what were ye havering sae about a brute beast, and had sic blithsome news to tell me?'

They then conversed somewhat circumstantially regarding the requisite settlements, Kilmarkeckle agreeing entirely with every thing that the sordid and cunning bargainer proposed, until the whole business was arranged, except the small particular of ascertaining how the appointed bridegroom stood affected. This, however, his father undertook to manage, and also that Walter should go in the evening to Kilmarkeckle, and in person make a tender of his heart and hand to the blooming, boisterous, and bouncing Miss Betty.

CHAPTER XXV

'Watty,' said the Laird o' Grippy to his hopeful heir, calling him into the room, after Kilmarkeckle had retired, —

'Watty, come ben and sit down; I want to hae some solid converse wi' thee. Dist t'ou hearken to what I'm saying? – Kilmarkeckle has just been wi' me – Hear'st t'ou me? – deevil an I saw the like o' thee – what's t'ou looking at? As I was saying, Kilmarkeckle has been here, and he was thinking that you and his dochter' —

'Weel,' interrupted Watty, 'if ever I saw the like o' that. There was a Jenny Langlegs bumming at the corner o' the window, when down came a spider wabster as big as a puddock, and claught it in his arms; and he's off and awa wi' her intil his nest; – I ne'er saw the like o't.'

'It's most extraordinar, Watty Walkinshaw,' exclaimed his father peevishly, 'that I canna get a mouthful o' common sense out o' thee, although I was just telling thee o' the greatest advantage that t'ou's ever likely to meet wi' in this world. How would ye like Miss Betty Bodle for a wife?'

'O father!'

'I'm saying, would na she make a capital Leddy o' the Plealands?'

Walter made no reply, but laughed, and chucklingly rubbed his hands, and then delightedly patted the sides of his thighs with them.

'I'm sure ye canna fin' ony fau't wi' her; there's no a brawer nor a better tocher'd lass in the three shires. – What think'st t'ou?'

Walter suddenly suspended his ecstasy; and grasping his knees firmly, he bent forward, and, looking his father seriously in the face, said, —

'But will she no thump me? Ye mind how she made my back baith black and blue. – I'm frightit.'

'Haud thy tongue wi' sic nonsense; that happened when ye were but bairns. I'm sure there's no a blither, bonnier quean in a' the kintra side.'

'I'll no deny that she has red cheeks, and e'en like blobs o' honey-dew in a kail-blade; but father – Lord, father! she has a neive like a beer mell.'

'But for a' that, a sightly lad like you might put up wi' her, Watty. I'm sure ye'll gang far, baith east and west, before ye'll meet wi' her marrow; and ye should reflek on her tocher, the whilk is a wull-ease that's no to be found at ilka dykeside.'

'Aye, so they say; her uncle 'frauded his ain only dochter, and left her a stocking-fu' o' guineas for a legacy. – But will she let me go halver?'

'Ye need na misdoubt that; na, an ye fleech her weel, I would na be surprised if she would gi'e you the whole tot; and I'm sure ye ne'er hae seen ony woman that ye can like better.'

'Aye, but I hae though,' replied Watty confidently.

'Wha is't?' exclaimed his father, surprised and terrified.

'My mother.'

The old man, sordid as he was, and driving thus earnestly his greedy purpose, was forced to laugh at the solemn simplicity of this answer; but he added, resuming his perseverance, —

'True! I did na think o' thy mother, Watty – but an t'ou was ance marriet to Betty Bodle, t'ou would soon like her far better than thy mother.'

'The fifth command says, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land;" and there's no ae word about liking a wife in a' the rest.'

'Weel, weel, but what I hae to say is, that me and Kilmarkeckle hae made a paction for thee to marry his dochter, and t'ou maun just gang o'er the night and court Miss Betty.'

'But I dinna ken the way o't, father; I ne'er did sic a thing a' my days; odd, I'm unco blate to try't.'

‘Gude forgi’e me,’ said Claud to himself, ‘but the creature grows sillier and sillier every day – I tell thee, Watty Walkinshaw, to pluck up the spirit o’ manhood, and gang o’er this night to Kilmarkeckle, and speak to Miss Betty by yoursel about the wedding.’

‘Atweel, I can do that, and help her to buy her parapharnauls. – We will hae a prime apple-pye that night, wi’ raisins in’t.’

The old man was petrified. – It seemed to him that it was utterly impossible the marriage could ever take place, and he sat for some time stricken, as it were, with a palsy of the mind. But these intervals of feeling and emotion were not of long duration; his inflexible character, and the ardour with which his whole spirit was devoted to the attainment of one object, soon settled and silenced all doubt, contrition, and hesitation; and considering, so far as Walter was concerned, the business decided, he summoned his wife to communicate to her the news, —

‘Girzy Hypel,’ said he as she entered the room, holding by the neck a chicken, which she was assisting the maids in the kitchen to pluck for dinner, and the feathers of which were sticking thickly on the blue worsted apron which she had put on to protect her old red quilted silk petticoat.

‘Girzy Hypel, be nane surprised to hear of a purpose of marriage soon between Watty and Betty Bodle.’

‘No possible!’ exclaimed the Leddy, sitting down with vehemence in her astonishment, and flinging, at the same time, the chicken across her lap, with a certain degree of instinctive or habitual dexterity.

‘What for is’t no possible?’ said the Laird angrily through his teeth, apprehensive that she was going to raise some foolish objection.

‘Na, gudeman, an that’s to be a come-to-pass – let nobody talk o’ miracles to me. For although it’s a thing just to the nines o’ my wishes, I hae ay jealoused that Betty Bodle would na tak him, for she’s o’ a rampant nature, and he’s a sober weel-disposed lad. My word, Watty, t’ou has thy ain luck – first thy grandfather’s property o’ the Plealands, and syne’ – She was going to add, ‘sic a bonny braw-tochered lass as Betty Bodle’ – but her observation struck jarringly on the most discordant string in her husband’s bosom, and he interrupted her sharply, saying, —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.