

ВАЛЬТЕР СКОТТ

GUY MANNERING; OR,
THE ASTROLOGER

Вальтер Скотт

Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer

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Walter Scott

Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer – Complete

VOLUME I

*'Tis said that words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour;
But scarce I praise their venturous part
Who tamper with such dangerous art.*

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

INTRODUCTION

The Novel or Romance of Waverley made its way to the public slowly, of course, at first, but afterwards with such accumulating popularity as to encourage the Author to a second attempt. He looked about for a name and a subject; and the manner in which the novels were composed cannot be better illustrated than by reciting the simple narrative on which Guy Mannering was originally founded; but to which, in the progress of the work, the production ceased to bear any, even the most distant resemblance. The tale was originally told me by an old servant of my father's, an excellent old Highlander, without a fault, unless a preference to mountain dew over less potent liquors be accounted one. He believed as firmly in the story as in any part of his creed.

A grave and elderly person, according to old John MacKinlay's account, while travelling in the wilder parts of Galloway, was benighted. With difficulty he found his way to a country seat, where, with the hospitality of the time and country, he was readily admitted. The owner of the house, a gentleman of good fortune, was much struck by the reverend appearance of his guest, and apologised to him for a certain degree of confusion which must unavoidably attend his reception, and could not escape his eye. The lady of the house was, he said, confined to her apartment, and on the point of making her husband a father for the first time, though they had been ten years married. At such an emergency, the laird said, he feared his guest might meet with some apparent neglect.

'Not so, sir,' said the stranger; 'my wants are few, and easily supplied, and I trust the present circumstances may even afford an opportunity of showing my gratitude for your hospitality. Let me only request that I may be informed of the exact minute of the birth; and I hope to be able to put you in possession of some particulars which may influence in an important manner the future prospects of the child now about to come into this busy and changeable world. I will not conceal from you that I am skilful in understanding and interpreting the movements of those planetary bodies which exert their influences on the destiny of mortals. It is a science which I do not practise, like others who call themselves astrologers, for hire or reward; for I have a competent estate, and only use the knowledge I possess for the benefit of those in whom I feel an interest.' The laird bowed in respect and gratitude, and the stranger was accommodated with an apartment which commanded an ample view of the astral regions.

The guest spent a part of the night in ascertaining the position of the heavenly bodies, and calculating their probable influence; until at length the result of his observations induced him to send for the father and conjure him in the most solemn manner to cause the assistants to retard the birth if practicable, were it but for five minutes. The answer declared this to be impossible; and almost

in the instant that the message was returned the father and his guest were made acquainted with the birth of a boy.

The Astrologer on the morrow met the party who gathered around the breakfast table with looks so grave and ominous as to alarm the fears of the father, who had hitherto exulted in the prospects held out by the birth of an heir to his ancient property, failing which event it must have passed to a distant branch of the family. He hastened to draw the stranger into a private room.

‘I fear from your looks,’ said the father, ‘that you have bad tidings to tell me of my young stranger; perhaps God will resume the blessing He has bestowed ere he attains the age of manhood, or perhaps he is destined to be unworthy of the affection which we are naturally disposed to devote to our offspring?’

‘Neither the one nor the other,’ answered the stranger; ‘unless my judgment greatly err, the infant will survive the years of minority, and in temper and disposition will prove all that his parents can wish. But with much in his horoscope which promises many blessings, there is one evil influence strongly predominant, which threatens to subject him to an unhallowed and unhappy temptation about the time when he shall attain the age of twenty-one, which period, the constellations intimate, will be the crisis of his fate. In what shape, or with what peculiar urgency, this temptation may beset him, my art cannot discover.’

‘Your knowledge, then, can afford us no defence,’ said the anxious father, ‘against the threatened evil?’

‘Pardon me,’ answered the stranger, ‘it can. The influence of the constellations is powerful; but He who made the heavens is more powerful than all, if His aid be invoked in sincerity and truth. You ought to dedicate this boy to the immediate service of his Maker, with as much sincerity as Samuel was devoted to the worship in the Temple by his parents. You must regard him as a being separated from the rest of the world. In childhood, in boyhood, you must surround him with the pious and virtuous, and protect him to the utmost of your power from the sight or hearing of any crime, in word or action. He must be educated in religious and moral principles of the strictest description. Let him not enter the world, lest he learn to partake of its follies, or perhaps of its vices. In short, preserve him as far as possible from all sin, save that of which too great a portion belongs to all the fallen race of Adam. With the approach of his twenty-first birthday comes the crisis of his fate. If he survive it, he will be happy and prosperous on earth, and a chosen vessel among those elected for heaven. But if it be otherwise-’ The Astrologer stopped, and sighed deeply.

‘Sir,’ replied the parent, still more alarmed than before, ‘your words are so kind, your advice so serious, that I will pay the deepest attention to your behests; but can you not aid me farther in this most important concern? Believe me, I will not be ungrateful.’

‘I require and deserve no gratitude for doing a good action,’ said the stranger, ‘in especial for contributing all that lies in my power to save from an abhorred fate the harmless infant to whom, under a singular conjunction of planets, last night gave life. There is my address; you may write to me from time to time concerning the progress of the boy in religious knowledge. If he be bred up as I advise, I think it will be best that he come to my house at the time when the fatal and decisive period approaches, that is, before he has attained his twenty-first year complete. If you send him such as I desire, I humbly trust that God will protect His own through whatever strong temptation his fate may subject him to.’ He then gave his host his address, which was a country seat near a post town in the south of England, and bid him an affectionate farewell.

The mysterious stranger departed, but his words remained impressed upon the mind of the anxious parent. He lost his lady while his boy was still in infancy. This calamity, I think, had been predicted by the Astrologer; and thus his confidence, which, like most people of the period, he had freely given to the science, was riveted and confirmed. The utmost care, therefore, was taken to carry into effect the severe and almost ascetic plan of education which the sage had enjoined. A tutor of the strictest principles was employed to superintend the youth’s education; he was surrounded by

domestics of the most established character, and closely watched and looked after by the anxious father himself.

The years of infancy, childhood, and boyhood passed as the father could have wished. A young Nazarene could not have been bred up with more rigour. All that was evil was withheld from his observation: he only heard what was pure in precept, he only witnessed what was worthy in practice.

But when the boy began to be lost in the youth, the attentive father saw cause for alarm. Shades of sadness, which gradually assumed a darker character, began to over-cloud the young man's temper. Tears, which seemed involuntary, broken sleep, moonlight wanderings, and a melancholy for which he could assign no reason, seemed to threaten at once his bodily health and the stability of his mind. The Astrologer was consulted by letter, and returned for answer that this fitful state of mind was but the commencement of his trial, and that the poor youth must undergo more and more desperate struggles with the evil that assailed him. There was no hope of remedy, save that he showed steadiness of mind in the study of the Scriptures. 'He suffers, continued the letter of the sage,' from the awakening of those harpies the passions, which have slept with him, as with others, till the period of life which he has now attained. Better, far better, that they torment him by ungrateful cravings than that he should have to repent having satiated them by criminal indulgence.'

The dispositions of the young man were so excellent that he combated, by reason and religion, the fits of gloom which at times overcast his mind, and it was not till he attained the commencement of his twenty-first year that they assumed a character which made his father tremble for the consequences. It seemed as if the gloomiest and most hideous of mental maladies was taking the form of religious despair. Still the youth was gentle, courteous, affectionate, and submissive to his father's will, and resisted with all his power the dark suggestions which were breathed into his mind, as it seemed by some emanation of the Evil Principle, exhorting him, like the wicked wife of Job, to curse God and die.

The time at length arrived when he was to perform what was then thought a long and somewhat perilous journey, to the mansion of the early friend who had calculated his nativity. His road lay through several places of interest, and he enjoyed the amusement of travelling more than he himself thought would have been possible. Thus he did not reach the place of his destination till noon on the day preceding his birthday. It seemed as if he had been carried away with an unwonted tide of pleasurable sensation, so as to forget in some degree what his father had communicated concerning the purpose of his journey. He halted at length before a respectable but solitary old mansion, to which he was directed as the abode of his father's friend.

The servants who came to take his horse told him he had been expected for two days. He was led into a study, where the stranger, now a venerable old man, who had been his father's guest, met him with a shade of displeasure, as well as gravity, on his brow. 'Young man,' he said, 'wherefore so slow on a journey of such importance?' 'I thought,' replied the guest, blushing and looking downward, 'that there was no harm in travelling slowly and satisfying my curiosity, providing I could reach your residence by this day; for such was my father's charge.' 'You were to blame,' replied the sage, 'in lingering, considering that the avenger of blood was pressing on your footsteps. But you are come at last, and we will hope for the best, though the conflict in which you are to be engaged will be found more dreadful the longer it is postponed. But first accept of such refreshments as nature requires to satisfy, but not to pamper, the appetite.'

The old man led the way into a summer parlour, where a frugal meal was placed on the table. As they sat down to the board they were joined by a young lady about eighteen years of age, and so lovely that the sight of her carried off the feelings of the young stranger from the peculiarity and mystery of his own lot, and riveted his attention to everything she did or said. She spoke little and it was on the most serious subjects. She played on the harpsichord at her father's command, but it was hymns with which she accompanied the instrument. At length, on a sign from the sage, she left the room, turning on the young stranger as she departed a look of inexpressible anxiety and interest.

The old man then conducted the youth to his study, and conversed with him upon the most important points of religion, to satisfy himself that he could render a reason for the faith that was in him. During the examination the youth, in spite of himself, felt his mind occasionally wander, and his recollections go in quest of the beautiful vision who had shared their meal at noon. On such occasions the Astrologer looked grave, and shook his head at this relaxation of attention; yet, on the whole, he was pleased with the youth's replies.

At sunset the young man was made to take the bath; and, having done so, he was directed to attire himself in a robe somewhat like that worn by Armenians, having his long hair combed down on his shoulders, and his neck, hands, and feet bare. In this guise he was conducted into a remote chamber totally devoid of furniture, excepting a lamp, a chair, and a table, on which lay a Bible. 'Here,' said the Astrologer, 'I must leave you alone to pass the most critical period of your life. If you can, by recollection of the great truths of which we have spoken, repel the attacks which will be made on your courage and your principles, you have nothing to apprehend. But the trial will be severe and arduous.' His features then assumed a pathetic solemnity, the tears stood in his eyes, and his voice faltered with emotion as he said, 'Dear child, at whose coming into the world I foresaw this fatal trial, may God give thee grace to support it with firmness!'

The young man was left alone; and hardly did he find himself so, when, like a swarm of demons, the recollection of all his sins of omission and commission, rendered even more terrible by the scrupulousness with which he had been educated, rushed on his mind, and, like furies armed with fiery scourges, seemed determined to drive him to despair. As he combated these horrible recollections with distracted feelings, but with a resolved mind, he became aware that his arguments were answered by the sophistry of another, and that the dispute was no longer confined to his own thoughts. The Author of Evil was present in the room with him in bodily shape, and, potent with spirits of a melancholy cast, was impressing upon him the desperation of his state, and urging suicide as the readiest mode to put an end to his sinful career. Amid his errors, the pleasure he had taken in prolonging his journey unnecessarily, and the attention which he had bestowed on the beauty of the fair female when his thoughts ought to have been dedicated to the religious discourse of her father, were set before him in the darkest colours; and he was treated as one who, having sinned against light, was therefore deservedly left a prey to the Prince of Darkness.

As the fated and influential hour rolled on, the terrors of the hateful Presence grew more confounding to the mortal senses of the victim, and the knot of the accursed sophistry became more inextricable in appearance, at least to the prey whom its meshes surrounded. He had not power to explain the assurance of pardon which he continued to assert, or to name the victorious name in which he trusted. But his faith did not abandon him, though he lacked for a time the power of expressing it. 'Say what you will,' was his answer to the Tempter; 'I know there is as much betwixt the two boards of this Book as can ensure me forgiveness for my transgressions and safety for my soul.' As he spoke, the clock, which announced the lapse of the fatal hour, was heard to strike. The speech and intellectual powers of the youth were instantly and fully restored; he burst forth into prayer, and expressed in the most glowing terms his reliance on the truth and on the Author of the Gospel. The Demon retired, yelling and discomfited, and the old man, entering the apartment, with tears congratulated his guest on his victory in the fated struggle.

The young man was afterwards married to the beautiful maiden, the first sight of whom had made such an impression on him, and they were consigned over at the close of the story to domestic happiness. So ended John MacKinlay's legend.

The Author of *Waverley* had imagined a possibility of framing an interesting, and perhaps not an unedifying, tale out of the incidents of the life of a doomed individual, whose efforts at good and virtuous conduct were to be for ever disappointed by the intervention, as it were, of some malevolent being, and who was at last to come off victorious from the fearful struggle. In short, something was

meditated upon a plan resembling the imaginative tale of Sintram and his Companions, by Mons. le Baron de la Motte Fouque, although, if it then existed, the author had not seen it.

The scheme projected may be traced in the three or four first chapters of the work; but farther consideration induced the author to lay his purpose aside. It appeared, on mature consideration, that astrology, though its influence was once received and admitted by Bacon himself, does not now retain influence over the general mind sufficient even to constitute the mainspring of a romance. Besides, it occurred that to do justice to such a subject would have required not only more talent than the Author could be conscious of possessing, but also involved doctrines and discussions of a nature too serious for his purpose and for the character of the narrative. In changing his plan, however, which was done in the course of printing, the early sheets retained the vestiges of the original tenor of the story, although they now hang upon it as an unnecessary and unnatural incumbrance. The cause of such vestiges occurring is now explained and apologised for.

It is here worthy of observation that, while the astrological doctrines have fallen into general contempt, and been supplanted by superstitions of a more gross and far less beautiful character, they have, even in modern days, retained some votaries.

One of the most remarkable believers in that forgotten and despised science was a late eminent professor of the art of legerdemain. One would have thought that a person of this description ought, from his knowledge of the thousand ways in which human eyes could be deceived, to have been less than others subject to the fantasies of superstition. Perhaps the habitual use of those abstruse calculations by which, in a manner surprising to the artist himself, many tricks upon cards, etc., are performed, induced this gentleman to study the combination of the stars and planets, with the expectation of obtaining prophetic communications.

He constructed a scheme of his own nativity, calculated according to such rules of art as he could collect from the best astrological authors. The result of the past he found agreeable to what had hitherto befallen him, but in the important prospect of the future a singular difficulty occurred. There were two years during the course of which he could by no means obtain any exact knowledge whether the subject of the scheme would be dead or alive. Anxious concerning so remarkable a circumstance, he gave the scheme to a brother astrologer, who was also baffled in the same manner. At one period he found the native, or subject, was certainly alive; at another that he was unquestionably dead; but a space of two years extended between these two terms, during which he could find no certainty as to his death or existence.

The astrologer marked the remarkable circumstance in his diary, and continued his exhibitions in various parts of the empire until the period was about to expire during which his existence had been warranted as actually ascertained. At last, while he was exhibiting to a numerous audience his usual tricks of legerdemain, the hands whose activity had so often baffled the closest observer suddenly lost their power, the cards dropped from them, and he sunk down a disabled paralytic. In this state the artist languished for two years, when he was at length removed by death. It is said that the diary of this modern astrologer will soon be given to the public.

The fact, if truly reported, is one of those singular coincidences which occasionally appear, differing so widely from ordinary calculation, yet without which irregularities human life would not present to mortals, looking into futurity, the abyss of impenetrable darkness which it is the pleasure of the Creator it should offer to them. Were everything to happen in the ordinary train of events, the future would be subject to the rules of arithmetic, like the chances of gaming. But extraordinary events and wonderful runs of luck defy the calculations of mankind and throw impenetrable darkness on future contingencies.

To the above anecdote, another, still more recent, may be here added. The author was lately honoured with a letter from a gentleman deeply skilled in these mysteries, who kindly undertook to calculate the nativity of the writer of *Guy Mannering*, who might be supposed to be friendly to the divine art which he professed. But it was impossible to supply data for the construction of a horoscope,

had the native been otherwise desirous of it, since all those who could supply the minutiae of day, hour, and minute have been long removed from the mortal sphere.

Having thus given some account of the first idea, or rude sketch, of the story, which was soon departed from, the Author, in following out the plan of the present edition, has to mention the prototypes of the principal characters in Guy Mannering.

Some circumstances of local situation gave the Author in his youth an opportunity of seeing a little, and hearing a great deal, about that degraded class who are called gipsies; who are in most cases a mixed race between the ancient Egyptians who arrived in Europe about the beginning of the fifteenth century and vagrants of European descent.

The individual gipsy upon whom the character of Meg Merrilies was founded was well known about the middle of the last century by the name of Jean Gordon, an inhabitant of the village of Kirk Yetholm, in the Cheviot Hills, adjoining to the English Border. The Author gave the public some account of this remarkable person in one of the early numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, to the following purpose: -

'My father remembered old Jean Gordon of Yetholm, who had great sway among her tribe. She was quite a Meg Merrilies, and possessed the savage virtue of fidelity in the same perfection. Having been often hospitably received at the farmhouse of Lochside, near Yetholm, she had carefully abstained from committing any depredations on the farmer's property. But her sons (nine in number) had not, it seems, the same delicacy, and stole a brood-sow from their kind entertainer. Jean was mortified at this ungrateful conduct, and so much ashamed of it that she absented herself from Lochside for several years.

'It happened in course of time that, in consequence of some temporary pecuniary necessity, the Goodman of Lochside was obliged to go to Newcastle to raise some money to pay his rent. He succeeded in his purpose, but, returning through the mountains of Cheviot, he was benighted and lost his way.

'A light glimmering through the window of a large waste barn, which had survived the farmhouse to which it had once belonged, guided him to a place of shelter; and when he knocked at the door it was opened by Jean Gordon. Her very remarkable figure, for she was nearly six feet high, and her equally remarkable features and dress, rendered it impossible to mistake her for a moment, though he had not seen her for years; and to meet with such a character in so solitary a place, and probably at no great distance from her clan, was a grievous surprise to the poor man, whose rent (to lose which would have been ruin) was about his person.

'Jean set up a loud shout of joyful recognition-

"Eh, sirs! the winsome gudeman of Lochside! Light down, light down; for ye maunna gang farther the night, and a friend's house sae near." The farmer was obliged to dismount and accept of the gipsy's offer of supper and a bed. There was plenty of meat in the barn, however it might be come by, and preparations were going on for a plentiful repast, which the farmer, to the great increase of his anxiety, observed was calculated for ten or twelve guests, of the same description, probably, with his landlady.

'Jean left him in no doubt on the subject. She brought to his recollection the story of the stolen sow, and mentioned how much pain and vexation it had given her. Like other philosophers, she remarked that the world grew worse daily; and, like other parents, that the bairns got out of her guiding, and neglected the old gipsy regulations, which commanded them to respect in their depredations the property of their benefactors. The end of all this was an inquiry what money the farmer had about him; and an urgent request, or command, that he would make her his purse-keeper, since the bairns, as she called her sons, would be soon home. The poor farmer made a virtue of necessity, told his story, and surrendered his gold to Jean's custody. She made him put a few shillings in his pocket, observing, it would excite suspicion should he be found travelling altogether penniless.

‘This arrangement being made, the farmer lay down on a sort of shake-down, as the Scotch call it, or bed-clothes disposed upon some straw, but, as will easily be believed, slept not.

‘About midnight the gang returned, with various articles of plunder, and talked over their exploits in language which made the farmer tremble. They were not long in discovering they had a guest, and demanded of Jean whom she had got there.

“E’en the winsome gudeman of Lochside, poor body,” replied Jean; “he’s been at Newcastle seeking for siller to pay his rent, honest man, but deil-be-lickit he’s been able to gather in, and sae he’s gaun e’en hame wi’ a toom purse and a sair heart.”

“That may be, Jean,” replied one of the banditti, “but we maun ripe his pouches a bit, and see if the tale be true or no.” Jean set up her throat in exclamations against this breach of hospitality, but without producing any change in their determination. The farmer soon heard their stifled whispers and light steps by his bedside, and understood they were rummaging his clothes. When they found the money which the providence of Jean Gordon had made him retain, they held a consultation if they should take it or no; but the smallness of the booty, and the vehemence of Jean’s remonstrances, determined them in the negative. They caroused and went to rest. As soon as day dawned Jean roused her guest, produced his horse, which she had accommodated behind the hallan, and guided him for some miles, till he was on the highroad to Lochside. She then restored his whole property; nor could his earnest entreaties prevail on her to accept so much as a single guinea.

‘I have heard the old people at Jedburgh say, that all Jean’s sons were condemned to die there on the same day. It is said the jury were equally divided, but that a friend to justice, who had slept during the whole discussion, waked suddenly and gave his vote for condemnation in the emphatic words, “Hang them a’!” Unanimity is not required in a Scottish jury, so the verdict of guilty was returned. Jean was present, and only said, “The Lord help the innocent in a day like this!” Her own death was accompanied with circumstances of brutal outrage, of which poor Jean was in many respects wholly undeserving. She had, among other demerits, or merits, as the reader may choose to rank it, that of being a stanch Jacobite. She chanced to be at Carlisle upon a fair or market-day, soon after the year 1746, where she gave vent to her political partiality, to the great offence of the rabble of that city. Being zealous in their loyalty when there was no danger, in proportion to the tameness with which they had surrendered to the Highlanders in 1745, the mob inflicted upon poor Jean Gordon no slighter penalty than that of ducking her to death in the Eden. It was an operation of some time, for Jean was a stout woman, and, struggling with her murderers, often got her head above water; and, while she had voice left, continued to exclaim at such intervals, “Charlie yet! Charlie yet!” When a child, and among the scenes which she frequented, I have often heard these stories, and cried piteously for poor Jean Gordon.

‘Before quitting the Border gipsies, I may mention that my grandfather, while riding over Charterhouse Moor, then a very extensive common, fell suddenly among a large band of them, who were carousing in a hollow of the moor, surrounded by bushes. They instantly seized on his horse’s bridle with many shouts of welcome, exclaiming (for he was well known to most of them) that they had often dined at his expense, and he must now stay and share their good cheer. My ancestor was, a little alarmed, for, like the goodman of Lochside, he had more money about his person than he cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold, lively-spirited man, he entered into the humour of the thing and sate down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one; but my relative got a hint from some of the older gipsies to retire just when-

The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,

and, mounting his horse accordingly, he took a French leave of his entertainers, but without experiencing the least breach of hospitality. I believe Jean Gordon was at this festival.[Footnote: Blackwood's Magazine, vol. I, p. 54]

Notwithstanding the failure of Jean's issue, for which

Weary fa' the waefu' wuddie,

a granddaughter survived her, whom I remember to have seen. That is, as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne as a stately lady in black, adorned with diamonds, so my memory is haunted by a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who commenced acquaintance by giving me an apple, but whom, nevertheless, I looked on with as much awe as the future Doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the Queen. I conceive this woman to have been Madge Gordon, of whom an impressive account is given in the same article in which her mother Jean is mentioned, but not by the present writer: -

'The late Madge Gordon was at this time accounted the Queen of the Yetholm clans. She was, we believe, a granddaughter of the celebrated Jean Gordon, and was said to have much resembled her in appearance. The following account of her is extracted from the letter of a friend, who for many years enjoyed frequent and favourable opportunities of observing the characteristic peculiarities of the Yetholm tribes: - "Madge Gordon was descended from the Faas by the mother's side, and was married to a Young. She was a remarkable personage-of a very commanding presence and high stature, being nearly six feet high. She had a large aquiline nose, penetrating eyes, even in her old age, bushy hair, that hung around her shoulders from beneath a gipsy bonnet of straw, a short cloak of a peculiar fashion, and a long staff nearly as tall as herself. I remember her well; every week she paid my father a visit for her awmous when I was a little boy, and I looked upon Madge with no common degree of awe and terror. When she spoke vehemently (for she made loud complaints) she used to strike her staff upon the floor and throw herself into an attitude which it was impossible to regard with indifference. She used to say that she could bring from the remotest parts of the island friends to revenge her quarrel while she sat motionless in her cottage; and she frequently boasted that there was a time when she was of still more considerable importance, for there were at her wedding fifty saddled asses, and unsaddled asses without number. If Jean Gordon was the prototype of the CHARACTER of Meg Merrilies, I imagine Madge must have sat to the unknown author as the representative of her PERSON.'"[Footnote: Blackwood's Magazine, vol. I, p. 56.]

How far Blackwood's ingenious correspondent was right, how far mistaken, in his conjecture the reader has been informed.

To pass to a character of a very different description, Dominie Sampson, - the reader may easily suppose that a poor modest humble scholar who has won his way through the classics, yet has fallen to leeward in the voyage of life, is no uncommon personage in a country where a certain portion of learning is easily attained by those who are willing to suffer hunger and thirst in exchange for acquiring Greek and Latin. But there is a far more exact prototype of the worthy Dominie, upon which is founded the part which he performs in the romance, and which, for certain particular reasons, must be expressed very generally.

Such a preceptor as Mr. Sampson is supposed to have been was actually tutor in the family of a gentleman of considerable property. The young lads, his pupils, grew up and went out in the world, but the tutor continued to reside in the family, no uncommon circumstance in Scotland in former days, where food and shelter were readily afforded to humble friends and dependents. The laird's predecessors had been imprudent, he himself was passive and unfortunate. Death swept away his sons, whose success in life might have balanced his own bad luck and incapacity. Debts increased and funds diminished, until ruin came. The estate was sold; and the old man was about to remove from the house of his fathers to go he knew not whither, when, like an old piece of furniture, which,

left alone in its wonted corner, may hold together for a long while, but breaks to pieces on an attempt to move it, he fell down on his own threshold under a paralytic affection.

The tutor awakened as from a dream. He saw his patron dead, and that his patron's only remaining child, an elderly woman, now neither graceful nor beautiful, if she ever had been either the one or the other, had by this calamity become a homeless and penniless orphan. He addressed her nearly in the words which Dominie Sampson uses to Miss Bertram, and professed his determination not to leave her. Accordingly, roused to the exercise of talents which had long slumbered, he opened a little school and supported his patron's child for the rest of her life, treating her with the same humble observance and devoted attention which he had used towards her in the days of her prosperity.

Such is the outline of Dominie Sampson's real story, in which there is neither romantic incident nor sentimental passion; but which, perhaps, from the rectitude and simplicity of character which it displays, may interest the heart and fill the eye of the reader as irresistibly as if it respected distresses of a more dignified or refined character.

These preliminary notices concerning the tale of Guy Mannering and some of the characters introduced may save the author and reader in the present instance the trouble of writing and perusing a long string of detached notes.

ABBOTSFORD, January, 1829.

ADDENDUM: I may add that the motto of this novel was taken from the Lay of the Last Minstrel, to evade the conclusions of those who began to think that, as the author of Waverley never quoted the works of Sir Walter Scott, he must have reason for doing so, and that the circumstances might argue an identity between them.

ABBOTSFORD, August 1, 1829.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

GALWEGIAN LOCALITIES AND PERSONAGES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUPPOSED TO BE ALLUDED TO IN THE NOVEL

An old English proverb says, that more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows; and the influence of the adage seems to extend to works composed under the influence of an idle or foolish planet. Many corresponding circumstances are detected by readers of which the Author did not suspect the existence. He must, however, regard it as a great compliment that, in detailing incidents purely imaginary, he has been so fortunate in approximating reality as to remind his readers of actual occurrences. It is therefore with pleasure he notices some pieces of local history and tradition which have been supposed to coincide with the fictitious persons, incidents, and scenery of Guy Mannering.

The prototype of Dirk Hatteraick is considered as having been a Dutch skipper called Yawkins. This man was well known on the coast of Galloway and Dumfriesshire, as sole proprietor and master of a buckkar, or smuggling lugger, called the 'Black Prince.' Being distinguished by his nautical skill and intrepidity, his vessel was frequently freighted, and his own services employed, by French, Dutch, Manx, and Scottish smuggling companies.

A person well known by the name of Buckkar-tea, from having been a noted smuggler of that article, and also by that of Bogle Bush, the place of his residence, assured my kind informant Mr. Train, that he had frequently seen upwards of two hundred Lingtow men assemble at one time, and go off into the interior of the country, fully laden with contraband goods.

In those halcyon days of the free trade, the fixed price for carrying a box of tea or bale of tobacco from the coast of Galloway to Edinburgh was fifteen shillings, and a man with two horses carried four such packages. The trade was entirely destroyed by Mr. Pitt's celebrated commutation law, which, by reducing the duties upon excisable articles, enabled the lawful dealer to compete with the smuggler. The statute was called in Galloway and Dumfries-shire, by those who had thriven upon the contraband trade, 'the burning and starving act.'

Sure of such active assistance on shore, Yawkins demeaned himself so boldly that his mere name was a terror to the officers of the revenue. He availed himself of the fears which his presence inspired on one particular night, when, happening to be ashore with a considerable quantity of goods in his sole custody, a strong party of excisemen came down on him. Far from shunning the attack, Yawkins sprung forward, shouting, 'Come on, my lads; Yawkins is before you.' The revenue officers were intimidated and relinquished their prize, though defended only by the courage and address of a single man. On his proper element Yawkins was equally successful. On one occasion he was landing his cargo at the Manxman's Lake near Kirkcudbright, when two revenue cutters (the 'Pigmy' and the 'Dwarf') hove in sight at once on different tacks, the one coming round by the Isles of Fleet, the other between the point of Rueberry and the Muckle Ron. The dauntless freetrader instantly weighed anchor and bore down right between the luggers, so close that he tossed his hat on the deck of the one and his wig on that of the other, hoisted a cask to his maintop, to show his occupation, and bore away under an extraordinary pressure of canvass, without receiving injury. To account for these and other hairbreadth escapes, popular superstition alleged that Yawkins insured his celebrated buckkar by compounding with the devil for one-tenth of his crew every voyage. How they arranged the separation of the stock and tithes is left to our conjecture. The buckkar was perhaps called the 'Black Prince' in honour of the formidable insurer.

The 'Black Prince' used to discharge her cargo at Luce, Balcarry, and elsewhere on the coast; but her owner's favourite landing-places were at the entrance of the Dee and the Cree, near the old Castle of Rueberry, about six miles below Kirkcudbright. There is a cave of large dimensions in the vicinity of Rueberry, which, from its being frequently used by Yawkins and his supposed connexion with the smugglers on the shore, is now called Dirk Hatteraick's Cave. Strangers who visit this place,

the scenery of which is highly romantic, are also shown, under the name of the Gauger's Loup, a tremendous precipice, being the same, it is asserted, from which Kennedy was precipitated.

Meg Merrilies is in Galloway considered as having had her origin in the traditions concerning the celebrated Flora Marshal, one of the royal consorts of Willie Marshal, more commonly called the Caird of Barullion, King of the Gipsies of the Western Lowlands. That potentate was himself deserving of notice from the following peculiarities: – He was born in the parish of Kirkmichael about the year 1671; and, as he died at Kirkcudbright 23d November 1792, he must then have been in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age. It cannot be said that this unusually long lease of existence was noted by any peculiar excellence of conduct or habits of life. Willie had been pressed or enlisted in the army seven times, and had deserted as often; besides three times running away from the naval service. He had been seventeen times lawfully married; and, besides, such a reasonably large share of matrimonial comforts, was, after his hundredth year, the avowed father of four children by less legitimate affections. He subsisted in his extreme old age by a pension from the present Earl of Selkirk's grandfather. Will Marshal is buried in Kirkcudbright church, where his monument is still shown, decorated with a scutcheon suitably blazoned with two tups' horns and two cutty spoons.

In his youth he occasionally took an evening walk on the highway, with the purpose of assisting travellers by relieving them of the weight of their purses. On one occasion the Caird of Barullion robbed the Laird of Bargally at a place between Carsphairn and Dalmellington. His purpose was not achieved without a severe struggle, in which the gipsy lost his bonnet, and was obliged to escape, leaving it on the road. A respectable farmer happened to be the next passenger, and, seeing the bonnet, alighted, took it up, and rather imprudently put it on his own head. At this instant Bargally came up with some assistants, and, recognising the bonnet, charged the farmer of Bantoberick with having robbed him, and took him into custody. There being some likeness between the parties, Bargally persisted in his charge, and, though the respectability of the farmer's character was proved or admitted, his trial before the Circuit Court came on accordingly. The fatal bonnet lay on the table of the court. Bargally swore that it was the identical article worn by the man who robbed him; and he and others likewise deponed that they had found the accused on the spot where the crime was committed, with the bonnet on his head. The case looked gloomily for the prisoner, and the opinion of the judge seemed unfavourable. But there was a person in court who knew well both who did and who did not commit the crime. This was the Caird of Barullion, who, thrusting himself up to the bar near the place where Bargally was standing, suddenly seized on the bonnet, put it on his head, and, looking the Laird full in the face, asked him, with a voice which attracted the attention of the court and crowded audience- 'Look at me, sir, and tell me, by the oath you have sworn- Am not I the man who robbed you between Carsphairn and Dalmellington?' Bargally replied, in great astonishment, 'By Heaven! you are the very man.' 'You see what sort of memory this gentleman has,' said the volunteer pleader; 'he swears to the bonnet whatever features are under it. If you yourself, my Lord, will put it on your head, he will be willing to swear that your Lordship was the party who robbed him between Carsphairn and Dalmellington.' The tenant of Bantoberick was unanimously acquitted; and thus Willie Marshal ingeniously contrived to save an innocent man from danger, without incurring any himself, since Bargally's evidence must have seemed to every one too fluctuating to be relied upon.

While the King of the Gipsies was thus laudably occupied, his royal consort, Flora, contrived, it is said, to steal the hood from the judge's gown; for which offence, combined with her presumptive guilt as a gipsy, she was banished to New England, whence she never returned.

Now, I cannot grant that the idea of Meg Merrilies was, in the first concoction of the character, derived from Flora Marshal, seeing I have already said she was identified with Jean Gordon, and as I have not the Laird of Bargally's apology for charging the same fact on two several individuals. Yet I am quite content that Meg should be considered as a representative of her sect and class in general, Flora as well as others.

The other instances in which my Gallovidian readers have obliged me by assigning to

Airy nothing
A local habitation and a name,

shall also be sanctioned so far as the Author may be entitled to do so. I think the facetious Joe Miller records a case pretty much in point; where the keeper of a museum, while showing, as he said, the very sword with which Balaam was about to kill his ass, was interrupted by one of the visitors, who reminded him that Balaam was not possessed of a sword, but only wished for one. 'True, sir,' replied the ready-witted cicerone; 'but this is the very sword he wished for.' The Author, in application of this story, has only to add that, though ignorant of the coincidence between the fictions of the tale and some real circumstances, he is contented to believe he must unconsciously have thought or dreamed of the last while engaged in the composition of Guy Mannering.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO GUY MANNERING

The second essay in fiction of an author who has triumphed in his first romance is a doubtful and perilous adventure. The writer is apt to become self-conscious, to remember the advice of his critics, – a fatal error, – and to tremble before the shadow of his own success. He knows that he will have many enemies, that hundreds of people will be ready to find fault and to vow that he is “written out.” Scott was not unacquainted with these apprehensions. After publishing “Marmion” he wrote thus to Lady Abercorn: –

“No one acquires a certain degree of popularity without exciting an equal degree of malevolence among those who, either from rivalry or from the mere wish to pull down what others have set up, are always ready to catch the first occasion to lower the favoured individual to what they call his ‘real standard.’ Of this I have enough of experience, and my political interferences, however useless to my friends, have not failed to make me more than the usual number of enemies. I am therefore bound, in justice to myself and to those whose good opinion has hitherto protected me, not to peril myself too frequently. The naturalists tell us that if you destroy the web which the spider has just made, the insect must spend many days in inactivity till he has assembled within his person the materials necessary to weave another. Now, after writing a work of imagination one feels in nearly the same exhausted state as the spider. I believe no man now alive writes more rapidly than I do (no great recommendation); but I never think of making verses till I have a sufficient stock of poetical ideas to supply them, – I would as soon join the Israelites in Egypt in their heavy task of making bricks without clay. Besides, I know, as a small farmer, that good husbandry consists in not taking the same crop too frequently from the same soil; and as turnips come after wheat, according to the best rules of agriculture, I take it that an edition of Swift will do well after such a scourging crop as ‘Marmion.’”
[March 13, 1808. Copied from the Collection of Lady Napier and Ettrick.]

These fears of the brave, then, were not unfamiliar to Scott; but he audaciously disregarded all of them in the composition of “Guy Mannering.” He had just spun his web, like the spider of his simile, he had just taken off his intellectual fields the “scourging crop” of “The Lord of the Isles,” he had just received the discouraging news of its comparative failure, when he “buckled to,” achieved “Guy Mannering” in six weeks, and published it. Moliere tells us that he wrote “Les Facheux” in a fortnight; and a French critic adds that it reads indeed as if it had been written in, a fortnight. Perhaps a self-confident censor might venture a similar opinion about “Guy Mannering.” It assuredly shows traces of haste; the plot wanders at its own will; and we may believe that the Author often-did not see his own way out of the wood. But there is little harm in that. “If I do not know what is coming next,” a modern novelist has remarked, “how can the public know?” Curiosity, at least, is likely to be excited by this happy-go-lucky manner of Scott’s. “The worst of it is;” as he wrote to Lady Abercorn about his poems (June 9, 1808), “that I am not very good or patient in slow and careful composition; and sometimes I remind myself of the drunken man, who could run long after he could not walk.” Scott could certainly run very well, though averse to a plodding motion.

[He was probably thinking of a famous Edinburgh character, “Singing Jamie Balfour.” Jamie was found very drunk and adhering to the pavement one night. He could not raise himself; but when helped to his feet, ran his preserver a race to the tavern, and won!]

The account of the year’s work which preceded “Guy Mannering” is given by Lockhart, and is astounding. In 1814 Scott had written, Lockhart believes, the greater part of the “Life of Swift,” most

of “Waverley” and the “Lord of the Isles;” he had furnished essays to the “Encyclopaedia,” and had edited “The Memorie of the Somervilles.” The spider might well seem spun out, the tilth exhausted. But Scott had a fertility, a spontaneity, of fancy equalled only, if equalled at all, by Alexandre Dumas.

On November 7 of this laborious year, 1814, Scott was writing to Mr. Joseph Train, thanking him for a parcel of legendary lore, including the Galloway tale of the wandering astrologer and a budget of gypsy traditions. Falling in the rich soil of Scott’s imagination, the tale of the astrologer yielded a name and an opening to “Guy Mannering,” while the gypsy lore blossomed into the legend of Meg Merrilies. The seed of the novel was now sown. But between November 11 and December 25 Scott was writing the three last cantos of the “Lord of the Isles.” Yet before the “Lord of the Isles” was published (Jan. 18, 1815), two volumes of “Guy Mannering” were in print (Letter to Morritt, Jan. 17, 1815.) The novel was issued on Feb. 14, 1815. Scott, as he says somewhere, was like the turnspit dog, into whose wheel a hot cinder is dropped to encourage his activity. Scott needed hot cinders in the shape of proof-sheets fresh from the press, and he worked most busily when the printer’s devil was waiting. In this case, not only the printer’s devil, but the wolf was at the door. The affairs of the Ballantynes clamoured for moneys. In their necessity and his own, Scott wrote at the rate of a volume in ten days, and for some financial reason published “Guy Mannering” with Messrs. Longmans, not with Constable. Scott was at this moment facing creditors and difficulties as Napoleon faced the armies of the Allies, – present everywhere, everywhere daring and successful. True, his “Lord of the Isles” was a disappointment, as James Ballantyne informed him. “Well, James, so be it; but you know we must not droop, for we cannot afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else.’ And so he dismissed me, and resumed his novel.”

In these circumstances, far from inspiring, was “Guy Mannering” written and hurried through the press. The story has its own history: one can watch the various reminiscences and experiences of life that crystallized together in Scott’s mind, and grouped themselves fantastically into his unpremeditated plot. Sir Walter gives, in the preface of 1829, the legend which he heard from John MacKinlay, his father’s Highland servant, and on which he meant to found a tale more in Hawthorn’s manner than in his own. That plan he changed in the course of printing, “leaving only just enough of astrology to annoy pedantic reviewers and foolish Puritans.” Whence came the rest of the plot, – the tale of the long-lost heir, and so on? The true heir, “kept out of his own,” and returning in disguise, has been a favourite character ever since Homer sang of Odysseus, and probably long before that. But it is just possible that Scott had a certain modern instance in his mind. In turning over the old manuscript diary at Branhholme Park (mentioned in a note to “Waverley”), the Editor lighted on a singular tale, which, in the diarist’s opinion, might have suggested “Guy Mannering” to Sir Walter. The resemblance between the story of Vanbeest Brown and the hero of the diarist was scanty; but in a long letter of Scott’s to Lady Abercorn (May 21, 1813), a the Editor finds Sir Walter telling his correspondent the very narrative recorded in the Branhholme Park diary. Singular things happen, Sir Walter says; and he goes on to describe a case just heard in the court where he is sitting as Clerk of Sessions. Briefly, the anecdote is this: A certain Mr. Carruthers of Dormont had reason to suspect his wife’s fidelity. While proceedings for a divorce were pending, Mrs. Carruthers bore a daughter, of whom her husband, of course, was legally the father. But he did not believe in the relationship, and sent the infant girl to be brought up, in ignorance of her origin and in seclusion, among the Cheviot Hills. Here she somehow learned the facts of her own story. She married a Mr. Routledge, the son of a yeoman, and “compounded” her rights (but not those of her issue) for a small sum of ready money, paid by old Dormont. She bears a boy; then she and her husband died in poverty. Their son was sent by a friend to the East Indies, and was presented with a packet of papers, which he left unopened at a lawyer’s. The young man made a fortune in India, returned to Scotland, and took a shooting in Dumfriesshire, near bormont, his ancestral home. He lodged at a small inn hard by, and the landlady, struck by his name, began to gossip with him about his family history. He knew nothing of the facts which the landlady disclosed, but, impressed by her story, sent for and examined his

neglected packet of papers. Then he sought legal opinion, and was advised, by President Blair, that he had a claim worth presenting on the estate of Dormont. "The first decision of the cause," writes Scott, "was favourable." The true heir celebrated his legal victory by a dinner-party, and his friends saluted him as "Dormont." Next morning he was found dead. Such is the true tale. As it occupied Scott's mind in 1813, and as he wrote "Guy Mannering" in 1814-15, it is not impossible that he may have borrowed his wandering heir, who returns by pure accident to his paternal domains, and there learns his origin at a woman's lips, from the Dormont case. The resemblance of the stories, at least, was close enough to strike a shrewd observer some seventy years ago.

Another possible source of the plot—a more romantic origin, certainly—is suggested by Mr. Robert Chambers in "Illustrations of the Author of 'Waverley.'" A Maxwell of Glenormiston, "a religious and bigoted recluse," sent his only son and heir to a Jesuit College in Flanders, left his estate in his brother's management, and died. The wicked uncle alleged that the heir was also dead. The child, ignorant of his birth, grew up, ran away from the Jesuits at the age of sixteen, enlisted in the French army, fought at Fontenoy, got his colours, and, later, landed in the Moray Firth as a French officer in 1745. He went through the campaign, was in hiding in Lochaber after Drumossie, and in making for a Galloway port, was seized, and imprisoned in Dumfries. Here an old woman of his father's household recognized him by "a mark which she remembered on his body." His cause was taken up by friends; but the usurping uncle died, and Sir Robert Maxwell recovered his estates without a lawsuit. This anecdote is quoted from the "New Monthly Magazine," June, 1819. There is nothing to prove that Scott was acquainted with this adventure. Scott's own experience, as usual, supplied him with hints for his characters. The phrase of Dominie Sampson's father, "Please God, my bairn may live to wag his pow in a pulpit," was uttered in his own hearing. There was a Bluegown, or Bedesman, like Edie Ochiltree, who had a son at Edinburgh College. Scott was kind to the son, the Bluegown asked him to dinner, and at this meal the old man made the remark about the pulpit and the pow.' A similar tale is told by Scott in the Introduction to "The Antiquary" (1830). As for the good Dominie, Scott remarks that, for "certain particular reasons," he must say what he has to say about his prototype "very generally." Mr. Chambers' finds the prototype in a Mr. James Sanson, tutor in the house of Mr. Thomas Scott, Sir Walter's uncle. It seems very unlike Sir Walter to mention this excellent man almost by his name, and the tale about his devotion to his patron's daughter cannot, apparently, be true of Mr. James Sanson. The prototype of Pleydell, according to Sir Walter himself (Journal, June 19, 1830), was "my old friend Adam Rolland, Esq., in external circumstances, but not in frolic or fancy." Mr. Chambers, however, finds the original in Mr. Andrew Crosbie, an advocate of great talents, who frolicked to ruin, and died in 1785. Scott may have heard tales of this patron of "High Jinks," but cannot have known him much personally. Dandie Dinmont is simply the typical Border farmer. Mr. Shortreed, Scott's companion in his Liddesdale raids, thought that Willie Elliot, in Millburnholm, was the great original. Scott did not meet Mr. James Davidson in Hindlee, owner of all the Mustards and Peppers, till some years after the novel was written. "Guy Mannering," when read to him, sent Mr. Davidson to sleep. "The kind and manly character of Dandie, the gentle and delicious one of his wife," and the circumstances of their home, were suggested, Lockhart thinks, by Scott's friend, steward, and amanuensis, Mr. William Laidlaw, by Mrs. Laidlaw, and by their farm among the braes of Yarrow. In truth, the Border was peopled then by Dandies and Ailies: nor is the race even now extinct in Liddesdale and Teviotdale, in Ettrick and Yarrow. As for Mustard and Pepper, their offspring too is powerful in the land, and is the deadly foe of vermin. The curious may consult Mr. Cook's work on "The Dandie Dinmont Terrier." The Duke of Buccleugh's breed still resembles the fine example painted by Gainsborough in his portrait of the duke (of Scott's time). "Tod Gabbie," again, as Lockhart says, was studied from Tod Willie, the huntsman of the hills above Loch Skene. As for the Galloway scenery, Scott did not know it well, having only visited "the Kingdom" in 1793, when he was defending the too frolicsome Mr. McNaught, Minister of Girthon. The beautiful and lonely wilds of the Glenkens, in central Galloway, where traditions yet linger, were, unluckily,

terra incognita to Scott. A Galloway story of a murder and its detection by the prints of the assassin's boots inspired the scene where Dirk Hatteraick is traced by similar means. In Colonel Mannering, by the way, the Ettrick Shepherd recognized "Walter Scott, painted by himself."

The reception of "Guy Mannering" was all that could be wished. William Erskine and Ballantyne were "of opinion that it is much more interesting than 'Waverley.'" Mr. Morritt (March, 1815) pronounced himself to be "quite charmed with Dandie, Meg Merrilies, and Dirk Hatteraick, – characters as original as true to nature, and as forcibly conceived as, I had almost said, could have been drawn by Shakspeare himself." The public were not less appreciative. Two thousand copies, at a guinea, were sold the day after publication, and three thousand more were disposed of in three months. The professional critics acted just as Scott, speaking in general terms, had prophesied that they would. Let us quote the "British Critic" (1815).

"There are few spectacles in the literary world more lamentable than to view a successful author, in his second appearance before the public, limping lamely after himself, and treading tediously and awkwardly in the very same round, which, in his first effort, he had traced with vivacity and applause. We would not be harsh enough to say that the Author of 'Waverley' is in this predicament, but we are most unwillingly compelled to assert that the second effort falls far below the standard of the first. In 'Waverley' there was brilliancy of genius... In 'Guy Mannering' there is little else beyond the wild sallies of an original genius, the bold and irregular efforts of a powerful but an exhausted mind. Time enough has not been allowed him to recruit his resources, both of anecdote and wit; but, encouraged by the credit so justly, bestowed upon one of then most finished portraits ever presented to the world, he has followed up the exhibition with a careless and hurried sketch, which betrays at once the weakness and the strength of its author.

"The character of Dirk Hatteraick is a faithful copy from nature, – it is one of those moral monsters which make us almost ashamed of our kind. Still, amidst the ruffian and murderous brutality of the smuggler, some few feelings of our common nature are thrown in with no less ingenuity than truth... The remainder of the personages are very little above the cast of a common lively novel... The Edinburgh lawyer is perhaps the most original portrait; nor are the saturnalia of the Saturday evenings described without humour. The Dominie is overdrawn and inconsistent; while the young ladies present nothing above par..

"There are parts of this novel which none but one endowed with the sublimity of genius could have dictated; there are others which any ordinary character cobbler might as easily have stitched together. There are sparks both of pathos and of humour, even in the dullest parts, which could be elicited from none but the Author of 'Waverley.'.. If, indeed, we have spoken in a manner derogatory to this, his later effort, our censure arises only from its comparison with the former..

"We cannot, however, conclude this article without remarking the absurd influence which our Author unquestionably attributes to the calculations of judicial astrology. No power of chance alone could have fulfilled the joint predictions both of Guy Mannering and Meg Merrilies; we cannot suppose that the Author can be endowed with sufficient folly to believe in the influence of planetary conjunctions himself, nor to have so miserable an idea of the understanding of his readers as to suppose them capable of a similar belief. We must also remember that the time of this novel is not in the dark ages, but scarcely forty years since; no aid, therefore, can be derived from the general tendency of popular superstition. What the clew may be to this apparent absurdity, we cannot imagine; whether the Author be in jest

or earnest we do not know, and we are willing to suppose in this dilemma that he does not know himself.”

The “Monthly Review” sorrowed, like the “British,” over the encouragement given to the follies of astrology. The “Critical Review” “must lament that ‘Guy Mannering’ is too often written in language unintelligible to all except the Scotch.” The “Critical Monthly” also had scruples about morality. The novel “advocates duelling, encourages a taste for peeping into the future, – a taste by far too prevalent, – and it is not over nice on religious subjects!”

The “Quarterly Review” distinguished itself by stupidity, if not by spite. “The language of ‘Guy Mannering,’ though characteristic, is mean; the state of society, though peculiar, is vulgar. Meg Merrilies is swelled into a very unnatural importance.” The speech of Meg Merrilies to Ellangowan is “one of the few which affords an intelligible extract.” The Author “does not even scruple to overturn the laws of Nature” – because Colonel Mannering resides in the neighbourhood of Ellangowan! “The Author either gravely believes what no other man alive believes, or he has, of malice prepense, committed so great an offence against good taste as to build his story on what he must know to be a contemptible absurdity... The greater part of the characters, their manners and dialect, are at once barbarous and vulgar, extravagant and mean... The work would be, on the whole, improved by being translated into English. Though we cannot, on the whole, speak of the novel with approbation, we will not affect to deny that we read it with interest, and that it repaid us with amusement.”

It is in reviewing “The Antiquary” that the immortal idiot of the “Quarterly” complains about “the dark dialect of Anglified Erse.” Published criticism never greatly affected Scott’s spirits, – probably, he very seldom read it. He knew that the public, like Constable’s friend Mrs. Stewart, were “reading ‘Guy Mannering’ all day, and dreaming of it all night.”

Indeed, it is much better to read “Guy Mannering” than to criticise it. A book written in six weeks, a book whose whole plot and conception was changed “in the printing,” must have its faults of construction. Thus, we meet Mannering first as “a youthful lover,” a wanderer at adventure, an amateur astrologer, and suddenly we lose sight of him, and only recover him as a disappointed, “disilluded,” and weary, though still vigorous, veteran. This is the inevitable result of a novel based on a prediction. Either you have to leap some twenty years just when you are becoming familiar with the persons, or you have to begin in the midst of the events foreseen, and then make a tedious return to explain the prophecy. Again, it was necessary for Scott to sacrifice Frank Kennedy, who is rather a taking adventurer, like Bothwell in “Old Mortality.” Readers regret the necessity which kills Kennedy. The whole fortunes of Vanbeest Brown, his duel with the colonel, and his fortunate appearance in the nick of time, seem too rich in coincidences: still, as the Dormont case and the Ormiston case have shown, coincidences as unlooked for do occur. A fastidious critic has found fault with Brown’s flageolet. It is a modest instrument; but what was he to play upon, – a lute, a concertina, a barrel-organ?

The characters of the young ladies have not always been applauded. Taste, in the matter of heroines, varies greatly; Sir Walter had no high opinion of his own skill in delineating them. But Julia Mannering is probably a masterly picture of a girl of that age, – a girl with some silliness and more gaiety, with wit, love of banter, and, in the last resort, sense and good feeling. She is particularly good when, in fear and trembling, she teases her imposing father.

“I expect,” says Colonel Mannering, “that you will pay to this young lady that attention which is due to misfortune and virtue.” “Certainly, sir. Is my future friend red-haired?” Miss Mannering is very capable of listening to Brown’s flageolet from the balcony, but not of accompanying Brown, should he desire it, in the boat. As for Brown himself, he is one of Sir Walter’s usual young men, – “brave, handsome, not too clever,” – the despair of their humorous creator. “Once you come to forty year,” as Thackeray sings, “then you’ll know that a lad is an ass;” and Scott had come to that age, and perhaps entertained that theory of a jeune premier when he wrote “Guy Mannering.” In that novel, as always, he was most himself when dealing either with homely Scottish characters of everyday life,

with exaggerated types of humorous absurdity, and with wildly adventurous banditti, who appealed to the old strain of the Border reiver in his blood. The wandering plot of "Guy Mannering" enabled him to introduce examples of all these sorts. The good-humoured, dull, dawdling Ellangowan, a laird half dwindled to a yeoman, is a sketch absolutely accurate, and wonderfully touched with pathos. The landladies, Mrs. MacCandlish and Tib Mumps, are little masterpieces; so is Mac-Morlan, the foil to Glossin; and so is Pleydell, allowing for the manner of the age. Glossin himself is best when least villainous. Sir Robert Hazlewood is hardly a success. But as to Jock Jabos, a Southern Scot may say that he knows Jock Jabos in the flesh, so persistent is the type of that charioteer. It is partly Scott's good fortune, partly it is his evil luck, to be so inimitably and intimately true in his pictures of Scottish character. This wins the heart of his countrymen, indeed; but the stranger can never know how good Scott really is, any more than a Frenchman can appreciate Falstaff. Thus the alien may be vexed by what he thinks the mere clannish enthusiasm of praise, in Scott's countrymen. Every little sketch of a passing face is exquisite in Scott's work, when he is at his best. For example, Dandie Dinmont's children are only indicated "with a dusty roll of the brush;" but we recognize at once the large, shy, kindly families of the Border. Dandie himself, as the "Edinburgh Review" said (1817), "is beyond all question the best rustic portrait that has ever yet been exhibited to the public, – the most honourable to rustics, and the most creditable to the heart as well as to the genius of the Author, the truest to nature, the most complete in all its lineaments." Dandie is always delightful, – whether at Mumps's Hall, or on the lonely moor, or at home in Charlieshope, or hunting, or leistering fish, or entering terriers at vermin, or fighting, or going to law, or listening to the reading of a disappointing will, or entertaining the orphan whom others neglect; always delightful he is, always generous, always true, always the Border farmer. There is no better stock of men, none less devastated by "the modern spirit." His wife is worthy of him, and has that singular gentleness, kindness, and dignity which prevail on the Border, even in households far less prosperous than that of Dandie Dinmont. – [Dr. John Brown's Ailie, in "Rab and his Friends," will naturally occur to the mind of every reader.]

Among Scott's "character parts," or types broadly humorous, few have been more popular than Dominie Sampson. His ungainly goodness, unwieldy strength, and inaccessible learning have made great sport, especially when "Guy Mannering" was "Terryfied" for the stage.

As Miss Bertram remarks in that singular piece, – where even Jock Jabos "wins till his English," like Elspeth in the Antiquary, – the Dominie "rather forces a tear from the eye of sentiment than a laugh from the lungs of ribaldry." In the play, however, he sits down to read a folio on some bandboxes, which, very naturally, "give way under him." As he has just asked Mrs. Mac-Candlish after the health of both her husbands, who are both dead, the lungs of ribaldry are more exercised than the fine eye of sentiment. We scarcely care to see our Dominie treated thus. His creator had the very lowest opinion of the modern playwright's craft, and probably held that stage humour could not be too palpable and practical. Lockhart writes (v. 130): "What share the novelist himself had in this first specimen of what he used to call 'the art of Terryfying' I cannot exactly say; but his correspondence shows that the pretty song of the 'Lullaby' was not his only contribution to it; and I infer that he had taken the trouble to modify the plot and rearrange for stage purposes a considerable part of the original dialogue." Friends of the Dominie may be glad to know, perhaps on Scott's own testimony, that he was an alumnus of St. Andrews. "I was boarded for twenty pence a week at Luckie Sour-kail's, in the High Street of St. Andrews." He was also fortunate enough to hold a bursary in St. Leonard's College, which, however, is a blunder. St. Leonard's and St. Salvator's had already been merged in the United College (1747). All this is in direct contradiction to the evidence in the novel, which makes the Dominie a Glasgow man. Yet the change seems to be due to Scott rather than to Terry. It is certain that Colonel Mannering would not have approved of the treatment which the Dominie undergoes, in a play whereof the plot and conduct fall little short of the unintelligible.

Against the character of Pleydell “a few murmurs of pedantic criticism,” as Lockhart says, were uttered, and it was natural that Pleydell should seem an incredible character to English readers. But there is plenty of evidence that his “High Jinks” were not exaggerated.

There remains the heroine of the novel, as Mr. Ruskin not incorrectly calls her, Meg Merrilies, the sybil who so captivated the imagination of Keats. Among Scott’s many weird women, she is the most romantic, with her loyal heart and that fiery natural eloquence which, as Scott truly observed, does exist ready for moments of passion, even among the reticent Lowlanders. The child of a mysterious wandering race, Meg has a double claim to utter such speeches as she addresses to Ellangowan after the eviction of her tribe. Her death, as Mr. Ruskin says, is “self-devoted, heroic in the highest, and happy.” The devotion of Meg Merrilies, the grandeur of her figure, the music of her songs, more than redeem the character of Dirk Hatteraick, even if we hold, with the “Edinburgh” reviewer, that he is “a vulgar bandit of the German school,” just as the insipidity and flageolet of the hero are redeemed by the ballad sung in the moment of recognition.

“Are these the Links of Forth, she said,
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonnie woods of Warroch Head,
That I so fain would see?”

“Guy Mannering,” according to Lockhart, was “pronounced by acclamation fully worthy to share the honours of ‘Waverley.’” One star differeth from another in glory, and “Guy Mannering” has neither that vivid picture of clannish manners nor that noble melancholy of a gallant and forlorn endeavour of the Lost Cause, which give dignity to “Waverley.” Yet, with Lockhart, we may admire, in “Guy Mannering,” “the rapid, ever-heightening interest of the narrative, the unaffected kindliness of feeling, the manly purity of thought, everywhere mingled with a gentle humour and homely sagacity, but, above all, the rich variety and skilful contrast of character and manners, at once fresh in fiction and stamped with the unforgeable seal of truth and nature.”

“When all was done that man may do,
And all was done in vain,”

ANDREW LANG.

CHAPTER I

He could not deny that, looking round upon the dreary region, and seeing nothing but bleak fields and naked trees, hills obscured by fogs, and flats covered with inundations, he did for some time suffer melancholy to prevail upon him, and wished himself again safe at home.

— 'Travels of Will. Marvel,' IDLER, No. 49.

It was in the beginning of the month of November 17-when a young English gentleman, who had just left the university of Oxford, made use of the liberty afforded him to visit some parts of the north of England; and curiosity extended his tour into the adjacent frontier of the sister country. He had visited, on the day that opens our history, some monastic ruins in the county of Dumfries, and spent much of the day in making drawings of them from different points, so that, on mounting his horse to resume his journey, the brief and gloomy twilight of the season had already commenced. His way lay through a wide tract of black moss, extending for miles on each side and before him. Little eminences arose like islands on its surface, bearing here and there patches of corn, which even at this season was green, and sometimes a hut or farm-house, shaded by a willow or two and surrounded by large elder-bushes. These insulated dwellings communicated with each other by winding passages through the moss, impassable by any but the natives themselves. The public road, however, was tolerably well made and safe, so that the prospect of being benighted brought with it no real danger. Still it is uncomfortable to travel alone and in the dark through an unknown country; and there are few ordinary occasions upon which Fancy frets herself so much as in a situation like that of Mannering.

As the light grew faint and more faint, and the morass appeared blacker and blacker, our traveller questioned more closely each chance passenger on his distance from the village of Kippletringan, where he proposed to quarter for the night. His queries were usually answered by a counter-challenge respecting the place from whence he came. While sufficient daylight remained to show the dress and appearance of a gentleman, these cross interrogatories were usually put in the form of a case supposed, as, 'Ye'll hae been at the auld abbey o' Halycross, sir? there's mony English gentlemen gang to see that.'-Or, 'Your honour will become frae the house o' Pouderloupat?' But when the voice of the querist alone was distinguishable, the response usually was, 'Where are ye coming frae at sic a time o' night as the like o' this?'-or, 'Ye'll no be o' this country, freend?' The answers, when obtained, were neither very reconcilable to each other nor accurate in the information which they afforded. Kippletringan was distant at first 'a gey bit'; then the 'gey bit' was more accurately described as 'ablins three mile'; then the 'three mile' diminished into 'like a mile and a bittock'; then extended themselves into 'four mile or thereawa'; and, lastly, a female voice, having hushed a wailing infant which the spokeswoman carried in her arms, assured Guy Mannering, 'It was a weary lang gate yet to Kippletringan, and unco heavy road for foot passengers.' The poor hack upon which Mannering was mounted was probably of opinion that it suited him as ill as the female respondent; for he began to flag very much, answered each application of the spur with a groan, and stumbled at every stone (and they were not few) which lay in his road.

Mannering now grew impatient. He was occasionally betrayed into a deceitful hope that the end of his journey was near by the apparition of a twinkling light or two; but, as he came up, he was disappointed to find that the gleams proceeded from some of those farm-houses which occasionally ornamented the surface of the extensive bog. At length, to complete his perplexity, he arrived at a place where the road divided into two. If there had been light to consult the relics of a finger-post which stood there, it would have been of little avail, as, according to the good custom of North Britain, the inscription had been defaced shortly after its erection. Our adventurer was therefore compelled, like a knight-errant of old, to trust to the sagacity of his horse, which, without any demur, chose the

left-hand path, and seemed to proceed at a somewhat livelier pace than before, affording thereby a hope that he knew he was drawing near to his quarters for the evening. This hope, however, was not speedily accomplished, and Mannering, whose impatience made every furlong seem three, began to think that Kippletringan was actually retreating before him in proportion to his advance.

It was now very cloudy, although the stars from time to time shed a twinkling and uncertain light. Hitherto nothing had broken the silence around him but the deep cry of the bog-blitter, or bull-of-the-bog, a large species of bittern, and the sighs of the wind as it passed along the dreary morass. To these was now joined the distant roar of the ocean, towards which the traveller seemed to be fast approaching. This was no circumstance to make his mind easy. Many of the roads in that country lay along the sea-beach, and were liable to be flooded by the tides, which rise with great height, and advance with extreme rapidity. Others were intersected with creeks and small inlets, which it was only safe to pass at particular times of the tide. Neither circumstance would have suited a dark night, a fatigued horse, and a traveller ignorant of his road. Mannering resolved, therefore, definitively to halt for the night at the first inhabited place, however poor, he might chance to reach, unless he could procure a guide to this unlucky village of Kippletringan.

A miserable hut gave him an opportunity to execute his purpose. He found out the door with no small difficulty, and for some time knocked without producing any other answer than a duet between a female and a cur-dog, the latter yelping as if he would have barked his heart out, the other screaming in chorus. By degrees the human tones predominated; but the angry bark of the cur being at the instant changed into a howl, it is probable something more than fair strength of lungs had contributed to the ascendancy.

‘Sorrow be in your thrapple then!’ these were the first articulate words, ‘will ye no let me hear what the man wants, wi’ your yaffing?’

‘Am I far from Kippletringan, good dame?’

‘Frae Kippletringan!!!’ in an exalted tone of wonder, which we can but faintly express by three points of admiration. ‘Ow, man! ye should hae hadden eassel to Kippletringan; ye maun gae back as far as the whaap, and bauld the whaap till ye come to Ballenloan, and then-’

‘This will never do, good dame! my horse is almost quite knocked up; can you not give me a night’s lodgings?’

‘Troth can I no; I am a lone woman, for James he’s awa to Drumshourloch Fair with the year-aulds, and I daurna for my life open the door to ony o’ your gang-there-out sort o’ bodies.’

‘But what must I do then, good dame? for I can’t sleep here upon the road all night.’

‘Troth, I kenna, unless ye like to gae down and speer for quarters at the Place. I’s warrant they’ll tak ye in, whether ye be gentle or semple.’

‘Simple enough, to be wandering here at such a time of night,’ thought Mannering, who was ignorant of the meaning of the phrase; ‘but how shall I get to the PLACE, as you call it?’

‘Ye maun bauld wessel by the end o’ the loan, and take tent o’ the jaw-hole.’

‘O, if ye get to eassel and wessel again, I am undone! Is there nobody that could guide me to this Place? I will pay him handsomely.’

The word pay operated like magic. ‘Jock, ye villain,’ exclaimed the voice from the interior, ‘are ye lying routing there, and a young gentleman seeking the way to the Place? Get up, ye fause loon, and show him the way down the muckle loaning. He’ll show you the way, sir, and I’s warrant ye’ll be weel put up; for they never turn awa naebody frae the door; and ye ‘ll be come in the canny moment, I’m thinking, for the laird’s servant—that’s no to say his body-servant, but the helper like-rade express by this e’en to fetch the houdie, and he just staid the drinking o’ twa pints o’ tippenny to tell us how my leddy was ta’en wi’ her pains.’

‘Perhaps,’ said Mannering, ‘at such a time a stranger’s arrival might be inconvenient?’

‘Hout, na, ye needna be blate about that; their house is muckle eneugh, and decking time’s aye canty time.’

By this time Jock had found his way into all the intricacies of a tattered doublet and more tattered pair of breeches, and sallied forth, a great white-headed, bare-legged, lubberly boy of twelve years old, so exhibited by the glimpse of a rush-light which his half-naked mother held in such a manner as to get a peep at the stranger without greatly exposing herself to view in return. Jock moved on westward by the end of the house, leading Mannering's horse by the bridle, and piloting with some dexterity along the little path which bordered the formidable jaw-hole, whose vicinity the stranger was made sensible of by means of more organs than one. His guide then dragged the weary hack along a broken and stony cart-track, next over a ploughed field, then broke down a slap, as he called it, in a drystone fence, and lugged the unresisting animal through the breach, about a rood of the simple masonry giving way in the splutter with which he passed. Finally, he led the way through a wicket into something which had still the air of an avenue, though many of the trees were felled. The roar of the ocean was now near and full, and the moon, which began to make her appearance, gleamed on a turreted and apparently a ruined mansion of considerable extent. Mannering fixed his eyes upon it with a disconsolate sensation.

‘Why, my little fellow,’ he said, ‘this is a ruin, not a house?’

‘Ah, but the lairds lived there langsyne; that’s Ellangowan Auld Place. There’s a hantle bogles about it; but ye needna be feared, I never saw ony mysell, and we’re just at the door o’ the New Place.’

Accordingly, leaving the ruins on the right, a few steps brought the traveller in front of a modern house of moderate size, at which his guide rapped with great importance. Mannering told his circumstances to the servant; and the gentleman of the house, who heard his tale from the parlour, stepped forward and welcomed the stranger hospitably to Ellangowan. The boy, made happy with half-a-crown, was dismissed to his cottage, the weary horse was conducted to a stall, and Mannering found himself in a few minutes seated by a comfortable supper, for which his cold ride gave him a hearty appetite.

CHAPTER II

*Comes me cranking in,
And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle, out*

Henry IV, Part 1.

The company in the parlour at Ellangowan consisted of the Laird and a sort of person who might be the village schoolmaster, or perhaps the minister's assistant; his appearance was too shabby to indicate the minister, considering he was on a visit to the Laird.

The Laird himself was one of those second-rate sort of persons that are to be found frequently in rural situations. Fielding has described one class as *feras consumere nati*; but the love of field-sports indicates a certain activity of mind, which had forsaken Mr. Bertram, if ever he possessed it. A good-humoured listlessness of countenance formed the only remarkable expression of his features, although they were rather handsome than otherwise. In fact, his physiognomy indicated the inanity of character which pervaded his life. I will give the reader some insight into his state and conversation before he has finished a long lecture to Mannering upon the propriety and comfort of wrapping his stirrup-irons round with a wisp of straw when he had occasion to ride in a chill evening.

Godfrey Bertram of Ellangowan succeeded to a long pedigree and a short rent-roll, like many lairds of that period. His list of forefathers ascended so high that they were lost in the barbarous ages of Galwegian independence, so that his genealogical tree, besides the Christian and crusading names of Godfreys, and Gilberts, and Dennises, and Rolands without end, bore heathen fruit of yet darker ages-Arths, and Knarths, and Donagilds, and Hanlons. In truth, they had been formerly the stormy chiefs of a desert but extensive domain, and the heads of a numerous tribe called Mac-Dingawaie, though they afterwards adopted the Norman surname of Bertram. They had made war, raised rebellions, been defeated, beheaded, and hanged, as became a family of importance, for many centuries. But they had gradually lost ground in the world, and, from being themselves the heads of treason and traitorous conspiracies, the Bertrams, or Mac-Dingawaies, of Ellangowan had sunk into subordinate accomplices. Their most fatal exhibitions in this capacity took place in the seventeenth century, when the foul fiend possessed them with a spirit of contradiction, which uniformly involved them in controversy with the ruling powers. They reversed the conduct of the celebrated Vicar of Bray, and adhered as tenaciously to the weaker side as that worthy divine to the stronger. And truly, like him, they had their reward.

Allan Bertram of Ellangowan, who flourished tempore Caroli primi, was, says my authority, Sir Robert Douglas, in his Scottish Baronage (see the title 'Ellangowan'), 'a steady loyalist, and full of zeal for the cause of His Sacred Majesty, in which he united with the great Marquis of Montrose and other truly zealous and honourable patriots, and sustained great losses in that behalf. He had the honour of knighthood conferred upon him by His Most Sacred Majesty, and was sequestered as a malignant by the parliament, 1642, and afterwards as a resolutioner in the year 1648.' These two cross-grained epithets of malignant and resolutioner cost poor Sir Allan one half of the family estate. His son Dennis Bertram married a daughter of an eminent fanatic who had a seat in the council of state, and saved by that union the remainder of the family property. But, as ill chance would have it, he became enamoured of the lady's principles as well as of her charms, and my author gives him this character: 'He was a man of eminent parts and resolution, for which reason he was chosen by the western counties one of the committee of noblemen and gentlemen to report their griefs to the privy council of Charles II. anent the coming in of the Highland host in 1678.' For undertaking this patriotic task he underwent a fine, to pay which he was obliged to mortgage half of the remaining moiety of his

paternal property. This loss he might have recovered by dint of severe economy, but on the breaking out of Argyle's rebellion Dennis Bertram was again suspected by government, apprehended, sent to Dunnotar Castle on the coast of the Mearns, and there broke his neck in an attempt to escape from a subterranean habitation called the Whigs' Vault, in which he was confined with some eighty of the same persuasion. The appriizer therefore (as the holder of a mortgage was then called) entered upon possession, and, in the language of Hotspur, 'came me cranking in,' and cut the family out of another monstrous cantle of their remaining property.

Donohoe Bertram, with somewhat of an Irish name and somewhat of an Irish temper, succeeded to the diminished property of Ellangowan. He turned out of doors the Reverend Aaron Macbriar, his mother's chaplain (it is said they quarrelled about the good graces of a milkmaid); drank himself daily drunk with brimming healths to the king, council, and bishops; held orgies with the Laird of Lagg, Theophilus Ogleshorpe, and Sir James Turner; and lastly, took his grey gelding and joined Clavers at Killiecrankie. At the skirmish of Dunkeld, 1689, he was shot dead by a Cameronian with a silver button (being supposed to have proof from the Evil One against lead and steel), and his grave is still called the Wicked Laird's Lair.

His son Lewis had more prudence than seems usually to have belonged to the family. He nursed what property was yet left to him; for Donohoe's excesses, as well as fines and forfeitures, had made another inroad upon the estate. And although even he did not escape the fatality which induced the Lairds of Ellangowan to interfere with politics, he had yet the prudence, ere he went out with Lord Kenmore in 1715, to convey his estate to trustees, in order to parry pains and penalties in case the Earl of Mar could not put down the Protestant succession. But Scylla and Charybdis—a word to the wise—he only saved his estate at expense of a lawsuit, which again subdivided the family property. He was, however, a man of resolution. He sold part of the lands, evacuated the old cattle, where the family lived in their decadence as a mouse (said an old farmer) lives under a firloft. Pulling down part of these venerable ruins, he built with the stones a narrow house of three stories high, with a front like a grenadier's cap, having in the very centre a round window like the single eye of a Cyclops, two windows on each side, and a door in the middle, leading to a parlour and withdrawing-room full of all manner of cross lights.

This was the New Place of Ellangowan, in which we left our hero, better amused perhaps than our readers, and to this Lewis Bertram retreated, full of projects for re-establishing the prosperity of his family. He took some land into his own hand, rented some from neighbouring proprietors, bought and sold Highland cattle and Cheviot sheep, rode to fairs and trysts, fought hard bargains, and held necessity at the staff's end as well as he might. But what he gained in purse he lost in honour, for such agricultural and commercial negotiations were very ill looked upon by his brother lairds, who minded nothing but cock-fighting, hunting, coursing, and horse-racing, with now and then the alternative of a desperate duel. The occupations which he followed encroached, in their opinion, upon the article of Ellangowan's gentry, and he found it necessary gradually to estrange himself from their society, and sink into what was then a very ambiguous character, a gentleman farmer. In the midst of his schemes death claimed his tribute, and the scanty remains of a large property descended upon Godfrey Bertram, the present possessor, his only son.

The danger of the father's speculations was soon seen. Deprived of Laird Lewis's personal and active superintendence, all his undertakings miscarried, and became either abortive or perilous. Without a single spark of energy to meet or repel these misfortunes, Godfrey put his faith in the activity of another. He kept neither hunters nor hounds, nor any other southern preliminaries to ruin; but, as has been observed of his countrymen, he kept a man of business, who answered the purpose equally well. Under this gentleman's supervision small debts grew into large, interests were accumulated upon capitals, movable bonds became heritable, and law charges were heaped upon all; though Ellangowan possessed so little the spirit of a litigant that he was on two occasions charged to make payment of the expenses of a long lawsuit, although he had never before heard that he had

such cases in court. Meanwhile his neighbours predicted his final ruin. Those of the higher rank, with some malignity, accounted him already a degraded brother. The lower classes, seeing nothing enviable in his situation, marked his embarrassments with more compassion. He was even a kind of favourite with them, and upon the division of a common, or the holding of a black-fishing or poaching court, or any similar occasion when they conceived themselves oppressed by the gentry, they were in the habit of saying to each other, 'Ah, if Ellangowan, honest man, had his ain that his forbears had afore him, he wadna see the puir folk trodden down this gait.' Meanwhile, this general good opinion never prevented their taking advantage of him on all possible occasions, turning their cattle into his parks, stealing his wood, shooting his game, and so forth, 'for the Laird, honest man, he'll never find it; he never minds what a puir body does.' Pedlars, gipsies, tinkers, vagrants of all descriptions, roosted about his outhouses, or harboured in his kitchen; and the Laird, who was 'nae nice body,' but a thorough gossip, like most weak men, found recompense for his hospitality in the pleasure of questioning them on the news of the country side.

A circumstance arrested Ellangowan's progress on the highroad to ruin. This was his marriage with a lady who had a portion of about four thousand pounds. Nobody in the neighbourhood could conceive why she married him and endowed him with her wealth, unless because he had a tall, handsome figure, a good set of features, a genteel address, and the most perfect good-humour. It might be some additional consideration, that she was herself at the reflecting age of twenty-eight, and had no near relations to control her actions or choice.

It was in this lady's behalf (confined for the first time after her marriage) that the speedy and active express, mentioned by the old dame of the cottage, had been despatched to Kippletringan on the night of Mannering's arrival.

Though we have said so much of the Laird himself, it still remains that we make the reader in some degree acquainted with his companion. This was Abel Sampson, commonly called, from his occupation as a pedagogue, Dominie Sampson. He was of low birth, but having evinced, even from his cradle, an uncommon seriousness of disposition, the poor parents were encouraged to hope that their bairn, as they expressed it, 'might wag his pow in a pulpit yet.' With an ambitious view to such a consummation, they pinched and pared, rose early and lay down late, ate dry bread and drank cold water, to secure to Abel the means of learning. Meantime, his tall, ungainly figure, his taciturn and grave manners, and some grotesque habits of swinging his limbs and screwing his visage while reciting his task, made poor Sampson the ridicule of all his school-companions. The same qualities secured him at Glasgow College a plentiful share of the same sort of notice. Half the youthful mob of 'the yards' used to assemble regularly to see Dominie Sampson (for he had already attained that honourable title) descend the stairs from the Greek class, with his lexicon under his arm, his long misshapen legs sprawling abroad, and keeping awkward time to the play of his immense shoulder-blades, as they raised and depressed the loose and threadbare black coat which was his constant and only wear. When he spoke, the efforts of the professor (professor of divinity though he was) were totally inadequate to restrain the inextinguishable laughter of the students, and sometimes even to repress his own. The long, sallow visage, the goggle eyes, the huge under-jaw, which appeared not to open and shut by an act of volition, but to be dropped and hoisted up again by some complicated machinery within the inner man, the harsh and dissonant voice, and the screech-owl notes to which it was exalted when he was exhorted to pronounce more distinctly, – all added fresh subject for mirth to the torn cloak and shattered shoe, which have afforded legitimate subjects of raillery against the poor scholar from Juvenal's time downward. It was never known that Sampson either exhibited irritability at this ill usage, or made the least attempt to retort upon his tormentors. He slunk from college by the most secret paths he could discover, and plunged himself into his miserable lodging, where, for eighteenpence a week, he was allowed the benefit of a straw mattress, and, if his landlady was in good humour, permission to study his task by her fire. Under all these disadvantages, he obtained a competent knowledge of Greek and Latin, and some acquaintance with the sciences.

In progress of time, Abel Sampson, probationer of divinity, was admitted to the privileges of a preacher. But, alas! partly from his own bashfulness, partly owing to a strong and obvious disposition to risibility which pervaded the congregation upon his first attempt, he became totally incapable of proceeding in his intended discourse, gasped, grinned, hideously rolled his eyes till the congregation thought them flying out of his head, shut the Bible, stumbled down the pulpit-stairs, trampling upon the old women who generally take their station there, and was ever after designated as a 'stickit minister.' And thus he wandered back to his own country, with blighted hopes and prospects, to share the poverty of his parents. As he had neither friend nor confidant, hardly even an acquaintance, no one had the means of observing closely how Dominie Sampson bore a disappointment which supplied the whole town with a week's sport. It would be endless even to mention the numerous jokes to which it gave birth, from a ballad called 'Sampson's Riddle,' written upon the subject by a smart young student of humanity, to the sly hope of the Principal that the fugitive had not, in imitation of his mighty namesake, taken the college gates along with him in his retreat.

To all appearance, the equanimity of Sampson was unshaken. He sought to assist his parents by teaching a school, and soon had plenty of scholars, but very few fees. In fact, he taught the sons of farmers for what they chose to give him, and the poor for nothing; and, to the shame of the former be it spoken, the pedagogue's gains never equalled those of a skilful ploughman. He wrote, however, a good hand, and added something to his pittance by copying accounts and writing letters for Ellangowan. By degrees, the Laird, who was much estranged from general society, became partial to that of Dominie Sampson. Conversation, it is true, was out of the question, but the Dominie was a good listener, and stirred the fire with some address. He attempted even to snuff the candles, but was unsuccessful, and relinquished that ambitious post of courtesy after having twice reduced the parlour to total darkness. So his civilities, thereafter, were confined to taking off his glass of ale in exactly the same time and measure with the Laird, and in uttering certain indistinct murmurs of acquiescence at the conclusion of the long and winding stories of Ellangowan.

On one of these occasions, he presented for the first time to Mannering his tall, gaunt, awkward, bony figure, attired in a threadbare suit of black, with a coloured handkerchief, not over clean, about his sinewy, scraggy neck, and his nether person arrayed in grey breeches, dark-blue stockings, clouted shoes, and small copper buckles.

Such is a brief outline of the lives and fortunes of those two persons in whose society Mannering now found himself comfortably seated.

CHAPTER III

*Do not the hist'ries of all ages
Relate miraculous presages
Of strange turns in the world's affairs,
Foreseen by astrologers, soothsayers,
Chaldeans, learned genethliacs,
And some that have writ almanacks?*

Hudibras.

The circumstances of the landlady were pleaded to Mannering, first, as an apology for her not appearing to welcome her guest, and for those deficiencies in his entertainment which her attention might have supplied, and then as an excuse for pressing an extra bottle of good wine. 'I cannot weel sleep,' said the Laird, with the anxious feelings of a father in such a predicament, 'till I hear she's gotten ower with it; and if you, sir, are not very sleepery, and would do me and the Dominie the honour to sit up wi' us, I am sure we shall not detain you very late. Luckie Howatson is very expeditious. There was ance a lass that was in that way; she did not live far from hereabouts-ye needna shake your head and groan, Dominie; I am sure the kirk dues were a' weel paid, and what can man do mair? – it was laid till her ere she had a sark ower her head; and the man that she since wadded does not think her a pin the waur for the misfortune. They live, Mr. Mannering, by the shoreside at Annan, and a mair decent, orderly couple, with six as fine bairns as ye would wish to see plash in a saltwater dub; and little curlie Godfrey-that's the eldest, the come o' will, as I may say-he's on board an excise yacht. I hae a cousin at the board of excise; that's Commissioner Bertram; he got his commissionership in the great contest for the county, that ye must have heard of, for it was appealed to the House of Commons. Now I should have voted there for the Laird of Balruddery; but ye see my father was a Jacobite, and out with Kenmore, so he never took the oaths; and I ken not weel how it was, but all that I could do and say, they keepit me off the roll, though my agent, that had a vote upon my estate, ranked as a good vote for auld Sir Thomas Kittlecourt. But, to return to what I was saying, Luckie Howatson is very expeditious, for this lass-'

Here the desultory and long-winded narrative of the Laird was interrupted by the voice of some one ascending the stairs from the kitchen story, and singing at full pitch of voice. The high notes were too shrill for a man, the low seemed too deep for a woman. The words, as far as Mannering could distinguish them, seemed to run thus: -

Canny moment, lucky fit!
Is the lady lighter yet?
Be it lad, or be it lass,
Sign wi' cross and sain wi' mass.

'It's Meg Merrilies, the gipsy, as sure as I am a sinner,' said Mr. Bertram. The Dominie groaned deeply, uncrossed his legs, drew in the huge splay foot which his former posture had extended, placed it perpendicularly, and stretched the other limb over it instead, puffing out between whiles huge volumes of tobacco smoke. 'What needs ye groan, Dominie? I am sure Meg's sangs do nae ill.'

'Nor good neither,' answered Dominie Sampson, in a voice whose untuneable harshness corresponded with the awkwardness of his figure. They were the first words which Mannering had heard him speak; and as he had been watching with some curiosity when this eating, drinking, moving, and smoking automaton would perform the part of speaking, he was a good deal diverted with the

harsh timber tones which issued from him. But at this moment the door opened, and Meg Merrilies entered.

Her appearance made Mannering start. She was full six feet high, wore a man's great-coat over the rest of her dress, had in her hand a goodly sloethorn cudgel, and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf-locks shot out like the snakes of the gorgon between an old-fashioned bonnet called a bongrace, heightening the singular effect of her strong and weather-beaten features, which they partly shadowed, while her eye had a wild roll that indicated something like real or affected insanity.

'Aweel, Ellangowan,' she said, 'wad it no hae been a bonnie thing, an the leddy had been brought to bed, and me at the fair o' Drumshourloch, no kenning, nor dreaming a word about it? Wha was to hae keepit awa the worriecows, I trow? Ay, and the elves and gyre-carlings frae the bonnie bairn, grace be wi' it? Ay, or said Saint Colme's charm for its sake, the dear?' And without waiting an answer she began to sing-

Trefoil, vervain, John's-wort, dill,
Hinders witches of their
will, Weel is them, that weel may
Fast upon Saint Andrew's day.

Saint Bride and her brat,
Saint Colme and his cat,
Saint Michael and his spear,
Keep the house frae reif and wear.

This charm she sung to a wild tune, in a high and shrill voice, and, cutting three capers with such strength and agility as almost to touch the roof of the room, concluded, 'And now, Laird, will ye no order me a tass o' brandy?'

'That you shall have, Meg. Sit down yont there at the door and tell us what news ye have heard at the fair o' Drumshourloch.'

'Troth, Laird, and there was muckle want o' you, and the like o' you; for there was a whin bonnie lasses there, forbye mysell, and deil ane to gie them hansels.'

'Weel, Meg, and how many gipsies were sent to the tolbooth?'

'Troth, but three, Laird, for there were nae mair in the fair, bye mysell, as I said before, and I e'en gae them leg-bail, for there's nae ease in dealing wi' quarrelsome fowk. And there's Dunbog has warned the Red Rotten and John Young aff his grounds-black be his cast! he's nae gentleman, nor drap's bluid o' gentleman, wad grudge twa gangrel puir bodies the shelter o' a waste house, and the thistles by the roadside for a bit cuddy, and the bits o' rotten birk to boil their drap parritch wi'. Weel, there's Ane abune a'; but we'll see if the red cock craw not in his bonnie barn-yard ae morning before day-dawing.'

'Hush! Meg, hush! hush! that's not safe talk.'

'What does she mean?' said Mannering to Sampson, in an undertone.

'Fire-raising,' answered the laconic Dominie.

'Who, or what is she, in the name of wonder?'

'Harlot, thief, witch, and gipsy,' answered Sampson again.

'O troth, Laird,' continued Meg, during this by-talk, 'it's but to the like o' you ane can open their heart; ye see, they say Dunbog is nae mair a gentleman than the blunker that's biggit the bonnie house down in the howm. But the like o' you, Laird, that's a real gentleman for sae mony hundred years, and never hunds puir fowk aff your grund as if they were mad tykes, nane o' our fowk wad stir

your gear if ye had as many capons as there's leaves on the trysting-tree. And now some o' ye maun lay down your watch, and tell me the very minute o' the hour the wean's born, an I'll spae its fortune.'

'Ay, but, Meg, we shall not want your assistance, for here's a student from Oxford that kens much better than you how to spae its fortune; he does it by the stars.'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mannering, entering into the simple humour of his landlord, 'I will calculate his nativity according to the rule of the "triplicities," as recommended by Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Diocles, and Avicenna. Or I will begin *ab hora questionis*, as Haly, Messahala, Ganwehis, and Guido Bonatus have recommended.'

One of Sampson's great recommendations to the favour of Mr. Bertram was, that he never detected the most gross attempt at imposition, so that the Laird, whose humble efforts at jocularity were chiefly confined to what were then called bites and bams, since denominated hoaxes and quizzes, had the fairest possible subject of wit in the unsuspecting Dominie. It is true, he never laughed, or joined in the laugh which his own simplicity afforded-nay, it is said, he never laughed but once in his life, and on that memorable occasion his landlady miscarried, partly through surprise at the event itself, and partly from terror at the hideous grimaces which attended this unusual cachinnation. The only effect which the discovery of such impositions produced upon this saturnine personage was, to extort an ejaculation of 'Prodigious!' or 'Very facetious!' pronounced syllabically, but without moving a muscle of his own countenance.

On the present occasion, he turned a gaunt and ghastly stare upon the youthful astrologer, and seemed to doubt if he had rightly understood his answer to his patron.

'I am afraid, sir,' said Mannering, turning towards him, 'you may be one of those unhappy persons who, their dim eyes being unable to penetrate the starry spheres, and to discern therein the decrees of heaven at a distance, have their hearts barred against conviction by prejudice and misprision.'

'Truly,' said Sampson, 'I opine with Sir Isaac Newton, Knight, and umwhile master of his Majesty's mint, that the (pretended) science of astrology is altogether vain, frivolous, and unsatisfactory.' And here he reposed his oracular jaws.

'Really,' resumed the traveller, 'I am sorry to see a gentleman of your learning and gravity labouring under such strange blindness and delusion. Will you place the brief, the modern, and, as I may say, the vernacular name of Isaac Newton in opposition to the grave and sonorous authorities of Dariot, Bonatus, Ptolemy, Haly, Eztler, Dieterick, Naibob, Harfurt, Zael, Taustettor, Agrippa, Duretus, Maginus, Origen, and Argol? Do not Christians and Heathens, and Jews and Gentiles, and poets and philosophers, unite in allowing the starry influences?'

'Communis error-it is a general mistake,' answered the inflexible Dominie Sampson.

'Not so,' replied the young Englishman; 'it is a general and well-grounded belief.'

'It is the resource of cheaters, knaves, and cozeners,' said Sampson.

'Abusus non tollit usum. – The abuse of anything doth not abrogate the lawful use thereof.'

During this discussion Ellangowan was somewhat like a woodcock caught in his own springe. He turned his face alternately from the one spokesman to the other, and began, from the gravity with which Mannering plied his adversary, and the learning which he displayed in the controversy, to give him credit for being half serious. As for Meg, she fixed her bewildered eyes upon the astrologer, overpowered by a jargon more mysterious than her own.

Mannering pressed his advantage, and ran over all the hard terms of art which a tenacious memory supplied, and which, from circumstances hereafter to be noticed, had been familiar to him in early youth.

Signs and planets, in aspects sextile, quartile, trine, conjoined, or opposite; houses of heaven, with their cusps, hours, and minutes; almuten, almochoden, anabibazon, catabibazon; a thousand terms of equal sound and significance, poured thick and threefold upon the unshrinking Dominie, whose stubborn incredulity bore him out against the pelting of this pitiless storm.

At length the joyful annunciation that the lady had presented her husband with a fine boy, and was (of course) as well as could be expected, broke off this intercourse. Mr. Bertram hastened to the lady's apartment, Meg Merrilies descended to the kitchen to secure her share of the groaning malt and the 'ken-no,' [Footnote: See Note i.] and Mannering, after looking at his watch, and noting with great exactness the hour and minute of the birth, requested, with becoming gravity, that the Dominie would conduct him to some place where he might have a view of the heavenly bodies.

The schoolmaster, without further answer, rose and threw open a door half sashed with glass, which led to an old-fashioned terrace-walk behind the modern house, communicating with the platform on which the ruins of the ancient castle were situated. The wind had arisen, and swept before it the clouds which had formerly obscured the sky. The moon was high, and at the full, and all the lesser satellites of heaven shone forth in cloudless effulgence. The scene which their light presented to Mannering was in the highest degree unexpected and striking.

We have observed, that in the latter part of his journey our traveller approached the sea-shore, without being aware how nearly. He now perceived that the ruins of Ellangowan Castle were situated upon a promontory, or projection of rock, which formed one side of a small and placid bay on the sea-shore. The modern mansion was placed lower, though closely adjoining, and the ground behind it descended to the sea by a small swelling green bank, divided into levels by natural terraces, on which grew some old trees, and terminating upon the white sand. The other side of the bay, opposite to the old castle, was a sloping and varied promontory, covered chiefly with copsewood, which on that favoured coast grows almost within water-mark. A fisherman's cottage peeped from among the trees. Even at this dead hour of night there were lights moving upon the shore, probably occasioned by the unloading a smuggling lugger from the Isle of Man which was lying in the bay. On the light from the sashed door of the house being observed, a halloo from the vessel of 'Ware hawk! Douse the glim!' alarmed those who were on shore, and the lights instantly disappeared.

It was one hour after midnight, and the prospect around was lovely. The grey old towers of the ruin, partly entire, partly broken, here bearing the rusty weather-stains of ages, and there partially mantled with ivy, stretched along the verge of the dark rock which rose on Mannering's right hand. In his front was the quiet bay, whose little waves, crisping and sparkling to the moonbeams, rolled successively along its surface, and dashed with a soft and murmuring ripple against the silvery beach. To the left the woods advanced far into the ocean, waving in the moonlight along ground of an undulating and varied form, and presenting those varieties of light and shade, and that interesting combination of glade and thicket, upon which the eye delights to rest, charmed with what it sees, yet curious to pierce still deeper into the intricacies of the woodland scenery. Above rolled the planets, each, by its own liquid orbit of light, distinguished from the inferior or more distant stars. So strangely can imagination deceive even those by whose volition it has been excited, that Mannering, while gazing upon these brilliant bodies, was half inclined to believe in the influence ascribed to them by superstition over human events. But Mannering was a youthful lover, and might perhaps be influenced by the feelings so exquisitely expressed by a modern poet: -

For fable is Love's world, his home, his birthplace:
Delightedly dwells he 'mong fays, and talismans,
And spirits, and delightedly believes
Divinities, being himself divine
The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms and wat'ry depths-all these have vanish'd;

They live no longer in the faith of reason!
But still the heart doth need a language, still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names.
And to yon starry world they now are gone,
Spirits or gods, that used to share this earth
With man as with their friend, and to the lover
Yonder they move, from yonder visible sky
Shoot influence down; and even at this day
'T is Jupiter who brings whate'er is great,
And Venus who brings everything that's fair.

Such musings soon gave way to others. 'Alas!' he muttered, 'my good old tutor, who used to enter so deep into the controversy between Heydon and Chambers on the subject of astrology, he would have looked upon the scene with other eyes, and would have seriously endeavoured to discover from the respective positions of these luminaries their probable effects on the destiny of the new-born infant, as if the courses or emanations of the stars superseded, or at least were co-ordinate with, Divine Providence. Well, rest be with him! he instilled into me enough of knowledge for erecting a scheme of nativity, and therefore will I presently go about it.' So saying, and having noted the position of the principal planetary bodies, Guy Mannering returned to the house. The Laird met him in the parlour, and, acquainting him with great glee that the boy was a fine healthy little fellow, seemed rather disposed to press further conviviality. He admitted, however, Mannering's plea of weariness, and, conducting him to his sleeping apartment, left him to repose for the evening.

CHAPTER IV

*Come and see' trust thine own eyes
A fearful sign stands in the house of life,
An enemy a fiend lurks close behind
The radiance of thy planet O be warned!*

COLERIDGE, from SCHILLER

The belief in astrology was almost universal in the middle of the seventeenth century; it began to waver and become doubtful towards the close of that period, and in the beginning of the eighteenth the art fell into general disrepute, and even under general ridicule. Yet it still retained many partizans even in the seats of learning. Grave and studious men were loath to relinquish the calculations which had early become the principal objects of their studies, and felt reluctant to descend from the predominating height to which a supposed insight into futurity, by the power of consulting abstract influences and conjunctions, had exalted them over the rest of mankind.

Among those who cherished this imaginary privilege with undoubting faith was an old clergyman with whom Mannering was placed during his youth. He wasted his eyes in observing the stars, and his brains in calculations upon their various combinations. His pupil, in early youth, naturally caught some portion of his enthusiasm, and laboured for a time to make himself master of the technical process of astrological research; so that, before he became convinced of its absurdity, William Lilly himself would have allowed him 'a curious fancy and piercing judgment in resolving a question of nativity.'

On the present occasion he arose as early in the morning as the shortness of the day permitted, and proceeded to calculate the nativity of the young heir of Ellangowan. He undertook the task secundum artem, as well to keep up appearances as from a sort of curiosity to know whether he yet remembered, and could practise, the imaginary science. He accordingly erected his scheme, or figure of heaven, divided into its twelve houses, placed the planets therein according to the ephemeris, and rectified their position to the hour and moment of the nativity. Without troubling our readers with the general prognostications which judicial astrology would have inferred from these circumstances, in this diagram there was one significator which pressed remarkably upon our astrologer's attention. Mars, having dignity in the cusp of the twelfth house, threatened captivity or sudden and violent death to the native; and Mannering, having recourse to those further rules by which diviners pretend to ascertain the vehemency of this evil direction, observed from the result that three periods would be particularly hazardous—his fifth, his tenth, his twenty-first year.

It was somewhat remarkable that Mannering had once before tried a similar piece of foolery at the instance of Sophia Wellwood, the young lady to whom he was attached, and that a similar conjunction of planetary influence threatened her with death or imprisonment in her thirty-ninth year. She was at this time eighteen; so that, according to the result of the scheme in both cases, the same year threatened her with the same misfortune that was presaged to the native or infant whom that night had introduced into the world. Struck with this coincidence, Mannering repeated his calculations; and the result approximated the events predicted, until at length the same month, and day of the month, seemed assigned as the period of peril to both.

It will be readily believed that, in mentioning this circumstance, we lay no weight whatever upon the pretended information thus conveyed. But it often happens, such is our natural love for the marvellous, that we willingly contribute our own efforts to beguile our better judgments. Whether the coincidence which I have mentioned was really one of those singular chances which sometimes happen against all ordinary calculations; or whether Mannering, bewildered amid the arithmetical

labyrinth and technical jargon of astrology, had insensibly twice followed the same clue to guide him out of the maze; or whether his imagination, seduced by some point of apparent resemblance, lent its aid to make the similitude between the two operations more exactly accurate than it might otherwise have been, it is impossible to guess; but the impression upon his mind that the results exactly corresponded was vividly and indelibly strong.

He could not help feeling surprise at a coincidence so singular and unexpected. 'Does the devil mingle in the dance, to avenge himself for our trifling with an art said to be of magical origin? Or is it possible, as Bacon and Sir Thomas Browne admit, that there is some truth in a sober and regulated astrology, and that the influence of the stars is not to be denied, though the due application of it by the knaves who pretend to practise the art is greatly to be suspected?' A moment's consideration of the subject induced him to dismiss this opinion as fantastical, and only sanctioned by those learned men either because they durst not at once shock the universal prejudices of their age, or because they themselves were not altogether freed from the contagious influence of a prevailing superstition. Yet the result of his calculations in these two instances left so unpleasing an impression on his mind that, like Prospero, he mentally relinquished his art, and resolved, neither in jest nor earnest, ever again to practise judicial astrology.

He hesitated a good deal what he should say to the Laird of Ellangowan concerning the horoscope of his first-born; and at length resolved plainly to tell him the judgment which he had formed, at the same time acquainting him with the futility of the rules of art on which he had proceeded. With this resolution he walked out upon the terrace.

If the view of the scene around Ellangowan had been pleasing by moonlight, it lost none of its beauty by the light of the morning sun. The land, even in the month of November, smiled under its influence. A steep but regular ascent led from the terrace to the neighbouring eminence, and conducted Mannering to the front of the old castle. It consisted of two massive round towers projecting deeply and darkly at the extreme angles of a curtain, or flat wall, which united them, and thus protecting the main entrance, that opened through a lofty arch in the centre of the curtain into the inner court of the castle. The arms of the family, carved in freestone, frowned over the gateway, and the portal showed the spaces arranged by the architect for lowering the portcullis and raising the drawbridge. A rude farm-gate, made of young fir-trees nailed together, now formed the only safeguard of this once formidable entrance. The esplanade in front of the castle commanded a noble prospect.

The dreary scene of desolation through which Mannering's road had lain on the preceding evening was excluded from the view by some rising ground, and the landscape showed a pleasing alternation of hill and dale, intersected by a river, which was in some places visible, and hidden in others, where it rolled betwixt deep and wooded banks. The spire of a church and the appearance of some houses indicated the situation of a village at the place where the stream had its junction with the ocean. The vales seemed well cultivated, the little inclosures into which they were divided skirting the bottom of the hills, and sometimes carrying their lines of straggling hedgerows a little way up the ascent. Above these were green pastures, tenanted chiefly by herds of black cattle, then the staple commodity of the country, whose distant low gave no unpleasing animation to the landscape. The remoter hills were of a sterner character, and, at still greater distance, swelled into mountains of dark heath, bordering the horizon with a screen which gave a defined and limited boundary to the cultivated country, and added at the same time the pleasing idea that it was sequestered and solitary. The sea-coast, which Mannering now saw in its extent, corresponded in variety and beauty with the inland view. In some places it rose into tall rocks, frequently crowned with the ruins of old buildings, towers, or beacons, which, according to tradition, were placed within sight of each other, that, in times of invasion or civil war, they might communicate by signal for mutual defence and protection. Ellangowan Castle was by far the most extensive and important of these ruins, and asserted from size and situation the superiority which its founders were said once to have possessed among the chiefs and

nobles of the district. In other places the shore was of a more gentle description, indented with small bays, where the land sloped smoothly down, or sent into the sea promontories covered with wood.

A scene so different from what last night's journey had presaged produced a proportional effect upon Mannering. Beneath his eye lay the modern house—an awkward mansion, indeed, in point of architecture, but well situated, and with a warm, pleasant exposure. 'How happily,' thought our hero, 'would life glide on in such a retirement! On the one hand, the striking remnants of ancient grandeur, with the secret consciousness of family pride which they inspire; on the other, enough of modern elegance and comfort to satisfy every moderate wish. Here then, and with thee, Sophia!'

We shall not pursue a lover's day-dream any farther. Mannering stood a minute with his arms folded, and then turned to the ruined castle.

On entering the gateway, he found that the rude magnificence of the inner court amply corresponded with the grandeur of the exterior. On the one side ran a range of windows lofty and large, divided by carved mullions of stone, which had once lighted the great hall of the castle; on the other were various buildings of different heights and dates, yet so united as to present to the eye a certain general effect of uniformity of front. The doors and windows were ornamented with projections exhibiting rude specimens of sculpture and tracery, partly entire and partly broken down, partly covered by ivy and trailing plants, which grew luxuriantly among the ruins. That end of the court which faced the entrance had also been formerly closed by a range of buildings; but owing, it was said, to its having been battered by the ships of the Parliament under Deane, during the long civil war, this part of the castle was much more ruinous than the rest, and exhibited a great chasm, through which Mannering could observe the sea, and the little vessel (an armed lugger), which retained her station in the centre of the bay. [Footnote: The outline of the above description, as far as the supposed ruins are concerned, will be found somewhat to resemble the noble remains of Carlaverock Castle, six or seven miles from Dumfries, and near to Lochar Moss.] While Mannering was gazing round the ruins, he heard from the interior of an apartment on the left hand the voice of the gipsy he had seen on the preceding evening. He soon found an aperture through which he could observe her without being himself visible; and could not help feeling that her figure, her employment, and her situation conveyed the exact impression of an ancient sibyl.

She sate upon a broken corner-stone in the angle of a paved apartment, part of which she had swept clean to afford a smooth space for the evolutions of her spindle. A strong sunbeam through a lofty and narrow window fell upon her wild dress and features, and afforded her light for her occupation; the rest of the apartment was very gloomy. Equipt in a habit which mingled the national dress of the Scottish common people with something of an Eastern costume, she spun a thread drawn from wool of three different colours, black, white, and grey, by assistance of those ancient implements of housewifery now almost banished from the land, the distaff and spindle. As she spun, she sung what seemed to be a charm. Mannering, after in vain attempting to make himself master of the exact words of her song, afterwards attempted the following paraphrase of what, from a few intelligible phrases, he concluded to be its purport: -

Twist ye, twine ye! even so
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife,
In the thread of human life.

While the mystic twist is spinning,
And the infant's life beginning,
Dimly seen through twilight bending,
Lo, what varied shapes attending!

Passions wild, and Follies vain,
Pleasures soon exchanged for pain,
Doubt, and Jealousy, and Fear
In the magic dance appear.

Now they wax, and now they dwindle,
Whirling with the whirling spindle.
Twist ye, twine ye! even so
Mingle human bliss and woe.

Ere our translator, or rather our free imitator, had arranged these stanzas in his head, and while he was yet hammering out a rhyme for DWINDLE, the task of the sibyl was accomplished, or her wool was expended. She took the spindle, now charged with her labours, and, undoing the thread gradually, measured it by casting it over her elbow and bringing each loop round between her forefinger and thumb. When she had measured it out, she muttered to herself- 'A hank, but not a haill ane-the full years o' three score and ten, but thrice broken, and thrice to OOP (i.e. to unite); he'll be a lucky lad an he win through wi't.'

Our hero was about to speak to the prophetic, when a voice, hoarse as the waves with which it mingled, hallooed twice, and with increasing impatience- 'Meg, Meg Merrilies! Gipsy-hag-tausend devils!'

'I am coming, I am coming, Captain,' answered Meg; and in a moment or two the impatient commander whom she addressed made his appearance from the broken part of the ruins.

He was apparently a seafaring man, rather under the middle size, and with a countenance bronzed by a thousand conflicts with the north-east wind. His frame was prodigiously muscular, strong, and thick-set; so that it seemed as if a man of much greater height would have been an inadequate match in any close personal conflict. He was hard-favoured, and, which was worse, his face bore nothing of the insouciance, the careless, frolicsome jollity and vacant curiosity, of a sailor on shore. These qualities, perhaps, as much as any others, contribute to the high popularity of our seamen, and the general good inclination which our society expresses towards them. Their gallantry, courage, and hardihood are qualities which excite reverence, and perhaps rather humble pacific landsmen in their presence; and neither respect nor a sense of humiliation are feelings easily combined with a familiar fondness towards those who inspire them. But the boyish frolics, the exulting high spirits, the unreflecting mirth of a sailor when enjoying himself on shore, temper the more formidable points of his character. There was nothing like these in this man's face; on the contrary, a surly and even savage scowl appeared to darken features which would have been harsh and unpleasant under any expression or modification. 'Where are you, Mother Deyvilson?' he said, with somewhat of a foreign accent, though speaking perfectly good English. 'Donner and blitzen! we have been staying this half-hour. Come, bless the good ship and the voyage, and be cursed to ye for a hag of Satan!'

At this moment he noticed Mannering, who, from the position which he had taken to watch Meg Merrilies's incantations, had the appearance of some one who was concealing himself, being half hidden by the buttress behind which he stood. The Captain, for such he styled himself, made a sudden and startled pause, and thrust his right hand into his bosom between his jacket and waistcoat as if to draw some weapon. 'What cheer, brother? you seem on the outlook, eh?' Ere Mannering, somewhat struck by the man's gesture and insolent tone of voice, had made any answer, the gipsy emerged from her vault and joined the stranger. He questioned her in an undertone, looking at Mannering- 'A shark alongside, eh?'

She answered in the same tone of under-dialogue, using the cant language of her tribe- 'Cut ben whids, and stow them; a gentry cove of the ken.' [Footnote: Meaning-Stop your uncivil language; that is a gentleman from the house below.]

The fellow's cloudy visage cleared up. 'The top of the morning to you, sir; I find you are a visitor of my friend Mr. Bertram. I beg pardon, but I took you for another sort of a person.'

Mannering replied, 'And you, sir, I presume, are the master of that vessel in the bay?'

'Ay, ay, sir; I am Captain Dirk Hatteraick, of the Yungfrau Hagenslaapen, well known on this coast; I am not ashamed of my name, nor of my vessel-no, nor of my cargo neither for that matter.'

'I daresay you have no reason, sir.'

'Tausend donner, no; I'm all in the way of fair trade. Just loaded yonder at Douglas, in the Isle of Man-neat cogniac-real hyson and souchong-Mechlin lace, if you want any-right cogniac-we bumped ashore a hundred kegs last night.'

'Really, sir, I am only a traveller, and have no sort of occasion for anything of the kind at present.'

'Why, then, good-morning to you, for business must be minded-unless ye'll go aboard and take schnaps; you shall have a pouch-full of tea ashore. Dirk Hatteraick knows how to be civil.'

There was a mixture of impudence, hardihood, and suspicious fear about this man which was inexpressibly disgusting. His manners were those of a ruffian, conscious of the suspicion attending his character, yet aiming to bear it down by the affectation of a careless and hardy familiarity. Mannering briefly rejected his proffered civilities; and, after a surly good-morning, Hatteraick retired with the gipsy to that part of the ruins from which he had first made his appearance. A very narrow staircase here went down to the beach, intended probably for the convenience of the garrison during a siege. By this stair the couple, equally amiable in appearance and respectable by profession, descended to the sea-side. The soi-disant captain embarked in a small boat with two men, who appeared to wait for him, and the gipsy remained on the shore, reciting or singing, and gesticulating with great vehemence.

CHAPTER IV

*You have fed upon my seignories,
Dispark'd my parks, and fell'd my forest woods,
From mine own windows torn my household coat,
Razed out my impress, leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To show the world I am a gentleman.*

Richard II.

When the boat which carried the worthy captain on board his vessel had accomplished that task, the sails began to ascend, and the ship was got under way. She fired three guns as a salute to the house of Ellangowan, and then shot away rapidly before the wind, which blew off shore, under all the sail she could crowd.

‘Ay, ay,’ said the Laird, who had sought Mannering for some time, and now joined him, ‘there they go-there go the free-traders-there go Captain Dirk Hatteraick and the Yungfrau Hagenslaapen, half Manks, half Dutchman, half devil! run out the boltsprit, up mainsail, top and top-gallant sails, royals, and skyscrapers, and away-follow who can! That fellow, Mr. Mannering, is the terror of all the excise and custom-house cruisers; they can make nothing of him; he drubs them, or he distances them; – and, speaking of excise, I come to bring you to breakfast; and you shall have some tea, that-’

Mannering by this time was aware that one thought linked strangely on to another in the concatenation of worthy Mr. Bertram’s ideas,

Like orient pearls at random strung;

and therefore, before the current of his associations had drifted farther from the point he had left, he brought him back by some inquiry about Dirk Hatteraick.

‘O he’s a-a-gude sort of blackguard fellow enough; naeboddy cares to trouble him-smuggler, when his guns are in ballast-privateer, or pirate, faith, when he gets them mounted. He has done more mischief to the revenue folk than ony rogue that ever came out of Ramsay.’

‘But, my good sir, such being his character, I wonder he has any protection and encouragement on this coast.’

‘Why, Mr. Mannering, people must have brandy and tea, and there’s none in the country but what comes this way; and then there’s short accounts, and maybe a keg or two, or a dozen pounds, left at your stable-door, instead of a d-d lang account at Christmas from Duncan Robb, the grocer at Kippletringan, who has aye a sum to make up, and either wants ready money or a short-dated bill. Now, Hatteraick will take wood, or he’ll take bark, or he’ll take barley, or he’ll take just what’s convenient at the time. I’ll tell you a gude story about that. There was ance a laird-that’s Macfie of Gudgeonford, – he had a great number of kain hens-that’s hens that the tenant pays to the landlord, like a sort of rent in kind. They aye feed mine very ill; Luckie Finniston sent up three that were a shame to be seen only last week, and yet she has twelve bows sowing of victual; indeed her goodman, Duncan Finniston-that’s him that’s gone-(we must all die, Mr. Mannering, that’s ower true) – and, speaking of that, let us live in the meanwhile, for here’s breakfast on the table, and the Dominie ready to say the grace.’

The Dominie did accordingly pronounce a benediction, that exceeded in length any speech which Mannering had yet heard him utter. The tea, which of course belonged to the noble Captain Hatteraick’s trade, was pronounced excellent. Still Mannering hinted, though with due delicacy, at

the risk of encouraging such desperate characters. 'Were it but in justice to the revenue, I should have supposed-'

'Ah, the revenue lads'-for Mr. Bertram never embraced a general or abstract idea, and his notion of the revenue was personified in the commissioners, surveyors, comptrollers, and riding officers whom he happened to know-'the revenue lads can look sharp enough out for themselves, no ane needs to help them; and they have a' the soldiers to assist them besides; and as to justice-you 'll be surprised to hear it, Mr. Mannering, but I am not a justice of peace!'

Mannering assumed the expected look of surprise, but thought within himself that the worshipful bench suffered no great deprivation from wanting the assistance of his good-humoured landlord. Mr. Bertram had now hit upon one of the few subjects on which he felt sore, and went on with some energy.

'No, sir, the name of Godfrey Bertram of Ellangowan is not in the last commission, though there's scarce a carle in the country that has a plough-gate of land, but what he must ride to quarter-sessions and write J.P. after his name. I ken fu' weel whom I am obliged to-Sir Thomas Kittlecourt as good as tell'd me he would sit in my skirts if he had not my interest at the last election; and because I chose to go with my own blood and third cousin, the Laird of Balruddery, they keepit me off the roll of freeholders; and now there comes a new nomination of justices, and I am left out! And whereas they pretend it was because I let David Mac-Guffog, the constable, draw the warrants, and manage the business his ain gate, as if I had been a nose o' wax, it's a main untruth; for I granted but seven warrants in my life, and the Dominie wrote every one of them-and if it had not been that unlucky business of Sandy Mac-Gruthar's, that the constables should have keepit twa or three days up yonder at the auld castle, just till they could get conveniency to send him to the county jail-and that cost me eneugh o' siller. But I ken what Sir Thomas wants very weel-it was just sic and siclike about the seat in the kirk o' Kilmagirdle-was I not entitled to have the front gallery facing the minister, rather than Mac-Crosskie of Creochstone, the son of Deacon Mac-Crosskie, the Dumfries weaver?'

Mannering expressed his acquiescence in the justice of these various complaints.

'And then, Mr. Mannering, there was the story about the road and the fauld-dike. I ken Sir Thomas was behind there, and I said plainly to the clerk to the trustees that I saw the cloven foot, let them take that as they like. Would any gentleman, or set of gentlemen, go and drive a road right through the corner of a fauld-dike and take away, as my agent observed to them, like twa roods of gude moorland pasture? And there was the story about choosing the collector of the cess-'

'Certainly, sir, it is hard you should meet with any neglect in a country where, to judge from the extent of their residence, your ancestors must have made a very important figure.'

'Very true, Mr. Mannering; I am a plain man and do not dwell on these things, and I must needs say I have little memory for them; but I wish ye could have heard my father's stories about the auld fights of the Mac-Dingawaies-that's the Bertrams that now is-wi' the Irish and wi' the Highlanders that came here in their berlings from Ilay and Cantire; and how they went to the Holy Land-that is, to Jerusalem and Jericho, wi' a' their clan at their heels-they had better have gaen to Jamaica, like Sir Thomas Kittlecourt's uncle-and how they brought hame relics like those that Catholics have, and a flag that's up yonder in the garret. If they had been casks of muscavado and puncheons of rum it would have been better for the estate at this day; but there's little comparison between the auld keep at Kittlecourt and the castle o' Ellangowan; I doubt if the keep's forty feet of front. But ye make no breakfast, Mr. Mannering; ye're no eating your meat; allow me to recommend some of the kipper. It was John Hay that catcht it, Saturday was three weeks, down at the stream below Hempseed ford,' etc. etc. etc.

The Laird, whose indignation had for some time kept him pretty steady to one topic, now launched forth into his usual roving style of conversation, which gave Mannering ample time to reflect upon the disadvantages attending the situation which an hour before he had thought worthy of so much envy. Here was a country gentleman, whose most estimable quality seemed his perfect good-

nature, secretly fretting himself and murmuring against others for causes which, compared with any real evil in life, must weigh like dust in the balance. But such is the equal distribution of Providence. To those who lie out of the road of great afflictions are assigned petty vexations which answer all the purpose of disturbing their serenity; and every reader must have observed that neither natural apathy nor acquired philosophy can render country gentlemen insensible to the grievances which occur at elections, quarter-sessions, and meetings of trustees.

Curious to investigate the manners of the country, Mannering took the advantage of a pause in good Mr. Bertram's string of stories to inquire what Captain Hatteraick so earnestly wanted with the gipsy woman.

'O, to bless his ship, I suppose. You must know, Mr. Mannering, that these free-traders, whom the law calls smugglers, having no religion, make it all up in superstition; and they have as many spells and charms and nonsense-'

'Vanity and waur!' said the Dominie; 'it is a trafficking with the Evil One. Spells, periapts, and charms are of his device-choice arrows out of Apollyon's quiver.'

'Hold your peace, Dominie; ye're speaking for ever'-by the way, they were the first words the poor man had uttered that morning, excepting that he said grace and returned thanks-'Mr. Mannering cannot get in a word for ye! And so, Mr. Mannering, talking of astronomy and spells and these matters, have ye been so kind as to consider what we were speaking about last night?'

'I begin to think, Mr. Bertram, with your worthy friend here, that I have been rather jesting with edge-tools; and although neither you nor I, nor any sensible man, can put faith in the predictions of astrology, yet, as it has sometimes happened that inquiries into futurity, undertaken in jest, have in their results produced serious and unpleasant effects both upon actions and characters, I really wish you would dispense with my replying to your question.'

It was easy to see that this evasive answer only rendered the Laird's curiosity more uncontrollable. Mannering, however, was determined in his own mind not to expose the infant to the inconveniences which might have arisen from his being supposed the object of evil prediction. He therefore delivered the paper into Mr. Bertram's hand, and requested him to keep it for five years with the seal unbroken, until the month of November was expired. After that date had intervened he left him at liberty to examine the writing, trusting that, the first fatal period being then safely overpassed, no credit would be paid to its farther contents. This Mr. Bertram was content to promise, and Mannering, to ensure his fidelity, hinted at misfortunes which would certainly take place if his injunctions were neglected. The rest of the day, which Mannering, by Mr. Bertram's invitation, spent at Ellangowan, passed over without anything remarkable; and on the morning of that which followed the traveller mounted his palfrey, bade a courteous adieu to his hospitable landlord and to his clerical attendant, repeated his good wishes for the prosperity of the family, and then, turning his horse's head towards England, disappeared from the sight of the inmates of Ellangowan. He must also disappear from that of our readers, for it is to another and later period of his life that the present narrative relates.

CHAPTER VI

*Next, the Justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances-
And so he plays his part*

— As You Like It

When Mrs. Bertram of Ellangowan was able to hear the news of what had passed during her confinement, her apartment rung with all manner of gossiping respecting the handsome young student from Oxford who had told such a fortune by the stars to the young Laird, 'blessings on his dainty face.' The form, accent, and manners of the stranger were expatiated upon. His horse, bridle, saddle, and stirrups did not remain unnoticed. All this made a great impression upon the mind of Mrs. Bertram, for the good lady had no small store of superstition.

Her first employment, when she became capable of a little work, was to make a small velvet bag for the scheme of nativity which she had obtained from her husband. Her fingers itched to break the seal, but credulity proved stronger than curiosity; and she had the firmness to inclose it, in all its integrity, within two slips of parchment, which she sewed round it to prevent its being chafed. The whole was then put into the velvet bag aforesaid, and hung as a charm round the neck of the infant, where his mother resolved it should remain until the period for the legitimate satisfaction of her curiosity should arrive.

The father also resolved to do his part by the child in securing him a good education; and, with the view that it should commence with the first dawnings of reason, Dominie Sampson was easily induced to renounce his public profession of parish schoolmaster, make his constant residence at the Place, and, in consideration of a sum not quite equal to the wages of a footman even at that time, to undertake to communicate to the future Laird of Ellangowan all the erudition which he had, and all the graces and accomplishments which he had not indeed, but which he had never discovered that he wanted. In this arrangement the Laird found also his private advantage, securing the constant benefit of a patient auditor, to whom he told his stories when they were alone, and at whose expense he could break a sly jest when he had company.

About four years after this time a great commotion took place in the county where Ellangowan is situated.

Those who watched the signs of the times had long been of opinion that a change of ministry was about to take place; and at length, after a due proportion of hopes, fears, and delays, rumours from good authority and bad authority, and no authority at all; after some clubs had drank Up with this statesman and others Down with him; after riding, and running, and posting, and addressing, and counter-addressing, and proffers of lives and fortunes, the blow was at length struck, the administration of the day was dissolved, and parliament, as a natural consequence, was dissolved also.

Sir Thomas Kittlecourt, like other members in the same situation, posted down to his county, and met but an indifferent reception. He was a partizan of the old administration; and the friends of the new had already set about an active canvass in behalf of John Featherhead, Esq., who kept the best hounds and hunters in the shire. Among others who joined the standard of revolt was Gilbert Glossin, writer in-, agent for the Laird of Ellangowan. This honest gentleman had either been refused some favour by the old member, or, what is as probable, he had got all that he had the most distant pretension to ask, and could only look to the other side for fresh advancement. Mr. Glossin had a vote upon Ellangowan's property; and he was now determined that his patron should have one also,

there being no doubt which side Mr. Bertram would embrace in the contest. He easily persuaded Ellangowan that it would be creditable to him to take the field at the head of as strong a party as possible; and immediately went to work, making votes, as every Scotch lawyer knows how, by splitting and subdividing the superiorities upon this ancient and once powerful barony. These were so extensive that, by dint of clipping and paring here, adding and eking there, and creating over-lords upon all the estate which Bertram held of the crown, they advanced at the day of contest at the head of ten as good men of parchment as ever took the oath of trust and possession. This strong reinforcement turned the dubious day of battle. The principal and his agent divided the honour; the reward fell to the latter exclusively. Mr. Gilbert Glossin was made clerk of the peace, and Godfrey Bertram had his name inserted in a new commission of justices, issued immediately upon the sitting of the parliament.

This had been the summit of Mr. Bertram's ambition; not that he liked either the trouble or the responsibility of the office, but he thought it was a dignity to which he was well entitled, and that it had been withheld from him by malice prepense. But there is an old and true Scotch proverb, 'Fools should not have chapping sticks'; that is, weapons of offence. Mr. Bertram was no sooner possessed of the judicial authority which he had so much longed for than he began to exercise it with more severity than mercy, and totally belied all the opinions which had hitherto been formed of his inert good-nature. We have read somewhere of a justice of peace who, on being nominated in the commission, wrote a letter to a bookseller for the statutes respecting his official duty in the following orthography-'Please send the ax relating to a gustus pease.' No doubt, when this learned gentleman had possessed himself of the axe, he hewed the laws with it to some purpose. Mr. Bertram was not quite so ignorant of English grammar as his worshipful predecessor; but Augustus Pease himself could not have used more indiscriminately the weapon unwarily put into his hand.

In good earnest, he considered the commission with which he had been entrusted as a personal mark of favour from his sovereign; forgetting that he had formerly thought his being deprived of a privilege, or honour, common to those of his rank was the result of mere party cabal. He commanded his trusty aid-de-camp, Dominie Sampson, to read aloud the commission; and at the first words, 'The King has been pleased to appoint'-'Pleased!' he exclaimed in a transport of gratitude; 'honest gentleman! I'm sure he cannot be better pleased than I am.'

Accordingly, unwilling to confine his gratitude to mere feelings or verbal expressions, he gave full current to the new-born zeal of office, and endeavoured to express his sense of the honour conferred upon him by an unmitigated activity in the discharge of his duty. New brooms, it is said, sweep clean; and I myself can bear witness that, on the arrival of a new housemaid, the ancient, hereditary, and domestic spiders who have spun their webs over the lower division of my bookshelves (consisting chiefly of law and divinity) during the peaceful reign of her predecessor, fly at full speed before the probationary inroads of the new mercenary. Even so the Laird of Ellangowan ruthlessly commenced his magisterial reform, at the expense of various established and superannuated pickers and stealers who had been his neighbours for half a century. He wrought his miracles like a second Duke Humphrey; and by the influence of the beadle's rod caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the palsied to labour. He detected poachers, black-fishers, orchard-breakers, and pigeon-shooters; had the applause of the bench for his reward, and the public credit of an active magistrate.

All this good had its rateable proportion of evil. Even an admitted nuisance of ancient standing should not be abated without some caution. The zeal of our worthy friend now involved in great distress sundry personages whose idle and mendicant habits his own lachesse had contributed to foster, until these habits had become irreclaimable, or whose real incapacity for exertion rendered them fit objects, in their own phrase, for the charity of all well-disposed Christians. The 'long-remembered beggar,' who for twenty years had made his regular rounds within the neighbourhood, received rather as an humble friend than as an object of charity, was sent to the neighbouring workhouse. The decrepit dame, who travelled round the parish upon a hand-barrow, circulating from house to house like a bad shilling, which every one is in haste to pass to his neighbour, - she, who

used to call for her bearers as loud, or louder, than a traveller demands post-horses, – even she shared the same disastrous fate. The ‘daft Jock,’ who, half knave, half idiot, had been the sport of each succeeding race of village children for a good part of a century, was remitted to the county bridewell, where, secluded from free air and sunshine, the only advantages he was capable of enjoying, he pined and died in the course of six months. The old sailor, who had so long rejoiced the smoky rafters of every kitchen in the country by singing ‘Captain Ward’ and ‘Bold Admiral Benbow,’ was banished from the county for no better reason than that he was supposed to speak with a strong Irish accent. Even the annual rounds of the pedlar were abolished by the Justice, in his hasty zeal for the administration of rural police.

These things did not pass without notice and censure. We are not made of wood or stone, and the things which connect themselves with our hearts and habits cannot, like bark or lichen, be rent away without our missing them. The farmer’s dame lacked her usual share of intelligence, perhaps also the self-applause which she had felt while distributing the awmous (alms), in shape of a gowpen (handful) of oatmeal, to the mendicant who brought the news. The cottage felt inconvenience from interruption of the petty trade carried on by the itinerant dealers. The children lacked their supply of sugarplums and toys; the young women wanted pins, ribbons, combs, and ballads; and the old could no longer barter their eggs for salt, snuff, and tobacco. All these circumstances brought the busy Laird of Ellangowan into discredit, which was the more general on account of his former popularity. Even his lineage was brought up in judgment against him. They thought ‘naething of what the like of Greenside, or Burnville, or Viewforth might do, that were strangers in the country; but Ellangowan! that had been a name amang them since the Mirk Monanday, and lang before-HIM to be grinding the puir at that rate! They ca’d his grandfather the Wicked Laird; but, though he was whiles fractious aneuch, when he got into roving company and had ta’en the drap drink, he would have scorned to gang on at this gate. Na, na, the muckle chumlay in the Auld Place reeked like a killogie in his time, and there were as mony puir folk riving at the banes in the court, and about the door, as there were gentles in the ha’. And the leddy, on ilka Christmas night as it came round, gae twelve siller pennies to ilka puir body about, in honour of the twelve apostles like. They were fond to ca’ it papistrie; but I think our great folk might take a lesson frae the papists whiles. They gie another sort o’ help to puir folk than just dinging down a saxpence in the brod on the Sabbath, and kilting, and scourging, and drumming them a’ the sax days o’ the week besides.’

Such was the gossip over the good twopenny in every ale-house within three or four miles of Ellangowan, that being about the diameter of the orbit in which our friend Godfrey Bertram, Esq., J. P., must be considered as the principal luminary. Still greater scope was given to evil tongues by the removal of a colony of gipsies, with one of whom our reader is somewhat acquainted, and who had for a great many years enjoyed their chief settlement upon the estate of Ellangowan.

CHAPTER VII

*Come, princes of the ragged regiment,
You of the blood! PRIGS, my most upright lord,
And these, what name or title e'er they bear,
JARKMAN, or PATRICO, CRANKE or CLAPPER-
DUDGEON,
PRATER or ABRAM-MAN-I speak of all.*

Beggar's Bush.

Although the character of those gipsy tribes which formerly inundated most of the nations of Europe, and which in some degree still subsist among them as a distinct people, is generally understood, the reader will pardon my saying a few words respecting their situation in Scotland.

It is well known that the gipsies were at an early period acknowledged as a separate and independent race by one of the Scottish monarchs, and that they were less favourably distinguished by a subsequent law, which rendered the character of gipsy equal in the judicial balance to that of common and habitual thief, and prescribed his punishment accordingly. Notwithstanding the severity of this and other statutes, the fraternity prospered amid the distresses of the country, and received large accessions from among those whom famine, oppression, or the sword of war had deprived of the ordinary means of subsistence. They lost in a great measure by this intermixture the national character of Egyptians, and became a mingled race, having all the idleness and predatory habits of their Eastern ancestors, with a ferocity which they probably borrowed from the men of the north who joined their society. They travelled in different bands, and had rules among themselves, by which each tribe was confined to its own district. The slightest invasion of the precincts which had been assigned to another tribe produced desperate skirmishes, in which there was often much blood shed.

The patriotic Fletcher of Saltoun drew a picture of these banditti about a century ago, which my readers will peruse with astonishment: -

‘There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church boxes, with others who, by living on bad food, fall into various diseases) two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. These are not only no way advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of those vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land or even those of God and nature.. No magistrate could ever discover, or be informed, which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptized. Many murders have been discovered among them; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants (who, if they give not bread or some kind of provision to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them), but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions, they are to be seen, both man and woman, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together.’

Notwithstanding the deplorable picture presented in this extract, and which Fletcher himself, though the energetic and eloquent friend of freedom, saw no better mode of correcting than by introducing a system of domestic slavery, the progress of time, and increase both of the means of life and of the power of the laws, gradually reduced this dreadful evil within more narrow bounds. The tribes of gipsies, jockies, or cairds-for by all these denominations such banditti were known-became

few in number, and many were entirely rooted out. Still, however, a sufficient number remained to give, occasional alarm and constant vexation. Some rude handicrafts were entirely resigned to these itinerants, particularly the art of trencher-making, of manufacturing horn-spoons, and the whole mystery of the tinker. To these they added a petty trade in the coarse sorts of earthenware. Such were their ostensible means of livelihood. Each tribe had usually some fixed place of rendezvous, which they occasionally occupied and considered as their standing camp, and in the vicinity of which they generally abstained from depredation. They had even talents and accomplishments, which made them occasionally useful and entertaining. Many cultivated music with success; and the favourite fiddler or piper of a district was often to be found in a gipsy town. They understood all out-of-door sports, especially otter-hunting, fishing, or finding game. They bred the best and boldest terriers, and sometimes had good pointers for sale. In winter the women told fortunes, the men showed tricks of legerdemain; and these accomplishments often helped to while away a weary or stormy evening in the circle of the 'farmer's ha'. The wildness of their character, and the indomitable pride with which they despised all regular labour, commanded a certain awe, which was not diminished by the consideration that these strollers were a vindictive race, and were restrained by no check, either of fear or conscience, from taking desperate vengeance upon those who had offended them. These tribes were, in short, the pariahs of Scotland, living like wild Indians among European settlers, and, like them, judged of rather by their own customs, habits, and opinions, than as if they had been members of the civilised part of the community. Some hordes of them yet remain, chiefly in such situations as afford a ready escape either into a waste country or into another Jurisdiction. Nor are the features of their character much softened. Their numbers, however, are so greatly diminished that, instead of one hundred thousand, as calculated by Fletcher, it would now perhaps be impossible to collect above five hundred throughout all Scotland.

A tribe of these itinerants, to whom Meg Merrilies appertained, had long been as stationary as their habits permitted in a glen upon the estate of Ellangowan. They had there erected a few huts, which they denominated their 'city of refuge,' and where, when not absent on excursions, they harboured unmolested, as the crows that roosted in the old ash-trees around them. They had been such long occupants that they were considered in some degree as proprietors of the wretched shealings which they inhabited. This protection they were said anciently to have repaid by service to the Laird in war, or more frequently, by infesting or plundering the lands of those neighbouring barons with whom he chanced to be at feud. Latterly their services were of a more pacific nature. The women spun mittens for the lady, and knitted boot-hose for the Laird, which were annually presented at Christmas with great form. The aged sibyls blessed the bridal bed of the Laird when he married, and the cradle of the heir when born. The men repaired her ladyship's cracked china, and assisted the Laird in his sporting parties, wormed his dogs, and cut the ears of his terrier puppies. The children gathered nuts in the woods, and cranberries in the moss, and mushrooms on the pastures, for tribute to the Place. These acts of voluntary service, and acknowledgments of dependence, were rewarded by protection on some occasions, connivance on others, and broken victuals, ale, and brandy when circumstances called for a display of generosity; and this mutual intercourse of good offices, which had been carried on for at least two centuries, rendered the inhabitants of Derncleugh a kind of privileged retainers upon the estate of Ellangowan. 'The knaves' were the Laird's 'exceeding good friends'; and he would have deemed himself very ill used if his countenance could not now and then have borne them out against the law of the country and the local magistrate. But this friendly union was soon to be dissolved.

The community of Derncleugh, who cared for no rogues but their own, were wholly without alarm at the severity of the Justice's proceedings towards other itinerants. They had no doubt that he determined to suffer no mendicants or strollers in the country but what resided on his own property, and practised their trade by his immediate permission, implied or expressed. Nor was Mr. Bertram

in a hurry to exert his newly-acquired authority at the expense of these old settlers. But he was driven on by circumstances.

At the quarter-sessions our new Justice was publicly upbraided by a gentleman of the opposite party in county politics, that, while he affected a great zeal for the public police, and seemed ambitious of the fame of an active magistrate, he fostered a tribe of the greatest rogues in the country, and permitted them to harbour within a mile of the house of Ellangowan. To this there was no reply, for the fact was too evident and well known. The Laird digested the taunt as he best could, and in his way home amused himself with speculations on the easiest method of ridding himself of these vagrants, who brought a stain upon his fair fame as a magistrate. Just as he had resolved to take the first opportunity of quarrelling with the pariahs of Derncleugh, a cause of provocation presented itself.

Since our friend's advancement to be a conservator of the peace, he had caused the gate at the head of his avenue, which formerly, having only one hinge, remained at all times hospitably open—he had caused this gate, I say, to be newly hung and handsomely painted. He had also shut up with paling, curiously twisted with furze, certain holes in the fences adjoining, through which the gipsy boys used to scramble into the plantations to gather birds' nests, the seniors of the village to make a short cut from one point to another, and the lads and lasses for evening rendezvous—all without offence taken or leave asked. But these halcyon days were now to have an end, and a minatory inscription on one side of the gate intimated 'prosecution according to law' (the painter had spelt it 'persecution'—*l'un vaut bien l'autre*) to all who should be found trespassing on these inclosures. On the other side, for uniformity's sake, was a precautionary annunciation of spring-guns and man-traps of such formidable powers that, said the rubrick, with an emphatic *nota bene*—'if a man goes in they will break a horse's leg.'

In defiance of these threats, six well-grown gipsy boys and girls were riding cock-horse upon the new gate, and plaiting may-flowers, which it was but too evident had been gathered within the forbidden precincts. With as much anger as he was capable of feeling, or perhaps of assuming, the Laird commanded them to descend; — they paid no attention to his mandate: he then began to pull them down one after another; — they resisted, passively at least, each sturdy bronzed varlet making himself as heavy as he could, or climbing up as fast as he was dismounted.

The Laird then called in the assistance of his servant, a surly fellow, who had immediate recourse to his horsewhip. A few lashes sent the party a-scrampering; and thus commenced the first breach of the peace between the house of Ellangowan and the gipsies of Derncleugh.

The latter could not for some time imagine that the war was real; until they found that their children were horsewhipped by the griever when found trespassing; that their asses were pointed by the ground-officer when left in the plantations, or even when turned to graze by the roadside, against the provision of the turnpike acts; that the constable began to make curious inquiries into their mode of gaining a livelihood, and expressed his surprise that the men should sleep in the hovels all day, and be abroad the greater part of the night.

When matters came to this point, the gipsies, without scruple, entered upon measures of retaliation. Ellangowan's hen-roosts were plundered, his linen stolen from the lines or bleaching-ground, his fishings poached, his dogs kidnapped, his growing trees cut or barked. Much petty mischief was done, and some evidently for the mischief's sake. On the other hand, warrants went forth, without mercy, to pursue, search for, take, and apprehend; and, notwithstanding their dexterity, one or two of the depredators were unable to avoid conviction. One, a stout young fellow, who sometimes had gone to sea a-fishing, was handed over to the captain of the impress service at D-; two children were soundly flogged, and one Egyptian matron sent to the house of correction.

Still, however, the gipsies made no motion to leave the spot which they had so long inhabited, and Mr. Bertram felt an unwillingness to deprive them of their ancient 'city of refuge'; so that the petty warfare we have noticed continued for several months, without increase or abatement of hostilities on either side.

CHAPTER VIII

*So the red Indian, by Ontario's side,
Nursed hardy on the brindled panther's hide,
As fades his swarthy race, with anguish sees
The white man's cottage rise beneath the trees;
He leaves the shelter of his native wood,
He leaves the murmur of Ohio's flood,
And forward rushing in indignant grief,
Where never foot has trod the fallen leaf,
He bends his course where twilight reigns sublime.
O'er forests silent since the birth of time.*

SCENES OF INFANCY.

In tracing the rise and progress of the Scottish Maroon war, we must not omit to mention that years had rolled on, and that little Harry Bertram, one of the hardiest and most lively children that ever made a sword and grenadier's cap of rushes, now approached his fifth revolving birthday. A hardihood of disposition, which early developed itself, made him already a little wanderer; he was well acquainted with every patch of lea ground and dingle around Ellangowan, and could tell in his broken language upon what baulks grew the bonniest flowers, and what copse had the ripest nuts. He repeatedly terrified his attendants by clambering about the ruins of the old castle, and had more than once made a stolen excursion as far as the gipsy hamlet.

On these occasions he was generally brought back by Meg Merrilies, who, though she could not be prevailed upon to enter the Place of Ellangowan after her nephew had been given up to the press-gang, did not apparently extend her resentment to the child. On the contrary, she often contrived to waylay him in his walks, sing him a gipsy song, give him a ride upon her jackass, and thrust into his pocket a piece of gingerbread or a red-cheeked apple. This woman's ancient attachment to the family, repelled and checked in every other direction, seemed to rejoice in having some object on which it could yet repose and expand itself. She prophesied a hundred times, 'that young Mr. Harry would be the pride o' the family, and there hadna been sic a sprout frae the auld aik since the death of Arthur Mac-Dingawaie, that was killed in the battle o' the Bloody Bay; as for the present stick, it was good for nothing but fire-wood.' On one occasion, when the child was ill, she lay all night below the window, chanting a rhyme which she believed sovereign as a febrifuge, and could neither be prevailed upon to enter the house nor to leave the station she had chosen till she was informed that the crisis was over.

The affection of this woman became matter of suspicion, not indeed to the Laird, who was never hasty in suspecting evil, but to his wife, who had indifferent health and poor spirits. She was now far advanced in a second pregnancy, and, as she could not walk abroad herself, and the woman who attended upon Harry was young and thoughtless, she prayed Dominie Sampson to undertake the task of watching the boy in his rambles, when he should not be otherwise accompanied. The Dominie loved his young charge, and was enraptured with his own success in having already brought him so far in his learning as to spell words of three syllables. The idea of this early prodigy of erudition being carried off by the gipsies, like a second Adam Smith,[Footnote: The father of Economical Philosophy was, when a child, actually carried off by gipsies, and remained some hours in their possession.] was not to be tolerated; and accordingly, though the charge was contrary to all his habits of life, he readily undertook it, and might be seen stalking about with a mathematical problem in his head, and his eye upon a child of five years old, whose rambles led him into a hundred awkward situations. Twice was the Dominie chased by a cross-grained cow, once he fell into the brook crossing at the stepping-stones,

and another time was bogged up to the middle in the slough of Lochend, in attempting to gather a water-lily for the young Laird. It was the opinion of the village matrons who relieved Sampson on the latter occasion, 'that the Laird might as weel trust the care o' his bairn to a potatoe bogle'; but the good Dominie bore all his disasters with gravity and serenity equally imperturbable. 'Pro-di-gi-ous!' was the only ejaculation they ever extorted from the much-enduring man.

The Laird had by this time determined to make root-and-branch work with the Maroons of Derncleugh. The old servants shook their heads at his proposal, and even Dominie Sampson ventured upon an indirect remonstrance. As, however, it was couched in the oracular phrase, 'Ne moveas Camerinam,' neither the allusion, nor the language in which it was expressed, were calculated for Mr. Bertram's edification, and matters proceeded against the gipsies in form of law. Every door in the hamlet was chalked by the ground-officer, in token of a formal warning to remove at next term. Still, however, they showed no symptoms either of submission or of compliance. At length the term-day, the fatal Martinmas, arrived, and violent measures of ejection were resorted to. A strong posse of peace-officers, sufficient to render all resistance vain, charged the inhabitants to depart by noon; and, as they did not obey, the officers, in terms of their warrant, proceeded to unroof the cottages, and pull down the wretched doors and windows—a summary and effectual mode of ejection still practised in some remote parts of Scotland when a tenant proves refractory. The gipsies for a time beheld the work of destruction in sullen silence and inactivity; then set about saddling and loading their asses, and making preparations for their departure. These were soon accomplished, where all had the habits of wandering Tartars; and they set forth on their journey to seek new settlements, where their patrons should neither be of the quorum nor custos rotulorum.

Certain qualms of feeling had deterred Ellangowan from attending in person to see his tenants expelled. He left the executive part of the business to the officers of the law, under the immediate direction of Frank Kennedy, a supervisor, or riding-officer, belonging to the excise, who had of late become intimate at the Place, and of whom we shall have more to say in the next chapter. Mr. Bertram himself chose that day to make a visit to a friend at some distance. But it so happened, notwithstanding his precautions, that he could not avoid meeting his late tenants during their retreat from his property.

It was in a hollow way, near the top of a steep ascent, upon the verge of the Ellangowan estate, that Mr. Bertram met the gipsy procession. Four or five men formed the advanced guard, wrapped in long loose great-coats that hid their tall slender figures, as the large slouched hats, drawn over their brows, concealed their wild features, dark eyes, and swarthy faces. Two of them carried long fowling-pieces, one wore a broadsword without a sheath, and all had the Highland dirk, though they did not wear that weapon openly or ostentatiously. Behind them followed the train of laden asses, and small carts or TUMBLERS, as they were called in that country, on which were laid the decrepit and the helpless, the aged and infant part of the exiled community. The women in their red cloaks and straw hats, the elder children with bare heads and bare feet, and almost naked bodies, had the immediate care of the little caravan. The road was narrow, running between two broken banks of sand, and Mr. Bertram's servant rode forward, smacking his whip with an air of authority, and motioning to the drivers to allow free passage to their betters. His signal was unattended to. He then called to the men who lounged idly on before, 'Stand to your beasts' heads, and make room for the Laird to pass.'

'He shall have his share of the road,' answered a male gipsy from under his slouched and large-brimmed hat, and without raising his face, 'and he shall have nae mair; the highway is as free to our cuddies as to his gelding.'

The tone of the man being sulky, and even menacing, Mr. Bertram thought it best to put his dignity in his pocket, and pass by the procession quietly, on such space as they chose to leave for his accommodation, which was narrow enough. To cover with an appearance of indifference his feeling of the want of respect with which he was treated, he addressed one of the men, as he passed him without any show of greeting, salute, or recognition—'Giles Baillie,' he said, 'have you heard that your son Gabriel is well?' (The question respected the young man who had been pressed.)

'If I had heard otherwise,' said the old man, looking up with a stern and menacing countenance, 'you should have heard of it too.' And he plodded on his way, tarrying no further question. [Footnote: This anecdote is a literal fact.] When the Laird had pressed on with difficulty among a crowd of familiar faces, which had on all former occasions marked his approach with the reverence due to that of a superior being, but in which he now only read hatred and contempt, and had got clear of the throng, he could not help turning his horse, and looking back to mark the progress of their march. The group would have been an excellent subject for the pencil of Calotte. The van had already reached a small and stunted thicket, which was at the bottom of the hill, and which gradually hid the line of march until the last stragglers disappeared.

His sensations were bitter enough. The race, it is true, which he had thus summarily dismissed from their ancient place of refuge, was idle and vicious; but had he endeavoured to render them otherwise? They were not more irregular characters now than they had been while they were admitted to consider themselves as a sort of subordinate dependents of his family; and ought the mere circumstance of his becoming a magistrate to have made at once such a change in his conduct towards them? Some means of reformation ought at least to have been tried before sending seven families at once upon the wide world, and depriving them of a degree of countenance which withheld them at least from atrocious guilt. There was also a natural yearning of heart on parting with so many known and familiar faces; and to this feeling Godfrey Bertram was peculiarly accessible, from the limited qualities of his mind, which sought its principal amusements among the petty objects around him. As he was about to turn his horse's head to pursue his journey, Meg Merrilies, who had lagged behind the troop, unexpectedly presented herself.

She was standing upon one of those high precipitous banks which, as we before noticed, overhung the road, so that she was placed considerably higher than Ellangowan, even though he was on horseback; and her tall figure, relieved against the clear blue sky, seemed almost of supernatural stature. We have noticed that there was in her general attire, or rather in her mode of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notions respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion she had a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon lustre. Her long and tangled black hair fell in elf-locks from the folds of this singular head-gear. Her attitude was that of a sibyl in frenzy, and she stretched out in her right hand a sapling bough which seemed just pulled.

'I'll be d-d,' said the groom, 'if she has not been cutting the young ashes in the dukit park!' The Laird made no answer, but continued to look at the figure which was thus perched above his path.

'Ride your ways,' said the gipsy, 'ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan; ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram! This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths; see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses; look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster. Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh; see that the hare does not couch on the hearthstane at Ellangowan. Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram; what do ye glower after our folk for? There's thirty hearts there that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted sunkets, and spent their life-blood ere ye had scratched your finger. Yes; there's thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o' their bits o' bields, to sleep with the tod and the blackcock in the muirs! Ride your ways, Ellangowan. Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs; look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up; not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born-God forbid-and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father! And now, ride e'en your ways; for these are the last words ye'll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise that I'll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan.'

So saying, she broke the sapling she held in her hand, and flung it into the road. Margaret of Anjou, bestowing on her triumphant foes her keen-edged malediction, could not have turned from them with a gesture more proudly contemptuous. The Laird was clearing his voice to speak, and

thrusting his hand in his pocket to find a half-crown; the gipsy waited neither for his reply nor his donation, but strode down the hill to overtake the caravan.

Ellangowan rode pensively home; and it was remarkable that he did not mention this interview to any of his family. The groom was not so reserved; he told the story at great length to a full audience in the kitchen, and concluded by swearing, that 'if ever the devil spoke by the mouth of a woman, he had spoken by that of Meg Merrilies that blessed day.'

CHAPTER IX

*Paint Scotland greeting ower her thrissle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whistle,
And d-n'd excisemen in a bustle,
Seizing a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel,
Or lampit shell*

BURNS.

During the period of Mr. Bertram's active magistracy, he did not forget the affairs of the revenue. Smuggling, for which the Isle of Man then afforded peculiar facilities, was general, or rather universal, all along the southwestern coast of Scotland. Almost all the common people were engaged in these practices; the gentry connived at them, and the officers of the revenue were frequently discountenanced in the exercise of their duty by those who should have protected them.

There was at this period, employed as a riding-officer or supervisor, in that part of the country a certain Francis Kennedy, already named in our narrative—a stout, resolute, and active man, who had made seizures to a great amount, and was proportionally hated by those who had an interest in the fair trade, as they called the pursuit of these contraband adventurers. This person was natural son to a gentleman of good family, owing to which circumstance, and to his being of a jolly, convivial disposition, and singing a good song, he was admitted to the occasional society of the gentlemen of the country, and was a member of several of their clubs for practising athletic games, at which he was particularly expert.

At Ellangowan Kennedy was a frequent and always an acceptable guest. His vivacity relieved Mr. Bertram of the trouble of thought, and the labour which it cost him to support a detailed communication of ideas; while the daring and dangerous exploits which he had undertaken in the discharge of his office formed excellent conversation. To all these revenue adventures did the Laird of Ellangowan seriously incline, and the amusement which he derived from Kennedy's society formed an excellent reason for countenancing and assisting the narrator in the execution of his invidious and hazardous duty.

'Frank Kennedy,' he said, 'was a gentleman, though on the wrang side of the blanket; he was connected with the family of Ellangowan through the house of Glengubble. The last Laird of Glengubble would have brought the estate into the Ellangowan line; but, happening to go to Harrigate, he there met with Miss Jean Hadaway—by the by, the Green Dragon at Harrigate is the best house of the twa—but for Frank Kennedy, he's in one sense a gentleman born, and it's a shame not to support him against these blackguard smugglers.'

After this league had taken place between judgment and execution, it chanced that Captain Dirk Hatteraick had landed a cargo of spirits and other contraband goods upon the beach not far from Ellangowan, and, confiding in the indifference with which the Laird had formerly regarded similar infractions of the law, he was neither very anxious to conceal nor to expedite the transaction. The consequence was that Mr. Frank Kennedy, armed with a warrant from Ellangowan, and supported by some of the Laird's people who knew the country, and by a party of military, poured down upon the kegs, bales, and bags, and after a desperate affray, in which severe wounds were given and received, succeeded in clapping the broad arrow upon the articles, and bearing them off in triumph to the next custom-house. Dirk Hatteraick vowed, in Dutch, German, and English, a deep and full revenge, both against the gauger and his abettors; and all who knew him thought it likely he would keep his word.

A few days after the departure of the gipsy tribe, Mr. Bertram asked his lady one morning at breakfast whether this was not little Harry's birthday.

'Five years auld exactly, this blessed day,' answered the lady; 'so we may look into the English gentleman's paper.'

Mr. Bertram liked to show his authority in trifles. 'No, my dear, not till to-morrow. The last time I was at quarter-sessions the sheriff told us that DIES-that dies inceptus-in short, you don't understand Latin, but it means that a term-day is not begun till it's ended.'

'That sounds like nonsense, my dear.'

'May be so, my dear; but it may be very good law for all that. I am sure, speaking of term-days, I wish, as Frank Kennedy says, that Whitsunday would kill Martinmas and be hanged for the murder; for there I have got a letter about that interest of Jenny Cairns's, and deil a tenant's been at the Place yet wi' a boddle of rent, nor will not till Candlemas. But, speaking of Frank Kennedy, I daresay he'll be here the day, for he was away round to Wigton to warn a king's ship that's lying in the bay about Dirk Hatteraick's lugger being on the coast again, and he'll be back this day; so we'll have a bottle of claret and drink little Harry's health.'

'I wish,' replied the lady, 'Frank Kennedy would let Dirk Hatteraick alane. What needs he make himself mair busy than other folk? Cannot he sing his sang, and take his drink, and draw his salary, like Collector Snail, honest man, that never fashes ony body? And I wonder at you, Laird, for meddling and making. Did we ever want to send for tea or brandy frae the borough-town when Dirk Hatteraick used to come quietly into the bay?'

'Mrs. Bertram, you know nothing of these matters. Do you think it becomes a magistrate to let his own house be made a receptacle for smuggled goods? Frank Kennedy will show you the penalties in the act, and ye ken yoursell they used to put their run goods into the Auld Place of Ellangowan up by there.'

'Oh dear, Mr. Bertram, and what the waur were the wa's and the vault o' the auld castle for having a whin kegs o' brandy in them at an orra time? I am sure ye were not obliged to ken ony thing about it; and what the waur was the King that the lairds here got a soup o' drink and the ladies their drap o' tea at a reasonable rate? – it's a shame to them to pit such taxes on them! – and was na I much the better of these Flanders head and pinners that Dirk Hatteraick sent me a' the way from Antwerp? It will be lang or the King sends me ony thing, or Frank Kennedy either. And then ye would quarrel with these gipsies too! I expect every day to hear the barnyard's in a low.'

'I tell you once more, my dear, you don't understand these things-and there's Frank Kennedy coming galloping up the avenue.'

'Aweel! aweel! Ellangowan,' said the lady, raising her voice as the Laird left the room, 'I wish ye may understand them yoursell, that's a'!'

From this nuptial dialogue the Laird joyfully escaped to meet his faithful friend, Mr. Kennedy, who arrived in high spirits. 'For the love of life, Ellangowan,' he said, 'get up to the castle! you'll see that old fox Dirk Hatteraick, and his Majesty's hounds in full cry after him.' So saying, he flung his horse's bridle to a boy, and ran up the ascent to the old castle, followed by the Laird, and indeed by several others of the family, alarmed by the sound of guns from the sea, now distinctly heard.

On gaining that part of the ruins which commanded the most extensive outlook, they saw a lugger, with all her canvass crowded, standing across the bay, closely pursued by a sloop of war, that kept firing upon the chase from her bows, which the lugger returned with her stern-chasers. 'They're but at long bowls yet,' cried Kennedy, in great exultation, 'but they will be closer by and by. D-n him, he's starting his cargo! I see the good Nantz pitching overboard, keg after keg! That's a d-d ungenteel thing of Mr. Hatteraick, as I shall let him know by and by. Now, now! they've got the wind of him! that's it, that's it! Hark to him! hark to him! Now, my dogs! now, my dogs! Hark to Ranger, hark!'

'I think,' said the old gardener to one of the maids, 'the ganger's fie,' by which word the common people express those violent spirits which they think a presage of death.

Meantime the chase continued. The lugger, being piloted with great ability, and using every nautical shift to make her escape, had now reached, and was about to double, the headland which formed the extreme point of land on the left side of the bay, when a ball having hit the yard in the slings, the mainsail fell upon the deck. The consequence of this accident appeared inevitable, but could not be seen by the spectators; for the vessel, which had just doubled the headland, lost steerage, and fell out of their sight behind the promontory. The sloop of war crowded all sail to pursue, but she had stood too close upon the cape, so that they were obliged to wear the vessel for fear of going ashore, and to make a large tack back into the bay, in order to recover sea-room enough to double the headland.

‘They ‘ll lose her, by-, cargo and lugger, one or both,’ said Kennedy; ‘I must gallop away to the Point of Warroch (this was the headland so often mentioned), and make them a signal where she has drifted to on the other side. Good-bye for an hour, Ellangowan; get out the gallon punch-bowl and plenty of lemons. I’ll stand for the French article by the time I come back, and we’ll drink the young Laird’s health in a bowl that would swim the collector’s yawl.’ So saying, he mounted his horse and galloped off.

About a mile from the house, and upon the verge of the woods, which, as we have said, covered a promontory terminating in the cape called the Point of Warroch, Kennedy met young Harry Bertram, attended by his tutor, Dominie Sampson. He had often promised the child a ride upon his galloway; and, from singing, dancing, and playing Punch for his amusement, was a particular favourite. He no sooner came scampering up the path, than the boy loudly claimed his promise; and Kennedy, who saw no risk, in indulging him, and wished to tease the Dominie, in whose visage he read a remonstrance, caught up Harry from the ground, placed him before him, and continued his route; Sampson’s ‘Peradventure, Master Kennedy-’ being lost in the clatter of his horse’s feet. The pedagogue hesitated a moment whether he should go after them; but Kennedy being a person in full confidence of the family, and with whom he himself had no delight in associating, ‘being that he was addicted unto profane and scurrilous jests,’ he continued his own walk at his own pace, till he reached the Place of Ellangowan.

The spectators from the ruined walls of the castle were still watching the sloop of war, which at length, but not without the loss of considerable time, recovered sea-room enough to weather the Point of Warroch, and was lost to their sight behind that wooded promontory. Some time afterwards the discharges of several cannon were heard at a distance, and, after an interval, a still louder explosion, as of a vessel blown up, and a cloud of smoke rose above the trees and mingled with the blue sky. All then separated on their different occasions, auguring variously upon the fate of the smuggler, but the majority insisting that her capture was inevitable, if she had not already gone to the bottom.

‘It is near our dinner-time, my dear,’ said Mrs. Bertram to her husband; ‘will it be lang before Mr. Kennedy comes back?’

‘I expect him every moment, my dear,’ said the Laird; ‘perhaps he is bringing some of the officers of the sloop with him.’

‘My stars, Mr. Bertram! why did not ye tell me this before, that we might have had the large round table? And then, they’re a’ tired o’ saut meat, and, to tell you the plain truth, a rump o’ beef is the best part of your dinner. And then I wad have put on another gown, and ye wadna have been the waur o’ a clean neck-cloth yoursell. But ye delight in surprising and hurrying one. I am sure I am no to bauld out for ever against this sort of going on; but when folk’s missed, then they are moaned.’

‘Pshaw, pshaw! deuce take the beef, and the gown, and table, and the neck-cloth! we shall do all very well. Where’s the Dominie, John? (to a servant who was busy about the table) where’s the Dominie and little Harry?’

‘Mr. Sampson’s been at hame these twa hours and mair, but I dinna think Mr. Harry cam hame wi’ him.’

‘Not come hame wi’ him?’ said the lady; ‘desire Mr. Sampson to step this way directly.’

‘Mr. Sampson,’ said she, upon his entrance, ‘is it not the most extraordinary thing in this world wide, that you, that have free up-putting-bed, board, and washing-and twelve pounds sterling a year, just to look after that boy, should let him out of your sight for two or three hours?’

Sampson made a bow of humble acknowledgment at each pause which the angry lady made in her enumeration of the advantages of his situation, in order to give more weight to her remonstrance, and then, in words which we will not do him the injustice to imitate, told how Mr. Francis Kennedy ‘had assumed spontaneously the charge of Master Harry, in despite of his remonstrances in the contrary.’

‘I am very little obliged to Mr. Francis Kennedy for his pains,’ said the lady, peevishly; ‘suppose he lets the boy drop from his horse, and lames him? or suppose one of the cannons comes ashore and kills him? or suppose-’

‘Or suppose, my dear,’ said Ellangowan, ‘what is much more likely than anything else, that they have gone aboard the sloop or the prize, and are to come round the Point with the tide?’

‘And then they may be drowned,’ said the lady.

‘Verily,’ said Sampson, ‘I thought Mr. Kennedy had returned an hour since. Of a surety I deemed I heard his horse’s feet.’

‘That,’ said John, with a broad grin, ‘was Grizzel chasing the humble-cow out of the close.’

Sampson coloured up to the eyes, not at the implied taunt, which he would never have discovered, or resented if he had, but at some idea which crossed his own mind. ‘I have been in an error,’ he said; ‘of a surety I should have tarried for the babe.’ So saying, he snatched his bone-headed cane and hat, and hurried away towards Warroch wood faster than he was ever known to walk before or after.

The Laird lingered some time, debating the point with the lady. At length he saw the sloop of war again make her appearance; but, without approaching the shore, she stood away to the westward with all her sails set, and was soon out of sight. The lady’s state of timorous and fretful apprehension was so habitual that her fears went for nothing with her lord and master; but an appearance of disturbance and anxiety among the servants now excited his alarm, especially when he was called out of the room, and told in private that Mr. Kennedy’s horse had come to the stable door alone, with the saddle turned round below its belly and the reins of the bridle broken; and that a farmer had informed them in passing that there was a smuggling lugger burning like a furnace on the other side of the Point of Warroch, and that, though he had come through the wood, he had seen or heard nothing of Kennedy or the young Laird, ‘only there was Dominie Sampson gaun rampaung about like mad, seeking for them.’

All was now bustle at Ellangowan. The Laird and his servants, male and female, hastened to the wood of Warroch. The tenants and cottagers in the neighbourhood lent their assistance, partly out of zeal, partly from curiosity. Boats were manned to search the sea-shore, which, on the other side of the Point, rose into high and indented rocks. A vague suspicion was entertained, though too horrible to be expressed, that the child might have fallen from one of these cliffs.

The evening had begun to close when the parties entered the wood, and dispersed different ways in quest of the boy and his companion. The darkening of the atmosphere, and the hoarse sighs of the November wind through the naked trees, the rustling of the withered leaves which strewed the glades, the repeated halloos of the different parties, which often drew them together in expectation of meeting the objects of their search, gave a cast of dismal sublimity to the scene.

At length, after a minute and fruitless investigation through the wood, the searchers began to draw together into one body, and to compare notes. The agony of the father grew beyond concealment, yet it scarcely equalled the anguish of the tutor. ‘Would to God I had died for him!’ the affectionate creature repeated, in notes of the deepest distress. Those who were less interested rushed into a tumultuary discussion of chances and possibilities. Each gave his opinion, and each was alternately swayed by that of the others. Some thought the objects of their search had gone aboard the sloop;

some that they had gone to a village at three miles' distance; some whispered they might have been on board the lugger, a few planks and beams of which the tide now drifted ashore.

At this instant a shout was heard from the beach, so loud, so shrill, so piercing, so different from every sound which the woods that day had rung to, that nobody hesitated a moment to believe that it conveyed tidings, and tidings of dreadful import. All hurried to the place, and, venturing without scruple upon paths which at another time they would have shuddered to look at, descended towards a cleft of the rock, where one boat's crew was already landed. 'Here, sirs, here! this way, for God's sake! this way! this way!' was the reiterated cry. Ellangowan broke through the throng which had already assembled at the fatal spot, and beheld the object of their terror. It was the dead body of Kennedy. At first sight he seemed to have perished by a fall from the rocks, which rose above the spot on which he lay in a perpendicular precipice of a hundred feet above the beach. The corpse was lying half in, half out of the water; the advancing tide, raising the arm and stirring the clothes, had given it at some distance the appearance of motion, so that those who first discovered the body thought that life remained. But every spark had been long extinguished.

'My bairn! my bairn!' cried the distracted father, 'where can he be?' A dozen mouths were opened to communicate hopes which no one felt. Some one at length mentioned the gipsies! In a moment Ellangowan had reascended the cliffs, flung himself upon the first horse he met, and rode furiously to the huts at Derncleugh. All was there dark and desolate; and, as he dismounted to make more minute search, he stumbled over fragments of furniture which had been thrown out of the cottages, and the broken wood and thatch which had been pulled down by his orders. At that moment the prophecy, or anathema, of Meg Merrilies fell heavy on his mind. 'You have stripped the thatch from seven cottages; see that the roof-tree of your own house stand the surer!'

'Restore,' he cried, 'restore my bairn! bring me back my son, and all shall be forgot and forgiven!' As he uttered these words in a sort of frenzy, his eye caught a glimmering of light in one of the dismantled cottages; it was that in which Meg Merrilies formerly resided. The light, which seemed to proceed from fire, glimmered not only through the window, but also through the rafters of the hut where the roofing had been torn off.

He flew to the place; the entrance was bolted. Despair gave the miserable father the strength of ten men; he rushed against the door with such violence that it gave way before the momentum of his weight and force. The cottage was empty, but bore marks of recent habitation: there was fire on the hearth, a kettle, and some preparation for food. As he eagerly gazed around for something that might confirm his hope that his child yet lived, although in the power of those strange people, a man entered the hut.

It was his old gardener. 'O sir!' said the old man, 'such a night as this I trusted never to live to see! ye maun come to the Place directly!'

'Is my boy found? is he alive? have ye found Harry Bertram? Andrew, have ye found Harry Bertram?'

'No, sir; but—'

'Then he is kidnapped! I am sure of it, Andrew! as sure as that I tread upon earth! She has stolen him; and I will never stir from this place till I have tidings of my bairn!'

'O, but ye maun come hame, sir! ye maun come hame! We have sent for the Sheriff, and we'll set a watch here a' night, in case the gipsies return; but YOU-ye maun come hame, sir, for my lady's in the dead-thraw.'

Bertram turned a stupefied and unmeaning eye on the messenger who uttered this calamitous news; and, repeating the words 'in the dead-thraw!' as if he could not comprehend their meaning, suffered the old man to drag him towards his horse. During the ride home he only said, 'Wife and bairn baith-mother and son baith, — sair, sair to abide!'

It is needless to dwell upon the new scene of agony which awaited him. The news of Kennedy's fate had been eagerly and incautiously communicated at Ellangowan, with the gratuitous addition,

that, doubtless, 'he had drawn the young Laird over the craig with him, though the tide had swept away the child's body; he was light, puir thing, and would flee farther into the surf.'

Mrs. Bertram heard the tidings; she was far advanced in her pregnancy; she fell into the pains of premature labour, and, ere Ellangowan had recovered his agitated faculties, so as to comprehend the full distress of his situation, he was the father of a female infant, and a widower.

CHAPTER X

*But see, his face is black and full of blood;
His eye-balls farther out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly like a strangled man,
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling,
His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued*

Henry VI, Part II

The Sheriff-depute of the county arrived at Ellangowan next morning by daybreak. To this provincial magistrate the law of Scotland assigns judicial powers of considerable extent, and the task of inquiring into all crimes committed within his jurisdiction, the apprehension and commitment of suspected persons, and so forth. [Footnote: The Scottish sheriff discharges, on such occasions as that now mentioned, pretty much the same duty as a coroner.]

The gentleman who held the office in the shire of- at the time of this catastrophe was well born and well educated; and, though somewhat pedantic and professional in his habits, he enjoyed general respect as an active and intelligent magistrate. His first employment was to examine all witnesses whose evidence could throw light upon this mysterious event, and make up the written report, proces verbal, or precognition, as it is technically called, which the practice of Scotland has substituted for a coroner's inquest. Under the Sheriff's minute and skilful inquiry, many circumstances appeared which seemed incompatible with the original opinion that Kennedy had accidentally fallen from the cliffs. We shall briefly detail some of these.

The body had been deposited in a neighbouring fisher-hut, but without altering the condition in which it was found. This was the first object of the Sheriff's examination. Though fearfully crushed and mangled by the fall from such a height, the corpse was found to exhibit a deep cut in the head, which, in the opinion of a skilful surgeon, must have been inflicted by a broadsword or cutlass. The experience of this gentleman discovered other suspicious indications. The face was much blackened, the eyes distorted, and the veins of the neck swelled. A coloured handkerchief, which the unfortunate man had worn round his neck, did not present the usual appearance, but was much loosened, and the knot displaced and dragged extremely tight; the folds were also compressed, as if it had been used as a means of grappling the deceased, and dragging him perhaps to the precipice.

On the other hand, poor Kennedy's purse was found untouched; and, what seemed yet more extraordinary, the pistols which he usually carried when about to encounter any hazardous adventure were found in his pockets loaded. This appeared particularly strange, for he was known and dreaded by the contraband traders as a man equally fearless and dexterous in the use of his weapons, of which he had given many signal proofs. The Sheriff inquired whether Kennedy was not in the practice of carrying any other arms? Most of Mr. Bertram's servants recollected that he generally had a couteau de chasse, or short hanger, but none such was found upon the dead body; nor could those who had seen him on the morning of the fatal day take it upon them to assert whether he then carried that weapon or not.

The corpse afforded no other indicia respecting the fate of Kennedy; for, though the clothes were much displaced and the limbs dreadfully fractured, the one seemed the probable, the other the certain, consequences of such a fall. The hands of the deceased were clenched fast, and full of turf and earth; but this also seemed equivocal.

The magistrate then proceeded to the place where the corpse was first discovered, and made those who had found it give, upon the spot, a particular and detailed account of the manner in which

it was lying. A large fragment of the rock appeared to have accompanied, or followed, the fall of the victim from the cliff above. It was of so solid and compact a substance that it had fallen without any great diminution by splintering; so that the Sheriff was enabled, first, to estimate the weight by measurement, and then to calculate, from the appearance of the fragment, what portion of it had been bedded into the cliff from which it had descended. This was easily detected by the raw appearance of the stone where it had not been exposed to the atmosphere. They then ascended the cliff, and surveyed the place from whence the stony fragment had fallen. It seemed plain, from the appearance of the bed, that the mere weight of one man standing upon the projecting part of the fragment, supposing it in its original situation, could not have destroyed its balance and precipitated it, with himself, from the cliff. At the same time, it appeared to have lain so loose that the use of a lever, or the combined strength of three or four men, might easily have hurled it from its position. The short turf about the brink of the precipice was much trampled, as if stamped by the heels of men in a mortal struggle, or in the act of some violent exertion. Traces of the same kind, less visibly marked, guided the sagacious investigator to the verge of the copsewood, which in that place crept high up the bank towards the top of the precipice.

With patience and perseverance they traced these marks into the thickest part of the copse, a route which no person would have voluntarily adopted, unless for the purpose of concealment. Here they found plain vestiges of violence and struggling, from space to space. Small boughs were torn down, as if grasped by some resisting wretch who was dragged forcibly along; the ground, where in the least degree soft or marshy, showed the print of many feet; there were vestiges also which might be those of human blood. At any rate it was certain that several persons must have forced their passage among the oaks, hazels, and underwood with which they were mingled; and in some places appeared traces as if a sack full of grain, a dead body, or something of that heavy and solid description, had been dragged along the ground. In one part of the thicket there was a small swamp, the clay of which was whitish, being probably mixed with marl. The back of Kennedy's coat appeared besmeared with stains of the same colour.

At length, about a quarter of a mile from the brink of the fatal precipice, the traces conducted them to a small open space of ground, very much trampled, and plainly stained with blood, although withered leaves had been strewn upon the spot, and other means hastily taken to efface the marks, which seemed obviously to have been derived from a desperate affray. On one side of this patch of open ground was found the sufferer's naked hanger, which seemed to have been thrown into the thicket; on the other, the belt and sheath, which appeared to have been hidden with more leisurely care and precaution.

The magistrate caused the footprints which marked this spot to be carefully measured and examined. Some corresponded to the foot of the unhappy victim; some were larger, some less; indicating that at least four or five men had been busy around him. Above all, here, and here only, were observed the vestiges of a child's foot; and as it could be seen nowhere else, and the hard horse-track which traversed the wood of Warroch was contiguous to the spot, it was natural to think that the boy might have escaped in that direction during the confusion. But, as he was never heard of, the Sheriff, who made a careful entry of all these memoranda, did not suppress his opinion, that the deceased had met with foul play, and that the murderers, whoever they were, had possessed themselves of the person of the child Harry Bertram.

Every exertion was now made to discover the criminals. Suspicion hesitated between the smugglers and the gipsies. The fate of Dirk Hatteraick's vessel was certain. Two men from the opposite side of Warroch Bay (so the inlet on the southern side of the Point of Warroch is called) had seen, though at a great distance, the lugger drive eastward, after doubling the headland, and, as they judged from her manoeuvres, in a disabled state. Shortly after, they perceived that she grounded, smoked, and finally took fire. She was, as one of them expressed himself, 'in a light low' (bright flame) when they observed a king's ship, with her colours up, heave in sight from behind the cape.

The guns of the burning vessel discharged themselves as the fire reached them; and they saw her at length blow up with a great explosion. The sloop of war kept aloof for her own safety; and, after hovering till the other exploded, stood away southward under a press of sail. The Sheriff anxiously interrogated these men whether any boats had left the vessel. They could not say, they had seen none; but they might have put off in such a direction as placed the burning vessel, and the thick smoke which floated landward from it, between their course and the witnesses' observation.

That the ship destroyed was Dirk Hatteraick's no one doubted. His lugger was well known on the coast, and had been expected just at this time. A letter from the commander of the king's sloop, to whom the Sheriff made application, put the matter beyond doubt; he sent also an extract from his log-book of the transactions of the day, which intimated their being on the outlook for a smuggling lugger, Dirk Hatteraick master, upon the information and requisition of Francis Kennedy, of his Majesty's excise service; and that Kennedy was to be upon the outlook on the shore, in case Hatteraick, who was known to be a desperate fellow, and had been repeatedly outlawed, should attempt to run his sloop aground. About nine o'clock A.M. they discovered a sail which answered the description of Hatteraick's vessel, chased her, and, after repeated signals to her to show colours and bring-to, fired upon her. The chase then showed Hamburgh colours and returned the fire; and a running fight was maintained for three hours, when, just as the lugger was doubling the Point of Warroch, they observed that the main-yard was shot in the slings, and that the vessel was disabled. It was not in the power of the man-of-war's men for some time to profit by this circumstance, owing to their having kept too much in shore for doubling the headland. After two tacks, they accomplished this, and observed the chase on fire and apparently deserted. The fire having reached some casks of spirits, which were placed on the deck, with other combustibles, probably on purpose, burnt with such fury that no boats durst approach the vessel, especially as her shotted guns were discharging one after another by the heat. The captain had no doubt whatever that the crew had set the vessel on fire and escaped in their boats. After watching the conflagration till the ship blew up, his Majesty's sloop, the Shark, stood towards the Isle of Man, with the purpose of intercepting the retreat of the smugglers, who, though they might conceal themselves in the woods for a day or two, would probably take the first opportunity of endeavouring to make for this asylum. But they never saw more of them than is above narrated.

Such was the account given by William Pritchard, master and commander of his Majesty's sloop of war, Shark, who concluded by regretting deeply that he had not had the happiness to fall in with the scoundrels who had had the impudence to fire on his Majesty's flag, and with an assurance that, should he meet Mr. Dirk Hatteraick in any future cruise, he would not fail to bring him into port under his stern, to answer whatever might be alleged against him.

As, therefore, it seemed tolerably certain that the men on board the lugger had escaped, the death of Kennedy, if he fell in with them in the woods, when irritated by the loss of their vessel and by the share he had in it, was easily to be accounted for. And it was not improbable that to such brutal tempers, rendered desperate by their own circumstances, even the murder of the child, against whose father, as having become suddenly active in the prosecution of smugglers, Hatteraick was known to have uttered deep threats, would not appear a very heinous crime.

Against this hypothesis it was urged that a crew of fifteen or twenty men could not have lain hidden upon the coast, when so close a search took place immediately after the destruction of their vessel; or, at least, that if they had hid themselves in the woods, their boats must have been seen on the beach; that in such precarious circumstances, and when all retreat must have seemed difficult if not impossible, it was not to be thought that they would have all united to commit a useless murder for the mere sake of revenge. Those who held this opinion supposed either that the boats of the lugger had stood out to sea without being observed by those who were intent upon gazing at the burning vessel, and so gained safe distance before the sloop got round the headland; or else that, the boats being staved or destroyed by the fire of the Shark during the chase, the crew had obstinately determined to perish with the vessel. What gave some countenance to this supposed act of desperation was, that

neither Dirk Hatteraick nor any of his sailors, all well-known men in the fair trade, were again seen upon that coast, or heard of in the Isle of Man, where strict inquiry was made. On the other hand, only one dead body, apparently that of a seaman killed by a cannon-shot, drifted ashore. So all that could be done was to register the names, description, and appearance of the individuals belonging to the ship's company, and offer a reward for the apprehension of them, or any one of them, extending also to any person, not the actual murderer, who should give evidence tending to convict those who had murdered Francis Kennedy.

Another opinion, which was also plausibly supported, went to charge this horrid crime upon the late tenants of Derncleugh. They were known to have resented highly the conduct of the Laird of Ellangowan towards them, and to have used threatening expressions, which every one supposed them capable of carrying into effect. The kidnapping the child was a crime much more consistent with their habits than with those of smugglers, and his temporary guardian might have fallen in an attempt to protect him. Besides, it was remembered that Kennedy had been an active agent, two or three days before, in the forcible expulsion of these people from Derncleugh, and that harsh and menacing language had been exchanged between him and some of the Egyptian patriarchs on that memorable occasion.

The Sheriff received also the depositions of the unfortunate father and his servant, concerning what had passed at their meeting the caravan of gipsies as they left the estate of Ellangowan. The speech of Meg Merrilies seemed particularly suspicious. There was, as the magistrate observed in his law language, *damnum minatum*-a damage, or evil turn, threatened-and *malum secutum*-an evil of the very kind predicted shortly afterwards following. A young woman, who had been gathering nuts in Warroch wood upon the fatal day, was also strongly of opinion, though she declined to make positive oath, that she had seen Meg Merrilies-at least a woman of her remarkable size and appearance-start suddenly out of a thicket; she said she had called to her by name, but, as the figure turned from her and made no answer, she was uncertain if it were the gipsy or her wraith, and was afraid to go nearer to one who was always reckoned, in the vulgar phrase, 'no canny.' This vague story received some corroboration from the circumstance of a fire being that evening found in the gipsy's deserted cottage. To this fact Ellangowan and his gardener bore evidence. Yet it seemed extravagant to suppose that, had this woman been accessory to such a dreadful crime, she would have returned, that very evening on which it was committed, to the place of all others where she was most likely to be sought after.

Meg Merrilies was, however, apprehended and examined. She denied strongly having been either at Derncleugh or in the wood of Warroch upon the day of Kennedy's death; and several of her tribe made oath in her behalf, that she had never quitted their encampment, which was in a glen about ten miles distant from Ellangowan. Their oaths were indeed little to be trusted to; but what other evidence could be had in the circumstances? There was one remarkable fact, and only one, which arose from her examination. Her arm appeared to be slightly wounded by the cut of a sharp weapon, and was tied up with a handkerchief of Harry Bertram's. But the chief of the horde acknowledged he had 'corrected her' that day with his whinger; she herself, and others, gave the same account of her hurt; and for the handkerchief, the quantity of linen stolen from Ellangowan during the last months of their residence on the estate easily accounted for it, without charging Meg with a more heinous crime.

It was observed upon her examination that she treated the questions respecting the death of Kennedy, or 'the gauger,' as she called him, with indifference; but expressed great and emphatic scorn and indignation at being supposed capable of injuring little Harry Bertram. She was long confined in jail, under the hope that something might yet be discovered to throw light upon this dark and bloody transaction. Nothing, however, occurred; and Meg was at length liberated, but under sentence of banishment from the county as a vagrant, common thief, and disorderly person. No traces of the boy could ever be discovered; and at length the story, after making much noise, was gradually given up as altogether inexplicable, and only perpetuated by the name of 'The Gauger's Loup,' which was generally bestowed on the cliff from which the unfortunate man had fallen or been precipitated.

CHAPTER XI

ENTER TIME, AS CHORUS

*I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror
Of good and bad; that make and unfold error,
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings Impute it not a crime
To me, or my swift passage, that I slide
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap.*

Winter's Tale.

Our narration is now about to make a large stride, and omit a space of nearly seventeen years; during which nothing occurred of any particular consequence with respect to the story we have undertaken to tell. The gap is a wide one; yet if the reader's experience in life enables him to look back on so many years, the space will scarce appear longer in his recollection than the time consumed in turning these pages.

It was, then, in the month of November, about seventeen years after the catastrophe related in the last chapter, that, during a cold and stormy night, a social group had closed around the kitchen-fire of the Gordon Arms at Kippletringan, a small but comfortable inn kept by Mrs. Mac-Candlish in that village. The conversation which passed among them will save me the trouble of telling the few events occurring during this chasm in our history, with which it is necessary that the reader should be acquainted.

Mrs. Mac-Candlish, throned in a comfortable easychair lined with black leather, was regaling herself and a neighbouring gossip or two with a cup of genuine tea, and at the same time keeping a sharp eye upon her domestics, as they went and came in prosecution of their various duties and commissions. The clerk and precentor of the parish enjoyed at a little distance his Saturday night's pipe, and aided its bland fumigation by an occasional sip of brandy and water. Deacon Bearcliff, a man of great importance in the village, combined the indulgence of both parties: he had his pipe and his tea-cup, the latter being laced with a little spirits. One or two clowns sat at some distance, drinking their twopenny ale.

'Are ye sure the parlour's ready for them, and the fire burning clear, and the chimney no smoking?' said the hostess to a chambermaid.

She was answered in the affirmative. 'Ane wadna be uncivil to them, especially in their distress,' said she, turning to the Deacon.

'Assuredly not, Mrs. Mac-Candlish; assuredly not. I am sure ony sma' thing they might want frae my shop, under seven, or eight, or ten pounds, I would book them as readily for it as the first in the country. Do they come in the auld chaise?'

'I daresay no,' said the precentor; 'for Miss Bertram comes on the white powny ilka day to the kirk-and a constant kirk-keeper she is-and it's a pleasure to hear her singing the psalms, winsome young thing.'

'Ay, and the young Laird of Hazlewood rides hame half the road wi' her after sermon,' said one of the gossips in company. 'I wonder how auld Hazlewood likes that.'

'I kenna how he may like it now,' answered another of the tea-drinkers; 'but the day has been when Ellangowan wad hae liked as little to see his daughter taking up with their son.'

'Ay, has been,' answered the first, with somewhat of emphasis.

'I am sure, neighbour Ovens,' said the hostess, 'the Hazlewoods of Hazlewood, though they are a very gude auld family in the county, never thought, till within these twa score o' years, of evening themselves till the Ellangowans. Wow, woman, the Bertrams of Ellangowan are the auld Dingawaies lang syne. There is a sang about ane o' them marrying a daughter of the King of Man; it begins-

Blythe Bertram's ta'en him ower the faem,
To wed a wife, and bring her hame-

I daur say Mr. Skreigh can sing us the ballant.'

'Gudewife,' said Skreigh, gathering up his mouth, and sipping his tiff of brandy punch with great solemnity, 'our talents were gien us to other use than to sing daft auld sangs sae near the Sabbath day.'

'Hout fie, Mr. Skreigh; I'se warrant I hae heard you sing a blythe sang on Saturday at e'en before now. But as for the chaise, Deacon, it hasna been out of the coach-house since Mrs. Bertram died, that's sixteen or seventeen years sin syne. Jock Jabos is away wi' a chaise of mine for them; I wonder he's no come back. It's pit mirk; but there's no an ill turn on the road but twa, and the brigg ower Warroch burn is safe enough, if he haud to the right side. But then there's Heavieside Brae, that's just a murder for post-cattle; but Jock kens the road brawly.'

A loud rapping was heard at the door.

'That's no them. I dinna hear the wheels. Grizzel, ye limmer, gang to the door.'

'It's a single gentleman,' whined out Grizzel; 'maun I take him into the parlour?'

'Foul be in your feet, then; it'll be some English rider. Coming without a servant at this time o' night! Has the hostler ta'en the horse? Ye may light a spunk o' fire in the red room.'

'I wish, ma'am,' said the traveller, entering the kitchen, 'you would give me leave to warm myself here, for the night is very cold.'

His appearance, voice, and manner produced an instantaneous effect in his favour. He was a handsome, tall, thin figure, dressed in black, as appeared when he laid aside his riding-coat; his age might be between forty and fifty; his cast of features grave and interesting, and his air somewhat military. Every point of his appearance and address bespoke the gentleman. Long habit had given Mrs. Mac-Candlish an acute tact in ascertaining the quality of her visitors, and proportioning her reception accordingly: -

To every guest the appropriate speech was made,
And every duty with distinction paid;
Respectful, easy, pleasant, or polite-
'Your honour's servant!' 'Mister Smith, good-night.'

On the present occasion she was low in her courtesy and profuse in her apologies. The stranger begged his horse might be attended to: she went out herself to school the hostler.

'There was never a prettier bit o' horse-flesh in the stable o' the Gordon Arms,' said the man, which information increased the landlady's respect for the rider. Finding, on her return, that the stranger declined to go into another apartment (which, indeed, she allowed, would be but cold and smoky till the fire bleezed up), she installed her guest hospitably by the fireside, and offered what refreshment her house afforded.

'A cup of your tea, ma'am, if you will favour me.'

Mrs. Mac-Candlish bustled about, reinforced her teapot with hyson, and proceeded in her duties with her best grace. 'We have a very nice parlour, sir, and everything very agreeable for gentlefolks; but it's bespoke the night for a gentleman and his daughter that are going to leave this part of the country; ane of my chaises is gane for them, and will be back forthwith. They're no sae weel in the

world as they have been; but we're a' subject to ups and downs in this life, as your honour must needs ken, – but is not the tobacco-reek disagreeable to your honour?

'By no means, ma'am; I am an old campaigner, and perfectly used to it. Will you permit me to make some inquiries about a family in this neighbourhood?'

The sound of wheels was now heard, and the landlady hurried to the door to receive her expected guests; but returned in an instant, followed by the postilion. 'No, they canna come at no rate, the Laird's sae ill.'

'But God help them,' said the landlady, 'the morn's the term, the very last day they can bide in the house; a' thing's to be roupit.'

'Weel, but they can come at no rate, I tell ye; Mr. Bertram canna be moved.'

'What Mr. Bertram?' said the stranger; 'not Mr. Bertram of Ellangowan, I hope?'

'Just e'en that same, sir; and if ye be a friend o' his, ye have come at a time when he's sair bested.'

'I have been abroad for many years, – is his health so much deranged?'

'Ay, and his affairs an' a', said the Deacon; 'the creditors have entered into possession o' the estate, and it's for sale; and some that made the maist by him-I name nae names, but Mrs. Mac-Candlish kens wha I mean (the landlady shook her head significantly) – they're sairest on him e'en now. I have a sma' matter due myself, but I would rather have lost it than gane to turn the auld man out of his house, and him just dying.'

'Ay, but,' said the parish clerk, 'Factor Glossin wants to get rid of the auld Laird, and drive on the sale, for fear the heir-male should cast up upon them; for I have heard say, if there was an heir-male they couldna sell the estate for auld Ellangowan's debt.'

'He had a son born a good many years ago,' said the stranger; 'he is dead, I suppose?'

'Nae man can say for that,' answered the clerk mysteriously.

'Dead!' said the Deacon, 'I'se warrant him dead lang syne; he hasna been heard o' these twenty years or thereby.'

'I wot weel it's no twenty years,' said the landlady; 'it's no abune seventeen at the outside in this very month. It made an unco noise ower a' this country; the bairn disappeared the very day that Supervisor Kennedy cam by his end. If ye kenn'd this country lang syne, your honour wad maybe ken Frank Kennedy the Supervisor. He was a heartsome pleasant man, and company for the best gentlemen in the county, and muckle mirth he's made in this house. I was young then, sir, and newly married to Bailie Mac-Candlish, that's dead and gone (a sigh); and muckle fun I've had wi' the Supervisor. He was a daft dog. O, an he could hae hauden aff the smugglers a bit! but he was aye venturesome. And so ye see, sir, there was a king's sloop down in Wigton Bay, and Frank Kennedy, he behoved to have her up to chase Dirk Hatteraick's lugger-ye'll mind Dirk Hatteraick, Deacon? I daresay ye may have dealt wi' him-(the Deacon gave a sort of acquiescent nod and humph). He was a daring chield, and he fought his ship till she blew up like peelings of ingans; and Frank Kennedy, he had been the first man to board, and he was flung like a quarter of a mile off, and fell into the water below the rock at Warroch Point, that they ca' the Gauger's Loup to this day.'

'And Mr. Bertram's child,' said the stranger, 'what is all this to him?'

'Ou, sir, the bairn aye held an unco wark wi' the Supervisor; and it was generally thought he went on board the vessel alang wi' him, as bairns are aye forward to be in mischief.'

'No, no,' said the Deacon, 'ye're clean out there, Luckie; for the young Laird was stown away by a randy gipsy woman they ca'd Meg Merrilies-I mind her looks weel-in revenge for Ellangowan having gar'd her be drumm'd through Kippletringan for stealing a silver spoon.'

'If ye'll forgieme, Deacon,' said the precentor, 'ye're e'en as far wrang as the gudewife.'

'And what is your edition of the story, sir?' said the stranger, turning to him with interest.

'That's maybe no sae canny to tell,' said the precentor, with solemnity.

Upon being urged, however, to speak out, he preluded with two or three large puffs of tobacco-smoke, and out of the cloudy sanctuary which these whiffs formed around him delivered the following

legend, having cleared his voice with one or two hems, and imitating, as near as he could, the eloquence which weekly thundered over his head from the pulpit.

‘What we are now to deliver, my brethren, – hem-hem, – I mean, my good friends, – was not done in a corner, and may serve as an answer to witch-advocates, atheists, and misbelievers of all kinds. Ye must know that the worshipful Laird of Ellangowan was not so preceese as he might have been in clearing his land of witches (concerning whom it is said, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”), nor of those who had familiar spirits, and consulted with divination, and sorcery, and lots, which is the fashion with the Egyptians, as they ca’ themselfs, and other unhappy bodies, in this our country. And the Laird was three years married without having a family; and he was sae left to himsell, that it was thought he held ower muckle troking and communing wi’ that Meg Merrilies, wha was the maist notorious witch in a’ Galloway and Dumfries-shire baith.’

‘Aweel, I wot there’s something in that,’ said Mrs. Mac-Candlish; ‘I’ve kenn’d him order her twa glasses o’ brandy in this very house.’

‘Aweel, gudewife, then the less I lee. Sae the lady was wi’ bairn at last, and in the night when she should have been delivered there comes to the door of the ha’ house-the Place of Ellangowan as they ca’d-an ancient man, strangely habited, and asked for quarters. His head, and his legs, and his arms were bare, although it was winter time o’ the year, and he had a grey beard three-quarters lang. Weel, he was admitted; and when the lady was delivered, he craved to know the very moment of the hour of the birth, and he went out and consulted the stars. And when he came back he tell’d the Laird that the Evil One wad have power over the knave-bairn that was that night born, and he charged him that the babe should be bred up in the ways of piety, and that he should aye hae a godly minister at his elbow to pray WI’ the bairn and FOR him. And the aged man vanished away, and no man of this country ever saw mair o’ him.’

‘Now, that will not pass,’ said the postilion, who, at a respectful distance, was listening to the conversation, ‘begging Mr. Skreigh’s and the company’s pardon; there was no sae mony hairs on the warlock’s face as there’s on Letter-Gae’s [Footnote: The precentor is called by Allan Ramsay, The letter-gae of haly rhyme.] ain at this moment, and he had as gude a pair o’ boots as a man need streik on his legs, and gloves too; and I should understand boots by this time, I think.’

‘Whisht, Jock,’ said the landlady.

‘Ay? and what do YE ken o’ the matter, friend Jabos?’ said the precentor, contemptuously.

‘No muckle, to be sure, Mr. Skreigh, only that I lived within a penny-stane cast o’ the head o’ the avenue at Ellangowan, when a man cam jingling to our door that night the young Laird was born, and my mother sent me, that was a hafflin callant, to show the stranger the gate to the Place, which, if he had been sic a warlock, he might hae kenn’d himsell, ane wad think; and he was a young, weel-faured, weel-dressed lad, like an Englishman. And I tell ye he had as gude a hat, and boots, and gloves, as ony gentleman need to have. To be sure he DID gie an awesome glance up at the auld castle, and there WAS some spae-wark gaed on, I aye heard that; but as for his vanishing, I held the stirrup mysell when he gaed away, and he gied me a round half-crown. He was riding on a haick they ca’d Souple Sam, it belanged to the George at Dumfries; it was a blood-bay beast, very ill o’ the spavin; I hae seen the beast baith before and since.’

‘Aweel, aweel, Jock,’ answered Mr. Skreigh, with a tone of mild solemnity, ‘our accounts differ in no material particulars; but I had no knowledge that ye had seen the man. So ye see, my friends, that this soothsayer having prognosticated evil to the boy, his father engaged a godly minister to be with him morn and night.’

‘Ay, that was him they ca’d Dominie Sampson,’ said the postilion.

‘He’s but a dumb dog that,’ observed the Deacon; ‘I have heard that he never could preach five words of a sermon endlang, for as lang as he has been licensed.’

‘Weel, but,’ said the precentor, waving his hand, as if eager to retrieve the command of the discourse, ‘he waited on the young Laird by night and day. Now it chanced, when the bairn was near

five years auld, that the Laird had a sight of his errors, and determined to put these Egyptians aff his ground, and he caused them to remove; and that Frank Kennedy, that was a rough, swearing fellow, he was sent to turn them off. And he cursed and damned at them, and they swure at him; and that Meg Merrilies, that was the maist powerfu' with the Enemy of Mankind, she as gude as said she would have him, body and soul, before three days were ower his head. And I have it from a sure hand, and that's ane wha saw it, and that's John Wilson, that was the Laird's groom, that Meg appeared to the Laird as he was riding hame from Singleside, over Gibbie's know, and threatened him wi' what she wad do to his family; but whether it was Meg, or something waur in her likeness, for it seemed bigger than ony mortal creature, John could not say.'

'Aweel,' said the postilion, 'it might be sae, I canna say against it, for I was not in the country at the time; but John Wilson was a blustering kind of chield, without the heart of a sprug.'

'And what was the end of all this?' said the stranger, with some impatience.

'Ou, the event and upshot of it was, sir,' said the precentor, 'that while they were all looking on, beholding a king's ship chase a smuggler, this Kennedy suddenly brake away frae them without ony reason that could be descried-ropes nor tows wad not hae held him-and made for the wood of Warroch as fast as his beast could carry him; and by the way he met the young Laird and his governor, and he snatched up the bairn, and swure, if HE was bewitched, the bairn should have the same luck as him; and the minister followed as fast as he could, and almaist as fast as them, for he was wonderfully swift of foot, and he saw Meg the witch, or her master in her similitude, rise suddenly out of the ground, and claught the bairn suddenly out of the ganger's arms; and then he rampaged and drew his sword, for ye ken a fie man and a cusser fearsna the deil.'

'I believe that's very true,' said the postilion.

'So, sir, she grippit him, and clodded him like a stane from the sling ower the craigs of Warroch Head, where he was found that evening; but what became of the babe, frankly I cannot say. But he that was minister here then, that's now in a better place, had an opinion that the bairn was only conveyed to fairy-land for a season.'

The stranger had smiled slightly at some parts of this recital, but ere he could answer the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and a smart servant, handsomely dressed, with a cockade in his hat, bustled into the kitchen, with 'Make a little room, good people'; when, observing the stranger, he descended at once into the modest and civil domestic, his hat sunk down by his side, and he put a letter into his master's hands. 'The family at Ellangowan, sir, are in great distress, and unable to receive any visits.'

'I know it,' replied his master. 'And now, madam, if you will have the goodness to allow me to occupy the parlour you mentioned, as you are disappointed of your guests-'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mrs. Mac-Candlish, and hastened to light the way with all the imperative bustle which an active landlady loves to display on such occasions.

'Young man,' said the Deacon to the servant, filling a glass, 'ye'll no be the waur o' this, after your ride.'

'Not a feather, sir; thank ye, your very good health, sir.'

'And wha may your master be, friend?'

'What, the gentleman that was here? that's the famous Colonel Mannering, sir, from the East Indies.'

'What, him we read of in the newspapers?'

'Ay, ay, just the same. It was he relieved Cuddieburn, and defended Chingalore, and defeated the great Mahratta chief, Ram Jolli Bundleman. I was with him in most of his campaigns.'

'Lord safe us,' said the landlady; 'I must go see what he would have for supper; that I should set him down here!'

'O, he likes that all the better, mother. You never saw a plainer creature in your life than our old Colonel; and yet he has a spice of the devil in him too.'

The rest of the evening's conversation below stairs tending little to edification, we shall, with the reader's leave, step up to the parlour.

CHAPTER XII

*Reputation! that's man's idol
Set up against God, the Maker of all laws,
Who hath commanded us we should not kill,
And yet we say we must, for Reputation!
What honest man can either fear his own,
Or else will hurt another's reputation?
Fear to do base unworthy things is valour;
If they be done to us, to suffer them
Is valour too.*

BEN JONSON.

The Colonel was walking pensively up and down the parlour when the officious landlady reentered to take his commands. Having given them in the manner he thought would be most acceptable 'for the good of the house,' he begged to detain her a moment.

'I think,' he said, 'madam, if I understood the good people right, Mr. Bertram lost his son in his fifth year?'

'O ay, sir, there's nae doubt o' that, though there are mony idle clashes about the way and manner, for it's an auld story now, and everybody tells it, as we were doing, their ain way by the ingleside. But lost the bairn was in his fifth year, as your honour says, Colonel; and the news being rashly tell'd to the leddy, then great with child, cost her her life that samyn night; and the Laird never throve after that day, but was just careless of everything, though, when his daughter Miss Lucy grew up, she tried to keep order within doors; but what could she do, poor thing? So now they're out of house and hault.'

'Can you recollect, madam, about what time of the year the child was lost?' The landlady, after a pause and some recollection, answered, 'she was positive it was about this season'; and added some local recollections that fixed the date in her memory as occurring about the beginning of November 17-.

The stranger took two or three turns round the room in silence, but signed to Mrs. Mac-Candlish not to leave it.

'Did I rightly apprehend,' he said, 'that the estate of Ellangowan is in the market?'

'In the market? It will be sell'd the morn to the highest bidder-that's no the morn, Lord help me! which is the Sabbath, but on Monday, the first free day; and the furniture and stocking is to be roupit at the same time on the ground. It's the opinion of the haill country that the sale has been shamefully forced on at this time, when there's sae little money stirring in Scotland wi' this weary American war, that somebody may get the land a bargain. Deil be in them, that I should say sae!'-the good lady's wrath rising at the supposed injustice.

'And where will the sale take place?'

'On the premises, as the advertisement says; that's at the house of Ellangowan, your honour, as I understand it.'

'And who exhibits the title-deeds, rent-roll, and plan?'

'A very decent man, sir; the sheriff-substitute of the county, who has authority from the Court of Session. He's in the town just now, if your honour would like to see him; and he can tell you mair about the loss of the bairn than ony body, for the sheriff-depute (that's his principal, like) took much pains to come at the truth o' that matter, as I have heard.'

'And this gentleman's name is-'

‘Mac-Morlan, sir; he’s a man o’ character, and weel spoken o’.’

‘Send my compliments-Colonel Mannering’s compliments to him, and I would be glad he would do me the pleasure of supping with me, and bring these papers with him; and I beg, good madam, you will say nothing of this to any one else.’

‘Me, sir? ne’er a word shall I say. I wish your honour (a courtesy), or ony honourable gentleman that’s fought for his country (another courtesy), had the land, since the auld family maun quit (a sigh), rather than that wily scoundrel Glossin, that’s risen on the ruin of the best friend he ever had. And now I think on’t, I’ll slip on my hood and pattens, and gang to Mr. Mac-Morlan mysell, he’s at hame e’en now; it’s hardly a step.’

‘Do so, my good landlady, and many thanks; and bid my servant step here with my portfolio in the meantime.’

In a minute or two Colonel Mannering was quietly seated with his writing materials before him. We have the privilege of looking over his shoulder as he writes, and we willingly communicate its substance to our readers. The letter was addressed to Arthur Mervyn, Esq., of Mervyn Hall, Llanbraithwaite, Westmoreland. It contained some account of the writer’s previous journey since parting with him, and then proceeded as follows: -

‘And now, why will you still upbraid me with my melancholy, Mervyn? Do you think, after the lapse of twenty-five years, battles, wounds, imprisonment, misfortunes of every description, I can be still the same lively, unbroken Guy Mannering who climbed Skiddaw with you, or shot grouse upon Crossfell? That you, who have remained in the bosom of domestic happiness, experience little change, that your step is as light and your fancy as full of sunshine, is a blessed effect of health and temperament, cooperating with content and a smooth current down the course of life. But MY career has been one of difficulties and doubts and errors. From my infancy I have been the sport of accident, and, though the wind has often borne me into harbour, it has seldom been into that which the pilot destined. Let me recall to you-but the task must be brief-the odd and wayward fates of my youth, and the misfortunes of my manhood.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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