

**ВАЛЬТЕР
СКОТТ**

THE
SURGEON'S
DAUGHTER

Вальтер Скотт

The Surgeon's Daughter

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Walter Scott

The Surgeon's Daughter

INTRODUCTION. – (1831.)

The tale of the Surgeon's Daughter formed part of the second series of Chronicles of the Canongate, published in 1827; but has been separated from the stories of the Highland Widow, &c., which it originally accompanied, and deferred to the close of this collection, for reasons which printers and publishers will understand, and which would hardly interest the general reader.

The Author has nothing to say now in reference to this little Novel, but that the principal incident on which it turns, was narrated to him one morning at breakfast by his worthy friend, Mr. Train, of Castle Douglas, in Galloway, whose kind assistance he has so often had occasion to acknowledge in the course of these prefaces; and that the military friend who is alluded to as having furnished him with some information as to Eastern matters, was Colonel James Ferguson of Huntly Burn, one of the sons of the venerable historian and philosopher of that name – which name he took the liberty of concealing under its Gaelic form of *Mac-Erries*.

Abbotsford, *September* 1831.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

[Mr. Train was requested by Sir Walter Scott to give him in writing the story as nearly as possible in the shape in which he had told it; but the following narrative, which he drew up accordingly, did not reach Abbotsford until July 1832]

In the old Stock of Fife, there was not perhaps an individual whose exertions were followed by consequences of such a remarkable nature as those of Davie Duff, popularly called “The Thane of Fife,” who, from a very humble parentage, rose to fill one of the chairs of the magistracy of his native burgh. By industry and economy in early life, he obtained the means of erecting, solely on his own account, one of those ingenious manufactories for which Fifeshire is justly celebrated. From the day on which the industrious artisan first took his seat at the Council Board, he attended so much to the interests of the little privileged community, that civic honours were conferred on him as rapidly as the Set of the Royalty [Footnote: The Constitution of the Borough.] could legally admit.

To have the right of walking to church on holy-days, preceded by a phalanx of halberdiers, in habiliments fashioned as in former times, seems, in the eyes of many a guild brother, to be a very enviable pitch of worldly grandeur. Few persons were ever more proud of civic honours than the Thane of Fife, but he knew well how to turn his political influence to the best account. The council, court, and other business of the burgh, occupied much of his time, which caused him to intrust the management of his manufactory to a near relation, whose name was D – , a young man of dissolute habits; but the Thane, seeing at last, that by continuing that extravagant person in that charge, his affairs would, in all probability, fall into a state of bankruptcy, applied to the member of Parliament for that district to obtain a situation for his relation in the civil department of the state. The knight, whom it is here unnecessary to name, knowing how effectually the Thane ruled the little burgh, applied in the proper quarter, and actually obtained an appointment for D – in the civil service of the East India Company.

A respectable surgeon, whose residence was in a neighbouring village, had a beautiful daughter named Emma, who had long been courted by D – . Immediately before his departure to India, as a mark of mutual affection, they exchanged miniatures, taken by an eminent artist in Fife, and each set in a locket, for the purpose of having the object of affection always in view.

The eyes of the old Thane were now turned towards Hindostan with much anxiety; but his relation had not long arrived in that distant quarter of the globe before he had the satisfaction of receiving a letter, conveying the welcome intelligence of his having taken possession of his new station in a large frontier town of the Company's dominions, and that great emoluments were attached to the situation; which was confirmed by several subsequent communications of the most gratifying description to the old Thane, who took great pleasure in spreading the news of the reformed habits and singular good fortune of his intended heir. None of all his former acquaintances heard with such joy the favourable report of the successful adventurer in the East, as did the fair and accomplished daughter of the village surgeon; but his previous character caused her to keep her own correspondence with him secret from her parents, to whom even the circumstance of her being acquainted with D – was wholly unknown, till her father received a letter from him, in which he assured him of his attachment to Emma long before his departure from Fife; that having been so happy as to gain her affections, he would have made her his wife before leaving his native country, had he then had the means of supporting her in a suitable rank through life; and that, having it now in his power to do so, he only waited the consent of her parents to fulfil the vow he had formerly made.

The Doctor having a large family, with a very limited income to support them, and understanding that D – had at last become a person of sober and industrious habits, he gave his consent, in which Emma's mother fully concurred.

Aware of the straitened circumstances of the Doctor, D – remitted a sum of money to complete at Edinburgh Emma's Oriental education, and fit her out in her journey to India; she was to embark at Sheerness, on board one of the Company's ships, for a port in India, at which place, he said, he would wait her arrival, with a retinue suited to a person of his rank in society.

Emma set out from her father's house just in time to secure a passage, as proposed by her intended husband, accompanied by her only brother, who, on their arrival at Sheerness, met one C – , an old schoolfellow, captain of the ship by which Emma was to proceed to India.

It was the particular desire of the Doctor that his daughter should be committed to the care of that gentleman, from the time of her leaving the shores of Britain, till the intended marriage ceremony was duly performed on her arrival in India; a charge that was frankly undertaken by the generous sea-captain.

On the arrival of the fleet at the appointed port, D – , with a large cavalcade of mounted Pindarees, was, as expected, in attendance, ready to salute Emma on landing, and to carry her direct into the interior of the country. C – , who had made several voyages to the shores of Hindostan, knowing something of Hindoo manners and customs, was surprised to see a private individual in the Company's service with so many attendants; and when D – declined having the marriage ceremony performed according to the rites of the Church, till he returned to the place of his abode, C – , more and more confirmed in his suspicion that all was not right, resolved not to part with Emma till he had fulfilled, in the most satisfactory manner, the promise he had made before leaving England, of giving her duly away in marriage. Not being able by her entreaties to alter the resolution of D – , Emma solicited her protector C – to accompany her to the place of her intended destination, to which he most readily agreed, taking with him as many of his crew as he deemed sufficient to ensure the safe custody of his innocent protegee, should any attempt be made to carry her away by force.

Both parties journeyed onwards till they arrived at a frontier town, where a native Rajah was waiting the arrival of the fair maid of Fife, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, from seeing her miniature likeness in the possession of D – , to whom he had paid a large sum of money for the original, and had only intrusted him to convey her in state to the seat of his government.

No sooner was this villanous action of D – known to C – , than he communicated the whole particulars to the commanding officer of a regiment of Scotch Highlanders that happened to be quartered in that part of India, begging at the same time, for the honour of Caledonia, and protection of injured innocence, that he would use the means in his power, of resisting any attempt that might be made by the native chief to wrest from their hands the virtuous female who had been so shamefully decoyed from her native country by the worst of mankind. Honour occupies too large a space in the heart of the Gael to resist such a call of humanity.

The Rajah, finding his claim was not to be acceded to, and resolving to enforce the same, assembled his troops, and attacked with great fury the place where the affrighted Emma was for a time secured by her countrymen, who fought in her defence with all their native valour, which at length so overpowered their assailants, that they were forced to retire in every direction, leaving behind many of their slain, among whom was found the mangled corpse of the perfidious D – .

C – was immediately afterwards married to Emma, and my informant assured me he saw them many years afterwards, living happily together in the county of Kent, on the fortune bequeathed by the "Thane of Fife."

J. T

CASTLE DOUGLAS, July, 1832.

MR. CROFTANGRY'S PREFACE

Indite, my muse indite,
Subpoena'd is thy lyre,
The praises to requite
Which rules of court require.

PROBATIONARY ODES.

The concluding a literary undertaking, in whole or in part, is, to the inexperienced at least, attended with an irritating titillation, like that which attends on the healing of a wound – a prurient impatience, in short, to know what the world in general, and friends in particular, will say to our labours. Some authors, I am told, profess an oyster-like indifference upon this subject; for my own part, I hardly believe in their sincerity. Others may acquire it from habit; but, in my poor opinion, a neophyte like myself must be for a long time incapable of such *sang froid*.

Frankly, I was ashamed to feel how childish I felt on the occasion. No person could have said prettier things than myself upon the importance of stoicism concerning the opinion of others, when their applause or censure refers to literary character only; and I had determined to lay my work before the public, with the same unconcern with which the ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, giving herself no farther trouble concerning the incubation, but leaving to the atmosphere to bring forth the young, or otherwise, as the climate shall serve. But though an ostrich in theory, I became in practice a poor hen, who has no sooner made her deposit, but she runs cackling about, to call the attention of every one to the wonderful work which she has performed.

As soon as I became possessed of my first volume, neatly stitched up and boarded, my sense of the necessity of communicating with some one became ungovernable. Janet was inexorable, and seemed already to have tired of my literary confidence; for whenever I drew near the subject, after evading it as long as she could, she made, under some pretext or other, a bodily retreat to the kitchen or the cockloft, her own peculiar and inviolate domains. My publisher would have been a natural resource; but he understands his business too well, and follows it too closely, to desire to enter into literary discussions, wisely considering, that he who has to sell books has seldom leisure to read them. Then my acquaintance, now that I have lost Mrs. Bethune Baliol, are of that distant and accidental kind, to whom I had not face enough to communicate the nature of my uneasiness, and who probably would only have laughed at me had I made any attempt to interest them in my labours.

Reduced thus to a sort of despair, I thought of my friend and man of business, Mr. Fairscribe. His habits, it was true, were not likely to render him indulgent to light literature, and, indeed, I had more than once noticed his daughters, and especially my little songstress, whip into her reticule what looked very like a circulating library volume, as soon as her father entered the room. Still he was not only my assured, but almost my only friend, and I had little doubt that he would take an interest in the volume for the sake of the author, which the work itself might fail to inspire. I sent him, therefore, the book, carefully sealed up, with an intimation that I requested the favour of his opinion upon the contents, of which I affected to talk in the depreciatory style, which calls for point-blank contradiction, if your correspondent possess a grain of civility.

This communication took place on a Monday, and I daily expected (what I was ashamed to anticipate by volunteering my presence, however sure of a welcome) an invitation to eat an egg, as was my friend's favourite phrase, or a card to drink tea with Misses Fairscribe, or a provocation to breakfast, at least, with my hospitable friend and benefactor, and to talk over the contents of my enclosure. But the hours and days passed on from Monday till Saturday, and I had no acknowledgment whatever that my packet had reached its destination. "This is very unlike my

good friend's punctuality," thought I; and having again and again vexed James, my male attendant, by a close examination concerning the time, place, and delivery, I had only to strain my imagination to conceive reasons for my friend's silence. Sometimes I thought that his opinion of the work had proved so unfavourable that he was averse to hurt my feelings by communicating it – sometimes, that, escaping his hands to whom it was destined, it had found its way into his writing-chamber, and was become the subject of criticism to his smart clerks and conceited apprentices. "Sdeath!" thought I, "if I were sure of this, I would" —

"And what would you do?" said Reason, after a few moment's reflection. "You are ambitious of introducing your book into every writing and reading-chamber in Edinburgh, and yet you take fire at the thoughts of its being criticised by Mr. Fairscribe's young people? Be a little consistent – for shame!"

"I will be consistent," said I, doggedly; "but for all that, I will call on Mr. Fairscribe this evening."

I hastened my dinner, donned my great-coat (for the evening threatened rain,) and went to Mr. Fairscribe's house. The old domestic opened the door cautiously, and before I asked the question, said, "Mr. Fairscribe is at home, sir; but it is Sunday night." Recognising, however, my face and voice, he opened the door wider, admitted me, and conducted me to the parlour, where I found Mr. Fairscribe and the rest of his family engaged in listening to a sermon by the late Mr. Walker of Edinburgh, [Footnote: Robert Walker, the colleague and rival of Dr. Hugh Blair, in St. Giles's Church Edinburgh] which was read by Miss Catherine with unusual distinctness, simplicity, and judgment. Welcomed as a friend of the house, I had nothing for it but to take my seat quietly, and making a virtue of necessity, endeavour to derive my share of the benefit arising from an excellent sermon. But I am afraid Mr. Walker's force of logic and precision of expression were somewhat lost upon me. I was sensible I had chosen an improper time to disturb Mr. Fairscribe, and when the discourse was ended, I rose to take my leave, somewhat hastily, I believe. "A cup of tea, Mr. Croftangry?" said the young lady. "You will wait and take part of a Presbyterian supper?" said Mr. Fairscribe. – "Nine o'clock – I make it a point of keeping my father's hours on Sunday at e'en. Perhaps Dr. – (naming an excellent clergyman) may look in."

I made my apology for declining his invitation; and I fancy my unexpected appearance, and hasty retreat, had rather surprised my friend, since, instead of accompanying me to the door, he conducted me into his own apartment.

"What is the matter," he said, "Mr. Croftangry? This is not a night for secular business, but if any thing sudden or extraordinary has happened" —

"Nothing in the world," said I, forcing myself upon confession, as the best way of clearing myself out of the scrape, – "only – only I sent you a little parcel, and as you are so regular in acknowledging letters and communications, I – I thought it might have miscarried – that's all."

My friend laughed heartily, as if he saw into and enjoyed my motives and my confusion. "Safe? – it came safe enough," he said. "The wind of the world always blows its vanities into haven. But this is the end of the session, when I have little time to read any thing printed except Inner-House papers; yet if you will take your kail with us next Saturday, I will glance over your work, though I am sure I am no competent judge of such matters."

With this promise I was fain to take my leave, not without half persuading myself that if once the phlegmatic lawyer began my lucubrations, he would not be able to rise from them till he had finished the perusal, nor to endure an interval betwixt his reading the last page, and requesting an interview with the author.

No such marks of impatience displayed themselves. Time, blunt or keen, as my friend Joanna says, swift or leisurely, held his course; and on the appointed Saturday, I was at the door precisely as it struck four. The dinner hour, indeed, was five punctually; but what did I know but my friend might want half an hour's conversation with me before that time? I was ushered into an empty drawing-

room, and, from a needle-book and work-basket hastily abandoned, I had some reason to think I interrupted my little friend, Miss Katie, in some domestic labour more praiseworthy than elegant. In this critical age, filial piety must hide herself in a closet, if she has a mind to darn her father's linen.

Shortly after, I was the more fully convinced that I had been too early an intruder when a wench came to fetch away the basket, and recommend to my courtesies a red and green gentleman in a cage, who answered all my advances by croaking out, "You're a fool – you're a fool, I tell you!" until, upon my word, I began to think the creature was in the right. At last my friend arrived, a little overheated. He had been taking a turn at golf, to prepare him for "colloquy sublime." And wherefore not? since the game, with its variety of odds, lengths, bunkers, tee'd balls, and so on, may be no inadequate representation of the hazards attending literary pursuits. In particular, those formidable buffets, which make one ball spin through the air like a rifle-shot, and strike another down into the very earth it is placed upon, by the mal-adroitness, or the malicious purpose of the player – what are they but parallels to the favourable or depreciating notices of the reviewers, who play at golf with the publications of the season, even as Altisidora, in her approach to the gates of the infernal regions, saw the devils playing at racket with the new books of Cervantes' days.

Well, every hour has its end. Five o'clock came, and my friend, with his daughters, and his handsome young son, who, though fairly buckled to the desk, is every now and then looking over his shoulder at a smart uniform, set seriously about satisfying the corporeal wants of nature; I, stimulated by a nobler appetite after fame, wished that the touch of a magic wand could, without all the ceremony of picking and choosing, carving and slicing, masticating and swallowing, have transported a *quantum sufficit* of the good things on my friend's hospitable board, into the stomachs of those who surrounded it, to be there at leisure converted into chyle, while their thoughts were turned on higher matters. At length all was over. But the young ladies sat still, and talked of the music of the Freischutz, for nothing else was then thought of; so we discussed the wild hunter's song, and the tame hunter's song, &c. &c., in all which my young friends were quite at home. Luckily for me, all this horning and hooping drew on some allusion to the Seventh Hussars, which gallant regiment, I observe, is a more favourite theme with both Miss Catherine and her brother than with my old friend, who presently looked at his watch, and said something significantly to Mr. James about office hours. The youth got up with the ease of a youngster that would be thought a man of fashion rather than of business, and endeavoured, with some success, to walk out of the room, as if the locomotion was entirely voluntary; Miss Catherine and her sisters left us at the same time, and now, thought I, my trial comes on.

Reader, did you ever, in the course of your life, cheat the courts of justice and lawyers, by agreeing to refer a dubious and important question to the decision of a mutual friend? If so, you may have remarked the relative change which the arbiter undergoes in your estimation, when raised, though by your own free choice, from an ordinary acquaintance, whose opinions were of as little consequence to you as yours to him, into a superior personage, on whose decision your fate must depend *pro tanto*, as my friend Mr. Fairscribe would say. His looks assume a mysterious if not a minatory expression; his hat has a loftier air, and his wig, if he wears one, a more formidable buckle.

I felt, accordingly, that my good friend Fairscribe, on the present occasion, had acquired something of a similar increase of consequence. But a week since, he had, in my opinion, been indeed an excellent-meaning man, perfectly competent to every thing within his own profession, but immured, at the same time, among its forms and technicalities, and as incapable of judging of matters of taste as any mighty Goth whatsoever, of or belonging to the ancient Senate-House of Scotland. But what of that? I had made him my judge by my own election; and I have often observed, that an idea of declining such a reference, on account of his own consciousness of incompetency, is, as it perhaps ought to be, the last which occurs to the referee himself. He that has a literary work subjected to his judgment by the author, immediately throws his mind into a critical attitude, though the subject be one which he never before thought of. No doubt the author is well qualified to select his own judge, and why should the arbiter whom he has chosen doubt his own talents for condemnation or acquittal, since

he has been doubtless picked out by his friend, from his indubitable reliance on their competence? Surely, the man who wrote the production is likely to know the person best qualified to judge of it.

Whilst these thoughts crossed my brain, I kept my eyes fixed on my good friend, whose motions appeared unusually tardy to me, while he ordered a bottle of particular claret, decanted it with scrupulous accuracy with his own hand, caused his old domestic to bring a saucer of olives, and chips of toasted bread, and thus, on hospitable thoughts intent, seemed to me to adjourn the discussion which I longed to bring on, yet feared to precipitate.

“He is dissatisfied,” thought I, “and is ashamed to show it, afraid doubtless of hurting my feelings. What had I to do to talk to him about any thing save charters and sasines? – Stay, he is going to begin.”

“We are old fellows now, Mr. Croftangry,” said my landlord; “scarcely so fit to take a poor quart of claret between us, as we would have been in better days to take a pint, in the old Scottish liberal acceptation of the phrase. Maybe you would have liked me to have kept James to help us. But if it is not a holyday or so, I think it is best he should observe office hours.”

Here the discourse was about to fall. I relieved it by saying, Mr. James was at the happy time of life, when he had better things to do than to sit over the bottle. “I suppose,” said I, “your son is a reader.”

“Um – yes – James may be called a reader in a sense; but I doubt there is little solid in his studies – poetry and plays, Mr. Croftangry, all nonsense – they set his head a-gadding after the army, when he should be minding his business.”

“I suppose, then, that romances do not find much more grace in your eyes than dramatic and poetical compositions?”

“Deil a bit, deil a bit, Mr. Croftangry, nor historical productions either. There is too much fighting in history, as if men only were brought into this world to send one another out of it. It nourishes false notions of our being, and chief and proper end, Mr. Croftangry.”

Still all this was general, and I became determined to bring our discourse to a focus. “I am afraid, then, I have done very ill to trouble you with my idle manuscripts, Mr. Fairscribe; but you must do me the justice to remember, that I had nothing better to do than to amuse myself by writing the sheets I put into your hands the other day. I may truly plead —

‘I left no calling for this idle trade.’”

“I cry your mercy, Mr. Croftangry,” said my old friend, suddenly recollecting – “yes, yes, I have been very rude; but I had forgotten entirely that you had taken a spell yourself at that idle man’s trade.”

“I suppose,” replied I, “you, on your side, have been too *busy* a man to look at my poor Chronicles?”

“No, no,” said my friend, “I am not so bad as that neither. I have read them bit by bit, just as I could get a moment’s time, and I believe, I shall very soon get through them.”

“Well, my good friend?” said I, interrogatively.

And “*Well*, Mr. Croftangry,” cried he, “I really think you have got over the ground very tolerably well. I have noted down here two or three bits of things, which I presume to be errors of the press, otherwise it might be alleged, perhaps, that you did not fully pay that attention to the grammatical rules, which one would desire to see rigidly observed.”

I looked at my friend’s notes, which, in fact, showed, that in one or two grossly obvious passages, I had left uncorrected such solecisms in grammar.

“Well, well, I own my fault; but, setting apart these casual errors, how do you like the matter and the manner of what I have been writing, Mr. Fairscribe?”

“Why,” said my friend, pausing, with more grave and important hesitation than I thanked him for, “there is not much to be said against the manner. The style is terse and intelligible, Mr. Croftangry,

very intelligible; and that I consider as the first point in every thing that is intended to be understood. There are, indeed, here and there some flights and fancies, which I comprehended with difficulty; but I got to your meaning at last. There are people that are like ponies; their judgments cannot go fast, but they go sure."

"That is a pretty clear proposition, my friend; but then how did you like the meaning when you did get at it? or was that like some ponies, too difficult to catch, and, when caught, not worth the trouble?"

"I am far from saying that, my dear sir, in respect it would be downright uncivil; but since you ask my opinion, I wish you could have thought about something more appertaining to civil policy, than all this bloody work about shooting and dirking, and downright hanging. I am told it was the Germans who first brought in such a practice of choosing their heroes out of the Porteous Roll; [Footnote: List of criminal indictments, so termed in Scotland.] but, by my faith, we are like to be upsides with them. The first was, as I am credibly informed, Mr. Scholar, as they call him; a scholar-like piece of work he has made of it, with his robbers and thieves."

"Schiller," said I, "my dear sir, let it be Schiller."

"Schiller, or what you like," said Mr. Fairscribe; "I found the book where I wish I had found a better one, and that is, in Kate's work-basket. I sat down, and, like an old fool, began to read; but there, I grant, you have the better of Schiller, Mr. Croftangry."

"I should be glad, my dear sir, that you really think I have *approached* that admirable author; even your friendly partiality ought not to talk of my having *excelled* him."

"But I do say you have excelled him, Mr. Croftangry, in a most material particular. For surely a book of amusement should be something that one can take up and lay down at pleasure; and I can say justly, I was never at the least loss to put aside these sheets of yours when business came in the way. But, faith, this Schiller, sir, does not let you off so easily. I forgot one appointment on particular business, and I wilfully broke through another, that I might stay at home and finish his confounded book, which, after all, is about two brothers, the greatest rascals I ever heard of. The one, sir, goes near to murder his own father, and the other (which you would think still stranger) sets about to debauch his own wife."

"I find, then, Mr. Fairscribe, that you have no taste for the romance of real life – no pleasure in contemplating those spirit-rousing impulses, which force men of fiery passions upon great crimes and great virtues?"

"Why, as to that, I am not just so sure. But then to mend the matter," continued the critic, "you have brought in Highlanders into every story, as if you were going back again, *velis et remis*, into the old days of Jacobitism. I must speak my plain mind, Mr. Croftangry. I cannot tell what innovations in Kirk and State may now be proposed, but our fathers were friends to both, as they were settled at the glorious Revolution, and liked a tartan plaid as little as they did a white surplice. I wish to Heaven, all this tartan fever bode well to the Protestant succession and the Kirk of Scotland."

"Both too well settled, I hope, in the minds of the subject," said I, "to be affected by old remembrances, on which we look back as on the portraits of our ancestors, without recollecting, while we gaze on them, any of the feuds by which the originals were animated while alive. But most happy should I be to light upon any topic to supply the place of the Highlands, Mr. Fairscribe. I have been just reflecting that the theme is becoming a little exhausted, and your experience may perhaps supply" —

"Ha, ha, ha! —*my* experience supply!" interrupted Mr. Fairscribe, with a laugh of derision; — "why, you might as well ask my son James's experience to supply a case" about thirlage. No, no, my good friend, I have lived by the law, and in the law, all my life; and when you seek the impulses that make soldiers desert and shoot their sergeants and corporals, and Highland drovers dirk English graziers, to prove themselves men of fiery passions, it is not to a man like me you should come. I could tell you some tricks of my own trade, perhaps, and a queer story or two of estates that have

been lost and recovered. But, to tell you the truth, I think you might do with your Muse of Fiction, as you call her, as many an honest man does with his own sons in flesh and blood.”

“And how is that, my dear sir?”

“Send her to India, to be sure. That is the true place for a Scot to thrive in; and if you carry your story fifty years back, as there is nothing to hinder you, you will find as much shooting and stabbing there as ever was in the wild Highlands. If you want rogues, as they are so much in fashion with you, you have that gallant caste of adventurers, who laid down their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope as they went out to India, and forgot to take them up again when they returned. Then, for great exploits, you have in the old history of India, before Europeans were numerous there, the most wonderful deeds, done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford.”

“I know it,” said I, kindling at the ideas his speech inspired. “I remember in the delightful pages of Orme, the interest which mingles in his narratives, from the very small number of English which are engaged. Each officer of a regiment becomes known to you by name, nay, the non-commissioned officers and privates acquire an individual share of interest. They are distinguished among the natives like the Spaniards among the Mexicans. What do I say? They are like Homer’s demigods among the warring mortals. Men, like Clive and Caillaud, influenced great events, like Jove himself. Inferior officers are like Mars or Neptune; and the sergeants and corporals might well pass for demigods. Then the various religious costumes, habits, and manners of the people of Hindustan, – the patient Hindhu, the warlike Rajahpoot, the haughty Moslemah, the savage and vindictive Malay – Glorious and unbounded subjects! The only objection is, that I have never been there, and know nothing at all about them.”

“Nonsense, my good friend. You will tell us about them all the better that you know nothing of what you are saying; and come, we’ll finish the bottle, and when Katie (her sisters go to the assembly) has given us tea, she will tell you the outline of the story of poor Menie Gray, whose picture you will see in the drawing-room, a distant relation of my father’s, who had, however, a handsome part of cousin Menie’s succession. There are none living that can be hurt by the story now, though it was thought best to smother it up at the time, as indeed even the whispers about it led poor cousin Menie to live very retired. I mind her well when a child. There was something very gentle, but rather tiresome, about poor cousin Menie.”

When we came into the drawing-room, my friend pointed to a picture which I had before noticed, without, however, its having attracted more than a passing look; now I regarded it with more attention. It was one of those portraits of the middle of the eighteenth century, in which artists endeavoured to conquer the stiffness of hoops and brocades; by throwing a fancy drapery around the figure, with loose folds like a mantle or dressing gown, the stays, however, being retained, and the bosom displayed in a manner which shows that our mothers, like their daughters, were as liberal of their charms as the nature of the dress might permit. To this, the well-known style of the period, the features and form of the individual added, at first sight, little interest. It represented a handsome woman of about thirty, her hair wound simply about her head, her features regular, and her complexion fair. But on looking more closely, especially after having had a hint that the original had been the heroine of a tale, I could observe a melancholy sweetness in the countenance that seemed to speak of woes endured, and injuries sustained, with that resignation which women can and do sometimes display under the insults and ingratitude of those on whom they have bestowed their affections.

“Yes, she was an excellent and an ill-used woman,” said Mr. Fairscribe, his eye fixed like mine on the picture – “She left our family not less, I dare say, than five thousand pounds, and I believe she died worth four times that sum; but it was divided among the nearest of kin, which was all fair.”

“But her history, Mr. Fairscribe,” said I – “to judge from her look, it must have been a melancholy one.”

“You may say that, Mr. Croftangry. Melancholy enough, and extraordinary enough too – But,” added he, swallowing in haste a cup of the tea which was presented to him, “I must away to my business – we cannot be gowfling all the morning, and telling old stories all the afternoon. Katie knows all the outs and the ins of cousin Menie’s adventures as well as I do, and when she has given you the particulars, then I am at your service, to condescend more articulately upon dates or particulars.”

Well, here was I, a gay old bachelor, left to hear a love tale from my young friend Katie Fairscribe, who, when she is not surrounded by a bevy of gallants, at which time, to my thinking, she shows less to advantage, is as pretty, well-behaved, and unaffected a girl as you see tripping the new walks of Prince’s Street or Heriot Row. Old bachelorship so decided as mine has its privileges in such a *tete-a-tete*, providing you are, or can seem for the time, perfectly good-humoured and attentive, and do not ape the manners of your younger years, in attempting which you will only make yourself ridiculous. I don’t pretend to be so indifferent to the company of a pretty young woman as was desired by the poet, who wished to sit beside his mistress —

– “As unconcern’d as when
Her infant beauty could beget
Nor happiness nor pain.”

On the contrary, I can look on beauty and innocence, as something of which I know and esteem the value, without the desire or hope to make them my own. A young lady can afford to talk with an old stager like me without either artifice or affectation; and we may maintain a species of friendship, the more tender, perhaps, because we are of different sexes, yet with which that distinction has very little to do.

Now, I hear my wisest and most critical neighbour remark, “Mr. Croftangry is in the way of doing a foolish thing, He is well to pass – Old Fairscribe knows to a penny what he is worth, and Miss Katie, with all her airs, may like the old brass that buys the new pan. I thought Mr. Croftangry was looking very cadgy when he came in to play a rubber with us last night. Poor gentleman, I am sure I should be sorry to see him make a fool of himself.”

Spare your compassion, dear madam, there is not the least danger. The *beaux yeux de ma casette* are not brilliant enough to make amends for the spectacles which must supply the dimness of my own. I am a little deaf, too, as you know to your sorrow when we are partners; and if I could get a nymph to marry me with all these imperfections, who the deuce would marry Janet McEvoy? and from Janet McEvoy Chrystal Croftangry will not part.

Miss Katie Fairscribe gave me the tale of Menie Gray with much taste and simplicity, not attempting to suppress the feelings, whether of grief or resentment, which justly and naturally arose from the circumstances of the tale. Her father afterwards confirmed the principal outlines of the story, and furnished me with some additional circumstances, which Miss Katie had suppressed or forgotten. Indeed, I have learned on this occasion, what old Lintot meant when he told Pope, that he used to propitiate the critics of importance, when he had a work in the press, by now and then letting them see a sheet of the blotted proof, or a few leaves of the original manuscript. Our mystery of authorship has something about it so fascinating, that if you admit any one, however little he may previously have been disposed to such studies, into your confidence, you will find that he considers himself as a party interested, and, if success follows, will think himself entitled to no inconsiderable share of the praise.

The reader has seen that no one could have been naturally less interested than was my excellent friend Fairscribe in my lucubrations, when I first consulted him on the subject; but since he has contributed a subject to the work, he has become a most zealous coadjutor; and half-ashamed, I believe, yet half-proud of the literary stock-company, in which he has got a share, he never meets

me without jogging my elbow, and dropping some mysterious hints, as, “I am saying – when will you give us any more of yon?” – or, “Yon’s not a bad narrative – I like yon.”

Pray Heaven the reader may be of his opinion.

THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER. CHAPTER THE FIRST

When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
And hovering Death prepared the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show;
In Misery's darkest caverns known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die;
No summons mock'd by cold delay,
No petty gains disclaim'd by pride,
The modest wants of every day
The toil of every day supplied.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

The exquisitely beautiful portrait which the Rambler has painted of his friend Levett, well describes Gideon Gray, and many other village doctors, from whom Scotland reaps more benefit, and to whom she is perhaps more ungrateful than to any other class of men, excepting her schoolmasters.

Such a rural man of medicine is usually the inhabitant of some pretty borough or village, which forms the central point of his practice. But, besides attending to such cases as the village may afford, he is day and night at the service of every one who may command his assistance within a circle of forty miles in diameter, untraversed by roads in many directions, and including moors, mountains, rivers, and lakes. For late and dangerous journeys through an inaccessible country for services of the most essential kind, rendered at the expense, or risk at least, of his own health and life, the Scottish village doctor receives at best a very moderate recompense, often one which is totally inadequate, and very frequently none whatever. He has none of the ample resources proper to the brothers of the profession in an English town. The burgesses of a Scottish borough are rendered, by their limited means of luxury, inaccessible to gout, surfeits, and all the comfortable chronic diseases which are attendant on wealth and indolence. Four years, or so, of abstemiousness, enable them to stand an election dinner; and there is no hope of broken heads among a score or two of quiet electors, who settle the business over a table. There the mothers of the state never make a point of pouring, in the course of every revolving year, a certain quantity of doctor's stuff through the bowels of their beloved children. Every old woman, from the Townhead to the Townfit, can prescribe a dose of salts, or spread a plaster; and it is only when a fever or a palsy renders matters serious, that the assistance of the doctor is invoked by his neighbours in the borough.

But still the man of science cannot complain of inactivity or want of practice. If he does not find patients at his door, he seeks them through a wide circle. Like the ghostly lover of Burger's Leonora, he mounts at midnight and traverses in darkness, paths which, to those less accustomed to them, seem formidable in daylight, through straits where the slightest aberration would plunge him into a morass, or throw him over a precipice, on to cabins which his horse might ride over without knowing they lay in his way, unless he happened to fall through the roofs. When he arrives at such a stately termination of his journey, where his services are required, either to bring a wretch into the world, or prevent one from leaving it, the scene of misery is often such, that, far from touching the hard-saved shillings which are gratefully offered to him, he bestows his medicines as well as his

attendance – for charity. I have heard the celebrated traveller Mungo Park, who had experienced both courses of life, rather give the preference to travelling as a discoverer in Africa, than to wandering by night and day the wilds of his native land in the capacity of a country medical practitioner. He mentioned having once upon a time rode forty miles, sat up all night, and successfully assisted a woman under influence of the primitive curse, for which his sole remuneration was a roasted potato and a draught of buttermilk. But his was not the heart which grudged the labour that relieved human misery. In short, there is no creature in Scotland that works harder and is more poorly requited than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable, in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition; and so you will often find in his master, under an unpromising and blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science.

Mr. Gideon Gray, surgeon in the village of Middlemas, situated in one of the midland counties of Scotland, led the rough, active, and ill-rewarded course of life which we have endeavoured to describe. He was a man between forty and fifty, devoted to his profession, and of such reputation in the medical world, that he had been more than once, as opportunities occurred, advised to exchange Middlemas and its meagre circle of practice, for some of the larger towns in Scotland, or for Edinburgh itself. This advice he had always declined. He was a plain blunt man, who did not love restraint, and was unwilling to subject himself to that which was exacted in polite society. He had not himself found out, nor had any friend hinted to him, that a slight touch of the cynic, in manner and habits, gives the physician, to the common eye, an air of authority which greatly tends to enlarge his reputation. Mr. Gray, or, as the country people called him, Doctor Gray, (he might hold the title by diploma for what I know, though he only claimed the rank of Master of Arts,) had few wants, and these were amply supplied by a professional income which generally approached two hundred pounds a year, for which, upon an average, he travelled about five thousand miles on horseback in the course of the twelve months. Nay, so liberally did this revenue support himself and his ponies, called Pestle and Mortar, which he exercised alternately, that he took a damsel to share it, Jean Watson, namely, the cherry-cheeked daughter of an honest farmer, who being herself one of twelve children who had been brought up on an income of fourscore pounds a year, never thought there could be poverty in more than double the sum; and looked on Gray, though now termed by irreverent youth the Old Doctor, as a very advantageous match. For several years they had no children, and it seemed as if Doctor Gray, who had so often assisted the efforts of the goddess Lucina, was never to invoke her in his own behalf. Yet his domestic roof was, on a remarkable occasion, decreed to be the scene where the goddess's art was required.

Late of an autumn evening three old women might be observed plying their aged limbs through the single street of the village at Middlemas towards the honoured door, which, fenced off from the vulgar causeway, was defended by a broken paling, enclosing two slips of ground, half arable, half overrun with an abortive attempt at shrubbery. The door itself was blazoned with the name of Gideon Gray, M. A. Surgeon, &c. &c. Some of the idle young fellows, who had been a minute or two before loitering at the other end of the street before the door of the alehouse, (for the pretended inn deserved no better name,) now accompanied the old dames with shouts of laughter, excited by their unwonted agility; and with bets on the winner, as loudly expressed as if they had been laid at the starting post of Middlemas races. "Half a mutchkin on Luckie Simson!" – "Auld Peg Tamson against the field!" – "Mair speed, Alison Jaup, ye'll tak the wind out of them yet!" – "Canny against the hill, lasses, or we may have a burstern auld earline amang ye!" These, and a thousand such gibes, rent the air, without being noticed, or even heard, by the anxious racers, whose object of contention seemed to be, which should first reach the Doctor's door.

"Guide us, Doctor, what can be the matter now?" said Mrs. Gray, whose character was that of a good-natured simpleton; "Here's Peg Tamson, Jean Simson, and Alison Jaup, running a race on the hie street of the burgh!"

The Doctor, who had but the moment before hung his wet great-coat before the fire, (for he was just dismounted from a long journey,) hastened down stairs, arguing some new occasion for his services, and happy, that, from, the character of the messengers, it was likely to be within burgh, and not landward.

He had just reached the door as Luckie Simson, one of the racers, arrived in the little area before it. She had got the start, and kept it, but at the expense, for the time, of her power of utterance; for when she came in presence of the Doctor, she stood blowing like a grampus, her loose toy flying back from her face, making the most violent effort to speak, but without the power of uttering a single intelligible word. Peg Thompson whipped in before her.

“The ledly, sir, the ledly!”

“Instant help, instant help!” – screeched rather than uttered, Alison Jaup; while Luckie Simson, who had certainly won the race, found words to claim the prize which had set them all in motion.

“And I hope, sir, you will recommend me to be the sick-nurse; I was here to bring you the tidings lang before ony o’ thae lazy queans.”

Loud were the counter-protestations of the two competitors, and loud the laugh of the idle loons who listened at a little distance.

“Hold your tongue, ye flyting fools,” said the Doctor; “and you, ye idle rascals, if I come out among you.” So saying, he smacked his long-lashed whip with great emphasis, producing much the effect of the celebrated *Quos ego* of Neptune in the first Aeneid. – “And now,” said the Doctor, “where, or who, is this lady?”

The question was scarce necessary; for a plain carriage, with four horses, came at a foot’s pace towards the door of the Doctor’s house, and the old women, now more at their ease, gave the Doctor to understand, that the gentleman thought the accommodation of the Swan Inn totally unfit for his lady’s rank and condition, and had, by their advice, (each claiming the merit of the suggestion,) brought her here, to experience the hospitality of the *west room*; – a spare apartment, in which Doctor Gray occasionally accommodated such patients, as he desired to keep for a space of time under his own eye.

There were two persons only in the vehicle. The one, a gentleman in a riding dress, sprung out, and having received from the Doctor an assurance that the lady would receive tolerable accommodation in his house, he lent assistance to his companion to leave the carriage, and with great apparent satisfaction, saw her safely deposited in a decent sleeping apartment, and under the respectable charge of the Doctor and his lady, who assured him once more of every species of attention. To bind their promise more firmly, the stranger slipped a purse of twenty guineas (for this story chanced in the golden age) into the hand of the Doctor, as an earnest of the most liberal recompense, and requested he would spare no expense in providing all that was necessary or desirable for a person in the lady’s condition, and for the helpless being to whom she might immediately be expected to give birth. He then said he would retire to the inn, where he begged a message might instantly acquaint him with the expected change in the lady’s situation.

“She is of rank,” he said, “and a foreigner; let no expense be spared. We designed to have reached Edinburgh, but were forced to turn off the road by an accident.” Once more he said, “Let no expense be spared, and manage that she may travel as soon as possible.”

“That,” said the Doctor, “is past my control. Nature must not be hurried, and she avenges herself of every attempt to do so.”

“But art,” said the stranger, “can do much,” and he proffered a second purse, which seemed as heavy as the first.

“Art,” said the Doctor, “may be recompensed, but cannot be purchased. You have already paid me more than enough to take the utmost care I can of your lady; should I accept more money, it could only be for promising, by implication at least, what is beyond my power to perform. Every possible care shall be taken of your lady, and that affords the best chance of her being speedily able to travel.

Now, go you to the inn, sir, for I may be instantly wanted, and we have not yet provided either an attendant for the lady, or a nurse for the child; but both shall be presently done.”

“Yet a moment, Doctor – what languages do you understand?”

“Latin and French I can speak indifferently, and so as to be understood; and I read a little Italian.”

“But no Portuguese or Spanish?” continued the stranger.

“No, sir.”

“That is unlucky. But you may make her understand you by means of French. Take notice, you are to comply with her request in everything – if you want means to do so, you may apply to me.”

“May I ask, sir, by what name the lady is to be” —

“It is totally indifferent,” said the stranger, interrupting the question; “You shall know it at more leisure.”

So saying, he threw his ample cloak about him, turning himself half round to assist the operation, with an air which the Doctor would have found it difficult to imitate, and walked down the street to the little inn. Here he paid and dismissed the postilions, and shut himself up in an apartment, ordering no one to be admitted till the Doctor should call.

The Doctor, when he returned to his patient’s apartment, found his wife in great surprise, which, as is usual with persons of her character, was not unmixed with fear and anxiety.

“She cannot speak a word like a Christian being,” said Mrs. Gray.

“I know it,” said the Doctor.

“But she threeps to keep on a black fause-face, and skirls if we offer to take it away.”

“Well then, let her wear it – What harm will it do?”

“Harm, Doctor!” Was ever honest woman brought to bed with a fause-face on?”

“Seldom, perhaps. But, Jean, my dear, those who are not quite honest must be brought to bed all the same as those who are, and we are not to endanger the poor thing’s life by contradicting her whims at present.”

Approaching the sick woman’s bed, he observed that she indeed wore a thin silk mask, of the kind which do such uncommon service in the elder comedy; such as women of rank still wore in travelling, but certainly never in the situation of this poor lady. It would seem she had sustained importunity on the subject, for when she saw the Doctor, she put her hand to her face, as if she was afraid he would insist on pulling off the vizard.

He hastened to say, in tolerable French, that her will should be a law to them in every respect, and that she was at perfect liberty to wear the mask till it was her pleasure to lay it aside. She understood him; for she replied, by a very imperfect attempt, in the same language, to express her gratitude for the permission, as she seemed to regard it, of retaining her disguise.

The Doctor proceeded to other arrangements; and, for the satisfaction of those readers who may love minute information, we record, that Luckie Simson, the first in the race, carried as a prize the situation of sick-nurse beside the delicate patient; that Peg Thomson was permitted the privilege of recommending her good-daughter, Bet Jamieson, to be wet-nurse; and an *œ*, or grandchild, of Luckie Jaup was hired to assist in the increased drudgery of the family; the Doctor thus, like a practised minister, dividing among his trusty adherents such good things as fortune placed at his disposal.

About one in the morning the Doctor made his appearance at the Swan Inn, and acquainted the stranger gentleman, that he wished him joy of being the father of a healthy boy, and that the mother was, in the usual phrase, as well as could be expected.

The stranger heard the news with seeming satisfaction, and then exclaimed, “He must be christened, Doctor! he must be christened instantly!”

“There can be no hurry for that,” said the Doctor.

"We think otherwise," said the stranger, cutting his argument short. "I am a Catholic, Doctor, and as I may be obliged to leave this place before the lady is able to travel, I desire to see my child received into the pale of the Church. There is, I understand, a Catholic priest in this wretched place?"

"There is a Catholic gentleman, sir, Mr. Goodriche, who is reported to be in orders."

"I commend your caution, Doctor," said the stranger; "it is dangerous to be too positive on any subject. I will bring that same Mr. Goodriche to your house to-morrow."

Gray hesitated for a moment. "I am a Presbyterian Protestant, sir," he said, "a friend to the constitution as established in Church and State, as I have a good right, having drawn his Majesty's pay, God bless him, for four years, as surgeon's mate in the Cameronian regiment, as my regimental Bible and commission can testify. But although I be bound especially to abhor all trafficking or trinketing with Papists, yet I will not stand in the way of a tender conscience. Sir, you may call with Mr. Goodriche, when you please, at my house; and undoubtedly, you being, as I suppose, the father of the child, you will arrange matters as you please; only, I do not desire to be though an abettor or countenancer of any part of the Popish ritual."

"Enough, sir," said the stranger haughtily, "we understand each other."

The next day he appeared at the Doctor's house with Mr. Goodriche, and two persons understood to belong to that reverend gentleman's communion. The party were shut up in an apartment with the infant, and it may be presumed that the solemnity of baptism was administered to the unconscious being, thus strangely launched upon the world. When the priest and witnesses had retired, the strange gentleman informed Mr. Gray, that, as the lady had been pronounced unfit for travelling for several days, he was himself about to leave the neighbourhood, but would return thither in the space of ten days, when he hoped to find his companion able to leave it.

"And by what name are we to call the child and mother?"

"The infant's name is Richard."

"But it must have some surname – so must the lady – She cannot reside in my house, yet be without a name."

"Call them by the name of your town here – Middlemas, I think it is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Mrs. Middlemas is the name of the mother, and Richard Middlemas of the child – and I am Matthew Middlemas, at your service. This," he continued, "will provide Mrs. Middlemas in every thing she may wish to possess – or assist her in case of accidents." With that he placed £100 in Mr. Gray's hand, who rather scrupled receiving it, saying, "He supposed the lady was qualified to be her own purse-bearer."

"The worst in the world, I assure you, Doctor," replied the stranger. "If she wished to change that piece of paper, she would scarce know how many guineas she should receive for it. No, Mr. Gray, I assure you you will find Mrs. Middleton – Middlemas – what did I call her – as ignorant of the affairs of this world as any one you have met with in your practice: So you will please to be her treasurer and administrator for the time, as for a patient that is incapable to look after her own affairs."

This was spoke, as it struck Dr. Gray, in rather a haughty and supercilious manner. The words intimated nothing in themselves, more than the same desire of preserving incognito, which might be gathered from all the rest of the stranger's conduct; but the manner seemed to say, "I am not a person to be questioned by any one – what I say must be received without comment, how little soever you may believe or understand it." It strengthened Gray in his opinion, that he had before him a case either of seduction, or of private marriage, betwixt persons of the very highest rank; and the whole bearing, both of the lady and the gentleman, confirmed his suspicions. It was not in his nature to be troublesome or inquisitive, but he could not fail to see that the lady wore no marriage-ring; and her deep sorrow, and perpetual tremor, seemed to indicate an unhappy creature, who had lost the protection of parents, without acquiring a legitimate right to that of a husband. He was therefore somewhat anxious when Mr. Middlemas, after a private conference of some length with the lady,

bade him farewell. It is true, he assured him of his return within ten days, being the very shortest space which Gray could be prevailed upon to assign for any prospect of the lady being moved with safety.

"I trust in Heaven that he will return," said Gray to himself, "but there is too much mystery about all this, for the matter being a plain and well-meaning transaction. If he intends to treat this poor thing, as many a poor girl has been used before, I hope that my house will not be the scene in which he chooses to desert her. The leaving the money has somewhat a suspicious aspect, and looks as if my friend were in the act of making some compromise with his conscience. Well – I must hope the best. Meantime, my path plainly is to do what I can for the poor lady's benefit."

Mr. Gray visited his patient shortly after Mr. Middlemas's departure – as soon, indeed, as he could be admitted. He found her in violent agitation. Gray's experience dictated the best mode of relief and tranquillity. He caused her infant to be brought to her. She wept over it for a long time, and the violence of her agitation subsided under the influence of parental feelings, which, from her appearance of extreme youth, she must have experienced for the first time.

The observant physician could, after this paroxysm, remark that his patient's mind was chiefly occupied in computing the passage of the time, and anticipating the period when the return of her husband – if husband he was – might be expected. She consulted almanacks, enquired concerning distances, though so cautiously as to make it evident she desired to give no indication of the direction of her companion's journey, and repeatedly compared, her watch with those of others; exercising, it was evident, all that delusive species of mental arithmetic by which mortals attempt to accelerate the passage of Time while they calculate his progress. At other times she wept anew over her child, which was by all judges pronounced as goodly an infant as needed to be seen; and Gray sometimes observed that she murmured sentences to the unconscious infant, not only the words, but the very sound and accents of which were strange to him, and which, in particular, he knew not to be Portuguese.

Mr. Goodriche, the Catholic priest, demanded access to her upon one occasion. She at first declined his visit, but afterwards received it, under the idea, perhaps, that he might have news from Mr. Middlemas, as he called himself. The interview was a very short one, and the priest left the lady's apartment in displeasure, which his prudence could scarce disguise from Mr. Gray. He never returned, although the lady's condition would have made his attentions and consolations necessary, had she been a member of the Catholic Church.

Our Doctor began at length to suspect his fair guest was a Jewess, who had yielded up her person and affections to one of a different religion; and the peculiar style of her beautiful countenance went to enforce this opinion. The circumstance made no difference to Gray, who saw only her distress and desolation, and endeavoured to remedy both to the utmost of his power. He was, however, desirous to conceal it from his wife, and the others around the sick person, whose prudence and liberality of thinking might be more justly doubted. He therefore so regulated her diet, that she could not be either offended, or brought under suspicion, by any of the articles forbidden by the Mosaic law being presented to her. In other respects than what concerned her health or convenience, he had but little intercourse with her.

The space passed within which the stranger's return to the borough had been so anxiously expected by his female companion. The disappointment occasioned by his non-arrival was manifested in the convalescent by inquietude, which was at first mingled with peevishness, and afterwards with doubt and fear. When two or three days had passed without message or letter of any kind, Gray himself became anxious, both on his own account and the poor lady's, lest the stranger should have actually entertained the idea of deserting this defenceless and probably injured woman. He longed to have some communication with her, which might enable him to judge what enquiries could be made, or what else was most fitting to be done. But so imperfect was the poor young woman's knowledge of the French language, and perhaps so unwilling she herself to throw any light on her situation, that every attempt of this kind proved abortive. When Gray asked questions concerning any subject which appeared to approach to explanation, he observed she usually answered him by shaking her head,

in token of not understanding what he said; at other times by silence and with tears, and sometimes referring him to *Monsieur*.

For *Monsieur's* arrival, then, Gray began to become very impatient, as that which alone could put an end to a disagreeable species of mystery, which the good company of the borough began now to make the principal subject of their gossip; some blaming Gray for taking foreign *landloupers* [Footnote: Strollers.] into his house, on the subject of whose morals the most serious doubts might be entertained; others envying the “bonny hand” the doctor was like to make of it, by having disposal of the wealthy stranger’s travelling funds; a circumstance which could not be well concealed from the public, when the honest man’s expenditure for trifling articles of luxury came far to exceed its ordinary bounds.

The conscious probity of the honest Doctor enabled him to despise this sort of tittle-tattle, though the secret knowledge of its existence could not be agreeable to him. He went his usual rounds with his usual perseverance, and waited with patience until time should throw light on the subject and history of his lodger. It was now the fourth week after her confinement, and the recovery of the stranger might be considered as perfect, when Gray, returning from one of his ten-mile visits, saw a post-chaise and four horses at the door. “This man has returned,” he said, “and my suspicions have done him less than justice.” With that he spurred his horse, a signal which the trusty steed obeyed the more readily, as its progress was in the direction of the stable door. But when, dismounting, the Doctor hurried into his own house, it seemed to him, that the departure as well as the arrival of this distressed lady was destined to bring confusion to his peaceful dwelling. Several idlers had assembled about his door, and two or three had impudently thrust themselves forward almost into the passage, to listen to a confused altercation which was heard from within.

The Doctor hastened forward, the foremost of the intruders retreating in confusion on his approach, while he caught the tones of his wife’s voice, raised to a pitch which he knew, by experience, boded no good; for Mrs. Gray, good-humoured and tractable in general, could sometimes perform the high part in a matrimonial duet. Having much more confidence in his wife’s good intentions than her prudence, he lost no time in pushing into the parlour, to take the matter into his own hands. Here he found his helpmate at the head of the whole militia of the sick lady’s apartment, that is, wet nurse, and sick nurse, and girl of all work, engaged in violent dispute with two strangers. The one was a dark-featured elderly man, with an eye of much sharpness and severity of expression, which now seemed partly quenched by a mixture of grief and mortification. The other, who appeared actively sustaining the dispute with Mrs. Gray, was a stout, bold-looking, hard-faced person, armed with pistols, of which he made rather an unnecessary and ostentatious display.

“Here is my husband, sir,” said Mrs. Gray, in a tone of triumph, for she had the grace to believe the Doctor one of the greatest men living, – “Here is the Doctor – let us see what you will say now.”

“Why just what I said before, ma’am,” answered the man, “which is, that my warrant must be obeyed. It is regular, ma’am, regular.”

So saying, he struck the forefinger of his right hand against a paper which he held towards Mrs. Gray with his left.

“Address yourself to me, if you please, sir,” said the Doctor, seeing that he ought to lose no time in removing the cause into the proper court. “I am the master of this house, sir, and I wish to know the cause of this visit.”

“My business is soon told,” said the man. “I am a king’s messenger, and this lady has treated me as if I was a baron-bailie’s officer.”

“That is not the question, sir,” replied the Doctor. “If you are a king’s messenger, where is your warrant, and what do you propose to do here?” At the same time he whispered the little wench to call Mr. Lawford, the town-clerk, to come thither as fast as he possibly could. The good-daughter of Peg Thomson started off with an activity worthy of her mother-in-law.

“There is my warrant,” said the official, “and you may satisfy yourself.”

"The shameless loon dare not tell the Doctor his errand," said Mrs. Gray exultingly.

"A bonny errand it is," said old Lucky Simson, "to carry away a lying-in woman as a gled [Footnote: Or Kite.] would do a clocking-hen."

"A woman no a month delivered" – echoed the nurse Jamieson.

"Twenty-four days eight hours and seven minutes to a second," said Mrs. Gray.

The Doctor having looked over the warrant, which was regular, began to be afraid that the females of his family, in their zeal for defending the character of their sex, might be stirred up into some sudden fit of mutiny, and therefore commanded them to be silent.

"This," he said, "is a warrant for arresting the bodies of Richard Tresham, and of Zilia de Moncada on account of high treason. Sir, I have served his Majesty, and this is not a house in which traitors are harboured. I know nothing of any of these two persons, nor have I ever heard even their names."

"But the lady whom you have received into your family," said the messenger, "is Zilia de Moncada, and here stands her father, Matthias de Moncada, who will make oath to it."

"If this be true," said Mr. Gray, looking towards the alleged officer, "you have taken a singular duty on you. It is neither my habit to deny my own actions, nor to oppose the laws of the land. There is a lady in this house slowly recovering from confinement, having become under this roof the mother of a healthy child. If she be the person described in this warrant, and this gentleman's daughter, I must surrender her to the laws of the country."

Here the Esculapian militia were once more in motion.

"Surrender, Dr. Gray! It's a shame to hear you speak, and you that lives by women and weans, abuse your other means!" so exclaimed his fair better part.

"I wonder to hear the Doctor!" said the younger nurse; "there's no a wife in the town would believe it o' him."

"I aye thought the Doctor was a man till this moment," said Luckie Simson; "but I believe him now to be an auld wife, little baulder than mysell; and I dinna wonder that poor Mrs. Gray" —

"Hold your peace, you foolish woman," said the Doctor. "Do you think this business is not bad enough already, that you are making it worse with your senseless claver? [Footnote: Tattling.] – Gentlemen, this is a very sad case. Here is a warrant for a high crime against a poor creature, who is little fit to be removed from one house to another, much more dragged to a prison. I tell you plainly, that I think the execution of this arrest may cause her death. It is your business, sir, if you be really her father, to consider what you can do to soften this matter, rather than drive it on."

"Better death than dishonour," replied the stern-looking old man, with a voice as harsh as his aspect; "and you, messenger," he continued, "look what you do, and execute the warrant at your peril."

"You hear," said the man, appealing to the Doctor himself, "I must have immediate access to the lady."

"In a lucky time," said Mr. Gray, "here comes the town-clerk. – You are very welcome, Mr. Lawford. Your opinion here is much wanted as a man of law, as well as of sense and humanity. I was never more glad to see you in all my life."

He then rapidly stated the case; and the messenger, understanding the new-comer to be a man of some authority, again exhibited his warrant.

"This is a very sufficient and valid warrant, Dr. Gray," replied the man of law. "Nevertheless, if you are disposed to make oath, that instant removal would be unfavourable to the lady's health, unquestionably she must remain here, suitably guarded."

"It is not so much the mere act of locomotion which I am afraid of," said the surgeon; "but I am free to depone, on soul and conscience, that the shame and fear of her father's anger, and the sense of the affront of such an arrest, with terror for its consequences, may occasion violent and dangerous illness – even death itself."

"The father must see the daughter, though they may have quarrelled," said Mr. Lawford; "the officer of justice must execute his warrant though it should frighten the criminal to death; these evils are only contingent, not direct and immediate consequences. You must give up the lady, Mr. Gray, though your hesitation is very natural."

"At least, Mr. Lawford, I ought to be certain that the person in my house is the party they search for."

"Admit me to her apartment," replied the man whom the messenger termed Moncada.

The messenger, whom the presence of Lawford had made something more placid, began to become impudent once more. He hoped, he said, by means of his female prisoner, to acquire the information necessary to apprehend the more guilty person. If more delays were thrown in his way, that information might come too late, and he would make all who were accessory to such delay responsible for the consequences.

"And I," said Mr. Gray, "though I were to be brought to the gallows for it, protest, that this course may be the murder of my patient. – Can bail not be taken, Mr. Lawford?"

"Not in cases of high treason," said the official person; and then continued in a confidential tone, "Come, Mr. Gray, we all know you to be a person well affected to our Royal Sovereign King George and the Government; but you must not push this too far, lest you bring yourself into trouble, which every body in Middlemas would be sorry for. The forty-five has not been so far gone by, but we can remember enough of warrants of high treason – ay, and ladies of quality committed upon such charges. But they were all favourably dealt with – Lady Ogilvy, Lady Macintosh, Flora Macdonald, and all. No doubt this gentleman knows what he is doing, and has assurances of the young lady's safety – So you must jouk and let the jaw gae by, as we say."

"Follow me, then, gentleman," said Gideon, "and you shall see the young lady;" and then, his strong features working with emotion at anticipation of the distress which he was about to inflict, he led the way up the small staircase, and opening the door, said to Moncada, who had followed him, "This is your daughter's only place of refuge, in which I am, alas! too weak to be her protector. Enter, sir, if your conscience will permit you."

The stranger turned on him a scowl, into which it seemed as if he would willingly have thrown the power of the fabled basilisk. Then stepping proudly forward, he stalked into the room. He was followed by Lawford and Gray at a little distance. The messenger remained in the doorway. The unhappy young woman had heard the disturbance, and guessed the cause too truly. It is possible she might even have seen the strangers on their descent from the carriage. When they entered the room, she was on her knees, beside an easy chair, her face in a silk wrapper that was hung over it. The man called Moncada uttered a single word; by the accent it might have been something equivalent to *wretch*; but none knew its import. The female gave a convulsive shudder, such as that by which a half-dying soldier is affected on receiving a second wound. But, without minding her emotion, Moncada seized her by the arm, and with little gentleness raised her to her feet, on which she seemed to stand only because she was supported by his strong grasp. He then pulled from her face the mask which she had hitherto worn. The poor creature still endeavoured to shroud her face, by covering it with her left hand, as the manner in which she was held prevented her from using the aid of the right. With little effort her father secured that hand also, which indeed was of itself far too little to serve the purpose of concealment, and showed her beautiful face, burning with blushes and covered with tears.

"You, Alcalde, and you, Surgeon," he said to Lawford and Gray, with a foreign action and accent, "this woman is my daughter, the same Zilia Moncada who is signal'd in that protocol. Make way, and let me carry her where her crimes may be atoned for."

"Are you that person's daughter?" said Lawford to the lady.

"She understands no English," said Gray; and addressing his patient in French, conjured her to let him know whether she was that man's daughter or not, assuring her of protection if the fact were otherwise. The answer was murmured faintly, but was too distinctly intelligible – "He was her father."

All farther title of interference seemed now ended. The messenger arrested his prisoner, and, with some delicacy, required the assistance of the females to get her conveyed to the carriage in waiting.

Gray again interfered. – “You will not,” he said, “separate the mother and the infant?”

Zilia de Moncada heard the question, (which, being addressed to the father, Gray had inconsiderately uttered in French,) and it seemed as if it recalled to her recollection the existence of the helpless creature to which she had given birth, forgotten for a moment amongst the accumulated horrors of her father's presence. She uttered a shriek, expressing poignant grief, and turned her eyes on her father with the most intense supplication.

“To the parish with the bastard!” – said Moncada; while the helpless mother sunk lifeless into the arms of the females, who had now gathered round her.

“That will not pass, sir,” said Gideon. – “If you are father to that lady, you must be grandfather to the helpless child; and you must settle in some manner for its future provision, or refer us to some responsible person.”

Moncada looked towards Lawford, who expressed himself satisfied of the propriety of what Gray said.

“I object not to pay for whatever the wretched child may require,” said he; “and if you, sir,” addressing Gray, “choose to take charge of him, and breed him up, you shall have what will better your living.”

The Doctor was about to refuse a charge so uncivilly offered; but after a moment's reflection, he replied, “I think so indifferently of the proceedings I have witnessed, and of those concerned in them, that if the mother desires that I should retain the charge of this child, I will not refuse to do so.”

Moncada spoke to his daughter, who was just beginning to recover from her swoon, in the same language in which he had at first addressed her. The proposition which he made seemed highly acceptable, as she started from the arms of the females, and, advancing to Gray, seized his hand, kissed it, bathed it in her tears, and seemed reconciled, even in parting with her child, by the consideration, that the infant was to remain under his guardianship.

“Good, kind man,” she said in her indifferent French, “you have saved both mother and child.”

The father, meanwhile, with mercantile deliberation, placed in Mr. Lawford's hands notes and bills to the amount of a thousand pounds, which he stated was to be vested for the child's use, and advanced in such portions as his board and education might require. In the event of any correspondence on his account being necessary, as in case of death or the like, he directed that communication should be made to Signor Matthias Moncada, under cover to a certain banking house in London.

“But beware,” he said to Gray, “how you trouble me about these concerns, unless in case of absolute necessity.”

“You need not fear, sir,” replied Gray; “I have seen nothing to-day which can induce me to desire a more intimate correspondence with you than may be indispensable.”

While Lawford drew up a proper minute of this transaction, by which he himself and Gray were named trustees for the child, Mr. Gray attempted to restore to the lady the balance of the considerable sum of money which Tresham (if such was his real name) had formally deposited with him. With every species of gesture, by which hands, eyes, and even feet, could express rejection, as well as in her own broken French, she repelled the reimbursement, while she entreated that Gray would consider the money as his own property; and at the same time forced upon him a ring set with brilliants, which seemed of considerable value. The father then spoke to her a few stern words, which she heard with an air of mingled agony and submission.

“I have given her a few minutes to see and weep over the miserable being which has been the seal of her dishonour,” said the stern father. “Let us retire and leave her alone. – You,” to the messenger, “watch the door of the room on the outside.”

Gray, Lawford, and Moncada, retired to the parlour accordingly, where they waited in silence, each busied with his own reflections, till, within the space of half an hour, they received information that the lady was ready to depart.

“It is well,” replied Moncada; “I am glad she has yet sense enough left to submit to that which needs must be.”

So saying, he ascended the stair, and returned leading down his daughter, now again masked and veiled. As she passed Gray, she uttered the words – “My child, my child!” in a tone of unutterable anguish; then entered the carriage, which was drawn up as close to the door of the doctor’s house as the little enclosure would permit. The messenger, mounted on a led horse, and accompanied by a servant and assistant, followed the carriage, which drove rapidly off, taking the road which leads to Edinburgh. All who had witnessed this strange scene, now departed to make their conjectures, and some to count their gains; for money had been distributed among the females who had attended on the lady, with so much liberality, as considerably to reconcile them to the breach of the rights of womanhood inflicted by the precipitate removal of the patient.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

The last cloud of dust which the wheels of the carriage had raised was dissipated, when dinner, which claims a share of human thoughts even in the midst of the most marvellous and affecting incidents, recurred to those of Mrs. Gray.

"Indeed, Doctor, you will stand glowering out of the window till some other patient calls for you, and then have to set off without your dinner; – and I hope Mr. Lawford will take pot-luck with us, for it is just his own hour; and indeed we had something rather better than ordinary for this poor lady – lamb and spinage, and a veal Florentine."

The surgeon started as from a dream, and joined in his wife's hospitable request, to which Lawford willingly assented.

We will suppose the meal finished, a bottle of old and generous Antigua upon the table, and a modest little punch-bowl, judiciously replenished for the accommodation of the Doctor and his guest. Their conversation naturally turned on the strange scene which they had witnessed, and the Townclerk took considerable merit for his presence of mind.

"I am thinking, Doctor," said he, "you might have brewed a bitter browst to yourself if I had not come in as I did."

"Troth, and it might very well so be," answered Gray; "for, to tell you the truth, when I saw yonder fellow vapouring with his pistols among the woman-folk in my own house, the old Cameronian spirit began to rise in me, and little thing would have made me cleek to the poker."

"Hoot, hoot! that would never have done. Na, na," said the man of law, "this was a case where a little prudence was worth all the pistols and pokers in the world."

"And that was just what I thought when I sent to you, Clerk Lawford," said the Doctor.

"A wiser man he could not have called on to a difficult case," added Mrs. Gray, as she sat with her work at a little distance from the table.

"Thanks t'ye, and here's t'ye, my good neighbour," answered the scribe; "will you not let me help you to another glass of punch, Mrs. Gray?" This being declined, he proceeded. "I am jalousing that the messenger and his warrant were just brought in to prevent any opposition. Ye saw how quietly he behaved after I had laid down the law – I'll never believe the lady is in any risk from him. But the father is a dour chield; depend upon it, he has bred up the young filly on the curb-rein, and that has made the poor thing start off the course. I should not be surprised that he took her abroad, and shut her up in a convent."

"Hardly," replied Doctor Gray, "if it be true, as I suspect, that both the father and daughter are of the Jewish persuasion."

"A Jew!" said Mrs. Gray; "and have I been taking a' this fyke about a Jew? – I thought she seemed to gie a scunner at the eggs and bacon that Nurse Simson spoke about to her. But I thought Jews had aye had lang beards, and yon man's face is just like one of our ain folk's – I have seen the Doctor with a langer beard himsell, when he has not had leisure to shave."

"That might have been Mr. Moncada's case," said Lawford, "for he seemed to have had a hard journey. But the Jews are often very respectable people, Mrs. Gray – they have no territorial property, because the law is against them there, but they have a good hank in the money market – plenty of stock in the funds, Mrs. Gray, and, indeed, I think this poor young woman is better with her ain father, though he be a Jew and a dour chield into the bargain, than she would have been with the loon that wranged her, who is, by your account, Dr. Gray, baith a papist and a rebel. The Jews are well attached to government; they hate the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender, as much as any honest man among ourselves."

"I cannot admire either of the gentlemen," said Gideon. "But it is but fair to say, that I saw Mr. Moncada when he was highly incensed, and to all appearance not without reason. Now, this other

man Tresham, if that be his name, was haughty to me, and I think something careless of the poor young woman, just at the time when he owed her most kindness, and me some thankfulness. I am, therefore, of your opinion, Clerk Lawford, that the Christian is the worse bargain of the two.”

“And you think of taking care of this wean yourself, Doctor? That is what I call the good Samaritan.”

“At cheap cost. Clerk; the child, if it lives, has enough to bring it up decently, and set it out in life, and I can teach it an honourable and useful profession. It will be rather an amusement than a trouble to me, and I want to make some remarks on the childish diseases, which, with God’s blessing, the child must come through under my charge; and since Heaven has sent us no children” —

“Hoot, hoot!” said the Town-Clerk, “you are in ower great hurry now – you have na been sae lang married yet. – Mrs. Gray, dinna let my daffing chase you away – we will be for a dish of tea believe, for the Doctor and I are nae glass-breakers.”

Four years after this conversation took place, the event happened, at the possibility of which the Town-Clerk had hinted; and Mrs. Gray presented her husband with an infant daughter. But good and evil are strangely mingled in this sublunary world. The fulfilment of his anxious longing for posterity was attended with the loss of his simple and kind-hearted wife; one of the most heavy blows which fate could inflict on poor Gideon, and, his house was made desolate even by the event which had promised for months before to add new comforts to its humble roof. Gray felt the shock as men of sense and firmness feel a decided blow, from the effects of which they never hope again fully to raise themselves. He discharged the duties of his profession with the same punctuality as ever, was easy, and even to appearance, cheerful in his intercourse with society; but the sunshine of existence was gone. Every morning he missed the affectionate charges which recommended to him to pay attention to his own health while he was labouring to restore that blessing to his patients. Every evening, as he returned from his weary round, it was without the consciousness of a kind and affectionate reception from one eager to tell, and interested to hear, all the little events of the day. His whistle, which used to arise clear and strong so soon as Middlemas steeple was in view, was now for ever silenced, and the rider’s head drooped, while the tired horse, lacking the stimulus of his master’s hand and voice, seemed to shuffle along as if it experienced a share of his despondency. There were times when he was so much dejected as to be unable to endure even the presence of his little Menie, in whose infant countenance he could trace the lineaments of the mother, of whose loss she had been the innocent and unconscious cause. “Had it not been for this poor child” – he would think; but, instantly aware that the sentiment was sinful, he would snatch the infant to his breast, and load it with caresses – then hastily desire it to be removed from the parlour.

The Mahometans have a fanciful idea, that the true believer, in his passage to Paradise, is under the necessity of passing barefooted over a bridge composed of red-hot iron. But on this occasion, all the pieces of paper which the Moslem has preserved during his life, lest some holy thing being written upon them might be profaned, arrange themselves between his feet and the burning metal, and so save him from injury. In the same manner, the effects of kind and benevolent actions are sometimes found, even in this world, to assuage the pangs of subsequent afflictions.

Thus, the greatest consolation which poor Gideon could find after his heavy deprivation, was in the frolic fondness of Richard Middlemas, the child who was in so singular a manner thrown upon his charge. Even at this early age he was eminently handsome. When silent or out of humour, his dark eyes and striking countenance presented some recollections of the stern character imprinted on the features of his supposed father; but when he was gay and happy, which was much more frequently the case, these clouds were exchanged for the most frolicsome, mirthful expression, that ever dwelt on the laughing and thoughtless aspect of a child. He seemed to have a tact beyond his years in discovering and conforming to the peculiarities of human character. His nurse, one prime object of Richard’s observance, was Nurse Jamieson, or, as she was more commonly called for brevity, and *par excellence*, Nurse. This was the person who had brought him up from infancy. She had lost her

own child, and soon after her husband, and being thus a lone woman, had, as used to be common in Scotland, remained a member of Dr. Gray's family. After the death of his wife, she gradually obtained the principal superintendence of the whole household; and being an honest and capable manager, was a person of very great importance in the family.

She was bold in her temper, violent in her feelings, and, as often happens with those in her condition, was as much attached to Richard Middlemas, whom she had once nursed at her bosom, as if he had been her own son. This affection the child repaid by all the tender attentions of which his age was capable.

Little Dick was also distinguished by the fondest and kindest attachment to his guardian and benefactor Dr. Gray. He was officious in the right time and place, quiet as a lamb when his patron seemed inclined to study or to muse, active and assiduous to assist or divert him whenever it seemed to be wished, and, in choosing his opportunities, he seemed to display an address far beyond his childish years.

As time passed on, this pleasing character seemed to be still more refined. In everything like exercise or amusement, he was the pride and the leader of the boys of the place, over the most of whom his strength and activity gave him a decided superiority. At school his abilities were less distinguished, yet he was a favourite with the master, a sensible and useful teacher.

"Richard is not swift," he used to say to his patron, Dr. Gray, "but then he is sure; and it is impossible not to be pleased with a child who is so very desirous to give satisfaction."

Young Middlemas's grateful affection to his patron seemed to increase with the expanding of his faculties, and found a natural and pleasing mode of displaying itself in his attentions to little Menie [Footnote: Marion.] Gray. Her slightest hint was Richard's law, and it was in vain that he was summoned forth by a hundred shrill voices to take the lead in hye-spye, or at foot-ball, if it was little Menie's pleasure that he should remain within, and build card-houses for her amusement. At other times he would take the charge of the little damsel entirely under his own care, and be seen wandering with her on the borough common, collecting wild flowers, or knitting caps made of bulrushes. Menie was attached to Dick Middlemas, in proportion to his affectionate assiduities; and the father saw with pleasure every new mark of attention to his child on the part of his protege.

During the time that Richard was silently advancing from a beautiful child into a fine boy, and approaching from a fine boy to the time when he must be termed a handsome youth, Mr. Gray wrote twice a-year with much regularity to Mr. Moncada, through the channel that gentleman had pointed out. The benevolent man thought, that if the wealthy grandfather could only see his relative, of whom any family might be proud, he would be unable to persevere in his resolution of treating as an outcast one so nearly connected with him in blood, and so interesting in person and disposition. He thought it his duty, therefore, to keep open the slender and oblique communication with the boy's maternal grandfather, as that which might, at some future period, lead to a closer connexion. Yet the correspondence could not, in other respects, be agreeable to a man of spirit like Mr. Gray. His own letters were as short as possible, merely rendering an account of his ward's expenses, including a moderate board to himself, attested by Mr. Lawford, his co-trustee; and intimating Richard's state of health, and his progress in education, with a few words of brief but warm eulogy upon his goodness of head and heart. But the answers he received were still shorter. "Mr. Moncada," such was their usual tenor, "acknowledges Mr. Gray's letter of such a date, notices the contents, and requests Mr. Gray to persist in the plan which he has hitherto prosecuted on the subject of their correspondence." On occasions where extraordinary expenses seemed likely to be incurred, the remittances were made with readiness.

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