





THE ORPHAN OF KINLOCH.

THE
ORPHAN OF KINLOCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
'SKETCHES OF BROADBURN,'
ETC.

TORONTO AND MONTREAL:
JAMES CAMPBELL AND SON

THE ORPHAN OF KINLOCH.

CHAPTER I.

Slow sinks the sun. In clouds of crimson hue
He veils his beauties from departing day;
Trembles his light on Arran's mountains blue,
And Knapdale reddens in the lingering ray.

It was a fine evening in the beginning of August, when an open travelling carriage and pair were observed slowly ascending the hill which overlooked the village of Kinloch. A single traveller occupied the vehicle, who seemed to gaze with sad and increasing interest on the scenery around him. He was a man about the middle of life, and from the military undress which he wore, as well as a certain precision in his manner, had evidently served in the army. His forehead was marked with thought; and the dark locks, which flowed somewhat profusely around it, were slightly tinged with grey. There was nothing unhealthy in his aspect; yet he wanted that ruddy glow which betokens exuberance of animal spirits; and a stranger, judging from his appearance, would at once have said that he had spent some years in a tropical climate. His countenance could not be called positively handsome; but there was in it an expression of manly independence, and benevolent feeling. Altogether he was evidently a person to whom the

oppressed would not appeal in vain, and whom the oppressor might have cause to fear.

As the carriage moved slowly up the hill, the traveller occasionally rose up, as if for the purpose of catching a view of the landscape beyond it; and when at length the equipage had reached the summit, and the village of Kinloch, with its tiny bay and little fleet of fishing boats, came fully into sight, he laid his hand gently on the shoulder of the lad who acted as postillion, and requested him to stop. He then deposited on the seat beside him the book which he held in his hand (and which, if it was not a Bible, bore a close resemblance to that blessed volume), and stood for some minutes wrapt in silent contemplation of the scene before him.

The village of Kinloch is about a quarter of a mile in length, and sweeps gracefully round the extremity of the bay from which it derives its name. The houses are regularly and substantially built; and the inhabitants being compelled, by the humidity of the climate, to plaster and whitewash the outsides of their dwellings from time to time, the whole have an appearance of neatness and even beauty, which never fails to arrest the attention of the traveller. The rising grounds immediately behind the village are covered with wood, being part of the extensive domain of Achindarroch, the proprietor of which is superior of the village. Beyond these, however, the mountains present that bold and irregular outline so common in the Highlands, and more especially in the county of Argyle. Farther off, again, and dimly dis-

cernible in the east, the lofty mountains of Arran give a finish to the landscape, which would require a more skilful pencil than ours to do it any measure of justice.

This scene, lovely as it is at all times, was peculiarly so on the evening in question, owing to the mellow lustre of the setting sun; which ere it dipped behind the mountains on the western boundary, threw a flood of splendour over the surface of the bay, and seemed to convert its waters into a sea of molten gold. But lovely as the landscape was, and fondly as the eye of the stranger dwelt on every part of it—glancing in succession from the village to the bay, from the bay to the mountains, and from the mountains to the village again;—there was one object on which it rested with peculiar interest, for that object alone was new. It was the spire of a little church, which arose from an eminence behind the village; and which seemed to indicate that since the stranger last looked down upon that scene, an important change had taken place in the spiritual privileges of the inhabitants. Nor was he mistaken. Though still a part of the extensive parish of St Serle, the village of Kinloch now possessed a pastor and ordinances of its own; having shared in that munificence of a British Parliament, which so recently bestowed the privilege of a settled ministry on many desolate districts of the Highlands.

It was not without evident emotion that the stranger contemplated the scene which we have endeavoured to describe. A thousand recollections, indeed, crowded upon him, for the most part of a pain-

ful nature ; and in spite of himself a tear glistened in his eye. He brushed it hastily away ; and perceiving the postillion look at him with surprise, "You are astonished, young man," said he mildly, "to witness my emotion ! and perhaps consider a tear no very becoming ornament for the eye of a soldier. But had you been twenty-five years absent from your native land, and were you returning to it without the least expectation of finding any former friend or acquaintance alive, you would be moved also, I have marched up to a battery of cannon, and planted the British colours on an enemy's rampart, with less emotion than I can view this peaceful landscape, the scene to me of so much affecting remembrance. But tell me how long has that church been built ?"

"About five years," replied the lad ; "its ane o' the government kirks, as they ca' them ; but government, or no government, it has been a great blessing to Kinloch."

"Is it well attended on the Sabbath ?" anxiously inquired the stranger.

"Crowdit to the door !" returned the postillion, with animation. "The minister is a grand preacher too, and a real freend to the puir."

"And who is owner of Achindarroch, now ?" said the stranger, pointing to the mansion of that name, the top of which was barely visible amongst the trees.

"It has nae owner the now," rejoined the youth, "nor hasna' had for mony a year. The mair's the pity, for a bonnier place is no to be seen frae Fort William to the Mull o' Cantyre."

“How long is it since Mr Maclaine, the last proprietor, died?”

‘It’s seven years and better, sir. Few folk were sorry for him—auld Crusty as we used to ca’ him. But mony ane was sorry for his dochter, the puir lassie, that was turned out o’ house and hame by the creditors. It was what her father had done to mony a puir family, nae doubt; but that wasna her blame. They’ve made little by their cruelty, howsomever; for the estate is in the market yet, and like to be. Some say they’re seeking owre high for it. For my part I am nae judge.”

“What price do they set upon it then, my lad?”

“Thirty thousand pounds, sir; and if I had it, I would gie them’t the morn.”

A gleam of satisfaction flashed across the countenance of the stranger, “And who is trustee for the creditors?” asked he quickly.

“It’s black Colin Campbell, I believe, sir; the writer in Inverary.”

The stranger was silent. He resumed his seat in the carriage, took out his memorandum-book, and wrote down the address; then made a sign for the postillion to drive on.

“It will be wonderful, indeed,” said the stranger to himself, as he replaced his memorandum-book in his pocket, “if I be destined by Providence to be the purchaser of that domain, the proud owner of which sent me forth into the world a pennyless and friendless orphan! No, not friendless,” continued he, looking devoutly upwards; “I thank Thee, Father

of mercies, that Thou hast ever been my shield and my stay ; and hast prospered in all his undertakings the fatherless and forlorn one, who was so early cast upon Thy care !”

The carriage now rattled briskly down the hill, and rapidly approached the village. The stranger was lost in thought ; and heeded not the looks and shouts of surprise with which the little kilted and bonneted rustics, who were playing by the side of the road, hailed the arrival of a travelling equipage, no very usual sight at Kinloch. Scarcely, however, had he entered the village, when, seated at the door of a thatched cottage, at the extremity of a little garden which opened towards the road, he perceived a venerable looking man, whose bent form and snowy hair gave evidence of a pilgrimage extended beyond the customary limits of the life of man. He was leaning upon his staff, and seemed to watch the progress of the setting sun, half of the disk of which had already sunk behind the hills.

“ Surely,” said the stranger, starting from his seat, and desiring the postillion to stop, “ it cannot be Andrew Neilson ! And yet it is,” continued he after a short pause ; “ a kind Providence has disappointed my fears ; and permits us to meet once more on this side of the grave.”

So saying he sprung from the carriage ; and ordering the postillion to drive on to the village inn, he crossed the road towards the dwelling of his venerable friend.

CHAPTER II.

He sat within his garden bower,
To catch the balmy breath of even ;
And hold in that sweet solemn hour,
High converse with his Lord in heaven.

THE first impulse of the stranger, as he entered the little garden and approached the cottage, was immediately to make himself known to the friend of his early years. But when he looked at the venerable form before him, and considered the probable effect of an announcement which would appear to him like a resurrection from the dead, he resolved to address him as a total stranger, and gradually prepare him for the tidings of his unexpected return.

The old man was sitting in a little arbour of honeysuckle and sweetbriar, the work and pride of his early days. His eyes were still bent on the spot where the sun had now disappeared ; and as he remained fixed in that attitude of devout contemplation, his white hair escaping from beneath his bonnet and thrown into gentle motion by the evening breeze, he presented a form which Gainsborough would have gone miles to copy, and which hardly any other artist could have transferred with effect to the canvass.

“A fine evening this, my good sir,” said the stranger. “Forgive me for inquiring if you are not Mr Andrew Neilson ?”

“Andrew Neilson is my name, sir,” replied the old man mildly ; “to Maister I never pretendit. But ye’re pleased to be civil, and I thank you.”

“Well then, Andrew,” rejoined the stranger, “since you prefer that manner of address, I hope I see you in good health.”

“I’m muckle obleeged to you, sir,” returned the aged villager, “as weel as I can look to be at four-score ; praised be His name for a’ His mercies.” And as he said this, he raised his bonnet for a moment, and then gently replaced it on his head.

“I have come,” said the stranger, seating himself familiarly on the turf seat beside the old man, “to bring you tidings of an old friend.”

“You are very kind, sir,” replied Andrew, with a deep sigh. “It’s few freends that’s left to a man at my time o’ life ; but Him,” continued he, looking upward, “that sticketh closer that a brither.”

“The friend I mean,” returned the stranger, “has been many years in India. Do you remember none such ?”

“In Indy,” said the old man thoughtfully ; “I never had a freend there, that I ken o’, but ane ; and that was Patie Burnside, pair fallow. An ye could bring me word o’ him,” he continued, shaking his head mournfully, “it would be news indeed !”

“The gentleman I speak of is called Burnside,” rejoined the stranger.

“May be sae,” answered Andrew, in the same melancholy tone, “but Patie wasna a gentleman, born nor brought up ; but an orphan laddie that I reared mysell, and that left me five and twenty year syne when he couldna do better. It’s an auld story now, sir ; but twa heavier hearts that day there wasna

in braid Scotland. I was a' the faither he had, puir man; and he was like a son to me."

The stranger was much affected. "But why," said he making an effort to command his feelings, "should you suppose that the person I mean, whose name is in fact Patrick Burnside, may not, after all, be the very boy you speak of?"

"There's twa things," replied the old man, wiping his eyes, "that maks me think ye mista'en. In the first place, Patie was a freenless and a modest laddie, and no likely to set up for a gentleman. And in the second place, an he had been leevin, he wouldna been without lettin me ken."

"But he was in the army you know, in which friendless men occasionally get forward," said the stranger, in a cheerful tone; "and letters from India are often lost on the passage home, as well as letters from this country on their way thither. Depend upon it, sir, my friend Mr Burnside and your orphan charge, will turn out to be the same person."

"I canna believe it," returned the old man, the tears trickling down his cheeks, "it's owre gude news to be true."

"Not at all, my good sir," said the stranger. "Is not the name of your village Kinloch?"

"It is so," replied Andrew calmly.

"And your name is Andrew Neilson?"

"It is."

"Believe, me then, my friend, while I assure you that my sole object, in visiting Argyleshire at this time, was to find out such a village, and such a person if

alive ; for the purpose of stating that Patrick Burnside had returned from India, a major in His Majesty's service"—

“Patie Burnside a major!” interrupted the old man, smiling through his tears. “Na, na, that will no do, lad. I wonder ye're no ashamed o' yoursell,” continued he, in a dignified tone, “stranger as ye are, to come to an auld man's door-cheek, to mak' a fool o' him this way ; to waken up feelings that had nearly been smothered, and bring back thoughts”—

“Andrew,” said the stranger, taking the old man's hand, and producing a small Bible from his pocket, the same which he had been reading in the carriage, “do you remember this Bible, and the room at Otter Ferry?”

Andrew looked at the Bible, then at the stranger, then at the Bible again. The momentary irritation gave way to softer feelings. He saw before him the very gift which, twenty-five years before, he had presented to the son of his adoption, in the little inn where they parted, apparently for the last time ; and remembered (for his feelings on the occasion were too acute to be forgotten, while memory retained her seat) that he had accompanied the gift with long and fervent prayers for the temporal prosperity, and spiritual welfare of the orphan. His tears flowed afresh, and for some time he was unable to articulate. No sooner, however, had he recovered speech, than he pressed the stranger's hand, and said, “I ken the token weel. Excuse an auld man's weakness. And is Patie coming hame ? and is he a major, said ye ? Praised be His name, that has protected and prospered the

fatherless. But how did he no write,—tell me that, for that's what I canna understand?"

"He wrote often, my dear sir, and also sent frequent remittances. But as he received no answer for many years, he concluded that you were no more, and of course ceased to write."

"I never was gude at the pen mysell," observed the old man, "and I never heard frae him but twice; ance before he left Edinburgh, and ance before he sailed for Indy. I got the dominie to answer baith the letters for me; and weel I might, for in the last ane the kind-hearted laddie sent me a ten pound note, that the Colonel had gi'en him, he said, for saving his son frae being drowned."

"Then you received none of the many letters which I—I mean which Major Burnside wrote to you from India," said the stranger.

"No the scrape o' a pen," resumed the benevolent old man; "and so I concluded that the ship had been lost. The dominie was o' the same mind; and lang, lang he lookit the papers for news about it, honest man, for he was real fond o' Patie. Indeed a' body was fond o' him, puir man; and I reckon ye're fond o' him too, sir, or ye wouldna hae come sae far to tell me that he was coming hame. He maun be unco fond o' you, too, or he wudna hae lippen't ye wi' his bit Bible, even to show to me. And yet," continued he, after a short pause, "I wonder he partit wi'd after a'."

"He has never parted with it, Andrew; and never will, while he lives" cried the stranger, with

earnestness. "Look at me again, my friend, my second father ; and say if you cannot remember the features of the orphan Burnside, tanned and weather-beaten though they be."

The old man regarded him for some minutes with a penetrating glance ; and as he gazed, his countenance became flushed and pale by turns ; his whole frame trembled with emotion ; and Major Burnside was afraid that, cautious as he had been in announcing his presence, the recognition would prove too much for the benevolent patron of his childhood. At length poor Andrew's feelings found vent in tears. He threw his arms round the Major's neck, leaned his head on his bosom, and wept aloud. The Major was for a short time unwilling to interrupt him ; but when he perceived that the expression of his emotion had become somewhat less vehement, he whispered that the neighbours might see and wonder at his behaviour ; and, bidding him lean upon his arm, led him into the cottage.

Having placed the good old man in his elbow-chair, Major Burnside seated himself beside him ; and, laying his hand on his knee, requested him to be composed ; and added in a tone of the greatest tenderness, "This meeting, Andrew, was equally unexpected by us both ; but, since it has pleased God to grant it, we shall part no more on this side of the grave."

"I'm composed now, Patie," said the old man, smiling and sobbing by turns ; "I mean, sir—that's to say, Major. But wow man, my heart was grit for a minute or twa ; and I behoved either to greet

like a bairn, or gang awa in a faint. Do ye ken this fireside again, and yon wee bed in the corner? But ye'll be tired and hungry; and waes me, I hae little in the house that ye'll be able to eat."

"A soldier is never at a loss, Andrew," said the Major; "but I lived long enough at your expense, in old times; and it is your turn now to live at mine. Time about is fair play, you know," added he in a playful manner; "so I shall send a few refreshments from the inn, where I must bespeak a bed at any rate; and after supper, Andrew, we shall read a chapter, and pray together, as in other days."

He pressed the old man's hand, who accompanied him to the door; and addressing him tenderly, "Fare ye weel the now, Patie,—Major I mean," remained gazing after him until he was out of sight.

Major Burnside immediately proceeded to the village inn, from whence he sent such victuals as he could obtain on so short a notice, together with a bottle of wine, to Andrew Neilson's cottage; and in the meantime addressed a letter to the trustee on the estate of Achindarroch, requesting to know when he could be favoured with an interview, as he had it in prospect to become the purchaser.

Having despatched his letter, he returned to the cottage, where he encountered no small difficulty in persuading his venerable friend to partake of the viands he had sent him. "They were unco gude, nae doubt, but no like what he had been used to; and as for wine, he hadna tasted it for twenty year." The kindness of the Major, however, overcame his

scruples ; and he at length consented to share the meal of his guest. When that was concluded, the benevolent old man produced his family Bible ; and the Major requesting leave to read the chapter as in former days, it was resigned to him with a smile. The Major selected the forty-sixth chapter of Genesis ; but perceiving towards the close, that Andrew's feelings were again becoming too acute for expression, he closed the sacred volume, and kneeling by the old man's side, returned thanks in the name of both to that great and beneficent Being, who had so graciously watched over them through life and its dangers ; and who to all His other mercies had added the unspeakable gift of His only begotten and well beloved Son, who had died that they might live for ever.

CHAPTER III.

The moon-beams sparkle on the sea,
Come, fishers, ply the oar with me ;
And while along the deep we skim,
Lift up to God our evening hymn.

WHEN Major Burnside left his aged friend for the night, he did not immediately return to the inn. The mildness of the evening, together with the full splendour of a harvest moon, invited him to prolong his walk by the margin of the bay ; and thitherward, accordingly, he directed his steps. Twice he paused as he passed along the village, arrested by the accents of family devotion, a sound to which his ears had long been unaccustomed. His heart beat quicker, as he listened to the alternate rise and fall of the

ancient psalmody of his country ; he felt that he was indeed in Scotland ; the occurrences of the preceding twenty-five years appeared to him like a dream ; and as he pursued his way, his spirit rose in silent gratitude to Heaven, and he prayed that his countrymen might never so abuse their privileges, as to induce the great Master of the spiritual vineyard to remove their candlestick out of its place, or consign them to that heathen darkness, with the sight of which he had so long been familiar.

It was high water when he arrived at the side of the loch, where a scene of unexpected bustle presented itself. The fishermen, belonging to the village, were busy unmooring their boats, and preparing to resort to the herring fishery on Loch Fyne. But though all was activity, there was neither wrangling nor confusion ; the most perfect decorum and cheerfulness prevailed ; not an oath nor a profane jest was to be heard ; and an incident occurred, as the little fleet got under weigh, which powerfully affected the feelings of the Major. When all had embarked, upon a signal being given, a few strokes of the oars brought the boats into sailing order ; then a voice from the front row having asked if all were ready, and been answered by a hearty “aye, aye,” from every tongue in the company, each bent at once to his oar, and in the same instant commenced the hundred-and-seventh psalm, to a simple and appropriate tune. The sound of their manly voices as they rose in unison, the dashing of the oars which kept time with the melody, and the rippling of the

waves against the pebbled shore, formed a pleasing concert, to which the stillness of the evening, the mild lustre of the moon, and the beauty of the surrounding scenery, added charms inexpressible. Major Burnside stood rivetted to the spot; nor did he turn to leave it, until the sound, which had become fainter and fainter as the little navy receded from the shore, died away in the distance, and nothing was heard but the slumberous splash of the waves as they broke upon the beach.

When the Major at length resumed his walk along the shore, he continued to saunter by the margin of the loch, until he had almost reached the extremity of the village. He then turned to retrace his steps; but had scarcely done so, when he heard a groan proceed from the only cottage in that neighbourhood, from which a light continued to glimmer through the casement. He stopped to listen, and the expression of agony being repeated, he ran up to the door; but being unwilling to intrude where he was so completely a stranger, he stood for a few moments with his hand upon the latch, when a third groan still louder and more acute than the others overcame his hesitation, and he entered the cottage.

He immediately found himself in the presence of an elderly female, apparently in great distress; whose head, though she evidently belonged to the humbler ranks of society, was supported by a young lady of great personal beauty, and an appearance and manners which formed a singular contrast with the tokens of poverty by which she was surrounded.

“Pardon my intrusion, madam,” said Major Burnside, bowing politely to the latter. “I heard the sounds of distress, and thought it possible I might be of use.”

“If you are a medical man, sir,” replied the young lady, in the most winning accents, “you may be of the greatest service; for my poor friend here is in very acute pain, and the surgeon of our village being from home, I am at a loss what to do for her relief.”

“I am not a medical man, madam,” rejoined the Major; “but I have witnessed much of human suffering; and if you will allow me to inquire into the symptoms of the invalid, I think it not unlikely that I may be able to do her good.”

He then put a few questions to the poor woman; and having speedily ascertained the nature of her complaint, he remarked that, having served in India where disease was very rapid in its progress, he usually carried a few medicines in his portmanteau; and should immediately send a draught which he doubted not would be of service. So saying, he bowed again to the young lady, and hastened back to the inn; which he had almost reached before it once occurred to him, that he had neglected to inquire the name of his patient, or to make the inmates of the cottage acquainted with his own. Having prepared the draught, however, which he had promised to the invalid, he took the waiter into the street; and having pointed out the cottage by the light which still gleamed from the lattice, he requested him to convey the medicine, as speedily as possible, to a poor sick woman whom he should find within.

“ It is Morag Macneil’s cottage,” said the waiter ; “ I canna gae wrang ;” and off he tripped on his errand of mercy.

On re-entering the inn, Major Burnside found the landlord waiting to conduct him to his apartment ; and ascertained from him that the poor woman, whose sufferings he had commiserated, had been many years a servant to the last laird of Achindarroch, and was universally respected in the village as a person of piety and worth.

“ And the young lady, who lives with her ?” inquired the Major.

“ There’s nae young leddie lives wi’ her,” replied the landlord ; “ but if ye saw ane there, it could be naebody else but Miss Flora Maclaine. She gaes muckle about Morag.”

“ And who is Miss Flora Maclaine, if I may ask ?” said the Major.

“ A bonny young leddy, and a kind ane,” returned the landlord, with a sigh ; “ but waes me, sir, unfortunate. Wha wad ever thocht that the heiress o’ Achindarroch wad hae to work for her bread ! But to the surprise o’ the hale country, her father died insolvent ; and, for the last seven year, Miss Flora has maintained hersell by her needle.”

“ Has she no friends, then ?” asked the Major.

“ Nane, at least, that wad own her, sir,” said the landlord ; “ though when her cup was full, she had freends enow. But when ance a body’s back is at the wa’, ye ken, their freends is no to lippen to.”

“ Miss Maclaine of Achindarroch !” involuntarily

ejaculated the Major, when the landlord had retired. "How wonderful, how very wonderful are the ways of Providence! While honours and wealth have been flowing upon me in a foreign land, the daughter—the only child of the petty despot, whose *fiat* compelled me to leave my home, has been earning a scanty pittance by the labour of her hands. Yet lovely and compassionate she evidently is," said he, continuing his soliloquy, and walking several times rapidly across the apartment. "Pity, she should have been the daughter of such a man! Pity, too, she should have been unfortunate! Yet, who knows but her adversity may have been sanctified to her soul! 'Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth every child whom He receiveth.' But what is all this to me? and why should I feel so much interest in the offspring of a person, whose thoughts and acts towards me and mine were never otherwise than evil? Yet if she be a child of grace, why should I harbour an unkind idea respecting her? Surely it is the part of one, to whom so much has been forgiven, also to forgive much!" And, with this Christian sentiment on his lips, Major Burnside retired to rest.

Early on the following morning he bent his way towards the cottage of Morag Macneil, for the purpose of inquiring how she had passed the night. Somewhat to his disappointment, though he could not help wondering why it should be so, he found the poor woman alone; but was gratified to learn that his prescription had been completely successful, and that

the suffering, under which he had found her, was entirely removed. Old Morag was loud in her expressions of gratitude, and prayed that God would bless him and reward him for his kindness.

“I am already rewarded, my good woman,” said the Major, “in having been made useful to a suffering fellow-creature. But enough of that, Morag,” continued he, “for that I understand is your name; I trust that the young lady, whom I found with you last night, has not been injured by her fatigue and anxiety on your account.”

“Miss Flora do you mean?” replied Morag, “God’s blessing and mine be upon her! She never tires o’ being usefu’ to the distressed. She staid wi’ me till the sun was up, and then gaed hame to her wark; for she had a dress to finish for Miss Lamont o’ Barcland, that they say is to be married to the laird o’ Whinnybraes.”

“You were a servant to her father, I believe,” said the Major.

“I was in the house, when she was born,” returned Morag, wiping her eyes; “and little did we a’ think, that blithesome day, that the heiress o’ Achindarroch wad ever come to this.”

“God afflicts not willingly,” said the Major, in a soothing tone; “and she may be happier as she is, than if the mistress of a kingdom.”

“She’s happy and contentit baith,” rejoined Morag, with earnestness; “and the loss o’ her fortune never cost her a tear. Though her father was a doure and hard-heartit man, her mither was ane o’ the Lord’s

little flock, and brocht up Miss Flora in the fear o' God. Worthy woman! she did na live to see the downfa' o' her house, and had little reason to think that sic a day wad ever come; yet ye wad wonder how she spak o' the uncertainty o' riches, and how she accustomed Miss Flora, frae her very cradle, to the habits o' neatness and industry that's sae usefu' to her now."

"Such a mother was a treasure under any circumstances," said the Major; "but what said Achindarroch to such a mode of education?"

"Ye're no a stranger, I see, to our country way o' speakin'," answered Morag. "But the laird never interfered wi' ony thing, that was like to save him siller; and when he saw the leddy cuttin' up ane o' her auld gowns to mak a frock to Miss Flora, and the bonny bairn helpin' her, he never let on that he kenn'd what they were about."

"And when the day of trial came," said the Major, "did the young lady meet it like a Christian?"

"She was but young, sir," replied Morag, "little mair than fourteen; but it wad hae done your heart gude to see her. When black Colin cam in—that's the writer, but ye'll no ken him, a far awa' cousin, and they say a creditor of Achindarroch,—weel, when he cam in, and tell'd her that her father was dead, and hadna left her a shillin', she clappit her young hands thegither this way, and lookit up, and said, 'I have a Father in heaven still, and an inheritance there!'"

Major Burnside turned away towards the window,

as if to look out upon the beach ; but it was that he might, unseen, wipe the gathering tears from his eyes. Poor Morag was weeping herself, and therefore did not observe that he was moved. Recovering, however, from his' emotion, he resumed his place at her bedside, and endeavoured to comfort her with the hope of better times for her young mistress. "The dealings of Providence," said he, "are very mysterious ; and Miss Maclaine may yet again be mistress of Achindarroch."

"O that I might live to see that day !" said the faithful creature, folding her hands with an expression of the most intense feeling.

"Trust in God," replied the Major ; and slipping a sovereign into her hand, he left the poor woman overwhelmed with surprise and gratitude, and directed his steps towards the dwelling of his early friend, Andrew Neilson.

CHAPTER IV.

A Friend to all who feel distress,
A present help when troubles press,
A Father of the fatherless,
Is He who reigns on high.

THE old man was seated in the same arbour, in which Major Burnside had found him the preceding evening. After the first salutations, therefore, the latter placed himself by his side ; and, in compliance with his request to be made acquainted with some portion of his history since they had parted, commenced his narrative as follows :—

“I need not remind you, Andrew, that it was in consequence of my dog having accidentally killed a hare on the lands of Achindarroch, that I was compelled to leave my native village, to avoid being prosecuted as a poacher. I need not remind you, with how much earnestness you pleaded that the laird would forgive the unintentional trespass ; nor how the inexorable sovereign of a few acres refused to listen to any terms of accommodation whatever. I have seen many such things since. There are no men so ignoble in their sentiments, as those who have risen to opulence without merit ; and none so truly dignified as the sincere and single-hearted Christian, be his rank and station what they may.

“It was with a heavy heart that I parted with you at Otter Ferry ; and, depositing the Bible which you had given me in my bosom, began to climb the barren hills of Cowal. But it was not until I had passed the first range, and descended amidst the solitudes of Glendaruel, that I felt my desolate situation in all its bitterness. I threw myself on the ground at the foot of a rock, and gave vent to my feelings in a flood of tears. In a short time, however, your parting words recurred to my memory ; and I felt that the same God who protected Jacob on his way to Padanaram, was present with me, to succour and to guide. I rose to pursue my way ; but feeling my spirits still oppressed with sadness, I knelt beneath the canopy of heaven, and, in the artless language of boyhood, poured forth my whole soul to God. While thus engaged, I did not observe that my motions were

watched by an aged countryman on the heights above; who, judging from my behaviour (as he afterwards told me) that I was in distress, came down to afford me all the aid in his power. He listened to my little story with affectionate interest; regretted that his poverty would not allow him to do much; but stated, that if I were able to walk as far as Loch-Straven-head, where he resided, I should be welcome to a lodging for the night, and such fare as his family were possessed of. You may be sure that I accepted of his generous offer; and thus the first night of my exile passed over more comfortably than I could have expected.

“In the morning, my kind host (whose name, I remember, was Macfarlane) accompanied me some miles on my way to Dunoon; and enjoined me, on my arrival at that village, to inquire for a cousin of his, of the same name, who would show me equal kindness for his sake. When I reached Dunoon, however, I found this cousin, who was by trade a fisherman, about to sail for Greenock with a cargo of herrings, so that he could not conveniently accommodate me in his house. He gave me some victuals, notwithstanding, and invited me to accompany him to Greenock, as a cheap and easy way of getting forward on my journey; and there was too much real friendship in the offer, to leave me any disposition to decline it.

“At Greenock, it is probable that I might have remained for some days, for the purpose of endeavouring to procure employment; but it was so ordered

by Providence, that, shortly after my arrival I met a young seaman, whom I had seen at Kinloch, and who belonged to a coasting vessel on the eve of sailing for Leith, by way of the Forth and Clyde Canal. He accosted me in a friendly manner, expressed himself sorry for my situation, and pleaded my cause so well with the skipper of the sloop, that the latter agreed to give me a free passage to Leith, in return for the aid I might be able to afford them in navigating the vessel. Thus, at the end of six days from my leaving Kinloch, I was enabled to reach Edinburgh, without spending more than a few pence of my little stock of money; or encountering more personal fatigue than I had often previously undergone in pursuit of pleasure.

“Hitherto Providence had appeared to smile on my desolate situation. It pleased my heavenly Father, however, after my arrival in Edinburgh, to put my faith and principles to a severe trial. For several days I roamed through the streets of that magnificent city, in search of employment, but altogether in vain; until the contents of my little purse being at length entirely exhausted, the keeper of the obscure lodging-house in which I passed my nights, turned me out of doors without a penny in my pocket,—to starve or steal, it was all the same to him. He offered, indeed, to keep me a few nights longer, if I would give him my Bible; but I refused to part with it, whatever might be the consequences.

“I passed that day without food; and at night retired to an open shed in the Meadows, at that time

known by the name of the Bird's Cage, where I stretched myself on the bench, and contrived to sleep for some hours. Next morning I got up, hungry enough, as you may suppose; but as I could not obtain employment, and was ashamed to beg, I spent most of that day also without any refreshment. In the evening (I remember it as well as if it had been yesterday), I was sauntering along the pavement of George's Square, wearied and weak in body, and also much depressed in mind; when I observed a baker's basket stuck upon the railing, without any one near it, the owner having gone into a neighbouring house to deliver some bread. There were several penny loaves in the basket, and I was strongly tempted to appropriate one of them to my own use; but the excellent principles which you, my dear friend, had inculcated, overcame the cravings of nature, and I passed on. As I repassed the spot, the baker made his appearance, and requested me to assist him in placing the basket on his head. While in the act of doing so, one of the penny loaves, unseen by him, fell out upon the pavement. I took it up, and now the temptation was renewed with tenfold strength, and for a moment I felt inclined to yield to it. I raised the bread towards my mouth, but pausing that I might implore a blessing on the meal, I felt that I could neither ask nor expect one under such circumstances; and making a powerful effort, I repressed the desire of eating, and running after the baker, returned him the bread.

“Hungry as I was, I felt a secret pleasure in

having thus done what appeared to be my duty ; and I entertained a hope that my Father in heaven, who had seen both the action and the motive, would in His own good time, supply all my wants. The action, however, had been witnessed by other eyes than those of Omniscience ; for I had scarcely returned to the spot where the temptation had occurred, when a young gentleman in a military undress (who had been standing at a window with some ladies, but concealed from me by a venetian blind), threw up the sash, and asked me in a tone of kindly expostulation, why I loitered there so long, and did not go home, as it was growing late. I replied, in the most respectful manner I was able, that I had no home to go to. Upon this he interrogated me as to whence I came, and what had brought me to Edinburgh. I told him my story, which he heard with more interest than I could have expected ; and then, looking steadily in my face, inquired if I was ill. I answered, that I was not ; but that I was very hungry, having eaten nothing for the last two days. ‘What!’ said he, ‘did I not see you return a penny loaf to a baker, which dropped out of his basket within these few minutes?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘you did.’ ‘How came you to do that,’ said he, ‘if you are so very hungry as you say?’ I answered, ‘Because I fear God.’ When he heard me say that, he looked at the ladies, and immediately retired from the window. I was about to leave the spot, but in less than a minute the gentleman appeared at the door, and invited me to enter. I had no sooner

done so, than he took me by the hand, and said, 'Poor boy! I am an orphan myself, but God be praised! not quite so destitute as you are. We must know each other better; but in the mean time, you must eat. Follow me.'

"So saying, he conducted me down stairs to the housekeeper's room, and requested the good dame who acted in that capacity, to give me some food. She obeyed him with alacrity, and in a very few minutes, a comfortable meal was smoking on the table. In the meantime, I had laid my bonnet on the chair beside me; and taking my Bible from my bosom, placed it within it. The gentleman observed me, and taking up the sacred volume, 'I do not now wonder,' said he, 'that you should prefer hunger to dishonesty. Your bosom friend is well chosen. Follow its precepts, my lad, and trust God for the rest. But you will probably eat more at ease if I leave you alone with Mrs Damson; and when you have supped, I daresay she will be able to provide you with a bed. To-morrow I shall, perhaps, have something more to say to you.'

"When I was left alone with the housekeeper, I found the old lady sufficiently inquisitive. But as she seemed disposed to be kind to me, and moreover, had some reason to look upon me as an intruder, I considered it best to gratify her curiosity; and accordingly related to her the incidents of my little history. Nor had I afterwards any cause to repent of my confidence, for nothing could exceed her attention to me, during the remainder of my stay in Edinburgh.

“On the following day, Captain Graham (for that was the name of my benefactor) informed me, that his regiment was lying at Chatham, under orders for India ; that he himself was under the necessity of joining it in a few days ; but that he was in want of a servant, and if I had no objection to accompany him abroad, was willing to engage me in that capacity. ‘You are but fifteen, you say,’ continued he, ‘and I never had a servant so young. But you are tall of your age, and I like your principles. Besides, I am a bachelor, and do not require much attendance, so that I doubt not of your suiting me very well. At least, you may make trial of the situation ; and in a year or two, if you prefer that line of life, you may enter the army, under my command.’ Destitute as I was, Andrew, and far from any one who was capable of advising me, I thought the offer too good to be refused. What I had seen of Captain Graham had also prepossessed me in his favour. He was evidently a man that feared God, and such a person was not likely to prove an unkind master. I therefore thankfully closed with his proposal ; and having been provided, at his expense, with a liberal supply of clothing, I, in less than a week, set sail with him for London.

“Nothing particular occurred on our voyage, except that my master daily treated me more and more kindly. He had, by way of ascertaining the extent of my education, given me some papers to copy ; a task which I performed very much to his satisfaction. He then (for at sea people have a great deal of

leisure) proposed some questions in arithmetic ; and was pleased with the ease and readiness with which I solved them. Nor was he offended, when, one day coming into the cabin, he found me reading a copy of Horace, belonging to himself, which he had left open on the table when he went upon deck. But he was more gratified still (at least so he expressed himself) with the acquaintance which I manifested with the truths of revelation ; and I could perceive that, after his first conversation with me on these topics, he used me less as a servant than a son, and often performed those little offices for himself, which formerly he had desired me to execute for him. Thanks, however, my kind friend, to your valuable instructions, this treatment only made me more assiduous in my endeavours to please him.

“ When we reached the Thames, we were informed by a pilot, who had come alongside, that the troops had already embarked at Gravesend. At that port, therefore, we went ashore ; and in a day or two afterwards, were conveyed on board the ‘ Marchioness of Exeter,’ East Indiaman, the vessel in which the detachment that Captain Graham belonged to, was ordered to proceed to Bengal. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before the fleet got under weigh, and during that time an incident occurred, which had an important influence on my future fortunes.

“ The Colonel’s son, a fine lively boy about ten years of age, was very fond of climbing up the rigging of the vessel. He had often been forbidden to do so by his parents, but in the exuberance of his

spirits, he sometimes forgot the prohibition. When I happened to be on deck, I always watched his motions, lest an accident should occur; not that I had been desired to do so; but a gracious Providence, foreseeing what was to happen, had inclined me to it. One day the youngster had mounted so much higher than usual, that he conceived the idea of getting on the main-top; but lost his footing in the attempt, and fell into the river. I instantly plunged into the water after him; and although the shout of 'a boy over board!' ran promptly along the deck, I had brought him to the surface, swimming with the one arm, and supporting him with the other, before any one had time to follow my example. Six or seven seaman would now have jumped in after me; but the officer on the watch, perceiving that the child was safe, gave orders that no man should stir. 'Throw that brave boy a rope,' said he, 'but do not deprive him of a single yarn of the honour he has won.' A rope was accordingly thrown to me, which I twisted round my arm, and was speedily drawn upon deck, where I had the pleasure of delivering my now reviving charge into the arms of his distracted parents."

CHAPTER V.

The clime of Ind is fair and bright,
And bright its coral strand;
But dearer to the wanderer's sight
Were his own native land.

“WHEN the first burst of affectionate congratulation

was over," continued the Major, "Colonel Maxwell led me aside; and taking a ten-pound note from his pocket-book, requested me to accept of it, as a small testimony of his own gratitude, and that of his lady. Though fully sensible of the extent of the service which I had rendered him (for Master Maxwell was his only child), I was unwilling to receive the money; and respectfully stated as the reason, that, in saving the life of a fellow-creature, when it was in my power to do so, I had only performed my duty. The Colonel, however, insisted on my acceptance of his bounty; which I accordingly transmitted, by next post, as a token of my own respect and gratitude to you.

"Thus the matter appeared to pass over; and I should probably soon have forgotten the incident altogether, had not the seamen, as well as the officers of the ship, often clapped me on the back, called me 'a fine fellow for a landsman,' and expressed their regret that I was not 'a blue jacket.' It pleased God, however, that the adventure should have much more important consequences.

"In a very few days, Master Maxwell had completely recovered from the effects of his accident; though he was not permitted to come again upon deck, until the fleet was under weigh for India. The first time he appeared, was in company with his father; and perceiving me at a little distance, he came skipping up to me, and said "Mr Burnside, Mr Burnside, you are going to be my tutor!" Surprised at a style of address so entirely unexpected, I made no reply, but looked alternately at the Colonel and his son.

Perceiving my embarrassment, the former took my hand in the most condescending manner, and addressed me, as nearly as I can remember, in the following terms. ‘Henry,’ said he, ‘has been rather precipitate in his announcement, nevertheless he has only stated what I meant myself to propose to you. The truth is, my young friend, that I have ascertained, from Captain Graham, that you have had an education which fits you for a superior station to that which you now occupy ; and, as this heedless boy requires some one to keep him in his proper element, it has occurred to me to engage you in the capacity of his tutor. He can read English pretty well ; you are able, I understand, to teach him writing and accounts, with the rudiments of the Latin language ; and the chaplain of the regiment has undertaken to superintend the studies of both, at least until our arrival in India. Your salary shall be twenty-five pounds per annum ; to which, if your attainments answer my expectations, I shall add five pounds each successive year, while you remain in my family.’ There was something in this offer, and in the manner in which it was made, so kind and attractive ; and the situation was one so far above my fondest expectations, that, but for the ties of gratitude and honour which bound me to the service of Captain Graham, I should at once have expressed my dutiful acceptance of it. As matters stood, however, I felt that it would be wrong to do so, without consulting that gentleman, and asking his advice. This I stated to Colonel Maxwell, in the most respectful terms which occurred to me. ‘Oh ! as to

that,' said he, 'Charles Graham has already consented. He is too much your friend to stand in the way of any thing, which is calculated to promote your interests.'

"Every obstacle being thus removed, the arrangement proposed to me by Colonel Maxwell was next day carried into effect, and of course produced a most important alteration in my circumstances. For some time, I ate my meals along with my young charge, in a small cabin apart; but the Colonel and his lady, perceiving that I was not disposed to trespass on their indulgence, afterwards assigned me a place at their own table. In the early part of the day, I gave my dear pupil the best instructions I was able in penmanship, arithmetic, and Latin; while in the afternoons, the chaplain gave us familiar lectures on the principles of natural and moral philosophy. Twice or thrice a week, too, the paymaster of the regiment (an ingenious and accomplished man, with whom Master Maxwell was an especial favourite), gave us lessons in drawing and fortification; and pleased with the interest which I took in the latter, often amused us by making models of forts and batteries, and sketching plans of sieges and engagements in the field.

"In the evenings, while the other passengers were occupied with cards, music, or dancing, my youthful pupil and I spent much of our time alone, sometimes in our own cabin, and sometimes on the quarter-deck. On those occasions, I endeavoured to instil into his mind the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel; and as I accompanied my feeble efforts with fervent prayers

for a blessing from on high, I had the satisfaction of seeing the hallowed seed take root in his heart, and produce its genuine fruits in his life and conversation. He was naturally a very affectionate and docile boy, but thoughtless, and inclined to frolic and mischief, in which he was encouraged by some of the younger officers of the regiment. By degrees, however, he abandoned such practices, and shunned the society of those who had abetted his predilection for them. So great, indeed, was the change produced in his deportment, that the chaplain was often rallied upon the subject, and accused of attempting to make a parson of the child ; a charge which he denied, as well indeed he might, for he never opened his lips to either of us on the subject of religion.

“ In this manner, the time passed pleasantly away, until our arrival at Calcutta, where the regiment remained for some months. It was then ordered to Patna, and subsequently to Benares. At this last mentioned station we continued four years, during which period my beloved pupil advanced rapidly in knowledge, and acquired nearly all that I was capable of teaching him. It was evident, however, that his health was giving way under the deleterious influence of the climate ; and, just as he had entered on his sixteenth year, his complaints became so alarming, that his parents, after trying every expedient which the skill of their medical advisers could suggest, resolved, as a last resource, to return with him to Europe. A mysterious Providence prevented the accomplishment of their wishes. Before the Colonel’s

leave of absence arrived, the symptoms of the dear youth's disorder increased so much in severity, that he could not be removed to any distance whatever ; and after months of suffering, endured with exemplary fortitude and resignation, he fell asleep in Christ. It was, indeed, delightful to contemplate the influence of genuine faith, as exemplified in the experience of this young disciple. Even in the midst of his severest agonies, he would often press my hand, and say, 'This is nothing to what Jesus suffered.' Nor was the impressive spectacle without a sanctified influence on the hearts of his parents ; who, from that period (and my opportunities of observing them were many), appeared to renounce the world and its vanities, and to 'ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.'

"But, to return to my own history. On the day after that which consigned the remains of my dear pupil to the tomb, Colonel Maxwell entered my apartment ; and, after thanking me in the warmest manner for the attention I had paid his son, presented me with a commission as Ensign, in the regiment which he commanded. "I am unwilling that we should part," said he, "and this will keep us in some measure together. The commission was designed for Henry, but" — He was unable to proceed, and wrung my hand in silence. My own feelings were scarcely less excited ; but, while I accepted of this fresh token of his kindness with every expression of gratitude, I endeavoured at the same time to drop a few words of consolation, suited to the circumstances of my beneficent patron.

"For six years, during which the troops, though

frequently moved about from one station to another, were not engaged in any enterprise of moment, I continued to serve as Ensign; at the same time doing every thing in my power to supply, to Colonel Maxwell and his lady, the loss which they had sustained through the death of their son. At the end of the period which I have mentioned, some deaths and promotions having taken place in the regiment, the Colonel, unsolicited by me, took advantage of an opportunity which presented itself, and procured my advancement to the rank of Lieutenant.

“Shortly after this occurrence, and while the regiment was stationed at Delhi, I was one evening returning to quarters, after visiting one of our outposts, when I heard the cries of distress from a neighbouring thicket. I immediately drew my sword, and hastened to the spot, where I found a young native female in the hands of two Europeans, who were proceeding to use her in a most improper manner. In a tone of authority, I commanded them to desist. Surprised at my unexpected appearance, they relinquished their hold of the young woman, who immediately darted off like a deer, and effected her escape. Stung with rage and disappointment, the assailants turned upon me; and with shame and regret I recognised in them two of my brother officers, whom I could not previously have suspected of conduct so brutal. I remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their behaviour; high words ensued; and, in consequence, I received a challenge next morning from each. I put the hostile missives in my pocket,

without returning any immediate answer; for, from what I had heard of the proceedings of one of the native princes in the vicinity, it occurred to me that a fitter occasion for testing the courage of all three, was likely soon to present itself. Accordingly in less than a week, Colonel Maxwell, who was the senior officer at the station, summoned a council of war; and laid before us instructions, which he had received from the Commander-in-chief, to endeavour, by a sudden movement, to surprise a fortress belonging to the Rajah; in which the latter was understood to keep his wives and treasure, and the possession of which on our part would in all probability prevent a war. 'It is a service of considerable danger,' said the Colonel; 'the fortress is strong, and the access difficult; the number of men that can be spared is only two hundred; nevertheless the attempt must be made; who among you is willing to head the expedition?' There was silence for some minutes; at the end of which I stepped forward, and stated, that having had occasion to visit and take drawings of the fortress, I was well acquainted with its situation and approaches, and should cheerfully undertake the command of the detachment. 'Who is ready to accompany Lieutenant Burnside?' inquired the Colonel. 'We are all ready,' was the reply; 'he has only to choose.' I named the two officers who had sent me the challenges. 'Go to the barracks, and pick your men,' said the Colonel. We did so, and set out the same night.

"On the way, as we rode a little in advance of our troops, I explained to my companions the motives

of my conduct ; and told them that by sun-rise we should have an opportunity of showing our courage in our country's service, which was infinitely preferable to doing so in a private quarrel. With one voice they expressed their approbation of the course I had pursued, apologized for their own behaviour, and assured me that I should have no reason to regret the confidence I had placed in them. And nobly did they redeem their pledge, for they were both killed at my side next morning, as we were storming the fortress ; which I, nevertheless, carried at the point of the bayonet, and planted the British colours on the ramparts. The Rajah immediately submitted ; and in consequence, I not only received a large amount of prize money, but was rewarded for my exploit with the rank of Captain.

“ About four years afterwards, our regiment was ordered home to England ; and being unwilling to part company with my gallant associates, and more especially with my excellent Colonel, I prepared to return along with them. An opportunity, however, occurring of exchanging with an officer of another corps, who, in addition to the rank which I myself possessed, held also the Commissariat of his regiment, I resolved to embrace it ; conceiving that by completing my period of service in India, and under such circumstances, I should be enabled to retire in a more affluent condition, than was otherwise likely to be the case.

“ Upon entering on my new department of duty, I found much confusion to unravel, and many abuses to correct. The experience, however of a few years,

convinced me that the Commissariat could be conducted on a simpler plan, and at much less expense, than had been usual in India. These views I developed in a Memorial to the Commander-in-chief; and received, in return, the thanks of his Excellency, together with the rank of Major. Considerable changes have since taken place in that department; and many of the recommendations, contained in my memorial, have, I believe, been adopted.

“The period at length arrived, when I could retire on full pay; and in circumstances such as, at one period, I should have regarded as unattainable. My only source of uneasiness, on returning to my native country, was the doubt whether you, my dear friend, were alive, to share the wealth which your considerate kindness, and early instructions, had been the principal means of my acquiring. Most happy, then, am I to find, that you have been spared to witness and participate in the prosperity of the orphan; whose life your humanity saved, and whose mind you were at such pains to cultivate.”

CHAPTER VI.

His lonely ones the Lord will place,
Where social joys and love are found;
And while He fills their hearts with grace,
Will make their corn and wine abound.

It would be impossible to depict, in words, the almost breathless interest, with which the benevolent old man listened to the Major's narrative. Neither has

it been considered necessary to break the thread of the gallant officer's story, by placing on record any of the ejaculatory remarks, with which the kind guardian of his childhood repeatedly interrupted its progress. Suffice it to say, that when Major Burnside arrived at the conclusion of his history, the aged villager lifted his bonnet from his head, and, in an audible voice, returned thanks to the Father of Mercies, for the kindness with which He had watched over, and the munificence with which He had blessed, the child of his adoption.

"And now, Andrew," inquired the Major, in a tone of affectionate interest, "tell me how you have been since we parted?"

"Aff an' on, aff an' on, sir," replied Andrew, "for the last ten or eleven year. Braw an' hearty in the simmer, as ye see me the now; but sair troubled with the pains in the winter time. But praised be His name, I have wantit for naething. Your auld freend, the dominie, was like a brither to me as lang as he leaved; an' when he was ta'en awa', there was ane raised up to look after me, in a quarter where I least expeckit."

"Indeed!" said the Major.

"Ye may say sae," resumed the old man; "but your wonder will be doubled when I tell you wha I mean. It's true a sweet apple often grows on a crookit tree; but never did I look for either kindness or good-will frae a Maclaine o' Achindarroch."

"Has Miss Flora been kind to you then?" inquired the Major.

“Miss Flora!” repeated the old man, with surprise.
“What do ye ken about Miss Flora?”

“I have seen her,” said the Major.

“It’s been in your sleep, then,” rejoined Andrew, incredulously; “for she wasna born when ye left Kinloch.”

“I was awake, nevertheless, when I saw the young lady,” replied the Major; and he related the occurrences of the preceding evening.

“It was just like hersell,” observed the old man; “but Morag had a kind o’ claim upon her, an’ I had nane. May the blessin’ that Naomi pronounced on her gude-dochters rest upon her! The Lord deal kindly wi’ her, as she has done wi’ me; and grant that she may some day find rest in the house o’ her husband!”

The Major sighed, but made no remark; on which the old man regarded him with an arch look, and with a playful smile proceeded: “Ye seem interestit in that benison, Patie. The estate o’ Achindarroch is still in the market: an’ if ye hae ony notion o’ playin’ the part o’ Boaz, ye may gang farrer and fare waur, baith wi’ the ledly an’ the land.”

The Major now smiled in his turn; and desirous of obtaining a little more information on a subject, which excited a greater interest in his bosom than he could account for, inquired if Miss Maclaine was a pious young lady.

“Faith works by love,” replied Andrew, “purifies the heart, an’ overcomes the world. By a’ thae tokens Miss Flora is a child o’ God: an’ a humbler,

meeker, bonnier lassie ye'll no find in Scotland, spier whar ye may."

The Major was about to make some farther inquiries, when a messenger from the village inn drew near to acquaint him, that a gentleman had that moment arrived from Inverary, and wished to see him on important business. The Major immediately obeyed the call, and found the stranger to be Mr Colin Campbell, trustee on the estate of Achindarroch; a little thickset man about five feet high, whose singularly dark complexion had procured for him, throughout the county, the appellation of Colin Dhu, or Black Colin of Inverary. While exchanging the customary salutations with Major Burnside, this personage continued viewing him from head to foot, as if taking the dimensions of his capacity for business; but if the frank appearance of the gentleman, with whom he had to deal, or his military dress, had inspired a hope of his being easily overreached, a very short conversation dispelled the idea. The man of war soon proved himself a match for the man of law; and examined the papers, which he produced, with an attention and a knowledge of business, which convinced the latter that he was not to be imposed upon. Having satisfied himself that the creditors of the last owner of Achindarroch had acquired a legal title to dispose of the property, and that Mr Colin Campbell was fully empowered to act as their representative, the Major proposed that they should adjourn to the grounds; where he inspected the fences, the mansion-house, the woods, and the soil, with a

patience and a precision, which showed that he was no novice in such matters.

On their return to the inn, Major Burnside begged to be informed what value the creditors set upon the property. Being told that the price expected was thirty thousand pounds, he inquired if Miss Mac-laine would be benefited by the sale. He was answered in the negative: whereupon he remarked, that the business then resolved itself into an ordinary mercantile transaction; for that, though he might have given somewhat more than the estate was worth, provided the young lady had had a reversionary interest in the matter, he was not disposed to do so for the benefit of those, whose connection with the property was merely commercial. On hearing this announcement, the trustee's countenance fell; but unwilling to appear disconcerted, he entered into a lengthened detail of the local advantages which the property presented; and concluded by expressing first his hope, then his belief, and finally his assurance, that the Major would not consider thirty thousand pounds too much. To all this Major Burnside calmly replied, that, however much he might have been disposed to think so when the estate was first offered for sale, had he been on the spot to witness its condition at that time, it was evident that the mansion-house and fences had since fallen much out of repair; that three thousand pounds at least would require to be expended before the one could be rendered habitable, or the other secure; and that in common fairness that sum ought

to be deducted from the price demanded. Though unable to evade the force of this argument, the trustee would gladly have insisted on the whole sum; but finding the Major inflexible, and being afraid of losing his purchaser, he at length assented to the terms proposed; and having requested the Major to make him a tender of the money in writing, he intimated in the same form his acceptance of the offer.

These preliminaries being settled, Mr Colin Campbell posted back to Inverary, with all the speed of which his little grey nag was capable; and having shut himself up in his office, set to work in good earnest, to arrange and prepare the title-deeds for a settlement. So intent, indeed, was he on bringing the matter to a close, lest the Major should after all recede from his agreement, that it is even said he spent two whole days in his chambers, without once crossing the threshold of Widow M'Nicoll's tavern; to the surprise and disappointment of the Crow Pie Club, who were as much chagrined at his absence, as they were unable to account for the phenomenon. Be that as it may, on the morning of the fourth day, he again made his appearance at Kinloch; and having delivered over the property in due form to Major Burnside, returned to Inverary with a lighter heart, and a heavier purse, than he had ever known since he first began to handle a goose-quill.

On the afternoon of the same day, Major Burnside proceeded towards Achindarroch, for the purpose of deciding what portion of the necessary repairs he should cause to be immediately commenced.

Upon entering the grounds, he observed a female walking up the avenue before him, the elegance of whose person, and the neat simplicity of whose dress, convinced him she could be no other than Miss Mac-laine, whom he had not seen since the evening of his arrival. Having speedily overtaken her, he found that his conjecture was correct; and having respectfully addressed her, he was happy to see that she recognised him as the person who had been so useful to her humble friend. He, therefore, entered into conversation with her as follows :

“ You are partial to these woods, I perceive, Miss Mac-laine,” said he.

“ It is natural that I should be so, sir,” replied the lady; “ and as I know not how long I may be permitted to enjoy the privilege of walking in them, I endeavour to avail myself of it as often as possible.”

“ I trust, madam,” said the Major, “ that you will always consider yourself so privileged.”

“ I do so, at present, sir,” returned she; “ but should the property be disposed of to a stranger, I shall of course be deprived of the sweet solace of occasionally visiting the abode, and endeavouring to recall the remembrance of my parents.”

“ By no means, madam,” rejoined the Major. “ The heart would be callous indeed, which would deprive you of such a privilege. Of this I am certain, that although in the course of Providence these grounds have passed into the hands of one who has long been a stranger in Argyleshire, the new proprietor will always be happy to see you within their precincts.”

“Is Achindarroch then sold, sir?” inquired Miss Maclaine, turning pale.

“It is so, madam,” replied the Major, “but to me, who”——

The increasing agitation of the young lady prevented him from finishing the sentence. She became still more pale, trembled, and would have fallen, had not Major Burnside offered her his arm, and supported her to a seat, which happened to be near.

“Pardon this weakness, sir,” said she, gradually recovering her self-possession. “It is foolish, as well as sinful. But though long accustomed to look forward to such an event, I was not prepared to hear that Achindarroch had indeed passed away from my family.”

“Whether it shall eventually do so, Miss Maclaine,” said the Major, taking her hand, “will in a great measure depend on your own decision. The new proprietor of Achindarroch is before you; and if you will consent to unite your fortunes with his, you will acquire a legal title to that privilege which you value so much, and which no one will then be able to take from you.”

“I shall not pretend to misunderstand you, sir,” replied Miss Maclaine, colouring deeply; nor, poor and friendless as I am, do I underrate the generosity which prompts the offer you make me. But the engagement you allude to is of much too serious a nature, to be entered upon without deliberation and caution. Our acquaintance has been brief, and we know little of each other.”

“ You are right, madam,” said the Major. “ There are many things, besides fortune, which a follower of Jesus ought to require in a companion for life ; and believe me, Miss Maclaine, had I not been well aware that you were a fellow-traveller with myself to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the overture which I have made had never escaped my lips.”

Miss Maclaine’s eyes glistened as he spoke ; but Major Burnside did not press the matter farther at that time. As they rose, however, to resume their walk, he again offered her his arm, which she accepted without hesitation ; and forgetful how time passed, they continued to roam for hours, amidst the dark foliage, and smiling fields of Achindarroch ; and finally, about sunset, walked into the village together, apparently as well acquainted with each other, as if they had been on terms of intimacy for years.

It was not long before Morag Macneil was told, by more than one gossiping neighbour, that Miss Maclaine had been seen walking arm-in-arm with the strange gentleman, who was reported to have purchased the lands of Achindarroch. Various were the comments, which her informants made on the circumstance ; but, interesting as the intelligence was, when compared with what had passed between the Major and herself, the faithful old creature made no remark whatever. She left that, and everything else that concerned her, in the hands of her Heavenly Father. In less than three months, however, she had the happiness of seeing the first earthly wish of her heart accomplished ; and her young lady rein-

stalled as mistress of that mansion, in which she first drew the breath of life. On the same day, which witnessed this auspicious event, Old Morag entered on a new sphere of duty, as housekeeper in Major Burnside's family, with the prospect of closing her days in comfort and in peace.

Major Burnside also fitted up an apartment in his house, for the venerable patron of his childhood. The benevolent old man lived to witness the baptism of an heir to the estate of Achindarroch; and the tears started to his eyes, as he heard the officiating clergyman admit the infant a member of the visible church, by the name of Andrew Neilson. Old Morag had the honour and happiness of weaning the young laird; and there is not a fatherless family in the parish of St Serle, which has not cause to bless the Providence that shone so benignly on the fortunes of the ORPHAN OF KINLOCH.

THE YOUNG PEDLAR OF CORRIVOULIN.

What voice disturbs the calm of eve,
Where nought but ruin'd walls appear ?
Can fancy thus the sense deceive ?
Or are they mortal tones I hear ?

I HAD been ferried across the Connel, and was retracing my steps towards Oban, when I turned aside to take a parting look of the ruined castle of Dunstaffnage.

This ancient fortress, once the residence of Scotland's kings, stands on a rocky promontory at the entrance of Loch Etive. The building is of a square form, the sides of a commanding height, although the masonry be rude ; and the rock having been hewn away on a line with the walls, and made precipitous like them, the castle must, before the invention of gunpowder, have been nearly impregnable. In former days, it was accessible only by a drawbridge, which fell from a little gateway ; but, at present, the interior is approached by a staircase of a considerable altitude, as it is necessary to surmount the rock before reaching the castle. Altogether, the building is an interesting relic of feudal times ; and adds a prominent and striking feature to the beautiful and romantic scenery by which it is surrounded.

Adjacent to the castle, and a little further inland, stand the ruins of a small chapel, formerly used as a place of devotion by the garrison. In this, now

roofless, building, many kings of Scotland are said to be interred : and the circumstance is not improbable, from its proximity to what was undoubtedly a royal residence, although it is well known that Iona was the favourite cemetery of the Scottish monarchy for many generations.

On the south side of the chapel there is a projecting rock, in front of which I paused for a few minutes, to contemplate the landscape beneath and around me. Immediately before me was the chapel, roofless and dilapidated, and voiceless as the dust which slept within its walls. A little beyond it was the castle, tall, prominent, and commanding ; but silent also as the grave of its inhabitants. Farther off, and gleaming with the rays of the setting sun, was the bright and azure sea, with here and there a white sail flitting gracefully along. Farther off still were the Island of Lismore, and the lofty hills of Morvern, rearing their bold summits towards the sky. It was a prospect eminently fitted to impress the imagination ; and I lingered on the spot, until warned by the rapidly descending sun that the day was already spent, and that I was a stranger in the land which I so much admired.

As I turned to depart, I was startled by the sound of vocal music issuing from the chapel. I had carefully examined the building but a short time before, and had seen no one within it ; neither had I observed any one approach it afterwards. Still, it was quite possible that some lonely worshipper might, unperceived by me, have sought the altar of his forefathers,

there to unite his remembrance of them with his adoration of the Most High. Curious, therefore, to see the person who had chosen that spot for his evening devotions, I drew near to the chapel on tip-toe, and looked in ; but there was no one to be seen ; nothing was visible but the bare walls, and the long grass, and the tombstones of the dead. The music, however, continued to issue slowly and solemnly from the centre of the building. The language was the Gaelic, the voice apparently that of a young man about twenty years of age, and the theme one of the Psalms of David. I am not superstitious, but I felt a singular sensation creep over my frame, at thus "hearing a voice, but seeing no man." I walked round the chapel, then retired to my former station beside the rock, and surveyed every spot within sight, but no human being was to be seen. Yet the voice rose and fell in sweet melody as before, distinctly and audibly from the roofless sanctuary. "Can this be real?" said I to myself, "or is my imagination deceiving me? Has some disembodied spirit returned to the scene of its former devotions, to renew the orisons of departed years, or may this strange phenomenon be traced to natural causes? At all events, I shall await the issue." I looked towards the setting sun ; its disk already touched the horizon, and I was still three miles from Oban ; but the idea of leaving the spot without solving the mystery, if it were capable of solution, was even more disagreeable than that of a star-light journey amidst the mountain solitudes of a strange land.

I had scarcely adopted the resolution of awaiting the event, when the music ceased, and there was silence for about two minutes ; after which the voice again rose distinctly, in the form of slow and solemn prayer to the Almighty. The words were Gaelic as before, but I knew enough of that language to be aware that the invisible worshipper was wrestling powerfully with his God. My wonder and curiosity increased as the prayer proceeded ; for, besides praying for his own salvation, and that of his kindred and fellow-men, the unseen speaker pleaded earnestly for the success of the Bible and Missionary and Tract and School Societies, and in a more especial manner of the Society for support of Gaelic schools in the Highlands. "If this be a disembodied spirit," thought I, "it must be one which has not been long disengaged from the flesh, for these societies are but of recent institution ; or the inhabitants of the unseen world possess a most accurate knowledge of what is doing in this." In the meantime, the voice ceased altogether, silence sunk afresh upon the scene, and I seemed to feel more than ever alone. I again approached the chapel, and looked in ; but it was empty as before ; and the stillness, which on my first arrival had pervaded that resting-place of the dead, now appeared to be doubly solemn. The voice at any rate was gone ; and the invisible worshipper seemed to have departed, without leaving me the slightest clue to the mystery which had perplexed me.

I was about to quit the spot with my astonishment unabated, and my curiosity wound up to the highest

pitch, when I perceived a slender lad appear from behind the rock, in front of which I had been standing; and, without observing me, bend his steps towards the Connel. "Can this be the invisible worshipper?" said I, half aloud; "and has the phenomenon, which has puzzled me been merely the consequence of an echo?" I smiled involuntarily, as this idea flashed across my mind; and calling after the young man, I requested him to stop. He did so, and approached me. He was dressed in the light blue coat and trousers of the West Highlands, and had a bonnet of a somewhat darker shade upon his head. He had a staff in one hand; and supported with the other a large and heavy box, which was also suspended from his neck by a broad strap of black leather. It struck me, as he drew near, that there was something very ingenuous in his appearance; he bowed respectfully when I addressed him; and, in reply to my inquiry if he had been praising God and praying aloud behind that rock, he acknowledged with a modest blush, and in good English, that he had. Although the tone and language were different, the voice was the same as that which had proceeded from the chapel.

"Were you aware," said I, "that a remarkable echo existed in this place?"

"An echo, sir," replied the youth; "I do not know what it means."

I explained to him, in as few words as possible, the philosophy of sound, and the nature of an echo; and then inquired if he were really ignorant that such a thing existed there. He assured me that he

was ; and went on to say, that he was comparatively a stranger to the place ; for that, though he sometimes went to Oban, to dispose of his wares, he had visited Dunstaffnage but once before ; and that then he was alone, without any one to point out the curiosities of the neighbourhood, if there were any.

“And how did you happen,” said I, “to come here this evening?”

“As to that, sir,” replied he, “I have no objections to own it. In the house where I slept last night, there was no opportunity for prayer or praise ; and, as I was to pass this night at Connel Ferry, I thought I might again be interrupted. So I turned out of the road to seek a quiet nook, where, unseen and unheard, as I thought, except by God Himself, I might sing His praises, and seek His face in prayer.”

“And do you always use the Gaelic language in your devotions?”

“In general I do, sir. It is the language of my country, and of my father’s house ; and when my piety is the warmest, it always finds vent in Gaelic.”

There was so much good sense, as well as devotional feeling, in the young man’s answers, that I felt desirous of knowing something more about him. Anxious, however, in the first place, to make another trial of the echo, I requested him to retire once more behind the rock, and to reply aloud to the questions I should put. He complied without a moment’s hesitation ; and, as soon as he disappeared, I commenced the dialogue as follows :—

“What is your name?”

“Norman Macleod,” answered the voice, distinctly and audibly from the chapel.

“What is your business?”

“A travelling merchant.”

“Where do you come from?”

“Oban.”

“Where are you going?”

“To Ardnamurchan.”

The illusion was complete. Every syllable of the replies issued distinctly from the chapel, as if the youth himself had been there. While I was musing on the influence which such a phenomenon might have had on superstitious minds, and the uses to which it might have been put in the days of Popish delusion, the youth himself rejoined me; and willing that he should be sensible of the effect which his devotional exercises had had upon me, I told him that I should now retire behind the rock, and answer any questions he might put to me, when he would find that my voice would proceed, not from the place where I was standing, but from the chapel.

“It would ill become me, sir,” said the youth, in his usual modest manner, “to put questions to a gentleman like you; but, if you will repeat a verse of Scripture, it will come to the same thing.”

I accordingly went behind the rock, and repeated the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses of the eleventh chapter of St John; “Jesus said unto her I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and

whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die. Believest thou this?"

When I returned to the spot, where I had left my new acquaintance, I found him with his mouth open, his eyes staring, and his hands folded upon his breast. Although conscious of the effect, which the same phenomenon had produced upon myself, I could not help smiling at his astonishment; and addressing him in a gay tone, I said, "That is a curious thing, and in the days of Romish superstition might have been turned to some account."

"Yes, sir," replied the youth, solemnly; "and the days are not long gone by, when, if I had heard such a thing without previous warning, I should have fled from the spot with horror, and been haunted all the rest of my life with imaginary terrors."

"And would it not have had the same effect now?"

"No, sir, I think not."

"Why so?"

"Because, blessed be God, I know something of His grace as manifested in Christ Jesus; something of His Holy Word, and watchful care over His people; and I could not believe that He would allow the course of nature to be inverted, for the poor object of frightening a travelling merchant out of his wits."

"Well said, my good lad. But how long may it be since you thus became acquainted with the way of salvation?"

"About four years, sir. I was then but fifteen years old, and was the first of my father's house who saw the way of acceptance clearly. But praised be

God, He has called us all now. Some are in heaven already; and the rest, I have cause to hope, are on the way to it."

"And through what means, may I ask, was the salvation of your household brought about?"

"By means, sir, of a Society, which has been to the Highlands as rivers of waters in a dry place, and pools in the desert; and which has been to me, and to many others, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation—the Society for support of Gaelic Schools!"

"Indeed! I have heard of that Society, and felt interested in its operations; its object was so simple, and so consonant with sound reason. The evening is fast closing in, and yet I should be glad to hear the little story of your family. Suppose we sit down on this green sward for half an hour, while you relate the particulars.

"I cannot refuse your request, sir, without doing great injustice to a Society to which I owe much, and dishonour to God to whom I owe every thing. My family history is short; but like most family histories, it contains much that is sad as well as much that is joyous.

"I am a native of Corrivoulin, in the parish of Ardnamurchan; and, like the other inhabitants, was very ignorant of God and of His holy child Jesus. My father was a fisherman, and was a good deal from home; but as he could not read himself, and the parish school was at a distance, he never once thought of having his children instructed. We had no Bible

in the house, nor indeed any other book ; and when my father was at sea, we had nothing to do, but spend our whole time in idleness and folly. On the Sabbath, my father and the other men about the place, sat on the beach, and told wild and romantic tales about apparitions and the second sight ; or strolled about the hills and glens in the neighbourhood, in search of the bits of pointed flint, called elf-arrow-heads, which they very seldom found.

“ Things were in this state at Corrivoulin, when the Society for support of Gaelic Schools offered us a teacher, on condition that we provided the necessary accommodation. The idea of having their children taught, without trouble or expense, operated powerfully on many ; though they would have been better pleased had the instruction been in English, as it would have been more likely to forward the temporal interests of their offspring. Poor people ! they did not then know the value of their own souls, and how could they feel for the souls of their children ? However, the accommodation was provided, and the teacher came. He was a middle-aged man, of simple and unassuming manners, but ‘ fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ Immediately on his arrival, he assembled all the people in the school-house, and told them that he should only remain two years amongst them : so that if they ever wished to acquire the ability to read the Bible in their own language, now was the time. Some of the parents, and many of the children, were that very day enrolled as scholars. My father, who had taken no share

in providing the school-house, was with difficulty prevailed upon to enter me. I was his eldest child, but he had two others quite capable of instruction. These he was urged to enrol at the same time; but his answer was, 'He would see how Norman came on.'

"I have already said that the teacher was a man of God. As a necessary consequence, he was a man of prayer. He prayed with his scholars at meeting, and at parting; and on Sabbath he read the Scriptures, and prayed with as many of the neighbours as chose to come together, for the parish church was too distant for the people to attend it regularly, even if they had had the inclination.

"As soon as any of the scholars were able to read the Bible, that blessed book was furnished to them by the Society at a very low price, and the teacher began to explain its all-important contents. I had not been many months at school, when I became very uneasy in my mind. The Bible told me that I was a sinner, under the wrath and curse of God, and that I could not of myself recover His favour. I endeavoured to please Him, indeed, by reading the Bible, and praying, and doing my duty to my parents; but my conscience soon told me that all this would not do; I was unhappy still. I opened my mind to the teacher; he was deeply interested in the disclosure, and pointed me to the Lamb of God. He read with me, reasoned with me, and prayed with me; and, by the blessing of God's Holy Spirit on these means, I was led to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to me in the Gospel. I need

scarcely say that I soon found peace, as well as joy, in believing.

“ You will readily conclude, sir, that having thus found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, I was most anxious to make Him known to my dear parents too. Respecting this, however, I had serious difficulties to contend with. My father was an upright and high-spirited man, who was addicted to no vice, and paid every man his own, and therefore imagined that he had no need of a Saviour. My mother was entirely devoted to him, and to her family; and supposed herself as sure of heaven as her neighbours. I had great perplexity of mind, therefore, as to how I should introduce the subject of religion to them. I was not yet sixteen, and but a child in Christian experience myself, though feelingly awake to their spiritual danger. I mentioned the matter to the teacher, who advised me to pray much for my parents in private. This I did for several months, often retiring to the hills, and behind the rocks on the sea-shore, for the purpose; but still things remained in the same state. The teacher then advised me to try to set up family worship, assuring me that God would not fail to bless His own Word to my parents' souls. I spoke to my father on the subject, who coldly answered that I might do as I pleased, and with this negative permission I was constrained to be satisfied. Accordingly, one evening when the family were all assembled, I placed the table in the middle of the floor, and laid my Bible and psalm-book upon it. I then sat down, and said,

‘Let us worship God.’ I read a psalm and sung it, no one offering to join me, though none attempted any interruption. I then read a chapter of Scripture, and afterwards knelt down and prayed, while the rest continued sitting and looking on. I prayed, however, for them all, one by one ; but, when I rose from my knees, no remark was made, though I inwardly thanked God that I had been enabled to erect an altar to His praise in my father’s house.

“The next evening, things went on precisely in the same way ; but on the following one, a happy change took place. I sang, indeed, and knelt down alone ; but, as I was praying for my parents, my father rose from his seat and knelt down beside me ; my mother slid down upon her knees beside the cradle, which she was rocking at the time ; the children one after another did the like, and before I concluded we were all (the little baby excepted) on our knees together, for the first time in our lives, around a throne of grace. That night, sir, I could not sleep—do not wonder if I add, I even wept for joy.

“On the ensuing evening, after I had read the psalm, my father said, ‘Norman, if you will give out the line, as the precentor does in the church, we will sing along with you.’ This was a pleasant proposal, sir, to me, as you may well suppose ; but, when our united voices arose in praise to God, my delight was so great that it almost choked my utterance. My parents, however, did not observe my emotion ; or, if they did, they took no notice of it.

“Matters went on in this manner for five or six

weeks, when one evening, after family worship was over, my father sat down by the fire, and gazed intently on the burning peats for some time; after which he suddenly turned round to me, and said, 'Norman you must teach me to read.' 'Will you not go to school?' said I. 'No,' said he, 'I have not time for that. I must earn my family's bread; but you shall teach me in the evenings, and we shall begin to-night. So, bring the spelling-book.' Words, sir, cannot express the pleasure with which I obeyed that command. My mother and the children went to bed; but my father and I sat up till midnight, and before we parted he knew all the letters. Next night, and for several nights afterwards, I tried him with syllables; but in learning these he made so little progress, that I became discouraged, and he himself began to despond. I again applied to the teacher for advice. He smiled, and said, 'It is because there is no meaning in the syllables; give him the Bible at once.' Accordingly I laid by the spelling-book, and put the Gaelic Testament into my father's hand. There, as the teacher foresaw, he found meaning in every word, and soon made rapid progress. In four months, he could read as well as myself. Happy was I, sir, the first time I saw my dear father go to sea, with his Bible in the boat; and happier still when, a few evenings afterwards, as we were going to family worship, he said, 'Norman, I will now be the priest of my family myself.' He accordingly gave out the psalm, read a chapter, and prayed. I could not

doubt, sir, after his prayer that evening, that my father was a converted man.

“ While my father was thus learning to read the Gaelic Scriptures for himself, he had sent all the rest of his children to school, who were capable of instruction ; so that the whole family might, in some measure, be said to be ‘ asking the way to Ziop, with their faces thitherward,’ excepting my poor mother. Her heart continued wholly engrossed by her domestic concerns. Indeed (why should I conceal it ?), the fine manly form of my father, and the beauty of my infant brother Murdoch, who was my father’s very image, were the subjects of her idolatry, and seemed to have left no room in her heart for God. God, however, did not say of her, as He said of Israel of old, ‘ Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.’ No ; He had purposes of mercy towards her, though it was ‘ through much tribulation,’ that she was ‘ to enter into the kingdom of God.’ He smote her idols, in order that He might bring her to Himself.”

At this part of his narrative, the young man became much affected ; but, after drawing two or three deep sighs, he was able to proceed.

“ When I had acquired the art of reading, I became very fond of books ; but I soon found the books printed in Gaelic to be so few in number, that, if I wished to pursue my favourite pastime, I must of necessity learn English. This, with the assistance of the teacher, I very easily accomplished : and then indeed, sir, I found a new world opened up to me.

There was no subject I could mention, on which there did not seem to be a book. The teacher lent me several, and amongst others the *Pilgrim's Progress*. I had sat up very late one night, reading that singular book ; and had just lain down in bed, when I perceived the smell of burning straw. Thinking that one or two straws had been accidentally put into the fire with the peats, I paid no attention to it at first ; until a blaze of light and a crackling noise made me start out of bed, when I discovered, with horror and amazement, that the cottage was in flames. I awoke my father and mother, and rushed naked out of doors. My parents, and the other children who were able, immediately followed. We stood gazing in silence on the destruction of our little property, when all at once my mother with a fearful shriek exclaimed, ' Oh ! where is my little Murdoch ? ' ' Have you not got him ? ' said my father ; and, with the air of a distracted man, he rushed into the burning dwelling. Through the window, the glass of which had been first broken, and then melted by the heat, we saw him approach the blazing bed, and snatch the infant, still asleep, in his arms. Awakened by the sudden shock, the poor child began to cry, and my father pressed him for one moment to his lips, and then made for the door. Again we saw him in the door-way, his own shirt and the baby's night-gown both in flames ; but, just as he was in the act of springing over the threshold, the roof fell in, and my poor father and little Murdoch perished before our eyes."

Here the poor youth again became greatly agitated; he covered his face with his hands, and the tears gushed out between his fingers. After pausing a few minutes, however, he regained his composure, and continued his narrative.

“It was an awful sight, sir, and yet I could not but feel assured that their souls were safe. My father was a converted man; and little Murdoch, who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, would receive the full benefit of the Redeemer’s purchase. My poor mother, however, was not prepared to see things in that light; she beheld her idols perish, and fell senseless to the ground. In that state, she was carried to the house of a neighbour; and, as soon as she awoke to a full consciousness of her loss, fever and delirium ensued. For three weeks we despaired of her life; and when the fever happily subsided, the deepest melancholy took possession of her mind. In vain the teacher and I endeavoured to show her, from the Bible, that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God;’ and that, if she would only come to Christ as her Saviour, she would find support and consolation at the foot of His cross. Like ‘Rachel weeping for her children,’ she ‘refused to be comforted.’ At length, however, God spoke peace to her soul, through the instrumentality of His own Word. She never learned to read, but she took much delight in hearing the Scriptures read to her; and in them, after a time, she found a Saviour suited to her need. She believed, and was consoled, though she never

smiled after that awful night. Her bodily health, too, continued to decline ; and she died in about a year from the time of her heavy affliction. But she died in the Lord ; and, I have no doubt, now walks in white, along with my father and little Murdoch, before the throne of the Redeemer.

“In consequence of my father’s death, the support of the family became my duty, of course. I was too young to turn fisherman, and so I sold my father’s share of the boat to his partner in the business. With the money I bought this box in Glasgow ; and filled it with such articles as I thought would be easily disposed of in the West Highlands. A kind Providence has blessed the attempt, and I have been enabled to maintain my brothers and sisters in tolerable comfort. My eldest sister goes to service at next term, and one by one I hope to see the rest settled in the world. I have now been to Glasgow, getting my box filled for the fourth time ; and I am taking home a few pounds in my pocket besides. But it is a wandering life, sir, and I do not like it much ; for it often shuts me out from the means of grace, and exposes me to company in which my principles are laughed at, and my Maker’s name profaned. When I grow a little stronger, therefore, I mean to buy a boat at Greenock ; and with the help of my next brother Dugald, set up for a fisherman, the fittest trade, as I think, for my father’s son. But it is growing very dark, sir ; and I reckon you are even a greater stranger hereabouts than myself.”

Such was the story of this Highland youth ; to

which, I need scarcely say, I listened with the greatest interest. At first, I was much struck by the correctness of his style of speaking, as being so unlike that of the Scottish peasantry in the Lowlands; but I immediately recollected that English was with him an acquired language, and that therefore he would necessarily speak it with more precision and less slovenliness, than is customary with country people in using their vernacular tongue. When he had finished his narration, although there was little more light remaining than sufficed to let us see each other distinctly, I requested him to show me the contents of his box. I was anxious to make him some recompense for his lost time, as well as to possess myself of some memorial of an interview, which had interested me so much. From amidst a profusion of articles, all useful in their way, I selected a very neat penknife, with two blades and a tortoise-shell handle, on one side of which a little plate of silver was inlaid. For that I gave him five shillings, although the price he set upon it was but four; and we parted, never to meet again, in all probability, on this side of the grave.

I have that penknife still; indeed, I never use any other; nor can I look upon it without thinking of my interview, at Dunstaffnage, with the young and pious PEDLAR OF CORRIVOULIN.

THE END.

MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.



