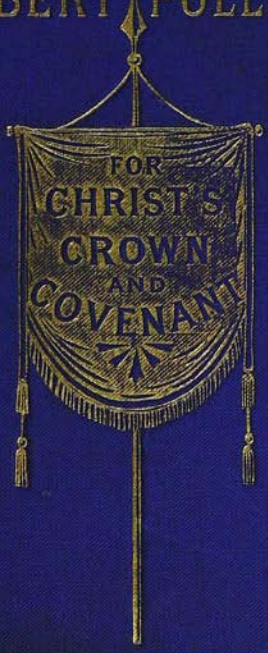
TALES OF THE COVENANTERS

BY

ROBERT POLLOK



OLIPHANT, ANDERSON, & FERRIERS

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF

The Methodist Church.

PRESENTED TO

Annie Lounsborough

a Scholar in the Methodist Sunday School at

Roxham

as an acknowledgment of diligence and fidelity in collecting Funds for the Missionary Society.

A. SUTHERLAND,
General Secretary.

Methodist Mission Rooms,
Toronto, 188 9

Geo Cooper Porter
Superintendent.
of Circuit

24 St. Giles Street, Edinburgh.

1.00

Annot and her Pupil.
The Cousins Reconciled.
Tales of my Sunday Scholars.
Little Alfred.
The Lycee Boys.
Eaton Parsonage.
The Race for Gold.
The Goldsmith's Widow.
The Martyr Shepherd.
Mr Leslie's Stories.
Hester Glen's Holidays.
Jem the Tinker and his Children.
Four Years in a Cave.
Until the Shadows Flee Away.
Marian Temple's Work.
Ned's Motto.
Crossing the Line.
Bertie Lee.
A Little Leaven.
Ocean Venture.
Beacon Lights.
Drifting and Steering.
The Gate of Pearl.
Little Effie's Home.
The Wonderful Pocket.
The Magic Shoes.
The Magic Spectacles.
Aunt Mabel's Prayer.
The Exiles of France.
The Power of Gold.
Mrs Gibbon's Parlour Maid.
Doctor Dunbar.
Ivan Papof.
Pollok's Tales of the Covenanters.
The Exiled Family and their Restorers
The Pilgrim's Progress.
Elder Logan's Story about the Kirks.
Bible Promises.
Bible Wonders.
Bible Jewels.
The Great Pilot.

TALES OF THE COVENANTERS.

COVENANTERS WORSHIPPING.—*See page* 19.

TALES

OF

THE COVENANTERS.

By ROBERT POLLOK, M.A.,
AUTHOR OF "THE COURSE OF TIME."

New Edition.

TORONTO:
METHODIST MISSION ROOMS,
31 ADELAIDE STREET, EAST.

HELEN OF THE GLEN.

CHAPTER I.

> "One there is above all others,
> Well deserves the name of friend!
> His is love beyond a brother's,
> Costly, free, and knows no end:
> They who once his kindness prove,
> Find it everlasting love!"
>
> DODDRIDGE.

It is pleasant, young reader, to contemplate in our day, the peace of the Redeemer's kingdom in Scotland. The Lord is indeed the glory in the midst of his church, and a wall of fire round about her. The still small voice of the gospel is unrestrained by the menaces of power, and its light unobscured by the clouds of bigotry and superstition. Our assemblies meet, and worship, and part in peace. In our land the promise is fast accomplishing, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord: and great shall be the peace of thy children." The church in our land, like a well-watered garden, and like a spring of waters, now sends forth her streams into the dry and parched

wilderness, and sheds her light on the people that sit in darkness. Her voice, harmonizing with the invitations of infinite mercy, is now addressed to all nations; inviting them to share in the same heavenly blessings.

But it is right for us to remember, young reader, that it was not always so in our beloved land. Only a hundred and forty years ago, persecution, and nakedness, and cold, and hunger, were the lot of those who followed the Lamb whithersoever He went. The sheep of the Great Shepherd wandered upon the mountains, and the hands of the men of power were defiled with their blood.

Such were the perilous and bloody days in which HELEN and WILLIAM, the subjects of this story, were ushered into life. Their father, James Thomson, although born in the moorish districts of Ayrshire, removed early in life to Glasgow, with Agnes Craig, his beloved wife. Mr Thomson was for some years prosperous enough in business; but the unsuspicious sincerity of his character often met with duplicity, and his generous kindness with ingratitude. Reduced by various losses to bankruptcy, he was compelled to leave Scotland. To support himself, and send something, if possible, for the assistance of his family, he entered the service of King Charles II., followed the army to the continent, and in a short time after died in Holland, fighting bravely for his sovereign.

His farewell with his wife had been short and hurried. He advised her to return with her little

ones, Helen and William, the former of whom was then four, and the latter two years old, to her native place; recommended them to their Father in heaven; and the last words which Mrs Thomson's ear caught from that voice which she was to hear no more, were these: "O, my dear Agnes, teach these little ones to know and remember their Creator in the days of their youth, that if I see you and them no more in this valley of tears, I may meet you and them at last by the river of life, in the paradise of God!"

Immediately after this painful parting, Mrs Thomson returned to the place of her birth, in the neighbourhood of Loudon-hill. I need not tell the young reader, with what feelings she crossed the little moor-streams, by which she was wont to walk with her James. Now she looked up the winding glen, where her ear had often turned to his affectionate voice, or listened with still more solid delight, while he read a chapter from the book of God, to dissipate their fears, and strengthen their hopes of eternal life, —now, her eyes streaming at once with joy and sorrow, fell back on her little William, the dear miniature of his father. A steady habit of industry; the remembrance of a youth spent in religion; her two infants, and an unwavering trust in the kindness of her Maker and Redeemer, were all the riches which Mrs Thomson brought home to the place of her nativity. Her near relations, weeded away by the hand of disease, or cut off by the sword of persecution, had left her father's house desolate. George

Paton, a man who had been her father's shepherd, now possessed the farm. He received the daughter of his former master kindly; assigned her a snug hut, in which, while a servant, he had himself lived, and gave her a cow, that her infants might not be without milk, which the old shepherd very properly observed was the best liquid Scotland produced, except water.

Cleughead, the name of this little habitation, was situated at the head of one of those solitary glens so common in the wilder districts of Scotland. The walls were built with rough granite; the roof thatched with the heath of the mountain, and the rushes of the brook;—and the interior, where the peat burned on the hearth, and the smoke rose up unconfined by any chimney, till it escaped by a little hole in the roof, although very unlike the abode Mrs Thomson had left in Glasgow, was soon rendered, by her own industry and native cleanliness, and the ready assistance of the old farmer, neat and comfortable.

Past the door of this humble dwelling, feebly murmured a mountain rill: as it rambled in frolicsome meanders down the slope, now kissing the blooming heath, now rippling among the green rushes, and again playing with the shadow of the grey willow, its channel deepened as the sides of the glen drew nearer one another;—here the projecting rock and crooked hazel on the one side, and the tall fern and stunted sloethorn on the other, mingled their dancing shadows on the torrent, which, loud and impetuous,

forced its headlong way, like the youth impatient for full manhood:—again the glen gradually opened; the spreading stream giving back the image of the sober ox, and sportive lamb, that cropt the verdant herb and wild daisy by its side; and at length smoothing its surface, laying asleep every turbulent wave, purifying its waters on the gravelly sand of its course, and reflecting the heaven only from its clear bosom, fell, like the dying Christian, without a murmur, into the current of the Irvine. The general features of the surrounding scenery were impressed with an air of solemn melancholy. To the north and east extended level tracks of gloomy moorland, relieved, here and there, by the smoke curling from the shepherd's lonely hut, a straggling dwarf tree or two which grew about his dwelling, and a little verdant meadow plot redeemed from the dark waste which lay before his door. At intervals, too, were to be seen a shepherd boy with his dog; and spreading around him, in little groups, here and there scattered and solitary, the white-fleeced sheep wandering on the brown heath. To the south and south-west, rose the unambitious hills of Dumfries and Galloway; and conspicuous among them, with its round summit, the *Twelve-hour* hill, over whose head, the shepherds of that country well know, the sun walks at mid-day. Spread out to the west, were the fertile, but monotonous, districts of Ayrshire, watered by those streams, delightfully romantic when you approach them, Ayr, Irvine, and Doon, which carried the eye down their course till it

reposed on the glassy bosom of the Atlantic, oftener in those days visited by the dreadful war-ship, than enlivened by the cheerful sail of the merchantman. Terminating the view in this direction, were the bold elevations of Arran, on whose castle peaks the cloud delights to sit, and from whose tops the sun of autumn casts his last look of glory on the western districts of Scotland.

In this humble dwelling, surrounded thus by the chaste and solemn countenance of nature, did Mrs Thomson set herself diligently to educate her children; to imbue their minds early with habits of industry; and above all, to bring them up in the fear of the Lord; to teach them to know and remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Every morning and evening, she went, leading Helen in the one hand, and William in the other, to the farm-house, and joined with the old shepherd in worshipping the God of salvation. Early on the dawn of every Sabbath was Agnes up, and prepared, not with the anointed hair and tinkling ornaments, which employ so much the thoughts of many females on the morning of the Lord's day, but by communing with her own heart, and by expostulating with her God in private, for setting out, often five, sometimes six, seven, or eight miles, to hear preached the glad tidings of eternal life. And in those days, surely you know, young reader, it was no smooth road, no pleasure walk to the house of God. Every one sat not then as we do now, "under his own vine and

fig-tree, having none to make him afraid;" but the solitary moor-hut, the glen of the mountain, or the cave of the rock, were often the only places in which the voice of the true servants of God, the shepherds that shall never need to be ashamed, could be heard. Even here the bloody fiend of persecution pursued them with fire and sword. The meetings, or conventicles, as they were called, of these poor artless Christians, were often dispersed by the insolent and merciless soldiers; many were taken and sent, some to the gibbet, some to dungeons, and many to the British plantations abroad. And all this because they assembled themselves to seek the Lord God of their fathers, in the way which their consciences approved.

But with her daily attention to family-worship at the farm-house, and meeting on as many Sabbaths as possible with the pious peasants around, Mrs Thomson's religious duties by no means terminated. Often would she kneel down with her son and daughter at her side, by the streamlet that purled down her secluded glen, and seek, with the fervency of a mother's heart which trusts in God, that her Father in heaven would shed down upon them that blessing which maketh rich, and bringeth no sorrow. And never did she unbend her knee, or turn her eye from the heaven on which it gazed, without watering her cheek with one drop in behalf of her dear husband. "If," would she plead aloud, as she kneeled by the heathy knoll or ferny glen, and seen

only by God and angels, "If, O gracious Father, Thou should'st never give him to these arms, nor bless these eyes with another sight of his countenance in this world, O give him that faith in Christ which shall open to him the gates of heaven! If Thou should'st lay his bones to rest in a foreign land, O may I meet him at last without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, in that happy place where friends part no more." Every day too she read a portion of the Bible, and taught her children to read it—taught them to understand much of it; and above all, taught them, and chiefly by her own example, to reverence and obey it.

Thus would she converse with Helen, for William was yet too young to profit much by her instructions:—"How great, my dear, is the love of God in Christ Jesus? You read in the Bible that we are all sinners; that is, we all naturally hate God, and God hates us because we are not holy, nor willing to be made holy. You read in the Bible, that in Adam all died, and became liable to the wrath and curse of God; and you know that we sin every day against God ourselves. The thoughts of our hearts are evil continually. This is our condition, my dear Helen; this is our sad condition by nature. Do you feel it to be sad? Would you like to be out of it? I love you, my dear, and I can do much for you; but I cannot take away your sins, I cannot make your peace with God. None of your friends—no man in the world—no angel in heaven can pardon your sins.

What then are you to do? How great, as I said, is the mercy of God in Christ? In your low and lost estate, He remembers you with love. When there was no other eye to pity—no other hand to help, God said, "Deliver from going down to the pit, from going down to hell for I have found a ransom." This ransom is Jesus Christ, who came into the world, and suffered and died that we might live. You remember that He says, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' If you come unto Him—if you believe that He died for your sins, God will pardon you, and be for ever at peace with you.

"But you will ask me, my dear, how you can believe in Christ? You must pray to God, that you may have this belief. You remember what our Saviour says himself—'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' The Holy Spirit will help you to pray. Paul tells us, that 'the Holy Ghost maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' 'Whatever ye ask in my name,' says the kind Redeemer, 'it shall be given you.'

"So great, my dear, is the loving-kindness of our gracious and heavenly Father! And surely you will love, and obey so merciful a God. You love me, and do all I wish you, because I love you, and am, as you often tell me, good to you; but you see that God loves you far more, and has done far more good for you; you should love Him therefore more than me,

or any of your friends, or any thing in the world—and you are to show your love to Him by living in his fear, by keeping his commandments, and by doing all the good you can, wherever you may be placed.

"Remember these things, my dear Helen," would the pious and affectionate mother say in conclusion—"Remember these things. You know not how soon you may die; or how soon you may lose your mother. You hear of people dying every day in their beds, or of their lives being taken away by the cruel persecutors. If I should be removed from you, your best instructor will be your Bible. Read it, dear Helen, and read it often."

I repeat to you, young reader, Mrs Thomson's injunctions to her daughter—"Read the Bible, and read it often."

It is surprising to notice how this sacred book is neglected by sinful men. The votaries of taste and fashion will spend their days and nights poring over the morbid pages of sensual and fictitious narrative; yet if their God was to ask them, if they had read the book which He sent them from heaven, where would they look? How could they say that they had never read the precious gift throughout? Wherever you go, learn not of those. Take your Bible in you hand; make it the companion of your way. In the thirsty desert of this world, it will supply you with the water of life; in the darkness of doubt and apprehension, it will cast a gleam of heaven over your path; in the struggle of temptation, and in the hour

of affliction, it will lift up the voice of warning, encouragement, and comfort. Never let the Bible lie by you unperused. It is the only helm that can guide you through the ocean of life, and bring you safely to the immortal shores. It is the only star which leads the wandering sinner by the rocks, and breakers, and fiery tempests of utter destruction, and points him away to the heights of everlasting blessedness. The Bible contains the only food that can satisfy the hungerings of the soul; it presents us with the only laver in which we can wash ourselves white and clean; it alone tells us of the garments that are worn in the courts of heaven; it is from the Bible alone that we learn to prepare a torch to conduct our footsteps through the valley of the shadow of death; and it is the Bible alone which can introduce us at last to the glories of immortality!

While Mrs Thomson was thus teaching her children habits of industry, and disclosing to their young minds the hopes of a better life, she received the account of her husband's death, mentioned above. The tears of love, and desolateness, and religion, mingled on her cheek. Although Helen and William remembered little of their father, yet so often had their mother told them of all his kindness to her, and love to them; so often had she repeated to them his last advice and prayer; and so often had she told them that he would perhaps come some day to their little hut, that they sobbed by their mother's side in the same bitterness of grief as if their father

had died among them. But the good widow sorrowed not as those who have no hope. The letter which brought the painful account, informed her that her husband died a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He was heard, on the bloody field of battle, recommending with his last breath, his widowed wife and fatherless children, to the God of the widow and the fatherless. "And God will hear the sincere request,' said the tender mother, as she wiped her tears, and threw a gleam of celestial hope and patient resignation on her weeping children: "God is the widow's stay; He is the Father of the fatherless: He forsakes none who put their trust in Him. To wean us from our sins and earthly attachments, He may afflict us for a moment; but with an everlasting love hath He loved us. Be comforted, my dear children; remember your Creator as your father ever wished you to do, and you will meet him at last in heaven, to be fatherless no more, to weep no more, and to part no more for ever."

In Mrs Thomson's outward circumstances, her husband's death produced no difference. She often assisted in the old farmer's dairy, and received in return food, and home-made clothing for herself and her children. Nor was her mind much altered. The violence of her grief subsided into a firmer trust in God, more fervent religion, and more heavenly-mindedness. Indeed, this event threw a thoughtfulness and an unrepining melancholy over all her character, which expanded every sympathy of her

nature, deepened every feeling of her soul, and warmed every act of her devotion, as the lingering looks of day cast a mellower softening, and a richer grandeur over the widely variegated landscape.

CHAPTER II.

———"In solitudes like these
Thy persecuted children, Scotia, foiled
A tyrant's and a bigot's bloody laws;
There leaning on his spear,

The lyart veteran heard the word of God
By Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured
In gentle stream: then rose the song, the loud
Acclaim of praise; the wheeling plover ceased
Her plaint; the solitary place was glad,
And on the distant cairns, the watcher's ear
Caught doubtfully at times the breeze-borne note."

GRAHAME.

MEANWHILE, the rage and cruelty of persecution grew every day more inveterate. Claverhouse, whose merciless sword widowed many a tender mother, and orphaned many a helpless infant, about this time was routed at Loudon-hill by a party of the Covenanters, whose sufferings had driven them to arms. This event stung to the heart the proud, bold, and cruel Claverhouse. Backed by soldiers imbued with his own spirit, he neglected no opportunity and spared no exertions, to pursue, torture, and kill all who would not renounce the service of their Father in

heaven for the vassalage of an earthly tyrant. Some time before this, military trial was instituted in Scotland; and all who refused the wicked test, were instantly shot by the soldiers. The brutal dragoons plundered, tortured, murdered, and committed every species of outrage at pleasure. At no hour, in no place, whether in the house, the glen, or the cave of the mountain, were the scattered sheep of the Great Shepherd safe from the persevering search, and unrelenting cruelty, of their persecutors.

——— "Every hour
They stood prepared to die, a people doom'd
To death;—old men, and youths, and simple maids."

It was thus in the western districts of Scotland, when, on a fine Sabbath morning, a little after midsummer, Mrs Thomson was early up, and preparing, as usual, to hear the word of God, which was to be preached that day two miles down the glen at the head of which the widow's hut stood. She left William, yet only in his sixth year, in the farm-house, and, with Helen by her side, took the little sheep-path down the glen. In her hallowed imagination, the sun coming up the rosy east unclouded, threw a purer ray over the solitary moorlands; a clearer dew sparkled on the red heather-bell; the matin hymn of the skylark, the varied music of the desert fowl, the bleating of the flocks that answered from knoll to knoll, the minstrelsy of the brook, and the gentle sigh of the zephyr that played among the wild mountain flowers, all assumed a chaster, holier cadence, and seemed to

confess the presence of the blessed day. Here and there was seen over the brown moor, like vessels scattered on the ocean, the solitary peasant travelling towards the glen, to meet the servant of God. Little Helen, with a profusion of fair ringlets already floating on her neck and shoulders, now plucked the wild thyme, now looked to the playful chases of the lambs, and anon listened to her mother, while she admonished her to hear the gospel with reverence and attention.

Thus engaged, they arrived at the place agreed on for meeting with the faithful ambassador of Jesus. The man of God was already there; and his little congregation mostly gathered around him. The place chosen for this day's worship of the Most High, was hidden from the distant view by the sides of the glen; one of which, withdrawing five or six yards from the streamlet, left a small green plain in the shape of a crescent. Here rose a large grey stone, on which the minister rested the holy book. Before him, on the rising ground, trode by the sheep into paths rising one above another, resembling a flight of stairs, sat his rustic audience, thirsting for the water of life. On a knoll, at a small distance, watched one of their friends, to give the alarm in case of the appearance of the persecuting soldiers. The minister to whose church Mrs Thomson, in her earlier days, often walked with her father and mother, had been driven from his flock and his family by violence; and now, concealed by the peasants who

loved him, and fed by their kindness, he took every opportunity which offered, in the cave, the moor, or the sheep-cot, to distribute among the poor hunted followers of the cross, the bread and the water of life. His figure was graceful, of the ordinary size; his countenance mild, full of resignation and heavenly zeal. Time had left his forehead bare; but behind, and on each side, flowed down plentiful locks, woolly, and white as the snow of the mountains.

The venerable man now threw a glance of fatherly compassion on his litle flock, lifted the Bible from the grey stone, opened it, and read these verses from that mournful psalm, sung by the Israelitish captives at Babylon :—

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept,
When Sion we thought on;
In midst thereof we hanged our harps
The willow trees upon.

"For there a song required they,
Who did us captive bring:
Our spoilers called for mirth, and said,
A song of Sion sing.

"O how the Lord's song shall we sing,
Within a foreign land?
If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skill part from my right hand.

"My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
If I do thee forget,
Jerusalem, and thee above
My chief joy do not set."

To the wild plaintive notes of Old Martyr's this sweet melody, from hearts full of gratitude and love, and calm resignation, ascended to the ear of the

Eternal. The Psalm being ended, all arose, and the holy man turning an eye of faith to the heavens, led the congregation in a prayer, humble, fervent, and appropriate. Again he opened the Bible, and read his text from Proverbs ix. 10, and xxix. 25: "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The sermon, though perplexed with divisions, and obscured occasionally by length of illustration, was affectionate, impressive, and highly enriched with quotations from the Holy Scriptures. The folly of fearing men rather than God, the everlasting security of those who fear and obey the Almighty, and the eternal confusion of those who put his fear away from them, were clearly proved, and strongly enforced by numberless passages from the volume of inspiration. As he came to the exhortation, generally the most useful part of sermons, his voice elevated, his language glowed with a deeper pathos, and seeming to forget the present sufferings of his audience, in the awful idea that there might be some fearless sinner among them in jeopardy of eternal wrath, he expostulated with them thus:—

"O that I could so speak of the goodness and mercy of God, manifested through the Saviour, as to win the love and obedience of you that fear Him not! O that I had the tongue of an angel, to tell you how much God hath done for you, and how unwilling He is that you should put his mercy away from you! Do ye not know that all your enjoy-

ments come from God? That those lips which never praised Him sincerely, and those knees which never bowed before Him reverently, are the work of his hand: and that your memories that forget Him, and your reasons that despise Him, and your imaginations that ever wander from Him, are the gifts of his goodness? Are ye ignorant that the clothes which warm you, and the food which nourishes you, and the houses which shelter you, come all from the God whom you refuse to fear? Do you not know that your sweet and tender endearments of loves, and brotherhoods, and friendships, that all which delights your eye, or soothes your ear, or warms your heart, descend from the Father of lights, whom ye will not honour? And have ye not heard, that God hath not yet removed his mercy from you? Will ye believe it, the everlasting Jehovah, whom ye daily offend, is yet beseeching you to accept of his pardon, is yet waiting to be gracious, is yet lifting up the voice of his mercy to win you from your waywardness, and save you from the fierceness of his wrath? Will ye believe it, the God for whom ye have no reverence, is yet casting a fatherly eye upon you, offering his own Son for your redemption, and inviting you up to the land of life and glory? Truly, the heart that is not won by this, is harder than the nether millstone, and deserves the anguish that shall ring it.

"But if ye will not hear, and if ye will not consider: if ye will harden your hearts, and not be persuaded to the fear of the Lord by his love and his

mercy, I dare not leave you unwarned. I must ask you to look on God's wrath, and measure your arms with the weapons of his indignation. Are ye prepared for this, ye that fear not the Almighty? God is your Judge, and will ye not fear Him? Eternity is at his disposal, and will ye have no reverence for Him? Are ye afraid of death? The God whom we counsel you to fear, keeps the gates of immortality. Have ye not heard, that there is a place where the fire is not quenched, and where the worn dieth not? Have ye not heard, that in hell the devil believes and trembles? And have ye not known that it is God, even the God whom ye will not fear, whose wrath kindles the everlasting burnings, and whose frown thickens the eternal darkness? Surely, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

"You that fear God as ye ought—and I trust there are few of another character here," continued the herald of heaven, "are safe from every evil. Your fear is a holy fear; it is the offspring of love; it is a filial awe, accompanied by the trust, and the expectation, and the affection of children to a father, who shields your hearts from every alarm. You know that all your present afflictions are but the chastisement of a father who loves you with an everlasting love. 'God so loved the world,' so loved you, my dear friends, 'that He delivered up his Son unto the death, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but have everlasting life;' and if He has given us his Son, his only and well-beloved

Son, shall He not with Him freely give us all things? O the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth of the love of God! it passeth understanding;' yea the response of your hearts is, It passeth understanding. It is this love of God—it is this love in your hearts which rouses you to all duty, cheers you in every distress, and supports you in every trial. Can you look upon the tender mercy of God in Christ Jesus—can you look upon his everlasting love, and hesitate for a moment to prefer his statutes, which are all holy, and just, and good, to the laws of wicked and cruel men? Will you offend the gracious God who hath all power in heaven and in earth, who preserved Daniel in the lion's den, and the three children in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, or your persecutors who pass away as the wind, and are crushed before the moth? Will you fear to offend the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves you as a father loves his children, who rests in his love to you, who will never leave you nor forsake you? or will you fear to offend those who seek your life, and hate you with a perfect hatred? Verily, it is the answer of your hearts, We will fear our God, for He hath loved us: we love Him, and we will obey Him. We will follow Him through good and through bad report. Well done (may I not say?) good and faithful servants, ye shall enter into the joy of your Lord. O ye that love and fear the Lord! here is comfort, and support, and safety to your souls. God loves you: the God of life and of death. Why

should your hearts be dismayed or disquieted within you? The Captain of your salvation hath overcome the world: He hath vanquished death and hell, and He hath gone to the Father to prepare mansions of peace, of happiness, of immortality for your reception. If God be for you, who can be against you? He stands on your right hand, and bids you fear no evil. In this hour of trial and desolation, He puts his left hand under you, and his right hand embraces you. When ye walk through the fire, ye shall not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon you. Persecution and reproach, and death and hell, are now banded against you; but the God of all your salvation, and all your desire, stands by your side, and ye shall be more than conquerors. What shall separate you that fear God from his everlasting love? Verily it shall be neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. He regards you as the apple of his eye. In your afflicted pilgrimage through this world, He shall hide you under the shadow of his wings; He shall walk with you through the dreariness of the valley of death; and set you down for ever at the banqueting table in the heavens. This is the promise of God, of Him who is the Amen, the faithful and the true Witness. As thy days are, O Christian, so shall thy strength be. With this merciful, this blessed assurance, may we not exclaim in the midst of all our afflictions, Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful! Return unto thy rest, O

my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

The sermon was just finished, and the minister again offering up his heart's desire to God, when the sentinel gave the alarm, that a party of cavalry was approaching. The venerable minister looked to his audience—then to heaven; and in a tone of assurance and resignation, pronounced these words: "Into thy hands, O Lord, we commit our immortal spirits." The congregation then dispersed hurriedly. The good old servant of God entreated them all to leave him, knowing that as a price had been set on his head, the pursuit after him would be most eager. It happened as he thought. The reverend pastor was taken —placed on horseback—his hands tied behind his back—and his ancles twisted with ropes below the belly of the animal. In this position, without refreshment, without being permitted once to alight, he was driven to Edinburgh, a distance of fifty miles, where, after much torture, he was executed at the Grassmarket, praising his God, solacing his friends, and forgiving his murderers, with his last breath. Surely the latter end of the righteous man, whatever be his external condition, is peace.

Mrs Thomson and her daughter had fled up the glen, and were now within a mile of their hut when two of the troopers discovered them. As they approached with their prancing steeds, and gleaming armour, uttering "strange oaths," Helen turned pale. and seized her mother's hand. The soldiers ap-

peared rather intoxicated, and their whole aspect was fierce and cruel. One of them, Duncan Wrathburn, a north countryman, full of the merciless spirit of his master, Claverhouse, commanded Mrs Thomson to take the test, or the shot that was in his carabine. She kneeled before them—pleaded with them not to force her to violate the dictates of her conscience, and to renounce her allegiance to the King of kings. "None of your canting," bawled Wrathburn, and with a horrible oath, commanded her again to take the test, to abjure conventicles, or else he would blow out her brains on the spot. "I will not abjure my religion and my God," said Mrs Thomson; "but O spare a poor widow—spare me for the sake of my husband, who died fighting for his king—spare me for the sake of that child and her little brother—spare me, as you expect mercy at the judgment of the great day." The good widow having refused again to violate her conscience and dishonour her Redeemer, by submitting to their unlawful demands, Wrathburn, in a tone of jeering and ridicule, said she had better pray and confess herself quickly, as she had not a moment to live. It was vain to entreat these men of Belial more. Mrs Thomson looked with a streaming eye on her daughter. "They will kill your mother," she said; "you shall be left helpless orphans,"—remembering William as she spoke—"you shall be left helpless orphans in the world; but God will be your Father—never forsake Him, and He will never forsake you. And O my dear Helen!

you know something of the Christian religion; instruct your little brother, that I may receive you both at last into the happy place." "Short, short," cried the cruel dragoon, taking hold of his carabine. The poor widow now turned her eyes to heaven, and commended her soul into the hands of her Redeemer. The soldier who accompanied Wrathburn, softened by the tears of the mother, and the shrieks of the daughter, urged him to let the poor widow escape. But Wrathburn, steady in his unmercifulness, levelled his carabine, and as Mrs Thomson's eyes were turning again from heaven on her dear child, fired the mortal shot. It took effect in her left side, touched the heart, and passed fairly through her body. Her head fell back heavily against the ground—she threw a dim look on her daughter—seemed to breathe the blessing she could not pronounce—drew her arms convulsively over her breast—again they fell back on the heath—and her soul ascended up on high.

"Her blood be on her own head," cried the brutal dragoon, as he turned his horse, and galloped away, unmoved by the expiring agonies of the mother, or her little daughter, that swooned by her bloody corpse.

And, O! shall he need no mercy himself? When disease shall lay its withering hand upon him, and cast him on his last bed—when every sublunary hold shall deceive him—and when hope shall take its leave of him—and when his desire shall fail, and the sun and the light withdraw itself—and the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl broken—and the wheel

broken at the cistern—and the dimness, and dizziness, and terrors of death fasten upon him—shall he have no lack of the smile of God's countenance? Is he sure that he can enter the gates of death alone, and take a fearless view of the grim and ghastly visage of the king of terrors, and find his unguided way through the valley of thick darkness? Shall he be stout-hearted enough to listen unalarmed to the notes of the last trumpet—and see the earth pass away, and the sun darkened, and the stars falling, and the moon turned into blood, and the heavens rolled up like a scroll, and the Son of man coming in the clouds to judgment? When he hears the footsteps of the summoning angels, and draws near the tribunal, and sees the books opening, and the face of the Judge frowning, and the sword of eternal justice flaming —shall he have no need of an Almighty Friend? Is he prepared to take a last sight of God's mercy, and all that is good, and all that is happy? Is he prepared to abide the unmitigated wrath of Jehovah, and take into his bosom the worm that dieth not, and make his dwelling in the fire that is not quenched, and converse with utter despair, and utter destruction, and hear the gates of hell shut behind him, and the bolts of his fate driven deep for ever and ever? Ah! cruel soldier, thou art not prepared for this.

The old farmer's shepherd having heard the mortal shot, came up to the place where the body of Mrs Thomson lay. Little Helen, recovered from her swoon, clung to her mother's breast, and with her

arms clasped about her neck, wept, and cried, "My mother, O my mother! will you speak to me no more? will you lead me no more by the hand, and tell me of my father, of Christ, and of heaven?" The shepherd endeavoured to soothe the child:—"Your mother is gone," said he, "to meet your father, where Christ dwells. She is happy; and wishes you to be comforted. And if you be a good girl, you shall see her when you go to heaven, more lovely, more kind than ever."

Talking in this way, the shepherd led Helen to the farm-house, and made known to the inmates the mournful story. The body of Mrs Thomson was carried into the house; and it was indeed a day of mourning and lamentation in the house of the old farmer. Every one wept, as if they had lost a mother, so much was Mrs Thomson loved by young and old for her sober cheerfulness, modest piety, and kind instructions in righteousness. Little William wept aloud; and it was an affecting sight to see Helen, while weeping herself, trying to soothe and comfort her brother. It may be supposed that she could not remember the whole of her mother's dying advice; but her ear had caught these words, and they were imprinted on her memory for ever: "Never forsake God, and He will never forsake you. Instruct your little brother, that I may receive you both at last into heaven." "We shall go to our mother in the happy place," said Helen to her little brother; "I have heard her say, and I have read in the Bible, that

Christ loves little children like us; and if we be good, He will come and take us to our mother."

While Helen talked thus, William would wipe his eyes, and seem now to believe, now to mistrust her words. Again would they remember the pale lips, and motionless eye of their mother, and burst into tears; and again, the hope of meeting her gleamed on their souls, as clasped in one another's arms the two orphans wept themselves fast asleep, while the darkness of night came down on the untenanted hut of Cleughhead.

On the Tuesday following, the old farmer gathered two or three of his friends, and the remains of Mrs Thomson were committed to the dust, near the spot (as was frequently the case in those days) where she died a martyr to the holy religion of Jesus.

How much ridicule soever, young reader, irreligion, or misguided genius, may throw on her memory, or the memories of those like her, it is to her, and to those like her, that we owe much of our civil liberty, and the plentiful streams of the water of life which flow to-day in the midst of our land. And shall the Christian take up the books of those who deliberately laugh at their memories, and laugh along with them? Shall the Christian hear their sufferings jeered at, their motives misconstrued, and their doings misrepresented, and yet give a smile of half approbation? Were our persecuted ancestors robbed of their goods? were they hunted like the wild beasts of the mountains? were they imprisoned? were they tor-

ured? were they banished? were they murdered? Did they eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of affliction, and watch at cold midnight, in the caves and the dens of the wilderness? Did they set their breasts of heavenly heroism to the floods and the fires of hellish rage, that the manna of life might never be driven from our native land? Did their blood flow on the scaffold, and their groans lament on the desert, that we should drink in abundance the streams of life, and listen unmolested to the glad tidings of salvation? Did they keep unslumbering watch on our hills, when the storms, and the tempests, and the darkness of hell howled and thickened over our beloved land, that we might walk in the clear and peaceful day of the Sun of Righteousness? Were their patience, and fortitude, and faith, and suffering, and death, made a spectacle to men and angels? Did the seraphim sing them a higher note? Did God lean down from the eternal heights, well pleased to behold them? And shall we, their offspring, forget their memories, or remember them with ridicule?

While the pious peasants pressed the heathy turf on the silent house, and mingled their tears with the streamlet that seemed to lament down the glen, Helen and William, holding one another by the hand, stood by the grave and wept. "This shall be my church," said Helen; "here will I read my Bible, here will I pray, here will I repeat to you, William, our mother's last advice."

CHAPTER III.

"Ah! how unwise the busy fluttering race,
Who, from themselves, to wanton tumults fly;
Their reason lost in passion's thorny maze,
No ray divine beams through their troubled sky:
A while they rave, and in their raving die.
Ah! there, my son's a waste of human woes!
There lions prowl, and filthy harpies cry;
There syrens lull the mind to cursed repose—
But in this waste serene the soul is far from foes."

ANON.

AFTER the death of their mother, the old farmer took Helen and William, the one now in her eighth, and the other in his sixth year, into his own family Helen had been taught by her mother to read, to knit, and to sew a little. William could also read though imperfectly. As there was no school near the place, his sister, and the woman of the house, frequently gave him lessons; and in the course of a twelvemonth he could read the Bible fluently. Here the two orphans had the benefit of a pious example; and the sweetness of their tempers, and ready obedience, procured them the affection of every one in the house. As they grew up, William was employed in keeping his benefactor's cows, and Helen assisted in the dairy. During their leisure hours they rambled together by the rushy brooks and sunny hills, gathering here the wild thyme, and there the silky white down of the cannach; and never did they re-

turn home without visiting their mother's grave, covered now by the pious care of the shepherds, with a smooth granite stone, on which they had cut, in "uncouth letters," the name of the inhabitant below. A grey willow, whose roots were nursed by the passing streamlet, spread its sweet-smelling leaves half-way over the grave, and by the other side bloomed the heath, rustling on the edge of the stone, while the breeze sighed over the moorland. Here would Helen kneel down, and pray with her little brother, that God would be their father, their guardian and their friend, and take them at length to himself, where they would be orphans no more—and here would she instruct her brother in the fear of the Lord, and tell him all that she remembered of their mother, while they lived in the little hut—and here, especially every Sabbath morning in summer, early, while the dew yet sparkled on the wild flowers, sat the orphan pair. O how often did they sit on this grey stone, unseen by all but heaven! and while the wild bee hummed its little note of gratitude, and sipped its sweet food from the bosom of the heather-bell, did they drink of the streams of life, which flow from the pure word of God! On Helen's soul at least, young as she was, the dawn of eternal day had already appeared. She prayed in faith—she trusted in her Saviour—she leaned on the Rock of Ages. She felt that her own heart was ever ready to go astray—she felt that she was naturally polluted; and she kept her eye on the Star of Bethlehem, and went daily

to wash in the fountain that is ever open for sin and for uncleanness.

Helen was remarkable for tender-heartedness. The lamb forsaken or bereaved of its mother, the crippled fowl, the dying sheep, received her ardent attention, and often her tear. She would frequently watch the falcon in chase of the lark or the moss-chirper; and as the little bird, now descending, now mounting above its fell pursuer, struggled for life, she would exclaim, "O would it come to me!" and once she enjoyed the luxury of saving the little trembler in her bosom, while the disappointed falcon swam away on the wind in search of some less fortunate songster of the desert. She would often, too, go out of her way, that she might not disturb the nest of the lapwing, the snipe, or the plover. And when she happened in her thoughtful mood to cast her eye down on the wild flower that seemed decaying, while all around was verdant and lively, she would bathe it with a tear, and say, "We must all die like thee, drooping flower. The world will laugh and be gay when we are gone, as the herbage that surrounds thy falling head. O that I may answer my end like thee! Thou hast grown up, spread thy bosom to the morning, shed thy fragrance around thee, looked lovely—very lovely, and thy duty is complete. O that I may so grow up, opening my heart to the Sun of Righteousness, casting around me a sweet savour of piety, shining in the white robes of holiness, and falling at last without a murmur into the grave; secure that my

soul shall have an everlasting place by the fount of life."—There was one rather odd employment into which the tenderness of Helen's feelings often led her.

Whoever has travelled over the moorish districts of Scotland, must have observed the webs woven by a large grey spider. They are to be seen in thousands, suspended across the gulleys and broken mosses, glittering in the morning dew. The insect generally fastens a single thread to a stump of heath, on each side of the gully, from the middle of which it weaves four or five other threads, fixing them also to one side of the gulley. On these it spins a circular network, nine inches or a foot in diameter, in the midst of which it crouches, like death, in concealment, till the coming of the heedless fly.

In her idle hours, Helen would often take a bush of heath in her hand, scramble among the broken mosses, and sweep away hundreds of those frail toils, always letting the spider escape, but disabling it for a time, for carrying on the work of destruction.

So far, young reader, is religion from destroying the finer feelings of our nature; so far from contracting our sympathies, or souring our ordinary pleasures. Indeed, how is it possible that the liker we become to our Father in heaven, who cares for all his works—the solitar flower of the desert as well as the seraphim in glory—our regards for creation can be diminished? Truly, the more religious we are, whatever the mere sentimentalist may say, the more kindly will we look on all the works of God's hand.

The flower of the field is pencilled by Jehovah; and the good man looks on it with an eye of admiration. The lark is taught her song by the Almighty; and the Christian listens to it with delight. The river spreads its bounties, and leads its meanderings under the guidance of the God of Israel; and the saint tastes its waters, and gazes on its romantic banks, and devious course, with feelings of poetical rapture and devotional gratitude. The Christian feels that he is heir of all things; and he looks to them all, thinks of them all, and acts towards them all, as a son. There have been Christians, and perhaps some of them may still be found, who seem to despise the natural world with all its beauty and grandeur. They turn away their ear from the music of the grove, as if God had not taught the songster; they tread on the lily of the valley, as if God had not arrayed it with glory. But this is a spot in their character—a sin which the blood of Christ must wash out; and far from being, as they would have us believe, a denying of themselves. Dispositions such as theirs have often caused the philosopher and the sentimentalist to load our holy religion with the charge of extinguishing the natural charities, and absorbing the finer sympathies of our soul. Imitate them not, young reader. God himself demands your warmest love; his tender mercy in Christ your primest gratitude. But let all the works of creation prove a mirror to your mind. Do the saints in glory—do the holy angels look on the moon and stars, walking the paths of the mid-

night sky, without rapture? Do they hear the ocean lift up the voice of his waves, and roar to break up his everlasting prison-doors; or the river roll down the massy wanderings of his strength; or the mountain forest shake the locks of his majesty, without exclaiming, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou Creator of the ends of the earth!"

Helen had now finished her fourteenth, and William his twelfth year, when Mr Hunter, a gentleman who had been an acquaintance and friend of their father while in Glasgow, came to pay them a visit. His manners were kind and familiar, such as soon gain the confidence of the youthful mind. William, who was never so well contented with his situation as his sister, listened eagerly while Mr Hunter talked of Glasgow, the hurry of its business, and the way of making money. Mr Hunter, pleased with William's natural capacity, and observing his dispositions, offered to take him along with him to Glasgow, and initiate him into the principles of the commercial concern, of which he was himself a partner. William accepted the proposal with eagerness; the old farmer approved the more easily of his choice, as he knew Mr Hunter to be a sober, industrious gentleman, and well in the world; and the views of future independence and respectability to her brother, and his promises never to forget religion, gained the consent of Helen.

It was a morning in Autumn when William set

out with his new friend. And as the old shepherd with Helen, accompanied them a mile or two on their way to Glasgow, he addressed William shortly after this manner :—

"You are now going away, my son," for this was the kind appellation the old farmer always gave him, "you are going away from the quietness and sobriety of our sequestered glens. Vice and temptation will beset you on every side. But trust in God, and He will uphold you. Read your Bible ; pray for direction to your Father in heaven; attend as often as possible the preaching of the gospel. Be obedient to your master, constant at your business, and obliging to all. And, if God shall prosper you, beware of pride and vanity: your prosperity will last the longer. Observe the heath on which we tread. It heeded not the first shower of spring: it put not forth its buds till the frosty nights were gone, and the steady heat of summer come in. And see, it is still green and vigorous—while the gaudy flower which rose and spread its painted leaves at the first sunshine of the year, has already withered away, and no trace of it is seen on the mountains. Remember this short advice, my William, and the God of your fathers be with you."

Helen held her brother by the hand, enforced the old man's instructions, and repeated to him their mother's last advice, with much tenderness and affection, "'Never forsake God, and He will never forsake you.' And O come to see us soon. The two

orphans now embraced, and with tears in their eyes, bade each other farewell. William took his way over the heath towards Glasgow; and Helen, often looking back on her brother, for she loved him with the tenderness of a seraph, returned with the old farmer to her home.

William on his arrival in Glasgow, was much amused with the busy scene. The houses, the streets, the carriages were all new to him. As new were the habits and manners of the inhabitants. But his natural pliancy of manner, and aptness to learn, soon assimilated his general character to his associates. Constant and vigilant at his business, he gained his master's favour and kind attention in return. He was taught writing and accounts, and whatever might tend to accomplish a young man designed for the activities of business.

During his first year's stay in Glasgow, the kind advices of his sister, and his old benefactor, never left his memory. He read his Bible, prayed in secret, and went to church on the hallowed day. When he heard the boy younger than himself utter horrid oaths, and take the name of the Holy One in vain; or when he heard the tongue of licentiousness and scandal, his soul trembled within him. But vice is a dangerous neighbour. Like the apples of Gomorrah, how rotten soever within, it puts on a fair outside; or, like the vampire of America, while it sucks away the life-blood of piety, it soothes and flatters the repose of its victims. William's associates, who

were most careless of religion, and some of them covertly addicted to the grosser vices, seemed cheerful, free, and generous, and often ridiculed his seriousness and scrupulous observance of the Lord's day. In his master, William had no example of genuine religion. Mr Hunter, as we have observed, was sober, vigilant in business, and knew well how to gain the world. But his creed was of the easy and accommodating kind. In these persecuting times, he shifted it, like too many of his contemporaries, as best suited his personal safety and worldly aggrandizement. His character was fair in the eyes of his neighbours; but the leprosy of sin was at work in the darkness of his heart. In his house, family-worship was neglected; and his instructions to William were oftener how to manage the fluctuations of trade, and distance his fellows in the pursuit of wealth, than how to avoid the snares of wickedness, and gain "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Thus removed from the kind instructions of his sister and the old farmer, and exposed to the seducements of temptation and vicious example, like the willow, from whose roots the stream turns away its waters, and on whose leaves come the blighting frosts, need we be surprised if the beauty of William's piety began to wither and decay? Now he would think of the gaiety of his companions, who seemed happy in their neglect of religion; now he would question the utility of so much attention to the well-being of his soul, and again the former admonitions of his

friends awakened in his memory, and his conscience trembled. By degrees, however, he forgot his Bible, or read it heedlessly; went to sleep without committing himself to the care of his heavenly Father; and arose in the morning, without thanking the God who had preserved him. The Sabbath, instead of being spent in the house of prayer, or in devotional meditation, was often profaned in pleasure-walks, or in idle and licentious conversation. Still would the parting advice of Helen come like a warning angel to his soul, and stem, for a moment, the current of his misdoings. His heart beat with fear when he thought that his sister might hear of his dishonouring the Sabbath, or neglecting his devotions.

And had he no fear of God? Will you, young reader, stand in awe of your fellow-men? Will you tremble at the rebuke of the world? Yes, you will grieve to wound the heart of your earthly benefactor. You will stand pale before the offended laws of your country. Shame will blush on your face, when you violate the niceness of the rules and customs of fashion. You will bow to the great ones of the earth; and look with alarm when the hand of man's justice lifts the sword against you. The little tyrant, who couches in the gloominess of his barricaded fastnesses, although but a worm of God's footstool, can make you tremble; and will you not fear God, who can cast both soul and body into hell fire? Will you fear to grieve your earthly benefactors, and will you have no reverence to your Father in heaven?

Will ye tremble to offend the laws of man, and blush to be seen in an unfashionable suit of apparel; and will ye trample under foot the laws and the statutes of the God of hosts; and will ye not blush when He sees you stript of the white robes of innocence, and refusing to put on the garments that are worn in the courts of heaven? Surely this is folly.

One thing I shall observe here, which may be useful to parents, should this little piece happen to fall into any of their hands.

Among the injunctions which the old farmer gave William, you remember one was, that he should attend the preaching of the gospel. But the good old man forgot to specify what minister of religion he should hear. Indeed, in those days, when the faithful servants of God were mostly driven from their flocks by persecution, it was not easy to find, even in such a place as Glasgow, a minister who ventured to declare the whole counsel of God. Those whom the iniquitous laws of the time permitted to appear in the pulpits, were dumb dogs that could not bark: they prophesied lies, and announced to their slumbering congregations, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace."

Such was the priest under whose ministry Mr Hunter had placed himself, and William attended the same church. Here he heard little of the original depravity of man—of his natural hatred to God, and all that is holy. Little of the inflexibility of God's justice, and of his jealous and immutable regard to

the minutest requirement of his moral law. He was indeed told that he was a sinner, and needed to be made holy, and just, and good, before he could see God. He was enjoined to do good, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God; to be kind and charitable to all, and to keep God's commandments, as far as frail human nature would permit. He was also reminded, that after all his pious endeavours, much would be amiss; but, that God was a God of mercy, and delighted to forgive the repenting sinner. But, alas! he heard little of the great atonement—of God's mercy flowing to sinners, only through Him—of the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit—of man putting away from his trust, all his own works, and relying for salvation, solely on the merits and propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The minister who concealed thus the essence of preaching, was called a minister of the gospel; but, oh! how unlike a minister of the gospel of Christ! Under him, William's conscience was flattered, he became more pleased with himself, and was glad to hear that he might expect heaven at last with so little expense to his natural desires and propensities. Thus, one who called himself, and whom the world called a servant of God, joined with William's companions, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, in endeavouring the ruin of his soul.

How careful should all be, then, who have the guidance of youth, to place them under a true

minister of the gospel of the grace of God—an able and a faithful minister of the New Testament! We are sorry to have cause to say, that our pulpits are not yet wholly cleared of false prophets. Let parents and guardians, therefore, beware. Let them not make the omission of the old farmer. Who knows how much William's pious resolutions might have been strengthened, and his backsliding prevented, by the weekly ministrations of a zealous, heart-searching, faithful minister of the gospel of Christ! The state of the church, as we have hinted, formed some palliation for the conduct of the old farmer. But the guardians of youth can have now no such excuse. Blessed be God, faithful ministers of religion may now be found in every part of the kingdom.

While William was thus, unknown to his friends, putting away from him the fear of the Lord, Helen, far retired from these busy scenes, was training her soul to virtue, and assimilating her nature to those "who walk with God, high in salvation, and the climes of bliss." The mercy and holiness of God, as manifested in the sacrifice of his Son, was the theme of her sweet and daily contemplation—she did good, and loved mercy, and walked humbly with her God; but she looked to Jesus Christ alone as the author and finisher of her faith; as the great and only means of her justification with God; and to the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, for those renewing and sanctifying influences which could alone prepare her soul for an inheritance among the

saints in light. Helen had often fled from the violence of persecution; and young, inoffensive, and meek as she was, suffered oftener than once from its cruelty. One time in particular, a lighted match was placed between her fingers by a soldier, to extort from her the discovery of her old guardian. Helen knew if the old man was taken, immediate death would be his lot, for he had not only been intercommuned himself, but his house was a noted sheltering place for the scattered flock of Christ. The match burned between her fingers, but Helen, with a look that might have softened the heart of the wolf, and a voice that might have wrung a tear from the eye of the tiger, said to her tormentor, that she could not discover the old man, for he was to her as a father. The oaths and menaces of the soldier made her tremble; but looking to heaven for strength, she endured the torture; and after her hand had been severely burned, the cruel dragoon struck her tender neck with the flat of his sword, and went off cursing her obstinacy, as he called her pious and faithful firmness.

Meanwhile the arm of persecution was beginning to weary in the slaughter. The instruments of torture, the iron boot, and the thumbkin, were nearly laid aside in Scotland, and the children of God were less hunted by the hounds of oppression. Helen neglected not the kind interference of Providence. Every Sabbath she was present in the house of God, where she sat with peculiar delight. Every morning

of the hallowed day she visited the solitary grave of her mother, reading her Bible and holding communion with the upper world.

To the affairs of the house, Helen was ever attentive; and her modesty, sensibility, and piety, made her the favourite of the sequestered few with whom she lived. The troublous aspect of the times, and the severe bereavements she had suffered, had thrown a seriousness and sobriety over her character, rather disproportioned to her years. But she knew nothing of moroseness or melancholy. The fear of heaven dwelt in her bosom; the smile of content beamed in her face. She always took a ready part in the simple and innocent amusements of her rustic companions. Of music she was peculiarly fond. Often would she sit on the grassy seat, by the house side, and listen to the evening song of the shepherd boy, winding down the glen from his laired flock. And often in the winter evening—the peat burning on the hearth, and the wheel humming in the corner—would the old farmer lay the stocking at which he knitted, on his knee, and give his ear to Helen while she sung the sweet melodies of Scotland.

Truly, young reader, religion is no dreary thing Its light casts a ray of cheerfulness over all the character. It is the Christian who possesses the merry heart. He is on his way to his Father's house; and why should he be fretted or morose? He sees no darkness on the countenance of heaven; and why should his face gather blackness? He

knows that no frown rests on the face of his reconciled Father; and why should he offer Him monastic sullenness?

CHAPTER IV.

——————"Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts; and from the bottom stir
The hell within him. * *
——————Now conscience wakes despair,
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds, worse sufferings must endure."

MILTON.

THREE years and some months had now elapsed since William went to business in Glasgow. He had hitherto been prevented from visiting his sister, chiefly by the tumult and danger of the times. But the bright morning of the Revolution had now driven away from our land the dark fiend of persecution. The laws were respected; the country was eased of oppression; and the persons and property of men safe from violence.

It was on a frosty morning in January that William left Glasgow to pay a visit to Helen and the old farmer. As he crossed the Clyde, the sun looked cold and red through the smoky atmosphere of the town. But as he left the city behind him, the fields and the sky brightened in the splendid,

though short, glare of the winter day. The bird chirped on the brown and leafless hedgerow, and the morning maid carried her pail from the well. Amusing himself with the objects around him, William crossed the cultivated parts of Renfrewshire, and drew near to the moorlands. He now passed a small stream that washed the north border of the parish of Eaglesham. This brook, called the Erne (as the swains on its banks say, from a species of the eagle of that name which lodged here, while Scotland was yet covered with woods), where William crossed it, leads its gentle waters secluded among grassy hills and little green holms, on which grow, in their seasons, the primrose, the fern, the wild daisy, and the violet. As he ascended the south bank, he noticed a small oval excavation, called from its appearance, the *Chamber's Braes*. In this sequestered hollow, during the hot day of persecution, the neighbouring swains, whose offspring still possess the ground, often met to hear the joyful sound. Here the psalm often rose on the breeze of the hallowed morning—here the holy man of God lifted up the desires of his people to the ear of the Eternal—and hither the blessing descended from between the cherubim.

Proceeding on his way, he gained, an hour after mid-day, the summit of Balagich, a hill about eleven miles south of Glasgow, which in this place forms the boundary between the heathy sheep grounds to the south, and the cultivated districts that slope

gently down to the river Clyde on the north. Tired with travelling, here he sat down on some old grey stones, piled together by the shepherds, and threw his eyes over the romantic scenery.

To the east rose Tinto, watching the youthful ramblings of the Clyde ; and a little to the north, and farther in the distance, Pentland Hills and Arthur's Seat, whence the morning sun looks down on the towers of Edinburgh. Beneath him, passing in his course the spires of Glasgow dimly seen in the smoke, and leaving the eye at the rock of Dumbarton Castle, the ancient strength of Scotland, the Clyde watered his fertile valley, surmounted on the north by the fells of Campsie, and the wild mountains of the western Highlands. Benledi, or hill of God, where our pagan forefathers worshipped their unknown gods, muffled its spiry top in the clouds. Benlomond, from whose shoulders the unsubdued sons of freedom rushed down on the Roman invader, was clothed in his saintly robes of snow, and the garments of the mist leaned on his head. Shooting up far to the west, were the rocky hills of Arran, on whose rugged tops the spirit of the storm gathers the rain, and nurses the infant tempest. Round the rock of Ailsa, hovering in the wave, like the guardian angel of the Frith, rolled the wintry billows of the Atlantic, and straggling along its shores stood Saltcoats, Irvine, and Ayr, looking up from the setting-sun on the plentiful districts of Carrick, Coil, and Cunningham, scattered with villages and farm-houses.

and guarded in the distance by the grassy hills of Galloway, from which the sun gazes on the shepherd at mid-day. Rising out of the brown level waste to the south, was the little round elevation of Loudon-hill, towards which William now directed his course.

Silence reigned on the desert, save when it was broken by the brown cock calling his mate,—the bleating of sheep, or the whistle of the shepherd, who seemed in more than ordinary solicitude to gather his flocks. His care was not unnecessary. Although William feared no danger, the shepherds who knew well the face of the heavens, saw an approaching tempest. The sun veiled his face, a heavy grey fog closed over the sky, the breeze had left the heath, the little waterfalls were heard at a distance, and a kind of general sighing prevailed over nature.

William had proceeded through gulleys and moor-streams, a few miles only, when the storm overtook him. It was sudden and furious. The snow descended so rapidly and closely, that he saw not whither he went; and the four winds seemed to contend around his head, which of them should drive the snow before it. Young and vigorous, he struggled a while against the fierceness of the tempest; but, every moment in danger of falling into some bog or water-runnel, now choked up with the snow, and not knowing what way to hold for safety, he at length stood still, leaning on a hillock of heath. The tempest grew still more violent; and he began to fear for his life. No hope of assistance, or of outliving the

storm where he was, appeared. Nothing was heard on the waste but the roaring of the wind; and the driving snow that beat against him, and blinding his eyes, threatened to smother him outright.

It was then that William remembered that he had profaned the Sabbaths, forgotten his Bible, and neglected prayer. His conscience rose within him as the storm increased without. The kind instructions of Helen rushed on his mind. And "O shall I never see her again!" was the exclamation of his heart. "Deliver me, O Lord, this time, and I will no more forget thy holy day and religion again!" Struggling thus with the tempest, and the fears of death, which, young as he was, he had already made terrible by his forgetfulness of Him who has conquered death, he shrunk down to the ground benumbed and hopeless. The storm had now rather abated; but the darkness of night was spreading over the moor, and William, unable to rise or stir himself, felt the piercing frost rapidly fastening on the functions of life. Another hour, and the wheel at the cistern would have stood still for ever. But his deliverer was at hand.

A shepherd's dog approached him, looked earnestly in his face, and immediately ran off. William tried to speak to it, but his tongue refused to obey. The dog needed no entreaty. It found its master, and brought him to where William lay. The shepherd raised him up; from his bosom took a bottle of sweet milk which he carried for his own refreshment, and giving him the warm milk in small quantities

succeeded in restoring him to proper animation, and to a partial use of his limbs. The kind peasant threw his own plaid round William's shoulders, and supported him on his arm to his master's house, a lonely hut situated in the midst of the moor, about a mile from the spot where he had fallen down, overcome by the storm. In this humble dwelling which was a noted rendezvous of the people of God in the time of persecution, he received the kindest attention. The old man of the house who had often fled before the cruel and insolent soldiers, like the primitive Christians, washed his feet with his own hands; one of his daughters wiped the snow from William's clothes and hair; another prepared him something to eat; while their mother warmed blankets for him before the fire. The old man thanked God for making his servant and his house the means of saving a fellow-creature, and William went to bed and fell fast asleep, remembering the shepherd's dog, more than the providence of God that had sent it to deliver him.

In the morning William was roused from sleep by a deep groan which proceeded from a bed in the same apartment. The old man who knitted stockings by the fire, came to William's bedside, and told him not to be alarmed. "It is an old soldier," continued he, "who lies there. He was brought in hither, feeble and exhausted, two or three days ago. He has been seized with a violent fever, and I fear he will not hear many hours told. His name," added the old man, "is Wrathburn, well known in the time

of the late persecution for his inflexible cruelty; and especially for his cold blooded murder of the widow of Cleughhead."

At the name of Wrathburn, and the widow of Cleughhead, William started, and his face changed colour. "What alarms you?" said the old man, "the soldier can hurt no one now." "The widow of Cleughhead was my mother," replied William, "and I never hear the name of her murderer without trembling. Discover me not to him," continued he, "it will make his last moments more bitter." "They are bitter enough even now," said the old man; "he refuses to be comforted."

Although the reader already knows something of Wrathburn, it will be necessary here to make a short pause in the narrative, and explain how he was brought into his present situation.

The licentiousness and prodigality of the reign of Charles II. spread from the court, over almost every class of men in the kingdom. The soldiers especially, who were the instruments of persecution in Scotland, imitated their master in every species of riot and drunkenness. Accustomed to plunder and massacre the recusants, or people of God, at pleasure, they totally lost every habit of temperance, and every feeling of humanity. The consequence was, that when disease or old age disabled them for service, deprived of the means, but not of the propensities of dissipation, they were reduced to poverty and wretchedness. And hundreds of them, forgotten by the

masters whose cruelty they had served, wandered about, especially after the persecution, begging their bread among those very peasants whose lives they had pursued, whose houses they had plundered, and whose relations they had murdered. Of this sort was Wrathburn; so intrepid in cruelty, so inflexible to supplication, that Claverhouse, the bitterest of all the persecutors, used to send him on all his bloody errands, where his soldiers were most apt to be turned aside from his orders, by the courage of the peasants, or the tears of women and children. We have already seen one act of his stubborn cruelty, in the murder of Mrs Thomson. This was certainly, the most abominable deed of his life! but there was scarcely a family in the moorish districts of the shires of Lanark and Ayr, that could not bear witness against him for some act of torture, or insolent violence. Disabled at last in his sword arm, by a wound received from the faithful sabre of Hackston, at Bothwell Bridge, and worn out with old age and disease, he had now begged his bread for several years. He had been found, overcome with hunger and fatigue, in the midst of the moors, by the same shepherd who saved William; and now he lay fevered, and on the brink of death, as the old man described him.

As the snow-storm had been succeeded by a rapid thaw, to leave the hut that day was impossible: William had therefore an opportunity of seeing the end of this man. He approached his bedside. The

aspect of the old sinner was indeed terrible. Down from his projecting cheek-bones, hung the skin in withered foldings, that had once been filled with flesh —his head was bald—his beard long, and of a dirty grey—a mouldering stump or two appeared in his mouth, that gaped widely for breath—the violence of the distemper raised up his eye-balls, now and then glaring from their large hollow sockets the fiery darkness of despair. Hell and everlasting wrath took hold of his imagination: and he would often cry out furiously, "Cut them down—cut them down to the last. The widow of Cleughhead—she pursues me—see her daughter swoons by her corpse—that groan was her last—it drives me to perdition—No mercy, no mercy!"

In the short intervals of the fever, he would endeavour to sit up on the bed. With his left arm he tried to support his head; but it was too heavy—the feeble prop fell down; and his right arm lay shrunk and withered by his side. It was then that the good old man placed his shoulder below the head of the dying wretch, pleaded with God for him, and laboured to administer comfort.

"God's mercy is infinite," said the old man; "your sin in disbelieving the all-sufficiency of his grace is greater than that of your most wicked actions. Remember what the Bible says: 'The Lord is slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. Come let us reason together,' says the voice of his infinite goodness, 'though your sins be as scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Whosoever believeth in Him,' however guilty he may have been, 'shall not perish, but have everlasting life. The blood of the Redeemer cleanseth from all sin.' O turn yourself to prayer, ere it be too late. God hath ever an open ear to those who call on Him in distress."

"No, no," with a voice of fury and despair, cried the hopeless sinner; "I never prayed, and God will not hear me now. I read not that Bible of which you speak—I despised that book, and them who read it. I will not pray—the blood of murder is on my hands—the gates of heaven are shut against me—the sword of God's vengeance hath gone into my heart—the eternal fire burns in my soul—pray not for me—talk not of mercy—O for utter annihilation; endless torment is on me—leave me—leave me—the widow of Cleughhead pursues me—that was the shriek of her daughter."

Oh! how dreadful were the agonies of his soul! Conscience, that had been long disregarded, now put on the terrors of eternal death; and truly its voice was heard. The bed on which he lay shook with the furious convulsions of his body. The fever again took away his senses—and nothing but heavy groans were heard. Again a minute of ease returned, and the old man tried yet again to administer some spiritual relief.

"Doubt not," said he, "of God's mercy; he wishes not that you should perish. Remember the thief who was saved on the cross, and went to Paradise. Remember Paul who was the most inveterate of persecutors, and yet he found mercy. Try, O try to pray! God may hear you."

"Away with mercy," cried the frantic wretch; "it is perdition to my soul. Hell calls for me—the devil drags me away—the wrath of God is on me—the widow of Cleughhead pursues me—that was the shriek of her orphan daughter—that is her blood on my hands—hell cannot burn it off!"

Again the strong disease fastened firmer upon him—the mighty strength of the king of terrors was in the pang. The withered stump of the right arm made a convulsive motion, as if to search for the sword; again it fell back—another lurid gleam flashed from his hollow eye—no bow appeared on the cloud of eternal darkness—a deep groan shook his body—it lay still for ever—and his soul was summoned away to that bar whence there is no appeal!

Surely, O man, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! This man showed no mercy: he exceeded even the cruelty of his commission. The tears and supplications of humble widowhood, the shriekings and swoonings of fatherless childhood, melted not the cruelty of his heart—and how could he expect to find mercy in the hour of need? He hated God, and Christ, and all that is holy—and

where could he find a stay; how could he see a guiding star in the valley of thick darkness? He despised the great Captain of Salvation—and how could he meet in battle with the king of terrors? Truly "the fear of the wicked it shall come upon him. Terrors take hold on him, as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and as a storm, hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place."

CHAPTER V.

———" With countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear;
Her eye of purity now darted up
To God's eternal throne, now humbly bent
Upon herself; and weeping down her cheek
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven."

ANON.

NIGHT had again shrouded all in darkness; and it was a night of sadness and trembling in the family of the moor. The horrible expressions of the dying wretch were still in their ears; they still saw his last looks of despair; his last convulsions were still in their memories; his lifeless corpse lay on the bed, and the dark blast of winter moaned over the waste

The old man exhorted them to put their trust in God, and prayed that the scene they had witnessed might be blessed for their improvement.

William now went to bed, but sleep refused to visit him. He thought still of the last looks and words of Wrathburn. He resolved, and resolved again, never to forget religion. Was it possible that his end might be like this man's? If he forsook God now, might not God forsake him in the hour of desolation? "Guide my feet, O God, in the path of the just, that my end may be like his," was the whisper of his fears—and only of his fears.

As soon as morning appeared, William, glad to quit the present scene, set forward for his sister's. Travelling was extremely difficult. The snow had been mostly dissolved, but the streams were swollen, and the swampy grounds in many places covered with water. Resting himself on a gentle height, about three miles from the house he had left, he observed, coming out from it, five or six men. They drove a horse, with a car, and seemed to hold towards a hamlet, situated at the distance of six or seven miles.

It was the funeral of Wrathburn. The very men whom he had often chased with the sword, and whose relations he had murdered, and whose memories many now ridicule, were doing him the last office of humanity. Through fens, and bogs, and over rills they carried him, and in a corner of the village church-yard, at a small distance from the

ordinary place of graves, laid him down in the narrow house, "far from the ashes of his fathers."

Meanwhile, William, now skipping from hillock to hillock, and now leaping the moor-runnels, made towards the habitation of Helen. She had been watching him making his way over the rough broken masses, like a vessel holding for a difficult port; and although this appearance was considerably altered, she recognised him at a short distance from the house, ran out with all her usual tenderness and embraced him, and led him into the dwelling of the honest old farmer. The evening was spent in kind inquiries and kind answers. Helen related, with beautiful simplicity, any curious or entertaining incident that had happened in the neighbourhood since William's departure; and William seemed unreserved in telling her and the old man whatever had happened to him in Glasgow! but not a word dropt from him that could give them the least intimation of his declining piety. The story of Wrathburn made a deep impression on the whole family: and "O!" said Helen, the blood leaving her cheek, and the tear starting in her eye, "was there no hope? Did he dieuttering these horrid words? Did you not pray for him, William? I am sure my mother forgave him. Why did he not seek the mercy of God? O! did he die unforgiven?"

Helen perceiving no marks of decline in his religion, was extremely pleased with her brother. William was taller; his glossy jet locks curled plentifully on his healthy cheeks, which had now assumed

that smoothness and richness of colouring which precedes manhood; his black eye rolled more freely; his dress was neater; he spoke better; and his whole appearance was more graceful.

Nor had Helen grown up in the desert an unlovely flower. Although seeing few but the old shepherd and his servants (for his wife had now been dead for some time, and he had no children), her native sweetness of temper, her contentment, her sobriety of thought, gave an expression and a dignity to her countenance, superior to her situation in life. Her form was handsome; the loveliness and vigour of seventeen imparted animation to every feature; a profusion of sunny ringlets shaded her fair neck, and played on her shoulders; and her soft blue eye beamed with beauty.

Although William was by no means deficient in natural talent and feeling, in all that concerned religion Helen was far his superior. Her understanding illuminated by the divine truths of the Bible; her imagination enlarged by the boldness of its poetry; and her heart warmed by the pathos of its piety,—she felt and spoke of divine things in a style much above her years. Seldom was she drawn into lengthened conversation on these subjects; but when the taste or interest of her associates required it, having fully before her mind the awful impression of eternal concerns, she entered into religious converse with an eloquence, a warmth, and an energy, which surprised and often deeply impressed those with whom she conversed.

Now gazing on one another, now talking of their days of childhood, and now of their future prospects, the two orphans spent that evening, and the following day, the wetness of which had kept them within doors, till sunset; and now they walked out to visit their mother's grave.

"Does the lamb go with us?" said William; noticing one that skipped at Helen's side. "It is a foster lamb," said Helen; "it lost its mother, and I have brought it up in the house. It follows me everywhere; I have to shut it up when I go to church. Poor thing! I love its white face. It will go along with us: often has it accompanied me to my mother's grave."

The wind was hushed on the mountain; the stream purled down its glen; in the water-spots, over the brown waste, glittered the lamps of heaven; the vesper star looked solitarily from its hermitage in the west; up the east, rejoicing in the midst of her constellations, rode the moon; and the light cloud, passing at intervals over her face, threw its wavy shadow on the heath.

The two orphans now approached the grave of their mother. The grey willow dropped on the stone the tears of evening. William stooped down, and read the name; Helen kneeled on the heath by its side; the lamb looked up in her face; she pressed one hand to her breast, lifted the other up to heaven, turned her blue eye to the skies, and besought the blessing, even life that shall never

end, for her brother and herself. "Father in heaven! guide our feet in the paths of wisdom; make us white and clean in the blood of the Lamb, that our dwelling-place may be in the house of God for ever."

The two orphans now shed the tear of natural affection on their mother's grave. Nor did they forget that their father's dust mouldered in a distant land. The sigh that heaved their breasts for the cruel death of their mother, deepened as they recollected that their father had gone before her. "Let us follow their steps," said Helen to her brother, as they returned home, "let us follow their steps, and we shall see them in heaven. Remember, William, our mother's dying advice, 'Never forsake God, and He will never forsake you.'"

During William's stay with his sister, they were often engaged in cheerful talk, and innocent amusement. But we mean to confine the narration here chiefly to their private religious conversation.

Before the old farmer, William always demeaned himself with the strictest propriety; but sometimes he betrayed a levity and a carelessness when Helen spoke of religion and its duties, which alarmed her, lest the contagion of bad example had been sapping the roots of his piety. Ever mindful of her mother's wish, that she should instruct and warn William; and ever anxious herself for the welfare of his soul, she urged him to tell her all that he felt and thought of religious concerns. However reluctant William

might have been to speak plainly on these subjects to any other, he could not resist the entreaties of his sister.

One day, while sitting in the house alone, the pious sister pressing her brother to speak to her just as he thought, the following conversation ensued—William disclosing the principles which he had learned from his companions in Glasgow, and Helen endeavouring to root them out of his mind, chiefly by the pure words of inspiration :—

"Some attention to religion, sister," said William, "is surely very necessary. But I see some of my companions as cheerful and happy as I, who trouble themselves little about it. They attend to their business, and are getting on in the world; and yet they don't seem to be always reading their Bible. I even hear them swear and take the name of God in vain; and yet they are gay and prosperous."

"And is it not God, dear William, who gives them health and prosperity?" said Helen, gazing on William's face. O how did she gaze when she heard these expressions! "It is from God we receive all our blessings. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. All that is beautiful, or grand, or useful in nature; all our intellectual enjoyments; and all that soothes or endears in acquaintance or friendship, come from our God. Is it any but God who giveth us the former and the latter rain, and scatters the dews of heaven on the grassy bosom of the earth? Is it any but our Father in heaven who

loads the fields of autumn, and crowns the hopes of the husbandman? He spreads the table of plenty, and bids all that live eat their fill. He giveth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. He crowneth the year with his goodness, and his paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with corn. They shout for joy; they also sing. Does God all this for us, dear William, and shall we not fear Him with a holy fear?

"And," continued she, her eye kindling with gratitude to God, and her voice softening in compassion for William, "and has our gracious Father done no more than this for his children? Yes, He hath done more—infinitely more. When we, by the transgressions of his law, and by our attachment to sin, had made ourselves his enemies, and the enemies of all that is holy, and just, and good—when we had thus exposed ourselves to his wrath and curse, to all manner of suffering in time, and to inconceivable punishment in eternity, the gracious voice of his mercy was heard, saying, "Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." And what was this ransom? His own Son, who is himself the Almighty God, left the glories of heaven, assumed our nature, and by his obedience in our room, satisfied the law of God which we had violated; and by his death in our stead delivered us from that eternal death to which we are exposed. And how did we

receive this Messenger of peace and love—this Saviour of a self-ruined world? Did we welcome his coming as all our salvation, and all our desire? Ah, no! He was received with reviling and reproach; yet He turned not away his love from us. He who was the brightness of his Father's glory, made himself of no reputation, girt himself like a servant, went about doing good, preaching peace, binding up the broken-hearted, and submitting to every privation, and trying every endearment to win us to himself, and save us from the consequences of our guilt. Nor was this the end of his love. The Son of God bore our sins, in his body on the tree; suffered the wrath of God for our sake; and on the hill of Calvary, bowed his head and gave up the ghost. On the third day He rose again, and ascended up into heaven, where, in the presence of his Father, He pleads our cause; whence He sends the Comforter to purify our hearts, to cheer and support us through the trials of life; and where He is preparing mansions to receive us, that where He is, there we may be also—holding communion with our God for ever and ever. Hath God done all this for us, William, and shall we not love Him? Hath Jesus Christ redeemed us by his own blood, and shall we not fear to offend Him?"

William, although much moved with this address to his feelings of gratitude, continued thus: "Dear sister, we should certainly be grateful to Him of whom we hold so much. But I have heard my

companions say, that God is all-merciful, He will not punish us for our frailties."

"O William," resumed Helen, "that is the fairest lure that vice spreads to entice its prey. God is indeed all-merciful to them who believe in his Son. Jesus Christ died for their sins, and rose again for their justification. His justice has, therefore, no claims against them. They are bought with a price. They are dear to Him as the apple of his eye. They are his own children—and every dispensation they meet with is the dispensation of a Father full of mercy. He hath no pleasure in the death even of the wicked. And He is saying to them, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.' Truly God is long suffering and slow to wrath. But He will forget to be gracious; He will ease himself of his adversaries; He will by no means clear the guilty; He will at last rise from his place, and scatter his enemies. And O, it will be a terrible day for the wicked man, when God's mercy leaves him for ever."

Again William tried to find refuge from the eloquence which Helen drew from the word of God. "The Almighty," said he, "will perhaps not punish so severely as He has said. He will perhaps relent at last."

"Dear brother," said Helen, weeping, when she heard William speak in this manner—"Dear brother,

you cannot think so. O! where is your security for so frail a reliance? Hath God ever failed of his word? 'The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed out of their place; but the word of our God abideth for ever. He is the fountain of truth.' The words of the Lord are pure words. He knows the end from the beginning; and hath no need to change his purpose. He will not be more merciful at the end of time, than He was when the morning stars first sang together. His justice, and power, and truth, and holiness, stand pledged for the fulfilment of what He hath spoken. He hath sworn by Himself, that every word that proceeds from his mouth shall be fulfilled. Seek in the book of the Lord, and see if any of his purposes hath failed. The sentence of death was pronounced against Adam, if he disobeyed his Maker; and did it not take its effect? The sword of justice turned in between man and the tree of life. Briars and thorns came up on the earth, and death was turned loose on mankind. And is not the curse still cleaving to our rebellious race? The care-worn countenance, the feeble knees, the pale visage of disease, can tell if God be faithful. The grave can tell if it has been defrauded of its prey. Has not death swept away generation after generation, and made the world a burying-place? Will the multitudes of those who perished in the deluge bear witness against God's faithfulness? Will the ashes of Tyre and Jerusalem, or the lake of Sodom and Gomorrah, speak against his veracity? Or will the apostate

spirits, and the departed souls of the wicked, bring us the tidings that his wrath is exhausted, and his decrees revoked?

"But God has not been faithful to punish only," continued the earnest pleader, her face brightening as she beheld the tender mercies of God present in her mind—"He has been, and is faithful and mighty to save. Since mercy placed the bow in the clouds, hath any one seen the waters come over the mountains, and smite every living thing with a curse? Or hath any one observed seed time and harvest; and cold and heat; and summer and winter; and day and night, cease from the earth? 'Hath He spoken it, and shall He not do it? Hath He said it, and shall He not bring it to pass?' The Son of God will not say that the Father is not true. In Eden, the voice of God's truth and mercy was heard saying, that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.' This was the most expressive promise that God ever gave to man. Yet no jot of it hath failed. The veil of the temple rent in twain—the earth shook and trembled—the sun shrouded himself in darkness; but the purpose of God stood fast. The Saviour laid down his life, cast the serpent into everlasting chains, and secured the redemption of man. Hath God done this to accomplish his sayings; and shall He not give effect to his threatenings against those who fear Him not, and trample on the blood of his Son? Trust not, William, —trust not, my dear brother, to refuges of lies. Ra-

member the deathbed scene you have lately witnessed —remember your mother's last advice—remember the goodness and wrath of God; and O think of the ingratitude and danger of offending Him!"

CHAPTER VI.

"Thrice happy they! that enter now the court
Heaven opens in their bosoms. But how rare!
Ah me! that magnanimity how rare!
What hero like the man who stands himself;
Who dares to meet his naked heart alone;
Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings,
Resolved to silence future murmurs there?
The coward flies, and flying is undone!"

YOUNG.

By those addresses, recorded in the preceding chapter, which were more congenial to Helen's habits of thinking, and better fitted to touch the heart of her brother, than abstract argumentation, his objections to strict piety were silenced, at least for the present. William seemed to admit the claims of religion to his careful observance, and promised to give his ear no more to such misrepresentations of the immutable character of God. Helen glanced a look of thankfulness to heaven, embraced her brother, and shed on his breast a tear of joy

From the good old farmer, William received many kind advices; one only of which I shall record here.

"Be faithful to your Father in heaven," said the pious old man, "so you shall be happy. Be forgetful of his commandments, so you shall be miserable. You have seen a child set off confidently to catch the wild fowl that sat on the neighbouring hillock; you smiled at the simplicity of the little one; much more simple is he who thinks to gather happiness from the frailties of earth. You have heard of a man chasing a shadow, or the fabled phantom of night; you then heard of one pursuing happiness among the frailties of earth. You have read of those false reflected waters, to which the thirsty traveller, in the sandy deserts of the East, hastens to drink, but finds them gone; you then heard of one making haste to draw happiness out of the frailties of earth. You have seen the wildfire dancing on the marsh; it was beautiful; but you could not lay hold of it. You have heard the echo of the glen; her voice was sweet; but you could not embrace her. You have observed the evening star; it was exceedingly bright; but you could not reach it where you stood. Neither, my son, shalt thou encompass true happiness, except the peace of God dwell in thy heart. This happiness you may attain; but religion is the only guide that can keep your feet in the upward road, and direct your eye to her habitation. Take hold of her hand, William, and she will conduct you to happiness."

At William's second departure for Glasgow, Helen

shortly addressed him: "Your companions, dear William, seek the honour and the preferment of this world; but O remember how frail they are! They, fearless of God, may flourish for a while. Their spring may have been green, their summer vigorous, and their autumn peaceful. But the dark winter comes; and all our pride, our vanity, and wealth, and honour, and earthly alliance, like the withered leaves of the grove, shall be driven away before its first blast. But religion shall outlive the withering breath; and transplanted at last to a warmer soil, and kinder skies, she shall strike her roots by the river of life, grow up under the everlasting smile of God's countenance, bearing on her immortal branches all our pious friendships, and all our hallowed attachments."

For some time after William's return to Glasgow, his narrow escape from perishing in the moor, the old soldier's awful death, and the pious advices and instructions of Helen and the old farmer, made a deep impression on his mind. He respected the Sabbath, read his Bible, and remembered the duty of prayer. He determined to persevere in duty, and defy the temptations of vice. But his trust was too much in an arm of flesh. A ray from heaven had not yet discovered to him the deceitfulness of his own heart.

With the enticements, the ridicule, and the sophistical reasonings of his vicious companions, he was again assailed. He now wanted the natural timidity and bashfulness which scared him awhile at his first

coming to town, from the deformity of wickedness. Vice knew the passes to his heart: and as the second attack is almost always more feebly resisted than the first, it soon brought him into captivity. Of his character in the eyes of men he was now indeed more careful than formerly. He could now see how necessary a fair name was to his worldly interest, and he took some means to preserve it. He mingled not oaths with the language of his ordinary business; he laughed not at religion before the serious; and he attended church, what is termed regularly, that is on the fore or afternoon of every Sabbath. To his business he was generally attentive; and his natural shrewdness and observation never suffered an opportunity in trade, as far as he was concerned, to escape unimproved. He seemed, indeed, in the eye of the world (and perhaps its eye saw the truth in this instance), to be following the very footsteps of his respectable master; and Mr Hunter loved and cherished him as a hopeful and enterprising son of commerce. Thus William stood before the world. But we must bring him to another examination; we must take a view of him in the privacy of chosen companionship.

It is a fact, that those who have been disciplined in the strictest rules of virtue, if they are once enticed away from its paths, become its bitterest enemies, and the foremost abettors of vice. They have been servants to religion, and they must deny it thrice ere their companions believe them—they know its de-

fences, and where it is most assailable, and they can direct the attack more skilfully and more effectually against it. Their conscience is more severe and more watchful, and it requires a deeper draught of iniquity to silence its reproaches, and lay it asleep.

It was so with William. His talents were superior to those of any of his associates; and, in the seclusion and concealment of selected intimacy, they shone in ridiculing the sobriety of religion, and heightening the luxuriousness of sensuality. Vigorous of constitution, determined to keep the fair word of men, and push himself on in the world, he seldom drank to intoxication, or deserted his business for a single hour. But his vigour and steadiness only fitted him the better for putting entirely away from him the fear of the Lord. Under the shadow of night—even sometimes the night of the sacred day, seated by the mantling bowl of conviviality, surrounded by willing and congenial friendship, did William shine, the very foremost in sporting with the pure words of Scripture, and laughing at those religious duties he had been taught to reverence. He heard the name of his father's God taken in vain without trembling; and he took it in vain himself. But God had not yet left him to utter hardness of heart. The prayers of Helen, the former supplications of his parents, were not forgotten. They lay on the mercy-seat, and rose up before God, as a sweet memorial in behalf of this only son, who seemed treading firmly on in the path to ruin. There were moments, amidst all the obscurity of night, the

encompassment of gay and cordial friendship, and the mirthfulness of wanton pleasure, when the bitterness of reflection came back on his soul, and the darkness of futurity stood before him. His early education, the instructions especially of his sister, reminded him he was wrong, and the deathbed of Wrathburn threatened him with the dreadful consequences. Remorse, that forlorn hope, which heaven often places on the brink of perdition, to drive back the hardy sinner from utter destruction, frequently lifted up its voice within him, and made him hesitate in the midst of his profane joviality. Had a minister of religion, or a pious Christian, glanced on him, in the chosen sociality of his hidden wickedness, the profane word would have turned back on his tongue, and the licentious look fled from his face.

Think, O think, young reader, how weak and inconsistent such conduct is. Will the cautious and calculating sinner fear the look of man; and will he vent his licentiousness, and jeer at the Scriptures, and utter the language of cursing, and detraction, and malice, in the presence of Jehovah? Will he creep under the shadow of night, to veil his crimes and his wickedness from the sight of his fellow-men; and has he no fear of Him who slumbers not nor sleeps? Shall the scorn of the world make him try every means to cover his deceitfulness; to put a colouring of truth on his lying; to hide from the search of his fellow-men the false measure and the unjust balance; to overshadow his extortion and oppression, his

robbing of the poor, and the widow, and the fatherless; to gloss over his knavery by the wresting and misapplication of human laws? Shall he do all this to present what he calls a fair character to the eyes of men, and will he have no fear of that God who has the decision of his eternal destiny—who destroys them that speak lies, and abhors the bloody and deceitful man—who hates the unjust measure, and the false balance—who is the avenger of the widow and the fatherless—who will uncover all his perjuries, and develop all his crafty devices, and bring him before that tribunal where his false witnesses, and his briberies, and his interest, and his splendid name, shall be of no avail?

William, as we have observed, lacked not that kindness and warmness of heart which forbid us to forget our friends and relations. Helen was the only relation he had in the world; and during his cautious career of irreligion in Glasgow, he sometimes remembered her pious advices, but oftener her sisterly relationship and native loveliness. His constant design and ardent desire was to bring her to Glasgow, to keep house with him, as soon as his circumstances would admit, persuading himself that the gaiety of the town, and acquaintance with the world, would soften the severity of her piety, or at least render her more heedless of his own carelessness about religion. The conveyance of letters to her remote situation was difficult. Sometimes, however, he wrote, and his letters generally informed his sister of his health. Mr

Hunter's kindness, his hopes of success in business, and his desire of bringing her, as soon as possible, to live with him. Indeed, all William's plans and hopes of advancing himself in the world, were ever mingled with the worthy intention, and ever stimulated by the strong desire, of raising Helen along with him. To see his kind and lovely sister by his side, decorated in the attire of fashion, and assimilated to the manners of the town, was the ardent wish of his brotherly affection, and the constant promise of his hopes. Two years had now elapsed since William's return to Glasgow. Although he had only completed his seventeenth year, his steadiness and watchful attention induced Mr Hunter to give him a small share in the business. Ambitious of wealth, and the gaudiness of fortune, he now set himself with renovated activity, to the management of trade, depending for success entirely on his own dexterity and perseverance. Although as forgetful of religion as ever, and as fond of hidden iniquity, his character was fair before men, and looking as little as possible into his own heart, and driving from his mind, by the hurry of business, or the gaiety of pleasure, the unwelcome thought of his everlasting interests, he had nearly succeeded in securing to himself, as far as religion was concerned, that listlessness, that slumber of soul, which so often presses its eyelids, till awakened by the voice of death, when an event occurred which gave a new colouring to his life.

CHAPTER VII.

Just knew, and knew no more, her Bible true.
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter read, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
The light she walked by, kindled from above,
Showed her the shortest way to life and love:
She, never checked by what impedes the wise,
Believed, rushed forward, and possessed the prize."

COWPER

One afternoon, in the month of May, as William walked the street with a gay companion, he observed a boy, in the homely garb of the country, pacing slowly along the causeway, and gazing eagerly on the sign-boards. William, who was ever ready to assist and befriend countrymen, who are but too often scorned and laughed at in the town, approached him. It was the shepherd-boy of the old farmer. "What brought you hither?" said William, surprised at the unexpected encounter. There was a meaning in the eye of the simple boy which half told the tale. "Helen is ill," said he; "she was seized with a severe cold some months ago: she is now confined to her bed, and the surgeon is doubtful of her recovery." "Is she ill? Is she very ill?" exclaimed William, fearing the worst, and bringing his handkerchief over his eyes. "Let us make haste," continued he; "I will take a surgeon with me from town." But we cannot

reach home to-night," said the boy; "the sun is nearly set." "True," said William, "true, we must be off early in the morning."

William now conducted the boy to his lodgings, informed Mr Hunter of his sister's illness, and that he would set out at day-break to see her, sent a message to a skilful surgeon to have himself in readiness at the dawn of next morning, and then retired to his room.

Again and again he questioned the boy of Helen's trouble. "Does she sleep much? Has she much pain? Does she think herself dying?" "She has little hope of recovery," said the boy, almost weeping aloud, when he saw the sorrowfulness of William's countenance, and remembered all Helen's kindness and pious instructions to himself. "She says she is dying, and wishes for nothing but to see you. O how she charged me to bring you quickly!" "Has she heard any thing of me lately?" said William eagerly. The boy looked down. "She has heard something," said William; "she has heard that I have neglected some of her kind advices." The boy wiped his eyes, and gave an assenting look. "Who carried the information?" resumed William; "did it hurt her spirits?" "A travelling merchant who knows you," said the shepherd, "came our way the other day"—. "And what did he say of me? You must tell me freely." "He said," replied the boy, bashfully, "that he thought you pay more attention to your worldly interests than your religious con-

cerns." "It is too true; it is too true," said William, his conscience taking advantage of the present state of his feelings. "But has the information hurt her? It would hurt her; she is all tenderness; she loves me like an angel." "It was only yesterday that she heard of you," answered the boy, "but she has never rested since. The servant girl heard her name you last night about twelve, while she waited on her by the bedside." "She prayed for me,—I know she prayed for me," said William, all her kindness to him coming over his soul. "What did the girl hear? Tell me, good boy." "She heard your sister say," replied the lad, "Blot not out my dear brother's name, O kind Redeemer, blot not my dear brother's name out of the book of life!" "When shall it be morning?" said William, weeping abundantly, "this night shall be a long one."

The shepherd was now conducted to bed, and William went to his own, but not to sleep. He thought not of wealth—he planned not the trade of to-morrow,—the gaiety of pleasure had fled from his imagination. Would the superior skilfulness of a city surgeon not recover his sister? Had the disease taken hold of the seats of life? Had the report of his impiety made her worse? Did she now struggle with disease, and pray for him again at midnight? Would all his cherished hopes of seeing her comfortable and accomplished with him in Glasgow be disappointed? Would he be left without a relation in the world? All her native loveliness and tender-

ness—all her kind warnings and instructions, came over his mind. He remembered their wanderings by the glen in the days of childhood—he saw the innocence and fondness of his sister's look—he heard the sweetness of her voice—he remembered their visits to their mother's grave—he remembered how often she had repeated to him their mother's dying advice—he remembered that they were orphans in the world. All his ambition, all his connections in Glasgow, broke away from his mind. He thought of Helen only—his soul was present at her bed.

The first glance of day saw William and the surgeon mounted on horseback, and on their way to the old farmer's ; taking with them whatever medicine the shepherd's account of Helen induced them to think might be useful. The country over which they had to travel was rough and difficult. But the droughtiness of the May days had dried up the morasses, and rendered all the streamlets passable by the horses. At ten o'clock in the forenoon they alighted before the door of Helen's habitation. How did William's heart beat as he entered! How would his sister be altered! The surgeon remained in the kitchen, and William hastened into the room or *spence*, as it was called, where Helen lay. O! how did he gaze on her countenance! It was sweeter than ever—her eye was purer—but there was a hollowness in her face that withered every hope of recovery.

Helen raised herself on her bed, threw her arms round William's neck, who now stooped over her

and kissed him without speaking a word. "Are you ill, dear sister?" said William; "Oh, I see you are ill." "Not ill, my dear brother," said Helen, a gleam of unspeakable kindness issuing from her eyes. "Not ill; but I have had fears for you." "O that the Lord would enable me never to forget your kind advices again!" said William. From his future life, this aspiration breathed in the sincerity of his heart, proved to be the prayer of faith. Then were his parent's prayers that had lain long on the mercy-seat —then were Helen's supplications in behalf of him answered. Helen saw the sincerity of the look, and kissed her brother again. "I have brought a surgeon with me," said William: "shall I bring him in?" "You are very kind," replied Helen, "but I fear he can do me no good."

The surgeon was now brought into the room. His skilful eye saw that his art would be unavailing. Helen was hastening to the close of a rapid decay. Every morning found her weaker than the preceding night, and every night than the morning before. Helen thanked the surgeon for his kindness in coming so far to see her, and said, "if you can do no good to me, you will comfort my brother." William turned himself away when he saw the surgeon's face, for it was a face of meaning, and wept plentifully.

As Helen complained of no pain, the surgeon could do little but instruct the servant girl how she might best prepare her cordials.

William now led the surgeon out of the room, and

they retired together into a small garden behind the house. "I need not ask your opinion of my sister," said William; "there is no hope. Do you think there is no hope?" "I will not deceive you," replied the surgeon; "but I shall wait till to-morrow, and endeavour fully to understand her disease. I will leave you just now, and make some inquiries of the servant girl; for your sister is not able to talk much herself."

William was now left alone in the garden. He threw himself down beneath an old hawthorn that spread its blossoms over him disregarded. This was the moment of the bitterness of his soul. A gleam from heaven, we have said, had lighted up the darkness of his heart. He was convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The holiness, and justice, and omnipotence of God, broke in on his soul. He felt the deceitfulness of his heart, he remembered his pious education, his narrow deliverance from death in the snow-storm, he thought of the warning scene of the soldier, and his ingratitude for so much kindness oppressed his spirit. The destruction, out of whose jaws he scarcely yet felt himself, made him tremble. But the bow appeared spanning the mount of Calvary; he saw the everlasting hand of mercy stretched down over the cross, he heard the everlasting voice of love inviting him to lay hold of it, and he had now no other stay. O how did the greatness of God's mercy in Christ then overwhelm his soul! How, in this moment, did Helen's kind

advices and instructions, and all her loveliness and tenderness, and her pale countenance, dart across his thoughts! She had been the means, he felt, the persevering means of saving him.

If any gentle reader should ever happen to come this way, that has been long in raptures with the gallant hero of romance, whose honour ever bears him out, whose heart is always good, and whose conscience never reproaches him, he will perhaps not be likely to esteem William much here. I cannot help it. This was a time of superior joy in heaven; the angels had watched seventeen years for this moment, and a fuller note now floated from their harps through the mansions of heaven.

While William was thus engaged in the garden, a short conversation happened between his sister and the old farmer, which we shall record here, chiefly to show what sustained Helen's hopes on a bed of languishing, and allayed her fears in the prospect of death; that last enemy which we must all meet.

Immediately after William and the surgeon left Helen's apartment, the old farmer entered, anxious to know the result of the surgeon's visit. From this he could gather little hope; and although the good old man had often asked Helen how she possessed her soul, he now urged the question with more than his wonted earnestness.

"How is it with you, my daughter," said he, "how is it with you? Do you feel your peace with God as secure as ever?"

"Yes, my dear father," replied the young saint, "I feel that God loves me with an everlasting love. You know I have had moments of fear and doubting in the expression of death; but the nearer I approach the end of my days, it hath pleased my kind Redeemer to give me brighter views of the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. My flesh indeed doth faint and fail; but while I am weak, then am I strong. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. This is my comfort, 'there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' It is on Him alone that I rely for salvation. Every day have I sinned against Him; and all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. I have often read in the Bible, and you have told me, that nothing but the blood of Christ could wash away our sins, but I never felt the truth of this so powerfully as now. When I look back on my life, I see little, I see nothing in my own doings but cause of repentance; when I look to my Saviour, I see nothing but strength, and hope, and salvation. I know He hath satisfied the law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. I know He hath unstinged death, and vanquished the grave, and though I die, yet shall I live; for my Redeemer liveth, and I shall live to praise Him with the spirits of the just made perfect. God is all my salvation and all my desire. I rest on his mercy in Christ. O how great is his goodness! Thanks be unto Him for the unspeakable gift which hath brought life and immortality to

light. 'O death, where now is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who giveth me the victory through Jesus Christ my Lord!'"

"Thanks be unto God," exclaimed the old man, "that He hath given you these hopes of eternal life. I came to comfort you, but you comfort me. Your comfort is in God, your hope in the Holy One of Israel. O how sweet this hope on the bed of death! How sweet to you, my daughter, and how solacing to me and all your friends!"

William having breathed a prayer of gratitude, and of fervent supplication for his sister, endeavoured to compose his spirits, and returned to Helen's room. The old farmer sat by her bedside. The lamb (for it was still called the lamb, although now three years old), stood and looked up in her face. "This is my lamb," said Helen, observing William rather surprised at its presence; "you recollect of it going with us to our mother's grave; it takes every opportunity of coming into the room. Poor thing! it will attend me to the last. Take good care of it," continued she, addressing the old man, "take good care of it when I am gone, it is an innocent little thing."

The old farmer now withdrew, and Helen and her brother were left together. William related his thoughts in the garden. While he spake, every look of Helen was a gleam from heaven—every sigh the essence of prayer. "You have been the means of saving me," said William, "O how good you have

been!" Helen clasped his neck, kissed him again and again with the warmth of intensest love, her eye glanced a look of perfect enjoyment, and she exclaimed, "I am happy now, O kind Redeemer! I come to Thee. My dear brother will soon be with me." It was too much for Helen. Her hands loosed from William's neck, the quivering hectic forsook her cheek, she gave a gentle sigh on her brother's bosom, it was the last of nature, the wheel stood still at the cistern, and her soul ascended up into heaven.

I shall leave the scene of this evening to the kind reader. The old farmer, the shepherd boy, the servant girl, the surgeon, wept with William; and the lamb looked up wistfully in their faces. The good old man at length opened the Bible; and they sang together these verses from the 103d Psalm:—

"Such pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear,
Like pity shows the Lord to such
As worship Him in fear.

"For He remembers we are dust.
And He our frame well knows.
Frail man, his days are like the grass,
As flower in field he grows;

For over it the wind doth pass,
And it away is gone
And of the place where once it was
It shall no more be known.

"But unto them that do Him fear
God's mercy never ends;
And to their children's children still
His righteousness extends."

The second morning after Helen's death saw her funeral moving slowly over the heath. The day was bright and lovely, but no one heeded its looks. The lamb followed after the mournful procession. "Shall I turn it back?" said the shepherd boy to the old farmer. "No, poor thing," answered George, "it loved Helen, and it will see her laid in her grave." About five miles distant was the village church-yard. The sexton waited at the gate, and conducted them to the newly opened grave, the pall was removed, William let down his sister's head, the cold clay fell from the sexton's shovel sadly on the coffin, the shepherd boy wept aloud, a tear ran down the wrinkled cheek of the old farmer, the lamb bleated mournfully by his side, William heard the clods of dust fall on the coffin, he looked into the grave, turned away and wiped his eyes; again the clay fell, he looked back into the tomb, and wept bitterly.—"I shall go to her, but she shall not return unto me!" was the sigh of his heart.

The green turf was now laid on the silent house of rest, over which William afterwards caused a modest stone to be placed, on which was engraved his sister's name, with these words of our Saviour below it:—"WEEP NOT FOR ME, BUT WEEP FOR YOURSELVES."

Farewell, Helen! Perhaps thou dost not hear me; but I shall pronounce thy funeral service. Thou hast done well. Thou didst look with delight and gratitude on the scenery of creation. Thou

rejoiced with that which rejoiced, and wept with that which wept. Thy face was the home of the sober smile and the cheerfulness of content. This was well. But it was merely like the sentimentalist and the philosopher, to possess a natural charity, and cherish an affection for the lower works of the Creator. But thou hast done more. It was thy belief in Jesus Christ, as the Author and Finisher of thy Faith, which gave all thy enjoyments a supernal relish. Thou hadst no hope in thy own works—in the tenderness of thy heart, or in the general mercy of the Creator. It was the mercy of God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, on which rested all thy faith of eternal life. It was the Spirit of God to which thou trusted for progress in holiness and complete sanctification. It was this love of God dwelling in thy heart, this undivided trust in the atonement, that excited all thy praise, and sustained, and comforted, and secured thee in the hour of dissolution. Nor did this love of God—this trust in the Saviour—this looking for the hallowing influences of the Spirit, relax thy own endeavours of well-doing. These were wings to thy feet, and a light in thy path of duty. Thou didst remember thy mother's advice—thy Bible was open in thy hand. Thy heart forgave the soldier—thy faithfulness and gratitude would not discover thy old friend to his enemies. Thou wast the means of persuading one soul at least into the straight path. Thy love to thy brother was great; he will talk of it to thy father

and mother in the New Jerusalem. Thou wast not much spoken of on earth. Thy tear of sympathy, thy humility and fervour of devotion, were noticed little by the world. This is thy praise: Thou wast well known in heaven. Thy name was familiar among those who stand with white palms in their hands, before the eternal throne. God loved thee, and took thee to dwell with Him for ever. Farewell!

Young reader, the same dwelling-place is open for thee. If thou hast not secured the entrance, I counsel thee to make no delay, for thou knowest not *what* an hour may bring forth.

CHAPTER VIII.

> "Turned from the reed, that breaking disappoints
> The fool that takes it for the oak; and leaning
> On the arm, by which suspended worlds hang
> Innumerous; and eye upturn'd to where
> The sun ne'er sets, where flows the font of life,
> Beneath the throne of God, unshaken he stood
> By all that earth could do."

PERHAPS the reader wishes to know something of the future fortunes of those few friends Helen left behind her. We shall satisfy him in a very few words.

In his ninety-fifth year, the old farmer was peacefully gathered to his fathers. The shepherd boy, who was the old farmer's nephew, and to whom he left the most of his substance, succeeded him in the

farm, and married the servant girl who attended Helen in her last moments. And often did they tell their children, as they sat by the blazing hearth, in the winter evenings, the simple story that I have now related.

When William returned to Glasgow, his companions were surprised at the change which they noticed in his manners and conversation; and we think it will not be unuseful to state briefly, both what means they employed to draw him back to his former habits, and how he set himself to resist the arguments and temptations by which he was assailed.

His wit and talents had rendered his company peculiarly acceptable to his irreligious companions. They had imitated and caressed him, and showed him all those flattering marks of distinction, of which young minds are peculiarly fond. They regretted the change which they remarked in his habits, and tried every means to allure him into his former ways. They pressed him by invitation after invitation, to join in their parties of unhallowed pleasure—they represented to him the unfashionableness and joylessness of a retired and religious life—they asked him if he meant to spend that part of his days, which nature had evidently designed for pleasure, in hearing sermons, and reading dull books of piety—they inquired what had become of his ambition, and his love of gaiety and splendour—and they wondered what had so blinded his reason, as to make

him refrain from those pleasures which fitted his age, and to practice those gloomy duties which were despised by all but the weak and visionary, and which he himself had formerly treated with ridicule and contempt. They talked of the religious companions with whom they now saw him associating, as men of weak and superstitious minds, and unfit for the company of one of his talents. It was unmanly in him, they said, to play the hypocrite; for they were sure that one of his understanding could never believe in those absurdities which bigots call religion. Not satisfied with their own arts of persuasion, they put into his hands books which represented the Bible as full of inconsistencies, and Christianity as an irrational superstition, unbecoming men of enlightened minds; and the authors of these books they extolled as men of great intellectual reach, who had risen far above the common prejudices of mankind, and nobly shown, that those who follow reason and nature live the most happy, and best fulfil the end of their being.

William had now to deny himself all the praise and admiration of his companions; he had now to resist all their enticements and arguments, and he had now to abide their taunting and ridicule. This was no easy task. To renounce the society and friendship of those by whom he had been treated with such flattering marks of distinction, to become the butt of their profane wit, and to be regarded by them as fallen into a weak and visionary man, whose reason had sustained a shock—this was a hard trial.

Nor was it easy to resist these weapons of false dispute, which in fact he himself had taught many of them to wield. But he had an enemy within still more powerful than these—a dreadful and corrupt heart. The sinful habits which he had acquired were strong, and not easily broken away from. While his companions plied him with every sort of persuasion, the vicious inclinations which he had formerly indulged, gave greedy ear to any wicked suggestion, and urged him to those pleasures which he had once relished so much.

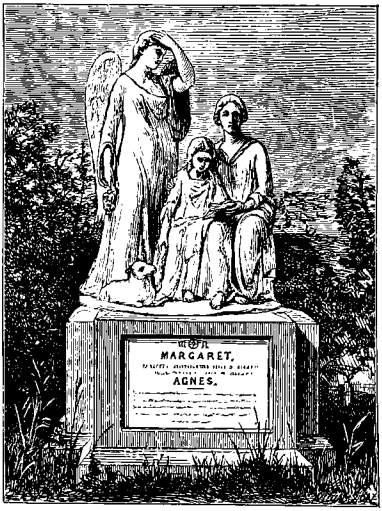
But William had now seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and was determined, through the grace of God, to abstain from all appearance of evil. He did not now, as he had formerly done, think of resisting the enemies of his soul by his own strength. He had tried this when he first came to town, and he saw how he had failed. The weakness of his own resolutions, he had now discovered, was no match for the power of an alluring world, and the deceit of a wicked heart. But if William had thus learned to distrust himself, he had learned also, that in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; and he went humbly and fervently to the throne of his grace, asking the guidance of that Divine Spirit which renews and invigorates the pious energies of the soul, and pours the lights of heaven on the eyes of the understanding. He had been convinced that the wrath of God shall at last awfully fall on the finally impenitent. He knew that none of his wicked

friends could stand by him in death, and shield him from the fear of its terrors. And above all, his soul had now tasted that God is gracious. His lips had now got a taste of the sweetness of immortality, his eye had seen the purity of heaven, and his heart felt the joy of peace with God, and he had thus learned rightly to estimate the value of his own soul. The unspeakable love of God, which he now saw manifested in the redemption of man by his Son, filled his heart with love and gratitude, and constrained him to run in the way of his commandments. His soul recoiled at the thought of dishonouring that Redeemer, who, he was now convinced, had died to save him from utter ruin. With the love of God thus warming his heart, with the light of His wisdom illuminating his understanding, and with the power of His grace exerted on his will, he now felt the meaning of that saying, "When I am weak, then I am strong." He was now indeed to lose the praise of men, but he felt he had got in exchange for it the praise of God. He had withdrawn his dependence from human strength, which is weakness; lost the honour of wicked men, which is disgrace; given up those pleasures which never satisfy, and which lead to ruin; and abandoned those gaudy hopes, whose promises are false, for the equipment of Almighty power, the approbation of the God of truth, those enjoyments which are pure, and never end; and those sure expectations, which, because they are founded on the promises of God, shall be all fulfilled.

It was thus that William was now prepared for entering on the Christian warfare. And he found that he was complete in God. Knowing that to shun evil company is the best way of escaping the influence and contagion of their manners, he avoided, as much as his necessary business would permit, the society of his former irreligious companions: and when he was compelled to associate with them, he maintained a serious deportment amidst the unhallowed sportings of their profanity. He bore the shafts of their wit with patience, and when he was pressed by their reasonings, he was not averse sometimes to give them a reason of the hope that was within him. He asked them to look attentively into their own hearts, and they would most certainly find that their conduct, which they foolishly believed to be sanctioned by reason, was in reality dictated only by wicked passions. He urged them to read the Bible with humility and attention, and to compare their own hearts with it, and they would be convinced that it was indeed a revelation from God. And farther, he silenced their reproaches, by calling them to remember their own professions of liberality of opinion. If they ridiculed him for maintaining his sentiments; if they treated him as a hypocrite or a visionary, they had all that bigotry, and all those prejudices, which they so freely ascribed to him. By such conversation as this, he gained some; others forsook his company; and as he advanced in life, he attained that high and enviable religious character

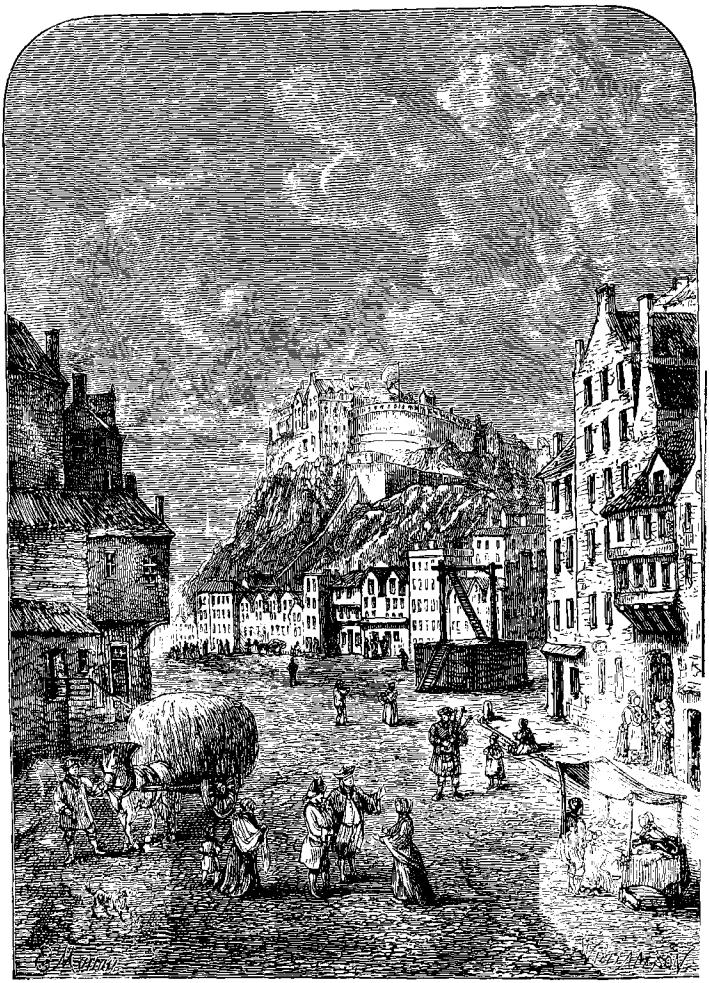
which all the good love and revere, which men in general respect, and which the most abandoned fear rather than hate. With such happy results, were the early instructions of an affectionate mother, and the kind and watchful care of a tender-hearted and pious sister rewarded. "Verily the righteous shall not labour in vain."

In business, William was prosperous, shedding, in all his intercourse with the world, the holy influence of a pious example around him. And during the whole of his life, he was peculiarly careful of the morals of young men from the country, whom Providence threw in his way. He never married. Every summer, as long as he lived, he visited the graves of his mother and sister—stayed a week or two with the shepherd boy, now become farmer—and it was from this place that he was at last carried to his grave, like a shock of corn fully ripe.



MONUMENT AT STIRLING TO THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS.

RALPH GEMMELL.



THE GRASSMARKET, EDINBURGH.

RALPH GEMMELL.

CHAPTER I.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy steps."—SOLOMON.

THERE is no truth in the Bible better confirmed, or more fully illustrated by the experience of the saints whose lives it records, or by the plain declarations of the Holy Spirit, than that God will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him. Yet there is no truth in that sacred book which the young Christian is oftener tempted to doubt. The veteran soldier of Jesus Christ, who had fought long under the banners of the Most High, sees in his own history so many dangers escaped, so many temptations resisted, so many trials endured, and so many battles with the devil, the world, and the flesh, fought and won, that he feels little dismay in the most trying and threatening circumstances. Although, like the children of Jacob of old, the sea be before him, and pathless mountains on the right hand and on the left, and the shout of his enemy behind him, he can ex-

claim, in the language of faith, "Verily, the Lord sendeth none a warfare on his own charges He hath delivered me out of six troubles, and in seven He will not forsake me." But when the young Christian is left to experience poverty, and contempt, and shame; when he is tried by temptations, which he feels too persuasive; and when he meets with enemies too formidable for his single arm; little acquainted with the experience of others, and little assisted by his own; he is ready to take up the unbelieving complaint, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?"

It is a pity, young reader, that a child of grace should ever thus complain, and charge God foolishly. And that you may be cautioned against thus dishonouring the veracity of the God of truth, I request your attention to the following story:—

RALPH GEMMELL, the subject of the following narrative, was born in the year of our Lord 1669, a period when persecution for religious opinions raged in our country. His father, George Gemmell, possessed from a long line of ancestors, the small, but fertile, estate of Craigfoot, situated on the banks of the Irvine, near to where that river pours itself into the Atlantic. From time immemorial, the younger sons of this family had generally devoted their lives to the service of their sovereign, while the eldest son farmed the estate, related the gallant actions of his kinsmen,

and boasted the steady loyalty of his house to the reigning prince. And to Craigfoot, in the evening of their lives, had their warlike relations often returned, bringing with them many a story of deeds done in the field of battle, of dangers braved, and honours received. From generation to generation, the castle of Craigfoot had thus been like a garrison of disabled soldiers, where the ever loyal toast, the fearless attack, the hair-breadth escape, the profane iest, the unchaste song, and the daring oath, make their constant rounds. Within its walls was heard neither the humble voice of prayer, nor the sweet melody of sacred praise.

But of all the masters of this house, none ever proved himself so careless of religion, or so blindly devoted to his prince, as the father of Ralph. In those troublous and cruel times, when the church of our land was driven to the wilderness, and when its scattered members hung their harps on the willows of Scotland's wildest streams, zealously did he embrace every measure of Lauderdale's wicked administration to overthrow and destroy the Presbyterians. Every Sabbath he attended the curate's church, not to worship God, but to evince his loyal attachment to the crown, and his hearty approbation of all the iniquitous and tyrannical measures its ministers were then carrying on in Scotland. Sharpe himself was not more eager to detect and suppress conventicles than George Gemmell. And in his rancour against the persecuted party, he had been often heard to say,

that he would rather see the waters of the ocean come up over his lands, than one of those fanatic rebels (for so the Covenanters were called) set a foot on it.

Such was the character of Ralph's father. But his mother, Isabella Mitchell, of a respectable family of that name in Ayrshire, was of a very different temper. She had read her Bible with attention and humility, before the commencement of the persecution under which the church was then suffering; she had listened to the pulpit ministrations of a faithful servant of God; and she had held communion with her heavenly Father, through the peace-speaking blood of his Son. She sighed for the desolation of Zion; and would willingly have gone to the mountains in search of that heavenly manna, which no longer dropt from the lips of those who ministered in the pulpits; but she feared her husband, with whom she had been unequally yoked, and chose rather to weep and pray in secret, than provoke his anger and resentment, by an open avowal of attachment to the interests of the Covenanters. Indeed, although she had often violated her own conscience to please him, and thus sinfully regarded him more than her Maker, her serious cast of mind had frequently been the subject of his ridicule; and her sympathy with the suffering church, which she could not conceal, had many a time provoked his anger, and drawn upon her his severe reproach. But although Mrs Gemmell had thus yielded too much for the sake of domestic peace, she had seen as we have intimated, the vanity of

time and its honours, the importance of eternity and its glories; and she wished to impress on the minds of her children, Ralph and Edward, the importance of religious duty. Ralph, the elder of the two, listened to her instructions with attention, and seemed peculiarly interested, when she told him of the nature of sin and its punishment,—of the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and of faith and its everlasting reward. But Edward was happier when mounted on his little pony, and riding by his father's side, along with the soldiers, in quest of our persecuted ancestors, whose torture and martyrdom he was taught to deride. Nothing could prevail on Ralph, however, even at the early age at which we are speaking of him, to mock at the sufferings of his fellow-creatures; and often when he saw men and women tortured by the merciless servants of despotism, he incurred his father's displeasure by entreating him to interfere and relieve them.

"He will be like his mother," his father would say, "ever weeping for those seditious wretches; but Edward is a true scion of the old stock of Craigfoot; I see loyalty and soldier-like bravery in his face."

Their tutor, a young man, recommended to Mr Gemmell by the curate of the parish, was entirely devoted to the wicked government, as on his interest with men in power rested all his hopes of preferment. What Mr Gemmell approved, therefore, he approved; what the former condemned, so did the latter; what the one practised, the other imitated. From a man

whose creed was ever ready thus to be adjusted to the suggestions of worldly interest, and whose practice was ever formed to the humour of those on whom he depended, Ralph and Edward could imbibe little that was valuable, either of morality or of religion. Although Ralph was far superior to his brother both in the strength of his understanding, and in the kinder feelings of his heart, Edward, because he was the father's favourite, was represented by the tutor as possessing a vigorous understanding, a sound and clear judgment, and a ready and tenacious memory; while it was hinted, that, indeed, Ralph might have sometimes more perseverance at his tasks, and more gentleness in his manners, but that his mental endowments were rather inferior, and seemed capable of little reach of improvement. Neglected by his father, Ralph was despised by the tutor and his brother. When Edward was invited forth to the sports of the field, or to attend the savage military in search of conventicles, he was left at home to pass the day with his mother and the servants. Happy it was for him that he was thus despised and left at home; it was then that his mother had an opportunity of freely setting before him the importance of a religious life; and it was then that first dawned on his soul the hopes and the glories of immortality.

"Dear Ralph," said his mother to him, one day when they were left alone, "you are now arrived at your thirteenth year. I have already often endeavoured to explain to you the Christian religion. Do

you understand it? have you felt its influence on your heart? are you cheered by its hopes? do you thirst after its glorious rewards? At all times, my son, the Christian has need to be well acquainted with the revealed truths on which he founds his hopes for eternity. At all times he has need to have the proofs of the divine origin of his religion so felt on his heart, as to enable him to gainsay the adversary, and hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering. But in these troublous and trying days, when the followers of the Lamb are hunted like the wild beasts of the field, persecuted, and everywhere spoken against, you have tenfold more need to acquaint yourself with religion, with its doctrines, its comforts, its hopes, and its rewards. Dear Ralph, have you considered these things?"

"I have often thought of them, dear mother," answered Ralph, "but I like to hear you speak of them. I am never happier than when you speak to me about religion."

"And I am never happier," replied his mother "than when I see you attentive to my instructions, and storing your mind with those truths which the Bible reveals. Listen, then, my son; and may the Spirit of grace and of wisdom be present in our hearts while I speak.

"We learn, dear Ralph, from the works of nature, that there is a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; but we cannot discern by all that is around us, our relation to Him. Our own hearts.

as well as the unjust actions we commit every day, inform us that we are sinners, and that we have need of a Saviour. But of this Saviour the works of nature give us no intimation. It is the Bible that reveals God to man, as a God of mercy, willing to be reconciled to us through his own Son. It is the Bible that teaches us our duty to our God and to our fellow-creatures—what we ought to do in time, and what we ought to expect in eternity. There we learn that God is not only all-powerful and all-wise, but also infinite, holy, and just; hating all manner of sin; and bound, by his own word, to punish every transgression of his holy law. There we learn, too, that we are great sinners, have broken his law and have exposed ourselves to everlasting punishment; that we are dead in trespasses and sins, totally unable either to keep his law or to ransom ourselves from its curse. But the Bible does not, you know, leave us in this hopeless state. It tells us, that our God is merciful; that He so loved the world as to send Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son, into it, to fulfil the law for us, to suffer and die for us. Jesus, you know, had no sin of his own: He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But He died for our sins, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven to plead for us in the presence of his Father—to plead, that through his merits our sins may be forgiven, and that we may be received, in due time, into those mansions of happiness which He is preparing for us.

"Do you, then, dear Ralph, know and feel yourself to be a sinner, guilty in the sight of God's law, and utterly undone for ever, unless Jesus Christ clothe you in his righteousness, and plead with his Father that your sins may be forgiven through his own blood? Do you believe on this Saviour? Do you think He is able and willing to save you? Have you placed all your hope for time and eternity on Him alone? Alas! kind as our Saviour is, able and willing as He is to save to the uttermost all who believe on Him, many will not listen to the invitations of his mercy, nor accept of his offered pardon! So much hath sin darkened the human mind to its own best interests, that none can believe on Him until the understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of God, and the heart made willing in the day of his power. Pray, then, my son, pray that this Holy Spirit may come into your heart, and abide in it for ever. This is the promise of God to all his children: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and all the treasures of free grace shall be opened up to you.' Place at all times your faith and your hope on the Saviour, this Rock of Ages, and you have no need to fear the troubles of life. These troubles you must not expect to escape. It is through many tribulations that the Christian is taken to heaven. It is through fire and water that he is brought into the wealthy place. But your Saviour will be present with you in every trial; and He will never suffer you to be overcome. In the darkest

night of trouble and affliction, your hopes shall have rest in heaven; and in your bosom shall dwell that peace which passeth understanding. In death, too, He shall be your friend and deliverer; and after death He shall receive you into that happy place, where you shall be for ever rewarded with the smiles of his countenance."

"I wish to be religious," said Ralph; "but when Edward laughs at my seriousness, and my father encourages him to do it, I am ashamed, and sometimes determine to be like them."

"Your situation, my dear," continued his mother, "is certainly difficult. It is hard to resist the bad example, and bear the mockery of those who are ever about you. But, my son, remember this; put your trust in God, and He will never leave nor forsake you. He will make you strong to resist all evil, and to set at nought all the revilings of the wicked. Persevere in religion, for it is happiness. Edward heeds none of my advice, and his father commends him for his foolishness, and teaches him to despise religious instruction. I fear he will go far astray; but I hope that you, through the grace of God, will resist bad example, and, by persevering in the service of your God, secure not only your own peace and happiness, but perhaps yet be the means of saving your brother."

Young reader, I repeat to you what this excellent lady said to her son: Persevere in religion, for it is happiness. Is not religion just a trusting in God, who cannot lie; a renouncing of the vain speculations

and opinions and surmises of erring men; and a placing of our faith on the words, promises, and appointments of an all-wise and all-ordering God? Is it not just a withdrawing of our confidence from the frailty and weakness of human power, and a leaning on the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength? Is it not just a coming forth from a land of darkness, ignorance, and slavery, and an entering into the fair regions of light, knowledge, and liberty? What is it but a leaving of those pleasures which debase, and cannot satisfy, of those hopes which promise but to deceive, and of those schemings and reasonings which perplex, but give no certainty; and a taking of ourselves up with those enjoyments which dignify and exalt us, while they never satiate—with those hopes which promise all that is really valuable, and give us all they promise—with those truths which are sanctioned by God, and which, therefore, are immutable—and with those plans which took their origin in eternal wisdom, and which, therefore, can never miscarry? Religion is a coming forth from all that is impure, and abominable in the world, from the prison of guilt, and anxiety and hopelessness; and forming an alliance with all that is pure, and holy, and happy. It is a putting away from us that which is empty, and fleeting, and perishing; and a laying fast hold of that which is substantial, satisfying, and eternal. It is an escape from the terrors of death, and the wrath of the Great Judge of all, into the bosom of our God—into the dwellings of peace,

and love, and immortality. This is religion. These are the trust and the doings, the hopes and rewards, of the Christian.

Sometimes exposed to the taunts of his relations, and the unholy influence of the unrestrained dissipation and hardened wickedness of the times, but oftener employed in listening to his mother's instructions, in reading his Bible, or in storing his mind from other books of useful knowledge, Ralph reached his fifteenth year. About this time he lost his mother. A lingering illness, occasioned by her grief for the distressed state of the persecuted church, and by the hard-hearted severity and wickedness of her husband, deprived him of that loving parent and kind monitor. Her dying advice to Ralph was short and simple :—

"I have often violated my conscience, dear Ralph," said she, as he stood by her bedside, only a few hours before her death; "I have often violated my conscience for the sake of domestic peace. I should have been more resolute and more public in serving my God and Redeemer. But I know He will be merciful to my unrighteousness; and my sins and iniquities He will remember no more. I shall see Him, because He loved me. I shall enter into his presence, because Christ died for me. But I wish not you to follow that part of my example which I now lament. You will have the same difficulties to encounter, the same reproach to bear; and if you take a more decided part than I have done in the interests

of the suffering church, and a more open and avowed path in the service of God, which I earnestly wish you may, you will have more trials to endure, and more obloquy to withstand. But, dear Ralph, that which the word of God and your own conscience testify to be your duty, choose and do. Regard not the consequences—the reproach of relations, the malignity of enemies, the sneers of careless dissipation: these, under the guidance of a kind Providence, will work together for your good. Remember what the Bible says, and what I have often repeated to you: Put your trust in God, and He will never leave nor forsake you. Protected by his power, you shall be safe, for it is almighty; led by his wisdom, you shall not go astray, for it never errs; hoping in his Son, you shall not be deceived, for He shall appear at last in his Father's presence, bringing with Him all who have put their trust in Him. And while you walk thus in the strength of your God, ever seek to be useful to your fellow-creatures; and Oh, seek especially the spiritual welfare of your father and brother. I have often prayed for them. It hath not yet pleased God to answer my prayers; but you may live to see them answered, and your own piety rewarded, by the happy conversion of your father and brother. Now, my son, remember when I am gone, that this was the soundest advice, and the sweetest comfort that your dying mother could give you: 'Put your trust in God, and He will never leave nor forsake you.'"

CHAPTER II.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not; walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path, that thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the path of the righteous."—SOLOMON.

RALPH, after the death of his mother, experienced little comfort in his father's house. Edward, as we have observed, was taught to ridicule his seriousness; his father was daily telling him that he would be a disgrace to his name; and the servants, following the example of their master, regarded him as a kind of outcast, and took every opportunity to insult and deride him.

From the curate, whom he still attended on Sabbath, he could gather little either to enlighten his mind or strengthen his piety. His sermons chiefly inculcated submission to the unjust measures of government, activity in suppressing those whose opinions differed from that of the then existing ecclesiastical establishment, and zeal in supporting the hierarchy to which he belonged. These were the chief doctrines which Ralph heard at church, and he was not satisfied. He wished to hear more of Christ, the great head of the Church; more of belief in Him who is the way, the truth, and the life; and more of holiness, without which none can see God

He had diligently contemplated the features of the times; he had examined the creed, opinions, and life of the persecuted party; he had likewise examined the principles, as well as the conduct of those who persecuted them; and, young as he was, he could easily see that the former were suffering for holding opinions founded on the word of God, and sanctioned by their own consciences, for their highest privileges as men, and their dearest rights as Christians; and the latter oppressing, torturing, and murdering, for non-submission to institutions which their own selfishness had suggested, and which they were ever ready to change for any other that might promise more gain to their avarice, or more indulgence to their vicious dispositions.

Impressed by these opinions, it was little wonder that Ralph, alive as he was to the dictates of conscience, and the calls of religion, had a strong inclination to join the Covenanters. But in doing this, he must submit to persecution and reproach, forsake his father's house, lay down all hopes of honour and preferment, abide the contempt and the hate of his nearest kinsmen, and experience the rigorous discipline of cold, and hunger, and cheerless wandering. Surely, young reader, this was no very agreeable reflection. It was enough to make a more experienced Christian than Ralph halt between two opinions.

More than three months after his mother's death he passed in this uneasy state of mind; now resolving to leave all and follow Christ, now looking forward to the dreariness of a life of suffering, and

again, back on that old paternal castle, and those fertile fields, which might one day be all his own And verily, were it in man that walketh to direct his steps—were it not God that chooseth his way, it is very probable that Ralph would have turned away from the sufferings he saw before him, and taken up with the ease, and the plenty, and the honour, which the world promised him. But God knoweth his own, and it is as certain that He will provide the means of enlightening them in the knowledge of himself, and of confirming them in his service, as that He will for ever protect and uphold them.

One Sabbath, after returning home as usual from the unprofitable discourse of the curate, Ralph went out at the evening-tide to meditate. It was in the end of autumn. And as he walked along the banks of the Irvine towards the sea, the wild flower, with scarcely its withered stalk remaining, which he had seen in the early year painted with all the colours of beauty—the shrub naked and blasted, which was lately vested in a thick foliage of healthy green—the aged leaf which fell rustling from its fellows—the stream, which was ever running on to be lost in the ocean—and the light, which faded dimly away on the indistinct summits of Arran; all had a tendency to draw him into serious musing, and especially to remind him of the short duration and sure decay of all earthly things.

"As for man," said he to himself, "his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth,

for the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. As the waters of this river run for a little, and then fall into the ocean, so shall time be with me; so suddenly shall I pass into eternity. As the light dieth away on yonder mountains, so speedily shall the sun of my days set for ever. What, then, should I do? Should I fear the reproach and persecution of man, which cannot long annoy me? Should I take the honours and the pleasures which he can give me, which, short as life is, may wither and die long before me, and will, at any rate, slip from my grasp when I go down into the grave? or should I serve my God, whose almighty power can protect me from every thing that would really hurt me in time, and whose loving-kindness and tender mercy will provide for me after death an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away? Surely the wisdom of man is foolishness. Why should I listen to it? O that God would direct my steps, and enable me to put my trust in Him alone!"

Thus did the merciful Creator make the contemplation of his works subservient to strengthen the piety of the young Christian. Musing on such thoughts as these, Ralph wandered on to the sea-shore. Agreeably to those sudden changes which happen so often in our climate towards the end of autumn, night, which at its coming on had been calm and serene, was now wrapt in the clouds of his thick darkness—the winds came in the swiftness of their

fury—the ocean lifted up his voice, and roared in the pride of his strength—and athwart the gloom at intervals gleamed the lightnings of God, awfully displaying the features of the storm. As it did not yet rain, however, Ralph walked on. The awful majesty of nature had something in it which pleased him, and sanctioned the reflections he had just made—something which reminded him of the littleness of man, and the greatness of the Creator. "How dreadful," thought he, "to have that God our enemy, who walketh on the wings of the wind, and biddeth the storm do his pleasure! who setteth his foot on the sea, and holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hands, who sendeth the lightning, and they say unto Him, Here we are!"

Thus contemplating, he was walking along the coast, when his ear was attracted by the following words:

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not avenge the blood of thy servants! Thy holy city is a wilderness: Zion is a wilderness; Jerusalem a desolation. Be not wroth very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, we beseech Thee; we are thy people. Oh visit Zion in thy mercy! Let not the weapon that is formed against her prosper; and the tongue that is raised against her in judgment do Thou condemn. We know that thy church is graven on the palms of thy hands, and Thou wilt bring her out of the deep waters. But, gracious Father! give us, poor helpless sinners, patience and resignation to wait till thy time come.

Give us that abiding faith in our Saviour, and that in extinguishable love, which, in all our trials, will make us more than conquerors. Yea, our eyes are unto Thee, O God, the Lord: in Thee is our trust: leave not our souls destitute: keep us from the snares which are laid for us, and the gins of the workers of iniquity."

After these breathings of holy fervour had ascended up unto the throne of God, Ralph heard proceeding from the same place the sweet melody of praise; and now it was lost in the loud voice of the storm, and again, in the intervals of partial calm, it came forth on the ear like the music of heaven. Ralph walked up to the place whence the sounds proceeded; and among the rugged cliffs, by the very side of the sea, did he find ten or twelve of those Christian heroes whom persecution had compelled to choose that secluded place, and that hour, to them of favourable darkness, to hear the word of life, and adore and praise the God and Redeemer of mankind

At Ralph's approach, they seemed somewhat alarmed, for they knew well, though in so retired a place, and under the wing of night, they were not safe from the vigilant persecution of their enemies. They feared, therefore, that Ralph might be a guide to a party of dragoons. But as some of those present had been but lately tenants of his father, he was soon recognised. They had heard it reported that he favoured their party, and that he had for several years, suffered little less from his wicked relations at home, than they had endured in their flights and

wanderings. He was, therefore, gladly received amongst them. The reverend old minister, part of whose prayer he had just heard, and who had once been his mother's spiritual guide and dear friend, was especially interested at his appearance. Ever zealous in his Master's work, and remembering how desirous Mrs Gemmell had been that her sons might be true fearers of God, he invited Ralph to sit down by his side on the shelvy rock, and entered into conversation with him. With fatherly tenderness the venerable pastor encouraged the youth to describe the circumstances in which he was placed, and lay open the state of his mind. This was the first time that Ralph had had an opportunity of conversing with a faithful servant of the Most High. And truly his heart burned within him, as the good old man thus concluded a long and tender advice to him.

"Now, my son," for so tenderly did he address him, "now I know the difficulty of your circumstances. I know how hard it is to leave father, and brother, and houses, and lands, and goods, and plenty, and honour; and to be hated of those of whose love you are most desirous, and to be despised of those in whose eyes you most wish to appear honourable. We can promise you little but trial and suffering. We have been driven from our houses and possessions. Our families are left to wander and weep in poverty, exposed to contempt, and subjected to the insults of a brutal soldiery. Torture, imprisonment, and banishment are prepared for us. A price

is set on our heads, and our lives are every day sought for. We are cut off from all the comforts of life, and are exposed to almost all the ills which this world can muster up against the people of God. Now, my son, if you will take up your cross and follow Christ, you must be prepared to meet similar trials. But remember that you have his promise, that if you forsake father and mother, and houses and lands, for his sake, He will give you an hundred-fold of spiritual blessings in this world, and eternal life in that which is to come. Remember what Christ has suffered for you. All that the wickedness of men could invent, and all that the offended justice of his Father required, He endured for you;—so ardent was his love for you; so inexhaustible his mercy!

"If you are resolved to put your trust in Christ, and follow Him through good and through bad report, although we can promise you none of this world's comforts or honours, we can promise you, that although you be perplexed, you shall never be in despair; although you are persecuted, you shall never be forsaken; although you are cast down, you shall never be destroyed.

"Are you afraid to put your whole trust in God? Look around you and see. Is there any thing on earth or in hell that can snatch you out of the hand of his omnipotence? Is there any power that can effectually hurt you, if ye abide under the shadow of the Almighty? He walketh on the sea, and his path is in the great waters; and He can say to the

raging of that vast ocean, Peace, be still! He walketh on the wings of the winds, and He can bid them, when He will, away to their place. He sitteth on the circuit of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. These lightnings which you see gleaming through the darkness of the night, go abroad at his word, and would, if He commanded, in the twinkling of an eye, lay the boasting of human strength, and the pride of human greatness in a heap of burning desolation. Are you afraid to put your trust in this God? Are you afraid to meet the fury of man's battle, if He be on your side? Only put your trust in Him, and you are safe. His love and his mercy will never forsake you. Love your Saviour and serve Him, and you may say, in the darkest night of human calamity, I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for Thou, O Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

As the minister concluded these instructions, the gloom began to disperse, and the moon and stars looking through the clouds, cast their silvery light on the majestic scenery around. Then did Ralph observe the countenances of those about him. Twenty years had the old pastor wandered among the mountains of Scotland, subjected to every hardship, and separated from every earthly comfort. Often had he made the narrowest escapes from his persecutors; and often, exposed as he was this night to the fierceness of the storm, had he met, in the wildest glens and most forlorn caves of our country, with the few who had forsaken all to follow Christ, to instruct,

comfort, and animate them; and yet, when Ralph looked on his face, he could see nothing in it but the composure of peace and the sweetness of contentment. The few that were around him, although some of them bore the marks of suffering, their clothes being worn to tatters, and their bodies emaciated by fatigue, had all of them in their countenances the meekness of resignation, and the fortitude of Christian faith;—so powerful is the grace of God—so sure the comforts of religion.

After appointing where to meet with the minister next Sabbath, Ralph left him, and returned home. It was late when he arrived; but as it was customary for him to retire every Sabbath evening from the idle and profane conversation of his relations, his late return excited no surprise. During the week he reflected much on what he had heard. The instructions, arguments, and advice of the old minister had a powerful influence in determining him to keep his appointment next Sabbath. But especially when he considered how many trials the aged pastor and his friends had gone through, and yet how little they regarded them; how many privations they were enduring, and yet how constant they were; how many calamities were threatening them, and yet how calmly they looked forward, resting their confidence and their hope in the all-sufficiency of their Saviour—he determined to hesitate no longer, but to meet with them on the coming Sabbath, and to cast in his lot with theirs.

CHAPTER III.

"He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure."

EARLY on the Sabbath morning Ralph left home, and in the barn of a farm-house, about three miles distant, met, according to appointment, with the old minister, and twelve or fifteen people who had assembled to hear the gospel. Scarcely were the psalm and prayer concluded, however, when an alarm was given by one who watched at a little distance, that a party of dragoons were riding towards the house. One of those wicked men, who in those days were well paid by the abettors of tyranny and persecution for bringing information against the Covenanters, during the preceding week had found means of discovering the place and hour of the present meeting; and now, like Judas of old, he came the leader of that savage soldiery who took delight in shedding the blood of the saints.

When the old minister heard that the dragoons were at hand, he recommended all present to God, the preserver of men, and earnestly begged that they would leave him, and take every possible measure for their own safety. But this they would by no means do. He had been the spiritual father, the comforter, and friend of most of those present, from their earliest

youth. He had grown grey in the service of his heavenly Master; and his little flock seemed more anxious to save him than themselves.

"Can you not hide him," said a boy, a son of the farmer to whom the house belonged—"can you not hide him in the hole below the kitchen floor, where Mr M'Coll once hid himself when the dragoons were here before?"

"Thank you, my good boy," said his father; 'the alarm and danger had driven that place from my recollection. He may be safe there. It has sheltered many a worthy Christian from the blood-hounds of persecution.'

Under the kitchen floor had been dug a cavity sufficiently large to hold two or three persons. The entrance to it was covered by a thin flag, so light that a single person could remove it, which, when closed, had such a complete likeness to the rest of the floor, that it could create no suspicion of any retreat below.

Into this place the old minister was persuaded to descend; and both because he was afraid that Ralph had too little experience in the Christian warfare, and because he had been the immediate instrument of bringing him into the present danger, he invited the youth to conceal himself in the same place. This, however, Ralph refused. He was young, he said, and able to endure hardships; but there were those present with hoary heads, who could ill bear the insolent and cruel treatment to which they should be

exposed, if they fell into the hands of their persecutors. There was no time for dispute. The owner of the house, and another old man, went into the cave along with the minister, and the flag was instantly returned to its place. Thus, young reader, had our Christian ancestors to hide themselves, for their attachment to religion and to their God.

Scarcely were these three old men concealed, when the dragoons, about twenty in number, arrived. They consisted mostly of Highlanders from the wildest districts of the North. Their countenances were fierce and cruel; and they seemed in general only to understand so much English as to be able, in that language, to curse their fellow-men, and blaspheme their Maker.

The Covenanters, aware that escape by flight was impossible, and knowing that, unarmed as they were, resistance would be vain, peaceably allowed themselves to be made prisoners. Their arms were pinioned to their bodies with cords, which the soldiers had brought with them for that purpose: and while they were thus bound as the vilest traitors, they were upbraided with the worst of names, and insulted with the most insolent and most contemptuous mockery. After some of them had been tortured in vain, to make them discover the owner of the house and the old minister, they were all conducted to Irvine. As persecution was then in the heat of its rage, I need not tell you what their fate was. Ralph was saved from that death to which

the rest were doomed, only by the influence of his father.

Mr Gemmell was just passing to the curate's church when the prisoners were guarded through the town to gaol. We have already mentioned his violent hatred to the persecuted party, and his displeasure at Ralph's serious and religious cast of mind; but paternal feelings, which cannot be easily overcome, compelled him to interfere for the safety of his son. To a man whose house had been long friendly to the governing party, and who had attested his own attachment to the present despotism, by the most diligent suppression, so far as it was in his power, of every movement against it, this was no difficult task. It was necessary, however, before Ralph's pardon and liberty could be granted, that his father should promise that his son's future conduct would be agreeable to government; and further, that Ralph himself should take what was called the test—a kind of oath by which the parties swearing engaged to renounce all communications with the Covenanters, to abjure all opinions not consonant with the institutions then established, and to defend every measure of government, however wicked or tyrannical.

And did Ralph swear this oath? Did he forget to soon the lessons of the old minister? Did he forget so soon his mother's last injunctions?—injunctions supported by the word of God, to abide by his duty, regardless of the consequences; to put his trust in God, and to despise the threatening of men?

He forgot none of these; but he had leaned too much to the strength of his own arm. He had not yet rested his unhesitating confidence on the Rock of Ages. His impressions of religious duty had been strong, and he had not yet fully recognised his own weakness, and his ever present need of Almighty grace. And now when he was threatened with imprisonment and death; when he was reproached by a father with dishonouring his family, and assailed on every side by entreaties or ridicule; although his tongue faltered, and every limb of his body trembled while he took the oath—he did take it. He engaged to assist in extirpating that form of religious worship which he thought most agreeable to the word of God, and which his own conscience therefore approved.

Let us pause here, young reader, and ask ourselves how we are prepared for meeting the threatenings of power, and the solicitations of sinful pleasure? True, you are not menaced with the instruments of torture, with dungeons, and exile. You see not the sword of persecution laid to your neck, nor the heads and hands of the people of God nailed to the gates of the towns of our country. You have no occasion to fly from your dwelling at cold midnight, and seek refuge in the solitudes of nature. You can go forward in the track of Christian duty, certain that nothing in the shape of external force will meet you to force you out of it. You may put on the uniform of a soldier of Jesus, and march forth to the Christian warfare.

secure that no band of warriors, with sword and buckler, will set the battle in array against you, with the determined purpose of dragging you away from under the banners of the Most High. But are you safer on this account? Have you less need of leaning on an Almighty arm? Pause and consider! Are there not waiting you, at every footstep of your journey, unlawful pleasures inviting you, with tongues of sweetest persuasion, to turn aside from the upright path, and promising to entertain you in the gay and flowery fields of unwithering delight? And have you not in your own bosom a set of treacherous inclinations which have an ever-greedy ear to every delusive voice, and which are ever willing to wander from the steep ascent of virtue, and to take themselves up with the indulgent offers of present enjoyment? Are not the reasonings of a sophistical philosophy, and the misrepresentations of a false religion ever casting their doubts in your way, to turn you out of it, and draw you into a labyrinth of inextricable difficulties? Will you not meet avarice tempting you with his gold, and ambition directing you away to the gaudy heights of human glory? Will you not, at every step of your Christian progress, have to set your face against the mockery of wanton dissipation, and the studied and pointed ridicule of veteran wickedness? Will you not be solicited by the flattering words and decoying speeches of polished libertinism, which will introduce themselves to your ear with all the warmth of dis

interested friendship, and all the gentleness of practised courtesy? Truly you will find these more dangerous foes, more frequent in their inroads, and more varied and persevering in their attacks, than the most violent of open and avowed enemies.

When the sword of persecution is unsheathed, and when it is plainly seen that something serious is determined against us, we put ourselves on our guard, advance with caution, examine every step we take, canvas every intelligence, and suspect every fair pretender of wishing to decoy us into the snares of the enemy. Besides, when we are beset by external violence, we are assisted in repelling it by that principle of our nature which rejects compulsion, and which will not comply with those who will have us their own way, whether we will or not, however agreeable to us their paths might otherwise be. But when vice comes in the guise of seeming zeal for our good, which infidel philosophy often assumes—or with the wanton jest and immoral illusion, which polished licentiousness is ever dropping from his tongue; or with the witty sarcasm and grave ridicule, which flow so profusely from the lips of irreligious genius; or when it tells us of riches, and honours, and preferments, and whispers in our ears, that if we stubbornly abide by the dictates of honesty, we shall probably die poor; then, young reader, it is that your enemy is the strongest, and that you have most need to call into service all the energies of your religion. Instead of any natural principle coming to

your assistance against foes like these, you have many of their friends in your own breast, wishing every moment to betray you, and labouring with all their might to hasten your defeat and complete your ruin.

Beware, then, young reader, of trusting to yourself; for if you do so but for a single step, at that step you will fall. Christ hath overcome the world; put your trust in Him, and you shall overcome it too.

CHAPTER IV.

"The Lord is with you, while you be with Him: and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you: if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."—CHRONICLES.

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer."—ISAIAH.

ON Ralph's return home, after thus renouncing his religion, his father at first assailed him with the most severe and indignant reproof. He reproached him not only for disgracing a family which had long boasted of its honour, but as he was answerable for the conduct of his family, for exposing him, if Government should exact it, to heavy penalties. And besides, he was told he had thrown an indelible stigma on his character, by associating with fanatics and traitors; for such was the light in which Mr Gemmell viewed the Covenanters. And further, he was assured, if ever he ventured again to attend their meetings, or at any future period should show them the least countenance, the paternal estate would be given to his brother, and he disinherited and disowned for ever.

But, as Mr Gemmell was really concerned for the honour, as he thought it, of his son, he did not leave him with reproach and censure. He assumed a

gentler mood, and represented to him how much his disobedience and folly had grieved his heart; promised, if his future conduct were agreeable to his wishes, to pay him the most fatherly attention; to make him his companion in all his visitings and amusements, and to introduce him to the notice of men of the first rank and highest honour in the country—assuring him, at the same time, that by pursuing the course which he himself had done, he would live in ease and happiness, would be respected and honoured by the nobles of the nation, and would add another worthy name to the dignity of his family.

These last arguments had a powerful effect on Ralph's mind. He had seldom heard his father speak kindly to him; and he was entirely overcome by the present tenderness. His conscience, no doubt, still told him he was wrong; but he had the sanction of a father, and he tried to silence its complaining. He rode out with his relations in quest of conventicles; he laughed at his own adventure with the Covenanters; he endeavoured to appear unconcerned about their sufferings; he took a share in whatever licentious conversation offered itself, and imitated the profane scoff and wicked ribaldry of his companions. His father rejoiced in the change, and every day showed him more kindness and respect; and all his relations caressed and complimented him as a worthy heir of so respectable a house. So much more were his circumstances easy and agreeable than formerly—and so much were his pride and

vanity flattered by the attentions and commendation he met with on all hands, that, to the eye of mortal penetration, he seemed to have made final shipwreck of his religion, and to have allied himself by a league that could never be broken with the world which lieth in wickedness. But God seeth not as man seeth. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts than man's thoughts.

Ralph, as we have hinted, although pleased and dazzled with his present condition, was not satisfied. His conscience often condemned him; and as it corresponded to the word of God, he knew its condemnations were just. Oft, in the merriment of light-hearted excursion, and the mirthfulness of wanton conversation, did its reproaches sting his soul and suddenly sadden his mind with the bitterness of remorse. But especially when he withdrew to repose, in the darkness and loneliness of midnight, did this censor within, directed by the Spirit of grace, set his sins in order before him, and point to the awful consequences.

One night, after having taken more than a usual share in the unholy mirth and licentious revelry which were so common in those times, and nowhere more so than in his father's house, he retired to bed, and had almost dropt asleep, when he was quickly alarmed by one of those sudden starts which are caused by a momentary cessation of the pulsation of the heart. Thousands have been thus alarmed at the beginning of their first slumbers, have felt a mo-

ment's uneasiness, laid their head again on the pillow, and slept soundly. But it was not so with Ralph. He thought he felt something like the visitation of death about him; a cold sweat suffused his body; and he durst scarcely lay his head down on the pillow. Quick as the lightning's flash did his mind traverse the field of his past doings. The many instructions, advices, and warnings he had received from an affectionate mother; the knowledge he had acquired of the will of God in the Bible; the conversation that had passed between him and the old minister; the resolutions which he had so often formed to be religious; the promises which he had made to God never to forsake his duty; all stood up as a strong witness against him. And his renouncing his religion when he knew he was doing wrong; his seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God; his countenancing the endeavour to extirpate that faith which his own conscience approved of; his mingling in profane conversation when the voice within had bidden him withdraw; his love to the indulgences of wickedness when he was aware that he should have hated them; these, like so many spirits of darkness, gathered around his soul, and for a moment involved him in the gloom of despair. The anguish of his mind affected his body; he shivered, trembled, and still imagined he felt death laying his hand upon him. He thought God had forsaken him, and had left him to try what support or comfort the friendship of wicked men could

give him in the moment of dissolution. And truly then did he feel how helpless, how insignificant a thing he was! how unequal to tread the darkness of death alone! how weak, how deceitful, and how despicable the pride of human strength, and the flattering of human honours! He felt that all things below the sun are indeed vanity of vanities; that the soul cannot lean on any of them when shaken by the hand of death; and that man is really dependant on his Maker. For a moment did the terrors of despair convulse his spirit. He saw no smile from heaven; and in that moment he felt a bitterness of anguish, which he would have willingly exchanged for a whole life-time of poverty, and shame, and bodily suffering. So will you feel, young reader, if ever you be threatened with death, when as ill-prepared for meeting it as Ralph was.

But this was only the hiding of his heavenly Father's countenance—only one of those kind chastisements by which He convinces his children of their own helplessness—of the weakness of human strength—and of the meanness of this world's glory; and by which He teaches them repentance and humility, and the necessity of putting their trust in Him alone, for time and eternity. Ralph was not long left in this state of utter hopelessness: that holy, that watchful, that comforting Spirit, which never loses sight of any whom the Lord hath chosen for his own, came into his soul. Then was his mind turned to the contemplation of that blood which cleanseth from all sin.

He wept the tear of true repentance, and prayed in the language of faith, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner!" He now saw himself more guilty in the sight of God than ever; but he saw, also, God willing to be reconciled to him through Jesus Christ, and he felt a holy peace and confidence in his Redeemer, to which he had been formerly an utter stranger. So much weakness had he discovered in his own strength, that he durst no longer put the least trust in it, and so much deceit in his own heart, that he durst not promise future obedience. But humbly did he wish to be enabled by the Holy Spirit to make the will of God and his glory the aim of all his future actions. And humbly did he pray, that the same Divine Spirit would ever keep present on his mind the impressions which it had received of its own frailty and the world's deceitfulness; that He would ever give him to put an undivided trust in his Saviour, and that He would, by his counsel, ever guide his feet in the way of everlasting life. Such are the feelings of the true child of God, to whom He saith, "I will never leave thee nor for sake thee."

Solaced by these thoughts, and committing himself to the protection of his God, Ralph soon sunk into sweet repose.

CHAPTER V.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil falsely against you for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'
—ST MATTHEW.

NEXT morning Ralph arose, and resolved, since he could not stay at home without sharing in the wickedness of the house, or exposing himself anew to reproach and ridicule, to spend the day in a solitary walk, and to engage himself in serious thought how to conduct his future life.

He took his favourite walk down the banks of the Irvine. It was the last month of spring. The beams of the morning sun threw an air of sprightliness and gaiety over nature, that smiled around him in the loveliness and vigour of youth. The fields had clothed themselves in their mantle of green, and the singing of birds was heard in the woods. And although he knew how many of Scotland's best friends and most faithful servants of God were that morning wandering in poverty, immured in dungeons, or appointed to immediate death; and although he looked forward to all these evils as embattled against himself, yet, so entire was his resignation to the will of God—so confiding his trust in the all-sufficiency of divine grace, that his heart took in the joy of

nature; and the breathings of its love and thankfulness ascended up to heaven with the universal anthem of nature's gratitude.

"Why should I be sad?" thought the young Christian, "or why should my soul be cast down? The flocks that sport on yonder hills, and the herds that browse on yonder meadow, seem grateful for their day of short enjoyment that will soon end for ever. The songsters of the wood warble their song of praise, although they must soon perish utterly; and why should not I be glad? Why should not I, too, join the happy melody? What are this world's sufferings to me? What is all that the wickedness of man can do? Is not my soul immortal? When this body decays, have I not a tabernacle, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Are there not rivers of pleasure at the right hand of God, secured to me by my Saviour's death? And when the loveliness of this world's scenery, and the mirthfulness of its irrational inhabitants, shall not be seen nor heard any more, shall not I, if I trust in my Redeemer and keep his commandments, stand in the presence of God and the Lamb, and sing the song of the Lamb in eternity?"

Employed with such thoughts as these, Ralph had nearly reached the sea-shore, when he was suddenly roused from his meditations by the sound of the military drum, and the tumult of a mixed multitude of soldiers, king's officers, magistrates, and others, leading, from the town of Irvine to the side of the

sea, a female, who, by her looks, appeared to be in her eighteenth or nineteenth year. This young woman, when an infant, had lost her mother, and she had seen her father, only a few weeks before the time of which we speak, torn from her arms and dragged to the gibbet. But the cruelty of persecution is as insatiable as the grave. The poor orphan girl had been apprehended on the preceding Sabbath at one of those field-meetings, whither she had resorted to worship God as her conscience directed her; and because neither entreaties nor threatenings could prevail on her to take the test which we formerly explained, she had been sentenced to be put to death by drowning—a kind of death to which several females were condemned in those days.

In the channel of the sea, from which the waves retired at low water, was fixed a stake, whither, between two ruffian soldiers, the helpless girl was led, and her arms bound to her body with ropes. In the meantime, she was again promised her life and freedom, if she would take the test. But with a holy indignation, she replied, "Seek ye the life of my soul by promising me a few years more of earthly existence? Begone, ye that would tempt me to violate my conscience, and deny my Saviour. I trust in my God. I know in whom I have believed. And I know that He will not forsake me."

The tide now began to flow, and she was soon surrounded with the waves, before which the crowd retired. As the water gradually deepened about her

she seemed engaged in prayer; and, when it reached her waist, as the day was calm, she was heard to say, "Farewell, my friends—farewell, my enemies—thou sun, and thou earth, farewell! Come, ye waters; why come ye so slowly? come and waft my soul to the bosom of my God!" Here her voice was lost in the sound of the drums that were beat to prevent her from being heard. Her eyes looked up to heaven, and a calm tranquillity settled on her face, while every succeeding wave advanced farther up her body, till at last the waters rolled over her head, and hid her from the eyes of the spectators.

You will perhaps ask me, young reader, why I introduce you to a scene like this? why I shock your feelings by the relation of such cruelties, and oppress your sympathies by the recital of such sufferings? Truly, I am not fond of the tale of distress; nor would I willingly sadden your countenance, did I not hope to make your heart better by it. And I think your best interests may be much promoted by thus reviewing the cruelties and sufferings of our ancestors. Thus we learn to what horrible transactions sin leads those who abandon themselves to its tyrannical guidance. How avarice, and ambition, and pride, if harboured and nourished in our bosoms, eradicate all that is amiable in man, and carry him forward into barbarity and wickedness, which place him far beneath the beasts that perish. And hence we gather the strongest proofs of the divine origin of our religion, and how well adapted it is to bear

the Christian out through the darkest night of the world's distresses. We hear evil spoken of him; we see him hunted from place to place, and tortured, and murdered; but still we see the grace of God sufficient for him. We see him placed on the Rock of Ages, putting away from him, as things of nought, the waves, and storms, and fierceness of this earth's most angry assault; and, calmly reclining his hope on the promise of his God, looking with a grateful heart and an eye of brightening gladness, to the land beyond the grave—the land of his Father, and his everlasting home. Hence, too, we learn how much we are indebted to the heaven-supported stand which our forefathers made against the inroads of civil despotism, and the domination of a secular priesthood; and thus we are led to revere their memory, which has, especially in late years, been loaded with contempt. And, above all, in reviewing such scenes as these, we cannot help being filled with gratitude to God, that He hath now brought his church back from the wilderness, and permitted us to worship within her walls in peace and safety.

Some of these reflections Ralph made while this work of wickedness was going on before him. For, although he had already resolved, through the help of divine grace, to give no countenance to the persecutors, and to ally himself to that scattered few, whom he thought sincere in serving their heavenly Master; and the murder of this helpless female—this outrage done both to humanity and religion.

excited within him a greater hatred to sin, and a firmer reliance on the grace of God, which he had seen so fully manifested, in supporting, consoling, and cheering this young woman in the last and severest trial to which the Christian can be exposed.

"If these be your doings," thought he, as he wandered slowly along the coast, after witnessing this horrible spectacle, "if these be your doings, ye men of power and this world's honour, let not my soul come into your secret; unto your assembly, mine honour, be not thou united. Surely the Lord will visit you for these things; and then He will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. Oh, my Father in heaven! Thou knowest my heart. It is sinful, it is deceitful, ever deceiving me, taken up with lying vanities, ever leading me astray; but in thy great mercy, for the sake of Him who died that I might live, do Thou deliver me from its vain imaginations —from the snares of an alluring world—from the fear of its threatenings—and from the flattery of its promises. And, O give me, for Thou hast all power in heaven and in earth, give me strength and resolution to forsake all that is sinful, and follow all that is holy; to forsake those friends who would ruin my soul, and those possessions which, in a few years, at any rate, must be left for ever; and to follow my Saviour, that friend who sticketh closer than a brother —that friend who will never forsake me—who will

stand by me in death, and secure me from the fear of its terrors, who, by his own blood, hath won for me an inheritance valuable as the riches of divine grace—durable as the ages of eternity."

After uttering these pious ejaculations, Ralph began to consider whither to betake himself. To return home was to put himself in the way of all that reproach, ridicule, and alluring temptation, which he had already found himself unable to resist; and to throw himself into the society of the Covenanters was to deprive himself of every comfort of life, and to expose himself to the severest sufferings. For the present, however, he thought the last his duty. Trusting, therefore, to God, the all-powerful and the all-wise, he took his way to the farm-house where he was formerly apprehended. When he arrived, the old farmer, whom we formerly mentioned, took him by the hand and said, "You were once our friend, will you tell us if the soldiers are coming hither; for we have heard that you are now taking part with our enemies?"

"I did take part with your enemies and mine," replied Ralph, "but I have now left them; and I hope that my Saviour will never leave me to go so far astray again. I come to seek a night's shelter under your roof, and to be instructed by your experience."

"I cannot promise you an hour's safety in my house," said the old man, "but to what shelter it affords, you are welcome; and what of meat and

drink our oppressors have left, my children shall divide with you. Come in; there is, at this moment, a minister in my house whom you formerly saw here. He will be glad to see you; for often have I heard him speak of your mother; and often has he lamented over you since you saw him last."

After a conversation with the old minister, in which Ralph related what had happened to him since their last interview, the venerable pastor asked him if he had ever joined in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He replied in the negative; and added, that it was his intention to take the first opportunity of publicly commemorating his Redeemer's death.

"You may soon have an opportunity," said the minister. "I am to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to-morrow, if it so please God, in a retired place, about five miles up the country, and you may go along with me."

"I would most willingly go," replied Ralph, "but I fear I am not prepared for an ordinance so solemn. It was but yesterday that I was giving myself up to profane conversation, and taking part with those who know not God."

"There are none of us well enough prepared," said the minister, "but that is no reason why we should neglect this ordinance Indeed, if we thought ourselves fully prepared, it would be a sign that we saw ourselves not as God sees us; that we flattered our own hearts, and were really ill-fitted for approaching the holy table of God. If you were lately

putting the fear of God away from you, and breaking his commandments, you have more need to approach the throne of grace in the sacrament of the Supper, that there you may manifest your return to his service, and receive a large supply of his grace, that you may not again fall into temptation and sin against Him. We do not eat and drink the Lord's Supper unworthily because we are sinners, but because we refuse to put on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. Arrayed in this righteousness, the guiltiest sinner shall then be welcomed and honoured by the God of holiness. If you see yourself to be naturally poor, and naked, and blind, and miserable, exposed to the curse of God's law, and unable of yourself to fulfil any of its demands; if you put all your hope of salvation in the mercy of God through his Son, sincerely desirous to love, honour, and obey your Saviour, to trust in Him—to be humbly taught by his word to hate sin—to avoid every appearance of it—to love holiness—and to be for ever holy; if you have a sincere desire thus to love and thus to hate what God loves and hates; if you can fall down on your knees before that God whose eye searcheth the heart, and pray to Him that you may so love and so hate, however guilty you may have been, however sinful you still are, you are called by your Redeemer to sit down at his table, and you are assured that He will meet you there in the kindness of his love. Examine yourself, my young friend, by these marks; and may the Great High Priest of the

upper sanctuary give you that preparation which we all need."

Thus instructed, Ralph spent the remainder of the evening in prayer and self-examination; and after a short repose, set out early on the Sabbath morning, with his reverend friend and the old farmer, to the place agreed on for worshipping God, and celebrating the death of his Son. When they reached the spot, which, that it might not be easily discovered, they had been induced to choose in the bosom of a thick wood, there were a considerable number assembled. The bread and wine to be used in his holy festival had been brought by some peasants from the nearest town. And as soon as the little flock was fully gathered around him the worthy old minister proceeded with the solemnities of the day. After sermon, and an address to those who were to be engaged in the celebration of the Supper, the communicants, among whom was Ralph, arranged themselves together on the grassy turf, and prepared themselves for receiving the bread and wine.

Let us pause here, young reader, and think for a moment on this scene. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is so common among us—we have so often seen it from our earliest years, that, whether we are engaged in it, or are merely spectators, it makes but too little impression on our minds. But let us reflect upon it for a little; and is it not the most solemn, the most interesting, and the most honourable work in which man engages in this world? It is not obe-

dience to the call of some noble friend, who hath raised us from poverty to some place of ease and distinction: it is a compliance with the invitations of our Saviour, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come, and secured to us an everlasting place in the presence of God. It is not the anniversary of a mortal's birthday or death, who will in time be forgotten: it is a calling to lively remembrance the death of our Redeemer, whose praise will constitute the anthem of eternity. It is not sitting down at the table of a prince: it is sitting down at a table spread by God, at the expense of Messiah's blood; and it is our Saviour himself who welcomes the guests. It is not a token of some king's favour: it is a pledge of the love of God, of his wonderful love to man. It is not a banquet to regale our bodies: it is a feast that fills the hungry soul with eternal life. And should you then, young reader, be backward or ashamed to sit down at this table, because the men of this world will laugh at you? Should you be afraid to tell, in the presence of the universe, that God is your friend, and that you are his friend? Truly, none will be ashamed to have this to tell on that great and terrible day when this world shall be judged. But, alas! those who are ashamed of Christ now, those who deny Him before men, will He deny before his Father and the holy angels.

After an address to the communicants, the old minister, who, as we formerly observed, amidst all his sufferings, had a look of peculiar peacefulness and

contentment, dispensed the elements; and, resuming his discourse, thus concluded:—

"Now, my friends, if you have eaten of this bread and drunk of this cup worthily, as I hope you have done, you are the honourable ones of the earth, the wisest, the best, the happiest. God is your friend, and He is the fountain of all honour. He delights to honour you. Your garments shall be ever white: your crowns are sure: He will himself place them on your heads; and no being can ever wrest them from you. You are the wisest; for God is your instructor, and He is the source of all wisdom. His word is a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path. He hath led your minds into all necessary truth. He hath made you wise unto salvation. You are the best; for you are likest God, who is holy, and just, and good. You are vested in his righteousness. His spirit is in your souls, assimilating them to his own image, warming them with love to God and man, to all that is pure in heaven and on earth. You are the happiest; for all your desires shall be satisfied. With God as your friend there is enough and to spare. You need but to ask, and ye shall receive—to seek, and ye shall find—to knock, and all his fulness shall be opened unto you. And, in the treasures of his grace, how much more is laid up than you can exhaust in time or eternity!

"It is true, my friends, that we are now hunted from mountain to mountain, and from solitude to solitude; now reviled and persecuted; now in want.

in danger, in affliction; now menaced with bonds, with torture, with death. But is it not enough to make you patiently endure present calamity, and boldly face the future, that you this moment sit at the table of an Almighty Saviour, who, to replenish it for you, laid down his life? Will He who loved you so much, suffer ought really to hurt you? Verily, no. I believe, my friends, and I trust you believe also, that we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. He will never leave us, nor forsake us. These are his own words, the words of Him who cannot lie. What, then, have we to fear? Our Saviour is with us. The God of love, the God of all worlds, the God of time and eternity, hath taken us under his care; let us then go through this world, unmindful of its honours, and careless of its revilings. Let us go, singing songs of praise to Him who goeth with us—to Him who will go with us through the darkness of death—to Him who will lead us to Mount Zion, to the city and temple of our God, where we shall sigh and weep no more; where we shall be entirely holy, as we shall be completely happy."

After the services of the day were over, the little congregation dispersed, with more true gladness in their hearts than the wicked have, when their corn and their wine are increased.

CHAPTER VI.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of his countenance. In the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."—PSALMS.

I SHOULD have mentioned in the last chapter, that, as soon as Ralph resolved to leave home, he wrote the following letter to his father:—

"DEAR FATHER.—I know what I am now to communicate to you will subject me to your displeasure. I wish I could both please you and obey my God. I tried that kind of life which you approve of. You then caressed and indulged me, and showed me all the kindness I could expect from a tender father. But still in every moment of reflection, I was miserable. I cannot be an enemy to God's people; I cannot live with those who persecute them; I dare not deny my Saviour before men, lest He deny me also before his Father at the day of judgment. Pardon, therefore, dear father, my disobedience. Since I have determined to associate with the persecuted party, and as I cannot at the same time make your house my home, without exposing you to the visitations of Government, I have resolved to leave you for some time. I may have to labour for my bread—I may have to beg it—I

may have to encounter many a hardship; but I put myself under the protection of a kind and watchful Providence, and I fear not the frowning of the world. Perhaps the time may soon come, when the party with whom I am now to associate will no longer be counted traitors, and when I might live at home without exposing you to any penalties. If that time come, and if my present conduct do not so much offend you as to induce you to abandon me altogether, I will be glad to return and live with you. Do not be offended with me, dear father, for obeying the dictates of my own conscience. Forgive me for what I have done; and be assured that I am still your affectionate son,—RALPH GEMMELL.'

You may imagine, young reader, how a man like Mr Gemmell would receive Ralph's letter. He stamped the ground with his foot, and gnashed his teeth with indignation. He regarded his son as a mad irreclaimable fanatic—a dishonour to his family—unworthy to be any longer remembered by him—and, without a moment's deliberation, sat down and wrote the following letter:—

"RALPH,—Return home and live with me! No, never; my door shall be for ever shut against you; I will even tear your remembrance from my heart. You have not only disregarded my injunctions; you have not only rejected my kindness and disappointed my hopes; you have allied yourself to the vilest and guiltiest traitors; you have disgraced my name and

my house. I blush to think that you are my son. But you shall no longer be recognised as such by me. I shall leave all that I have to Edward. And I hereby charge you never to let me again see your face—never to presume to write to me, or to say that I am your father.—GEORGE GEMMELL.'

When Mr Gemmell had finished this letter, he gave it to Edward, and said, "Go early to-morrow morning," for it was on the Sabbath evening he received Ralph's letter, "go and deliver that letter to Ralph, who is no longer worthy to be called your brother. You will find him perhaps at the house where he was formerly apprehended. If not, you will probably learn there where you may find him. Go; put that letter into his hand, and stop not to hear a word from him."

Ralph had just walked out from the old farmer's (for he had returned thither on the Sabbath evening), to enjoy the freshness of the morning, when he observed his brother riding towards the house. Edward came up to him, put the letter into his hand, and turned his horse and rode off—happy that he had now got fairly quit of a brother he never loved, and had the clear prospect of inheriting all the possessions and honours of his father.

Ralph read the letter. He expected something of the kind, yet he was not prepared for so much. All the feelings which a lost home and a lost father could excite rushed bitterly upon his soul It was hard

to be for ever forbidden a home where he had spent his childhood with the tenderest of mothers;—it was hard to be disowned and hated by a father whom he had often endeavoured to please, even against his own conscience. He felt all this; and to use the language of Scripture, he "fell down on his face, and wept bitterly." For a moment, he almost wished that, like Edward, he had been content to live as his father wished him. But this was only the passing thought of a moment. He remembered the stings of conscience, the anguish of remorse, and the fears of death, which he had so lately felt. He remembered the love of his heavenly Father, the love of his Saviour; and although he continued still to weep, it was not for what he himself had done—it was not for what he had lost; it was, that he had a father and a brother of whose eternal welfare he had every reason to doubt. But soon he betook himself to the never-failing comfort of the Christian. He addressed himself to a throne of grace, and besought his God that He would yet have mercy on his relations, and turn them from the evil of their ways, and yet magnify his grace by saving them from the wrath to come. After this fervent prayer to God for the salvation of those whom he still loved, however much they hated and despised him, peace returned to his mind. He knew, that although he was disowned of an earthly father, he had a Father in heaven who would never disown him; although he was despised of his brother, he had an elder brother who loved

him and would love him to the end; and although he had lost an earthly inheritance, he had treasures secured for him in heaven infinitely more valuable. These are the reflections, young reader, which fill the Christian's mind with that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have seen, in this passage of Ralph's history, how well adapted the promises of the gospel are to the wants of the Christian—how securely he leans on the arm of his Saviour, and reposes his hope on those fair and untroubled regions beyond the grave, when the deceitful rod of this world's strength breaks under him, and the clouds of adversity darken his earthly prospects. But where, in the day of sore trouble—where, at the hour of death, shall the sinner look? who shall comfort him at that awful crisis, when no earthly friend shall be of any avail? Who shall guide his steps through the valley of thick darkness, and where shall his spirit find rest, when it shall be driven away for ever from the presence of its God? The latter reflections have been suggested by a scene which Ralph witnessed soon after his banishment from his father's house.

Naturally of a thoughtful and contemplative turn of mind, and rendered still more so by the adverse circumstances of his life, Ralph loved to withdraw himself from the eye of human observation, and to sooth his feelings and nourish his virtues in solitary meditation.

One evening, following this propensity, he left a

shepherd's hut, in which he had spent a few days, and wandered forth amidst the peaceful scenery which surrounded it.

"These sheep," said Ralph, as he passed a flock that lay on the heath, "these sheep rest in peace; they have spent the day in gathering their food, and now their slumbers are sweet. And why is it that man eateth the bread and drinketh the water of affliction, and lieth down in sorrow? Why does rest depart from his eyes, and slumber from his eyelids? Why does he so often say, when it is night, 'When shall it be morning?' and when it is morning, 'When shall it be night?' Must he alone of all earthly beings, waste the day in sadness, and water his nightly couch with the tears of bitterness? Is God more merciful to the beasts of the field than to man, on whose soul He once impressed his own image? No, Holy Father!" the young man exclaimed, "Thou art not more merciful to the beasts of the field than Thou art to man. Thou hast made him only a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things under his feet. But he hath rebelled against Thee, and therefore he wandereth without a guide, he refuses to be reconciled to Thee, and therefore he hath no comforter; he hath himself planted his couch with thorns, and therefore rest fleeth far away. Gracious God! let it not be so with me; teach me to submit myself to thy government—to accept of

the offered Saviour as the great atonement for my sin. Then shall I spend the day in cheerfulness, for Thou shalt teach me to do my duty; and the night in peaceful repose, for I shall rest under the shadow of Thy wings.

"Just and Holy One! I know that Thou afflictest not willingly the children of men. It is sin, that abominable thing which Thou hatest, which infuses into the cup of life every drop of its gall. It is sin which embitters reflection, and darkens the prospects of hope. It is sin which makes this world a valley of tears, and the next, to him who hath not been redeemed from its consequences, a place of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. All the holy are happy. As that moon, which clothes the earth in silvery radiance, walks for ever peacefully and serenely amidst her attendant stars, untroubled by the noise of the tempest, while it carries desolation over the face of this lower world; so, O Father! if I trust in my Saviour, and keep his commandments, shalt Thou enable me to possess my soul in peace, amidst all the troubles of life, and all the terrors of death."

Ralph was thus engaged in holy communion with his God, when his attention was attracted by a loud shriek, which seemed to be uttered by some person in great distress. He turned towards the direction whence he imagined the cry proceeded, and, by the light of the moon, observed two men carrying or dragging a third along with them. As they ap-

proached him, he discovered that they were soldiers, and that one of them, who was an officer, had received a wound that same day in an affray with a party of Covenanters. A few of those dauntless and intrepid sons of civil and religious liberty had assembled in the desert moorlands, to hear a sermon from one of those ministers who were then driven to the wilderness. Sermon had no sooner commenced, however, than the little congregation was surprised and attacked by a party of soldiers. As they were mostly unarmed, they at first made no resistance, and would certainly have suffered themselves to have been led quietly to the nearest gaol, had not the following occurrence roused their indignation, and impelled them to set the arms of the soldiers at defiance.

The officer whom we have noticed, having used some unbecoming liberties with a young woman who was among the prisoners, was reprehended by her father, who was also present. Instead of desisting from his improper conduct, however, he struck the father on the left shoulder with his sword, and became still more insolent towards his daughter.

"Thou shalt not be misused in my presence," said the indignant father to his daughter, while he drew from under a loose great-coat, the short and rusty, but tried and faithful, sword of his forefathers, and bringing a sudden and unexpected stroke, disabled the sword-arm of the officer, and wounded him mortally in the left side. In a moment the engagement became general. Some of the peasants with clubs,

others with swords, which they had concealed about their clothes, fell violently on the soldiers. And as they were inflamed with rage, and greatly superior in number, they soon put the soldiers to flight. Two of them, however, leaving the rest to fight as they could with the Covenanters, supported their wounded officer, and after the dispersion of their fellows, were suffered to carry him away without molestation.

This was the man whose shriek had attracted Ralph's attention, and who, as the exhausted soldiers laid him down on the heath, asking if there were any hut near in which they might be sheltered for the night, exclaimed, in the faultering accents of one near dissolution—

"You shall carry me no farther. I will die here But, Oh! where am I going? What shall become of my soul?"

"You shall go to heaven," said one of the soldiers, wishing to comfort the poor wretch.

"My life has made God my enemy," replied the officer. "I have no hope! I have no hope!"

"If you must die, die like a man," said the other soldier; "you have done your duty to your king, and you have nothing to fear."

"The blood of innocence is on my hands," replied the dying sinner; "I have no hope! no hope!"

Ralph, although struck with horror at the despairing and ghastly visage of the man, stood near, and tried to comfort him.

"You ought not," said the young Christian, "to

despair, because you have been a great sinner. Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. His blood cleanseth from all sin—the greatest as well as the least. Persecutors have been saved, thieves and robbers have been saved, murderers have been saved. Repent, and seek the pardon of your sins through Jesus Christ. God will hear you for his sake, and save your soul from death.'

These words fell on the ear of the poor dying sinner, without yielding him any comfort. They were, indeed, like savoury meat placed in the sight of a hungry person, who is unable to stretch out his hand and partake of it. They made him feel with double anguish the wrath of God, which now lay heavy upon him; and he exclaimed, in the fearful tone of despair, "I cannot repent—God hath left me no hope! no hope!"

While he uttered these words of despair, his face grew pale as the moonbeams that fell upon it—the shadows of death closed over his eyes—the last agonies of nature shook his body—it lay still on the heath—and his soul was summoned away to the tribunal of its God.

Let us pause for a moment, and reflect on this scene. The man whose hopeless death we have just recorded was born of Christian parents, baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and thus, at his entrance into life, dedicated to the service of God. But early in youth he gave signs of aversion to religion, by swearing, breaking the

Sabbath, neglecting to read his Bible, and eagerly joining himself with the company of the profane. Conscience at first told him he was wrong, and for some time rendered him miserable by its upbraidings. But the farther we advance over the line that forms the limit of virtue, the voice of conscience becomes weaker and weaker, till it is at last almost lost amidst the noise and revelry of unhallowed pleasures.

So it was with the poor wretch whose lifeless body now lay on the heath. After treading for a while in the dark and ruinous paths of vice, his ear became deaf to the calls of religion, his heart hard as the nether millstone, and his conscience seared as with a hot iron. And when the voice of death, that speaks in the ear of conscience like the thunders of God, awoke him with the awful tidings that he must instantly appear before his God, he could not pray, he could not repent, because God, in his righteous displeasure, had left him to the hardness of his wicked heart. All his life he despised the Bible, and, at the hour of need, his own wicked heart rendered him incapable of drawing comfort from its promises. The Holy Spirit, long resisted, at last ceased to make intercession for him. The Saviour, long despised and rejected, withdrew from between him and offended justice. And God the Father, the entreaties of whose love and whose mercy he had long disregarded, took away from him the light of his countenance, and left him to the consequences of that sin from which he refused to be separated.

Thus it is the very nature of sin to harden the heart, and bring upon its miserable victims that punishment which is denounced against it. Every sin we commit stamps another stain on the soul, and renders it less capable than it was the moment before of relishing the beauties of holiness. Every step we take in the path of vice, carries us not only farther away from virtue, but weakens our desire of returning to it. Every draught we take of the cup of iniquity, not only increases our unhallowed thirst, but quenches some spark of heavenly fire in the soul. And when the soul is completely defiled, and every desire of returning to holiness entirely rooted out, and every spark of the Spirit's kindling utterly quenched in the heart, what is there to stand any longer between the sinner and the punishment of his sins? What is there that will turn aside from his soul the sword of vindictive justice? What is there that will snatch the wretched victim out of the grasp of eternal death? And who can tell what his sufferings shall be in that place where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched?

Think on the danger of sin. You do not know how soon your heart may become hard, and your conscience deaf, and God may leave you to the fearful consequences of your iniquity.

Although the two succeeding years of Ralph's life might afford many interesting and useful incidents, the bounds which we have prescribed for this narra-

tive oblige us to pass over them with a very short and general account. We shall only say, that his sufferings during this time were great. He often laboured in the fields with the peasants who sheltered him. Unaccustomed as he had been to poverty, want, or toil, they were now almost his constant companions. With clothes that could ill protect him from the severity of the cold, he had frequently, in the depth of winter, and the darkness of night, to seek a hiding-place in the dens and caves of the mountains; and sometimes he was compelled by hunger to beg a morsel of bread. His life, like that of all his associates, was every day sought, and he often made the narrowest escapes from those who sought it. Yet, instead of repining at his lot, instead of imagining that God had forsaken him, he had the Christian's peace in his mind, the Christian's hope ever brightening before him, and the truth of the promises of God every day ratified in his bosom. Through all his tribulations he pressed forward with joy for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And truly he felt that his Saviour's words are true, that "Whosoever put their trust in Him, He will never leave nor forsake."

He had often, as we have observed, escaped the search and pursuit of his persecutors. The time was now arrived, however, when they were to be permitted to take him.

On a Sabbath afternoon, about midsummer, as Ralph was hearing sermon in one of the moorish

glens in the upper part of Renfrewshire, he and the little congregation with whom he was worshipping, were suddenly surrounded by a troop of dragoons, and apprehended. Some of the soldiers, as they had then that power given them by Government, were for putting them instantly to death, others were for sending them to Edinburgh, there to be sentenced and executed. This last proposal was adopted; and the prisoners were accordingly conducted to Edinburgh. On their arrival there, they were loaded with irons, and thrown into the gloomiest cells of the old prison. After two days' confinement they were brought to trial, and all, excepting one or two who took the test, condemned to be executed next day, and their heads and hands affixed to the city gates. As soon as this sentence was read to them, they were remitted to prison, and shut up in separate cells.

You can often talk about death, young reader, with little alarm. You are not sure when it shall come, and your youth, your health, and your attachment to the world, when you begin to fear it, whisper in your ear that it is yet far distant. But to be assured that you were to die to-morrow would indeed bring the terrors of death near to your mind. Could you look on them without trembling? Are you sure that you would have a friend to stand by you, stronger than death? a friend who could effectually support you in the conflict with your last enemy? To be assured that we should die to-morrow would really be a serious thing, a try-

ing situation; and, in this situation, was Ralph placed.

Once before, you remember, he thought he was dying; now he was sentenced to be executed on the morrow. Let us reflect on his external circumstances and inward feelings in the former instance, and let us observe these also in the present. When formerly he imagined he was instantly to die, and appear at the tribunal of God, he was in his father's house, surrounded with this world's wealth and flattered with its honours; adjudged to no ignominious death, but in his own bed, called, as every one must sooner or later be, to pay the last debt of nature, and assured of a tender remembrance in the bosom of his friends, and of his name being ever mentioned with the highest respect. Thus was he then situated, and yet how did he feel? He had not then put his whole trust in God. He had been living in sin, and trying to banish every good impression from his heart. He thought, as he well might, that God was his enemy: and he saw no man that was able to protect him from the terrors of death, or from the wrath of the Judge before whom he was to appear. How did he then feel? The anguish of that moment was so insufferable, that he would have willingly exchanged it for a whole lifetime of the severest trials. Now the young man was cast out from his father's house, become the curse and the hissing of all his relations, forgotten by his acquaintances who once honoured him, or if remembered, only remembered

as a silly headstrong fanatic, whose sufferings deserved nothing but ridicule; oppressed with irons like a murderer; locked up in the darkness of a dungeon, without a friend to solace him; sentenced by the law to die as a traitor, and to have his head and hands nailed up before the public gaze, as an attestation to the vileness of his character. What were his thoughts now in this situation? Still death was awful to him: To be cut off in the midst of his days, in the vigour and healthfulness of youth—to break away from every earthly association—to leave the light of day for the darkness of the grave, and the voice of men for the silence of death; to have his body now so pleasant to him, made a meal for worms, and a prey to foul corruption. These were unwelcome thoughts. And he felt that death had still power to accomplish these things against him. But he now beheld the gloomy king shorn of his substantial terrors; a guilty conscience, the wrath of God, eternal punishment, these are the real terrors of death, the weapons with which he wounds the soul and destroys it. But Ralph knew that his Saviour had taken these weapons from his enemy; and he could look him in the face, and say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who giveth me the victory through Jesus Christ my Lord. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; and thy rod and thy staff, they shall comfort me." Thus did God give the young

Christian a song in the night, in the darkest and stormiest night which the wickedness of this world could gather about him. So true it is that God is a present help in the time of need; that He will never leave nor forsake any who put their trust in Him.

Young reader, think on death. It will come; and you know not how soon. Are you prepared to meet it? Are you sure you have a friend secured who will not desert you at that hour? Pause and consider. There is no friend but one who can then effectually help you. This is your God—your Saviour. Be prepared, as Ralph was, by putting all your trust in Him. And come your last moment when it may, you are safe. Your Saviour will deliver you also from the terrors of death.

When morning came, Ralph awoke from a refreshing sleep, in which he had spent part of the night, and had just kneeled down in prayer to God, when he heard some person turning the lock of his cell door; and he now expected to be instantly led forth to execution. The door opened, and the gaoler ushered into the cell an uncle of Ralph.

"Young man," said the old soldier, "I have come a long way this morning to save your life. I have already got your sentence turned into banishment; and I have even the promise of your liberty, if you will promise that your future conduct shall be agreeable to the wishes of Government."

"A thousand thanks to you, my dear uncle," said

Ralph, "for your kindness to me. But how did you know that I was here?"

"That will I soon explain, nephew. One of the soldiers who was at your apprehension had frequently seen you when you lived with your father. He recognised you; and, because he had served under me when I was a captain in the army, had a kindness for the family, and sent us word immediately that you were taken. Your father, although he seemed somewhat concerned, said he would by no means meddle in the affair; and I could not bear the thought that any one of my family should be beheaded, or hanged like a dog. So off I came, old as I am, pleaded the loyalty of our house, and my own services, in your favour; and you see how I have succeeded. Now, I am sure you have had enough of these madmen, the Covenanters; you will now take the test. What is it? I could swear a dozen such oaths in the hour, and be an honest man too. Come, I will introduce you to the minister. You shall be set at liberty; and I will do all that I can to make matters up between you and your father. Come, my boy, fling away that foolishness, and learn to be a man." Thus did the old soldier talk; and certainly Ralph found it no easy task to reject any of the kindness of a man who had taken so much interest in him: but he had not so learned Christ, as to be drawn from his service, by the promises and kindnesses of sinful men. After a moment's deliberation, he made the following reply to his uncle:—

"Dear uncle, be assured that I shall ever feel myself your debtor for the interest you have taken in me. You have already saved my life. This is enough of kindness; more than I can ever repay. Do not concern yourself further about me. Banishment and slavery are by no means pleasant; but I dare not try to escape them by violating my conscience, and breaking the commandments of my Saviour. I know you will think me foolish thus to choose exile and captivity, when I might, by your influence, be set at liberty, and perhaps restored to my father. But you will not be offended with me for persevering firmly in what I consider to be my duty to God. I have never found Him a hard master. He has supported, and will support me, in every time of need. I have always found his yoke easy, and his burden light. On the contrary, when I have forsaken his love, and given myself up to the guidance of this world's wisdom, and the sinful desires of my own heart, I could see no one that could sufficiently befriend me in the hour of affliction and death. Advise me not then, dear uncle, to do anything against my own conscience; but accept my gratitude and love for the great instance of your kindness I have already received."

"Well, well," said his uncle, when he saw Ralph thus resolved, "you may do as you please for me. You will not find it very agreeable to labour under the heat of a burning sun. But I wish you a good voyage; and I hope you will have learned more

sense when you return." With this short reply, the old soldier quitted the cell, and Ralph was left to his own meditations.

Gratitude to God was now his master feeling; for He had stirred up this old man, who in fact cared nothing for religion, to be the instrument of saving his life. He had thus given him a new token of his loving kindness, and a new pledge that He would never leave nor forsake him. He had given him a new prospect of serving Him in the land of the living; of further storing his mind with new proofs of his Saviour's love, and faithfulness, and all sufficiency; and thus of being better prepared when the hour of death should certainly come.

CHAPTER VII.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."—PSALMS

HAVING remained two or three weeks in prison, Ralph, with a number more, was put on board a vessel at Leith, to be transported to the English plantations in Jamaica. It is almost needless to relate the severe treatment they met with during the passage. The captain, to whose charge the captives were committed, was a man who had never thought of religion, and who had little sympathy with human suffering. The prisoners, crowded together, were shut up in the hold of the vessel, under an iron grating. Their food was bread and water, and even that was but sparingly given them. Thus situated, with nothing to cheer them but the hopes of a better life, where their sins, being finally forsaken, would no more subject them to calamity, they sailed from their native land in the month of July. The weather was favourable, and their passage prosperous enough, till they came in sight of the island of Jamaica. It was near night, in the month of September, a very stormy time in these latitudes, when the ship drew towards the land. The wind, at this time, however, was fair, the sky serene, and every one expected to be ashore in the course of a few hours; when suddenly a dead

calm ensued—the heavens grew dark—the sea was troubled—and in less than half-an-hour, the fury of the tempest came. The winds blew so violently, and the tumult of the waves was so great, that to manage the ship became impossible. A rocky shore was before them, and the mighty strength of a stormy sea was driving them quickly towards it. In the midst of this danger, the prisoners entreated the captain to relieve them from their confinement, that they might have a chance of saving themselves if the vessel foundered. This request, however, he refused; declaring, that he would rather see them all drowned, than give them an opportunity of escaping from his hands. In the meantime, the vessel ran aground, a very little off the land, and was so damaged by the shock, that she made water rapidly, while the waves were every moment breaking over deck. Still, however, the captain refused to release the prisoners. But he did not forget to provide for his own safety. Expecting that the vessel would be instantly wrecked, he ordered the long boat to be manned, into which he threw himself, with all the hands on board, except the mate and two or three sailors, who refused to leave the vessel. Thus he thought to save himself, careless of the fate of Ralph and his companions. But God, who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand and bringeth to nought the counsel of men, had not so determined it. The boat had not proceeded many yards from the ship, when it was upset by the force of two mighty billows, and the cruel

captain, and all who were with him, instantly perished in the waters.

When the mate observed this, he immediately released the prisoners; and they, with the few seamen who remained on board, laboured incessantly at the pumps to keep the vessel from filling with water. But, notwithstanding all they could do, the water still increased on them; the storm was as violent as ever; and they thought every moment would be their last.

And how did Ralph behave himself then? Where did he turn for help? He trusted, as he had done before, in that Saviour who walks upon the sea, and who can say to the raging of its billows, "Peace, be still!" And he cried to Him that He would yet spare him. All his companions also lifted up their voices to God; and it pleased Him to hear and answer their cry. He made the storm a calm by His command; and every man that remained on board safely reached the shore in the small boats. The mate now took charge of the prisoners, and conducted them to the governor of the island, who afterwards disposed of them to the planters.

For a free-born and enlightened man to submit to slavery, as Ralph now did, is the hardest task which can be proposed to a human being. In some respects it is worse than death itself. To die is the lot of all. The rich man, as well as the poor, must go the way appointed for all living; and, therefore, no one can think himself peculiarly degraded by being subject

to what every other person is. But to be in vassalage to a fellow-creature—to be bought and sold like the beasts of the field or the produce of the ground—to be subjected to toil without even the hope of a recompense—and to be exposed to the lash of a capricious and tyrannical master, without daring to defend ourselves, and without any opportunity of having our injuries redressed—is a descent so far below the common rights of our nature, so far below the common condition of mankind, and therefore so peculiarly degrading, that to stoop to it for the sake of conscience, requires the greatest devotedness to religion, the strongest trust in the promises and grace of God, and the liveliest hope of a sure reward in the mansions of eternal freedom. In this state of servitude, however, severe as it was, Ralph was now doomed to live for a time. The master under whom he and two or three of his fellow-sufferers were placed, treated them with nearly the same severity as the negroes with whom they laboured. To Ralph, this treatment was peculiarly galling. His infancy had been tenderly nursed: he had been brought up, to the age of fifteen, as the expectant of a considerable estate. But now he was compelled to labour daily, from morning till night, under the scourge of a cruel taskmaster, breathing a sultry air, and exposed to the heat of a burning sun.

This, young reader, was a hard and painful condition, peculiarly degrading and revolting to human nature. But if you are doing what Ralph, to save

himself from this state, might have done; if you are disobeying the commandments of God, and giving yourself up to the guidance of sinful passions, you are the willing victim of a slavery infinitely more debasing and severe. Ralph was compelled to his bondage by the wickedness of his fellow-men: you willingly subject yourself to the dominion of your passions, and the vassalage of the devil. He had the approbation of his own conscience, and the smile of his Saviour's countenance: you are providing for yourself remorse and the anger of your Maker. He submitted to slavery for love to God and holiness: you are selling yourself for what is unclean and abominable. He was degraded in the sight of sinful men only: you are rendering yourself vile in the pure eyes of God and every holy being. He was sustained by the hope of eternal life: your wages are eternal death. His servitude was that of the body only: yours is the bondage of the soul. His could endure for only a few years: yours, if you break not from it, will continue with increasing severity through eternity. In this dreadful slavery, you and all men are by nature. You cannot ransom yourself from it. No man can redeem his brother from this captivity. Christ only can make you free. Examine yourselves, then, and see that you are his freemen—that you have obtained the glorious liberty of the sons of God. If you have, you will not be surprised that Ralph submitted to slavery for love to his Saviour.

In this land of bondage, the young man had no

minister to counsel and comfort him. On the Sabbath, however, he was not required to labour, and he hailed its dawn with a rapture of holy delight. The former part of the day he spent alone reading his Bible—the only book he had taken with him from Scotland—enriching and solacing his mind with its precious truths, examining himself, lamenting his past transgressions, weeping over the sins that still remained in his heart, and lifting up his soul in prayer to God, for a heart to serve Him better and love Him more. In the afternoon he met regularly with his companions who were under the same master. Their place of meeting (for they generally met in the same place) was under a large plantain tree, whose foliage screened them from the scorching rays of the sun. Here they prayed together—read a portion of the Scriptures—sang a song of praise to their God and Saviour; here they conversed of the great love of God displayed through Christ Jesus; cheered and comforted one another with the promises of the gospel and the hopes of eternal life; and here, too, did they find the truth of the saying, that wherever two or three are met together in God's name, there will He be in the midst of them to bless them; and here did they often experience, in near communion with God, in the joy of the Holy Ghost, in ardent anticipation of heaven, the strongest proofs of that truth which we are so desirous to set before you, that whosoever putteth his trust in God, He will never leave nor forsake.

That this truth may be the better rooted in the mind of the young reader, I shall relate here a conversation which happened one Sabbath evening between Ralph and one of his companions.

"You seem," said Ralph to him, "very melancholy to-day. May I be permitted to ask the cause of your sadness?"

"I have been troubled for some time," replied his friend, "with the thought that we are deceiving ourselves. In our own country we were persecuted and condemned by the law to banishment; here we are in slavery, degraded from the rank of human beings, and without the hope of liberty: Surely the Lord hath forsaken us, else He would never permit so many evils to come upon us."

"Beware of such thoughts," said Ralph, "it is the adversary of God and man who suggests them. He tries to make you weary in the service of God, by persuading you that it is unprofitable. And if Satan or your own heart once persuade you of this, your obedience to God will be no longer sincere, and therefore you will have no right to expect the joy of his presence. But we have no reason to suppose that God hath forgotten to be gracious to us, because we are left to prove our sincerity by severe and long continued suffering, even slavery itself. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. It is through much tribulation that we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. But the wicked, you know, the Bible says, prosper every day;

they grow up and flourish like the green bay-tree, and are not troubled as other men. Prosperity in this world, therefore, is no proof of God's favour, nor is adversity any token of his displeasure. It is the feeling in our own bosom that makes us happy or miserable. The poor slave may have a peace of mind, and a hope in the life to come, which will be an ever-present reward for all his sufferings; while his rich master may have within him the gnawings of remorse, and those fearful forebodings, which shall hinder him from enjoying his wealth, and embitter his very existence. You know, my friend, that I tried the pleasures of sin myself. I had then all that I wanted. I was surrounded by friends who respected and loved me, and I was flattered by the hopes of future honours; but whenever I thought of death and a world to come, I was miserable. Then I was prosperous, and deemed happy by men; but then I had forsaken God, and was indeed forsaken by Him. Now I am as poor and as degraded in the eyes of the world as a human being can be; but I believe in my Saviour—I trust in God—and I am happy. It is only when I indulge sin in my heart that God leaves me a moment to mourn. Doubt not, my friend, the truth of God's promises. Our sufferings are indeed long and severe; but if we are rightly exercised under them, they will all work together for our good; and if we are faithful to the death, we shall receive a crown of life.

"You speak truth, my friend," replied his com-

panion. "I am convinced. I am comforted. Let us fall down on our knees, and pray to God that we may have grace given us to resist every suggestion of evil, to believe more and more in the promises of the gospel, knowing that He is faithful who hath promised, and will bring to pass the desire of our hearts."

Ralph had now endured this bondage nearly two years. His body, although naturally robust, subjected to severe toil, in a climate noxious to Europeans, was beginning to decay; and he hoped that death would soon deliver him from his thraldom. But God had yet in reserve for him many days of peace and happiness in the land of the living.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife or children, or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."—ST MATTHEW.

ONE day as Ralph and his companions were labouring in the fields, their master approached them, and saluting them pleasantly said—"The year of jubilee is come. You are no longer my servants. A revolution has happened in Britain. A new king is placed on the throne; and he has sent orders hither, that all who were banished and enslaved for their religious opinions under the preceding government, are to be immediately set at liberty. Vessels await you on the coast to convey you to your native land."

"Our native land!" they all cried with one voice. "Praised be God! hath He at last delivered it from oppression! O Scotland! Scotland! shall we yet see thee!" And they embraced one another, and shouted for gladness of heart.

In a few days after the announcement of these glad tidings, Ralph with many more exiles, embarked in a vessel for Greenock. The wind was favourable, the passage quick and prosperous. And how did his heart leap for joy, when the white rocks and blue mountains of his native country rose on his view!

With the flow of spirits which his releasement produced, and the change of air, his health was completely restored; and he forgot for a while that he was disinherited, and forbidden his father's house. And now the well-known cliffs of Arran, the rock of Ailsa, and the shores of Carrick, welcomed his eye; and now he could see Irvine, and the old castle of Craigfoot; and the joy of his childhood beat at his heart.

As Ralph and two or three other passengers wished to land at Irvine, the vessel drew near the harbour, and they were put ashore in the small boat. But who would attempt to tell the joy of Ralph's soul when he set foot on the land of his birth? It was a feeling of delight sufficient to repay years of toil. He fell down on his knees, and thanked God, who had preserved him through so many trials, and restored him in health and strength to his beloved country. "So may God bring me," said the young man, "when the trials of life have passed away, to the land beyond death and the grave."

It was in the beginning of summer, on a Sabbath, about mid-day, that he landed. The inhabitants of Irvine were just gathering to the afternoon's sermon It was a pleasant sight to Ralph. He could observe many, of whose sufferings he had shared in the time of persecution, this day peacefully walking to the house of God, having none to make them afraid. He entered the church; and was both surprised and delighted when he saw the pulpit filled with the vener-

able old pastor, who, after his mother's death, had first instructed him in the ways of righteousness. This worthy minister having been ejected from his pastoral charge in Irvine at the commencement of the persecution, had, for twenty-eight years, wandered up and down his native country, doing what he could to instruct and comfort the suffering church; and now, after having undergone innumerable hardships, after having often made the narrowest escapes from his enemies, and after having seen them entirely overthrown, he was restored to the arms of his flock, to his home, and his family. Age had rendered him so infirm, that he was compelled to address his people sitting in the pulpit. When he began his sermon, Ralph listened to every word, as it had come from the tongue of an angel. And it is no wonder that he listened with delight; for the whole discourse was an offering of thanks to God for the deliverance of his church. No wonder that the tear of holy joy flowed down his cheek, while the good old man prayed that all those who had been banished from their native land for conscience sake, might be safely conducted home, to glorify and praise their God.

After sermon, Ralph, who had not been observed in church by the minister, called at his house. Although he was much altered, the old man instantly recognised him, and, to use the language of Scripture, "fell on his neck and kissed him."

As soon as this happy salutation was past, Ralph,

asked the minister if he had heard any thing of his father lately.

"You shall lodge with me to-night," said the minister, "and I will introduce you to your father to-morrow."

"And is he indeed reconciled to me?" said Ralph. "And is he well? Is Edward well?"

"Edward is well," said the minister, "but your father has been complaining for some time. Yesterday he sent for me. I had not been in his house for nearly thirty years, and I was surprised at the invitation."

"You might be well surprised," said Ralph; "surely he is greatly changed!"

"Yes, he is greatly changed," said the old man; "for he thinks he has wronged both you and me, and his own soul too. He says he is dying, but knows not what is to become of his immortal spirit."

"I will go to him this moment," said Ralph, "it may be that God will comfort him through me."

"Nay, but I will go too," said the affectionate old minister, "I like to see meetings of forgiveness and love. Your father wished me also to visit him to day; but, being fatigued with the duties of the Sabbath, I meant to defer my visit till to-morrow. Since you will go, however, we will go together. By the time we have taken some refreshment, the cart will be ready, for I cannot walk now."

On their arrival at Craigfoot, Ralph, although he

had not been there for nearly six years, was recognised by some of the old servants.

"Here is Ralph!" they shouted; "here is Ralph! his father will now die in peace." And they ran and told his father that Ralph was come home.

"Bring him hither!" exclaimed his father, "bring him hither quickly!"

The old minister, now approached Mr Gemmell's bedside, leading Ralph in his hand. "I have wronged thee, my son! I have deeply wronged thee!" exclaimed Mr Gemmell, as he reached his hand over his bed, and drew his son forward to his embrace. "Canst thou forgive me? Will God forgive me for my iniquities to thee?"

"I have forgiven you already," said Ralph, while he wept over his father's breast, "and God is willing to forgive you too."

Here the good old servant of God gave one hand to the son, and another to the father, and offered up his heart's desire unto God. After this he exhorted Mr Gemmell to put his trust in God; entreated him to believe in the promises of the gospel, which, he assured him, were given to the chief of sinners; and then took his leave and returned home.

"You look very ill," said Ralph to his father, when they were left alone. "I am fast dying," replied his father; "I caught a cold last winter; it has never left me; and I am now so weak, I cannot stir from my bed. But where have you been wandering all this while, my son? I need not ask; I

know what you have suffered. I have been a cruel father to you. I wished you to live like myself, careless of religion; and because you could not do this, I drove you from my house. Your grievances, however, I can in some measure redress. I have destroyed the former will which I rashly made, and restored you to your proper rights; and thrice happy am I that you have returned to heir that estate you so well deserve."

Here Mr Gemmell was interrupted by Edward coming into the room. "Here is your brother," said his father to him. "You know how much I have wronged him—how much I have taught you to wrong him."

"But Ralph will forgive me," said Edward; for he knew the tenderness of his brother's heart, "Ralph will forgive me. You have often seen me weep, father, when we talked about him since you turned ill."

"My dear brother," said Ralph, "you are indeed forgiven." And the two brothers warmly embraced one another.

"Now," said Mr Gemmell, raising himself up on his bed, when he saw his sons weep for gladness in each other's arms; "now I am happy as far as this world is concerned. You are both well provided for; and you will be kind to one another. But, Oh, Ralph! I am not yet prepared for death. I have sinned grievously—I have been a curse to my own family—I have persecuted the people of God—I am

the vilest of sinners—and I fear that God in his anger may cast me off for ever. Yesterday I sent for the good old minister (so kindly did Mr Gemmell now speak of those men whom he had once scorned as the offscourings of the earth), and he gave me some comfort. He displayed the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and encouraged me to believe in Him. I do wish to believe in Him. I see no other way of escaping the wrath to come. But I fear my heinous sins have provoked Him to leave me for ever."

Can you imagine, young reader, with what feelings Ralph heard his father talk thus; or with what eagerness and anxious love he began to comfort him?

"Dear father," he said, "Christ loves us the better, the more we hate ourselves; and we do Him wrong, when we think that the greatness of our sins will hinder us from being accepted of God through Him. It is not because we are sinners that God will not accept of us; for if this were true, no man could be saved. It is because we will not believe in Christ, nor repent, nor forsake our sins that He will not save us. This is the saying of God to every man, even to the chief of sinners—'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. His grace is sufficient for us: He perfects his strength in our weakness. Is not the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sufficient to wash out the vilest sin from our souls? The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. God is well pleased with us, that is, with all

who believe in Christ, for his righteousness' sake. If, then, we are willing to believe in Christ, if we are willing to forsake our sins, and to be made holy, we have the word of God witnessing to us that Christ is willing to plead his suffering and death in our behalf, to sanctify us by his Spirit, and to present us at last to his Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" exclaimed his father, when Ralph had done speaking. And again he cried, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" Ralph saw by his look and difficulty of breathing, that death was at hand. He fell down on his knees, with Edward, by the bedside, and prayed for his father. It was a fervent, effectual prayer, and it was heard.

Ralph now asked his father if he felt his trust any stronger in his Saviour. "He hath come to me at the eleventh hour," said his father; "I hope all is well. Oh the love of God in Christ Jesus!" He could utter no more, but casting a look of ineffable affection on his son, he fell back on his bed and expired.

To have been the means of saving a soul from death, will be to every one who has been so honoured, a thought of sweetest delight throughout eternity: but what infinite joy of heart must it be to have the conscious feeling that we have been instrumental in accomplishing the salvation of a father or a mother, a brother or a sister! This feeling was now Ralph's

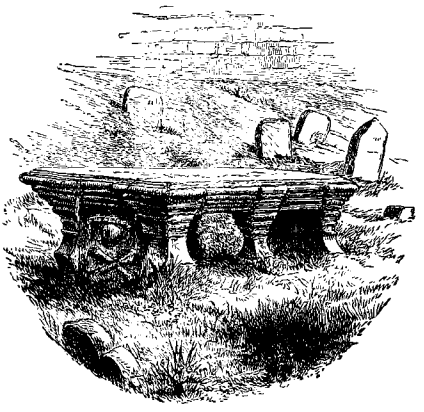
reward. It was his zealous perseverance in obedience to God, against so much opposition, that first led his father to think seriously of his own conduct. He was, as we have seen, the means of enlightening and comforting him in his last moments; and he received from him a look of affection and gratitude, which recompensed him more than a hundred fold for all his past afflictions. By his example and instruction, Edward, too, forsook the error of his ways; and he had the satisfaction of seeing him, after having devoted himself several years to study, become a faithful and zealous minister of the gospel of Christ.

At his father's death, Ralph succeeded to the paternal inheritance; and we deem it unnecessary to say more of his future life, than that in prosperity, as he had done in adversity, he put his whole trust in his Saviour, walked in the way of his commandments, and to the end of his days experienced it to be a true saying—that God will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him.

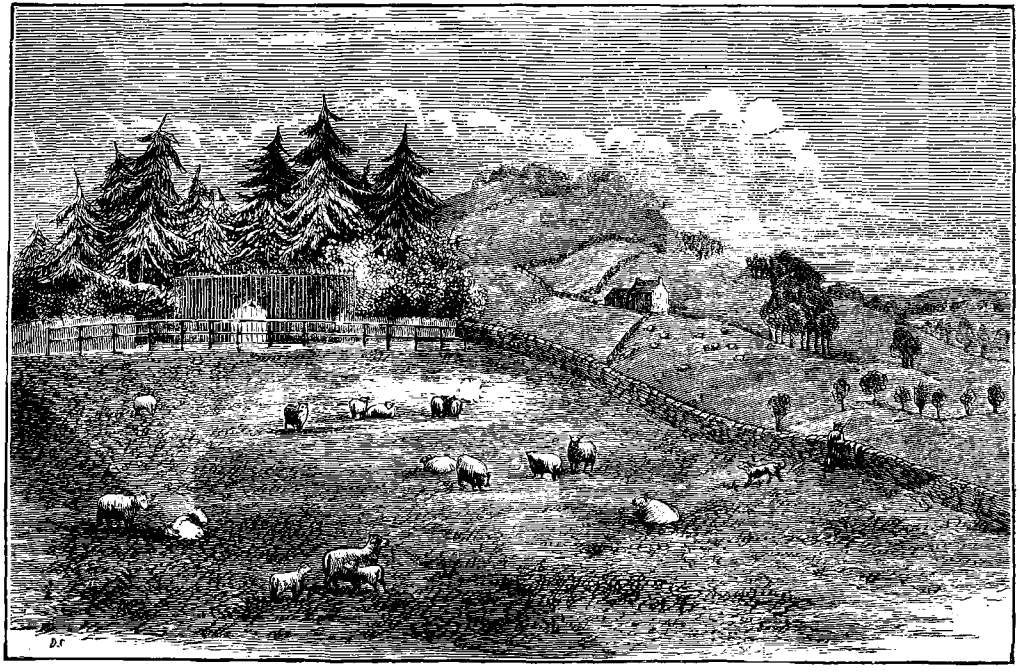
Young reader, before I take my leave of you, let us reflect a little on the history of Ralph. You have seen him in childhood reading his Bible, and listening to the instructions of his mother. You have seen him, after her death, trusting too much to himself—breaking his pious resolutions—renouncing his religion—and walking in that way in which sinners go. Then, you remember, he had all that his heart could desire of this world's bounties. He was in-

loved and caressed by his friends, honoured by his acquaintances, and filled with the hope of a life of ease and prosperity. And what was then the sum of his happiness? His conscience condemned him; remorse embittered all his pleasure; and when he thought he was dying, he shook with the terrors of despair; for he had secured no Almighty Friend to stand by him at that last hour when the help of man is vain. So shall you be overcome by the threatenings and allurements of the world, if you seek not continually the guidance of the Holy Spirit—if you rely not wholly on the grace of your Saviour. And if you continue to live in sin, so shall the bitterness of remorse come upon you, and so shall you find yourself friendless and in despair at the approach of death. Again, you have seen him awakened to his duty by the grace of God, while at the same time he was forbidden his father's house—despised by his friends—wandering in poverty—labouring in the field or begging his bread—now with the immediate prospect of an ignominious and untimely death before him—and now in banishment and slavery; and what was then the sum of his happiness? In the severest moment of his sufferings, he had that peace of mind which passeth all understanding—he had the hope of eternal life—he had the smile of God's countenance, and the assurance that He would never forsake him. This was his happiness. It will be yours too, young reader, if you so serve God, so resist the world, and so take up your cross and follow Christ.

We cannot promise you the same wealth in the world as that which fell to the share of Ralph; but if you persevere, like him, in well-doing, you may be the means of saving some near relation or dear friend; and we can promise you, on the authority of God, that in poverty He will enrich you—in suffering He will solace you—in temptation He will strengthen you—in sickness He will be your health—in death your rod and your staff—and after death your everlasting reward. Persevere, then, my young friend, in well-doing; put thy trust in God; and thou shalt find Him, in life and death, in time and eternity, thy ever-present and all-sufficient friend.



THE PERSECUTED FAMILY.



RULLION GREEN.

THE PERSECUTED FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

"There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
In doctrine uncorrupt: in language plain,
And plain in manner: decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."

COWPER.

THE Reverend Mr JAMES BRUCE, the head of that family whose lives we are briefly to record, was the youngest son of a very respectable gentleman in the upper district of Lanarkshire. In his boyhood he gave such indications of superior talent and love of piety and learning, as induced his father to educate him for the ministry. During the course of his studies in the University of Glasgow, James applied himself to the various branches of education, which were then taught, with an assiduity and success.

which proved that his father was noways wrong in the profession he had chosen for his son. In divine literature, to which the pious bent of his mind, as well as his future views, directed him chiefly, his progress was extremely rapid, and his acquirements solid and extensive. Of controversial theology he was by no means ignorant; although his mild and peaceful mind delighted itself especially in contemplating the plain truths of the Bible, and how they might be impressed with the happiest effects on the souls of men. The New Testament he read continually; and his heart was warmed with its love, and his soul fashioned to its precepts. As his judgment was sound, so his feelings were strong. The history of our Saviour's life, and sufferings, and death, made a most extraordinary impression on his mind; and while he read, and loved, and adored, his soul took on the likeness of the great Testator, in the holy simplicity of his character, in resignation to the will of God, in devotion to the duties of religion, and in love to mankind. To those acquirements, without which a minister is ill fitted for his office, he added a pretty extensive knowledge of philosophy and books of taste; and withal he was not an unsuccessful student of the human heart.

The romantic scenery amidst which his childhood had been nursed had strongly imaged on his mind the pure objects of nature; and, following his own propensity, as well as imitating the writers of the Bible, he made ample use of them, in summoning

them forth to bear witness to God's power, and wisdom, and goodness, and in illustrating by them the doctrines of the gospel.

With a mind thus prepared, in his twenty-sixth year, Mr Bruce received a call from the inhabitants of S—— (a small village on the water of Ayr) and its neighbourhood, to be their minister. The call, as every minister of sincere heart would wish, was cordial and unanimous. The situation of the village, although this was only a secondary consideration with Mr Bruce, was such as peculiarly concorded with his feelings and desires. Placed in a sequestered hollow, through which the Ayr led its stream, winding pleasantly, covered with hills which rose abruptly on every side, giving root to the beech, the oak, and the birch, which interwove their varied robes in Nature's taste, the little village seemed to be the very home of pensive goodness and holy meditation. These things urged him to accept the call. Above all, that he might be like his Saviour, continually engaged in his heavenly Father's work, instructing the ignorant, and training immortal spirits for heaven, he gladly complied with the invitation, and was accordingly settled among them.

Soon after this settlement, he married Miss Eliza Inglis, the daughter of a gentleman who lived in the neighbourhood of Mr Bruce's father. This marriage was the result of a long-nourished affection, founded on like tastes and like desires. As they had spent their childhood and youth near one another,

they became early acquainted, and early attached to each other. Miss Inglis, as she grew up, added to a handsome person, and an engaging countenance, the prudence and industry of domestic management, as well as some of those more liberal acquirements, fitted to render her a proper companion for a person of learning and taste. But what had attached Mr Bruce to her, and what was still the charm that bound his heart closer and closer to hers, was the natural tenderness of her soul, and the meek loveliness of her piety. It was this holy kind-heartedness, this simplicity of nature, added to the humility of the Christian, that threw enchantment into her look, and made her the more beloved, the more she was known.

Such was the young lady, whom, in her twenty-fourth year, Mr Bruce made the partner of his life. Her good report had reached the village before her, and she was received with joy. The meekness and innocence of her countenance was a passport to the hearts of all with whom she conversed; and the young as well as the old, the rich as well as the poor, applauded Mr Bruce's prudent choice; and, no doubt, conscious as he was of this world's vanity, he pictured to himself a long perspective of the purest and sweetest of earthly felicity. And, indeed, if youth and health, the comforts of plenty, wedded affection, mutually and fondly cherished, founded on the best of motives, and strengthened and tempered by the influences of religion, together with the esteem and

love of neighbours, and peace with ourself and our Maker, could warrant any man to hope for much and long-lasting happiness under the sun, surely Mr Bruce might well entertain this hope.

In the pulpit, Mr Bruce was truly the messenger of God. He knew the dignity of his office, and its awful responsibility; and, regardless of the face of man, with an earnestness which was of the heart, and with a voice, and look, and gesture, which suited themselves at all times to his subject, he made known the momentous commandments, with which his Master had entrusted him, and enforced the practice of them. Although he was by no means remiss in setting before his flock the terrors of God's wrath, which shall awfully fall on the finally impenitent, his natural mildness of disposition rather led him to enlarge on the eternal love of God, manifested in the scheme of redemption; and to allure his people from the evil of their ways, by painting the beauties of holiness, bringing home to their minds the joy of peace with God, and pointing their eye away to the rewards of immortality. He rather drew his flock after him, as with the suasive of irresistible melody, than drove them into the straight path, by the frownings of offended justice, and the threatenings of coming vengeance.

The abstract doctrines of Christianity he did not leave untaught; but he urged incessantly the practice of heartfelt godliness, faith in Jesus Christ, love to God, and charity to man. He never thought of wasting time, and defrauding his hearers, by heaping

together numberless meanings for one passage of Scripture, or proving what no one ever doubted, or in endeavouring to bring to the level of human capacity, those truths of revelation which Infinity alone can fully understand, and which we are rather commanded to believe than comprehend. He did not so much give reason after reason, to prove why God had a right to enjoin this or that duty, because he knew that few doubted this right, as he set himself to persuade his flock to the doing of it. What is practical in Christianity, he exhorted his people to practise; what is subject of credence merely, he believed, and taught others the reasonableness of believing it, and its influence on the heart and life; and instead of bewildering himself, and producing doubt and darkness in the minds of his auditors, by entering boldly, like many divines, on the explanation of what is, in itself, incomprehensible, he stood still, and believed, and adored, and took from it a lesson of humility.

But what, in his public ministrations, drew every ear into attention, and, through the blessing of God, produced such effects on the heart, was not more the soundness of his doctrines, than the earnestness of his persuasions. His was not the cold-hearted address of formality, which suits so ill a servant of the ever-earnest Jesus. He seemed to know the worth of an immortal soul, and the value of eternal happiness; and he pleaded for God and truth—for man's welfare here and hereafter, as one would plead for the life of an only son. He taught, he warned, he rebuked, he comforted,

with his whole heart; and was not ashamed, that, like his great Master, the tears of love and holy sorrow should be sometimes seen weeping down his cheek.

His daily manners suited his character in the pulpit. He was grave, decorous, and affable; dignified without loftiness, and familiar without meanness. He disgusted not the old by levity, nor terrified the young by austerity. Regarding himself as the spiritual father of his flock, and naturally kind, he made the interest of all his own. The child, as well as the man of grey hairs, found in him a cheerful friend and a pleasant instructor. Mr Bruce spent much of his time in visiting from house to house; a duty enjoined by the Bible, which the ministers of the seventeenth century seem to have recognised, or at least practised, better than those of the nineteenth. Although his learning and cultivated manners made him noways disagreeable to the higher circles, and his duty sometimes called him to mingle with them, yet you would not always have seen him in the train of the wealthy, or seated by the table of luxury. He went about comforting the broken-hearted, infusing the balm of heavenly comfort into the wounded soul, and administering here and there, out of his little income, to the wants of the needy. He entered into the hut of widowed loneliness, and took his station by the bed of poverty in distress. The dying saint saw him enter his chamber, and caught brighter views of the land beyond the grave from his conversation, and felt his faith increase in the earnestness

of his prayers. Nor did he pass by the house where the wicked man lay on the bed of death; but drew near his couch, and laboured, with admonition, with prayer, with entreaty, to turn the sinner's eye to the cross of Christ, and save his soul from death. His character was indeed a model which his parishioners might have imitated with as much safety as they obeyed the doctrines which he taught. He never thought of preaching humility, and yet walking in the stately steps of pride; of recommending purity of heart, and yet indulging in the pleasures of sense; of eulogising and enforcing charity, and yet shutting his own ear to the cry of want.

While Mr Bruce was thus engaged, feeding his flock, and endearing himself to them by his constant vigilance for their welfare, he enjoyed the utmost domestic peace and happiness. Mrs Bruce's prudent management saved him from all trouble with household affairs. His stipend was small; but she regulated her expenses accordingly. His manse, like many of the clergymen's houses in those days, was, when he came to it, a very inconvenient and dull-looking building; and had been suffered, besides, to fall into sad disrepair by the former incumbent, who had lived a single life, and, although peculiarly careful of his charge, had minded little about the comforts of his own house. The rain found its way plentifully through the ragged roof; the windows had, in many instances, exchanged their glass panes for boards, or something still less befitting, and were

nearly darkened by the honeysuckle and rose-trees, which had been left to spread at will. Up the walls, too, clambered the dock and the nettle; and the little plot, which gently sloped from the door to the river, was so overgrown with brushwood and weeds of every description, that the passage to the stream, in that direction, was almost shut up. The inside of the house was in no better state. The cornice and plaster, in many places, had fallen from the walls; the floor was so decayed, as to endanger the fall of those who walked on it; and in the closets and bed-rooms, spiders and other vermin had long taken up their abode.

As Mr Bruce was generally beloved, the heritors, of their own accord, agreed to repair his house; and, under Mrs Bruce's care, every thing about the manse soon assumed a livelier and more handsome appearance. The vermin were driven from their settlements, the windows filled with glass, and everything within assorted with taste and elegance. The improvement was not less conspicuous without. The little plot before the house was cleared of its brambles and weeds, and assumed the smoothness of a bowling-green; the dock and nettle were uprooted; and the rose and honeysuckle, although preserved with care, were no taught to bend their branches in subordination to taste and usefulness. The broad stone, which lay immediately before the front door, and which had been hid under a thick coat of dirt, was cleaned and washed; and, indeed, all without looked so cheerful, orderly, and comfortable, as well bespoke

the peace, and concord, and happiness, that dwell within. So inviting the old dwelling looked, that the traveller would not have passed it, without wishing to see its inhabitants; and the weary wanderer would have approached the door, in confidence of a kind welcome to nourishment and repose.

Mr Bruce, as we have observed, as he had no need, gave himself no trouble about household affairs. His hours of leisure, which were indeed but few, were therefore spent in some innocent amusement. At these times, Mrs Bruce was alway ready to attend him. Her conversation, cheerful and varied, never failed to refresh his mind when it had been exhausted by study, and to restore it to tranquillity when it had been disturbed by any unpleasing occurrence. Mr Bruce was very fond of the simple songs of his country; and although his wife's voice was not surprisingly fine, or her management of it very tasteful, her singing would have pleased any one who admired simplicity and feeling. But her husband was delighted; for he gazed on her with eyes of the tenderest affection while she sung to him the sweet melodies of Scotland. Sometimes they read together in some useful and entertaining book—sometimes they walked by the banks of the Ayr, enjoying the loveliness of nature, and giving audience to the song of the thrush and the blackbird, which from the birch or hawthorn joined their minstrelsy to the mellow pipe of the wind, and the purling voice of the stream.

To all these enjoyments were added, first a son, and

afterwards a daughter; the one, Andrew, as everybody said, the very image of his father; the other, Mary, no less the likeness of her mother. Eager to instruct all, Mr Bruce was doubly so with regard to his own children. He observed with a father's and Christian's eye, the opening of their infant faculties, and at an early hour shed upon them the light of truth, and spared no pains to warm their young and tender hearts with love to God and religion. He taught them betimes the way to heaven, setting their faces thitherward: and it pleased God to bless his teaching, and render it effectual. He taught them love to one another and to their fellow-creatures; and he turned the attention of their minds to those pleasing and sublime ideas which the objects of nature are fitted to produce.

Andrew, who seemed to resemble his father in his mental as well as corporeal parts, was early designed for the ministry. His education was, therefore, conducted chiefly under his father's eye; while Mary learned the more gentle and delicate accomplishments, befitting her character, from her mother; and never had parents more comfort in instructing and watching over their offspring. They loved their parents, and did everything to please them: they loved each other, feared God, and delighted in obeying his will. They increased daily in knowledge and stature, growing up like well-watered plants which the Lord hath blessed. The rose of health bloomed on their cheeks, and the sacred spirit of religion looked already from their eyes.

Religion! thou art happiness. Thou infusest the calm of heaven into the bosom of man, and pourest into his heart the sweetness of celestial enjoyment. Thou hast, indeed, special rewards to give in the land of glory. There thou openest the arms of everlasting felicity to receive all thy followers at last, into the fulness of its embrace—there thou securest them a place by the font of original life. But thou art even here infinitely superior to every other thing in the purity and sweetness of thy enjoyments. Thou art thyself fair as the light of God; and thou stampest on all the pleasures of thy sons the imagery of heaven, and minglest them with the relishes of immortality. Woe unto him that seeketh his happiness apart from thee! He shall be miserably disappointed.

CHAPTER II.

"Unpractised he to fawn or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had vent in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

FOURTEEN years had passed over this happy family, when the Restoration threatened the overthrow of the

Scottish Church. Charles, advised by his English and Irish ministers, Clarendon and Ormond, and latterly by Lauderdale, secretary for Scotland, introduced the episcopal form of worship into Scotland. Patronage was renewed; and the clergy were required to procure a presentation from their patrons, and collation from their bishops, to acknowledge their authority, and the spiritual supremacy of the king. The clergy in the northern districts complied without hesitation; but their more pious and zealous brethren in the west, however willing they might be to submit to and support the civil authority of the king, rejected his spiritual supremacy, refused submission to the episcopalian judicatories, and preferred rather to suffer the extremity of persecution, than to sacrifice what they deemed the truth and their duty to God. The people were no less averse to this encroachment on their religious privileges, and resolved to imitate their pastors, whose engaging familiarity, and sanctity of manners, had gained them the esteem and love of their flocks.

But if they had determined to suffer rather than renounce the covenant and their beloved presbytery, the bishops, who had now got all power in Scotland into their hands, determined no less than the destruction of both. Burnet, Archbishop of Glasgow, and the apostate Sharp, Primate of St Andrews, with a cruelty little becoming mitred heads, prepared to carry this into effect. Ambulatory courts were established, on the principles of the Inquisition, in which

the bishops were the judges of those whom they wished to destroy. No regard was had to remonstrance or entreaty, or even to evidence. To these courts the military were subordinate, and instructed to carry their resolutions, which were often formed in the midst of riot and drunkenness, into execution. By this procedure, three hundred and fifty clergymen were ejected from their livings in the severity of winter, and driven, with their families, to seek shelter among the peasants. The most ignorant and vicious of their northern brethren, who scrupled at no compliance, were thrust, by the strong hand of power, into their places. The ignorance and shameful lives of these apostates from the covenant, who were now metamorphosed into curates, disgusted the people on whom they had been forced. Their doctrines had none of that heavenly relish which suited the taste of those who had been formerly taught by the best and most affectionate of men. Their churches were deserted; and the people went into the mountains in search of that water of life which no longer flowed from the pulpits.

But this was only the beginning of their trials. Their pastors were soon forbidden to preach even in the fields, or to approach within twenty miles of their former charges; and all the people, as well as their pastors, who were not prepared to abjure their dearest rights, and to submit to the most galling and iniquitous civil and religious despotism, were denounced as traitors, and doomed to capital punish

ment. To admit any one who refused compliance into shelter—to favour his escape, or not to assist in apprehending him—subjected the person so convicted to the same punishment. To this, military persecution succeeded. The soldiers were both the judges and the executioners. The very forms of justice were now wholly abandoned. Gentlemen, and peasants, and ministers, were driven out to wander among the morasses and mountains of the country—were crowded into gaols—sent into exile and slavery, and multitudes were daily writhing in the torture, or perishing on the gibbet. Rapes, robberies, and every species of outrage, were committed by the soldiers with impunity. The west of Scotland was red with the blood of its own inhabitants, shed by their own countrymen. The spirits of darkness seemed to have entered into the bosoms of the persecutors, and to actuate all their doings. They appeared to delight in cruelty, and in shedding the blood of the innocent. But the glorious sufferers, relying on the goodness of their cause, and hoping in the promises of God, opposed sanctity of life to licentiousness and riot; the spiritual weapons of truth, to the swords of their enemies; patient endurance to fatigue, and want, and torture; and calm resignation to the most ignominious deaths. And truly they suffered not nor bled in vain. God at last gave them the victory over all their enemies, and, through them, secured to us the religious privileges we this day enjoy. From this short sketch of the times, which we thought neces-

sary to explain what shall afterwards occur, we return to that family which we left so happy.

Among those clergymen who bravely refused compliance with the iniquitous orders of government, was Mr Bruce. Although naturally mild, an ardent lover of good order, and ready at all times to impress on his flock the duty of submission to all the lawful commands of the civil authorities, he could not think for a moment of violating his conscience, and of teaching his people to violate theirs, by forsaking what he deemed his duty to his heavenly Master. But there was only one alternative. Either he must comply with the sinful and tyrannical requirements of the bishops, in whose hands the civil power was, or relinquish his pastoral charge, and quit his house and his living. Mr Bruce was not a man to hesitate whether to seek the praise of men or the praise of God. On the last Sabbath on which it was permitted him to enter his pulpit, he thus took farewell of his beloved flock:—

"You know, my dear friends," said he, "what orders I have received from the bishops, who possess, for the time, the civil as well as the ecclesiastical authority. I am required to acknowledge the king as supreme head of the Church; to submit to the diocesan jurisdiction of the bishops; to be re-ordained, and converted into a curate; and to introduce the episcopal mode of worship into this church. In a word, I am to renounce presbytery; preach, not as the Bible and my own conscience direct me, but

according to the wishes of a drunken and licentious court, and the dictates of a self-interested and domineering priesthood. And all this I am enjoined to do, or leave you, my house, and my living.

"You cannot but know that I have determined on this last. I have not so learned my duty, as not to be able to sacrifice a little of this world's comfort for conscience sake; and I would rather that my tongue should be for ever dumb, than that it should utter one word from this sacred place, merely to please men in power, and secure my own worldly gratification. I can part with the comforts of a home; but how can I part with you, my dear friends? We have lived together in the bonds of love. Every one of you is endeared to me by some particular kindness given or received. I have watched over the childhood of many of you, and now see you advancing in the knowledge of religion as you grow up to manhood. Others of you I have seen growing grey with years; and I have endeavoured to smooth your way, and stay your steps down the slope of time. All of you I have cared for—all of you I have set my heart upon—all of you have been to me as fathers or sons, as brothers or sisters. How can I part with you, my beloved flock? How can I leave you like sheep without a shepherd, and like sheep in the midst of ravening wolves? O God!" he exclaimed, and the people rose up as if by enchantment; "O God! who seest my heart, Thou knowest what love I bear to this people; Thou knowest how

dear their souls are to me. Oh hear my cry! keep them from the evil of the world, from the snares which are laid for their feet; and if they should never hear the word of life from my lips again; if Thou hast, in thy wise providence, wandering and weeping prepared for them, O Father, so watch over their souls, that I may meet them all at last by the right hand of their Saviour and my Saviour, of their God and my God. Father in heaven, into thy hands we commit our immortal spirits!"

When he had thus spoken, he sat down in the pulpit, and wept bitterly. Nor did he weep alone. The man of grey hairs wept, and the child sobbed by his side. And when they looked to the holy man, whose sorrow was all for them—and when they turned their eyes to the seat where his wife sat, bathed in tears, and her children, Andrew and Mary, weeping aloud, and looking up to their father; and when they thought that they were to be driven out from their happy home, to wander in poverty, again their tears flowed, and again they looked and wept.

Mr Bruce was the first to recover some degree of composure. He begged his sorrowing audience not to give themselves up to vain lamentations; but rather to be thankful for the comfortable days they had spent together; to be putting their hope and their confidence in God; and to be preparing for the sufferings to which it was likely they would soon be exposed. In surveying the aspect of the times, he said, he had no doubt that the entire destruction of

the Presbyterian Church was meditated; and a severe persecution, he had every reason to believe, was about to commence, in which their faith and their patience would be put to a severe trial. He advised them to be as inoffensive as possible to the civil powers, and to give prompt and cordial obedience to all their lawful commands; but exhorted them rather to suffer than renounce the covenant, or make the smallest compliance in violation of their own consciences; assuring them, at the same time, if they suffered now, they would rejoice hereafter. God would remember every sigh, and treasure up all their tears in his bottle. Their patient endurance would tire out the arm of persecution. They would thus leave the blessings of religious liberty to their posterity; and if they themselves suffered to the death, they would be rewarded in heaven with a crown of life.

After this valedictory admonition and encouragement, having recommended his flock again to the care of Heaven, he descended from the pulpit, amidst the weepings of his congregation; and when he had, with difficulty, withdrawn himself from them, he retired with his wife and children to his house.

In the pulpit, Mr Bruce had carefully avoided making any allusion to his own family. His feelings of sorrow, on their account, were of that deep and sacred kind, which we rather wish to shut up in the sanctuary of our own bosoms, than trust to the sympathy of the most confiding friendship. How could

he see her, who had been long the companion of his life, endeared to him by every tie that can draw kindred souls into the closest fellowship—her who had been ever used to the comforts of plenty—driven from a home which she had made so comfortable, exposed to fatigue, to houseless wandering, and perhaps, to want itself? How could he see his dear children, whom she had nursed so tenderly, and in whom resided his dearest earthly hopes, turned out, unable, as they were, to provide for themselves, on the sympathies of the world? He knew, indeed, that as long as he and his family were permitted to wander among his flock, they would be in no danger of want; but it was easy to read, from the face of the times, that even this would soon be denied them; and he already saw his family, in the forward eye of imagination, suffering under all the evils of insult and beggary.

On this subject he had not dared hitherto to enter, even to Mrs Bruce. She observed it, and was well aware of the cause; and anxious to relieve his feelings, on the Sabbath evening, while they sat in their snug parlour, gazing in silent dejection on their children, she thus began the conversation:—

"Do not be so sorrowful on our account, dear James," she said. "I have shared in all your enjoyments, and I can suffer with you too; and so can these children. We may have many hardships to encounter; but we will have the approbation of our own minds—we will have the protection of that God in whom we have always trusted; and we know that

He will not suffer any thing effectually to hurt us We will have your love, my dear James; and we shall still be happy in sharing your trials and soothing your cares."

"Dearest Eliza," said Mr Bruce, "you are indeed right. God will be our protector. Why should we hesitate to cast ourselves upon his care? I could have easily made up my mind to this trial, but for you and these children. But why should I cast one lingering look on these comforts, which my Master bids me leave? He can protect you as well as me. Under his guidance we are safe. To-morrow we quit this house, which is to be occupied by another; and let us quit it without a murmur. What is the threatening or indulgence of this world to us? What are its joys or its pains? To do our duty to God, our Creator and Redeemer—to love, to honour, and to obey Him—this is sufficient for us. He will see that no evil befall us."

Here Mr Bruce paused for a little, and then proceeded thus:—

"But let us act with prudence, my dear Eliza. Might it not be proper for you and the children to go and live with your friends at Lanark for the present? You will then have a settled home; and I am sure you will be kindly treated. For my own part, I am resolved to continue among my flock, and to take every opportunity of serving their spiritual interests."

"No, no," said Mrs Bruce; "we will not leave you. I am determined to suffer with you. Nothing but death shall part me from you."

"But these children," said Mr Bruce; "think of them, dear Eliza."

"They are stout and healthy," replied Mrs Bruce; "and you shall see how cheerfully they will submit to every thing, rather than part with you. Will you leave your father, Andrew? Will you, Mary?"

"No, no," they both exclaimed; and, weeping, clasped their hands about their father's neck, alarmed to hear their mother speak of their leaving him.

Andrew was at this time in his thirteenth year, a fine smart-looking boy; stout at his age, his hair black and bushy, and his eye full, dark, and penetrating. Of his talents we have already spoken. They were of a high order; and, under his father's assiduous culture, he had already made considerable progress in learning. Indeed, his acquirements of every kind were beyond his years. His father was his only companion, as well as instructor; and his attention had thus been turned, at all times, to something useful. His susceptible mind had rapidly imbibed his father's ideas, and, in fact, had already stored up most of his knowledge. In piety, in the love of learning, in the amiableness of his disposition, Andrew resembled his father; but his mind gave indications of more boldness and originality. Indeed, there already appeared in him a decision of character, a steady adherence to his resolutions, and a firm perseverance in the pursuit of whatever caught his attention, which, in union with his religious spirit, promised a life of the highest usefulness.

Mary, who was now in her eleventh year, with cheeks fair and rosy, a fine soft blue eye, and a profusion of golden ringlets flowing on her shoulders, had all the light-hearted gaiety, and innocent loveliness, which girls, properly educated, generally have at that age. Impressed thus early with the sacredness of religion, its purity seemed to beam from her eye. Her love to her relations was in proportion to her tenderness of heart. To please her mother, her father, and her brother, to hear them say she had done well, made her happy. A fairer and a sweeter plant hath nature nowhere; and, in the retirement of the secluded manse, she looked like one of those flowers which the traveller may sometimes meet in the desert, so lovely that he cannot feel in his heart to pull it, and yet knows not how to leave it behind.

Mr Bruce, perceiving it was needless to say any thing more about his family leaving him, turned their attention, for a considerable time, to those truths of the Christian religion which are best fitted to prepare us for bearing changes and trials with fortitude and resignation. And then the family, after joining as usual in the worship of God, withdrew to repose.

CHAPTER III.

"He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, armed himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect!"

COWPER.

EARLY on the Monday morning, Mr Bruce and his family arose; and having committed their way to God, prepared to leave their house. The furniture was dispersed among the neighbours, except a few articles necessary for their comfort, which were sent to Braeside, a farm-house, situated in a romantic glen about four miles from the village, whither Mr Bruce had chosen to retire. Every thing was soon put in order for their departure.

And now the venerable pastor, with Andrew and Mary, holding each other by the hand, before him, and his wife by his side, slowly and silently left the manse. The two youngsters tript on cheerfully, happy enough that they were going with their parents. Mrs Bruce could not be very sad when her husband was by her side; and the minister had prepared himself too well for this event, to show much uneasiness. Yet neither he nor his wife could help dropping a tear as they passed the church and entered the

street of the little village, through which their road lay. But the grief of the villagers was excessive. They saw their spiritual guide, their comforter, their adviser, their friend, in the coldness and severity of a winter morning, with his wife and children, driven from his comfortable dwelling, and about to leave them Would he assemble them no more on the Sabbath, to refresh their souls with the water of life? Would they see him no more going from door to door through the village, relieving the poor, comforting the sick, and instructing all? What hardships would these children, and that amiable woman, who, although by no means unhealthy, appeared to them so delicate, have probably to endure? And was his pulpit to be filled, and his house and living seized by some time-serving, cold-hearted stranger?

Full of these sorrowful thoughts, every inhabitant of the village, both old and young, crowded about Mr Bruce and his family. So anxious was every one to be near their beloved minister, that they eagerly pressed forward, and often compelled him to stop. He conjured them to leave him: but it was not till they had accompanied him more than a mile out of the village, that he could prevail on them to think of parting with him. Here he shook hands with each of them: exhorted them to avoid all evil: and lifted up his voice and blessed them, while they stood drowned in tears.

Now Mr Bruce and his family, with a few who had determined to accompany him, set forward to

Braeside, while the villagers and peasants returned to their homes, sorrowing in heart, and determined rather to suffer all, than make any compliance to an ecclesiastical government, which had begun so harshly. Such were many of the people, and such many of their pastors, whom the unwise politicians of those times thought to force into their measures by the violence of persecution.

Mr Hill, the farmer of Braeside, a worthy old bachelor, had rendered his house as comfortable as he possibly could for the reception of the newcomers; and with what articles they brought along with them, and with Mrs Bruce's ready hand, under which every thing about the house seemed at once to take its proper place, they found themselves, although not very well lodged, yet as well as they had expected. The house, however, like most of the farm-houses in those days, had only two apartments, a kitchen and a spence, as the room was called. The room Mr Hill gave them up entirely, and the kitchen was common to him and them. Mr Bruce had been deprived of his stipend due for the preceding year. It had been always small. He was by nature, as well as principle, generous and charitable, and had, therefore, saved no money. It was evident that he must now depend for his subsistence on the free-will offerings of his people; and in these they were not backward. Although Mr Hill was able and willing enough to support the family for some time, this he was not permitted to do. Scarcely a day passed but some of

Mr Bruce's flock arrived at Braeside, with what they could spare for their pastor (for such they still considered him) and his family. They had thus a plentiful supply of all the necessaries of life. The education of Andrew and Mary went on as usual. Mr Bruce preached in the houses of the peasants, or in the open fields, on Sundays. Mrs Bruce was kinder than ever to her husband, and almost as cheerful. Andrew and Mary were healthy, and contented; and indeed, while they were permitted to remain at Braeside, they had nothing to complain of.

Meantime the violence of persecution every day increased. The ejected clergy were forbidden to preach even in the fields: the people under the severest penalties, were forbidden to shelter them, or even to give them a morsel of bread. People of all ranks and conditions in life, who would not comply with the tyranny of the times, were driven from their houses, and were every day perishing by the hand of the executioner.

The curates, who had been thrust into the livings of the West, were the most active in informing against the Covenanters. The zeal and austere morals of the former pastors were a continual reproach on the vicious habits and indolent dispositions of many of those prophets of Baal, as they were not unfitly called; and they wished to have that example, which they were unwilling to imitate, out of their sight.

Mr Macduff, the curate, who had been put into Mr Bruce's place, was a Highlander, and really

spoke the English language, as well as the Scottish, so ill, that the peasants among whom he was settled, had they been willing to hear him, could have understood little of what he said. He was a robust, huntsman-looking young fellow, as ignorant of books, and all sorts of learning, as he was indecorus in character. He hunted, fowled, drank with the officers who were stationed in the village, and, in fact, did almost everything but what was becoming the character of a clergyman. The parishioners regarded him with horror, and fled from his presence as they would have done from a beast of prey. In no place in Scotland were the curates well attended; but Macduff's church was entirely deserted. Neither threats nor entreaties could induce as many to collect on a Sabbath as to give the appearance of an audience. And what has been perhaps seldom attempted in any other place, soldiers went every Sabbath morning through the village, and with their bayonets on their guns, compelled a half-score or dozen of the inhabitants into the church, where they sat, with countenances of disgust and horror, while the unsacerdotal curate went most indecorously through the cold and formal service of the day. Mr Macduff had, however, abundance of that pride which is founded on ignorance; was naturally cruel; devoted to the wicked government, because he could expect only to be countenanced by such; obsequious to every mandate of the bishops, because from them he held his living; and, withal, possessed of an unbounded hatred

to the Covenanters, because he knew, if they prevailed, he should soon be displaced. These qualifications rendered him fit enough for the purposes for which his superiors had chiefly designed him. These were, to harass and destroy the Presbyterians.

To assist the curates in gathering information of the resorts and conventicles of the Covenanters, spies were numerously employed. Sometimes they mingled with the people, professing themselves to be their zealous friends; sometimes they went through in the character of travelling merchants; and sometimes they assumed the garb of shepherds, that they might thus conceal their true character, and therefore be admitted more freely into the designs of the Covenanters. Sharpe had multitudes of these in his pay, scattered over the country. And it is not surprising that they brought in abundance of information, when we consider that many of them—and those the vilest and most worthless of men—were paid in proportion to the number of accusations they preferred. These spies, as long as the Covenanters were brought to any thing like a trial, were always witnesses at hand, ready to swear any thing against them.

Two of these wretches, in the pay of Sharpe, were entertained by Mr Macduff. Every day they traversed, in one character or other, the surrounding country, and always returned with abundance of information. All was believed, or, at least, pretended to be believed, that they reported; and the soldiers, with them for guides, were sent forth to plunder, to

apprehend, to torture, or to kill, all whom those scoundrels accused of Presbyterianism, which in those days was termed sedition.

Mr Bruce and his family shared in the increasing calamities of the times. After residing for a year at Braeside, they were compelled to betake themselves to a wandering life—now sheltered in some barn; now in some shepherd's hut; and now exposed, without cover, to all sorts of weather. The minister, especially, and his son, who almost always accompanied him, were often compelled to hide themselves in the caves and wild glens of the country. The place whither they most frequently resorted, was a cave on the banks of the Ayr, about five miles above the village. It had been formed in the precipitous banks by the hands of men, as a hiding-place in the former troublous times of Scotland, and was roomy enough for admitting five or six persons. The entrance to this retreat was by rude and difficult steps, cut out of the stone; and over its mouth, concealing it from the view, hung the straggling branches of the birch and hazel, that had struck their roots into the freestone rock. Two or three rude seats, some straw and blankets, made up the furniture of the cave. Here Mr Bruce and Andrew, and, indeed, Mrs Bruce and Mary too, often concealed themselves; and hither, in the darkness of the night, did the peasants of the surrounding country come with food for their worthy pastor, and his family, and to receive in return, instruction, advice, and comfort.

This, Mr Bruce gave them with all the prudence of a wise man, and all the earnestness of a serious Christian. He exhorted them to place all their trust in God; to bear up with becoming cheerfulness against the severe trials to which they were exposed He called them to remember how much Christ had suffered when He was in the world, and with what calmness and resignation He endured it all. He warned them to beware of attempting any thing against the government; well knowing, however much he might despise the exploded doctrine of non-resistance, that the Covenanters, deprived as they were of the gentlemen of their party, who were mostly in prison, could make no head against their oppressors, supported by a strong military force. He counselled them to oppose patience and hope to the swords of their persecutors, assuring them, that God would at length interfere in their behalf. And above all, he comforted and sustained the minds of the poor, hunted, houseless peasantry, by often directing their hopes to the rewards of immortality. Nor did he destroy the effect of his teaching by his own example. The following conversation, which happened one night in the forlorn cave, will show how bravely the Persecuted Family bore their lot.

The night to which we have alluded was in the end of autumn. The minister, with his wife and children, were seated in the cave. A few embers burned on the floor, and half lighted the rude habitation —the Ayr was heard murmuring down his pebbled

bed—the wind whistled in the mouth of the cave, blowing in the fallen leaf, that rustled about the floor—and the lightning flashed, at intervals, its momentary gleam into the solitary abode.

"Do you remember," said Mary to her brother, "how fresh and beautiful these leaves were in summer?" lifting one that the wind rustled through the dwelling. "You remember how we watched them as they spread, and shaded the mouth of the cave?" "They were very beautiful," said Andrew, "and kept the wind out of the cave. But their season is past, and we will see them green no more."

"And what should that remind you of?" said Mrs Bruce. "Should it not remind you of the transitory nature of all earthly things? We all do fade as a leaf; we are cut down, and wither as the grass. But the leaf hangs on the twig till autumn, and falls not till it is dried and withered with age. We, my dear children, may be cut off in the midst of our days. From disease we are never secure. But we may have soon to die by the hand of violence. Are you prepared, my dear children, to suffer all for Christ? Do you repine that you have been driven from your home to seek shelter in such a place as this, for his sake?"

"I am as happy here," said Andrew, "as when we lived at the village. My father and you have taught me to regard my duty to God as the end of my being; and I am resolved, trusting in his grace,

to suffer the utmost, rather than violate it. I know He will give me strength to do what He may have appointed me."

"Yes," said Mary, who was no stranger to the Bible, "His grace shall be sufficient for us. I know what He says: 'The Lord is nigh to all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He also will hear their cry, and save them.'"

"Yes," said Mrs Bruce, while her husband shed a tear of joy to hear his children talk thus—"Yes, if you put no trust in yourselves, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, He will give you resolution and strength to suffer all for his sake. 'Whatsoever ye ask in my name,' says that Redeemer, who hath all power in heaven and in earth—'Whatsoever ye ask in my name, you shall receive it.'"

"Happy are all those who trust in God," said Mr Bruce, taking up the conversation, while he threw a glance of unspeakable satisfaction on his family. "Happy are all they, whatever be their external circumstances, whose God is the Lord. We have, it is true, been driven from the comforts of this world's property; but we have, therefore, less to seduce us from the path of holiness. We are exposed to trials; but, through his blessing, they will prepare us the sooner for the enjoyment of his immediate presence. We are exposed to the winds of night; but our souls take shelter under the wings of the Most High. Our enemies are strong, and exceedingly mad against us; but He who is for us is stronger than they who are

against us. Those lightnings that flash athwart the night are the lightnings of God: they say unto Him, Here we are; and at his bidding, can lay the pride of the wicked in the dust. As his power is omnipotent to protect you, my dear ones, so is his love infinite. It passeth all knowledge. We are lost in the contemplation of his astonishing love, manifested in our redemption through his Son. He hath given his well-beloved Son for us, vile and miserable sinners; and surely He will allow nothing really to hurt us. What, then, should we not rather do than forsake our duty to Him? Severer sufferings may be yet awaiting us, my dear ones. But let us always lay the grasp of our dependence on God: let us have our eye on the promised land, the dwelling of life and immortality; and let us suffer without a murmur. Oh! my dear ones, in this trying time, may we all so believe, and so do, that we may find ourselves approved when men shall be finally judged. If any thing should occur which may separate us, let us direct our steps to heaven, where we shall meet to part no more. Our church is now driven to the wilderness. The blood of her people flows on the scaffold; their groanings are heard in the desert. But God hath not forsaken her; she shall yet shout for joy, and clap her hands for gladness of heart. We may be gone, my dear ones, ere the day of her mourning end; but by suffering cheerfully, we shall have done our part—we shall have our reward; and when our church takes her sorrowful harp from the

willow, and tunes it to the melody of joy in the peaceful temple, our memories shall not be forgotten."

When Mr Bruce had thus spoken, he kneeled down with his family in the cave, and besought for them the blessing, even life that shall never end. And then you might have heard the psalm of praise, mingling its holy melody with the blast of night.

Still, religion, thou art happiness! Thou hast, indeed, trials appointed for thy followers—but thou comest in the strength of God, and leadest them out through them all. As the darkness of the world thickens around them, thou sheddest a brighter light on the cloudless clime whither they are travelling. As the cup, of which the wickedness of man forces them to drink, comes nearer the bitterness of its dregs, thou pourest more copiously into their souls the sweetness of eternal life. As they have days of severe fatigue and wandering, and nights more wearisome and watchful, thou layest the repose of their souls nearer the bosom of their God. Woe unto him who seeketh his happiness apart from thee! He shall be miserably disappointed.

CHAPTER IV.

"Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,
Till persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither."

COWPER.

FOUR years of suffering had now passed since Mr Bruce and his family were driven from their comfortable home. But although many of his flock had been thrown into prison, and sent into banishment—had endured the cruelties of torture, or died on the scaffold, and although they had themselves often made the narrowest escapes from the vigilance of their fell pursuers, none of them had yet fallen into their hands. The time was not far off, however, when they were to feel more severely the cruelties of persecution.

On a Sabbath evening in the month of September, Mr Bruce, with his wife and children, left the cave, to meet some of his flock in a wild glen in the neighbourhood, where he was to deliver a sermon. When they arrived at the appointed place, there were about a score assembled—some of them stood, some seated themselves on the cold turf, while Mr Bruce took his station by a large stone, on which he rested the Bible,

and read, or rather repeated, for the night was dark, the following verses from the twenty-third Psalm :—

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

"My soul He doth restore again
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for his own name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
And staff, me comfort still."

Then, as it is beautifully expressed by Grahame—

"—— rose the song, the loud
Acclaim of praise. The wheeling plover ceased
Her plaint; the solitary place was glad;
And, on the distant cairn, the watcher's ear
Caught doubtfully at times the breeze-borne note."

After this, Mr Bruce lifted up their fervent prayer to the throne of grace; and then repeated his text from the same Psalm which had been sung, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

This consolatory passage he illustrated, by showing how they who had the rod and staff of the Almighty to support them, needed fear no evil. This rod and staff, he showed, were no less than the infinite love, and wisdom, and power of God, engaged in the pre-

servation of the righteous. This truth he illustrated at considerable length, and with more of elegance than was common to the preachers of the time. We shall content ourselves, however, by giving the concluding part of the discourse.

"If, then," said the fervent preacher, "we have the love, and wisdom, and the power of God engaged in our protection, what have we to fear from the cruelties of men, the malignity of evil spirits, or the terrors of death itself? His love fills our heart with unspeakable delight, and secures us the guidance of his wisdom, and the all-shielding covert of his almighty power. If we had to set our faces to the machinations of this world, under the direction of our own wisdom, we would soon be entangled in its snares, and decoyed into the pit which is dug for our destruction. But to guide us through every footstep of this earthly journey, to guide us through every footstep of the dark pass of death, we have the infinite wisdom of God, which hath all things present to its eye in the natural and moral world, in heaven and in earth, in time and in eternity. The most sagacious spirit that contrives our ruin in the darkest gloom of the bottomless pit, is noticed by our God, and those means taken which can never err in their operation, to defeat its purposes against us. He observes all the plottings of man's wisdom against us; and turns the best laid schemes of their wickedness to the profit of his people. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord, and against his Anointed. But He that sitteth in the heavens laughs: the Lord hath them in derision. He casteth the glance of his all-comprehending intelligence through all the varied workings of natural and moral being, the most intricate, the most profound, the most secret; and the wisdom of the wisest agency, that acts not by his guidance, seemeth to Him the folly of fools.

"But, however ardent the love of God might be to his children, however provident his wisdom, if there was any being that could resist his power, still we should not be safe. But our Father hath in himself all the resources of infinite might. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. He hath created all things. The arm of his omnipotence sustains them all. Turn your eyes to the stars that look through the breaking of the clouds; the multitude of their host are suspended to the girdle of his strength, and guide all their revolutions to the bidding of his will. He bringeth forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guideth Arcturus with his sons. He stilleth the raging of the waves; and the fierceness of the storm lays itself to rest at the whisper of his word. And shall any other of the beings He hath made—the spirits of darkness, or the worms of his footstool—stand up in proud rebellion against Him, and try to wrest the people whom He loves—the people for whom He hath given his own Son—out of his hand? Did Pharaoh's or Sennacherib's host accomplish aught victoriously against his children? Did the

powerful and malignant dealings of Satan touch the life of Job? No, my friends. In the estimation of our God, the strength of man is less than weakness; and the most stout-hearted of the spirits of perdition trembles at the uttering of his voice, and is held fast in the chains of his power. It is this God, my friends, who is our God. It is this all-wise, all-mighty being, who hath sworn by the eternal Godhead, that he who perseveres in well-doing, who fights the good fight of faith, and turns not back, shall sing victory over all his enemies, and shall inherit glory, and honour, and immortality.

"We are persecuted, my friends; we may soon have to lay down our lives. But let us lean on the rod and the staff of our Redeemer; and whatever be the cunning of man's contrivance against us, it shall be turned to our account; and whatever be the shape that death may assume, we shall behold him shorn of his terrors. Oh, my friends! let us do what the Bible hath taught us to be our duty; let us keep our conscience inviolate; and whatever may be appointed for us here, we shall have the welcome of our Father and Redeemer at last into the dwellings of immortality."

When Mr Bruce had finished his sermon, so well calculated to encourage the minds of his suffering audience, he took occasion to speak shortly of the times, the substance of which we shall record.

It was easy to see, he said, that the Presbyterians would yet be persecuted with still greater severity:

that the persecutors wished to gratify their ambition and avarice with the spoils of the Covenanters; and it was hard to say how far these passions would carry them. It had been the labour, he observed, of the Stuarts, for several reigns, to get into their hands the ecclesiastical supremacy in Scotland. They had hitherto been disappointed, and would, he had no doubt, be so still. "That infatuated race," continued he, "seems to be hastening its own ruin." And the venerable pastor dropped a tear, as he thought of the incurable folly of that house. The nation, he could see, would tire of oppression, and would most certainly assert its liberties. Oppression would, as usual, destroy itself by its own cruelties. But, for the time, that patience and hope must be their support: that any thing attempted against their oppressors, when they were in no state for it, would only render their condition more intolerable: that ready submission, for the time, to every thing that violated not conscience, and patient endurance of those evils which were measured out to them, were the means which, under the blessing of God, would at length most certainly restore to them and their children the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

Such were this man's sentiments, on whose head the infatuated administration of the time had set a price, as a rebel and sower of sedition; and such were the sentiments of many of those heroes of the covenant, whom some historians represent as the visionary and fanatic leaders of a visionary and

fanatic sect. We do not pretend to say that the sentiments of all the Covenanters were as moderate and just as those of Mr Bruce. Among a great number, there will always be weak and turbulent minds; and, under severe sufferings, they will be driven to extravagance. The calumniators of the Covenanters ought to remember, that none of them became bad subjects till oppression had rendered them desperate; and that, if some of them latterly adopted not very rational sentiments about civil government, the great body of the Presbyterians who suffered at that time approved as little of their notions as their persecutors did.

The little congregation had again joined in a song of praise, and the minister was just about to dismiss them with the blessing, when suddenly they heard the trampling of horses, and, in a moment, saw advancing rapidly towards them, with lighted torches in their hands, a number of dragoons. Not expecting any alarm at such an hour and place, they had neglected to appoint a watch. A little eminence, which the soldiers had been taught by the spies, who acted as their guides, to keep between them and the conventicle, had concealed from them the light of the torches, until the dragoons were almost upon the little assembly. Short as the time was before the soldiers could reach them, they fled into a morass, near to which they fortunately were; and the softness of the ground prevented the pursuit of the horsemen. But when the commanding officer saw

that they were likely to escape, naturally cruel and blood-thirsty, and chagrined at the loss of his prey, he ordered his men instantly to discharge their carabines after the flight of the poor people; and, without waiting to examine the result of his orders, wheeled, and rode off.

Several of the people were hurt, but Mrs Bruce received a mortal wound. "I am gone," she said, while her husband caught her in his arms, to keep her from falling. "I am killed. I must leave you. Oh, my dear husband! I leave these children to your care. I leave you all to the care of my God!" She tried to say more; but death was too near. She threw one look on her son and daughter, clasped her hands convulsively about her husband, and expired in his arms.

Mr Bruce for some time held her fondly in his embrace, and stood speechless and motionless. Andrew wept not; but threw himself on the ground in the depth of silent grief. Mary shrieked, and took hold of the bloody corpse of her mother, while the peasants gathered round, and wept in silence.

It was some time before any one could find self-command enough to speak. Andrew, whose vigorous mind would not permit him to give himself long up to unavailing sorrow, was the first to break the mournful silence.

"Father," he said, "let us now consider what is best to be done. We cannot stay here."

Mr Bruce, at these words of his son, recovering

himself a little, stretched the bloody corpse on the heath, and lifting up his hands to heaven, in a tone of resignation, said, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord!"

After a short consultation, it was determined to carry the dead body to a neighbouring hut. Assisting in turn to carry the corpse, they took their way, over the broken mosses, to the place agreed on. On their arrival, the first thing was to settle where the body should be interred. Mr Bruce wished to be present at the interment; but this he could not be, if they buried the remains of his wife in the village church-yard; for he was sure to be apprehended if he appeared so publicly. And yet he thought it was somewhat disrespectful to bury her in the moor.

"It matters not," said Andrew, when he saw his father's hesitation, "it matters not where our bodies rest. There is no distinction of place in the grave. Is it any difference to my mother where we lay her ashes? God will have his eye upon them; and angels will hold the place in honour. For my part, had I my choice, I would rather be laid at last in the solitary glen of the moor, than be entombed amidst the mockery of funeral pomp, and have the marble monument to record my praise."

"You are right my son," replied his father. "The grave is a bed of rest to the just. Their bodies rest in hope; and it matters not where they lie."

It was now resolved that the remains of Mrs Bruce should be buried next evening; and the place ap-

pointed for laying them to rest was near to where she had been shot.

When they had thus settled, and after joining in prayer with the sorrowing few who had accompanied him to the hut, Mr Bruce, sad in heart, withdrew to the cave; for the search after him was so vigilant, that he durst not remain a night even in this remote and lonely hut. Mary refused to leave her mother's corpse; and Andrew stayed to watch over and comfort his sister.

Next evening Mr Bruce returned to the hut. About twenty peasants had assembled. A rude coffin had been prepared; and under the covert of night the mournful procession moved slowly towards the place of interment. The clouds, clothed in the sombre garments of mourning, stood still in the heavens; and here and there, from out their rifted sides, peeped a solitary star, with an eye that seemed to weep as it looked on the wasteful heath, and glimmered on the sorrowful countenances of the mourners. Sadly down their glens murmured the streams of the wilderness; and the woful voice of the snipe traversing the wide air, the forlorn whistle of the plover, and the melancholy sound of the wind, that now and then rose on the heath, fell on the ear of Mr Bruce like the accents of some doleful prophecy, presaging to him and his family the coming of a still more wasteful desolation.

When the procession arrived at the place of interment, which had been chosen near to where Mrs

Bruce had been murdered, a grave was dug, into which the coffin was let down, and the attendants covered it up; while Mr Bruce and his two children watered with their tears the cold earth, that now hid from their eyes the one who was dearest to their souls. "But there is a joy in grief, when peace dwells in the bosom of the sad." They sorrowed not as those who have no hope. Mr Bruce wiped the tear of affection from his eye, and thus addressed the peasants, who could not refrain their tears as they stood around and looked on the grave.

"Weep not, my dear friends," said the resigned man. "she hath done her part well. She loved her God and served Him; and He hath now taken her to himself. Happy they, who are thus taken from the evils of this world! Although we have been compelled to do our last office to her under the darkness of night—although we have erected no marble to record her memory—she shall be held among the honourable in heaven. Let us, too, be prepared to lie down in the grave. If we be fitly prepared for this, it matters not when or in what manner we die. The sooner we reach our Father's house the better. But we must fight out our day, like the true soldiers of Jesus Christ. We must not repine that He keeps us long from our home. He knows best when to call us home to rest. Let us, in his strength, fight the good fight of faith. Let us abstain more carefully than ever even from the appearance of evil. Let us devote ourselves wholly to God. Let us,

my friends, be prepared to die well, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be destroyed, we may like all the righteous have a building with God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

When the minister had thus said, he bade the peasants farewell; and, with Andrew and Mary, returned to the cave.

CHAPTER V.

"The clouds of winter gather: fast the leaves,
One after one, fall from the storm-beat tree;
And o'er the humbled face of nature flap
The wings of desolation. 'Tis the hour
And power of darkness. Men of evil life,
Of horrid cruelty, now compass round
The just man's bed, with chains, and swords, and death."

ANON.

In the meantime, an incident took place in the south of Scotland, which rendered the condition of the Covenanters more intolerable. The persecutors in that quarter had laid a heavy fine on a poor old man, who being unable to pay it, the soldiers bound him, and regardless of his prayers and tears, were dragging him to prison, when a handful of peasants, who had gathered around, pitying the poor man, and indignant at the cruelty of such a proceeding, set violently upon the soldiers, and rescued the prisoner. Aware

that no pardon could be expected for this action, they took arms to defend themselves. Their number, small at first, soon increased to nearly two thousand; and in the heat of their zeal, they determined to march to Edinburgh, to compel the Government to redress their grievances. The wise and the prudent among them saw the impolicy of this attempt, and tried every means to dissuade their friends from their rash purpose. They represented the strength and discipline of the king's forces, and their own want of arms and discipline, and the impossibility of procuring skilful commanders, as the gentlemen of their party in the West were either in confinement, or had fled out of the country. They exhorted them rather to disperse and seek shelter from the cruelty of their oppressors in flight and hiding, than thus, unprepared as they were, to rush on certain destruction. Moreover, they affirmed, that it would be more consistent with the spirit of Christianity, yet to try to procure a mitigation of their sufferings by petition and entreaty.

Nevertheless, the multitude, afraid to lay down those arms they had once taken up, their minds rendered desperate by suffering, and encouraged by some of the less prudent of their pastors, directed their march towards the capital. This was the very point which the persecuting Government aimed at. They wished to have some better pretext than they yet had, to plunder and ruin the Presbyterians. They had often attempted, by their emissaries, to excite some

insurrection. This their own cruelty had now produced. And a band, which, at the most was never more than two thousand, and which had taken arms without any previous concertment, was magnified by the reports of the oppressors, into a general and preconcerted rebellion of all the West.

The result of this insurrection is well known. Having reached the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, reduced, by fatigue or fear, to less than half of their former number, and having effected nothing to better their condition, they were returning peaceably home by the Pentland Hills, when they were pursued and set upon by Dalziel, at that time commander of the king's forces in Scotland. They fought for some time with more spirit than could have been expected from men in their forlorn situation; but a party of soldiers from another quarter, coming behind them, they were thrown into disorder, and put to flight. Fifty were killed on the spot (where a very handsome monument has since been erected to their memory); some fell in the pursuit, and a considerable number were taken prisoners. These were treated without mercy. Ten of them were executed on the same scaffold, and their heads and hands sent to Lanark, where, in passing, they had renewed the covenant. Besides these, many were sent into the west country, and executed before their own doors.

The persecutors had now got, as we have already mentioned, the pretext they wanted; and they hesitated not to proceed to the most wanton and most

inhuman cruelties. Dalziel and Drummond, who were now the commanders of the military in the West, added the ferocity of the Muscovites (in which service they had for some time been) to the cool and inflexible cruelty which characterized the persecutors in general. Dragoons were stationed in every village; and even the private men had power to shoot, without any form of trial, all who refused to take the test to Government. In no place were the poor scattered members of Scotland's Church safe from the vigilant search of their enemies. The ejected clergymen especially, were pursued with unremitting diligence; and, among these, none were hunted with greater eagerness than Mr Bruce.

The curate, Mr Macduff, who had succeeded to his place, as he disliked all the Covenanters, so he hated Mr Bruce with the most bitter hatred. He considered this worthy man, whom he knew to be still lurking about the parish, as the chief cause of preventing the people in that quarter from complying with the established form of worship. The villagers, too, were sometimes bold enough to contrast, even to his face, his character with that of their former minister. These things were sufficient to irritate an ignorant and cruel being, such as Mr Macduff was, to implacable resentment against Mr Bruce; and he determined to have him cut off. Night and day, the two spies whom the curate still entertained, were in search of him; and their search was the more diligent, as Government had not only offered a consider

able reward for his apprehension, but Mr Macduff had promised them a handsome sum, if they would bring him certain intelligence how this good man might be taken.

Mr Bruce, although he seldom left the bounds of his former charge, had still, however, eluded their search. He was so esteemed and beloved by the peasants among whom he wandered, that they would have cheerfully risked their own lives to procure the escape or concealment of their pastor. And what was very surprising, such was the faithful secrecy of the inhabitants of the place, to whom alone it was known, that although Mr Bruce had for several years made the cave the place of his frequent resort, it had never been discovered by his enemies. An occurrence at length took place, through which the persecutors hoped to secure the apprehension of Mr Bruce.

Andrew had one afternoon left his father and Mary in the cave, to amuse himself, as he frequently did, with the conversation of a shepherd who kept his flocks hard by. Scarcely, however, was he half a mile away from the cave, when a party of soldiers, with Macduff, came suddenly upon him. They had been out, we believe, that day, chiefly for the purpose of killing wild-fowl; but at the same time, they required every one they met to take the test—an oath by which the party swearing renounced the covenant, owned the king as supreme head of the church, and tendered submission to the then existing ecclesiastical

establishment. Andrew, without hesitation, refused to comply. According to the laws, or rather to the lawlessness of the times, this refusal authorized the soldiers to shoot the young man on the spot. But although his dress was that of a peasant, they remarked something so superior and striking in his countenance, as well as in the manner in which he spoke, which immediately led them to the suspicion that he might be the son of some gentleman of rank in disguise, from whom useful discoveries might be elicited, or on whose account a handsome sum of money might be extorted.

Induced by those considerations, they spared his life for the present, and conducted him a prisoner to the village. On their way thither, they repeatedly endeavoured to learn his name; but Andrew, knowing well that if they once knew whose son he was, he should have no chance of escape without discovering his father, was careful to conceal it. When they reached the village, however, the inhabitants gathered round to see the prisoner; and perceiving the son of their beloved minister, they assailed the soldiers with the most bitter execrations, exclaiming that the judgment of heaven would fall upon them; and crying at the same time, "Will ye murder the son of our dear minister? Ye have already murdered his wife, and is your cruelty not yet glutted?"

When Mr Macduff heard these words, "The son of our minister," he looked to Dalziel, who was himself of the party, and said with a smile of grim satis-

faction, "We have made good sport to day. We shall now get on the scent of the old fox."*

Dalziel now asked Andrew if he was the son of the rebel Mr Bruce? for so he termed this meek and peaceable servant of Jesus. Andrew replied boldly, "I am the son of Mr Bruce." This short answer, and the tone and expression of countenance with which it was uttered, convinced Dalziel that they had got a youth to deal with from whom severity would not be likely to elicit much.

They now shut up Andrew in the church, which for some time had been more used as a prison than a place of worship; and having placed a guard, retired to consult how they might best draw the desired intelligence of Mr Bruce from his son.

The brutal Macduff was for proceeding imme diately to torture; but Dalziel, who had better observed Andrew's spirit, resolved to try him first by gentle means. Accordingly he returned to the young man, and addressed him in the following manner:—

"Your refusing to take the test, young man," said Dalziel, "you know, according to the laws of your country, forfeits your life; and you might be led, without further delay, to execution. But we have no desire to proceed to such an extremity with you. Your appearance has gained you our respect; and we have a strong wish to mitigate the rigour of the

* The curate's language, which would be ridiculous if introduced as he used it, is here translated into English.

law in your case. But this we are not authorized to do without some little submission on your part. We shall not require of you, however, to take the test, since it seems to be so unacceptable to you. If you will only tell us how we may find your father, you may have your liberty; and you need not be afraid of your father's life. He has, indeed, rendered himself obnoxious to Government; but we promise that his life shall be safe. We shall be careful that nothing worse happen to him than a short imprisonment."

To these arguments, he added, that if the young man could find it agreeable to make the necessary compliances, and if he liked the military life, he would endeavour to procure him some honourable post. Or, if he rather wished to prepare himself for the church, he would recommend him to those from whom he might expect preferment.

Andrew distrusting the promises Dalziel had made concerning his father, as much as he despised the offers proposed to himself, looking firmly in the soldier's face, absolutely refused to make any discovery of his father.

"Torture," exclaimed Macduff, who stood by, "will make you reveal what our mercy has failed to do."

"Yes," said Dalziel, "we still promise that your father's life shall not be touched. But if you will not make the discovery we want, we have torture prepared that will make you speak out. And if you

still persist in your refusal, your own life shall pay for your obstinacy. We leave you till to-morrow morning to consider whether you will accept your own liberty, with no serious danger to your father. or expose yourself to torture and death, which may, perhaps, not preserve him long from our hands." So saying, the inquisitors withdrew, to spend the night in mirth and revelry.

Andrew, who had no doubt that the promises made concerning his father would be broken the moment his persecutors had him in their power, determined, without hesitation, not to say a single word that might lead to his apprehension. Aware, also, that what had been threatened against himself would be most certainly executed, he prepared for meeting it like a man and a Christian.

As it chanced that night, there was no prisoner in the church except Andrew. In and around the church, as it stood at a little distance from the village, all was stillness, save when it was broken by the guard chanting a verse of a song, or cursing the times which kept them on foot at midnight. The interior of the building was faintly lighted by the moonbeams, that glimmered through the old Gothic windows. From the windows, Andrew could see the manse, half concealed amidst aged trees. He saw, too, the pulpit where, from his father's lips, had often dropt the word of life. He looked to the seat where he used to sit with Mary and his mother: he cast his eye on the manse, where they had lived so

nappily. But his mind soon hurried from these objects to what the family had suffered since persecution had driven them from their home. They had wandered on the mountains: they had endured cold, and fatigue, and fasting; at midnight, in the depth of winter, they had been often unsheltered from the severity of the weather. His mother, so tender, so affectionate, had already fallen by the hands of their persecutors, and her ashes lay cold in the loneliness of the moor. His father and sister were at this moment lurking in a forlorn cave, and in bitterness of soul on his account. He himself was a lonely prisoner; to-morrow to feel the agonies of torture, and to be cut down like a tree in the verdure of spring. These were the sorrowful and oppressive thoughts which forced themselves on the mind of the young man.

Andrew, as we have already said, had by nature sufficient of that boldness and fortitude of spirit, which bends not easily beneath misfortune; and the many sufferings and hardships he had endured, had only served to call forth and strengthen the natural firmness of his mind: for although trying circumstances may depress and overwhelm the weak and the timid, they never fail to summon forth the energies and heighten the courage of a vigorous spirit.

But Andrew trusted not to the bravery of human strength. He set himself not, like the distressed hero of romance, to call up the natural fortitude of his soul, and to prepare to meet all the evils that were

gathering around him in the strength of man-created might. He had been taught, that the strength of man is weakness, his wisdom folly, and all the resolutions of his natural bravery, fear and trembling at the approach of death; and he turned himself to the throne of that God whom he had always served, knowing He had sufficient help to give in every time of need; and, in the fervour of confiding prayer, sought the protection of his power, which no being can resist; the guidance of his wisdom, which never errs; and the comforts of his free grace, which can never be exhausted. He had seen the wickedness and deceitfulness of his own heart; he had been made acquainted with the strictness and purity of God's law; and he thought not of preparing to meet his God in the uprightness of his own character. But he looked with a humble and believing eye to the cross of Christ; and on the atonement which He has made, he placed all his hopes of justification and acceptance with God. Verily he put no trust in an arm of flesh; but he took unto him the whole armour of God; his loins girt about with truth; having on the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. While the afflictions of this world were thickening around him, and the terrors of death before his face, he had the peace of God dwelling in his heart, the hope of eternal life brightening in heavenly vision: and he could sing, in prison, and in the loneliness of midnight, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear

what man can do unto me. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." He felt that, strong in the all-sufficiency of God, nothing could seduce him from his duty; none of the powers of wickedness could wound his soul. Verily, the Christian's weapons,

> ——from the armoury of God,
> Are given him tempered so."

While Andrew was engaged with such thoughts as these, his father and sister, in the solitude of their cave, were deeply afflicted on his account. The shepherd, to meet whom Andrew had left them, observed him apprehended, and carried the tidings to his father. Mary wept for her brother, as if he had been already dead; and Mr Bruce feared the worst. He knew, and he was proud at the thought, that Andrew would not renounce his religion. He was well aware, also, that no mercy from the persecutors was to be expected for his son. Those into whose hands he had fallen he could easily foresee, would leave no cruelty unexercised against the son of one who was so hated by them, and whose life they had so eagerly sought. The distressed father thus looked upon the death of his son as almost certain. And if ever a father had reason to love a son, or be grieved at the intimation of his untimely death, that father was Mr Bruce.

Andrew was an only son. From his childhood

till the present time, when he was in his nineteenth year, he had been his constant companion. He had watched with the tenderest care the development of his faculties, turned their energies into the proper channel, and he had seen his care rewarded, by the rapid progress his son had made in the acquirement of knowledge. His talents, the acquisitions he had already made, his love of learning, and his devotedness to religion, warranted the highest hopes of his future usefulness and respectability in the world.

This was enough to render Andrew peculiarly dear to his father. But he had more than this to draw his son nearer to his heart. Andrew had been his companion in his suffering; and the calm and unmurmuring manner in which he had endured the severest hardships, had not only taught his mother and sister to bear their afflictions with patience, but even Mr Bruce had frequently learnt courage and constancy from his son. Those who have suffered much together have had opportunities of remarking one another's qualities, and of endearing themselves to each other by numberless offices of kindness, which can never have occurred to those who have passed all their days in prosperity. These opportunities had been too often afforded to the minister and his family. Andrew had gradually become the second hope on which they relied. In all his wanderings, he had scarcely ever left his father's side. He had watched with him at cold midnight, on the side of the mountains, and in the glen of the desert; he

had fled with him from the fell pursuit of the enemy, exposed to the storms and darkness of winter; he had hungered with him, he had mourned with him, he had endured every hardship with him; and, in all, he had been his father's comforter, and had showed him the most ardent filial affection. It was this son whom Mr Bruce was now, in all likelihood, to see taken from him by the merciless hand of persecution, in the very spring of his days. And we need not wonder if he found it hard, in this instance, to submit with resignation to the unsearchable appointment of Heaven.

But, if the trial was severe, he had the best comfort which a parent can have, when he sees a beloved child about to be wrested from him by the hand of death. He had every reason to believe, that whatever his enemies might accomplish against the life of his son, his soul would be received into the bosom of his God.

Now, consoling himself and his daughter with those sure and certain consolations, derived from that trust and confidence in God, which the Holy Scriptures point out as the duty of every Christian, under the most severe afflictions—now turning to the throne of grace in prayer for his son—and again giving way to all the depth and bitterness of paternal sorrow—he spent the night in the gloomy cave, hoping, sometimes, that the morrow's light would bring him an account of his son's escape; and yet fearing oftener, it would announce his death.

CHAPTER VI.

"Suffering for Truth's sake,
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And, to the faithful, death the gate of life."

MILTON.

NEXT morning, Dalziel and Macduff entered the church; and the former instantly asked Andrew, if he had come to a resolution about what had been proposed last night.

"My duty was so plain," said Andrew, "that it required no deliberation. I am prepared to die."

"But you are, perhaps, not prepared for torture," said Macduff, with a grin of fiend-like malignity, pointing to a thumbkin, which one of the spies, whom we formerly mentioned, held in his hand by the curate's side. "That will make you speak out."

Andrew glanced an eye of scorn on the curate, looked without emotion at the instrument of torture, and remained silent.

Dalziel then asked him if he would not send some one to his father, to persuade him to deliver himself up to them, again repeating the promise of safety to his father's life.

"Thrust your sword through my body," said Andrew; "but think not to extract from my lips one word, by all the tortures which you can inflict, that may lead to the discovery of my father. My

only fear is, that he may hear of my danger, and deliver up himself."

"Try that on your thumb, then," said Dalziel, ordering the spy, at the same time, to apply the instrument of torture, while the dragoons, that kept guard, held the young man, to prevent resistance.

The thumbkin was an instrument of exquisite torture; and, on this occasion, it was applied without mercy. For some time Andrew bore the pain it occasioned with a firm and unchanging countenance; but, as the instrument was screwed closer and closer to his thumb, the colour in his face came and went rapidly, and he writhed himself with the agonizing pain.

Dalziel, seeing it was in vain to expect any discovery, was just about to order the tormentor to desist, when Macduff prevented him, by saying, "Another twist yet! it may have more virtue in it." The obedient spirit of wickedness turned the screw: and the thumb of the young man was heard crashing within the instrument. Nature could bear no more. The blood entirely forsook his face, and he fell down in a swoon.

Fearing that their hopes of yet eliciting something might be disappointed by the immediate death of the sufferer, they hastened to relax the instrument. And, as soon as Andrew had recovered a little, he was again asked whether he would endure the same again, or discover his father.

"You may torture me to death," said he, in a firm

and resolute tone; "but I trust in God, in the Rock of my salvation; and you cannot touch my soul. It is covered by the shield of the Almighty. You shall not wring one word from me to endanger my father. The Lord comfort him!"

Having tried the torture again with the same effect, Dalziel, by nature and habit cruel, and enraged that his cruelty had entirely failed in the purposes for which it had been exercised in this instance, ordered the young man to be immediately led forth to execution; alleging Andrew's refusal to take the test as a ground for this proceeding, although the true reason was his refusal to discover his father. Hanging, as being the most ignominious of deaths, was that appointed for Andrew: and the gibbet, on this occasion, was an old elm-tree near the manse, under which he and Mary had often frolicked in the days of their childhood. He had just been led to the foot of the tree, and the spy, who was the only one to be found who would undertake the task, was fixing the fatal rope to one of its branches, when the attention of all present was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a young woman, who, screaming wildly, rushed through the soldiers, and clasped her arms around Andrew's neck.

This was his sister. One of the villagers, who, on the preceding night, had learned the determination of Dalziel with regard to Andrew, before day went to the cave, and informed Mr Bruce.

"I will go and put myself into their hands," ex-

claimed Mr Bruce, as soon as he heard the tidings. "Better that I die than lose my son." And he was hastening to leave the cave, for this purpose, when Mary laid hold of him, and besought him not to go.

"They will murder you both," said she, weeping, "and what shall become of me? Rather let me go. I will plead for my brother's life; and surely I will move their compassion."

"No," said her father, "you know them not. The tiger of the desert hath more of compassion than they. I know with what violence they hate me and my family. No, no; nothing but my death will save my son. But why do I thus tarry here? Perhaps they lead him out even now to execution."

"Go not, my father, I beseech you," said Mary, "Do you think that your death will save Andrew? O no, my dear father: they will murder you both. I shall be left alone in the world. Be persuaded, my dearest father. Let me go. I am sure they will have pity on us."

Mr Bruce, considering that it was indeed likely that his delivering himself up would not procure the liberty of his son, a spirited young man, deeply imbued with principles at enmity with the existing establishments—and imagining that the tears and entreaties of Mary, which appeared to him so eloquent, might excite some compassion in the hearts of those into whose hands Andrew had fallen; and taking pity on his daughter, who, he saw, would be left in a state of destraction if he went to give him-

self up, looked sorrowfully upon her, and wiping a tear from his eye, said :—

"Go, then, my daughter: But, stop :—I may lose you, too! Who knows where their cruelty may end? But, no, no! They will have pity on your youth and your tears. Surely there is not in the form of man aught so cruel that will murder my children God will protect you. Haste, you, my daughter. It is your brother's life that calls you. Haste to the village; and the Lord be with you and my son." The distressed father then knelt to wrestle at the throne of grace; while Mary flew with the speed of lightning to the village.

She arrived, as we have seen, just soon enough to have an opportunity of trying what her entreaties could do. The apparatus of death, which she noticed at her approach, and her brother standing bound between two soldiers, had so terrified her, that it was some time before she could so recover herself as to be able to speak.

"You have come," said Andrew to her, when she had recovered a little; "you have come to afflict yourself in vain. My death is determined."

"No, they will not kill you," replied his sister: "these men will not kill you." And then falling on her knees before Dalziel, whom she knew, by his dress, to be of highest authority, and, with tears fast flowing down her face, more lovely in grief, thus addressed him:

"Have pity on my brother. If you knew how

my father and I love him, you would not kill him I am sure he has never hurt you. Ever since we were driven from the manse, he has lived peaceably in the moors. He has lived with me: and I never saw him do injury to any one. Have pity, sir, on our family. You have already taken our dear mother from us, and will you now take from me an only brother, and from my father an only son? Oh, sir, have you no son, that you may know what my father will feel? Have you no brother, dear to you as mine is to me? My dear, dear brother! Oh, let him go, and I will die in his place!"

These words, when uttered by Mary, were eloquent; and Dalziel felt some movements of humanity within him.

"If your father will put himself into our hands," said he, "we will save the life of your brother."

"Wicked and unfeeling wretch! exclaimed Andrew, interposing here; "wicked and inhuman wretch! wouldst thou have her save her brother's life at the expense of her father's? Nor would you set me at liberty, though my father were in your hands. Entreat them no more, my dear sister. Weep not for me. I suffer with joy for the glory that is before me. Leave me, dear Mary. Go; and if ever you see our father, tell him I died with joy for the liberties and religion of Scotland. Tell him not to regret that he did not deliver himself up. It would have been certain death to him, and would not have saved me. Tell him that I am prouder to

lay down my life for him, and for the righteous cause in which Scotland suffers, than if I had been lifted up to the loftiest pinnacle of human distinction. Dear sister, be you comforted. I go to our mother. I go to the enjoyments of heaven. You and my father will soon follow; and there we shall again dwell together in peace, far beyond the change and turbulence of time."

Dalziel had been, as we have already observed, rather moved by Mary's entreaties; and still, as he saw her turning from her brother's embrace, and again casting herself down before him in the agonies of unspeakable grief, he felt something like the kindliness of compassion hovering about his heart; and he looked to Macduff with an eye that said, "Might we not have some mercy on this girl?"

The curate with a look of horrible ferocity, and in a tone of reproach, replied,—"Will you be drawn from your duty by the snivelling of girls? If you pardon rebels for their tears, you surely will be accounted a very merciful man; and the Government will certainly sustain the grounds of pardon."

Dalziel, as if ashamed that he had shown he yet possessed some little human feeling, without waiting a moment, ordered the executioner to proceed. At this word, Mary shrieked wildly, fainted, and was immediately carried towards the village by some women who had gathered around her on her arrival.

Andrew now mounted the scaffold, which had been erected beside the old elm. Here he was again asked,

if he would not save his life, by complying with the terms formerly offered. The young Christian, strong in the might of God, regarding his tempters with a look of indignation, remained silent. "Prepare, then, instantly to die," said Dalziel.

Andrew kneeled down; and, having recommended his soul to the care of his God, he arose and exclaimed, "Farewell, my father," as if he could have heard him. "Farewell, my sister. The light of the sun, the hopes of earth, farewell! And, Oh, holy Father, ere I depart, hear my cry. In thy mercy, haste to deliver the suffering people of Scotland. Now, welcome death; and welcome eternity!" When he had thus said, the executioner did as he had been ordered; and the soul of this Christian hero fled away to receive the crown of life.

What suffering was here! What did a father and a sister feel! And how might they have escaped it all? If they had deserted the cause of liberty and religion; if they had submitted tamely to those chains, which a licentious and tyrannical Government had forged for them, and which, but for their noble resistance, and that of their fellow-sufferers, might have this day been fastened around our necks, this persecuted family might have lived in peace in their manse, undisturbed and uninjured by the troubles of the times. But their souls despised the thought. They had the glory of God in their view —they had the liberty of their country at their heart —they had the welfare of us, their posterity, before

their eyes—and, without a murmur, they laid down their lives in a righteous cause.

Is there no one that loves to wander about Zion, "and the flowing brooks beneath, that wash her hallowed feet," and to sing on sacred harps the achievements of the saints? Is there no one warmed with the flame of their devotion, and touched near the heart with their patriotic sufferings, that will twine laurels to their sacred memory into the sweet numbers of immortal melody? Is the theme not soft enough for the refined ear of modern taste, or is it too sacred for the song of the bard? But why should we call for the poet's lyre? Even now, their praises sound from harps angelic. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they?" "These are they," respond the choirs of heaven—"these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

After the execution, Dalziel and Macduff having stood for a little, glutting their eyes with the effects

of their cruelty, or rather, of the Government under which they served, Macduff, sadly disappointed at the failure of this attempt to draw Mr Bruce into his hands, said to Dalziel, "Might we not try what torture would elicit from the daughter? She might be less obstinate; or the father, moved by her sufferings, might deliver himself up to us."

"Inhuman man," replied Dalziel, touched with some compunctious visitings of nature, "would'st thou lay thy hand on the distracted girl? No. I will not permit it. Let us find the father as we may But the daughter shall not be touched."

Macduff, being thus reproved by one who was noted for his inflexible rigour towards the Covenanters, ignorant, savage, crocodile-like as he was seemed to feel a slight movement of shame; and, without resuming the subject, said to Dalziel, "Let us go and despatch the prisoners whom the soldiers brought in this morning."

The corpse of the martyred youth was left hanging upon the tree till evening, when some of the villagers ventured to take it down; and, having dug a grave beneath the shade of the elm, laid the remains of the son of their minister in the narrow house.

CHAPTER VII.

"It matters little at what hour o' the day
The righteous falls asleep, death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die;
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven.
The briefer life, the earlier immortality."

MILMAN.

ONE grand and peculiarly excellent characteristic of the Christian religion is, that its resources are always in proportion to the wants of its true professors. If the wickedness and cruelty of men gather about them with a more frowning aspect, their Redeemer looks upon them with a kinder countenance. If the calamities and sufferings of life embattle themselves thicker and thicker around them, the objects, on which they have fixed their hopes, beyond the grave, come into a better light, and fill their souls more abundantly with their heavenly relishes.

The truth of this remark was well illustrated in the conduct of Mr Bruce. When he received the tidings of his son's death, with the account of the unmurmuring and triumphant manner in which he had closed his short life, the resigned father, looking to heaven, said, "My son, thou hast died in a good cause. The name of the Lord be magnified."

Having uttered these words, he turned suddenly to the peasant who had brought the sad intelligence,

and said, "My son is now safe; but where is my daughter? Have they murdered her too?"

"Your daughter," replied the peasant, "is in the village, with the old woman whom she used to be so fond of. She was so overcome by her brother's cruel death, that she remained for some time in a state of insensibility; but she is now recovered somewhat; although they are afraid she is still in a dangerous condition."

"I knew it," said Mr Bruce; "I knew she would never survive her brother's death. Her heart was too tender. It is broken! it is broken! Oh, my dear daughter! must I lose thee too? My two children in one day! Oh, Father in heaven!" he then exclaimed, "Thou knowest what is best for me, and all that is mine. Do with us as seemeth good unto Thee." And then addressing himself to the peasant said, "Can I not see her once ere she depart? I must see her. I will venture into the village under the shadow of night. If I should fall into my enemies' hands, the Lord will deliver my soul."

"You must not venture," said the peasant. "If you fall into their hands, we will all lose a father, who is our instructor and comforter in all our sufferings. Your daughter may soon be able to meet you in a place where you shall be in no danger."

"Nay," said the affectionate father, "but I must see her to-night. She hath need of comfort. Perhaps she will not see another day."

"Well, well, reverend sir," said the peasant; "we

will all do what we can to get you into the village safely. We will let you know when the soldiers have gone to rest. Then will be the safest time for you."

"Do accordingly," replied the minister. "I will approach the village after night-fall, and wait in the hazel glen till you or some of your friends come to me. Go, and be mindful of your appointment."

When Mr Bruce was left alone, he ventured out to the top of a hill hard by, whence he could espy the grave of his wife, and the smoke rising from the village, where his son had that day been put to death, and where his dear daughter, his only remaining earthly hope, lay on a bed of distress. And, truly, it needed something more than the mere firmness of natural fortitude to sustain his spirit, while he waited in anxious expectation the coming darkness.

Mary, to whom we now return, when she lived at the manse in peace, as we formerly remarked, was cheerful as the lark of the morning, and lovely as the flower on which hath never breathed aught but the purest and gentlest breezes from the chambers of the south. And, till her mother's death, she bore all the sufferings to which the family were subjected with little change of spirit; and often did she cheer their wanderings by the sallies of her innocent mirth. Ever after her mother's death, however, although her father watched over her with the eye of a guardian angel, and her brother tended her with the most vigilant affection, she had lost much of her cheerfulness, and her health had been rather declining. The cir-

cumstances in which the family had been placed had rendered her mother peculiarly dear to her; and her tender feelings never fully recovered from the shock they received by the sudden and cruel death of her mother. And now the still more untimely and cruel death of her brother, together with all the affecting circumstances with which it was connected, had entirely overcome her. After she had been carried into the old woman's house, and had recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen when she heard that her brother's death was sure, she exclaimed, for some minutes, "My brother! my dear brother! what will my father do?" and then relapsed into the swoon. During the whole course of the day, although she had resorted to the treasures of comfort that are laid up for all afflicted Christians, and although the peace which is from above had stilled the tumult of her soul, she fell at intervals into fainting fits; and as the evening and night approached, they came on oftener, and continued longer. She felt that she was dying; and she had only one wish, she said, unfulfilled—that was, to see her father. "But he cannot come here without endangering his life," she would say; "and why should I wish him? I shall soon see him in heaven. He will not take care of himself when we are gone, and the persecutors will soon get him; but my father is prepared to die."

At the approach of night, Mr Bruce, anxious to see his daughter, drew near the village. He stayed in the hazel glen, as agreed on, till about midnight,

when the peasant, faithful to his appointment, met him. As it happened, most of the soldiers, who were quartered in the village and its neighbourhood, had been sent the preceding day on a distant excursion, and had not yet returned, and the few who remained, the peasant assured Mr Bruce, had all retired to rest.

Mr Bruce, in coming to the house where his daughter lay, passed the place where his son was buried, and the church which he had so often entered with holy joy; and he saw the manse where he had lived so happily with his family. But these times were past. His Master had called him to severer service. And the worthy pastor, without giving way to the sad reflections which every object about him tended to suggest, hurried on to the hut where his daughter lay.

When he entered the house, he beheld Mary stretched on a humble bed, to all appearance lifeless. "I am too late," he said to the old woman and some of the neighbours, who stood by. "My daughter is gone." "We hope not, sir," replied the old woman. "She has fallen into a swoon; but she will recover yet."

Mr Bruce examined his daughter narrowly; and he could discover that life had not entirely left its seat. Sometimes, however, he could discern nothing but the paleness and stillness of death about his dear child; sometimes a slight quiver moved her lips, and her eye half opened; and he leaned over her and

wept, praying that he might yet hear his daughter's voice ere she departed.

After continuing nearly half-an-hour in this state, she gave a deep sigh, and looked up in her father's face. "Are you there, father?" she said. "I am now ready to die. They will tell you," continued she, looking to those who stood by—"they will tell you what my brother said to me when I saw him last. Haste you, dear father, from this place. They will torture you if they get you. Is it not night? Leave me before the day come. Dear father, I go to my Redeemer: He is all my salvation, and all my desire."

"Dear daughter," he said, grasping her hand, and half embracing her—"dear daughter, what can I wish more? The Lord our God take you to himself!"

"Farewell, father," Mary said. "We shall soon meet again."

Oh, how lovely in that moment did she seem in her father's sight! Her eye, always beautiful, shed, at its setting, the purity of heaven; and no earthly commotion stirred the composure of her cheek. For a moment she looked on her father, not like the solitary star, which looks by the skirts of the gathering clouds, which are soon to wrap it in darkness, but like the last star of the morning, about to fade away into the light of day. And now her eye closed: she grasped her father's hand convulsively: it loosened its hold: the last quiver forsook her lips; and her gentle soul fled far away beyond the sufferings of time.

"It is done," said Mr Bruce, still gazing on his daughter—"it is done; persecution hath accomplished its worst against me. But why should I repine? My dear family hath now escaped from the evils to come. This world was not their home. It was the country of their enemies; and blessed be the name of God, that He hath so early taken them away from suffering, to that place which his everlasting love hath prepared for them. I have now less to care for in this vale of tears. Let me now, Holy Father," said he, lifting up his hands to heaven, "let me henceforth have nought but thy glory before me. In thy name and strength let me fight out the Christian warfare.—Make me more and more the comforter and helper of thy scattered people; and if Thou shouldst deliver me up to my enemies, give me to die without a murmur in the cause of my country's liberty!"

After uttering these words, Mr Bruce desired the corpse of his daughter should be interred as privately as possible; and, taking leave of the sorrowful few who had gathered around him, immediately left the village, and returned toward the place of his concealment.

The objects of nature had early made a deep impression on the mind of Mr Bruce; and his manner of life, spent for the last six years amidst its wildest scenery, had still deepened this impression. Night, as it was the only time when he could venture safely abroad, had especially engaged his contemplation

and often, in his nocturnal discourses, did he turn the attention of his audience to the grandeur of that magnificent temple in which they met to worship God.

Notwithstanding the losses he had sustained that day, Mr Bruce, resigned to the will of God, and having the Christian's peace in his bosom, as he walked towards the cave, could look with his usual relish to the magnificence of the starred canopy, and the shadowy grandeur of nature around him. And as he ascended, with a peasant who accompanied him, an eminence near his cave, he made the following reflections,—standing lonely on the hill—with no wife, no child remaining; but standing firm and dignified, like the oak of the mountains after its leaves have been torn away by the violence of the tempest:—

"Turn your eye to those stars," said he to the peasant, "that look forth like angels' eyes from heaven. How pure and tranquil they seem! None of the storms which agitate this lower world disturb them. They shone on the beings that trode this waste a thousand years ago, and still they shine on us. Do not their serenity and duration seem to write a satire on the tumult and brevity of the life of man? How much of his folly have they seen! how little of his wisdom! How much of his cruelty to his fellow creatures! how little of his brotherly affection! How many have they seen going forth, under their holy light, with the dagger of vengeance, to carry into

execution the dark plots of wickedness! how few have they noticed crossing the valleys of earth on errands of mercy! How many deluded human beings have they observed bowing down to stocks and stones! how few bending the knee sincerely to the living and true God! Yes, they have seen hundreds of generations bustle away the little hour of their vanity—and they have seen their everlasting destiny sealed: And yet man is still as foolish as if none had ever proved to him that he must die. He grasps at the shadow of earth's happiness, more fleeting than that which the passing cloud casts yonder on the heath. And so eagerly does he run after the spectre, that neither the tears nor the execrations of thousands dying under his feet, nor the sword of eternal wrath which gleams over his head, can stop him in his frenzied pursuit. Sure there is something miserably wrong in the human heart. Surely the true eyes of the human understanding have been, indeed, put out. The shadow that falls from yonder mountain. and hides the vale in gloom, is itself brightness, compared with that cloud that broods on the human mind, and benights all its faculties. So dreadfully dim is mortal vision, that it cannot decern the glory of God himself, even when He comes to redeem, to forgive, and to save. Oh, when shall that star arise, which led the wise men of old to the manger of Bethlehem, and guides the way of every man to the feet of Jesus, who, although He created the heavens, and heard the harps of angels sing his glory divine. died, to make

as wise unto salvation? Surely the time will come, for the Lord hath sworn it, yea, He hath sworn it by himself, when the earth shall return to its allegiance, and be cured of its folly."

Here the holy man looked to his companion, whom he had forgotten in his contemplations; and, casting his eye of faith far into days yet to come, and filled with the blessedness which the promises of God have pledged to the world, exclaimed, "Yes, my friend, we have the God that made all these worlds to support us. We have his promise, that truth shall ultimately prevail. Let us boldly do our duty, that we may be partakers of that joy unspeakable, which shall fill the hearts of the just, when all shall be complete in Christ, and when these stars shall melt away at his second coming."

When Mr Bruce had withdrawn his mind from these contemplations, he parted from the peasant, and returned to the cave—by wife or child no longer made cheerful.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Servant of God well done!
Rest from thy loved employ
The battle fought, the victory won.
Enter thy Master's joy.
The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease;
And life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.
Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

MONTGOMERY.

After the loss of his family, Mr Bruce continued to instruct and comfort his scattered flock with more assiduity and zeal than ever. The sufferings he had endured had given a bolder and firmer tone to his character. The more he saw the devastations of cruelty and tyranny spreading around him, the warmer his heart glowed with the love of liberty, and the blessings which accompany it. The lovely flowers, which, that he might guard and cherish them, had hitherto rendered him more careful of himself, were now gathered into a place of safety. With nought to bind him to earth but an ardent desire to instruct and counsel the Presbyterians, so as they might best attain the glorious purposes they had in view, he now ventured forth boldly, and seized with

eagerness every opportunity of strengthening and consoling them. Thus employed, for a considerable time, he wandered from place to place, always visiting, as often as he durst, the people of his former charge.

But, in proportion as Mr Bruce became more conspicuous among the persecuted party, the malignity of his enemies, and their exertions to cut him off, increased; and what they had so long and so eagerly sought was now drawing near.

One Sabbath evening, in the depth of winter, he met, according to a previous appointment, a few of his own flock in a remote house, not very far from the place where he had so often concealed himself. There he preached a sermon; and as if he had felt some presentiment that this sermon would be his last, he exhorted his hearers, towards the close of his discourse, with extraordinary warmth and energy, to be faithful to the death, to live peaceably, to bear all with patience; assuring them that God would most certainly plead his own cause and deliver his servants from oppression. He represented how much Christ had suffered for them, and with what meekness and resignation;—what blessings they would secure to posterity, and what rewards they would themselves receive, by bearing nobly up against the storm that beat on them so severely. On leaving the little audience, whose hearts had burned, whose eyes had wept, whose faith had increased, and whose purpose to bear all, for the cause in which they had en-

gaged, had been more firmly established, while listening to his discourse, he said to them in a cheerful manner,—"My friends, when we part in these times, we have very little certainty of meeting again. But our best friend, Jesus Christ, goes with us all. He is company enough; and should any thing happen to any of us, when we have no one to give us assistance, He will take care of us."

When he had thus said, he left the house, fearing that he had been already too long there, as it was not improbable that some notice of the meeting might have reached the persecutors. Both because it was the safest place, and because he meant to spend the remaining part of the Sabbath night in private prayer and supplication to God in behalf of the suffering people, he withdrew, unaccompanied to the cave, never suspecting that any of his enemies observed him. But there had been a Judas among those who embraced him at parting.

One of those spies, whom we have had occasion to mention before, eager to gain the reward offered to any one who should bring information which might lead to the apprehension of Mr Bruce, took the following method to compass his design:—

With the consent and privacy of Macduff, he entirely forsook his house, lived among the peasants, and, as he was one who had formerly sworn the covenant, he manifested the deepest contrition for the aid he had given to those who sought the ruin of the Covenanters. He gave proof of the greatest

zeal in every thing which had for its end their safety —revealed to them many schemes which were contrived for their destruction—and showed always the most sensible alarm lest he should fall into the hands of those he had last deserted. By these artifices, he gained the confidence of those with whom he now associated; and had continued with them more than a month, supporting always the same character, before Mr Bruce happened to visit his people. The night of which we have spoken was the first time he had ever got into his presence. Mr Bruce noticed him; but, both from the manner in which he behaved during the meeting, and from the account he had received of him, he entertained no suspicion of his real designs. This man, if he deserve the name, dogged Mr Bruce, through the darkness of night, to the cave; and, as soon as he saw him enter, hastened to the village, to give information.

It was midnight when he reached the curate's house. And, although this monster would not have risen from his bed at that hour to save a soul from death, he instantly got up, and, with the malignant satisfaction of an evil spirit, when it hath compassed some infernal aim, hastened to inform the few soldiers who were in the village. No time was lost. It was at first resolved to bring Mr Bruce to the village, and send him thence, to be executed in Edinburgh. But, as the appearance of a Dutch fleet on the north coast of Scotland, had, at that time, occasioned the withdrawing of most of the troops from the West,

they were afraid that the handful they could collect would not be sufficient to repel the peasants, whose ardent attachment to Mr Bruce, they had every reason to suspect, would excite them to attempt a rescue. Urged by this reason, and determined, at any rate, to make sure of Mr Bruce's death, Macduff said to the commanding officer, "Go, and shoot the rebel wherever you find him. The king will reward you for it."

The soldiers, about ten in number, set out from the village, conducted by the spy, and led by an officer, well fitted to execute a bloody command. As the ground was covered with snow, and the way extremely rugged, they could make no use of their horses, and were therefore obliged to leave them behind. But, although the storm of winter howled around their heads, and the darkness of night brooded on the rough and wayless moors, keeping, by the direction of the spy, not far from the stream up which the cave lay, they urged on, as if they had been going on a message of extraordinary mercy.

About three in the morning they reached the vicinity of the cave. Two or three soldiers were posted on a crag above it, one or two on the opposite side of the stream, to prevent the possibility of Mr Bruce escaping, while the others scrambled up the difficult ascent which led to the mouth of the cave. The spirit of the blast of night moaned dolefully among the forlorn cliffs; the Ayr, half fettered in ice, grumbled at their feet: and the leafless trees by

which they supported themselves as they ascended the rock, waving to the wind, seemed to utter curses on the ruffians' heads. Hardened as they were in ruthless deeds, their guilty hearts interpreted every sound they heard as an indication of coming wrath. They trembled like the leaf which the wind passeth over; and, as they stood still involuntarily before the abode of the holy man, they heard, issuing from the mouth of the cave, the following words: "Yea, for Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, Holy Father, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the day of her mercy come. Hast Thou forsaken Zion, O Lord? hast Thou forgotten the people of thy love? Our temples are desolate; the courts of thy holiness are defiled; thy children are scattered on the mountains; they weep and cry in the desert. The harp of their sorrow hangs on the willow, and mourns to the blast of the wilderness; the wastes of nature are watered with their tears; their blood is poured forth, and there is none to pity them! Surely we are a sinful nation; a people laden with iniquity. We have forsaken Thee! we have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. But, O Merciful and Holy One! God of salvation! look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness; and let the bow of thy mercy be seen in the wilderness. Thou wilt not forsake us. I know thy church is graven on the palms of thy hands; her walls are continually before Thee: and the point of every weapon that is lifted against her wilt Thou at length

turn into the soul of him that lifted it. Haste, O God and Father, to deliver us! Turn the hand of oppression from our country, that thy people may dwell in freedom and peace. And while Thou seest meet that they should wander on the mountains and suffer in the cause of their country, Oh give them patience, and fortitude, and strength. Let them take comfort, that, in all their afflictions, the Captain of their Salvation is afflicted, and that the Angel of thy presence shall save them. Stretch over them the shield of thine omnipotence; guide the path of their trials by thine all-comprehending wisdom; fill their hearts with thine inexhaustible love: save them, Oh Lord! Save, and support them in death! And, Oh Father! when the day of thy vengeance arriveth, and the year of restitution to the spoilers of our land doth come, have mercy on those who have had no mercy on us. Soften the hardness of their hearts; open the blindness of their eyes. Oh, cast them not away from thy presence for ever! For who among them shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among them shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Thus did the holy man, in the darkness of night, in the cave of the cold rock, plead with his God for our church and our country.

The fell assassins still stood before the cave, trembling at the words they had heard, and the holy confidence with which they were uttered. And the most fearless and stout-hearted among them wished the task of murdering this servant of Jesus

had fallen to other hands. After a short pause, however, the officer, ashamed to have felt something like humanity moving within him, which he considered as cowardice, suddenly entered the cave, ordering two of his men to follow.

Mr Bruce, who was kneeling when he entered, arose. A few embers, that burned on the floor of the place helped to show his appearance. His forehead was bald, and his few remaining locks were grey. His figure, although nothing improved by his half-worn and little-befitting clothes, was elegant; and the serene and peaceful dignity of his countenance, which changed not at the entrance of the soldiers, was such as might impress the beholder with respect and awe.

"You are come," said he mildly, addressing the officer, "you are come to apprehend me. I am prepared to go with you. You, perhaps, have a better lodging for me than this; although, as it is, I have been often glad to get to it."

"My orders are," said the officer, "to offer you the test; and if you refuse it, to put you to death on the spot."

"Nay, then," said Mr Bruce, smiling, "is heaven so near? You are going to send me to better lodgings indeed."

"But will you take the test," said the officer, "and save us the expense of a shot?"

"God be my witness," said Mr Bruce, the true fortitude of the Christian strongly marking his coun-

tenance as he spoke: "God be my witness, I will never swear away my allegiance from the King of kings, who is my Saviour and Master. I will not submit to that which my conscience condemns. I will not connive at the enslaving of my country."

"Have done," said the officer; "have done."

"I have done," replied Mr Bruce, with unfaltering voice. And, lifting up his hands, he prayed, and said, "Lord Jesus, forgive my enemies. Lord Jesus, be with the poor people I leave in this wilderness. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, receive my spirit?"

When he had thus spoken, the officer commanded his men to discharge their carabines on Mr Bruce. The reverend minister glanced a look upon them, and they refused to obey. "Faint-hearted slaves," exclaimed the enraged officer; and, snatching a carabine from the hand of one of the soldiers, discharged its contents into the breast of Mr Bruce. The martyred saint instantly fell down, and expired, while the report of the fatal shot yet echoed among the wild cliffs around. Farewell, good and faithful servant! Thou hast entered into the joy of thy Lord!

Still, religion thou art happiness! The joys which thou pourest into the heart lie not within the reach of any weapon that the hand of man can form. The calm which thou settlest on the soul, the wing of no earthly blast can disturb. The light by which thy children walk is the candle of the Lord, which can never be quenched. Thou plantest a torch for them in the gloom of death's darkness, and supportest their

goings on the rod and the staff of the Almighty. Thou conductest their spirits to the feast of immortality, and layest their bodies down to sleep in peace till the morning of the resurrection. Woe unto him that seeketh his happiness apart from Thee! He shall be miserably disappointed

---

READER, I have now finished this short account of the PERSECUTED FAMILY. In it I have had occasion to introduce thee to some of the sufferings that were endured, and some of the cruelties that were exercised by our ancestors of the seventeenth century—the former for the sake of religion, and all the dearest rights of men; the latter to extirpate liberty, and leave to posterity the chains of servitude. The sufferings of the family, to which I confined myself, did not lead me to bring into view the most exalted Christian heroism which was in these times manifested; and, unwilling to shock the tender feelings of the heart, I have studiously avoided some of those monstrous cruelties which were then exercised, and which, without going out of my way, I might have introduced. Thou hast seen enough, however, kind reader, of the latter, to abhor it; and of the former, to admire it. I know thou hast praised their patience, and their resignation, and their hope, and their faith, and their fortitude in death. Thou hast marked their staunch adherence to the dictates of conscience, the

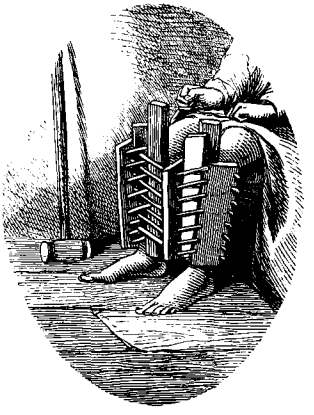
ardour of their devotion, and their love of liberty and their country. And, while thou sittest in peace, conscious that thou mayest worship thy God as thou thinkest the Bible orders thee, thou perhaps givest them, who suffered so much to secure thee this liberty, the sacred applause due to their exertions. It is right that it should be so.

But I wish thee not to stop here. I wish thee to trust in and to adore the grace of God, which supported them, and gave them victory; to admire the wonderful resources of that religion which they professed—how sufficient they are to instruct and advise the Christian, in the devious and difficult paths—to keep his heart warm in the coldest winter of adversity—to invigorate him as he climbs the steepest ascents of virtue—and to uphold and sustain his soul in the face of the most violent of deaths.

Nor hath the Christian of the present day need only to admire the marvellous sources from which his suffering ancestors drew. He hath not less need than they to draw for himself. His enemies are more concealed, more mannerly, more deceitful, and, therefore, less apt to excite his suspicion, and put him on his guard. Persecution labours to force the Christian out of his way, whether he will or not; and therefore the spirit of liberty within him encourages him to make a bold resistance. In the days of peace and prosperity, he is assailed by pleasures, which, endeavouring to draw him out of his path, by the sweetness of their song, and the fairness of their promises.

excite little suspicion of their design, and are therefore often little resisted.

If the persecuted Christian needs more of comfort, of steadiness in peril, of patience, resignation, and fortitude—he who lives in peace requires more of watchfulness, of self-denial, and of resistance to temptation. If our wants are, therefore, as numerous, so should our applications be to that inexhaustible source which supplied all theirs, and which will supply all ours, if we approach it with our whole heart.



THE BOOTS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with portraits of the Hodges and of Dr. M'Cosh, 3s. 6d.,

Princetoniana. Charles and A. A. Hodge, with Class and Table Talk of Hodge the Younger. By a SCOTTISH PRINCETONIAN (Rev. C. A. SALMOND, M.A., Rothesay, author of 'A Woman's Work,' etc.).

'I had a delightful hour or more with "Princetoniana." A capital book. All who love the sound doctrine men who have just gone home should read your book.'—Mr. SPURGEON.

'A very interesting work. . . . The agreeable conversational style in which the brief memoirs are written makes this part of the work pleasant to read beyond the common run of similar memorials. The collection of jottings from the lectures and table talk of Dr. A. A. Hodge is valuable for the racy vivacity and point of the various utterances, which have quite as much biographical as theological significance. . . . Will be welcomed as an interesting memorial of two memorable men, and as a vivid sketch of the manner in which theology is taught at Princeton.'—*Scotsman.*

'This beautiful volume is a graceful scholarly tribute to the memories of the two Hodges. We have here Dr. Charles Hodge at fourscore; but he is still Dr. Hodge, the learned theologian, the tender-hearted, emotional, humble Christian, and revered professor. The author's estimate of the younger Hodge is not left to rest simply upon the author's own judgment. He takes the reader into the class-room, the family, and the social circle, and places him where he can hear and judge of the man from his own theological utterances. The utterances, styled *Brevia Theologica*, are arranged with much discrimination under appropriate headings.'—*Belfast Witness.*

'Chatty, anecdote-laden, and most readable. . . . In Dr. Charles Hodge was conspicuously seen how warm a heart may beat beneath what some would regard as the cold steel of a Calvinistic coat of mail.'—*N. B. Daily Mail.*

'An able, loving, and discriminating tribute to two eminent American theologians.'—*Buteman.*

'One of the most interesting books we have read for a long time. The arrangement is so concise and methodical, the biographical and doctrinal statements are so compact, and the style so vivacious, vigorous, and lucid, that the reader becomes more and more intensely riveted and entranced as page after page is perused and pondered. . . .'—*Christian News.*

'If anything could convey a just idea of what Calvinism really is to the theological small fry, who delight to ventilate their ignorance and conceit in carping at that grand representation of Divine Truth, it ought to be the perusal of this book. . . .'—*Perthshire Constitutional.*

'Mr. Salmond brings to his genial task, not only the power of a fresh and vigorous intellect, but a feeling of reverence for the eminent men to whom he has been indebted for mental and spiritual stimuli.'—*League Journal.*

'An extremely interesting book.'—*Free Church of Scotland Monthly.*

'Brightly and cleverly done.'—*Scottish Leader.*

'Able and readable. . . . The notes are the rich and pregnant utterances of a devout, cultured, and vigorous mind.'—*Literary World.*

'The compiler of this book puts the many admirers of the Hodges under a distinct obligation to him.'—*The Christian.*

'Worthy to rank beside Professor Knight's "Colloquia Peripatetica."'—*Perthshire Advertiser.*

'The portrait of Dr. Charles Hodge, which forms a frontispiece to the volume, shows a head that reminds one of Dr. Guthrie and George Gilfillan, at one and the same time. . . .'—*Dundee Advertiser.*

'The *Brevia Theologica* are for the most part gems of devout philosophical thought.'—*Christian Irishman.*

Small crown 8vo, Illustrated, paper, 1s.; *cloth, extra,* 1s. 6d.; *cloth, gilt,* 2s.,

BITS ABOUT AMERICA. By JOHN STRATHESK.

'The genial and wide-awake Scotchman, who writes under the *nom de plume* of John Strathesk, is a shrewd and kindly observer of men and things. His "Bits" are the result of clear and kindly observation, . . singularly free from prejudice and preconceived notions, . . . readable and enjoyable.' —*Canada Presbyterian.*

'There is not an ill-natured word in it, and the reader has only to make a beginning to have his appetite whetted for more knowledge of Jonathan.'—*Helensburgh Times.*

'The writer went to the States, and found, on the whole, that what he saw pleased him. He learnt that the "increase of American railways was fabulous," but did not apparently consider their solvency. "The railway," he says grandly, "is the friend of all," except, he might have added, the shareholder. However, the elevated lines did not please him. But what delighted him most was to find Scotchmen thriving in all parts. He is himself Scotch to the backbone, and it is a curious thing that almost all his jokes are of Scotch manufacture. Our relatives on the other side of the Atlantic must be hard to please if this testimonial to their excellence does not satisfy them.'—*Spectator.*

'A "Chiel" has been "amang us takin' notes." He has formed a generally favourable impression of our important cities, and is greatly impressed with our handsome city halls and capitols. Our Church and Educational systems interest and instruct him, while he is filled with amazement at the magnitude of America's timber trade. He has a good word for our industries, thinks that in ten years we will see "sturdy competition in the markets of the world." "Already American enterprise and capital have gone far to make this country independent of foreign supplies." The book is a candid and discriminating description of America, and is in refreshing contrast with sundry attempts and "impressions" of over-conceited Britons.'—*American Daily Press.*

'"Bits about America" by "John Strathesk" is a thoroughly genial and clever book; there is quite a family of healthy red-cheeked young jokes in this book.'—*British Weekly.*

'Many will be glad to have "Bits about America" from this shrewd and genial observer of men and manners."—*U.P. Missionary Record.*

'Mr. Strathesk's "Bits" are likely to be as popular as they are readable. One of the pleasantest features in the little volume is the entire absence of prejudice which is so apt to warp the British views of anything American, or, indeed, anything foreign. We cordially recommend these "Bits" to our readers who enjoy a pleasant chatty book on an interesting subject.'—*Glasgow Herald.*

'As its title indicates, the object was simply to paint a few "Bits" of American scenery and society, and yet the writer does suggest much matter for speculation by the way, as well as furnish many valuable hints for the emigrant. That the *brochure* abounds in fine humour, of course, "goes without saying," nor is it less, of course, that we meet with touches that bring moisture into the eye, and the lump into the throat.'—*Methodist Recorder.*

'We commend this book to our readers as giving truthful impressions of America, and helping to maintain the *entente cordiale* between that great country and our own. The book is illustrated, and is a handy shilling guide to a general knowledge of American life and scenery'—*U.P. Magazine.*

The Scots Worthies. By JOHN HOWIE of Lochgoin. Revised from the Author's Original Edition by the Rev. W. H. CARSLAW, M.A. The Landscapes and Ornaments by various artists, engraved under the superintendence of Mr Williamson; the Historical Portraits by Mr Hector Chalmers, engraved by Messrs Schenck & M'Farlane. New edition, demy 8vo, cloth extra, with upwards of 150 Illustrations, price 5s.

"The popularity of this book, long established, will certainly suffer no diminution from the manner in which it is presented to the reading public in this illustrated edition. It is a handsome volume, attractively bound, and beautifully printed; and the illustrations, equally appropriate and effective, at once stimulate and gratify historical interest—supplying indeed a 'National Portrait Gallery' of no small value and extent. Great care, too, has been bestowed upon the letterpress, the work of revision having been performed by a scholar who loves and knows the subject; and altogether the work seems to be nearly as fine an edition of the Scots Worthies as could be desired."—*Daily Review.*

"The well-known house of Messrs Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, of Edinburgh, has republished the Rev. W. H. Carslaw's edition of the Scots Worthies, and, in so doing, has put within the reach of everybody one of the most interesting and useful books in Scottish literature. More than one hundred years have elapsed since John Howie issued the first edition of the famous book. No man was better fitted for the task of embalming the worthies of the Scottish Covenant in the memories of his fellow-men, for he was a staunch Cameronian; his ancestors had suffered in the interests of the Church of Christ in Scotland; his home was the centre of the district in which many of the most tragic scenes of Scottish martyrology occurred; and, besides strict adherence to truth, he had a literary power which awakes surprise and admiration. The book was a household one in the Presbyterian homes in Scotland in its quaint early garb. An edition was issued with notes by the late William M'Gavin, author of 'The Protestant;' and other editions have followed. Mr Carslaw's has already established itself in public favour, and well it may. It has all the quaintness of the original volume in a condensed form. It abounds in illustrations of well-executed views of Covenanter localities, from the Communion stones of Irongray to Dunnottar; of Scottish palaces, Falkland, Holyrood, etc.; of Scottish abbeys and churches—indeed it might almost be called an illustrated Gazetteer of Scotland. It likewise contains views of places in England, Ireland, and the Continent connected with Covenanting story, such as Westminster, Rotterdam, and Londonderry. It gives, moreover, a gallery of portraits, from George Wishart to Robert Traill; from Mary Queen of Scots to William III.; and from Archbishop Sharpe to Claverhouse. It is in every way elegantly and quaintly got up, the illustrations having old-fashioned elaborately-decorated borders. We know of no book more calculated to quicken the pulse of modern Protestantism, or to give in an attractively biographical form the history of the Church of Scotland through the lives, and doings, and deaths of her noblest sons. We therefore commend it to all who wish to remember the days of former generations, or to understand the glorious work done for Scotland in his chief book by the old farmer of Lochgoin."—*Christian Leader.*

"The Scots Worthies. By John Howie of Lochgoin. An illustrated edition, revised from the author's original edition, by the Rev. W. H. Carslaw, M.A.—We are glad to see this reprint of our Scottish Acta Sanctorum. It is one of the books that, lying on cottage shelves, and conned over on cottars' Sabbath nights, has helped to make Scotchmen what they are. It will be a sad day for Scotland when she forgets the men whose deeds are so simply and so quaintly recorded by one who had himself the blood of the Covenant in his veins, and whose fathers resisted unto blood. Though this edition is inexpensive, the illustrations are admirably executed. We counsel those who have not the book in their libraries, to place it there, and put it in the way of their children."—*U. P. Record.*

Uniform with 'The Scots Worthies,' demy 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Engravings specially prepared for this work, price 5s.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ: Being the Last Speeches and Testimonies of those who have suffered for the Truth in Scotland since the year 1680. Reprinted from the Original Editions, with Explanatory and Historical Notes by the Rev. JOHN H. THOMSON.

EDINBURGH:
OLIPHANT, ANDERSON, & FERRIER,
24 ST. GILES STREET.

Father Clement.
Anna Lee.
Anna Ross.
Jock Halliday: a Grassmarket Hero.
Katie: an Edinburgh Lassie.
Tom Telfer's Shadow.
Ben Hanson.
By Still Waters.
A Door of Hope.
Across her Path.
Robert Martin's Lesson.
Mistaken, and Marion Forsyth.
Little Bluebird, & Miss Graham's Protegs
Hard to Win.
A Divided House.
Bible Warnings.
Rays from the Sun of Righteousness.
Reformation Heroes.
Ursula Vivian, the Sister Mother.
Memoir of Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne
Dorothea Kirke.
The King's Highway.
Shadowed Lives.
Letters to a Daughter.
Gordonhaven.
Bits about America.
Stratharran.
Dunallan.
Sundered Hearts.
Juvenile Wit and Humour.
Blawearie.
Fickle Fortune.
Vita Vinctis.
Wrongs Righted.
The Safe Compass.
The Secret Panel.

In 4to, paper covers, beautifully Illustrated. price, in cloth, 1/6; paper 1/-

Letters from Birdie Land. Illustrated by Giacomelli and Harrison Weir.

PONNOK TALES OF THE COVENANTERS

37131 089 688 303

This book is the gift of

Margaret Kohr