ВАЛЬТЕР СКОТТ

ROB ROY — COMPLETE

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Rob Roy – Complete

Скотт В.

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Содержание

Walter Scott
Rob Roy – Complete

VOLUME ONE

For why? Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

Rob Roy's Grave– Wordsworth

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION

When the Editor of the following volumes published, about two years since, the work called the "Antiquary," he announced that he was, for the last time, intruding upon the public in his present capacity. He might shelter himself under the plea that every anonymous writer is, like the celebrated Junius, only a phantom, and that therefore, although an apparition, of a more benign, as well as much meaner description, he cannot be bound to plead to a charge of inconsistency. A better apology may be found in the imitating the confession of honest Benedict, that, when he said he would die a bachelor, he did not think he should live to be married. The best of all would be, if, as has eminently happened in the case of some distinguished contemporaries, the merit of the work should, in the reader's estimation, form an excuse for the Author's breach of promise. Without presuming to hope that this may prove the case, it is only further necessary to mention, that his resolution, like that of Benedict, fell a sacrifice, to temptation at least, if not to stratagem.

It is now about six months since the Author, through the medium of his respectable Publishers, received a parcel of Papers, containing the Outlines of this narrative, with a permission, or rather with a request, couched in highly flattering terms, that they might be given to the Public, with such alterations as should be found suitable.[1]

These were of course so numerous, that, besides the suppression of names, and of incidents approaching too much to reality, the work may in a great measure be, said to be new written. Several anachronisms have probably crept in during the course of these changes; and the mottoes for the Chapters have been selected without any reference to the supposed date of the incidents. For these, of course, the Editor is responsible. Some others occurred in the original materials, but they are of little consequence. In point of minute accuracy, it may be stated, that the bridge over the Forth, or rather the Avondhu (or Black River), near the hamlet of Aberfoil, had not an existence thirty years ago. It does not, however, become the Editor to be the first to point out these errors; and he takes this public opportunity to thank the unknown and nameless correspondent, to whom the reader will owe the principal share of any amusement which he may derive from the following pages.

1st December 1817.

[1] As it maybe necessary, in the present Edition(1829), to speak upon the square, the Author thinks it proper to own, that the communication alluded to is entirely imaginary.

INTRODUCTION – (1829)

When the author projected this further encroachment on the patience of an indulgent public, he was at some loss for a title; a good name being very nearly of as much consequence in literature as in life. The title of *Rob Roy* was suggested by the late Mr. Constable, whose sagacity and experience foresaw the germ of popularity which it included.

No introduction can be more appropriate to the work than some account of the singular character whose name is given to the title-page, and who, through good report and bad report, has maintained a wonderful degree of importance in popular recollection. This cannot be ascribed to the distinction of his birth, which, though that of a gentleman, had in it nothing of high destination, and gave him little right to command in his clan. Neither, though he lived a busy, restless, and enterprising life, were his feats equal to those of other freebooters, who have been less distinguished. He owed his fame in a great measure to his residing on the very verge of the Highlands, and playing such pranks in the beginning of the 18th century, as are usually ascribed to Robin Hood in the middle ages, – and that within forty miles of Glasgow, a great commercial city, the seat of a learned university. Thus a character like his, blending the wild virtues, the subtle policy, and unrestrained license of an American Indian, was flourishing in Scotland during the Augustan age of Queen Anne and George I. Addison, it is probable, or Pope, would have been considerably surprised if they had known that there existed in the same island with them a personage of Rob Roy's peculiar habits and profession. It is this strong contrast betwixt the civilised and cultivated mode of life on the one side of the Highland line, and the wild and lawless adventures which were habitually undertaken and achieved by one who dwelt on the opposite side of that ideal boundary, which creates the interest attached to his name. Hence it is that even yet,

Far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same,
And kindle like a fire new stirr'd,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

There were several advantages which Rob Roy enjoyed for sustaining to advantage the character which he assumed.

The most prominent of these was his descent from, and connection with, the clan MacGregor, so famous for their misfortunes, and the indomitable spirit with which they maintained themselves as a clan, linked and banded together in spite of the most severe laws, executed with unheard-of rigour against those who bore this forbidden surname. Their history was that of several others of the original Highland clans, who were suppressed by more powerful neighbours, and either extirpated, or forced to secure themselves by renouncing their own family appellation, and assuming that of the conquerors. The peculiarity in the story of the MacGregors, is their retaining, with such tenacity, their separate existence and union as a clan under circumstances of the utmost urgency. The history of the tribe is briefly as follows – But we must premise that the tale depends in some degree on tradition; therefore, excepting when written documents are, quoted, it must be considered as in some degree dubious.

The sept of MacGregor claimed a descent from Gregor, or Gregorius, third son, it is said, of Alpin King of Scots, who flourished about 787. Hence their original patronymic is MacAlpine, and they are usually termed the Clan Alpine. An individual tribe of them retains the same name. They are accounted one of the most ancient clans in the Highlands, and it is certain they were a people of original Celtic descent, and occupied at one period very extensive possessions in Perthshire and Argyleshire, which they imprudently continued to hold by the *coir a glaive,* that is, the right of the sword. Their neighbours, the Earls of Argyle and Breadalbane, in the meanwhile, managed to leave

the lands occupied by the MacGregors engrossed in those charters which they easily obtained from the Crown; and thus constituted a legal right in their own favour, without much regard to its justice. As opportunity occurred of annoying or extirpating their neighbours, they gradually extended their own domains, by usurping, under the pretext of such royal grants, those of their more uncivilised neighbours. A Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochow, known in the Highlands by the name of *Donacha Dhu nan Churraichd,* that is, Black Duncan with the Cowl, it being his pleasure to wear such a head-gear, is said to have been peculiarly successful in those acts of spoliation upon the clan MacGregor.

The devoted sept, ever finding themselves iniquitously driven from their possessions, defended themselves by force, and occasionally gained advantages, which they used cruelly enough. This conduct, though natural, considering the country and time, was studiously represented at the capital as arising from an untameable and innate ferocity, which nothing, it was said, could remedy, save cutting off the tribe of MacGregor root and branch.

In an act of Privy Council at Stirling, 22d September 1563, in the reign of Queen Mary, commission is granted to the most powerful nobles, and chiefs of the clans, to pursue the clan Gregor with fire and sword. A similar warrant in 1563, not only grants the like powers to Sir John Campbell of Glenorchy, the descendant of Duncan with the Cowl, but discharges the lieges to receive or assist any of the clan Gregor, or afford them, under any colour whatever, meat, drink, or clothes.

An atrocity which the clan Gregor committed in 1589, by the murder of John Drummond of Drummond-ernoch, a forester of the royal forest of Glenartney, is elsewhere given, with all its horrid circumstances. The clan swore upon the severed head of the murdered man, that they would make common cause in avowing the deed. This led to an act of the Privy Council, directing another crusade against the "wicked clan Gregor, so long continuing in blood, slaughter, theft, and robbery," in which letters of fire and sword are denounced against them for the space of three years. The reader will find this particular fact illustrated in the Introduction to the Legend of Montrose in the present edition of these Novels.

Other occasions frequently occurred, in which the MacGregors testified contempt for the laws, from which they had often experienced severity, but never protection. Though they were gradually deprived of their possessions, and of all ordinary means of procuring subsistence, they could not, nevertheless, be supposed likely to starve for famine, while they had the means of taking from strangers what they considered as rightfully their own. Hence they became versed in predatory forays, and accustomed to bloodshed. Their passions were eager, and, with a little management on the part of some of their most powerful neighbours, they could easily be *hounded out,* to use an expressive Scottish phrase, to commit violence, of which the wily instigators took the advantage, and left the ignorant MacGregors an undivided portion of blame and punishment. This policy of pushing on the fierce clans of the Highlands and Borders to break the peace of the country, is accounted by the historian one of the most dangerous practices of his own period, in which the MacGregors were considered as ready agents.

Notwithstanding these severe denunciations, – which were acted upon in the same spirit in which they were conceived, some of the clan still possessed property, and the chief of the name in 1592 is designed Allaster MacGregor of Glenstrae. He is said to have been a brave and active man; but, from the tenor of his confession at his death, appears to have been engaged in many and desperate feuds, one of which finally proved fatal to himself and many of his followers. This was the celebrated conflict at Glenfruin, near the southwestern extremity of Loch Lomond, in the vicinity of which the MacGregors continued to exercise much authority by the *coir a glaive,* or right of the strongest, which we have already mentioned.

There had been a long and bloody feud betwixt the MacGregors and the Laird of Luss, head of the family of Colquhoun, a powerful race on the lower part of Loch Lomond. The MacGregors' tradition affirms that the quarrel began on a very trifling subject. Two of the MacGregors being benighted, asked shelter in a house belonging to a dependant of the Colquhouns, and were refused.

They then retreated to an out-house, took a wedder from the fold, killed it, and supped off the carcass, for which (it is said) they offered payment to the proprietor. The Laird of Luss seized on the offenders, and, by the summary process which feudal barons had at their command, had them both condemned and executed. The MacGregors verify this account of the feud by appealing to a proverb current amongst them, execrating the hour *(Mult dhu an Carbail ghil)* that the black wedder with the white tail was ever lambed. To avenge this quarrel, the Laird of MacGregor assembled his clan, to the number of three or four hundred men, and marched towards Luss from the banks of Loch Long, by a pass called *Raid na Gael,* or the Highlandman's Pass.

Sir Humphrey Colquhoun received early notice of this incursion, and collected a strong force, more than twice the number of that of the invaders. He had with him the gentlemen of the name of Buchanan, with the Grahams, and other gentry of the Lennox, and a party of the citizens of Dumbarton, under command of Tobias Smollett, a magistrate, or bailie, of that town, and ancestor of the celebrated author.

The parties met in the valley of Glenfruin, which signifies the Glen of Sorrow – a name that seemed to anticipate the event of the day, which, fatal to the conquered party, was at least equally so to the victors, the "babe unborn" of Clan Alpine having reason to repent it. The MacGregors, somewhat discouraged by the appearance of a force much superior to their own, were cheered on to the attack by a Seer, or second-sighted person, who professed that he saw the shrouds of the dead wrapt around their principal opponents. The clan charged with great fury on the front of the enemy, while John MacGregor, with a strong party, made an unexpected attack on the flank. A great part of the Colquhouns' force consisted in cavalry, which could not act in the boggy ground. They were said to have disputed the field manfully, but were at length completely routed, and a merciless slaughter was exercised on the fugitives, of whom betwixt two and three hundred fell on the field and in the pursuit. If the MacGregors lost, as is averred, only two men slain in the action, they had slight provocation for an indiscriminate massacre. It is said that their fury extended itself to a party of students for clerical orders, who had imprudently come to see the battle. Some doubt is thrown on this fact, from the indictment against the chief of the clan Gregor being silent on the subject, as is the historian Johnston, and a Professor Ross, who wrote an account of the battle twenty-nine years after it was fought. It is, however, constantly averred by the tradition of the country, and a stone where the deed was done is called *Leck-a-Mhinisteir,* the Minister or Clerk's Flagstone. The MacGregors, by a tradition which is now found to be inaccurate, impute this cruel action to the ferocity of a single man of their tribe, renowned for size and strength, called Dugald, *Ciar Mhor,* or the great Mouse-coloured Man. He was MacGregor's foster-brother, and the chief committed the youths to his charge, with directions to keep them safely till the affray was over. Whether fearful of their escape, or incensed by some sarcasms which they threw on his tribe, or whether out of mere thirst of blood, this savage, while the other MacGregors were engaged in the pursuit, poniarded his helpless and defenceless prisoners. When the chieftain, on his return, demanded where the youths were, the *Ciar* (pronounced Kiar) *Mhor* drew out his bloody dirk, saying in Gaelic, "Ask that, and God save me!" The latter words allude to the exclamation which his victims used when he was murdering them. It would seem, therefore, that this horrible part of the story is founded on fact, though the number of the youths so slain is probably exaggerated in the Lowland accounts. The common people say that the blood of the Ciar Mhor's victims can never be washed off the stone. When MacGregor learnt their fate, he expressed the utmost horror at the deed, and upbraided his foster-brother with having done that which would occasion the destruction of him and his clan. This supposed homicide was the ancestor of Rob Roy, and the tribe from which he was descended. He lies buried at the church of Fortingal, where his sepulchre, covered with a large stone,[2] is still shown, and where his great strength and courage are the theme of many traditions.[3]

[2] Note A. The Grey Stone of MacGregor.

MacGregor's brother was one of the very few of the tribe who was slain. He was buried near the field of battle, and the place is marked by a rude stone, called the Grey Stone of MacGregor.

Sir Humphrey Colquhoun, being well mounted, escaped for the time to the castle of Banochar, or Benechra. It proved no sure defence, however, for he was shortly after murdered in a vault of the castle, – the family annals say by the MacGregors, though other accounts charge the deed upon the MacFarlanes.

This battle of Glenfruin, and the severity which the victors exercised in the pursuit, was reported to King James VI. in a manner the most unfavourable to the clan Gregor, whose general character, being that of lawless though brave men, could not much avail them in such a case. That James might fully understand the extent of the slaughter, the widows of the slain, to the number of eleven score, in deep mourning, riding upon white palfreys, and each bearing her husband's bloody shirt on a spear, appeared at Stirling, in presence of a monarch peculiarly accessible to such sights of fear and sorrow, to demand vengeance for the death of their husbands, upon those by whom they had been made desolate.

The remedy resorted to was at least as severe as the cruelties which it was designed to punish. By an Act of the Privy Council, dated 3d April 1603, the name of MacGregor was expressly abolished, and those who had hitherto borne it were commanded to change it for other surnames, the pain of death being denounced against those who should call themselves Gregor or MacGregor, the names of their fathers. Under the same penalty, all who had been at the conflict of Glenfruin, or accessory to other marauding parties charged in the act, were prohibited from carrying weapons, except a pointless knife to eat their victuals. By a subsequent act of Council, 24th June 1613, death was denounced against any persons of the tribe formerly called MacGregor, who should presume to assemble in greater numbers than four. Again, by an Act of Parliament, 1617, chap. 26, these laws were continued, and extended to the rising generation, in respect that great numbers of the children of those against whom the acts of Privy Council had been directed, were stated to be then approaching to maturity, who, if permitted to resume the name of their parents, would render the clan as strong as it was before.

The execution of those severe acts was chiefly intrusted in the west to the Earl of Argyle and the powerful clan of Campbell, and to the Earl of Athole and his followers in the more eastern Highlands of Perthshire. The MacGregors failed not to resist with the most determined courage; and many a valley in the West and North Highlands retains memory of the severe conflicts, in which the proscribed clan sometimes obtained transient advantages, and always sold their lives dearly. At length the pride of Allaster MacGregor, the chief of the clan, was so much lowered by the sufferings of his people, that he resolved to surrender himself to the Earl of Argyle, with his principal followers, on condition that they should be sent out of Scotland. If the unfortunate chief's own account be true, he had more reasons than one for expecting some favour from the Earl, who had in secret advised and encouraged him to many of the desperate actions for which he was now called to so severe a reckoning. But Argyle, as old Birrell expresses himself, kept a Highlandman's promise with them, fulfilling it to the ear, and breaking it to the sense. MacGregor was sent under a strong guard to the frontier of England, and being thus, in the literal sense, sent out of Scotland, Argyle was judged to have kept faith with him, though the same party which took him there brought him back to Edinburgh in custody.

MacGregor of Glenstrae was tried before the Court of Justiciary, 20th January 1604, and found guilty. He appears to have been instantly conveyed from the bar to the gallows; for Birrell, of the same date, reports that he was hanged at the Cross, and, for distinction sake, was suspended higher by his own height than two of his kindred and friends.

On the 18th of February following, more men of the MacGregors were executed, after a long imprisonment, and several others in the beginning of March.

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[3] Note B. Dugald Ciar Mhor.

The Earl of Argyle's service, in conducting to the surrender of the insolent and wicked race and name of MacGregor, notorious common malefactors, and in the in-bringing of MacGregor, with a great many of the leading men of the clan, worthily executed to death for their offences, is thankfully acknowledged by an Act of Parliament, 1607, chap. 16, and rewarded with a grant of twenty chalders of victual out of the lands of Kintire.

The MacGregors, notwithstanding the letters of fire and sword, and orders for military execution repeatedly directed against them by the Scottish legislature, who apparently lost all the calmness of conscious dignity and security, and could not even name the outlawed clan without vituperation, showed no inclination to be blotted out of the roll of clanship. They submitted to the law, indeed, so far as to take the names of the neighbouring families amongst whom they happened to live, nominally becoming, as the case might render it most convenient, Drummonds, Campbells, Grahams, Buchanans, Stewarts, and the like; but to all intents and purposes of combination and mutual attachment, they remained the clan Gregor, united together for right or wrong, and menacing with the general vengeance of their race, all who committed aggressions against any individual of their number.

They continued to take and give offence with as little hesitation as before the legislative dispersion which had been attempted, as appears from the preamble to statute 1633, chapter 30, setting forth, that the clan Gregor, which had been suppressed and reduced to quietness by the great care of the late King James of eternal memory, had nevertheless broken out again, in the counties of Perth, Stirling, Clackmannan, Monteith, Lennox, Angus, and Mearns; for which reason the statute re-establishes the disabilities attached to the clan, and, grants a new commission for enforcing the laws against that wicked and rebellious race.

Notwithstanding the extreme severities of King James I. and Charles I. against this unfortunate people, who were rendered furious by proscription, and then punished for yielding to the passions which had been wilfully irritated, the MacGregors to a man attached themselves during the civil war to the cause of the latter monarch. Their bards have ascribed this to the native respect of the MacGregors for the crown of Scotland, which their ancestors once wore, and have appealed to their armorial bearings, which display a pine-tree crossed saltire wise with a naked sword, the point of which supports a royal crown. But, without denying that such motives may have had their weight, we are disposed to think, that a war which opened the low country to the raids of the clan Gregor would have more charms for them than any inducement to espouse the cause of the Covenanters, which would have brought them into contact with Highlanders as fierce as themselves, and having as little to lose. Patrick MacGregor, their leader, was the son of a distinguished chief, named Duncan Abbarach, to whom Montrose wrote letters as to his trusty and special friend, expressing his reliance on his devoted loyalty, with an assurance, that when once his Majesty's affairs were placed upon a permanent footing, the grievances of the clan MacGregor should be redressed.

At a subsequent period of these melancholy times, we find the clan Gregor claiming the immunities of other tribes, when summoned by the Scottish Parliament to resist the invasion of the Commonwealth's army, in 1651. On the last day of March in that year, a supplication to the King and Parliament, from Calum MacCondachie Vich Euen, and Euen MacCondachie Euen, in their own name, and that of the whole name of MacGregor, set forth, that while, in obedience to the orders of Parliament, enjoining all clans to come out in the present service under their chieftains, for the defence of religion, king, and kingdoms, the petitioners were drawing their men to guard the passes at the head of the river Forth, they were interfered with by the Earl of Athole and the Laird of Buchanan, who had required the attendance of many of the clan Gregor upon their arrays. This interference was, doubtless, owing to the change of name, which seems to have given rise to the claim of the Earl of Athole and the Laird of Buchanan to muster the MacGregors under their banners, as Murrays or Buchanans. It does not appear that the petition of the MacGregors, to be permitted to come out in a body, as other clans, received any answer. But upon the Restoration, King Charles, in the first Scottish

Parliament of his reign (statute 1661, chap. 195), annulled the various acts against the clan Gregor, and restored them to the full use of their family name, and the other privileges of liege subjects, setting forth, as a reason for this lenity, that those who were formerly designed MacGregors had, during the late troubles, conducted themselves with such loyalty and affection to his Majesty, as might justly wipe off all memory of former miscarriages, and take away all marks of reproach for the same.

It is singular enough, that it seems to have aggravated the feelings of the non-conforming Presbyterians, when the penalties which were most unjustly imposed upon themselves were relaxed towards the poor MacGregors; – so little are the best men, any more than the worst, able to judge with impartiality of the same measures, as applied to themselves, or to others. Upon the Restoration, an influence inimical to this unfortunate clan, said to be the same with that which afterwards dictated the massacre of Glencoe, occasioned the re-enaction of the penal statutes against the MacGregors. There are no reasons given why these highly penal acts should have been renewed; nor is it alleged that the clan had been guilty of late irregularities. Indeed, there is some reason to think that the clause was formed of set purpose, in a shape which should elude observation; for, though containing conclusions fatal to the rights of so many Scottish subjects, it is neither mentioned in the title nor the rubric of the Act of Parliament in which it occurs, and is thrown briefly in at the close of the statute 1693, chap. 61, entitled, an Act for the Justiciary in the Highlands.

It does not, however, appear that after the Revolution the acts against the clan were severely enforced; and in the latter half of the eighteenth century, they were not enforced at all. Commissioners of supply were named in Parliament by the proscribed title of MacGregor, and decrees of courts of justice were pronounced, and legal deeds entered into, under the same appellative. The MacGregors, however, while the laws continued in the statute-book, still suffered under the deprivation of the name which was their birthright, and some attempts were made for the purpose of adopting another, MacAlpine or Grant being proposed as the title of the whole clan in future. No agreement, however, could be entered into; and the evil was submitted to as a matter of necessity, until full redress was obtained from the British Parliament, by an act abolishing for ever the penal statutes which had been so long imposed upon this ancient race. This statute, well merited by the services of many a gentleman of the clan in behalf of their King and country, was passed, and the clan proceeded to act upon it with the same spirit of ancient times, which had made them suffer severely under a deprivation that would have been deemed of little consequence by a great part of their fellow-subjects.

They entered into a deed recognising John Murray of Lanrick, Esq. (afterwards Sir John MacGregor, Baronet), representative of the family of Glencarnock, as lawfully descended from the ancient stock and blood of the Lairds and Lords of MacGregor, and therefore acknowledged him as their chief on all lawful occasions and causes whatsoever. The deed was subscribed by eight hundred and twenty-six persons of the name of MacGregor, capable of bearing arms. A great many of the clan during the last war formed themselves into what was called the Clan Alpine Regiment, raised in 1799, under the command of their Chief and his brother Colonel MacGregor.

Having briefly noticed the history of this clan, which presents a rare and interesting example of the indelible character of the patriarchal system, the author must now offer some notices of the individual who gives name to these volumes.

In giving an account of a Highlander, his pedigree is first to be considered. That of Rob Roy was deduced from Ciar Mhor, the great mouse-coloured man, who is accused by tradition of having slain the young students at the battle of Glenfruin.

Without puzzling ourselves and our readers with the intricacies of Highland genealogy, it is enough to say, that after the death of Allaster MacGregor of Glenstrae, the clan, discouraged by the unremitting persecution of their enemies, seem not to have had the means of placing themselves under the command of a single chief. According to their places of residence and immediate descent, the several families were led and directed by *Chieftains,* which, in the Highland acceptation, signifies

the head of a particular branch of a tribe, in opposition to *Chief,* who is the leader and commander of the whole name.

The family and descendants of Dugald Ciar Mhor lived chiefly in the mountains between Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, and occupied a good deal of property there – whether by sufferance, by the right of the sword, which it was never safe to dispute with them, or by legal titles of various kinds, it would be useless to inquire and unnecessary to detail. Enough; – there they certainly were – a people whom their most powerful neighbours were desirous to conciliate, their friendship in peace being very necessary to the quiet of the vicinage, and their assistance in war equally prompt and effectual.

Rob Roy MacGregor Campbell, which last name he bore in consequence of the Acts of Parliament abolishing his own, was the younger son of Donald MacGregor of Glengyle, said to have been a Lieutenant-Colonel (probably in the service of James II.), by his wife, a daughter of Campbell of Glenfalloch. Rob's own designation was of Inversnaid; but he appears to have acquired a right of some kind or other to the property or possession of Craig Royston, a domain of rock and forest, lying on the east side of Loch Lomond, where that beautiful lake stretches into the dusky mountains of Glenfalloch.

The time of his birth is uncertain. But he is said to have been active in the scenes of war and plunder which succeeded the Revolution; and tradition affirms him to have been the leader in a predatory incursion into the parish of Kippen, in the Lennox, which took place in the year 1691. It was of almost a bloodless character, only one person losing his life; but from the extent of the depredation, it was long distinguished by the name of the Her'-ship, or devastation, of Kippen.[4] The time of his death is also uncertain, but as he is said to have survived the year 1733, and died an aged man, it is probable he may have been twenty-five about the time of the Her'-ship of Kippen, which would assign his birth to the middle of the 17th century.

In the more quiet times which succeeded the Revolution, Rob Roy, or Red Robert, seems to have exerted his active talents, which were of no mean order, as a drover, or trader in cattle, to a great extent. It may well be supposed that in those days no Lowland, much less English drovers, ventured to enter the Highlands. The cattle, which were the staple commodity of the mountains, were escorted down to fairs, on the borders of the Lowlands, by a party of Highlanders, with their arms rattling around them; and who dealt, however, in all honour and good faith with their Southern customers. A fray, indeed, would sometimes arise, when the Lowlandmen, chiefly Borderers, who had to supply the English market, used to dip their bonnets in the next brook, and wrapping them round their hands, oppose their cudgels to the naked broadswords, which had not always the superiority. I have heard from aged persons who had been engaged in such affrays, that the Highlanders used remarkably fair play, never using the point of the sword, far less their pistols or daggers; so that

> With many a stiff thwack and many a bang,
> Hard crabtree and cold iron rang.

A slash or two, or a broken head, was easily accommodated, and as the trade was of benefit to both parties, trifling skirmishes were not allowed to interrupt its harmony. Indeed it was of vital interest to the Highlanders, whose income, so far as derived from their estates, depended entirely on the sale of black cattle; and a sagacious and experienced dealer benefited not only himself, but his friends and neighbours, by his speculations. Those of Rob Roy were for several years so successful as to inspire general confidence, and raise him in the estimation of the country in which he resided.

His importance was increased by the death of his father, in consequence of which he succeeded to the management of his nephew Gregor MacGregor of Glengyle's property, and, as his tutor, to such influence with the clan and following as was due to the representative of Dugald Ciar. Such influence

[4] See *Statistcal Account of Scotland,* 1st edition, vol. xviii. p. 332. Parish of Kippen.

was the more uncontrolled, that this family of the MacGregors seemed to have refused adherence to MacGregor of Glencarnock, the ancestor of the present Sir Ewan MacGregor, and asserted a kind of independence.

It was at this time that Rob Roy acquired an interest by purchase, wadset, or otherwise, to the property of Craig Royston already mentioned. He was in particular favour, during this prosperous period of his life, with his nearest and most powerful neighbour, James, first Duke of Montrose, from whom he received many marks of regard. His Grace consented to give his nephew and himself a right of property on the estates of Glengyle and Inversnaid, which they had till then only held as kindly tenants. The Duke also, with a view to the interest of the country and his own estate, supported our adventurer by loans of money to a considerable amount, to enable him to carry on his speculations in the cattle trade.

Unfortunately that species of commerce was and is liable to sudden fluctuations; and Rob Roy was, by a sudden depression of markets, and, as a friendly tradition adds, by the bad faith of a partner named MacDonald, whom he had imprudently received into his confidence, and intrusted with a considerable sum of money, rendered totally insolvent. He absconded, of course – not empty-handed, if it be true, as stated in an advertisement for his apprehension, that he had in his possession sums to the amount of L1000 sterling, obtained from several noblemen and gentlemen under pretence of purchasing cows for them in the Highlands. This advertisement appeared in June 1712, and was several times repeated. It fixes the period when Rob Roy exchanged his commercial adventures for speculations of a very different complexion.[5]

He appears at this period first to have removed from his ordinary dwelling at Inversnaid, ten or twelve Scots miles (which is double the number of English) farther into the Highlands, and commenced the lawless sort of life which he afterwards followed. The Duke of Montrose, who conceived himself deceived and cheated by MacGregor's conduct, employed legal means to recover the money lent to him. Rob Roy's landed property was attached by the regular form of legal procedure, and his stock and furniture made the subject of arrest and sale.

It is said that this diligence of the law, as it is called in Scotland, which the English more bluntly term distress, was used in this case with uncommon severity, and that the legal satellites, not usually the gentlest persons in the world, had insulted MacGregor's wife, in a manner which would have aroused a milder man than he to thoughts of unbounded vengeance. She was a woman of fierce and haughty temper, and is not unlikely to have disturbed the officers in the execution of their duty, and thus to have incurred ill treatment, though, for the sake of humanity, it is to be hoped that the story sometimes told is a popular exaggeration. It is certain that she felt extreme anguish at being expelled from the banks of Loch Lomond, and gave vent to her feelings in a fine piece of pipe-music, still well known to amateurs by the name of "Rob Roy's Lament."

The fugitive is thought to have found his first place of refuge in Glen Dochart, under the Earl of Breadalbane's protection; for, though that family had been active agents in the destruction of the MacGregors in former times, they had of late years sheltered a great many of the name in their old possessions. The Duke of Argyle was also one of Rob Roy's protectors, so far as to afford him, according to the Highland phrase, wood and water – the shelter, namely, that is afforded by the forests and lakes of an inaccessible country.

The great men of the Highlands in that time, besides being anxiously ambitious to keep up what was called their Following, or military retainers, were also desirous to have at their disposal men of resolute character, to whom the world and the world's law were no friends, and who might at times ravage the lands or destroy the tenants of a feudal enemy, without bringing responsibility on their patrons. The strife between the names of Campbell and Graham, during the civil wars of the seventeenth century, had been stamped with mutual loss and inveterate enmity. The death of the

[5] See Appendix, No. I.

great Marquis of Montrose on the one side, the defeat at Inverlochy, and cruel plundering of Lorn, on the other, were reciprocal injuries not likely to be forgotten. Rob Roy was, therefore, sure of refuge in the country of the Campbells, both as having assumed their name, as connected by his mother with the family of Glenfalloch, and as an enemy to the rival house of Montrose. The extent of Argyle's possessions, and the power of retreating thither in any emergency, gave great encouragement to the bold schemes of revenge which he had adopted.

This was nothing short of the maintenance of a predatory war against the Duke of Montrose, whom he considered as the author of his exclusion from civil society, and of the outlawry to which he had been sentenced by letters of horning and caption (legal writs so called), as well as the seizure of his goods, and adjudication of his landed property. Against his Grace, therefore, his tenants, friends, allies, and relatives, he disposed himself to employ every means of annoyance in his power; and though this was a circle sufficiently extensive for active depredation, Rob, who professed himself a Jacobite, took the liberty of extending his sphere of operations against all whom he chose to consider as friendly to the revolutionary government, or to that most obnoxious of measures – the Union of the Kingdoms. Under one or other of these pretexts, all his neighbours of the Lowlands who had anything to lose, or were unwilling to compound for security by paying him an annual sum for protection or forbearance, were exposed to his ravages.

The country in which this private warfare, or system of depredation, was to be carried on, was, until opened up by roads, in the highest degree favourable for his purpose. It was broken up into narrow valleys, the habitable part of which bore no proportion to the huge wildernesses of forest, rocks, and precipices by which they were encircled, and which was, moreover, full of inextricable passes, morasses, and natural strengths, unknown to any but the inhabitants themselves, where a few men acquainted with the ground were capable, with ordinary address, of baffling the pursuit of numbers.

The opinions and habits of the nearest neighbours to the Highland line were also highly favourable to Rob Roy's purpose. A large proportion of them were of his own clan of MacGregor, who claimed the property of Balquhidder, and other Highland districts, as having been part of the ancient possessions of their tribe; though the harsh laws, under the severity of which they had suffered so deeply, had assigned the ownership to other families. The civil wars of the seventeenth century had accustomed these men to the use of arms, and they were peculiarly brave and fierce from remembrance of their sufferings. The vicinity of a comparatively rich Lowland district gave also great temptations to incursion. Many belonging to other clans, habituated to contempt of industry, and to the use of arms, drew towards an unprotected frontier which promised facility of plunder; and the state of the country, now so peaceable and quiet, verified at that time the opinion which Dr. Johnson heard with doubt and suspicion, that the most disorderly and lawless districts of the Highlands were those which lay nearest to the Lowland line. There was, therefore, no difficulty in Rob Roy, descended of a tribe which was widely dispersed in the country we have described, collecting any number of followers whom he might be able to keep in action, and to maintain by his proposed operations.

He himself appears to have been singularly adapted for the profession which he proposed to exercise. His stature was not of the tallest, but his person was uncommonly strong and compact. The greatest peculiarities of his frame were the breadth of his shoulders, and the great and almost disproportionate length of his arms; so remarkable, indeed, that it was said he could, without stooping, tie the garters of his Highland hose, which are placed two inches below the knee. His countenance was open, manly, stern at periods of danger, but frank and cheerful in his hours of festivity. His hair was dark red, thick, and frizzled, and curled short around the face. His fashion of dress showed, of course, the knees and upper part of the leg, which was described to me, as resembling that of a Highland bull, hirsute, with red hair, and evincing muscular strength similar to that animal. To these personal qualifications must be added a masterly use of the Highland sword, in which his length of arm gave him great advantage – and a perfect and intimate knowledge of all the recesses of the wild country

in which he harboured, and the character of the various individuals, whether friendly or hostile, with whom he might come in contact.

His mental qualities seem to have been no less adapted to the circumstances in which he was placed. Though the descendant of the blood-thirsty Ciar Mhor, he inherited none of his ancestor's ferocity. On the contrary, Rob Roy avoided every appearance of cruelty, and it is not averred that he was ever the means of unnecessary bloodshed, or the actor in any deed which could lead the way to it. His schemes of plunder were contrived and executed with equal boldness and sagacity, and were almost universally successful, from the skill with which they were laid, and the secrecy and rapidity with which they were executed. Like Robin Hood of England, he was a kind and gentle robber, – and, while he took from the rich, was liberal in relieving the poor. This might in part be policy; but the universal tradition of the country speaks it to have arisen from a better motive. All whom I have conversed with, and I have in my youth seen some who knew Rob Roy personally, give him the character of a benevolent and humane man "in his way."

His ideas of morality were those of an Arab chief, being such as naturally arose out of his wild education. Supposing Rob Roy to have argued on the tendency of the life which he pursued, whether from choice or from necessity, he would doubtless have assumed to himself the character of a brave man, who, deprived of his natural rights by the partiality of laws, endeavoured to assert them by the strong hand of natural power; and he is most felicitously described as reasoning thus, in the high-toned poetry of my gifted friend Wordsworth:

Say, then, that he was wise as brave,
As wise in thought as bold in deed;
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.
Said generous Rob, "What need of Books?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves!
They stir us up against our kind,
And worse, against ourselves.
"We have a passion, make a law,
Too false to guide us or control;
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.
"And puzzled, blinded, then we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few;
These find I graven on my heart,
That tells me what to do.
"The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind
With them no strife can last; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.
"For why? Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.
"A lesson which is quickly learn'd,
A signal through which all can see;
Thus, nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.
"And freakishness of mind is check'd,

He tamed who foolishly aspires,
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.
"All kinds and creatures stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit;
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.
"Since then," said Robin, "right is plain,
And longest life is but a day,
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I'll take the shortest way."
And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer's heat and winter's snow
The eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

We are not, however, to suppose the character of this distinguished outlaw to be that of an actual hero, acting uniformly and consistently on such moral principles as the illustrious bard who, standing by his grave, has vindicated his fame. On the contrary, as is common with barbarous chiefs, Rob Roy appears to have mixed his professions of principle with a large alloy of craft and dissimulation, of which his conduct during the civil war is sufficient proof. It is also said, and truly, that although his courtesy was one of his strongest characteristics, yet sometimes he assumed an arrogance of manner which was not easily endured by the high-spirited men to whom it was addressed, and drew the daring outlaw into frequent disputes, from which he did not always come off with credit. From this it has been inferred, that Rob Roy was more of a bully than a hero, or at least that he had, according to the common phrase, his fighting days. Some aged men who knew him well, have described him also as better at a *taich-tulzie,* or scuffle within doors, than in mortal combat. The tenor of his life may be quoted to repel this charge; while, at the same time, it must be allowed, that the situation in which he was placed rendered him prudently averse to maintaining quarrels, where nothing was to be had save blows, and where success would have raised up against him new and powerful enemies, in a country where revenge was still considered as a duty rather than a crime. The power of commanding his passions on such occasions, far from being inconsistent with the part which MacGregor had to perform, was essentially necessary, at the period when he lived, to prevent his career from being cut short.

I may here mention one or two occasions on which Rob Roy appears to have given way in the manner alluded to. My late venerable friend, John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, alike eminent as a classical scholar and as an authentic register of the ancient history and manners of Scotland, informed me, that on occasion of a public meeting at a bonfire in the town of Doune, Rob Roy gave some offence to James Edmondstone of Newton, the same gentleman who was unfortunately concerned in the slaughter of Lord Rollo (see Maclaurin's Criminal Trials, No. IX.), when Edmondstone compelled MacGregor to quit the town on pain of being thrown by him into the bonfire. "I broke one off your ribs on a former occasion," said he, "and now, Rob, if you provoke me farther, I will break your neck." But it must be remembered that Edmondstone was a man of consequence in the Jacobite party, as he carried the royal standard of James VII. at the battle of Sheriffmuir, and also, that he was near the door of his own mansion-house, and probably surrounded by his friends and adherents. Rob Roy, however, suffered in reputation for retiring under such a threat.

Another well-vouched case is that of Cunningham of Boquhan.

Henry Cunningham, Esq. of Boquhan, was a gentleman of Stirlingshire, who, like many *exquisites* of our own time, united a natural high spirit and daring character with an affectation of delicacy of address and manners amounting to foppery.[6]

"Six times had Harry bowed unseen,
Before he dared advance;
The Duke then, turning round well pleased,
Said, 'Sure you've been in France!
A more polite and jaunty man
I never saw before:'
Then Harry bowed, and blushed, and bowed,
And strutted to the door."

See a Collection of original Poems, by Scotch Gentlemen, vol. ii. p. 125.

He chanced to be in company with Rob Roy, who, either in contempt of Boquhan's supposed effeminacy, or because he thought him a safe person to fix a quarrel on (a point which Rob's enemies alleged he was wont to consider), insulted him so grossly that a challenge passed between them. The goodwife of the clachan had hidden Cunningham's sword, and while he rummaged the house in quest of his own or some other, Rob Roy went to the Shieling Hill, the appointed place of combat, and paraded there with great majesty, waiting for his antagonist. In the meantime, Cunningham had rummaged out an old sword, and, entering the ground of contest in all haste, rushed on the outlaw with such unexpected fury that he fairly drove him off the field, nor did he show himself in the village again for some time. Mr. MacGregor Stirling has a softened account of this anecdote in his new edition of Nimmo's Stirlingshire; still he records Rob Roy's discomfiture.

Occasionally Rob Roy suffered disasters, and incurred great personal danger. On one remarkable occasion he was saved by the coolness of his lieutenant, Macanaleister or Fletcher, the *Little John* of his band – a fine active fellow, of course, and celebrated as a marksman. It happened that MacGregor and his party had been surprised and dispersed by a superior force of horse and foot, and the word was given to "split and squander." Each shifted for himself, but a bold dragoon attached himself to pursuit of Rob, and overtaking him, struck at him with his broadsword. A plate of iron in his bonnet saved the MacGregor from being cut down to the teeth; but the blow was heavy enough to bear him to the ground, crying as he fell, "Oh, Macanaleister, is there naething in her?" (*i. e.* in the gun). The trooper, at the same time, exclaiming, "D – n ye, your mother never wrought your night-cap!" had his arm raised for a second blow, when Macanaleister fired, and the ball pierced the dragoon's heart.

Such as he was, Rob Roy's progress in his occupation is thus described by a gentleman of sense and talent, who resided within the circle of his predatory wars, had probably felt their effects, and speaks of them, as might be expected, with little of the forbearance with which, from their peculiar and romantic character, they are now regarded.

"This man (Rob Roy MacGregor) was a person of sagacity, and neither wanted stratagem nor address; and having abandoned himself to all licentiousness, set himself at the head of all the loose, vagrant, and desperate people of that clan, in the west end of Perth and Stirling shires, and infested those whole countries with thefts, robberies, and depredations. Very few who lived within his reach (that is, within the distance of a nocturnal expedition) could promise to themselves security, either for their persons or effects, without subjecting themselves to pay him a heavy and shameful tax of *black-mail.* He at last proceeded to such a degree of audaciousness that he committed robberies, raised

[6] His courage and affectation of foppery were united, which is less frequently the case, with a spirit of innate modesty. He is thus described in Lord Binning's satirical verses, entitled "Argyle's Levee:"

contributions, and resented quarrels, at the head of a very considerable body of armed men, in open day, and in the face of the government." [7]

The extent and success of these depredations cannot be surprising, when we consider that the scene of them was laid in a country where the general law was neither enforced nor respected.

Having recorded that the general habit of cattle-stealing had blinded even those of the better classes to the infamy of the practice, and that as men's property consisted entirely in herds, it was rendered in the highest degree precarious, Mr. Grahame adds —

"On these accounts there is no culture of ground, no improvement of pastures, and from the same reasons, no manufactures, no trade; in short, no industry. The people are extremely prolific, and therefore so numerous, that there is not business in that country, according to its present order and economy, for the one-half of them. Every place is full of idle people, accustomed to arms, and lazy in everything but rapines and depredations. As *buddel* or *aquavitae* houses are to be found everywhere through the country, so in these they saunter away their time, and frequently consume there the returns of their illegal purchases. Here the laws have never been executed, nor the authority of the magistrate ever established. Here the officer of the law neither dare nor can execute his duty, and several places are about thirty miles from lawful persons. In short, here is no order, no authority, no government."

The period of the rebellion, 1715, approached soon after Rob Roy had attained celebrity. His Jacobite partialities were now placed in opposition to his sense of the obligations which he owed to the indirect protection of the Duke of Argyle. But the desire of "drowning his sounding steps amid the din of general war" induced him to join the forces of the Earl of Mar, although his patron the Duke of Argyle was at the head of the army opposed to the Highland insurgents.

The MacGregors, a large sept of them at least, that of Ciar Mhor, on this occasion were not commanded by Rob Roy, but by his nephew already mentioned, Gregor MacGregor, otherwise called James Grahame of Glengyle, and still better remembered by the Gaelic epithet of *Ghlune Dhu, i.e.* Black Knee, from a black spot on one of his knees, which his Highland garb rendered visible. There can be no question, however, that being then very young, Glengyle must have acted on most occasions by the advice and direction of so experienced a leader as his uncle.

The MacGregors assembled in numbers at that period, and began even to threaten the Lowlands towards the lower extremity of Loch Lomond. They suddenly seized all the boats which were upon the lake, and, probably with a view to some enterprise of their own, drew them overland to Inversnaid, in order to intercept the progress of a large body of west-country whigs who were in arms for the government, and moving in that direction.

The whigs made an excursion for the recovery of the boats. Their forces consisted of volunteers from Paisley, Kilpatrick, and elsewhere, who, with the assistance of a body of seamen, were towed up the river Leven in long-boats belonging to the ships of war then lying in the Clyde. At Luss they were joined by the forces of Sir Humphrey Colquhoun, and James Grant, his son-in-law, with their followers, attired in the Highland dress of the period, which is picturesquely described.[8] The whole party crossed to Craig-Royston, but the MacGregors did not offer combat.

If we are to believe the account of the expedition given by the historian Rae, they leapt on shore at Craig-Royston with the utmost intrepidity, no enemy appearing to oppose them, and by the noise of their drums, which they beat incessantly, and the discharge of their artillery and small arms, terrified the MacGregors, whom they appear never to have seen, out of their fastnesses, and caused them to fly

[7] Mr. Grahame of Gartmore's Causes of the Disturbances in the Highlands. See Jamieson's edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, Appendix, vol. ii. p. 348.

[8] "At night they arrived at Luss, where they were joined by Sir Humphrey Colquhoun of Luss, and James Grant of Plascander, his son-in-law, followed by forty or fifty stately fellows in their short hose and belted plaids, armed each of them with a well-fixed gun on his shoulder, a strong handsome target, with a sharp-pointed steel of above half an ell in length screwed into the navel of it, on his left arm, a sturdy claymore by his side, and a pistol or two, with a dirk and knife, in his belt." —*Rae's History of the Rebellion,* 4to, p. 287.

in a panic to the general camp of the Highlanders at Strath-Fillan.[9] The low-country men succeeded in getting possession of the boats at a great expenditure of noise and courage, and little risk of danger.

After this temporary removal from his old haunts, Rob Roy was sent by the Earl of Mar to Aberdeen, to raise, it is believed, a part of the clan Gregor, which is settled in that country. These men were of his own family (the race of the Ciar Mhor). They were the descendants of about three hundred MacGregors whom the Earl of Murray, about the year 1624, transported from his estates in Menteith to oppose against his enemies the MacIntoshes, a race as hardy and restless as they were themselves.

But while in the city of Aberdeen, Rob Roy met a relation of a very different class and character from those whom he was sent to summon to arms. This was Dr. James Gregory (by descent a MacGregor), the patriarch of a dynasty of professors distinguished for literary and scientific talent, and the grandfather of the late eminent physician and accomplished scholar, Professor Gregory of Edinburgh. This gentleman was at the time Professor of Medicine in King's College, Aberdeen, and son of Dr. James Gregory, distinguished in science as the inventor of the reflecting telescope. With such a family it may seem our friend Rob could have had little communion. But civil war is a species of misery which introduces men to strange bed-fellows. Dr. Gregory thought it a point of prudence to claim kindred, at so critical a period, with a man so formidable and influential. He invited Rob Roy to his house, and treated him with so much kindness, that he produced in his generous bosom a degree of gratitude which seemed likely to occasion very inconvenient effects.

The Professor had a son about eight or nine years old, – a lively, stout boy of his age, – with whose appearance our Highland Robin Hood was much taken. On the day before his departure from the house of his learned relative, Rob Roy, who had pondered deeply how he might requite his cousin's kindness, took Dr. Gregory aside, and addressed him to this purport: – "My dear kinsman, I have been thinking what I could do to show my sense of your hospitality. Now, here you have a fine spirited boy of a son, whom you are ruining by cramming him with your useless book-learning, and I am determined, by way of manifesting my great good-will to you and yours, to take him with me and make a man of him." The learned Professor was utterly overwhelmed when his warlike kinsman announced his kind purpose in language which implied no doubt of its being a proposal which, would be, and ought to be, accepted with the utmost gratitude. The task of apology or explanation was of a most delicate description; and there might have been considerable danger in suffering Rob Roy to perceive that the promotion with which he threatened the son was, in the father's eyes, the ready road to the gallows. Indeed, every excuse which he could at first think of – such as regret for putting his friend to trouble with a youth who had been educated in the Lowlands, and so on – only strengthened the chieftain's inclination to patronise his young kinsman, as he supposed they arose entirely from the modesty of the father. He would for a long time take no apology, and even spoke of carrying off the youth by a certain degree of kindly violence, whether his father consented, or not. At length the perplexed Professor pleaded that his son was very young, and in an infirm state of health, and not yet able to endure the hardships of a mountain life; but that in another year or two he hoped his health would be firmly established, and he would be in a fitting condition to attend on his brave kinsman, and follow out the splendid destinies to which he opened the way. This agreement being made, the cousins parted, – Rob Roy pledging his honour to carry his young relation to the hills with him on his next return to Aberdeenshire, and Dr. Gregory, doubtless, praying in his secret soul that he might never see Rob's Highland face again.

James Gregory, who thus escaped being his kinsman's recruit, and in all probability his henchman, was afterwards Professor of Medicine in the College, and, like most of his family, distinguished by his scientific acquirements. He was rather of an irritable and pertinacious disposition;

[9] Note C. The Loch Lomond Expedition.

and his friends were wont to remark, when he showed any symptom of these foibles, “Ah! this comes of not having been educated by Rob Roy.”

The connection between Rob Roy and his classical kinsman did not end with the period of Rob’s transient power. At a period considerably subsequent to the year 1715, he was walking in the Castle Street of Aberdeen, arm in arm with his host, Dr. James Gregory, when the drums in the barracks suddenly beat to arms, and soldiers were seen issuing from the barracks. “If these lads are turning out,” said Rob, taking leave of his cousin with great composure, “it is time for me to look after my safety.” So saying, he dived down a close, and, as John Bunyan says, “went upon his way and was seen no more.” [10]

We have already stated that Rob Roy’s conduct during the insurrection of 1715 was very equivocal. His person and followers were in the Highland army, but his heart seems to have been with the Duke of Argyle’s. Yet the insurgents were constrained to trust to him as their only guide, when they marched from Perth towards Dunblane, with the view of crossing the Forth at what are called the Fords of Frew, and when they themselves said he could not be relied upon.

This movement to the westward, on the part of the insurgents, brought on the battle of Sheriffmuir – indecisive, indeed, in its immediate results, but of which the Duke of Argyle reaped the whole advantage. In this action, it will be recollected that the right wing of the Highlanders broke and cut to pieces Argyle’s left wing, while the clans on the left of Mar’s army, though consisting of Stewarts, Mackenzies, and Camerons, were completely routed. During this medley of flight and pursuit, Rob Roy retained his station on a hill in the centre of the Highland position; and though it is said his attack might have decided the day, he could not be prevailed upon to charge. This was the more unfortunate for the insurgents, as the leading of a party of the Macphersons had been committed to MacGregor. This, it is said, was owing to the age and infirmity of the chief of that name, who, unable to lead his clan in person, objected to his heir-apparent, Macpherson of Nord, discharging his duty on that occasion; so that the tribe, or a part of them, were brigaded with their allies the MacGregors. While the favourable moment for action was gliding away unemployed, Mar’s positive orders reached Rob Roy that he should presently attack. To which he coolly replied, “No, no! if they cannot do it without me, they cannot do it with me.” One of the Macphersons, named Alexander, one of Rob’s original profession, *videlicet,* a drover, but a man of great strength and spirit, was so incensed at the inactivity of this temporary leader, that he threw off his plaid, drew his sword, and called out to his clansmen, “Let us endure this no longer! if he will not lead you I will.” Rob Roy replied, with great coolness, “Were the question about driving Highland stots or kyloes, Sandie, I would yield to your superior skill; but as it respects the leading of men, I must be allowed to be the better judge.” – “Did the matter respect driving Glen-Eigas stots,” answered the Macpherson, “the question with Rob would not be, which was to be last, but which was to be foremost.” Incensed at this sarcasm, MacGregor drew his sword, and they would have fought upon the spot if their friends on both sides had not interfered. But the moment of attack was completely lost. Rob did not, however, neglect his own private interest on the occasion. In the confusion of an undecided field of battle, he enriched his followers by plundering the baggage and the dead on both sides.

The fine old satirical ballad on the battle of Sheriffmuir does not forget to stigmatise our hero’s conduct on this memorable occasion —

Rob Roy he stood watch
On a hill for to catch

[10] The first of these anecdotes, which brings the highest pitch of civilisation so closely in contact with the half-savage state of society, I have heard told by the late distinguished Dr. Gregory; and the members of his family have had the kindness to collate the story with their recollections and family documents, and furnish the authentic particulars. The second rests on the recollection of an old man, who was present when Rob took French leave of his literary cousin on hearing the drums beat, and communicated the circumstance to Mr. Alexander Forbes, a connection of Dr. Gregory by marriage, who is still alive.

The booty for aught that I saw, man;
For he ne'er advanced
From the place where he stanced,
Till nae mair was to do there at a', man.

Notwithstanding the sort of neutrality which Rob Roy had continued to observe during the progress of the Rebellion, he did not escape some of its penalties. He was included in the act of attainder, and the house in Breadalbane, which was his place of retreat, was burned by General Lord Cadogan, when, after the conclusion of the insurrection, he marched through the Highlands to disarm and punish the offending clans. But upon going to Inverary with about forty or fifty of his followers, Rob obtained favour, by an apparent surrender of their arms to Colonel Patrick Campbell of Finnah, who furnished them and their leader with protections under his hand. Being thus in a great measure secured from the resentment of government, Rob Roy established his residence at Craig-Royston, near Loch Lomond, in the midst of his own kinsmen, and lost no time in resuming his private quarrel with the Duke of Montrose. For this purpose he soon got on foot as many men, and well armed too, as he had yet commanded. He never stirred without a body-guard of ten or twelve picked followers, and without much effort could increase them to fifty or sixty.

The Duke was not wanting in efforts to destroy this troublesome adversary. His Grace applied to General Carpenter, commanding the forces in Scotland, and by his orders three parties of soldiers were directed from the three different points of Glasgow, Stirling, and Finlarig near Killin. Mr. Graham of Killearn, the Duke of Montrose's relation and factor, Sheriff-depute also of Dumbartonshire, accompanied the troops, that they might act under the civil authority, and have the assistance of a trusty guide well acquainted with the hills. It was the object of these several columns to arrive about the same time in the neighbourhood of Rob Roy's residence, and surprise him and his followers. But heavy rains, the difficulties of the country, and the good intelligence which the Outlaw was always supplied with, disappointed their well-concerted combination. The troops, finding the birds were flown, avenged themselves by destroying the nest. They burned Rob Roy's house, – though not with impunity; for the MacGregors, concealed among the thickets and cliffs, fired on them, and killed a grenadier.

Rob Roy avenged himself for the loss which he sustained on this occasion by an act of singular audacity. About the middle of November 1716, John Graham of Killearn, already mentioned as factor of the Montrose family, went to a place called Chapel Errock, where the tenants of the Duke were summoned to appear with their termly rents. They appeared accordingly, and the factor had received ready money to the amount of about L300, when Rob Roy entered the room at the head of an armed party. The Steward endeavoured to protect the Duke's property by throwing the books of accounts and money into a garret, trusting they might escape notice. But the experienced freebooter was not to be baffled where such a prize was at stake. He recovered the books and cash, placed himself calmly in the receipt of custom, examined the accounts, pocketed the money, and gave receipts on the Duke's part, saying he would hold reckoning with the Duke of Montrose out of the damages which he had sustained by his Grace's means, in which he included the losses he had suffered, as well by the burning of his house by General Cadogan, as by the later expedition against Craig-Royston. He then requested Mr. Graham to attend him; nor does it appear that he treated him with any personal violence, or even rudeness, although he informed him he regarded him as a hostage, and menaced rough usage in case he should be pursued, or in danger of being overtaken. Few more audacious feats have been performed. After some rapid changes of place (the fatigue attending which was the only annoyance that Mr. Graham seems to have complained of), he carried his prisoner to an island on Loch Katrine, and caused him to write to the Duke, to state that his ransom was fixed at L3400 merks, being the balance which MacGregor pretended remained due to him, after deducting all that he owed to the Duke of Montrose.

However, after detaining Mr. Graham five or six days in custody on the island, which is still called Rob Roy's Prison, and could be no comfortable dwelling for November nights, the Outlaw seems to have despaired of attaining further advantage from his bold attempt, and suffered his prisoner to depart uninjured, with the account-books, and bills granted by the tenants, taking especial care to retain the cash.[11]

About 1717, our Chieftain had the dangerous adventure of falling into the hands of the Duke of Athole, almost as much his enemy as the Duke of Montrose himself; but his cunning and dexterity again freed him from certain death. See a contemporary account of this curious affair in the Appendix, No. V.

Other pranks are told of Rob, which argue the same boldness and sagacity as the seizure of Killearn. The Duke of Montrose, weary of his insolence, procured a quantity of arms, and distributed them among his tenantry, in order that they might defend themselves against future violences. But they fell into different hands from those they were intended for. The MacGregors made separate attacks on the houses of the tenants, and disarmed them all one after another, not, as was supposed, without the consent of many of the persons so disarmed.

As a great part of the Duke's rents were payable in kind, there were girnels (granaries) established for storing up the corn at Moulin, and elsewhere on the Buchanan estate. To these storehouses Rob Roy used to repair with a sufficient force, and of course when he was least expected, and insist upon the delivery of quantities of grain – sometimes for his own use, and sometimes for the assistance of the country people; always giving regular receipts in his own name, and pretending to reckon with the Duke for what sums he received.

In the meanwhile a garrison was established by Government, the ruins of which may be still seen about half-way betwixt Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, upon Rob Roy's original property of Inversnaid. Even this military establishment could not bridle the restless MacGregor. He contrived to surprise the little fort, disarm the soldiers, and destroy the fortification. It was afterwards re-established, and again taken by the MacGregors under Rob Roy's nephew Ghlune Dhu, previous to the insurrection of 1745-6. Finally, the fort of Inversnaid was a third time repaired after the extinction of civil discord; and when we find the celebrated General Wolfe commanding in it, the imagination is strongly affected by the variety of time and events which the circumstance brings simultaneously to recollection. It is now totally dismantled.[12]

It was not, strictly speaking, as a professed depredator that Rob Roy now conducted his operations, but as a sort of contractor for the police; in Scottish phrase, a lifter of black-mail. The nature of this contract has been described in the Novel of Waverley, and in the notes on that work. Mr. Grahame of Gartmore's description of the character may be here transcribed: —

"The confusion and disorders of the country were so great, and the Government go absolutely neglected it, that the sober people were obliged to purchase some security to their effects by shameful and ignominious contracts of *black-mail.* A person who had the greatest correspondence with the thieves was agreed with to preserve the lands contracted for from thefts, for certain sums to be paid yearly. Upon this fund he employed one half of the thieves to recover stolen cattle, and the other half of them to steal, in order to make this agreement and black-mail contract necessary. The estates of those gentlemen who refused to contract, or give countenance to that pernicious practice, are plundered by the thieving part of the watch, in order to force them to purchase their protection. Their leader calls himself the *Captain* of the *Watch,* and his banditti go by that name. And as this gives them a kind of authority to traverse the country, so it makes them capable of doing any mischief.

[11] The reader will find two original letters of the Duke of Montrose, with that which Mr. Graham of Killearn despatched from his prison-house by the Outlaw's command, in the Appendix, No. II.

[12] About 1792, when the author chanced to pass that way while on a tour through the Highlands, a garrison, consisting of a single veteran, was still maintained at Inversnaid. The venerable warder was reaping his barley croft in all peace and tranquillity and when we asked admittance to repose ourselves, he told us we would find the key of the Fort under the door.

These corps through the Highlands make altogether a very considerable body of men, inured from their infancy to the greatest fatigues, and very capable, to act in a military way when occasion offers.

"People who are ignorant and enthusiastic, who are in absolute dependence upon their chief or landlord, who are directed in their consciences by Roman Catholic priests, or nonjuring clergymen, and who are not masters of any property, may easily be formed into any mould. They fear no dangers, as they have nothing to lose, and so can with ease be induced to attempt anything. Nothing can make their condition worse: confusions and troubles do commonly indulge them in such licentiousness, that by these they better it." [13]

As the practice of contracting for black-mail was an obvious encouragement to rapine, and a great obstacle to the course of justice, it was, by the statute 1567, chap. 21, declared a capital crime both on the part of him who levied and him who paid this sort of tax. But the necessity of the case prevented the execution of this severe law, I believe, in any one instance; and men went on submitting to a certain unlawful imposition rather than run the risk of utter ruin – just as it is now found difficult or impossible to prevent those who have lost a very large sum of money by robbery, from compounding with the felons for restoration of a part of their booty.

At what rate Rob Roy levied black-mail I never heard stated; but there is a formal contract by which his nephew, in 1741, agreed with various landholders of estates in the counties of Perth, Stirling, and Dumbarton, to recover cattle stolen from them, or to pay the value within six months of the loss being intimated, if such intimation were made to him with sufficient despatch, in consideration of a payment of L5 on each L100 of valued rent, which was not a very heavy insurance. Petty thefts were not included in the contract; but the theft of one horse, or one head of black cattle, or of sheep exceeding the number of six, fell under the agreement.

Rob Roy's profits upon such contracts brought him in a considerable revenue in money or cattle, of which he made a popular use; for he was publicly liberal as well as privately beneficent. The minister of the parish of Balquhidder, whose name was Robertson, was at one time threatening to pursue the parish for an augmentation of his stipend. Rob Roy took an opportunity to assure him that he would do well to abstain from this new exaction – a hint which the minister did not fail to understand. But to make him some indemnification, MacGregor presented him every year with a cow and a fat sheep; and no scruples as to the mode in which the donor came by them are said to have affected the reverend gentleman's conscience.

The following amount of the proceedings of Rob Roy, on an application to him from one of his contractors, had in it something very interesting to me, as told by an old countryman in the Lennox who was present on the expedition. But as there is no point or marked incident in the story, and as it must necessarily be without the half-frightened, half-bewildered look with which the narrator accompanied his recollections, it may possibly lose, its effect when transferred to paper.

My informant stated himself to have been a lad of fifteen, living with his father on the estate of a gentleman in the Lennox, whose name I have forgotten, in the capacity of herd. On a fine morning in the end of October, the period when such calamities were almost always to be apprehended, they found the Highland thieves had been down upon them, and swept away ten or twelve head of cattle. Rob Roy was sent for, and came with a party of seven or eight armed men. He heard with great gravity all that could be told him of the circumstances of the *creagh,* and expressed his confidence that the *herd-widdiefows*[14] could not have carried their booty far, and that he should be able to recover them.

He desired that two Lowlanders should be sent on the party, as it was not to be expected that any of his gentlemen would take the trouble of driving the cattle when he should recover possession of them. My informant and his father were despatched on the expedition. They had no good will to the journey; nevertheless, provided with a little food, and with a dog to help them to manage the cattle,

[13] Letters from the North of Scotland, vol. ii. pp. 344, 345.

[14] Mad herdsmen – a name given to cattle-stealers [properly one who deserves to fill a *widdie,* or halter].

they set off with MacGregor. They travelled a long day's journey in the direction of the mountain Benvoirlich, and slept for the night in a ruinous hut or bothy. The next morning they resumed their journey among the hills, Rob Roy directing their course by signs and marks on the heath which my informant did not understand.

About noon Rob commanded the armed party to halt, and to lie couched in the heather where it was thickest. "Do you and your son," he said to the oldest Lowlander, "go boldly over the hill; – you will see beneath you, in a glen on the other side, your master's cattle, feeding, it may be, with others; gather your own together, taking care to disturb no one else, and drive them to this place. If any one speak to or threaten you, tell them that I am here, at the head of twenty men." – "But what if they abuse us, or kill us?" said the Lowland, peasant, by no means delighted at finding the embassy imposed on him and his son. "If they do you any wrong," said Rob, "I will never forgive them as long as I live." The Lowlander was by no means content with this security, but did not think it safe to dispute Rob's injunctions.

He and his son climbed the hill therefore, found a deep valley, where there grazed, as Rob had predicted, a large herd of cattle. They cautiously selected those which their master had lost, and took measures to drive them over the hill. As soon as they began to remove them, they were surprised by hearing cries and screams; and looking around in fear and trembling they saw a woman seeming to have started out of the earth, who *flyted* at them, that is, scolded them, in Gaelic. When they contrived, however, in the best Gaelic they could muster, to deliver the message Rob Roy told them, she became silent, and disappeared without offering them any further annoyance. The chief heard their story on their return, and spoke with great complacency of the art which he possessed of putting such things to rights without any unpleasant bustle. The party were now on their road home, and the danger, though not the fatigue, of the expedition was at an end.

They drove on the cattle with little repose until it was nearly dark, when Rob proposed to halt for the night upon a wide moor, across which a cold north-east wind, with frost on its wing, was whistling to the tune of the Pipers of Strath-Dearn.[15]

The Highlanders, sheltered by their plaids, lay down on the heath comfortably enough, but the Lowlanders had no protection whatever. Rob Roy observing this, directed one of his followers to afford the old man a portion of his plaid; "for the callant (boy), he may," said the freebooter, "keep himself warm by walking about and watching the cattle." My informant heard this sentence with no small distress; and as the frost wind grew more and more cutting, it seemed to freeze the very blood in his young veins. He had been exposed to weather all his life, he said, but never could forget the cold of that night; insomuch that, in the bitterness of his heart, he cursed the bright moon for giving no heat with so much light. At length the sense of cold and weariness became so intolerable that he resolved to desert his watch to seek some repose and shelter. With that purpose he couched himself down behind one of the most bulky of the Highlanders, who acted as lieutenant to the party. Not satisfied with having secured the shelter of the man's large person, he coveted a share of his plaid, and by imperceptible degrees drew a corner of it round him. He was now comparatively in paradise, and slept sound till daybreak, when he awoke, and was terribly afraid on observing that his nocturnal operations had altogether uncovered the dhuiniewassell's neck and shoulders, which, lacking the plaid which should have protected them, were covered with *cranreuch* (*i. e.* hoar frost). The lad rose in great dread of a beating, at least, when it should be found how luxuriously he had been accommodated at the expense of a principal person of the party. Good Mr. Lieutenant, however, got up and shook himself, rubbing off the hoar frost with his plaid, and muttering something of a *cauld neight.* They then drove on the cattle, which were restored to their owner without farther adventure – The above can hardly be termed a tale, but yet it contains materials both for the poet and artist.

[15] The winds which sweep a wild glen in Badenoch are so called.

It was perhaps about the same time that, by a rapid march into the Balquhidder hills at the head of a body of his own tenantry, the Duke of Montrose actually surprised Rob Roy, and made him prisoner. He was mounted behind one of the Duke's followers, named James Stewart, and made fast to him by a horse-girth. The person who had him thus in charge was grandfather of the intelligent man of the same name, now deceased, who lately kept the inn in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, and acted as a guide to visitors through that beautiful scenery. From him I learned the story many years before he was either a publican, or a guide, except to moorfowl shooters. – It was evening (to resume the story), and the Duke was pressing on to lodge his prisoner, so long sought after in vain, in some place of security, when, in crossing the Teith or Forth, I forget which, MacGregor took an opportunity to conjure Stewart, by all the ties of old acquaintance and good neighbourhood, to give him some chance of an escape from an assured doom. Stewart was moved with compassion, perhaps with fear. He slipt the girth-buckle, and Rob, dropping down from behind the horse's croupe, dived, swam, and escaped, pretty much as described in the Novel. When James Stewart came on shore, the Duke hastily demanded where his prisoner was; and as no distinct answer was returned, instantly suspected Stewart's connivance at the escape of the Outlaw; and, drawing a steel pistol from his belt, struck him down with a blow on the head, from the effects of which, his descendant said, he never completely recovered.

In the success of his repeated escapes from the pursuit of his powerful enemy, Rob Roy at length became wanton and facetious. He wrote a mock challenge to the Duke, which he circulated among his friends to amuse them over a bottle. The reader will find this document in the Appendix.[16] It is written in a good hand, and not particularly deficient in grammar or spelling.

Our Southern readers must be given to understand that it was a piece of humour, – a *quiz,* in short, – on the part of the Outlaw, who was too sagacious to propose such a rencontre in reality. This letter was written in the year 1719.

In the following year Rob Roy composed another epistle, very little to his own reputation, as he therein confesses having played booty during the civil war of 1715. It is addressed to General Wade, at that time engaged in disarming the Highland clans, and making military roads through the country. The letter is a singular composition. It sets out the writer's real and unfeigned desire to have offered his service to King George, but for his liability to be thrown into jail for a civil debt, at the instance of the Duke of Montrose. Being thus debarred from taking the right side, he acknowledged he embraced the wrong one, upon Falstaff's principle, that since the King wanted men and the rebels soldiers, it were worse shame to be idle in such a stirring world, than to embrace the worst side, were it as black as rebellion could make it. The impossibility of his being neutral in such a debate, Rob seems to lay down as an undeniable proposition. At the same time, while he acknowledges having been forced into an unnatural rebellion against King George, he pleads that he not only avoided acting offensively against his Majesty's forces on all occasions, but, on the contrary, sent to them what intelligence he could collect from time to time; for the truth of which he refers to his Grace the Duke of Argyle. What influence this plea had on General Wade, we have no means of knowing.

Rob Roy appears to have continued to live very much as usual. His fame, in the meanwhile, passed beyond the narrow limits of the country in which he resided. A pretended history of him appeared in London during his lifetime, under the title of the Highland Rogue. It is a catch-penny publication, bearing in front the effigy of a species of ogre, with a beard of a foot in length; and his actions are as much exaggerated as his personal appearance. Some few of the best known adventures of the hero are told, though with little accuracy; but the greater part of the pamphlet is entirely fictitious. It is great pity so excellent a theme for a narrative of the kind had not fallen into the hands of De Foe, who was engaged at the time on subjects somewhat similar, though inferior in dignity and interest.

[16] Appendix, No. III.

As Rob Roy advanced in years, he became more peaceable in his habits, and his nephew Ghlune Dhu, with most of his tribe, renounced those peculiar quarrels with the Duke of Montrose, by which his uncle had been distinguished. The policy of that great family had latterly been rather to attach this wild tribe by kindness than to follow the mode of violence which had been hitherto ineffectually resorted to. Leases at a low rent were granted to many of the MacGregors, who had heretofore held possessions in the Duke's Highland property merely by occupancy; and Glengyle (or Black-knee), who continued to act as collector of black-mail, managed his police, as a commander of the Highland watch arrayed at the charge of Government. He is said to have strictly abstained from the open and lawless depredations which his kinsman had practised.

It was probably after this state of temporary quiet had been obtained, that Rob Roy began to think of the concerns of his future state. He had been bred, and long professed himself, a Protestant; but in his later years he embraced the Roman Catholic faith, – perhaps on Mrs. Cole's principle, that it was a comfortable religion for one of his calling. He is said to have alleged as the cause of his conversion, a desire to gratify the noble family of Perth, who were then strict Catholics. Having, as he observed, assumed the name of the Duke of Argyle, his first protector, he could pay no compliment worth the Earl of Perth's acceptance save complying with his mode of religion. Rob did not pretend, when pressed closely on the subject, to justify all the tenets of Catholicism, and acknowledged that extreme unction always appeared to him a great waste of *ulzie,* or oil.[17]

Waverley, chap. lxii,

In the last years of Rob Roy's life, his clan was involved in a dispute with one more powerful than themselves. Stewart of Appin, a chief of the tribe so named, was proprietor of a hill-farm in the Braes of Balquhidder, called Invernenty. The MacGregors of Rob Roy's tribe claimed a right to it by ancient occupancy, and declared they would oppose to the uttermost the settlement of any person upon the farm not being of their own name. The Stewarts came down with two hundred men, well armed, to do themselves justice by main force. The MacGregors took the field, but were unable to muster an equal strength. Rob Roy, fending himself the weaker party, asked a parley, in which he represented that both clans were friends to the *King,* and, that he was unwilling they should be weakened by mutual conflict, and thus made a merit of surrendering to Appin the disputed territory of Invernenty. Appin, accordingly, settled as tenants there, at an easy quit-rent, the MacLarens, a family dependent on the Stewarts, and from whose character for strength and bravery, it was expected that they would make their right good if annoyed by the MacGregors. When all this had been amicably adjusted, in presence of the two clans drawn up in arms near the Kirk of Balquhidder, Rob Roy, apparently fearing his tribe might be thought to have conceded too much upon the occasion, stepped forward and said, that where so many gallant men were met in arms, it would be shameful to part without it trial of skill, and therefore he took the freedom to invite any gentleman of the Stewarts present to exchange a few blows with him for the honour of their respective clans. The brother-in-law of Appin, and second chieftain of the clan, Alaster Stewart of Invernahyle, accepted the challenge, and they encountered with broadsword and target before their respective kinsmen.[18]

The combat lasted till Rob received a slight wound in the arm, which was the usual termination of such a combat when fought for honour only, and not with a mortal purpose. Rob Roy dropped his point, and congratulated his adversary on having been the first man who ever drew blood from him. The victor generously acknowledged, that without the advantage of youth, and the agility accompanying it, he probably could not have come off with advantage.

This was probably one of Rob Roy's last exploits in arms. The time of his death is not known with certainty, but he is generally said to have survived 1738, and to have died an aged man. When

[17] Such an admission is ascribed to the robber Donald Bean Lean in

[18] Some accounts state that Appin himself was Rob Roy's antagonist on thisoccasion. My recollection, from the account of Invernahyle himself, was asstated in the text. But the period when I received the information is nowso distant, that it is possible I may be mistaken. Invernahyle was ratherof low stature, but very well made, athletic, and an excellent swordsman.

he found himself approaching his final change, he expressed some contrition for particular parts of his life. His wife laughed at these scruples of conscience, and exhorted him to die like a man, as he had lived. In reply, he rebuked her for her violent passions, and the counsels she had given him. “You have put strife,” he said, “betwixt me and the best men of the country, and now you would place enmity between me and my God.”

There is a tradition, no way inconsistent with the former, if the character of Rob Roy be justly considered, that while on his deathbed, he learned that a person with whom he was at enmity proposed to visit him. “Raise me from my bed,” said the invalid; “throw my plaid around me, and bring me my claymore, dirk, and pistols – it shall never be said that a foeman saw Rob Roy MacGregor defenceless and unarmed.” His foeman, conjectured to be one of the MacLarens before and after mentioned, entered and paid his compliments, inquiring after the health of his formidable neighbour. Rob Roy maintained a cold haughty civility during their short conference, and so soon as he had left the house. “Now,” he said, “all is over – let the piper play, *Ha til mi tulidh*” (we return no more); and he is said to have expired before the dirge was finished.

This singular man died in bed in his own house, in the parish of Balquhidder. He was buried in the churchyard of the same parish, where his tombstone is only distinguished by a rude attempt at the figure of a broadsword.

The character of Rob Roy is, of course, a mixed one. His sagacity, boldness, and prudence, qualities so highly necessary to success in war, became in some degree vices, from the manner in which they were employed. The circumstances of his education, however, must be admitted as some extenuation of his habitual transgressions against the law; and for his political tergiversations, he might in that distracted period plead the example of men far more powerful, and less excusable in becoming the sport of circumstances, than the poor and desperate outlaw. On the other hand, he was in the constant exercise of virtues, the more meritorious as they seem inconsistent with his general character. Pursuing the occupation of a predatory chieftain, – in modern phrase a captain of banditti, – Rob Roy was moderate in his revenge, and humane in his successes. No charge of cruelty or bloodshed, unless in battle, is brought against his memory. In like manner, the formidable outlaw was the friend of the poor, and, to the utmost of his ability, the support of the widow and the orphan – kept his word when pledged – and died lamented in his own wild country, where there were hearts grateful for his beneficence, though their minds were not sufficiently instructed to appreciate his errors.

The author perhaps ought to stop here; but the fate of a part of Rob Roy’s family was so extraordinary, as to call for a continuation of this somewhat prolix account, as affording an interesting chapter, not on Highland manners alone, but on every stage of society in which the people of a primitive and half-civilised tribe are brought into close contact with a nation, in which civilisation and polity have attained a complete superiority.

Rob had five sons, – Coll, Ronald, James, Duncan, and Robert. Nothing occurs worth notice concerning three of them; but James, who was a very handsome man, seems to have had a good deal of his father’s spirit, and the mantle of Dougal Ciar Mhor had apparently descended on the shoulders of Robin Oig, that is, young Robin. Shortly after Rob Roy’s death, the ill-will which the MacGregors entertained against the MacLarens again broke out, at the instigation, it was said, of Rob’s widow, who seems thus far to have deserved the character given to her by her husband, as an Ate’ stirring up to blood and strife. Robin Oig, under her instigation, swore that as soon as he could get back a certain gun which had belonged to his father, and had been lately at Doune to be repaired, he would shoot MacLaren, for having presumed to settle on his mother’s land.[19]

[19] This fatal piece was taken from Robin Oig, when he was seized many years afterwards. It remained in possession of the magistrates before whom he was brought for examination, and now makes part of a small collection of arms belonging to the Author. It is a Spanish-barrelled gun, marked with the letters R. M. C., for Robert MacGregor Campbell.

He was as good as his word, and shot MacLaren when between the stilts of his plough, wounding him mortally.

The aid of a Highland leech was procured, who probed the wound with a probe made out of a castock; *i. e.*, the stalk of a colewort or cabbage. This learned gentleman declared he would not venture to prescribe, not knowing with what shot the patient had been wounded. MacLaren died, and about the same time his cattle were houghed, and his live stock destroyed in a barbarous manner.

Robin Oig, after this feat – which one of his biographers represents as the unhappy discharge of a gun – retired to his mother's house, to boast that he had drawn the first blood in the quarrel aforesaid. On the approach of troops, and a body of the Stewarts, who were bound to take up the cause of their tenant, Robin Oig absconded, and escaped all search.

The doctor already mentioned, by name Callam MacInleister, with James and Ronald, brothers to the actual perpetrator of the murder, were brought to trial. But as they contrived to represent the action as a rash deed committed by "the daft callant Rob," to which they were not accessory, the jury found their accession to the crime was Not Proven. The alleged acts of spoil and violence on the MacLarens' cattle, were also found to be unsupported by evidence. As it was proved, however, that the two brothers, Ronald and James, were held and reputed thieves, they were appointed to find caution to the extent of L200, for their good behaviour for seven years.[20]

The spirit of clanship was at that time, so strong – to which must be added the wish to secure the adherence of stout, able-bodied, and, as the Scotch phrase then went, *pretty* men – that the representative of the noble family of Perth condescended to act openly as patron of the MacGregors, and appeared as such upon their trial. So at least the author was informed by the late Robert MacIntosh, Esq., advocate. The circumstance may, however, have occurred later than 1736 – the year in which this first trial took place.

Robin Oig served for a time in the 42d regiment, and was present at the battle of Fontenoy, where he was made prisoner and wounded. He was exchanged, returned to Scotland, and obtained his discharge. He afterwards appeared openly in the MacGregor's country; and, notwithstanding his outlawry, married a daughter of Graham of Drunkie, a gentleman of some property. His wife died a few years afterwards.

The insurrection of 1745 soon afterwards called the MacGregors to arms. Robert MacGregor of Glencarnoch, generally regarded as the chief of the whole name, and grandfather of Sir John, whom the clan received in that character, raised a MacGregor regiment, with which he joined the standard of the Chevalier. The race of Ciar Mhor, however, affecting independence, and commanded by Glengyle and his cousin James Roy MacGregor, did not join this kindred corps, but united themselves to the levies of the titular Duke of Perth, until William MacGregor Drummond of Bolhaldie, whom they regarded as head of their branch, of Clan Alpine, should come over from France. To cement the union after the Highland fashion, James laid down the name of Campbell, and assumed that of Drummond, in compliment to Lord Perth. He was also called James Roy, after his father, and James Mhor, or Big James, from his height. His corps, the relics of his father Rob's band, behaved with great activity; with only twelve men he succeeded in surprising and burning, for the second time, the fort at Inversnaid, constructed for the express purpose of bridling the country of the MacGregors.

What rank or command James MacGregor had, is uncertain. He calls himself Major; and Chevalier Johnstone calls him Captain. He must have held rank under Ghlune Dhu, his kinsman, but his active and audacious character placed him above the rest of his brethren. Many of his followers were unarmed; he supplied the want of guns and swords with scythe-blades set straight upon their handles.

At the battle of Prestonpans, James Roy distinguished himself. "His company," says Chevalier Johnstone, "did great execution with their scythes." They cut the legs of the horses in two – the

[20] Note D. Author's expedition against the MacLarens.

riders through the middle of their bodies. MacGregor was brave and intrepid, but at the same time, somewhat whimsical and singular. When advancing to the charge with his company, he received five wounds, two of them from balls that pierced his body through and through. Stretched on the ground, with his head resting on his hand, he called out loudly to the Highlanders of his company, "My lads, I am not dead. By G – , I shall see if any of you does not do his duty." The victory, as is well known, was instantly obtained.

In some curious letters of James Roy,[21] it appears that his thigh-bone was broken on this occasion, and that he, nevertheless, rejoined the army with six companies, and was present at the battle of Culloden.

After that defeat, the clan MacGregor kept together in a body, and did not disperse till they had returned into their own country. They brought James Roy with them in a litter; and, without being particularly molested, he was permitted to reside in the MacGregor's country along with his brothers.

James MacGregor Drummond was attainted for high treason with persons of more importance. But it appears he had entered into some communication with Government, as, in the letters quoted, he mentions having obtained a pass from the Lord Justice-Clerk in 1747, which was a sufficient protection to him from the military. The circumstance is obscurely stated in one of the letters already quoted, but may perhaps, joined to subsequent incidents, authorise the suspicion that James, like his father, could look at both sides of the cards. As the confusion of the country subsided, the MacGregors, like foxes which had baffled the hounds, drew back to their old haunts, and lived unmolested. But an atrocious outrage, in which the sons of Rob Roy were concerned, brought at length on the family the full vengeance of the law.

James Roy was a married man, and had fourteen children. But his brother, Robin Oig, was now a widower; and it was resolved, if possible, that he should make his fortune by carrying off and marrying, by force if necessary, some woman of fortune from the Lowlands.

The imagination of the half-civilised Highlanders was less shocked at the idea of this particular species of violence, than might be expected from their general kindness to the weaker sex when they make part of their own families. But all their views were tinged with the idea that they lived in a state of war; and in such a state, from the time of the siege of Troy to "the moment when Previsa fell," [22] the female captives are, to uncivilised victors, the most valuable part of the booty —

"The wealthy are slaughtered, the lovely are spared."

We need not refer to the rape of the Sabines, or to a similar instance in the Book of Judges, for evidence that such deeds of violence have been committed upon a large scale. Indeed, this sort of enterprise was so common along the Highland line as to give rise to a variety of songs and ballads.[23]

The annals of Ireland, as well as those of Scotland, prove the crime to have been common in the more lawless parts of both countries; and any woman who happened to please a man of spirit who came of a good house, and possessed a few chosen friends, and a retreat in the mountains, was not permitted the alternative of saying him nay. What is more, it would seem that the women themselves, most interested in the immunities of their sex, were, among the lower classes, accustomed to regard such marriages as that which is presently to be detailed as "pretty Fanny's way," or rather, the way of Donald with pretty Fanny. It is not a great many years since a respectable woman, above the lower rank of life, expressed herself very warmly to the author on his taking the freedom to censure the behaviour of the MacGregors on the occasion in question. She said "that there was no use in giving a bride too much choice upon such occasions; that the marriages were the happiest long syne which

[21] Published in Blackwood's Magazine, vol. ii. p. 228.

[22] Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto II.

[23] See Appendix, No. VI.

had been done offhand." Finally, she averred that her "own mother had never seen her father till the night he brought her up from the Lennox, with ten head of black cattle, and there had not been a happier couple in the country."

James Drummond and his brethren having similar opinions with the author's old acquaintance, and debating how they might raise the fallen fortunes of their clan, formed a resolution to settle their brother's fortune by striking up an advantageous marriage betwixt Robin Oig and one Jean Key, or Wright, a young woman scarce twenty years old, and who had been left about two months a widow by the death of her husband. Her property was estimated at only from 16,000 to 18,000 merks, but it seems to have been sufficient temptation to these men to join in the commission of a great crime.

This poor young victim lived with her mother in her own house at Edinbilly, in the parish of Balfron and shire of Stirling. At this place, in the night of 3d December 1750, the sons of Rob Roy, and particularly James Mhor and Robin Oig, rushed into the house where the object of their attack was resident, presented guns, swords, and pistols to the males of the family, and terrified the women by threatening to break open the doors if Jean Key was not surrendered, as, said James Roy, "his brother was a young fellow determined to make his fortune." Having, at length, dragged the object of their lawless purpose from her place of concealment, they tore her from her mother's arms, mounted her on a horse before one of the gang, and carried her off in spite, of her screams and cries, which were long heard after the terrified spectators of the outrage could no longer see the party retreat through the darkness. In her attempts to escape, the poor young woman threw herself from the horse on which they had placed her, and in so doing wrenched her side. They then laid her double over the pummel of the saddle, and transported her through the mosses and moors till the pain of the injury she had suffered in her side, augmented by the uneasiness of her posture, made her consent to sit upright. In the execution of this crime they stopped at more houses than one, but none of the inhabitants dared interrupt their proceedings. Amongst others who saw them was that classical and accomplished scholar the late Professor William Richardson of Glasgow, who used to describe as a terrible dream their violent and noisy entrance into the house where he was then residing. The Highlanders filled the little kitchen, brandishing their arms, demanding what they pleased, and receiving whatever they demanded. James Mhor, he said, was a tall, stern, and soldier-like man. Robin Oig looked more gentle; dark, but yet ruddy in complexion – a good-looking young savage. Their victim was so dishevelled in her dress, and forlorn in her appearance and demeanour, that he could hardly tell whether she was alive or dead.

The gang carried the unfortunate woman to Rowardennan, where they had a priest unscrupulous enough to read the marriage service, while James Mhor forcibly held the bride up before him; and the priest declared the couple man and wife, even while she protested against the infamy of his conduct. Under the same threats of violence, which had been all along used to enforce their scheme, the poor victim was compelled to reside with the pretended husband who was thus forced upon her. They even dared to carry her to the public church of Balquhidder, where the officiating clergyman (the same who had been Rob Roy's pensioner) only asked them if they were married persons. Robert MacGregor answered in the affirmative; the terrified female was silent.

The country was now too effectually subjected to the law for this vile outrage to be followed by the advantages proposed by the actors, Military parties were sent out in every direction to seize the MacGregors, who were for two or three weeks compelled to shift from one place to another in the mountains, bearing the unfortunate Jean Key along with them. In the meanwhile, the Supreme Civil Court issued a warrant, sequestrating the property of Jean Key, or Wright, which removed out of the reach of the actors in the violence the prize which they expected. They had, however, adopted a belief of the poor woman's spirit being so far broken that she would prefer submitting to her condition, and adhering to Robin Oig as her husband, rather than incur the disgrace, of appearing in such a cause in an open court. It was, indeed, a delicate experiment; but their kinsman Glengyle, chief of their

immediate family, was of a temper averse to lawless proceedings;[24] and the captive's friends having had recourse to his advice, they feared that he would withdraw his protection if they refused to place the prisoner at liberty.

The brethren resolved, therefore, to liberate the unhappy woman, but previously had recourse to every measure which should oblige her, either from fear or otherwise, to own her marriage with Robin Oig. The cailliachs (old Highland hags) administered drugs, which were designed to have the effect of philtres, but were probably deleterious. James Mhor at one time threatened, that if she did not acquiesce in the match she would find that there were enough of men in the Highlands to bring the heads of two of her uncles who were pursuing the civil lawsuit. At another time he fell down on his knees, and confessed he had been accessory to wronging her, but begged she would not ruin his innocent wife and large family. She was made to swear she would not prosecute the brethren for the offence they had committed; and she was obliged by threats to subscribe papers which were tendered to her, intimating that she was carried off in consequence of her own previous request.

James Mhor Drummond accordingly brought his pretended sister-in-law to Edinburgh, where, for some little time, she was carried about from one house to another, watched by those with whom she was lodged, and never permitted to go out alone, or even to approach the window. The Court of Session, considering the peculiarity of the case, and regarding Jean Key as being still under some forcible restraint, took her person under their own special charge, and appointed her to reside in the family of Mr. Wightman of Mauldsley, a gentleman of respectability, who was married to one of her near relatives. Two sentinels kept guard on the house day and night – a precaution not deemed superfluous when the MacGregors were in question. She was allowed to go out whenever she chose, and to see whomsoever she had a mind, as well as the men of law employed in the civil suit on either side. When she first came to Mr. Wightman's house she seemed broken down with affright and suffering, so changed in features that her mother hardly knew her, and so shaken in mind that she scarce could recognise her parent. It was long before she could be assured that she was in perfect safely. But when she at length received confidence in her situation, she made a judicial declaration, or affidavit, telling the full history of her wrongs, imputing to fear her former silence on the subject, and expressing her resolution not to prosecute those who had injured her, in respect of the oath she had been compelled to take. From the possible breach of such an oath, though a compulsory one, she was relieved by the forms of Scottish jurisprudence, in that respect more equitable than those of England, prosecutions for crimes being always conducted at the expense and charge of the King, without inconvenience or cost to the private party who has sustained the wrong. But the unhappy sufferer did not live to be either accuser or witness against those who had so deeply injured her.

James Mhor Drummond had left Edinburgh so soon as his half-dead prey had been taken from his clutches. Mrs. Key, or Wright, was released from her species of confinement there, and removed to Glasgow, under the escort of Mr. Wightman. As they passed the Hill of Shotts, her escort chanced to say, "this is a very wild spot; what if the MacGregors should come upon us?" – "God forbid!" was her immediate answer, "the very sight of them would kill me." She continued to reside at Glasgow, without venturing to return to her own house at Edinbilly. Her pretended husband made some attempts to obtain an interview with her, which she steadily rejected. She died on the 4th October 1751. The information for the Crown hints that her decease might be the consequence of the usage she received. But there is a general report that she died of the small-pox. In the meantime, James Mhor, or Drummond, fell into the hands of justice. He was considered as the instigator of the whole affair. Nay, the deceased had informed her friends that on the night of her being carried off, Robin Oig, moved by her cries and tears, had partly consented to let her return, when James

[24] Such, at least, was his general character; for when James Mhor, while perpetrating the violence at Edinbilly, called out, in order to overawe opposition, that Glengyle was lying in the moor with a hundred men to patronise his enterprise, Jean Key told him he lied, since she was confident Glengyle would never countenance so scoundrelly a business.

came up with a pistol in his hand, and, asking whether he was such a coward as to relinquish an enterprise in which he had risked everything to procure him a fortune, in a manner compelled his brother to persevere. James's trial took place on 13th July 1752, and was conducted with the utmost fairness and impartiality. Several witnesses, all of the MacGregor family, swore that the marriage was performed with every appearance of acquiescence on the woman's part; and three or four witnesses, one of them sheriff-substitute of the county, swore she might have made her escape if she wished, and the magistrate stated that he offered her assistance if she felt desirous to do so. But when asked why he, in his official capacity, did not arrest the MacGregors, he could only answer, that he had not force sufficient to make the attempt.

The judicial declarations of Jean Key, or Wright, stated the violent manner in which she had been carried off, and they were confirmed by many of her friends, from her private communications with them, which the event of her death rendered good evidence. Indeed, the fact of her abduction (to use a Scottish law term) was completely proved by impartial witnesses. The unhappy woman admitted that she had pretended acquiescence in her fate on several occasions, because she dared not trust such as offered to assist her to escape, not even the sheriff-substitute.

The jury brought in a special verdict, finding that Jean Key, or Wright, had been forcibly carried off from her house, as charged in the indictment, and that the accused had failed to show that she was herself privy and consenting to this act of outrage. But they found the forcible marriage, and subsequent violence, was not proved; and also found, in alleviation of the panel's guilt in the premises, that Jean Key did afterwards acquiesce in her condition. Eleven of the jury, using the names of other four who were absent, subscribed a letter to the Court, stating it was their purpose and desire, by such special verdict, to take the panel's case out of the class of capital crimes.

Learned informations (written arguments) on the import of the verdict, which must be allowed a very mild one in the circumstances, were laid before the High Court of Justiciary. This point is very learnedly debated in these pleadings by Mr. Grant, Solicitor for the Crown, and the celebrated Mr. Lockhart, on the part of the prisoner; but James Mhor did not wait the event of the Court's decision.

He had been committed to the Castle of Edinburgh on some reports that an escape would be attempted. Yet he contrived to achieve his liberty even from that fortress. His daughter had the address to enter the prison, disguised as a cobbler, bringing home work, as she pretended. In this cobbler's dress her father quickly arrayed himself. The wife and daughter of the prisoner were heard by the sentinels scolding the supposed cobbler for having done his work ill, and the man came out with his hat slouched over his eyes, and grumbling, as if at the manner in which they had treated him. In this way the prisoner passed all the guards without suspicion, and made his escape to France. He was afterwards outlawed by the Court of Justiciary, which proceeded to the trial of Duncan MacGregor, or Drummond, his brother, 15th January 1753. The accused had unquestionably been with the party which carried off Jean Key; but no evidence being brought which applied to him individually and directly, the jury found him not guilty – and nothing more is known of his fate.

That of James MacGregor, who, from talent and activity, if not by seniority, may be considered as head of the family, has been long misrepresented; as it has been generally averred in Law Reports, as well as elsewhere, that his outlawry was reversed, and that he returned and died in Scotland. But the curious letters published in Blackwood's Magazine for December 1817, show this to be an error. The first of these documents is a petition to Charles Edward. It is dated 20th September 1753, and pleads his service to the cause of the Stuarts, ascribing his exile to the persecution of the Hanoverian Government, without any allusion to the affair of Jean Key, or the Court of Justiciary. It is stated to be forwarded by MacGregor Drummond of Bohaldie, whom, as before mentioned, James Mhor acknowledged as his chief.

The effect which this petition produced does not appear. Some temporary relief was perhaps obtained. But, soon after, this daring adventurer was engaged in a very dark intrigue against an exile of his own country, and placed pretty nearly in his own circumstances. A remarkable Highland

story must be here briefly alluded to. Mr. Campbell of Glenure, who had been named factor for Government on the forfeited estates of Stewart of Ardshiel, was shot dead by an assassin as he passed through the wood of Lettermore, after crossing the ferry of Ballachulish. A gentleman, named James Stewart, a natural brother of Ardshiel, the forfeited person, was tried as being accessory to the murder, and condemned and executed upon very doubtful evidence; the heaviest part of which only amounted to the accused person having assisted a nephew of his own, called Allan Breck Stewart, with money to escape after the deed was done. Not satisfied with this vengeance, which was obtained in a manner little to the honour of the dispensation of justice at the time, the friends of the deceased Glenure were equally desirous to obtain possession of the person of Allan Breck Stewart, supposed to be the actual homicide. James Mhor Drummond was secretly applied to to trepan Stewart to the sea-coast, and bring him over to Britain, to almost certain death. Drummond MacGregor had kindred connections with the slain Glenure; and, besides, the MacGregors and Campbells had been friends of late, while the former clan and the Stewarts had, as we have seen, been recently at feud; lastly, Robert Oig was now in custody at Edinburgh, and James was desirous to do some service by which his brother might be saved. The joint force of these motives may, in James's estimation of right and wrong, have been some vindication for engaging in such an enterprise, although, as must be necessarily supposed, it could only be executed by treachery of a gross description. MacGregor stipulated for a license to return to England, promising to bring Allan Breck thither along with him. But the intended victim was put upon his guard by two countrymen, who suspected James's intentions towards him. He escaped from his kidnapper, after, as MacGregor alleged, robbing his portmanteau of some clothes and four snuff-boxes. Such a charge, it may be observed, could scarce have been made unless the parties had been living on a footing of intimacy, and had access to each other's baggage.

Although James Drummond had thus missed his blow in the matter of Allan Breck Stewart, he used his license to make a journey to London, and had an interview, as he avers, with Lord Holdernesse. His Lordship, and the Under-Secretary, put many puzzling questions to him; and, as he says, offered him a situation, which would bring him bread, in the Government's service. This office was advantageous as to emolument; but in the opinion of James Drummond, his acceptance of it would have been a disgrace to his birth, and have rendered him a scourge to his country. If such a tempting offer and sturdy rejection had any foundation in fact, it probably relates to some plan of espionage on the Jacobites, which the Government might hope to carry on by means of a man who, in the matter of Allan Breck Stewart, had shown no great nicety of feeling. Drummond MacGregor was so far accommodating as to intimate his willingness to act in any station in which other gentlemen of honour served, but not otherwise; – an answer which, compared with some passages of his past life, may remind the reader of Ancient Pistol standing upon his reputation.

Having thus proved intractable, as he tells the story, to the proposals of Lord Holdernesse, James Drummond was ordered instantly to quit England.

On his return to France, his condition seems to have been utterly disastrous. He was seized with fever and gravel – ill, consequently, in body, and weakened and dispirited in mind. Allan Breck Stewart threatened to put him to death in revenge of the designs he had harboured against him.[25]

The Stewart clan were in the highest degree unfriendly to him: and his late expedition to London had been attended with many suspicious circumstances, amongst which it was not the slightest that he had kept his purpose secret from his chief Bohaldie. His intercourse with Lord Holdernesse was suspicious. The Jacobites were probably, like Don Bernard de Castel Blaze, in Gil Blas, little disposed to like those who kept company with Alguazils. Mac-Donnell of Lochgarry, a man of unquestioned honour, lodged an information against James Drummond before the High Bailie of Dunkirk, accusing him of being a spy, so that he found himself obliged to leave that town and come to Paris, with only

[25] Note E. Allan Breck Stewart.

the sum of thirteen livres for his immediate subsistence, and with absolute beggary staring him in the face.

We do not offer the convicted common thief, the accomplice in MacLaren's assassination, or the manager of the outrage against Jean Key, as an object of sympathy; but it is melancholy to look on the dying struggles even of a wolf or a tiger, creatures of a species directly hostile to our own; and, in like manner, the utter distress of this man, whose faults may have sprung from a wild system of education, working on a haughty temper, will not be perused without some pity. In his last letter to Bohaldie, dated Paris, 25th September 1754, he describes his state of destitution as absolute, and expresses himself willing to exercise his talents in breaking or breeding horses, or as a hunter or fowler, if he could only procure employment in such an inferior capacity till something better should occur. An Englishman may smile, but a Scotchman will sigh at the postscript, in which the poor starving exile asks the loan of his patron's bagpipes that he might play over some of the melancholy tunes of his own land. But the effect of music arises, in a great degree, from association; and sounds which might jar the nerves of a Londoner or Parisian, bring back to the Highlander his lofty mountain, wild lake, and the deeds of his fathers of the glen. To prove MacGregor's claim to our reader's compassion, we here insert the last part of the letter alluded to.

"By all appearance I am born to suffer crosses, and it seems they're not at an end; for such is my wretched case at present, that I do not know earthly where to go or what to do, as I have no subsistence to keep body and soul together. All that I have carried here is about 13 livres, and have taken a room at my old quarters in Hotel St. Pierre, Rue de Cordier. I send you the bearer, begging of you to let me know if you are to be in town soon, that I may have the pleasure of seeing you, for I have none to make application to but you alone; and all I want is, if it was possible you could contrive where I could be employed without going to entire beggary. This probably is a difficult point, yet unless it's attended with some difficulty, you might think nothing of it, as your long head can bring about matters of much more difficulty and consequence than this. If you'd disclose this matter to your friend Mr. Butler, it's possible he might have some employ wherein I could be of use, as I pretend to know as much of breeding and riding of horse as any in France, besides that I am a good hunter either on horseback or by footing. You may judge my reduction, as I propose the meanest things to lend a turn till better cast up. I am sorry that I am obliged to give you so much trouble, but I hope you are very well assured that I am grateful for what you have done for me, and I leave you to judge of my present wretched case. I am, and shall for ever continue, dear Chief, your own to command, Jas. MacGregor.

"P. S. – If you'd send your pipes by the bearer, and all the other little trinkims belonging to it, I would put them in order, and play some melancholy tunes, which I may now with safety, and in real truth. Forgive my not going directly to you, for if I could have borne the seeing of yourself, I could not choose to be seen by my friends in my wretchedness, nor by any of my acquaintance."

While MacGregor wrote in this disconsolate manner, Death, the sad but sure remedy for mortal evils, and decider of all doubts and uncertainties, was hovering near him. A memorandum on the back of the letter says the writer died about a week after, in October 1754.

It now remains to mention the fate of Robin Oig – for the other sons of Rob Roy seem to have been no way distinguished. Robin was apprehended by a party of military from the fort of Inversnaid, at the foot of Gartmore, and was conveyed to Edinburgh 26th May 1753. After a delay, which may have been protracted by the negotiations of James for delivering up Allan Breck Stewart upon promise of his brother's life, Robin Oig, on the 24th of December 1753, was brought to the bar of the High Court of Justiciary, and indicted by the name of Robert MacGregor, alias Campbell, alias Drummond, alias Robert Oig; and the evidence led against him resembled exactly that which was brought by the Crown on the former trial. Robert's case was in some degree more favourable than his brother's; – for, though the principal in the forcible marriage, he had yet to plead that he had shown symptoms of relenting while they were carrying Jean Key off, which were silenced by

the remonstrances and threats of his harder natured brother James. A considerable space of time had also elapsed since the poor woman died, which is always a strong circumstance in favour of the accused; for there is a sort of perspective in guilt, and crimes of an old date seem less odious than those of recent occurrence. But notwithstanding these considerations, the jury, in Robert's case, did not express any solicitude to save his life as they had done that of James. They found him guilty of being art and part in the forcible abduction of Jean Key from her own dwelling.[26]

Robin Oig was condemned to death, and executed on the 14th February 1754. At the place of execution he behaved with great decency; and professing himself a Catholic, imputed all his misfortunes to his swerving from the true church two or three years before. He confessed the violent methods he had used to gain Mrs. Key, or Wright, and hoped his fate would stop further proceedings against his brother James.[27]

The newspapers observed that his body, after hanging the usual time, was delivered to his friends to be carried to the Highlands. To this the recollection of a venerable friend, recently taken from us in the fulness of years, then a schoolboy at Linlithgow, enables the author to add, that a much larger body of MacGregors than had cared to advance to Edinburgh received the corpse at that place with the coronach and other wild emblems of Highland mourning, and so escorted it to Balquhidder. Thus we may conclude this long account of Rob Roy and his family with the classic phrase,

Ite. Conclamatum est.

I have only to add, that I have selected the above from many anecdotes of Rob Roy which were, and may still be, current among the mountains where he flourished; but I am far from warranting their exact authenticity. Clannish partialities were very apt to guide the tongue and pen, as well as the pistol and claymore, and the features of an anecdote are wonderfully softened or exaggerated as the story is told by a MacGregor or a Campbell.

[26] The Trials of the Sons of Rob Roy, with anecdotes of Himself and his Family, were published at Edinburgh, 1818, in 12mo.

[27] James died near three months before, but his family might easily remain a long time without the news of that event.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

No. I. – ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE APPREHENSION OF ROB ROY.

(From the Edinburgh Evening Courant, June 18 to June 21, A.D. 1732. No. 1058.)

"That Robert Campbell, commonly known by the name of Rob Roy MacGregor, being lately intrusted by several noblemen and gentlemen with considerable sums for buying cows for them in the Highlands, has treacherously gone off with the money, to the value of L1000 sterling, which he carries along with him. All Magistrates and Officers of his Majesty's forces are intreated to seize upon the said Rob Roy, and the money which he carries with him, until the persons concerned in the money be heard against him; and that notice be given, when he is apprehended, to the keepers of the Exchange Coffee-house at Edinburgh, and the keeper of the Coffee-house at Glasgow, where the parties concerned will be advertised, and the seizers shall be very reasonably rewarded for their pains."

It is unfortunate that this Hue and Cry, which is afterwards repeated in the same paper, contains no description of Rob Roy's person, which, of course, we must suppose to have been pretty generally known. As it is directed against Rob Roy personally, it would seem to exclude the idea of the cattle being carried off by his partner, MacDonald, who would certainly have been mentioned in the advertisement, if the creditors concerned had supposed him to be in possession of the money.

No. II. – LETTERS

FROM AND TO THE DUKE OF MONTROSE RESPECTING ROB ROY'S ARREST OF MR. GRAHAME OF KILLEARN.

The Duke of Montrose to — [28]

"Glasgow, the 21st November, 1716.

"My Lord, – I was surprised last night with the account of a very remarkable instance of the insolence of that very notorious rogue Rob Roy, whom your lordship has often heard named. The honour of his Majesty's Government being concerned in it, I thought it my duty to acquaint your lordship of the particulars by an express.

"Mr. Grahame of Killearn (whom I have had occasion to mention frequently to you, for the good service he did last winter during the rebellion) having the charge of my Highland estate, went to Monteath, which is a part of it, on Monday last, to bring in my rents, it being usual for him to be there for two or three nights together at this time of the year, in a country house, for the conveniency of meeting the tenants, upon that account. The same night, about 9 of the clock, Rob Roy, with a party of those ruffians whom he has still kept about him since the late rebellion, surrounded the house where Mr. Grahame was with some of my tenants doing his business, ordered his men to present their guns in att the windows of the room where he was sitting, while he himself at the same time with others entered at the door, with cocked pistols, and made Mr. Grahame prisoner, carrying him away to the hills with the money he had got, his books and papers, and my tenants' bonds for their fines, amounting to above a thousand pounds sterling, whereof the one-half had been paid last year, and the other was to have been paid now; and att the same time had the insolence to cause him to write a letter to me (the copy of which is enclosed) offering me terms of a treaty.

"That your Lordship may have the better view of this matter, it will be necessary that I should inform you, that this fellow has now, of a long time, put himself at the head of the Clan M'Gregor, a race of people who in all ages have distinguished themselves beyond others, by robberies, depredations, and murders, and have been the constant harbourers and entertainers of vagabonds and loose people. From the time of the Revolution he has taken every opportunity to appear against the Government, acting rather as a robber than doing any real service to those whom he pretended to appear for, and has really done more mischief to the countrie than all the other Highlanders have done.

"Some three or four years before the last rebellion broke out, being overburdened with debts, he quitted his ordinary residence, and removed some twelve or sixteen miles farther into the Highlands, putting himself under the protection of the Earl of Bredalbin. When my Lord Cadogan was in the Highlands, he ordered his house att this place to be burnt, which your Lordship sees he now places to my account.

"This obliges him to return to the same countrie he went from, being a most rugged inaccessible place, where he took up his residence anew amongst his own friends and relations; but well judging that it was possible to surprise him, he, with about forty-five of his followers, went to Inverary, and made a sham surrender of their arms to Coll. Campbell of Finab, Commander of one of the Independent Companies, and returned home with his men, each of them having the Coll.'s protection. This happened in the beginning of summer last; yet not long after he appeared with his men twice in arms, in opposition to the King's troops: and one of those times attackt them, rescued a prisoner from

[28] It does not appear to whom this letter was addressed. Certainly, from its style and tenor, It was designed for some person high in rank and office – perhaps the King's Advocate for the time.

them, and all this while sent abroad his party through the countrie, plundering the countrie people, and amongst the rest some of my tenants.

"Being informed of these disorders after I came to Scotland, I applied to Lieut. – Genll. Carpenter, who ordered three parties from Glasgow, Stirling, and Finlarig, to march in the night by different routes, in order to surprise him and his men in their houses, which would have its effect certainly, if the great rains that happened to fall that verie night had not retarded the march of the troops, so as some of the parties came too late to the stations that they were ordered for. All that could be done upon the occasion was to burn a countrie house, where Rob Roy then resided, after some of his clan had, from the rocks, fired upon the king's troops, by which a grenadier was killed.

"Mr. Grahame of Killearn, being my deputy-sheriff in that countrie, went along with the party that marched from Stirling; and doubtless will now meet with the worse treatment from that barbarous people on that account. Besides, that he is my relation, and that they know how active he has been in the service of the Government – all which, your Lordship may believe, puts me under very great concern for the gentleman, while, at the same time, I can foresee no manner of way how to relieve him, other than to leave him to chance and his own management.

"I had my thoughts before of proposing to Government the building of some barracks as the only expedient for suppressing these rebels, and securing the peace of the countrie; and in that view I spoke to Genll. Carpenter, who has now a scheme of it in his hands; and I am persuaded that will be the true method for restraining them effectually; but, in the meantime, it will be necessary to lodge some of the troops in those places, upon which I intend to write to the Generall.

"I am sensible I have troubled your Lordship with a very long letter, which I should be ashamed of, were I myself singly concerned; but where the honour of the King's Government is touched, I need make no apologie, and I shall only beg leave to add, that I am, with great respect, and truth,

"My Lord, "yr. Lord's most humble and obedient servant, "MONTROSE"

COPY OF GRAHAME OF KILLEARN'S LETTER, ENCLOSED IN THE PRECEDING

"Chappellarroch, Nov. 19th, 1716

"May it please your Grace, – I am obliged to give your Grace the trouble of this, by Robert Roy's commands, being so unfortunate at present as to be his prisoner. I refer the way and manner I was apprehended, to the bearer, and shall only, in short, acquaint your Grace with the demands, which are, that your Grace shall discharge him of all soumes he owes your Grace, and give him the soume of 3400 merks for his loss and damages sustained by him, both at Craigrostown and at his house, Auchinchisallen; and that your Grace shall give your word not to trouble or prosecute him afterwards; till which time he carries me, all the money I received this day, my books and bonds for entress, not yet paid, along with him, with assurance of hard usage, if any party are sent after him. The soume I received this day, conform to the nearest computation I can make before several of the gentlemen, is 3227L. 2sh. 8d. Scots, of which I gave them notes. I shall wait your Grace's return, and ever am,

"Your Grace's most obedient, faithful, "humble servant, *Sic subscribitur,* "John Grahame."

THE DUKE OF MONTROSE TO —

28th Nov. 1716 —*Killearn's Release*

"Glasgow, 28th Nov. 1716.

"Sir, – Having acquainted you by my last, of the 21st instant, of what had happened to my friend, Mr. Grahame of Killearn, I'm very glad now to tell you, that last night I was very agreeably surprised with Mr. Grahame's coming here himself, and giving me the first account I had had of him from the time of his being carried away. It seems Rob Roy, when he came to consider a little better of it, found that, he could not mend his matters by retaining Killearn his prisoner, which could only expose him still the more to the justice of the Government; and therefore thought fit to dismiss him on Sunday evening last, having kept him from the Monday night before, under a very uneasy kind of restraint, being obliged to change continually from place to place. He gave him back the books, papers, and bonds, but kept the money.

"I am, with great truth, Sir, "your most humble servant, "MONTROSE."

[Some papers connected with Rob Roy Macgregor, signed "Ro. Campbell," in 1711, were lately presented to the Society of Antiquaries. One of these is a kind of contract between the Duke of Montrose and Rob Roy, by which the latter undertakes to deliver within a given time "Sixtie good and sufficient Kintaill highland Cowes, betwixt the age of five and nine years, at fourtene pounds Scotts per peice, with ane bull to the bargane, and that at the head dykes of Buchanan upon the twenty-eight day of May next." – Dated December 1711. – See *Proceedings,* vol. vii. p. 253.]

No. III. – CHALLENGE BY ROB ROY

"Rob Roy *to ain hie and mighty Prince,* James Duke of Montrose

"In charity to your Grace's couradge and conduct, please know, the only way to retrive both is to treat Rob Roy like himself, in appointing tyme, place, and choice of arms, that at once you may extirpate your inveterate enemy, or put a period to your punny (puny?) life in falling gloriously by his hands. That impertinent criticks or flatterers may not brand me for challenging a man that's repute of a poor dastardly soul, let such know that I admit of the two great supporters of his character and the captain of his bands to joyne with him in the combat. Then sure your Grace wont have the impudence to clamour att court for multitudes to hunt me like a fox, under pretence that I am not to be found above ground. This saves your Grace and the troops any further trouble of searching; that is, if your ambition of glory press you to embrace this unequald venture offerd of Rob's head. But if your Grace's piety, prudence, and cowardice, forbids hazarding this gentlemanly expedient, then let your desire of peace restore what you have robed from me by the tyranny of your present cituation, otherwise your overthrow as a man is determined; and advertise your friends never more to look for the frequent civility payed them, of sending them home without their arms only. Even their former cravings wont purchase that favour; so your Grace by this has peace in your offer, if the sound of wax be frightful, and chuse you whilk, your good friend or mortal enemy."

This singular rhodomontade is enclosed in a letter to a friend of Rob Roy, probably a retainer of the Duke of Argyle in Isle, which is in these words: —

"Sir, – Receive the enclosd paper, qn you are takeing yor Botle it will divert yorself and comrad's. I gote noe news since I seed you, only qt wee had before about the Spainyard's is like to continue. If I'll get any further account about them I'll be sure to let you know of it, and till then I will not write any more till I'll have more sure account, and I am

"Sir, your most affectionate Cn [cousin], "and most humble servant, "Ro: Roy."

"*Apryle* 16*th,* 1719.

"To Mr. Patrick Anderson, at Hay – These.'

The seal, *a stag*– no bad emblem of a wild cateran.

It appears from the envelope that Rob Roy still continued to act as Intelligencer to the Duke of Argyle, and his agents. The war he alludes to is probably some vague report of invasion from Spain. Such rumours were likely enough to be afloat, in consequence of the disembarkation of the troops who were taken at Glensheal in the preceding year, 1718.

No. IV. – LETTER

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, *alias* M'GREGOR, COMMONLY CALLED ROB ROY, TO FIELD-MARSHAL WADE,

Then receiving the submission of disaffected Chieftains and Clans.[29]

Sir, – The great humanity with which you have constantly acted in the discharge of the trust reposed in you, and your ever having made use of the great powers with which you were vested as the means of doing good and charitable offices to such as ye found proper objects of compassion, will, I hope, excuse my importunity in endeavouring to approve myself not absolutely unworthy of that mercy and favour which your Excellency has so generously procured from his Majesty for others in my unfortunate circumstances. I am very sensible nothing can be alledged sufficient to excuse so great a crime as I have been guilty of it, that of Rebellion. But I humbly beg leave to lay before your Excellency some particulars in the circumstance of my guilt, which, I hope, will extenuate it in some measure. It was my misfortune, at the time the Rebellion broke out, to be liable to legal diligence and caption, at the Duke of Montrose's instance, for debt alledged due to him. To avoid being flung into prison, as I must certainly have been, had I followed my real inclinations in joining the King's troops at Stirling, I was forced to take party with the adherents of the Pretender; for the country being all in arms, it was neither safe nor indeed possible for me to stand neuter. I should not, however, plead my being forced into that unnatural rebellion against his Majesty, King George, if I could not at the same time assure your Excellency, that I not only avoided acting offensively against his Majesty's forces upon all occasions, but on the contrary, sent his Grace the Duke of Argyle all the intelligence I could from time to time, of the strength and situation of the rebels; which I hope his Grace will do me the justice to acknowledge. As to the debt to the Duke of Montrose, I have discharged it to the utmost farthing. I beg your Excellency would be persuaded that, had it been in my power, as it was in my inclination, I should always have acted for the service of his Majesty King George, and that one reason of my begging the favour of your intercession with his Majesty for the pardon of my life, is the earnest desire I have to employ it in his service, whose goodness, justice, and humanity, are so conspicuous to all mankind. – I am, with all duty and respect, your Excellency's most, &c.,

"Robert Campbell."

[29] This curious epistle is copied from an authentic narrative of Marshal Wade's proceedings in the Highlands, communicated by the late eminent antiquary, George Chalmers, Esq., to Mr. Robert Jamieson, of the Register House, Edinburgh, and published in the Appendix to an Edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, 2 vols. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1818.

No. IVa. – LETTER

ESCAPE OF ROB ROY FROM THE DUKE OF ATHOLE

The following copy of a letter which passed from one clergyman of the Church of Scotland to another, was communicated to me by John Gregorson, Esq. of Ardtornish. The escape of Rob Roy is mentioned, like other interesting news of the time with which it is intermingled. The disagreement between the Dukes of Athole and Argyle seems to have animated the former against Rob Roy, as one of Argyle's partisans.

"Rev. and dear Brother,

Yrs of the 28th Jun I had by the bearer. Im pleased yo have got back again yr Delinquent which may probably safe you of the trouble of her child. I'm sory I've yet very little of certain news to give you from Court tho' I've seen all the last weekes prints, only I find in them a pasage which is all the account I can give you of the Indemnity yt when the estates of forfaulted Rebells Comes to be sold all Just debts Documented are to be preferred to Officers of the Court of enquiry. The Bill in favours of that Court against the Lords of Session in Scotland in past the house of Commons and Come before the Lords which is thought to be considerably more ample yn formerly wt respect to the Disposeing of estates Canvassing and paying of Debts. It's said yt the examinations of Cadugans accounts is droped but it wants Confirmations here as yet. Oxford's tryals should be entered upon Saturday last. We hear that the Duchess of Argyle is wt child. I doe not hear yt the Divisions at Court are any thing abated or of any appearance of the Dukes having any thing of his Maj: favour. I heartily wish the present humours at Court may not prove an encouragmt to watchfull and restles enemies.

My accounts of Rob Roy his escape are yt after severall Embassies between his Grace (who I hear did Correspond wt some at Court about it) and Rob he at length upon promise of protectione Came to waite upon the Duke & being presently secured his Grace sent post to Edr to acquent the Court of his being aprehended & call his friends at Edr and to desire a party from Gen Carpinter to receive and bring him to Edr which party came the length of Kenross in Fife, he was to be delivered to them by a party his Grace had demanded from the Governour at Perth, who when upon their march towards Dunkell to receive him, were mete wt and returned by his Grace having resolved to deliver him by a party of his own men and left Rob at Logierate under a strong guard till yt party should be ready to receive him. This space of time Rob had Imployed in taking the other dram heartily wt the Guard & qn all were pretty hearty, Rob is delivering a letter for his wife to a servant to whom he most needs deliver some private instructions at the Door (for his wife) where he's attended wt on the Guard. When serious in this privat Conversations he is making some few steps carelessly from the Door about the house till he comes close by this horse which he soon mounted and made off. This is no small mortifican to the guard because of the delay it give to there hopes of a Considerable additionall charge agt John Roy.[30] my wife was upon Thursday last delivered of a Son after sore travell of which she still continues very weak.

I give yl Lady hearty thanks for the Highland plaid. It's good cloath but it does not answer the sett I sent some time agae wt McArthur & tho it had I told in my last yt my wife was obliged to provid herself to finish her bed before she was lighted but I know yt letr came not timely to yr hand – I'm sory I had not mony to send by the bearer having no thought of it & being exposed to some little expenses last week but I expect some sure occasion when order by a letter to receive it excuse this freedom from &c.

"*Manse of Comrie, July* 2*d,* 1717. "I salute yr lady I wish my … her Daughter much Joy."

[30] *i. e.* John the Red – John Duke of Argyle, so called from his complexion, more commonly styled "Red John the Warriour."

No. V. – HIGHLAND WOOING

There are many productions of the Scottish Ballad Poets upon the lion-like mode of wooing practised by the ancient Highlanders when they had a fancy for the person (or property) of a Lowland damsel. One example is found in Mr. Robert Jamieson's Popular Scottish Songs: —

Bonny Babby Livingstone
Gaed out to see the kye,
And she has met with Glenlyon,
Who has stolen her away.

He took free her her sattin coat,
But an her silken gown,
Syne roud her in his tartan plaid,
And happd her round and roun'.

In another ballad we are told how —

Four-and-twenty Hieland men,
Came doun by Fiddoch Bide,
And they have sworn a deadly aith,
Jean Muir suld be a bride:

And they have sworn a deadly aith,
Ilke man upon his durke,
That she should wed with Duncan Ger,
Or they'd make bloody works.

This last we have from tradition, but there are many others in the collections of Scottish Ballads to the same purpose.

The achievement of Robert Oig, or young Rob Roy, as the Lowlanders called him, was celebrated in a ballad, of which there are twenty different and various editions. The tune is lively and wild, and we select the following words from memory: —

Rob Roy is frae the Hielands come,
Down to the Lowland border;
And he has stolen that lady away,
To haud his house in order.

He set her on a milk-white steed,
Of none he stood in awe;
Untill they reached the Hieland hills,
Aboon the Balmaha'![31]

Saying, Be content, be content,
Be content with me, lady;

[31] A pass on the eastern margin of Loch Lomond, and an entrance to the Highlands.

Where will ye find in Lennox land,
Sae braw a man as me, lady?

Rob Roy he was my father called,
MacGregor was his name, lady;
A' the country, far and near,
Have heard MacGregor's fame, lady.

He was a hedge about his friends,
A heckle to his foes, lady;
If any man did him gainsay,
He felt his deadly blows, lady.

I am as bold, I am as bold,
I am as bold and more, lady;
Any man that doubts my word,
May try my gude claymore, lady.

Then be content, be content.
Be content with me, lady;
For now you are my wedded wife,
Until the day you die, lady.

No. VI – GHLUNE DHU

The following notices concerning this Chief fell under the Author's eye while the sheets were in the act of going through the press. They occur in manuscript memoirs, written by a person intimately acquainted with the incidents of 1745.

This Chief had the important task intrusted to him of defending the Castle of Doune, in which the Chevalier placed a garrison to protect his communication with the Highlands, and to repel any sallies which might be made from Stirling Castle – Ghlune Dhu distinguished himself by his good conduct in this charge.

Ghlune Dhu is thus described: – "Glengyle is, in person, a tall handsome man, and has more of the mien of the ancient heroes than our modern fine gentlemen are possessed of. He is honest and disinterested to a proverb – extremely modest – brave and intrepid – and born one of the best partisans in Europe. In short, the whole people of that country declared that never did men live under so mild a government as Glengyle's, not a man having so much as lost a chicken while he continued there."

It would appear from this curious passage, that Glengyle – not Stewart of Balloch, as averred in a note on Waverley – commanded the garrison of Doune. Balloch might, no doubt, succeed MacGregor in the situation.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO ROB ROY

In the magnum opus, the author's final edition of the Waverley Novels, "Rob Roy" appears out of its chronological order, and comes next after "The Antiquary." In this, as in other matters, the present edition follows that of 1829. "The Antiquary," as we said, contained in its preface the author's farewell to his art. This valediction was meant as prelude to a fresh appearance in a new disguise. Constable, who had brought out the earlier works, did not publish the "Tales of my Landlord" ("The Black Dwarf" and "Old Mortality "), which Scott had nearly finished by November 12, 1816. The four volumes appeared from the houses of Mr. Murray and Mr. Blackwood, on December 1, 1816. Within less than a month came out "Harold the Dauntless," by the author of "The Bridal of Triermain." Scott's work on the historical part of the "Annual Register" had also been unusually arduous. At Abbotsford, or at Ashiestiel, his mode of life was particularly healthy; in Edinburgh, between the claims of the courts, of literature, and of society, he was scarcely ever in the open air. Thus hard sedentary work caused, between the publication of "Old Mortality" and that of "Rob Roy," the first of those alarming illnesses which overshadowed the last fifteen years of his life. The earliest attack of cramp in the stomach occurred on March 5, 1817, when he "retired from the room with a scream of agony which electrified his guests."

Living on "parritch," as he tells Miss Baillie (for his national spirit rejected arrowroot), Scott had yet energy enough to plan a dramatic piece for Terry, "The Doom of Devorgoil." But in April he announced to John Ballantyne "a good subject" for a novel, and on May 6, John, after a visit to Abbotsford with Constable, proclaimed to James Ballantyne the advent of "Rob Roy."

The anecdote about the title is well known. Constable suggested it, and Scott was at first wisely reluctant to "write up to a title." Names like Rob Roy, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Cleopatra, and so forth, tell the reader too much, and, Scott imagined, often excite hopes which cannot be fulfilled. However, in the geniality of an after-dinner hour in the gardens of Abbotsford, Scott allowed Constable to be sponsor. Many things had lately brought Rob into his mind. In 1812 Scott had acquired Rob Roy's gun – "a long Spanish-barrelled piece, with his initials R. M. C.," C standing for Campbell, a name assumed in compliment to the Argyll family.

Rob's spleuchan had also been presented by Mr. Train to Sir Walter, in 1816, and may have directed his thoughts to this popular freebooter. Though Rob flourished in the '15, he was really a character very near Scott, whose friend Invernahyle had fought Rob with broadsword and target – a courteous combat like that between Ajax and Hector.

At Tullibody Scott had met, in 1793, a gentleman who once visited Rob, and arranged to pay him blackmail.

Mr. William Adam had mentioned to Scott in 1816 the use of the word "curlie-wurlies" for highly decorated architecture, and recognised the phrase, next year, in the mouth of Andrew Fairservice.

In the meeting at Abbotsford (May 2, 1817) Scott was very communicative, sketched Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and improvised a dialogue between Rob and the magistrate. A week later he quoted to Southey, Swift's lines – Too bad for a blessing, too good for a curse, – which probably suggested Andrew Fairservice's final estimate of Scott's hero, – "over bad for blessing, and ower gude for banning."

These are the trifles which show the bent of Scott's mind at this period. The summer of 1817 he spent in working at the "Annual Register" and at the "Border Antiquities." When the courts rose, he visited Rob's cave at the head of Loch Lomond; and this visit seems to have been gossiped about, as literary people, hearing of the new novel, expected the cave to be a very prominent feature. He also went to Glasgow, and refreshed his memory of the cathedral; nor did he neglect old books, such as "A Tour through Great Britain, by a Gentleman" (4th Edition, 1748). This yielded him the

Bailie's account of Glasgow commerce "in Musselburgh stuffs and Edinburgh shalloons," and the phrase "sortable cargoes."

Hence, too, Scott took the description of the rise of Glasgow. Thus Scott was taking pains with his preparations. The book was not written in post-haste. Announced to Constable early in May, the last sheet was not corrected till about December 21, when Scott wrote to Ballantyne: —

DEAR JAMES, —

With great joy I send you Roy.
'T was a tough job,
But we're done with Rob.

"Rob Roy" was published on the last day of 1817. The toughness of the job was caused by constant pain, and by struggles with "the lassitude of opium." So seldom sentimental, so rarely given to expressing his melancholy moods in verse, Scott, while composing "Rob Roy," wrote the beautiful poem "The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill," in which, for this once, "pity of self through all makes broken moan."

Some stress may be laid on the state of Sir Walter's health at this moment, because a living critic has tried to show that, in his case, "every pang of the stomach paralyses the brain;" that he "never had a fit of the cramp without spoiling a chapter." – [Mr. Ruskin's "Fiction Fair and Foul," "Nineteenth Century," 1880, p. 955.] – "Rob Roy" is a sufficient answer to these theories. The mind of Scott was no slave to his body.

The success of the story is pleasantly proved by a sentence in a review of the day: "It is an event unprecedented in the annals either of literature or of the custom-house that the entire cargo of a packet, or smack, bound from Leith to London, should be the impression of a novel, for which the public curiosity was so much upon the alert as to require this immense importation to satisfy."

Ten thousand copies of a three-volume novel are certainly a ponderous cargo, and Constable printed no fewer in his first edition. Scott was assured of his own triumph in February 1819, when a dramatised version of his novel was acted in Edinburgh by the company of Mr. William Murray, a descendant of the traitor Murray of Broughton. Mr. Charles Mackay made a capital Bailie, and the piece remains a favourite with Scotch audiences. It is plain, from the reviews, that in one respect "Rob Roy" rather disappointed the world. They had expected Rob to be a much more imposing and majestic cateran, and complained that his foot was set too late on his native heather. They found too much of the drover and intriguer, too little of the traditional driver of the spoil. This was what Scott foresaw when he objected to "writing up to a title." In fact, he did not write up to, it, and, as the "Scots Magazine" said, "shaped his story in such a manner as to throw busybodies out in their chase, with a slight degree of malicious finesse." "All the expeditions to the wonderful cave have been thrown away, for the said cave is not once, we think, mentioned from beginning to end."

"Rob Roy" equals "Waverley" in its pictures of Highland and Lowland society and character. Scott had clearly set himself to state his opinions about the Highlands as they were under the patriarchal system of government. The Highlanders were then a people, not lawless, indeed, but all their law was the will of their chief. Bailie Nicol Jarvie makes a statement of their economic and military condition as accurate as it is humorous. The modern "Highland Question" may be studied as well in the Bailie's words as in volumes of history and wildernesses of blue-books. A people patriarchal and military as the Arabs of the desert were suddenly dragged into modern commercial and industrial society. All old bonds were snapped in a moment; emigration (at first opposed by some of the chiefs) and the French wars depleted the country of its "lang-leggit callants, gaun wanting the breeks." Cattle took the place of men, sheep of cattle, deer of sheep, and, in the long peace, a population grew up again – a population destitute of employment even more than of old, because war and robbery had ceased to be outlets for its energy. Some chiefs, as Dr. Johnson said, treated

their lands as an attorney treats his row of cheap houses in a town. Hence the Highland Question, – a question in which Scott's sympathies were with the Highlanders. "Rob Roy," naturally, is no mere "novel with a purpose," no economic tract in disguise. Among Scott's novels it stands alone as regards its pictures of passionate love. The love of Diana Vernon is no less passionate for its admirable restraint. Here Scott displays, without affectation, a truly Greek reserve in his art. The deep and strong affection of Diana Vernon would not have been otherwise handled by him who drew the not more immortal picture of Antigone. Unlike modern novelists, Sir Walter deals neither in analysis nor in rapturous effusions. We can, unfortunately, imagine but too easily how some writers would peep and pry into the concealed emotions of that maiden heart; how others would revel in tears, kisses, and caresses. In place of all these Scott writes: —

> She extended her hand, but I clasped her to my bosom. She sighed as she extricated herself from the embrace which she permitted, escaped to the door which led to her own apartment, and I saw her no more.

Months pass, in a mist of danger and intrigue, before the lovers meet again in the dusk and the solitude.

"Mr. Francis Osbaldistone," cries the girl's voice through the moonlight, "should not whistle his favourite airs when he wishes to remain undiscovered."

And Diana Vernon – for she, wrapped in a horseman's cloak, was the last speaker – whistled in playful mimicry the second part of the tune, which was on my lips when they came up.

Surely there was never, in story or in song, a lady so loving and so light of heart, save Rosalind alone. Her face touches Frank's, as she says goodbye for ever "It was a moment never to be forgotten, inexpressibly bitter, yet mixed with a sensation of pleasure so deeply soothing and affecting as at once to unlock all the floodgates of the heart."

She rides into the night, her lover knows the *hysterica passio* of poor Lear, but "I had scarce given vent to my feelings in this paroxysm ere I was ashamed of my weakness."

These were men and women who knew how to love, and how to live. All men who read "Rob Roy" are innocent rivals of Frank Osbaldistone. Di Vernon holds her place in our hearts with Rosalind, and these airy affections, like the actual emotions which they mimic, are not matters for words. This lady, so gay, so brave, so witty and fearless, so tender and true, who "endured trials which might have dignified the history of a martyr… who spent the day in darkness and the night in vigil, and never breathed a murmur of weakness or complaint," is as immortal in men's memories as the actual heroine of the White Rose, Flora Macdonald. Her place is with Helen and Antigone, with Rosalind and Imogen, the deathless daughters of dreams. She brightens the world as she passes, and our own hearts tell us all the story when Osbaldistone says, "You know how I lamented her."

In the central interest, which, for once, is the interest of love, "Rob Roy" attains the nobility, the reserve, the grave dignity of the highest art. It is not easy to believe that Frank Osbaldistone is worthy of his lady; but here no man is a fair judge. In the four novels – "Waverley," "Guy Mannering," "The Antiquary," and "Rob Roy" – which we have studied, the hero has always been a young poet. Waverley versified; so did Mannering; Lovel "had attempted a few lyrical pieces;" and, in Osbaldistone's rhymes, Scott parodied his own

> blast of that dread horn
> On Fontarabian echoes borne.

All the heroes, then, have been poets, and Osbaldistone's youth may have been suggested by Scott's memories of his own, and of the father who "feared that he would never be better than a

gangrel scrapegut." Like Henry Morton, in "Old Mortality," Frank Osbaldistone is on the political side taken by Scott's judgment, not by his emotions. To make Di Vernon convert him to Jacobitism would have been to repeat the story of Waverley. Still, he would have been more sympathetic if he had been converted. He certainly does not lack spirit, as a sportsman, or "on an occasion," as Sir William Hope says in "The Scots' Fencing Master," when he encounters Rashleigh in the college gardens. Frank, in short, is all that a hero should be, and is glorified by his affection.

Of the other characters, perhaps Rob Roy is too sympathetically drawn. The materials for a judgment are afforded by Scott's own admirable historical introduction. The Rob Roy who so calmly "played booty," and kept a foot in either camp, certainly falls below the heroic. His language has been criticised in late years, and it has been insisted that the Highlanders never talked Lowland Scotch. But Scott has anticipated these cavils in the eighteenth chapter of the second volume. Certainly no Lowlander knew the Highlanders better than he did, and his ear for dialect was as keen as his musical ear was confessedly obtuse. Scott had the best means of knowing whether Helen MacGregor would be likely to soar into heroics as she is apt to do. In fact, here "we may trust the artist."

The novel is as rich as any in subordinate characters full of life and humour. Morris is one of the few utter cowards in Scott. He has none of the passionate impulses towards courage of the hapless hero in "The Fair Maid of Perth." The various Osbaldistones are nicely discriminated by Diana Vernon, in one of those "Beatrix moods" which Scott did not always admire, when they were displayed by "Lady Anne" and other girls of flesh and blood. Rashleigh is of a nature unusual in Scott. He is, perhaps, Sir Walter's nearest approach, for malignant egotism, to an Iago. Of Bailie Nicol Jarvie commendation were impertinent. All Scotland arose, called him hers, laughed at and applauded her civic child. Concerning Andrew Fairservice, the first edition tells us what the final edition leaves us to guess – that Tresham "may recollect him as gardener at Osbaldistone Hall." Andrew was not a friend who could be shaken off. Diana may have ruled the hall, but Andrew must have remained absolute in the gardens, with "something to maw that he would like to see mawn, or something to saw that he would like to see sawn, or something to ripe that he would like to see ripen, and sae he e'en daikered on wi' the family frae year's end to year's end," and life's end. His master "needed some carefu' body to look after him."

Only Shakspeare and Scott could have given us medicines to make us like this cowardly, conceited "jimp honest" fellow, Andrew Fairservice, who just escapes being a hypocrite by dint of some sincere old Covenanting leaven in his veins. We make bold to say that the creator of Parolles and Lucie, and many another lax and lovable knave, would, had he been a Scot, have drawn Andrew Fairservice thus, and not otherwise.

The critics of the hour censured, as they were certain to censure, the construction, and especially the conclusion, of "Rob Roy." No doubt the critics were right. In both Scott and Shakspeare there is often seen a perfect disregard of the denouement. Any moderately intelligent person can remark on the huddled-up ends and hasty marriages in many of Shakspeare's comedies; Moliere has been charged with the same offence; and, if blame there be, Scott is almost always to blame. Thackeray is little better. There must be some reason that explains why men of genius go wrong where every newspaper critic, every milliner's girl acquainted with circulating libraries, can detect the offence.

In the closing remarks of "Old Mortality" Scott expresses himself humorously on this matter of the denouement. His schoolmaster author takes his proofsheets to Miss Martha Buskbody, who was the literary set in Gandercleugh, having read through the whole stock of three circulating libraries. Miss Buskbody criticises the Dominic as Lady Louisa Stuart habitually criticised Sir Walter. "Your plan of omitting a formal conclusion will never do!" The Dominie replies, "Really, madam, you must be aware that every volume of a narrative turns less and less interesting as the author draws to a conclusion, – just like your tea, which, though excellent hyson, is necessarily weaker and more insipid in the last cup." He compares the orthodox happy ending to "the luscious lump of half-dissolved sugar" usually found at the bottom of the cup. This topic might be discussed, and indeed has been

discussed, endlessly. In our actual lives it is probable that most of us have found ourselves living for a year, or a month, or a week, in a chapter or half a volume of a novel, and these have been our least happy experiences. But we have also found that the romance vanishes away like a ghost, dwindles out, closes with ragged ends, has no denouement. Then the question presents itself, As art is imitation, should not novels, as a rule, close thus? The experiment has frequently been tried, especially by the modern geniuses who do not conceal their belief that their art is altogether finer than Scott's, or, perhaps, than Shakspeare's.

In his practice, and in his Dominie's critical remarks, Sir Walter appears inclined to agree with them. He was just as well aware as his reviewers, or as Lady Louisa Stuart, that the conclusion of "Rob Roy" is "huddled up," that the sudden demise of all the young Baldistones is a high-handed measure. He knew that, in real life, Frank and Di Vernon would never have met again after that farewell on the moonlit road. But he yielded to Miss Buskbody's demand for "a glimpse of sunshine in the last chapter;" he understood the human liking for the final lump of sugar. After all, fiction is not, any more than any other art, a mere imitation of life: it is an arrangement, a selection. Scott was too kind, too humane, to disappoint us, the crowd of human beings who find much of our happiness in dreams. He could not keep up his own interest in his characters after he had developed them; he could take pleasure in giving them life, – he had little pleasure in ushering them into an earthly paradise; so that part of his business he did carelessly, as his only rivals in literature have also done it.

The critics censured, not unjustly, the "machinery" of the story, – these mysterious "assets" of Osbaldistone and Tresham, whose absence was to precipitate the Rising of 1715. The "Edinburgh Review" lost its heart (Jeffrey's heart was always being lost) to Di Vernon. But it pronounces that "a king with legs of marble, or a youth with an ivory shoulder," heroes of the "Arabian Nights" and of Pindar, was probable, compared with the wit and accomplishments of Diana. This is hypercriticism. Diana's education, under Rashleigh, had been elaborate; her acquaintance with Shakspeare, her main strength, is unusual in women, but not beyond the limits of belief. Here she is in agreeable contrast to Rose Bradwardine, who had never heard of "Romeo and Juliet." In any case, Diana compels belief as well as wins affection, while we are fortunate enough to be in her delightful company.

As long as we believe in her, it is not of moment to consider whether her charms are incompatible with probability.

"Rob Roy" was finished in spite of "a very bad touch of the cramp for about three weeks in November, which, with its natural attendants of dulness and, weakness, made me unable to get our matters forward till last week," says Scott to Constable. "But," adds the unconquerable author, "I am resting myself here a few days before commencing my new labours, which will be untrodden ground, and, I think, pretty likely to succeed." The "new labours" were "The Heart of Mid-Lothian."

ANDREW LANG.

CHAPTER FIRST

How have I sinn'd, that this affliction
Should light so heavy on me? I have no more sons,
And this no more mine own. – My grand curse
Hang o'er his head that thus transformed thee! —
Travel? I'll send my horse to travel next.

Monsieur Thomas.

You have requested me, my dear friend, to bestow some of that leisure, with which Providence has blessed the decline of my life, in registering the hazards and difficulties which attended its commencement. The recollection of those adventures, as you are pleased to term them, has indeed left upon my mind a chequered and varied feeling of pleasure and of pain, mingled, I trust, with no slight gratitude and veneration to the Disposer of human events, who guided my early course through much risk and labour, that the ease with which he has blessed my prolonged life might seem softer from remembrance and contrast. Neither is it possible for me to doubt, what you have often affirmed, that the incidents which befell me among a people singularly primitive in their government and manners, have something interesting and attractive for those who love to hear an old man's stories of a past age.

Still, however, you must remember, that the tale told by one friend, and listened to by another, loses half its charms when committed to paper; and that the narratives to which you have attended with interest, as heard from the voice of him to whom they occurred, will appear less deserving of attention when perused in the seclusion of your study. But your greener age and robust constitution promise longer life than will, in all human probability, be the lot of your friend. Throw, then, these sheets into some secret drawer of your escritoire till we are separated from each other's society by an event which may happen at any moment, and which must happen within the course of a few – a very few years. When we are parted in this world, to meet, I hope, in a better, you will, I am well aware, cherish more than it deserves the memory of your departed friend, and will find in those details which I am now to commit to paper, matter for melancholy, but not unpleasing reflection. Others bequeath to the confidants of their bosom portraits of their external features – I put into your hands a faithful transcript of my thoughts and feelings, of my virtues and of my failings, with the assured hope, that the follies and headstrong impetuosity of my youth will meet the same kind construction and forgiveness which have so often attended the faults of my matured age.

One advantage, among the many, of addressing my Memoirs (if I may give these sheets a name so imposing) to a dear and intimate friend, is, that I may spare some of the details, in this case unnecessary, with which I must needs have detained a stranger from what I have to say of greater interest. Why should I bestow all my tediousness upon you, because I have you in my power, and have ink, paper, and time before me? At the same time, I dare not promise that I may not abuse the opportunity so temptingly offered me, to treat of myself and my own concerns, even though I speak of circumstances as well known to you as to myself. The seductive love of narrative, when we ourselves are the heroes of the events which we tell, often disregards the attention due to the time and patience of the audience, and the best and wisest have yielded to its fascination. I need only remind you of the singular instance evinced by the form of that rare and original edition of Sully's Memoirs, which you (with the fond vanity of a book-collector) insist upon preferring to that which is reduced to the useful and ordinary form of Memoirs, but which I think curious, solely as illustrating how far so great a man as the author was accessible to the foible of self-importance. If I recollect rightly, that venerable peer and great statesman had appointed no fewer than four gentlemen of his household to draw up the events of his life, under the title of Memorials of the Sage and Royal Affairs of State, Domestic,

Political, and Military, transacted by Henry IV., and so forth. These grave recorders, having made their compilation, reduced the Memoirs containing all the remarkable events of their master's life into a narrative, addressed to himself in *propria persona.* And thus, instead of telling his own story, in the third person, like Julius Caesar, or in the first person, like most who, in the hall, or the study, undertake to be the heroes of their own tale, Sully enjoyed the refined, though whimsical pleasure, of having the events of his life told over to him by his secretaries, being himself the auditor, as he was also the hero, and probably the author, of the whole book. It must have been a great sight to have seen the ex-minister, as bolt upright as a starched ruff and laced cassock could make him, seated in state beneath his canopy, and listening to the recitation of his compilers, while, standing bare in his presence, they informed him gravely, "Thus said the duke – so did the duke infer – such were your grace's sentiments upon this important point – such were your secret counsels to the king on that other emergency," – circumstances, all of which must have been much better known to their hearer than to themselves, and most of which could only be derived from his own special communication.

My situation is not quite so ludicrous as that of the great Sully, and yet there would be something whimsical in Frank Osbaldistone giving Will Tresham a formal account of his birth, education, and connections in the world. I will, therefore, wrestle with the tempting spirit of P. P., Clerk of our Parish, as I best may, and endeavour to tell you nothing that is familiar to you already. Some things, however, I must recall to your memory, because, though formerly well known to you, they may have been forgotten through lapse of time, and they afford the ground-work of my destiny.

You must remember my father well; for, as your own was a member of the mercantile house, you knew him from infancy. Yet you hardly saw him in his best days, before age and infirmity had quenched his ardent spirit of enterprise and speculation. He would have been a poorer man, indeed, but perhaps as happy, had he devoted to the extension of science those active energies, and acute powers of observation, for which commercial pursuits found occupation. Yet, in the fluctuations of mercantile speculation, there is something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain. He who embarks on that fickle sea, requires to possess the skill of the pilot and the fortitude of the navigator, and after all may be wrecked and lost, unless the gales of fortune breathe in his favour. This mixture of necessary attention and inevitable hazard, – the frequent and awful uncertainty whether prudence shall overcome fortune, or fortune baffle the schemes of prudence, affords full occupation for the powers, as well as for the feelings of the mind, and trade has all the fascination of gambling without its moral guilt.

Early in the 18th century, when I (Heaven help me) was a youth of some twenty years old, I was summoned suddenly from Bourdeaux to attend my father on business of importance. I shall never forget our first interview. You recollect the brief, abrupt, and somewhat stern mode in which he was wont to communicate his pleasure to those around him. Methinks I see him even now in my mind's eye; – the firm and upright figure, – the step, quick and determined, – the eye, which shot so keen and so penetrating a glance, – the features, on which care had already planted wrinkles, – and hear his language, in which he never wasted word in vain, expressed in a voice which had sometimes an occasional harshness, far from the intention of the speaker.

When I dismounted from my post-horse, I hastened to my father's apartment. He was traversing it with an air of composed and steady deliberation, which even my arrival, although an only son unseen for four years, was unable to discompose. I threw myself into his arms. He was a kind, though not a fond father, and the tear twinkled in his dark eye, but it was only for a moment.

"Dubourg writes to me that he is satisfied with you, Frank."

"I am happy, sir" —

"But I have less reason to be so" he added, sitting down at his bureau.

"I am sorry, sir" —

"Sorry and happy, Frank, are words that, on most occasions, signify little or nothing – Here is your last letter."

He took it out from a number of others tied up in a parcel of red tape, and curiously labelled and filed. There lay my poor epistle, written on the subject the nearest to my heart at the time, and couched in words which I had thought would work compassion if not conviction, – there, I say, it lay, squeezed up among the letters on miscellaneous business in which my father's daily affairs had engaged him. I cannot help smiling internally when I recollect the mixture of hurt vanity, and wounded feeling, with which I regarded my remonstrance, to the penning of which there had gone, I promise you, some trouble, as I beheld it extracted from amongst letters of advice, of credit, and all the commonplace lumber, as I then thought them, of a merchant's correspondence. Surely, thought I, a letter of such importance (I dared not say, even to myself, so well written) deserved a separate place, as well as more anxious consideration, than those on the ordinary business of the counting-house.

But my father did not observe my dissatisfaction, and would not have minded it if he had. He proceeded, with the letter in his hand. "This, Frank, is yours of the 21st ultimo, in which you advise me (reading from my letter), that in the most important business of forming a plan, and adopting a profession for life, you trust my paternal goodness will hold you entitled to at least a negative voice; that you have insuperable – ay, insuperable is the word – I wish, by the way, you would write a more distinct current hand – draw a score through the tops of your t's, and open the loops of your l's – insuperable objections to the arrangements which I have proposed to you. There is much more to the same effect, occupying four good pages of paper, which a little attention to perspicuity and distinctness of expression might have comprised within as many lines. For, after all, Frank, it amounts but to this, that you will not do as I would have you."

"That I cannot, sir, in the present instance, not that I will not."

"Words avail very little with me, young man," said my father, whose inflexibility always possessed the air of the most perfect calmness of self-possession. "*Can not* may be a more civil phrase than *will not,* but the expressions are synonymous where there is no moral impossibility. But I am not a friend to doing business hastily; we will talk this matter over after dinner. – Owen!"

Owen appeared, not with the silver locks which you were used to venerate, for he was then little more than fifty; but he had the same, or an exactly similar uniform suit of light-brown clothes, – the same pearl-grey silk stockings, – the same stock, with its silver buckle, – the same plaited cambric ruffles, drawn down over his knuckles in the parlour, but in the counting-house carefully folded back under the sleeves, that they might remain unstained by the ink which he daily consumed; – in a word, the same grave, formal, yet benevolent cast of features, which continued to his death to distinguish the head clerk of the great house of Osbaldistone and Tresham.

"Owen," said my father, as the kind old man shook me affectionately by the hand, "you must dine with us to-day, and hear the news Frank has brought us from our friends in Bourdeaux."

Owen made one of his stiff bows of respectful gratitude; for, in those days, when the distance between superiors and inferiors was enforced in a manner to which the present times are strangers, such an invitation was a favour of some little consequence.

I shall long remember that dinner-party. Deeply affected by feelings of anxiety, not unmingled with displeasure, I was unable to take that active share in the conversation which my father seemed to expect from me; and I too frequently gave unsatisfactory answers to the questions with which he assailed me. Owen, hovering betwixt his respect for his patron, and his love for the youth he had dandled on his knee in childhood, like the timorous, yet anxious ally of an invaded nation, endeavoured at every blunder I made to explain my no-meaning, and to cover my retreat; manoeuvres which added to my father's pettish displeasure, and brought a share of it upon my kind advocate, instead of protecting me. I had not, while residing in the house of Dubourg, absolutely conducted myself like

A clerk condemn'd his father's soul to cross,
Who penn'd a stanza when he should engross; —

but, to say truth, I had frequented the counting-house no more than I had thought absolutely necessary to secure the good report of the Frenchman, long a correspondent of our firm, to whom my father had trusted for initiating me into the mysteries of commerce. In fact, my principal attention had been dedicated to literature and manly exercises. My father did not altogether discourage such acquirements, whether mental or personal. He had too much good sense not to perceive, that they sate gracefully upon every man, and he was sensible that they relieved and dignified the character to which he wished me to aspire. But his chief ambition was, that I should succeed not merely to his fortune, but to the views and plans by which he imagined he could extend and perpetuate the wealthy inheritance which he designed for me.

Love of his profession was the motive which he chose should be most ostensible, when he urged me to tread the same path; but he had others with which I only became acquainted at a later period. Impetuous in his schemes, as well as skilful and daring, each new adventure, when successful, became at once the incentive, and furnished the means, for farther speculation. It seemed to be necessary to him, as to an ambitious conqueror, to push on from achievement to achievement, without stopping to secure, far less to enjoy, the acquisitions which he made. Accustomed to see his whole fortune trembling in the scales of chance, and dexterous at adopting expedients for casting the balance in his favour, his health and spirits and activity seemed ever to increase with the animating hazards on which he staked his wealth; and he resembled a sailor, accustomed to brave the billows and the foe, whose confidence rises on the eve of tempest or of battle. He was not, however, insensible to the changes which increasing age or supervening malady might make in his own constitution; and was anxious in good time to secure in me an assistant, who might take the helm when his hand grew weary, and keep the vessel's way according to his counsel and instruction. Paternal affection, as well as the furtherance of his own plans, determined him to the same conclusion. Your father, though his fortune was vested in the house, was only a sleeping partner, as the commercial phrase goes; and Owen, whose probity and skill in the details of arithmetic rendered his services invaluable as a head clerk, was not possessed either of information or talents sufficient to conduct the mysteries of the principal management. If my father were suddenly summoned from life, what would become of the world of schemes which he had formed, unless his son were moulded into a commercial Hercules, fit to sustain the weight when relinquished by the falling Atlas? and what would become of that son himself, if, a stranger to business of this description, he found himself at once involved in the labyrinth of mercantile concerns, without the clew of knowledge necessary for his extraction? For all these reasons, avowed and secret, my father was determined I should embrace his profession; and when he was determined, the resolution of no man was more immovable. I, however, was also a party to be consulted, and, with something of his own pertinacity, I had formed a determination precisely contrary. It may, I hope, be some palliative for the resistance which, on this occasion, I offered to my father's wishes, that I did not fully understand upon what they were founded, or how deeply his happiness was involved in them. Imagining myself certain of a large succession in future, and ample maintenance in the meanwhile, it never occurred to me that it might be necessary, in order to secure these blessings, to submit to labour and limitations unpleasant to my taste and temper. I only saw in my father's proposal for my engaging in business, a desire that I should add to those heaps of wealth which he had himself acquired; and imagining myself the best judge of the path to my own happiness, I did not conceive that I should increase that happiness by augmenting a fortune which I believed was already sufficient, and more than sufficient, for every use, comfort, and elegant enjoyment.

Accordingly, I am compelled to repeat, that my time at Bourdeaux had not been spent as my father had proposed to himself. What he considered as the chief end of my residence in that city, I had postponed for every other, and would (had I dared) have neglected altogether. Dubourg, a favoured and benefited correspondent of our mercantile house, was too much of a shrewd politician to make such reports to the head of the firm concerning his only child, as would excite the displeasure of

both; and he might also, as you will presently hear, have views of selfish advantage in suffering me to neglect the purposes for which I was placed under his charge. My conduct was regulated by the bounds of decency and good order, and thus far he had no evil report to make, supposing him so disposed; but, perhaps, the crafty Frenchman would have been equally complaisant, had I been in the habit of indulging worse feelings than those of indolence and aversion to mercantile business. As it was, while I gave a decent portion of my time to the commercial studies he recommended, he was by no means envious of the hours which I dedicated to other and more classical attainments, nor did he ever find fault with me for dwelling upon Corneille and Boileau, in preference to Postlethwayte (supposing his folio to have then existed, and Monsieur Dubourg able to have pronounced his name), or Savary, or any other writer on commercial economy. He had picked up somewhere a convenient expression, with which he rounded off every letter to his correspondent, – "I was all," he said, "that a father could wish."

My father never quarrelled with a phrase, however frequently repeated, provided it seemed to him distinct and expressive; and Addison himself could not have found expressions so satisfactory to him as, "Yours received, and duly honoured the bills enclosed, as per margin."

Knowing, therefore, very well what he desired me to, be, Mr. Osbaldistone made no doubt, from the frequent repetition of Dubourg's favourite phrase, that I was the very thing he wished to see me; when, in an evil hour, he received my letter, containing my eloquent and detailed apology for declining a place in the firm, and a desk and stool in the corner of the dark counting-house in Crane Alley, surmounting in height those of Owen, and the other clerks, and only inferior to the tripod of my father himself. All was wrong from that moment. Dubourg's reports became as suspicious as if his bills had been noted for dishonour. I was summoned home in all haste, and received in the manner I have already communicated to you.

CHAPTER SECOND

I begin shrewdly to suspect the young man of a terrible taint – Poetry; with which idle disease if he be infected, there's no hope of him in astate course. Actum est of him
for a commonwealth's man, if he goto't in rhyme once.

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair.

My father had, generally speaking, his temper under complete self-command, and his anger rarely indicated itself by words, except in a sort of dry testy manner, to those who had displeased him. He never used threats, or expressions of loud resentment. All was arranged with him on system, and it was his practice to do "the needful" on every occasion, without wasting words about it. It was, therefore, with a bitter smile that he listened to my imperfect answers concerning the state of commerce in France, and unmercifully permitted me to involve myself deeper and deeper in the mysteries of agio, tariffs, tare and tret; nor can I charge my memory with his having looked positively angry, until he found me unable to explain the exact effect which the depreciation of the louis d'or had produced on the negotiation of bills of exchange. "The most remarkable national occurrence in my time," said my father (who nevertheless had seen the Revolution) – "and he knows no more of it than a post on the quay!"

"Mr. Francis," suggested Owen, in his timid and conciliatory manner, "cannot have forgotten, that by an *arret* of the King of France, dated 1st May 1700, it was provided that the *porteur,* within ten days after due, must make demand" —

"Mr. Francis," said my father, interrupting him, "will, I dare say, recollect for the moment anything you are so kind as hint to him. But, body o' me! how Dubourg could permit him! Hark ye, Owen, what sort of a youth is Clement Dubourg, his nephew there, in the office, the black-haired lad?"

"One of the cleverest clerks, sir, in the house; a prodigious young man for his time," answered Owen; for the gaiety and civility of the young Frenchman had won his heart.

"Ay, ay, I suppose *he* knows something of the nature of exchange. Dubourg was determined I should have one youngster at least about my hand who understood business. But I see his drift, and he shall find that I do so when he looks at the balance-sheet. Owen, let Clement's salary be paid up to next quarter-day, and let him ship himself back to Bourdeaux in his father's ship, which is clearing out yonder."

"Dismiss Clement Dubourg, sir?" said Owen, with a faltering voice.

"Yes, sir, dismiss him instantly; it is enough to have a stupid Englishman in the counting-house to make blunders, without keeping a sharp Frenchman there to profit by them."

I had lived long enough in the territories of the *Grand Monarque* to contract a hearty aversion to arbitrary exertion of authority, even if it had not been instilled into me with my earliest breeding; and I could not refrain from interposing, to prevent an innocent and meritorious young man from paying the penalty of having acquired that proficiency which my father had desired for me.

"I beg pardon, sir," when Mr. Osbaldistone had done speaking; "but I think it but just, that if I have been negligent of my studies, I should pay the forfeit myself. I have no reason to charge Monsieur Dubourg with having neglected to give me opportunities of improvement, however little I may have profited by them; and with respect to Monsieur Clement Dubourg" —

"With respect to him, and to you, I shall take the measures which I see needful," replied my father; "but it is fair in you, Frank, to take your own blame on your own shoulders – very fair, that

cannot be denied. – I cannot acquit old Dubourg," he said, looking to Owen, "for having merely afforded Frank the means of useful knowledge, without either seeing that he took advantage of them or reporting to me if he did not. You see, Owen, he has natural notions of equity becoming a British merchant."

"Mr. Francis," said the head-clerk, with his usual formal inclination of the head, and a slight elevation of his right hand, which he had acquired by a habit of sticking his pen behind his ear before he spoke – "Mr. Francis seems to understand the fundamental principle of all moral accounting, the great ethic rule of three. Let A do to B, as he would have B do to him; the product will give the rule of conduct required."

My father smiled at this reduction of the golden rule to arithmetical form, but instantly proceeded.

"All this signifies nothing, Frank; you have been throwing away your time like a boy, and in future you must learn to live like a man. I shall put you under Owen's care for a few months, to recover the lost ground."

I was about to reply, but Owen looked at me with such a supplicatory and warning gesture, that I was involuntarily silent.

"We will then," continued my father, "resume the subject of mine of the 1st ultimo, to which you sent me an answer which was unadvised and unsatisfactory. So now, fill your glass, and push the bottle to Owen."

Want of courage – of audacity if you will – was never my failing. I answered firmly, "I was sorry that my letter was unsatisfactory, unadvised it was not; for I had given the proposal his goodness had made me, my instant and anxious attention, and it was with no small pain that I found myself obliged to decline it."

My father bent his keen eye for a moment on me, and instantly withdrew it. As he made no answer, I thought myself obliged to proceed, though with some hesitation, and he only interrupted me by monosyllables. – "It is impossible, sir, for me to have higher respect for any character than I have for the commercial, even were it not yours."

"Indeed!"

"It connects nation with nation, relieves the wants, and contributes to the wealth of all; and is to the general commonwealth of the civilised world what the daily intercourse of ordinary life is to private society, or rather, what air and food are to our bodies."

"Well, sir?"

"And yet, sir, I find myself compelled to persist in declining to adopt a character which I am so ill qualified to support."

"I will take care that you acquire the qualifications necessary. You are no longer the guest and pupil of Dubourg."

"But, my dear sir, it is no defect of teaching which I plead, but my own inability to profit by instruction."

"Nonsense. – Have you kept your journal in the terms I desired?"

"Yes, sir."

"Be pleased to bring it here."

The volume thus required was a sort of commonplace book, kept by my father's recommendation, in which I had been directed to enter notes of the miscellaneous information which I had acquired in the course of my studies. Foreseeing that he would demand inspection of this record, I had been attentive to transcribe such particulars of information as he would most likely be pleased with, but too often the pen had discharged the task without much correspondence with the head. And it had also happened, that, the book being the receptacle nearest to my hand, I had occasionally jotted down memoranda which had little regard to traffic. I now put it into my father's hand, devoutly hoping he might light on nothing that would increase his displeasure against me. Owen's face, which

had looked something blank when the question was put, cleared up at my ready answer, and wore a smile of hope, when I brought from my apartment, and placed before my father, a commercial-looking volume, rather broader than it was long, having brazen clasps and a binding of rough calf. This looked business-like, and was encouraging to my benevolent well-wisher. But he actually smiled with pleasure as he heard my father run over some part of the contents, muttering his critical remarks as he went on.

"– *Brandies – Barils and barricants, also tonneaux. – At Nantz 29 – Velles to the barique at Cognac and Rochelle 27 – At Bourdeaux 32*– Very right, Frank —*Duties on tonnage and custom-house, see Saxby's Tables*– That's not well; you should have transcribed the passage; it fixes the thing in the memory —*Reports outward and inward – Corn debentures – Over-sea Cockets – Linens – Isingham – Gentish – Stock-fish – Titling – Cropling – Lub-fish.* You should have noted that they are all, nevertheless to be entered as titlings. – How many inches long is a titling?"

Owen, seeing me at fault, hazarded a whisper, of which I fortunately caught the import.

"Eighteen inches, sir." —

"And a lub-fish is twenty-four – very right. It is important to remember this, on account of the Portuguese trade – But what have we here? – *Bourdeaux founded in the year – Castle of the Trompette – Palace of Gallienus*– Well, well, that's very right too. – This is a kind of waste-book, Owen, in which all the transactions of the day, – emptions, orders, payments, receipts, acceptances, draughts, commissions, and advices, – are entered miscellaneously."

"That they may be regularly transferred to the day-book and ledger," answered Owen: "I am glad Mr. Francis is so methodical."

I perceived myself getting so fast into favour, that I began to fear the consequence would be my father's more obstinate perseverance in his resolution that I must become a merchant; and as I was determined on the contrary, I began to wish I had not, to use my friend Mr. Owen's phrase, been so methodical. But I had no reason for apprehension on that score; for a blotted piece of paper dropped out of the book, and, being taken up by my father, he interrupted a hint from Owen, on the propriety of securing loose memoranda with a little paste, by exclaiming, "To the memory of Edward the Black Prince – What's all this? – verses! – By Heaven, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I supposed you!"

My father, you must recollect, as a man of business, looked upon the labour of poets with contempt; and as a religious man, and of the dissenting persuasion, he considered all such pursuits as equally trivial and profane. Before you condemn him, you must recall to remembrance how too many of the poets in the end of the seventeenth century had led their lives and employed their talents. The sect also to which my father belonged, felt, or perhaps affected, a puritanical aversion to the lighter exertions of literature. So that many causes contributed to augment the unpleasant surprise occasioned by the ill-timed discovery of this unfortunate copy of verses. As for poor Owen, could the bob-wig which he then wore have uncurled itself, and stood on end with horror, I am convinced the morning's labour of the friseur would have been undone, merely by the excess of his astonishment at this enormity. An inroad on the strong-box, or an erasure in the ledger, or a mis-summation in a fitted account, could hardly have surprised him more disagreeably. My father read the lines sometimes with an affectation of not being able to understand the sense – sometimes in a mouthing tone of mock heroic – always with an emphasis of the most bitter irony, most irritating to the nerves of an author.

"O for the voice of that wild horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
The dying hero's call,
That told imperial Charlemagne,
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain
Had wrought his champion's fall.

"*Fontarabian echoes!*" continued my father, interrupting himself; "the Fontarabian Fair would have been more to the purpose —*Paynim!*– What's Paynim? – Could you not say Pagan as well, and write English at least, if you must needs write nonsense? —

"Sad over earth and ocean sounding.
And England's distant cliffs astounding.
Such are the notes should say
How Britain's hope, and France's fear,
Victor of Cressy and Poitier,
In Bordeaux dying lay."

"Poitiers, by the way, is always spelt with an *s,* and I know no reason why orthography should give place to rhyme. —

"'Raise my faint head, my squires,' he said,
'And let the casement be display'd,
That I may see once more
The splendour of the setting sun
Gleam on thy mirrored wave, Garonne,
And Blaye's empurpled shore.

"*Garonne* and *sun* is a bad rhyme. Why, Frank, you do not even understand the beggarly trade you have chosen.

"'Like me, he sinks to Glory's sleep,
His fall the dews of evening steep,
As if in sorrow shed,
So soft shall fall the trickling tear,
When England's maids and matrons hear
Of their Black Edward dead.

"'And though my sun of glory set,
Nor France, nor England, shall forget
The terror of my name;
And oft shall Britain's heroes rise,
New planets in these southern skies,
Through clouds of blood and flame.'

"A cloud of flame is something new – Good-morrow, my masters all, and a merry Christmas to you! – Why, the bellman writes better lines." He then tossed the paper from him with an air of superlative contempt, and concluded – "Upon my credit, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I took you for."

What could I say, my dear Tresham? There I stood, swelling with indignant mortification, while my father regarded me with a calm but stern look of scorn and pity; and poor Owen, with uplifted hands and eyes, looked as striking a picture of horror as if he had just read his patron's name in the Gazette. At length I took courage to speak, endeavouring that my tone of voice should betray my feelings as little as possible.

"I am quite aware, sir, how ill qualified I am to play the conspicuous part in society you have destined for me; and, luckily, I am not ambitious of the wealth I might acquire. Mr. Owen would be a much more effective assistant." I said this in some malice, for I considered Owen as having deserted my cause a little too soon.

"Owen!" said my father – "The boy is mad – actually insane. And, pray, sir, if I may presume to inquire, having coolly turned me over to Mr. Owen (although I may expect more attention from any one than from my son), what may your own sage projects be?"

"I should wish, sir," I replied, summoning up my courage, "to travel for two or three years, should that consist with your pleasure; otherwise, although late, I would willingly spend the same time at Oxford or Cambridge."

"In the name of common sense! was the like ever heard? – to put yourself to school among pedants and Jacobites, when you might be pushing your fortune in the world! Why not go to Westminster or Eton at once, man, and take to Lilly's Grammar and Accidence, and to the birch, too, if you like it?"

"Then, sir, if you think my plan of improvement too late, I would willingly return to the Continent."

"You have already spent too much time there to little purpose, Mr. Francis."

"Then I would choose the army, sir, in preference to any other active line of life."

"Choose the d – l!" answered my father, hastily, and then checking himself – "I profess you make me as great a fool as you are yourself. Is he not enough to drive one mad, Owen?" – Poor Owen shook his head, and looked down. "Hark ye, Frank," continued my father, "I will cut all this matter very short. I was at your age when my father turned me out of doors, and settled my legal inheritance on my younger brother. I left Osbaldistone Hall on the back of a broken-down hunter, with ten guineas in my purse. I have never crossed the threshold again, and I never will. I know not, and I care not, if my fox-hunting brother is alive, or has broken his neck; but he has children, Frank, and one of them shall be my son if you cross me farther in this matter."

"You will do your pleasure," I answered – rather, I fear, with more sullen indifference than respect, "with what is your own."

"Yes, Frank, what I have *is* my own, if labour in getting, and care in augmenting, can make a right of property; and no drone shall feed on my honeycomb. Think on it well: what I have said is not without reflection, and what I resolve upon I will execute."

"Honoured sir! – dear sir!" exclaimed Owen, tears rushing into his eyes, "you are not wont to be in such a hurry in transacting business of importance. Let Mr. Francis run up the balance before you shut the account; he loves you, I am sure; and when he puts down his filial obedience to the *per contra,* I am sure his objections will disappear."

"Do you think I will ask him twice," said my father, sternly, "to be my friend, my assistant, and my confidant? – to be a partner of my cares and of my fortune? – Owen, I thought you had known me better."

He looked at me as if he meant to add something more, but turned instantly away, and left the room abruptly. I was, I own, affected by this view of the case, which had not occurred to me; and my father would probably have had little reason to complain of me, had he commenced the discussion with this argument.

But it was too late. I had much of his own obduracy of resolution, and Heaven had decreed that my sin should be my punishment, though not to the extent which my transgression merited. Owen, when we were left alone, continued to look at me with eyes which tears from time to time moistened, as if to discover, before attempting the task of intercessor, upon what point my obstinacy was most assailable. At length he began, with broken and disconcerted accents, – "O L – d, Mr. Francis! – Good Heavens, sir! – My stars, Mr. Osbaldistone! – that I should ever have seen this day – and you so young a gentleman, sir! – For the love of Heaven! look at both sides of the account – think what

you are going to lose – a noble fortune, sir – one of the finest houses in the City, even under the old firm of Tresham and Trent, and now Osbaldistone and Tresham – You might roll in gold, Mr. Francis – And, my dear young Mr. Frank, if there was any particular thing in the business of the house which you disliked, I would" (sinking his voice to a whisper) "put it in order for you termly, or weekly, or daily, if you will – Do, my dear Mr. Francis, think of the honour due to your father, that your days may be long in the land."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Owen," said I – "very much obliged indeed; but my father is best judge how to bestow his money. He talks of one of my cousins: let him dispose of his wealth as he pleases – I will never sell my liberty for gold."

"Gold, sir? – I wish you saw the balance-sheet of profits at last term – It was in five figures – five figures to each partner's sum total, Mr. Frank – And all this is to go to a Papist, and a north-country booby, and a disaffected person besides – It will break my heart, Mr. Francis, that have been toiling more like a dog than a man, and all for love of the firm. Think how it will sound, Osbaldistone, Tresham, and Osbaldistone – or perhaps, who knows" (again lowering his voice), "Osbaldistone, Osbaldistone, and Tresham, for our Mr. Osbaldistone can buy them all out."

"But, Mr. Owen, my cousin's name being also Osbaldistone, the name of the company will sound every bit as well in your ears."

"O fie upon you, Mr. Francis, when you know how well I love you – Your cousin, indeed! – a Papist, no doubt, like his father, and a disaffected person to the Protestant succession – that's another item, doubtless."

"There are many very good men Catholics, Mr. Owen," rejoined I.

As Owen was about to answer with unusual animation, my father re-entered the apartment.

"You were right," he said, "Owen, and I was wrong; we will take more time to think over this matter. – Young man, you will prepare to give me an answer on this important subject this day month."

I bowed in silence, sufficiently glad of a reprieve, and trusting it might indicate some relaxation in my father's determination.

The time of probation passed slowly, unmarked by any accident whatever. I went and came, and disposed of my time as I pleased, without question or criticism on the part of my father. Indeed, I rarely saw him, save at meal-times, when he studiously avoided a discussion which you may well suppose I was in no hurry to press onward. Our conversation was of the news of the day, or on such general topics as strangers discourse upon to each other; nor could any one have guessed, from its tenor, that there remained undecided betwixt us a dispute of such importance. It haunted me, however, more than once, like the nightmare. Was it possible he would keep his word, and disinherit his only son in favour of a nephew whose very existence he was not perhaps quite certain of? My grandfather's conduct, in similar circumstances, boded me no good, had I considered the matter rightly. But I had formed an erroneous idea of my father's character, from the importance which I recollected I maintained with him and his whole family before I went to France. I was not aware that there are men who indulge their children at an early age, because to do so interests and amuses them, and who can yet be sufficiently severe when the same children cross their expectations at a more advanced period. On the contrary, I persuaded myself, that all I had to apprehend was some temporary alienation of affection – perhaps a rustication of a few weeks, which I thought would rather please me than otherwise, since it would give me an opportunity of setting about my unfinished version of Orlando Furioso, a poem which I longed to render into English verse. I suffered this belief to get such absolute possession of my mind, that I had resumed my blotted papers, and was busy in meditation on the oft-recurring rhymes of the Spenserian stanza, when I heard a low and cautious tap at the door of my apartment. "Come in," I said, and Mr. Owen entered. So regular were the motions and habits of this worthy man, that in all probability this was the first time he had ever been in the second story of his patron's house, however conversant with the first; and I am still at a loss to know in what manner he discovered my apartment.

"Mr. Francis," he said, interrupting my expression of surprise and pleasure at seeing, him, "I do not know if I am doing well in what I am about to say – it is not right to speak of what passes in the compting-house out of doors – one should not tell, as they say, to the post in the warehouse, how many lines there are in the ledger. But young Twineall has been absent from the house for a fortnight and more, until two days since."

"Very well, my dear sir, and how does that concern us?"

"Stay, Mr. Francis; – your father gave him a private commission; and I am sure he did not go down to Falmouth about the pilchard affair; and the Exeter business with Blackwell and Company has been settled; and the mining people in Cornwall, Trevanion and Treguilliam, have paid all they are likely to pay; and any other matter of business must have been put through my books: – in short, it's my faithful belief that Twineall has been down in the north."

"Do you really suppose?" so said I, somewhat startled.

"He has spoken about nothing, sir, since he returned, but his new boots, and his Ripon spurs, and a cockfight at York – it's as true as the multiplication-table. Do, Heaven bless you, my dear child, make up your mind to please your father, and to be a man and a merchant at once."

I felt at that instant a strong inclination to submit, and to make Owen happy by requesting him to tell my father that I resigned myself to his disposal. But pride – pride, the source of so much that is good and so much that is evil in our course of life, prevented me. My acquiescence stuck in my throat; and while I was coughing to get it up, my father's voice summoned Owen. He hastily left the room, and the opportunity was lost.

My father was methodical in everything. At the very same time of the day, in the same apartment, and with the same tone and manner which he had employed an exact month before, he recapitulated the proposal he had made for taking me into partnership, and assigning me a department in the counting-house, and requested to have my final decision. I thought at the time there was something unkind in this; and I still think that my father's conduct was injudicious. A more conciliatory treatment would, in all probability, have gained his purpose. As it was, I stood fast, and, as respectfully as I could, declined the proposal he made to me. Perhaps – for who can judge of their own heart? – I felt it unmanly to yield on the first summons, and expected farther solicitation, as at least a pretext for changing my mind. If so, I was disappointed; for my father turned coolly to Owen, and only said, "You see it is as I told you. – Well, Frank" (addressing me), "you are nearly of age, and as well qualified to judge of what will constitute your own happiness as you ever are like to be; therefore, I say no more. But as I am not bound to give in to your plans, any more than you are compelled to submit to mine, may I ask to know if you have formed any which depend on my assistance?"

I answered, not a little abashed, "That being bred to no profession, and having no funds of my own, it was obviously impossible for me to subsist without some allowance from my father; that my wishes were very moderate; and that I hoped my aversion for the profession to which he had designed me, would not occasion his altogether withdrawing his paternal support and protection."

"That is to say, you wish to lean on my arm, and yet to walk your own way? That can hardly be, Frank; – however, I suppose you mean to obey my directions, so far as they do not cross your own humour?"

I was about to speak – "Silence, if you please," he continued. "Supposing this to be the case, you will instantly set out for the north of England, to pay your uncle a visit, and see the state of his family. I have chosen from among his sons (he has six, I believe) one who, I understand, is most worthy to fill the place I intended for you in the counting-house. But some farther arrangements may be necessary, and for these your presence may be requisite. You shall have farther instructions at Osbaldistone Hall, where you will please to remain until you hear from me. Everything will be ready for your departure to-morrow morning."

With these words my father left the apartment.

“What does all this mean, Mr. Owen?” said I to my sympathetic friend, whose countenance wore a cast of the deepest dejection.

“You have ruined yourself, Mr. Frank, that’s all. When your father talks in that quiet determined manner, there will be no more change in him than in a fitted account.”

And so it proved; for the next morning, at five o’clock, I found myself on the road to York, mounted on a reasonably good horse, and with fifty guineas in my pocket; travelling, as it would seem, for the purpose of assisting in the adoption of a successor to myself in my father’s house and favour, and, for aught I knew, eventually in his fortune also.

CHAPTER THIRD

The slack sail shifts from side to side,
The boat, untrimm'd, admits the tide,
Borne down, adrift, at random tost,
The oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.

Gay's Fables.

I have tagged with rhyme and blank verse the subdivisions of this important narrative, in order to seduce your continued attention by powers of composition of stronger attraction than my own. The preceding lines refer to an unfortunate navigator, who daringly unloosed from its moorings a boat, which he was unable to manage, and thrust it off into the full tide of a navigable river. No schoolboy, who, betwixt frolic and defiance, has executed a similar rash attempt, could feel himself, when adrift in a strong current, in a situation more awkward than mine, when I found myself driving, without a compass, on the ocean of human life. There had been such unexpected ease in the manner in which my father slipt a knot, usually esteemed the strongest which binds society together, and suffered me to depart as a sort of outcast from his family, that it strangely lessened the confidence in my own personal accomplishments, which had hitherto sustained me. Prince Prettyman, now a prince, and now a fisher's son, had not a more awkward sense of his degradation. We are so apt, in our engrossing egotism, to consider all those accessories which are drawn around us by prosperity, as pertaining and belonging to our own persons, that the discovery of our unimportance, when left to our own proper resources, becomes inexpressibly mortifying. As the hum of London died away on my ear, the distant peal of her steeples more than once sounded to my ears the admonitory "Turn again," erst heard by her future Lord Mayor; and when I looked back from Highgate on her dusky magnificence, I felt as if I were leaving behind me comfort, opulence, the charms of society, and all the pleasures of cultivated life.

But the die was cast. It was, indeed, by no means probable that a late and ungracious compliance with my father's wishes would have reinstated me in the situation which I had lost. On the contrary, firm and strong of purpose as he himself was, he might rather have been disgusted than conciliated by my tardy and compulsory acquiescence in his desire that I should engage in commerce. My constitutional obstinacy came also to my aid, and pride whispered how poor a figure I should make, when an airing of four miles from London had blown away resolutions formed during a month's serious deliberation. Hope, too, that never forsakes the young and hardy, lent her lustre to my future prospects. My father could not be serious in the sentence of foris-familiation, which he had so unhesitatingly pronounced. It must be but a trial of my disposition, which, endured with patience and steadiness on my part, would raise me in his estimation, and lead to an amicable accommodation of the point in dispute between us. I even settled in my own mind how far I would concede to him, and on what articles of our supposed treaty I would make a firm stand; and the result was, according to my computation, that I was to be reinstated in my full rights of filiation, paying the easy penalty of some ostensible compliances to atone for my past rebellion.

In the meanwhile, I was lord of my person, and experienced that feeling of independence which the youthful bosom receives with a thrilling mixture of pleasure and apprehension. My purse, though by no means amply replenished, was in a situation to supply all the wants and wishes of a traveller. I had been accustomed, while at Bourdeaux, to act as my own valet; my horse was fresh, young, and active, and the buoyancy of my spirits soon surmounted the melancholy reflections with which my journey commenced.

I should have been glad to have journeyed upon a line of road better calculated to afford reasonable objects of curiosity, or a more interesting country, to the traveller. But the north road was then, and perhaps still is, singularly deficient in these respects; nor do I believe you can travel so far through Britain in any other direction without meeting more of what is worthy to engage the attention. My mental ruminations, notwithstanding my assumed confidence, were not always of an unchequered nature. The Muse too, – the very coquette who had led me into this wilderness, – like others of her sex, deserted me in my utmost need, and I should have been reduced to rather an uncomfortable state of dulness, had it not been for the occasional conversation of strangers who chanced to pass the same way. But the characters whom I met with were of a uniform and uninteresting description. Country parsons, jogging homewards after a visitation; farmers, or graziers, returning from a distant market; clerks of traders, travelling to collect what was due to their masters, in provincial towns; with now and then an officer going down into the country upon the recruiting service, were, at this period, the persons by whom the turnpikes and tapsters were kept in exercise. Our speech, therefore, was of tithes and creeds, of beeves and grain, of commodities wet and dry, and the solvency of the retail dealers, occasionally varied by the description of a siege, or battle, in Flanders, which, perhaps, the narrator only gave me at second hand. Robbers, a fertile and alarming theme, filled up every vacancy; and the names of the Golden Farmer, the Flying Highwayman, Jack Needham, and other Beggars' Opera heroes, were familiar in our mouths as household words. At such tales, like children closing their circle round the fire when the ghost story draws to its climax, the riders drew near to each other, looked before and behind them, examined the priming of their pistols, and vowed to stand by each other in case of danger; an engagement which, like other offensive and defensive alliances, sometimes glided out of remembrance when there was an appearance of actual peril.

Of all the fellows whom I ever saw haunted by terrors of this nature, one poor man, with whom I travelled a day and a half, afforded me most amusement. He had upon his pillion a very small, but apparently a very weighty portmanteau, about the safety of which he seemed particularly solicitous; never trusting it out of his own immediate care, and uniformly repressing the officious zeal of the waiters and ostlers, who offered their services to carry it into the house. With the same precaution he laboured to conceal, not only the purpose of his journey, and his ultimate place of destination, but even the direction of each day's route. Nothing embarrassed him more than to be asked by any one, whether he was travelling upwards or downwards, or at what stage he intended to bait. His place of rest for the night he scrutinised with the most anxious care, alike avoiding solitude, and what he considered as bad neighbourhood; and at Grantham, I believe, he sate up all night to avoid sleeping in the next room to a thick-set squinting fellow, in a black wig, and a tarnished gold-laced waistcoat. With all these cares on his mind, my fellow traveller, to judge by his thews and sinews, was a man who might have set danger at defiance with as much impunity as most men. He was strong and well built; and, judging from his gold-laced hat and cockade, seemed to have served in the army, or, at least, to belong to the military profession in one capacity or other. His conversation also, though always sufficiently vulgar, was that of a man of sense, when the terrible bugbears which haunted his imagination for a moment ceased to occupy his attention. But every accidental association recalled them. An open heath, a close plantation, were alike subjects of apprehension; and the whistle of a shepherd lad was instantly converted into the signal of a depredator. Even the sight of a gibbet, if it assured him that one robber was safely disposed of by justice, never failed to remind him how many remained still unhanged.

I should have wearied of this fellow's company, had I not been still more tired of my own thoughts. Some of the marvellous stories, however, which he related, had in themselves a cast of interest, and another whimsical point of his peculiarities afforded me the occasional opportunity of amusing myself at his expense. Among his tales, several of the unfortunate travellers who fell among thieves, incurred that calamity from associating themselves on the road with a well-dressed and entertaining stranger, in whose company they trusted to find protection as well as amusement; who

cheered their journey with tale and song, protected them against the evils of over-charges and false reckonings, until at length, under pretext of showing a near path over a desolate common, he seduced his unsuspicious victims from the public road into some dismal glen, where, suddenly blowing his whistle, he assembled his comrades from their lurking-place, and displayed himself in his true colours – the captain, namely, of the band of robbers to whom his unwary fellow-travellers had forfeited their purses, and perhaps their lives. Towards the conclusion of such a tale, and when my companion had wrought himself into a fever of apprehension by the progress of his own narrative, I observed that he usually eyed me with a glance of doubt and suspicion, as if the possibility occurred to him, that he might, at that very moment, be in company with a character as dangerous as that which his tale described. And ever and anon, when such suggestions pressed themselves on the mind of this ingenious self-tormentor, he drew off from me to the opposite side of the high-road, looked before, behind, and around him, examined his arms, and seemed to prepare himself for flight or defence, as circumstances might require.

The suspicion implied on such occasions seemed to me only momentary, and too ludicrous to be offensive. There was, in fact, no particular reflection on my dress or address, although I was thus mistaken for a robber. A man in those days might have all the external appearance of a gentleman, and yet turn out to be a highwayman. For the division of labour in every department not having then taken place so fully as since that period, the profession of the polite and accomplished adventurer, who nicked you out of your money at White's, or bowled you out of it at Marylebone, was often united with that of the professed ruffian, who on Bagshot Heath, or Finchley Common, commanded his brother beau to stand and deliver. There was also a touch of coarseness and hardness about the manners of the times, which has since, in a great degree, been softened and shaded away. It seems to me, on recollection, as if desperate men had less reluctance then than now to embrace the most desperate means of retrieving their fortune. The times were indeed past, when Anthony-a-Wood mourned over the execution of two men, goodly in person, and of undisputed courage and honour, who were hanged without mercy at Oxford, merely because their distress had driven them to raise contributions on the highway. We were still farther removed from the days of "the mad Prince and Poins." And yet, from the number of unenclosed and extensive heaths in the vicinity of the metropolis, and from the less populous state of remote districts, both were frequented by that species of mounted highwaymen, that may possibly become one day unknown, who carried on their trade with something like courtesy; and, like Gibbet in the Beaux Stratagem, piqued themselves on being the best behaved men on the road, and on conducting themselves with all appropriate civility in the exercise of their vocation. A young man, therefore, in my circumstances was not entitled to be highly indignant at the mistake which confounded him with this worshipful class of depredators.

Neither was I offended. On the contrary, I found amusement in alternately exciting, and lulling to sleep, the suspicions of my timorous companion, and in purposely so acting as still farther to puzzle a brain which nature and apprehension had combined to render none of the clearest. When my free conversation had lulled him into complete security, it required only a passing inquiry concerning the direction of his journey, or the nature of the business which occasioned it, to put his suspicions once more in arms. For example, a conversation on the comparative strength and activity of our horses, took such a turn as follows: —

"O sir," said my companion, "for the gallop I grant you; but allow me to say, your horse (although he is a very handsome gelding – that must be owned,) has too little bone to be a good roadster. The trot, sir" (striking his Bucephalus with his spurs), – "the trot is the true pace for a hackney; and, were we near a town, I should like to try that daisy-cutter of yours upon a piece of level road (barring canter) for a quart of claret at the next inn."

"Content, sir," replied I; "and here is a stretch of ground very favourable."

"Hem, ahem," answered my friend with hesitation; "I make it a rule of travelling never to blow my horse between stages; one never knows what occasion he may have to put him to his mettle: and

besides, sir, when I said I would match you, I meant with even weight; you ride four stone lighter than I."

"Very well; but I am content to carry weight. Pray, what may that portmanteau of yours weigh?"

"My p-p-portmanteau?" replied he, hesitating – "O very little – a feather – just a few shirts and stockings."

"I should think it heavier, from its appearance. I'll hold you the quart of claret it makes the odds betwixt our weight."

"You're mistaken, sir, I assure you – quite mistaken," replied my friend, edging off to the side of the road, as was his wont on these alarming occasions.

"Well, I am willing to venture the wine; or, I will bet you ten pieces to five, that I carry your portmanteau on my croupe, and out-trot you into the bargain."

This proposal raised my friend's alarm to the uttermost. His nose changed from the natural copper hue which it had acquired from many a comfortable cup of claret or sack, into a palish brassy tint, and his teeth chattered with apprehension at the unveiled audacity of my proposal, which seemed to place the barefaced plunderer before him in full atrocity. As he faltered for an answer, I relieved him in some degree by a question concerning a steeple, which now became visible, and an observation that we were now so near the village as to run no risk from interruption on the road. At this his countenance cleared up: but I easily perceived that it was long ere he forgot a proposal which seemed to him so fraught with suspicion as that which I had now hazarded. I trouble you with this detail of the man's disposition, and the manner in which I practised upon it, because, however trivial in themselves, these particulars were attended by an important influence on future incidents which will occur in this narrative. At the time, this person's conduct only inspired me with contempt, and confirmed me in an opinion which I already entertained, that of all the propensities which teach mankind to torment themselves, that of causeless fear is the most irritating, busy, painful, and pitiable.

CHAPTER FOURTH

The Scots are poor, cries surly English pride.
True is the charge; nor by themselves denied.
Are they not, then, in strictest reason clear,
Who wisely come to mend their fortunes here?

Churchill.

There was, in the days of which I write, an old-fashioned custom on the English road, which I suspect is now obsolete, or practised only by the vulgar. Journeys of length being made on horseback, and, of course, by brief stages, it was usual always to make a halt on the Sunday in some town where the traveller might attend divine service, and his horse have the benefit of the day of rest, the institution of which is as humane to our brute labourers as profitable to ourselves. A counterpart to this decent practice, and a remnant of old English hospitality, was, that the landlord of a principal inn laid aside his character of a publican on the seventh day, and invited the guests who chanced to be within his walls to take a part of his family beef and pudding. This invitation was usually complied with by all whose distinguished rank did not induce them to think compliance a derogation; and the proposal of a bottle of wine after dinner, to drink the landlord's health, was the only recompense ever offered or accepted.

I was born a citizen of the world, and my inclination led me into all scenes where my knowledge of mankind could be enlarged; I had, besides, no pretensions to sequester myself on the score of superior dignity, and therefore seldom failed to accept of the Sunday's hospitality of mine host, whether of the Garter, Lion, or Bear. The honest publican, dilated into additional consequence by a sense of his own importance, while presiding among the guests on whom it was his ordinary duty to attend, was in himself an entertaining, spectacle; and around his genial orbit, other planets of inferior consequence performed their revolutions. The wits and humorists, the distinguished worthies of the town or village, the apothecary, the attorney, even the curate himself, did not disdain to partake of this hebdomadal festivity. The guests, assembled from different quarters, and following different professions, formed, in language, manners, and sentiments, a curious contrast to each other, not indifferent to those who desired to possess a knowledge of mankind in its varieties.

It was on such a day, and such an occasion, that my timorous acquaintance and I were about to grace the board of the ruddy-faced host of the Black Bear, in the town of Darlington, and bishopric of Durham, when our landlord informed us, with a sort of apologetic tone, that there was a Scotch gentleman to dine with us.

"A gentleman! – what sort of a gentleman?" said my companion somewhat hastily – his mind, I suppose, running on gentlemen of the pad, as they were then termed.

"Why, a Scotch sort of a gentleman, as I said before," returned mine host; "they are all gentle, ye mun know, though they ha' narra shirt to back; but this is a decentish hallion – a canny North Briton as e'er cross'd Berwick Bridge – I trow he's a dealer in cattle."

"Let us have his company, by all means," answered my companion; and then, turning to me, he gave vent to the tenor of his own reflections. "I respect the Scotch, sir; I love and honour the nation for their sense of morality. Men talk of their filth and their poverty: but commend me to sterling honesty, though clad in rags, as the poet saith. I have been credibly assured, sir, by men on whom I can depend, that there was never known such a thing in Scotland as a highway robbery."

"That's because they have nothing to lose," said mine host, with the chuckle of a self-applauding wit.

"No, no, landlord," answered a strong deep voice behind him, "it's e'en because your English gaugers and supervisors,[32] that you have sent down benorth the Tweed, have taen up the trade of thievery over the heads of the native professors."

"Well said, Mr. Campbell," answered the landlord; "I did not think thoud'st been sae near us, mon. But thou kens I'm an outspoken Yorkshire tyke. And how go markets in the south?"

"Even in the ordinar," replied Mr. Campbell; "wise folks buy and sell, and fools are bought and sold."

"But wise men and fools both eat their dinner," answered our jolly entertainer; "and here a comes – as prime a buttock of beef as e'er hungry men stuck fork in."

So saying, he eagerly whetted his knife, assumed his seat of empire at the head of the board, and loaded the plates of his sundry guests with his good cheer.

This was the first time I had heard the Scottish accent, or, indeed, that I had familiarly met with an individual of the ancient nation by whom it was spoken. Yet, from an early period, they had occupied and interested my imagination. My father, as is well known to you, was of an ancient family in Northumberland, from whose seat I was, while eating the aforesaid dinner, not very many miles distant. The quarrel betwixt him and his relatives was such, that he scarcely ever mentioned the race from which he sprung, and held as the most contemptible species of vanity, the weakness which is commonly termed family pride. His ambition was only to be distinguished as William Osbaldistone, the first, at least one of the first, merchants on Change; and to have proved him the lineal representative of William the Conqueror would have far less flattered his vanity than the hum and bustle which his approach was wont to produce among the bulls, bears, and brokers of Stock-alley. He wished, no doubt, that I should remain in such ignorance of my relatives and descent as might insure a correspondence between my feelings and his own on this subject. But his designs, as will happen occasionally to the wisest, were, in some degree at least, counteracted by a being whom his pride would never have supposed of importance adequate to influence them in any way. His nurse, an old Northumbrian woman, attached to him from his infancy, was the only person connected with his native province for whom he retained any regard; and when fortune dawned upon him, one of the first uses which he made of her favours, was to give Mabel Rickets a place of residence within his household. After the death of my mother, the care of nursing me during my childish illnesses, and of rendering all those tender attentions which infancy exacts from female affection, devolved on old Mabel. Interdicted by her master from speaking to him on the subject of the heaths, glades, and dales of her beloved Northumberland, she poured herself forth to my infant ear in descriptions of the scenes of her youth, and long narratives of the events which tradition declared to have passed amongst them. To these I inclined my ear much more seriously than to graver, but less animated instructors. Even yet, methinks I see old Mabel, her head slightly agitated by the palsy of age, and shaded by a close cap, as white as the driven snow, – her face wrinkled, but still retaining the healthy tinge which it had acquired in rural labour – I think I see her look around on the brick walls and narrow street which presented themselves before our windows, as she concluded with a sigh the favourite old ditty, which I then preferred, and – why should I not tell the truth? – which I still prefer to all the opera airs ever minted by the capricious brain of an Italian Mus. D. —

Oh, the oak, the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish best at home in the North Countrie!

Now, in the legends of Mabel, the Scottish nation was ever freshly remembered, with all the embittered declamation of which the narrator was capable. The inhabitants of the opposite frontier

[32] The introduction of gaugers, supervisors, and examiners, was one of the great complaints of the Scottish nation, though a natural consequence of the Union.

served in her narratives to fill up the parts which ogres and giants with seven-leagued boots occupy in the ordinary nursery tales. And how could it be otherwise? Was it not the Black Douglas who slew with his own hand the heir of the Osbaldistone family the day after he took possession of his estate, surprising him and his vassals while solemnizing a feast suited to the occasion? Was it not Wat the Devil, who drove all the year-old hogs off the braes of Lanthorn-side, in the very recent days of my grandfather's father? And had we not many a trophy, but, according to old Mabel's version of history, far more honourably gained, to mark our revenge of these wrongs? Did not Sir Henry Osbaldistone, fifth baron of the name, carry off the fair maid of Fairnington, as Achilles did his Chryseis and Briseis of old, and detain her in his fortress against all the power of her friends, supported by the most mighty Scottish chiefs of warlike fame? And had not our swords shone foremost at most of those fields in which England was victorious over her rival? All our family renown was acquired – all our family misfortunes were occasioned – by the northern wars.

Warmed by such tales, I looked upon the Scottish people during my childhood, as a race hostile by nature to the more southern inhabitants of this realm; and this view of the matter was not much corrected by the language which my father sometimes held with respect to them. He had engaged in some large speculations concerning oak-woods, the property of Highland proprietors, and alleged, that he found them much more ready to make bargains, and extort earnest of the purchase-money, than punctual in complying on their side with the terms of the engagements. The Scottish mercantile men, whom he was under the necessity of employing as a sort of middle-men on these occasions, were also suspected by my father of having secured, by one means or other, more than their own share of the profit which ought to have accrued. In short, if Mabel complained of the Scottish arms in ancient times, Mr. Osbaldistone inveighed no less against the arts of these modern Sinons; and between them, though without any fixed purpose of doing so, they impressed my youthful mind with a sincere aversion to the northern inhabitants of Britain, as a people bloodthirsty in time of war, treacherous during truce, interested, selfish, avaricious, and tricky in the business of peaceful life, and having few good qualities, unless there should be accounted such, a ferocity which resembled courage in martial affairs, and a sort of wily craft which supplied the place of wisdom in the ordinary commerce of mankind. In justification, or apology, for those who entertained such prejudices, I must remark, that the Scotch of that period were guilty of similar injustice to the English, whom they branded universally as a race of purse-proud arrogant epicures. Such seeds of national dislike remained between the two countries, the natural consequences of their existence as separate and rival states. We have seen recently the breath of a demagogue blow these sparks into a temporary flame, which I sincerely hope is now extinguished in its own ashes. [33]

It was, then, with an impression of dislike, that I contemplated the first Scotchman I chanced to meet in society. There was much about him that coincided with my previous conceptions. He had the hard features and athletic form said to be peculiar to his country, together with the national intonation and slow pedantic mode of expression, arising from a desire to avoid peculiarities of idiom or dialect. I could also observe the caution and shrewdness of his country in many of the observations which he made, and the answers which he returned. But I was not prepared for the air of easy self-possession and superiority with which he seemed to predominate over the company into which he was thrown, as it were by accident. His dress was as coarse as it could be, being still decent; and, at a time when great expense was lavished upon the wardrobe, even of the lowest who pretended to the character of gentleman, this indicated mediocrity of circumstances, if not poverty. His conversation intimated that he was engaged in the cattle trade, no very dignified professional pursuit. And yet, under these disadvantages, he seemed, as a matter of course, to treat the rest of the company with the cool and condescending politeness which implies a real, or imagined, superiority over those towards whom it is used. When he gave his opinion on any point, it was with that easy tone of confidence used by those

[33] This seems to have been written about the time of Wilkes and Liberty.

superior to their society in rank or information, as if what he said could not be doubted, and was not to be questioned. Mine host and his Sunday guests, after an effort or two to support their consequence by noise and bold averment, sunk gradually under the authority of Mr. Campbell, who thus fairly possessed himself of the lead in the conversation. I was tempted, from curiosity, to dispute the ground with him myself, confiding in my knowledge of the world, extended as it was by my residence abroad, and in the stores with which a tolerable education had possessed my mind. In the latter respect he offered no competition, and it was easy to see that his natural powers had never been cultivated by education. But I found him much better acquainted than I was myself with the present state of France, the character of the Duke of Orleans, who had just succeeded to the regency of that kingdom, and that of the statesmen by whom he was surrounded; and his shrewd, caustic, and somewhat satirical remarks, were those of a man who had been a close observer of the affairs of that country.

On the subject of politics, Campbell observed a silence and moderation which might arise from caution. The divisions of Whig and Tory then shook England to her very centre, and a powerful party, engaged in the Jacobite interest, menaced the dynasty of Hanover, which had been just established on the throne. Every alehouse resounded with the brawls of contending politicians, and as mine host's politics were of that liberal description which quarrelled with no good customer, his hebdomadal visitants were often divided in their opinion as irreconcilably as if he had feasted the Common Council. The curate and the apothecary, with a little man, who made no boast of his vocation, but who, from the flourish and snap of his fingers, I believe to have been the barber, strongly espoused the cause of high church and the Stuart line. The excise-man, as in duty bound, and the attorney, who looked to some petty office under the Crown, together with my fellow-traveller, who seemed to enter keenly into the contest, staunchly supported the cause of King George and the Protestant succession. Dire was the screaming – deep the oaths! Each party appealed to Mr. Campbell, anxious, it seemed, to elicit his approbation.

"You are a Scotchman, sir; a gentleman of your country must stand up for hereditary right," cried one party.

"You are a Presbyterian," assumed the other class of disputants; "you cannot be a friend to arbitrary power."

"Gentlemen," said our Scotch oracle, after having gained, with some difficulty, a moment's pause, "I havena much dubitation that King George weel deserves the predilection of his friends; and if he can haud the grip he has gotten, why, doubtless, he may made the gauger, here, a commissioner of the revenue, and confer on our friend, Mr. Quitam, the preferment of solicitor-general; and he may also grant some good deed or reward to this honest gentleman who is sitting upon his portmanteau, which he prefers to a chair: And, questionless, King James is also a grateful person, and when he gets his hand in play, he may, if he be so minded, make this reverend gentleman archprelate of Canterbury, and Dr. Mixit chief physician to his household, and commit his royal beard to the care of my friend Latherum. But as I doubt mickle whether any of the competing sovereigns would give Rob Campbell a tass of aquavitae, if he lacked it, I give my vote and interest to Jonathan Brown, our landlord, to be the King and Prince of Skinkers, conditionally that he fetches us another bottle as good as the last."

This sally was received with general applause, in which the landlord cordially joined; and when he had given orders for fulfilling the condition on which his preferment was to depend, he failed not to acquaint them, "that, for as peaceable a gentleman as Mr. Campbell was, he was, moreover, as bold as a lion – seven highwaymen had he defeated with his single arm, that beset him as he came from Whitson-Tryste."

"Thou art deceived, friend Jonathan," said Campbell, interrupting him; "they were but barely two, and two cowardly loons as man could wish to meet withal."

"And did you, sir, really," said my fellow-traveller, edging his chair (I should have said his portmanteau) nearer to Mr. Campbell, "really and actually beat two highwaymen yourself alone?"

"In troth did I, sir," replied Campbell; "and I think it nae great thing to make a sang about."

"Upon my word, sir," replied my acquaintance, "I should be happy to have the pleasure of your company on my journey – I go northward, sir."

This piece of gratuitous information concerning the route he proposed to himself, the first I had heard my companion bestow upon any one, failed to excite the corresponding confidence of the Scotchman.

"We can scarce travel together," he replied, drily. "You, sir, doubtless, are well mounted, and I for the present travel on foot, or on a Highland shelty, that does not help me much faster forward."

So saying, he called for a reckoning for the wine, and throwing down the price of the additional bottle which he had himself introduced, rose as if to take leave of us. My companion made up to him, and taking him by the button, drew him aside into one of the windows. I could not help overhearing him pressing something – I supposed his company upon the journey, which Mr. Campbell seemed to decline.

"I will pay your charges, sir," said the traveller, in a tone as if he thought the argument should bear down all opposition.

"It is quite impossible," said Campbell, somewhat contemptuously; "I have business at Rothbury."

"But I am in no great hurry; I can ride out of the way, and never miss a day or so for good company."

"Upon my faith, sir," said Campbell, "I cannot render you the service you seem to desiderate. I am," he added, drawing himself up haughtily, "travelling on my own private affairs, and if ye will act by my advisement, sir, ye will neither unite yourself with an absolute stranger on the road, nor communicate your line of journey to those who are asking ye no questions about it." He then extricated his button, not very ceremoniously, from the hold which detained him, and coming up to me as the company were dispersing, observed, "Your friend, sir, is too communicative, considering the nature of his trust."

"That gentleman," I replied, looking towards the traveller, "is no friend of mine, but an acquaintance whom I picked up on the road. I know neither his name nor business, and you seem to be deeper in his confidence than I am."

"I only meant," he replied hastily, "that he seems a thought rash in conferring the honour of his company on those who desire it not."

"The gentleman," replied I, "knows his own affairs best, and I should be sorry to constitute myself a judge of them in any respect."

Mr. Campbell made no farther observation, but merely wished me a good journey, and the party dispersed for the evening.

Next day I parted company with my timid companion, as I left the great northern road to turn more westerly in the direction of Osbaldistone Manor, my uncle's seat. I cannot tell whether he felt relieved or embarrassed by my departure, considering the dubious light in which he seemed to regard me. For my own part, his tremors ceased to amuse me, and, to say the truth, I was heartily glad to get rid of him.

CHAPTER FIFTH

How melts my beating heart as I behold
Each lovely nymph, our island's boast and pride,
Push on the generous steed, that sweeps along
O'er rough, o'er smooth, nor heeds the steepy hill,
Nor falters in the extended vale below!

The Chase.

I approached my native north, for such I esteemed it, with that enthusiasm which romantic and wild scenery inspires in the lovers of nature. No longer interrupted by the babble of my companion, I could now remark the difference which the country exhibited from that through which I had hitherto travelled. The streams now more properly deserved the name, for, instead of slumbering stagnant among reeds and willows, they brawled along beneath the shade of natural copsewood; were now hurried down declivities, and now purled more leisurely, but still in active motion, through little lonely valleys, which, opening on the road from time to time, seemed to invite the traveller to explore their recesses. The Cheviots rose before me in frowning majesty; not, indeed, with the sublime variety of rock and cliff which characterizes mountains of the primary class but huge, round-headed, and clothed with a dark robe of russet, gaining, by their extent and desolate appearance, an influence upon the imagination, as a desert district possessing a character of its own.

The abode of my fathers, which I was now approaching, was situated in a glen, or narrow valley, which ran up among those hills. Extensive estates, which once belonged to the family of Osbaldistone, had been long dissipated by the misfortunes or misconduct of my ancestors; but enough was still attached to the old mansion, to give my uncle the title of a man of large property. This he employed (as I was given to understand by some inquiries which I made on the road) in maintaining the prodigal hospitality of a northern squire of the period, which he deemed essential to his family dignity.

From the summit of an eminence I had already had a distant view of Osbaldistone Hall, a large and antiquated edifice, peeping out from a Druidical grove of huge oaks; and I was directing my course towards it, as straightly and as speedily as the windings of a very indifferent road would permit, when my horse, tired as he was, pricked up his ears at the enlivening notes of a pack of hounds in full cry, cheered by the occasional bursts of a French horn, which in those days was a constant accompaniment to the chase. I made no doubt that the pack was my uncle's, and drew up my horse with the purpose of suffering the hunters to pass without notice, aware that a hunting-field was not the proper scene to introduce myself to a keen sportsman, and determined when they had passed on, to proceed to the mansion-house at my own pace, and there to await the return of the proprietor from his sport. I paused, therefore, on a rising ground, and, not unmoved by the sense of interest which that species of silvan sport is so much calculated to inspire (although my mind was not at the moment very accessible to impressions of this nature), I expected with some eagerness the appearance of the huntsmen.

The fox, hard run, and nearly spent, first made his appearance from the copse which clothed the right-hand side of the valley. His drooping brush, his soiled appearance, and jaded trot, proclaimed his fate impending; and the carrion crow, which hovered over him, already considered poor Reynard as soon to be his prey. He crossed the stream which divides the little valley, and was dragging himself up a ravine on the other side of its wild banks, when the headmost hounds, followed by the rest of the pack in full cry, burst from the coppice, followed by the huntsman and three or four riders. The dogs pursued the trace of Reynard with unerring instinct; and the hunters followed with reckless haste, regardless of the broken and difficult nature of the ground. They were tall, stout young men,

well mounted, and dressed in green and red, the uniform of a sporting association, formed under the auspices of old Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone. – "My cousins!" thought I, as they swept past me. The next reflection was, what is my reception likely to be among these worthy successors of Nimrod? and how improbable is it that I, knowing little or nothing of rural sports, shall find myself at ease, or happy, in my uncle's family. A vision that passed me interrupted these reflections.

It was a young lady, the loveliness of whose very striking features was enhanced by the animation of the chase and the glow of the exercise, mounted on a beautiful horse, jet black, unless where he was flecked by spots of the snow-white foam which embossed his bridle. She wore, what was then somewhat unusual, a coat, vest, and hat, resembling those of a man, which fashion has since called a riding habit. The mode had been introduced while I was in France, and was perfectly new to me. Her long black hair streamed on the breeze, having in the hurry of the chase escaped from the ribbon which bound it. Some very broken ground, through which she guided her horse with the most admirable address and presence of mind, retarded her course, and brought her closer to me than any of the other riders had passed. I had, therefore, a full view of her uncommonly fine face and person, to which an inexpressible charm was added by the wild gaiety of the scene, and the romance of her singular dress and unexpected appearance. As she passed me, her horse made, in his impetuosity, an irregular movement, just while, coming once more upon open ground, she was again putting him to his speed. It served as an apology for me to ride close up to her, as if to her assistance. There was, however, no cause for alarm; it was not a stumble, nor a false step; and, if it had, the fair Amazon had too much self-possession to have been deranged by it. She thanked my good intentions, however, by a smile, and I felt encouraged to put my horse to the same pace, and to keep in her immediate neighbourhood. The clamour of "Whoop! dead! dead!" – and the corresponding flourish of the French horn, soon announced to us that there was no more occasion for haste, since the chase was at a close. One of the young men whom we had seen approached us, waving the brush of the fox in triumph, as if to upbraid my fair companion,

"I see," she replied, – "I see; but make no noise about it: if Phoebe," she said, patting the neck of the beautiful animal on which she rode, "had not got among the cliffs, you would have had little cause for boasting."

They met as she spoke, and I observed them both look at me, and converse a moment in an under-tone, the young lady apparently pressing the sportsman to do something which he declined shyly, and with a sort of sheepish sullenness. She instantly turned her horse's head towards me, saying, – "Well, well, Thornie, if you won't, I must, that's all. – Sir," she continued, addressing me, "I have been endeavouring to persuade this cultivated young gentleman to make inquiry of you whether, in the course of your travels in these parts, you have heard anything of a friend of ours, one Mr. Francis Osbaldistone, who has been for some days expected at Osbaldistone Hall?"

I was too happy to acknowledge myself to be the party inquired after, and to express my thanks for the obliging inquiries of the young lady.

"In that case, sir," she rejoined, "as my kinsman's politeness seems to be still slumbering, you will permit me (though I suppose it is highly improper) to stand mistress of ceremonies, and to present to you young Squire Thorncliff Osbaldistone, your cousin, and Die Vernon, who has also the honour to be your accomplished cousin's poor kinswoman."

There was a mixture of boldness, satire, and simplicity in the manner in which Miss Vernon pronounced these words. My knowledge of life was sufficient to enable me to take up a corresponding tone as I expressed my gratitude to her for her condescension, and my extreme pleasure at having met with them. To say the truth, the compliment was so expressed, that the lady might easily appropriate the greater share of it, for Thorncliff seemed an arrant country bumpkin, awkward, shy, and somewhat sulky withal. He shook hands with me, however, and then intimated his intention of leaving me that he might help the huntsman and his brothers to couple up the hounds, – a purpose which he rather communicated by way of information to Miss Vernon than as apology to me.

"There he goes," said the young lady, following him with eyes in which disdain was admirably painted – "the prince of grooms and cock-fighters, and blackguard horse-coursers. But there is not one of them to mend another. – Have you read Markham?" said Miss Vernon.

"Read whom, ma'am? – I do not even remember the author's name."

"O lud! on what a strand are you wrecked!" replied the young lady. "A poor forlorn and ignorant stranger, unacquainted with the very Alcoran of the savage tribe whom you are come to reside among – Never to have heard of Markham, the most celebrated author on farriery! then I fear you are equally a stranger to the more modern names of Gibson and Bartlett?"

"I am, indeed, Miss Vernon."

"And do you not blush to own it?" said Miss Vernon. "Why, we must forswear your alliance. Then, I suppose, you can neither give a ball, nor a mash, nor a horn!"

"I confess I trust all these matters to an ostler, or to my groom."

"Incredible carelessness! – And you cannot shoe a horse, or cut his mane and tail; or worm a dog, or crop his ears, or cut his dew-claws; or reclaim a hawk, or give him his casting-stones, or direct his diet when he is sealed; or" —

"To sum up my insignificance in one word," replied I, "I am profoundly ignorant in all these rural accomplishments."

"Then, in the name of Heaven, Mr. Francis Osbaldistone, what *can* you do?"

"Very little to the purpose, Miss Vernon; something, however, I can pretend to – When my groom has dressed my horse I can ride him, and when my hawk is in the field, I can fly him."

"Can you do this?" said the young lady, putting her horse to a canter.

There was a sort of rude overgrown fence crossed the path before us, with a gate composed of pieces of wood rough from the forest; I was about to move forward to open it, when Miss Vernon cleared the obstruction at a flying leap. I was bound in point of honour to follow, and was in a moment again at her side. "There are hopes of you yet," she said. "I was afraid you had been a very degenerate Osbaldistone. But what on earth brings you to Cub-Castle? – for so the neighbours have christened this hunting-hall of ours. You might have stayed away, I suppose, if you would?"

I felt I was by this time on a very intimate footing with my beautiful apparition, and therefore replied, in a confidential under-tone – "Indeed, my dear Miss Vernon, I might have considered it as a sacrifice to be a temporary resident in Osbaldistone Hall, the inmates being such as you describe them; but I am convinced there is one exception that will make amends for all deficiencies."

"O, you mean Rashleigh?" said Miss Vernon.

"Indeed I do not; I was thinking – forgive me – of some person much nearer me."

"I suppose it would be proper not to understand your civility? – But that is not my way – I don't make a courtesy for it because I am sitting on horseback. But, seriously, I deserve your exception, for I am the only conversable being about the Hall, except the old priest and Rashleigh."

"And who is Rashleigh, for Heaven's sake?"

"Rashleigh is one who would fain have every one like him for his own sake. He is Sir Hildebrand's youngest son – about your own age, but not so – not well looking, in short. But nature has given him a mouthful of common sense, and the priest has added a bushelful of learning; he is what we call a very clever man in this country, where clever men are scarce. Bred to the church, but in no hurry to take orders."

"To the Catholic Church?"

"The Catholic Church? what Church else?" said the young lady. "But I forgot – they told me you are a heretic. Is that true, Mr. Osbaldistone?"

"I must not deny the charge."

"And yet you have been abroad, and in Catholic countries?"

"For nearly four years."

"You have seen convents?"

"Often; but I have not seen much in them which recommended the Catholic religion."

"Are not the inhabitants happy?"

"Some are unquestionably so, whom either a profound sense of devotion, or an experience of the persecutions and misfortunes of the world, or a natural apathy of temper, has led into retirement. Those who have adopted a life of seclusion from sudden and overstrained enthusiasm, or in hasty resentment of some disappointment or mortification, are very miserable. The quickness of sensation soon returns, and like the wilder animals in a menagerie, they are restless under confinement, while others muse or fatten in cells of no larger dimensions than theirs."

"And what," continued Miss Vernon, "becomes of those victims who are condemned to a convent by the will of others? what do they resemble? especially, what do they resemble, if they are born to enjoy life, and feel its blessings?"

"They are like imprisoned singing-birds," replied I, "condemned to wear out their lives in confinement, which they try to beguile by the exercise of accomplishments which would have adorned society had they been left at large."

"I shall be," returned Miss Vernon – "that is," said she, correcting herself – "I should be rather like the wild hawk, who, barred the free exercise of his soar through heaven, will dash himself to pieces against the bars of his cage. But to return to Rashleigh," said she, in a more lively tone, "you will think him the pleasantest man you ever saw in your life, Mr. Osbaldistone, – that is, for a week at least. If he could find out a blind mistress, never man would be so secure of conquest; but the eye breaks the spell that enchants the ear. – But here we are in the court of the old hall, which looks as wild and old-fashioned as any of its inmates. There is no great toilette kept at Osbaldistone Hall, you must know; but I must take off these things, they are so unpleasantly warm, – and the hat hurts my forehead, too," continued the lively girl, taking it off, and shaking down a profusion of sable ringlets, which, half laughing, half blushing, she separated with her white slender fingers, in order to clear them away from her beautiful face and piercing hazel eyes. If there was any coquetry in the action, it was well disguised by the careless indifference of her manner. I could not help saying, "that, judging of the family from what I saw, I should suppose the toilette a very unnecessary care."

"That's very politely said – though, perhaps, I ought not to understand in what sense it was meant," replied Miss Vernon; "but you will see a better apology for a little negligence when you meet the Orsons you are to live amongst, whose forms no toilette could improve. But, as I said before, the old dinner-bell will clang, or rather clank, in a few minutes – it cracked of its own accord on the day of the landing of King Willie, and my uncle, respecting its prophetic talent, would never permit it to be mended. So do you hold my palfrey, like a duteous knight, until I send some more humble squire to relieve you of the charge."

She threw me the rein as if we had been acquainted from our childhood, jumped from her saddle, tripped across the courtyard, and entered at a side-door, leaving me in admiration of her beauty, and astonished with the over-frankness of her manners, which seemed the more extraordinary at a time when the dictates of politeness, flowing from the court of the Grand Monarque Louis XIV., prescribed to the fair sex an unusual severity of decorum. I was left awkwardly enough stationed in the centre of the court of the old hall, mounted on one horse, and holding another in my hand.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.