

gers were despatched in great haste, to concentrate, as I supposed, their forces, with a view to the purposed attack on the Lowlanders; and the dejection and despair, at first visible on each countenance, gave place to the hope of rescuing their leader, and to the thirst of vengeance. It was under the burning influence of the latter passion that the wife of MacGregor commanded that the hostage exchanged for his safety should be brought into her presence. I believe her sons had kept this unfortunate wretch out of her sight, for fear of the consequences; but if it was so, their humane precaution only postponed his fate. They dragged forward at her summons a wretch already half dead with terror, in whose agonized features I recognised, to my horror and astonishment, my old acquaintance Morris.

He fell prostrate before the female Chief with an effort to clasp her knees, from which she drew back, as if his touch had been pollution, so that all he could do in token of the extremity of his humiliation, was to kiss the hem of her plaid. I never heard entreaties for life poured forth with such agony of spirit. The ecstasy of fear was such, that instead of paralyzing his tongue, as on ordinary occasions, it even rendered him eloquent; and, with cheeks pale as ashes, hands compressed in agony, eyes that seemed to be taking their last look of all mortal objects, he protested, with the deepest oaths, his total ignorance of any design on the person of Rob Roy, whom he swore he loved and honored as his own soul. In the inconsistency of his terror, he said he was but the agent of others, and he muttered the name of Rashleigh. He prayed but for life—for life he would give all he had in the world: it was but life he asked—life, if it were to be prolonged under tortures and privations: he asked only breath, though it should be drawn in the damp of the lowest caverns of their hills.

It is impossible to describe the scorn, the loathing and contempt, with which the wife of MacGregor regarded this wretched petitioner for the poor boon of existence.

"I could have bid ye live," she said, "had life been to you the same weary and wasting burden that it is to me—that it is to every noble and generous mind. But you—wretch! you could creep through the world unaffected by its various disgraces, its ineffable miseries, its constantly accumulating masses of crime and sorrow: you could live and enjoy yourself, while the noble-minded are betrayed—while nameless and birthless villains tread on the neck of the brave and the long-descended: you could enjoy yourself, like a butcher's dog in the shambles, battening on garbage, while the slaughter of the oldest and best went on around you! This enjoyment you shall not live to partake of!—you shall die, base dog! and that before you cloud has passed over the sun."

She gave a brief command in Gaelic to her attendants, two of whom seized upon the prostrate suppliant, and hurried him to the brink of a

cliff which overhung the flood. He set up the most piercing and dreadful cries that fear ever uttered—I may well term them dreadful, for they haunted my sleep for years afterwards. As the murderers, or executioners, call them as you will, dragged him along, he recognised me even in that moment of horror, and exclaimed in the last articulate words I ever heard him utter, "Oh, Mr. Osbaldistone, save me!—save me!"

I was so much moved by this horrid spectacle, that, although in momentary expectation of sharing his fate, I did attempt to speak in his behalf, but, as might have been expected, my interference was sternly disregarded. The victim was held fast by some, while others, binding a large heavy stone in a plaid, tied it round his neck, and others again eagerly stripped him of some part of his dress. Half-naked, and thus manacled, they hurled him into the lake, there about twelve feet deep, with a loud halloo of vindictive triumph,—above which, however, his last death-shriek, the yell of mortal agony, was distinctly heard. The heavy burden splashed in the dark-blue waters, and the Highlanders, with their pole-axes and swords, watched an instant to guard, lest extricating himself from the load to which he was attached, the victim might have struggled to regain the shore. But the knot had been securely bound—the wretched man sunk without effort; the waters, which his fall had disturbed, settled calmly over him, and the unit of that life for which he had pleaded so strongly, was for ever withdrawn from the sum of human existence

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

And be he safe restored ere evening set,  
Or, if there's vengeance in an injured heart,  
And power to wreak it in an armed hand,  
Your land shall ache for't.

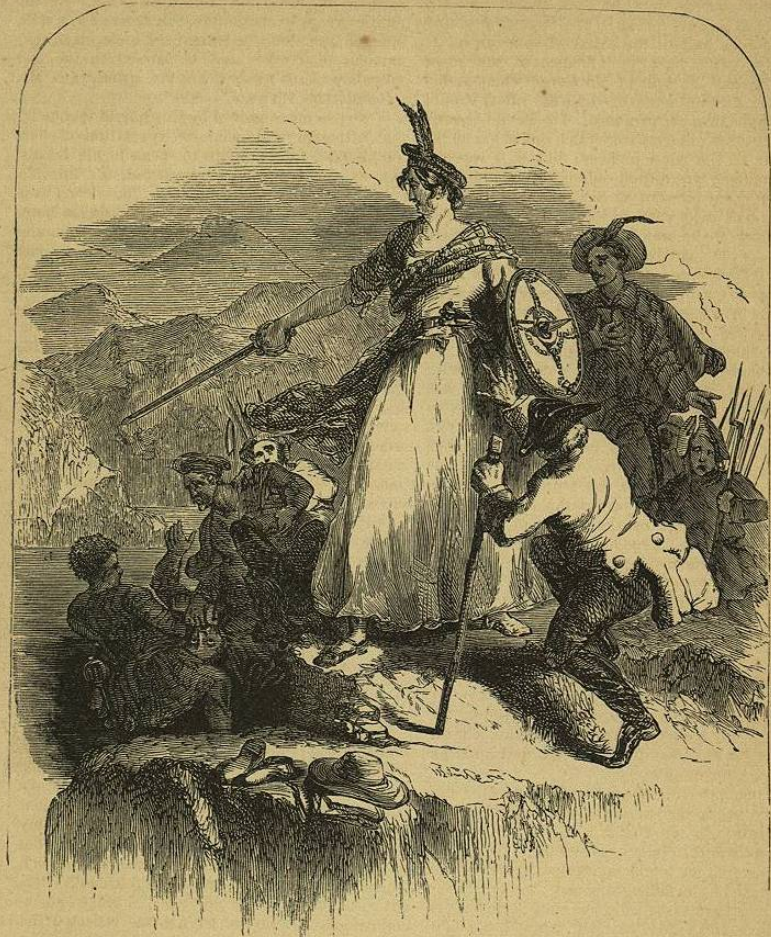
OLD PLAY.

I know not why it is that a single deed of violence and cruelty affects our nerves more than when these are exercised on a more extended scale. I had seen that day several of my brave countrymen fall in battle; it seemed to me that they met a lot appropriate to humanity, and my bosom, though thrilling with interest, was affected with nothing of that sickening horror with which I beheld the unfortunate Morris put to death without resistance, and in cold blood. I looked at my companion, Mr. Jarvie, whose face reflected the feelings which were painted in mine. Indeed he could not so suppress his horror, but that the words escaped him in a low and broken whisper,—

"I take up my protest against this deed, as a bloody and cruel murder—it is a cursed deed, and God will avenge it in his due way and time."

"Then you do not fear to follow?" said the virago, bending on him a look of death, such as that with which a hawk looks at his prey ere he pounces.

"Kinswoman," said the Bailie, 'nao man



She gave a brief command in Gaelic to her attendants, two of whom seized upon the prostrate suppliant, and hurried him to the brink of a cliff which overhung the flood.

Rob Roy R. 154.

willingly wad cut short his thread of life before the end o' his pirn was fairly measured off on the yarn-wines—And I hae muckle to do, an I be spared, in this world—public and private business, as weel that belonging to the magistracy as to my ain particular; and nae doubt I hae some to depend on me, as puir Mattie, wha is an orphan—She's a far-awa' cousin o' the Laird o' Liffmerfield. Sae that, laying a' this thegither—skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will he give for his life."

"And were I to set you at liberty," said the imperious dame, "what name would you give to the drowning of that Saxon dog?"

"Uh! uh!—hem! hem!" said the Bailie, clearing his throat as well as he could, "I suld study to say as little on that score as might be—least said is sunest mended."

"But if you were called on by the courts, as you term them, of justice," she again demanded, "what then would be your answer?"

The Bailie looked this way and that way, like a person who meditates an escape, and then answered in the tone of one who, seeing no means of accomplishing a retreat, determines to stand the brunt of battle—"I see what you are driving me to the wa' about. But I'll tell you't plain, kinswoman,—I behoved just to speak according to my ain conscience; and though your ain gude-man, that I wish had been here for his ain sake and mine, as weel as the puir Hieland creature Dougal, can tell ye that Nicol Jarvie can wink as hard at a friend's failings as onybody, yet I'se tell ye, kinswoman, mine's ne'er be the tongue to belie my thoughts; and sooner than say that yonder puir wretch was lawfully slaughtered, I wad consent to be laid beside him—though I think ye are the first Hieland woman wad mint sic a doom to her husband's kinsman but four times removed."

"It is probable that the tone and firmness assumed by the Bailie in his last speech was better suited to make an impression on the hard heart of his kinswoman than the tone of supplication he had hitherto assumed, as gems can be cut with steel, though they resist softer metals. She commanded us both to be placed before her. "Your name," she said to me, "is Osbaldistone?—the dead dog, whose death you have witnessed, called you so."

"My name *is* Osbaldistone," was my answer.

"Rashleigh, then, I suppose, is your Christian name?" she pursued.

"No,—my name is Francis."

"But you know Rashleigh Osbaldistone?" she continued. "He is your brother, if I mistake not,—at least your kinsman and near friend."

"He is my kinsman," I replied, "but not my friend. We were lately engaged together in a rencontre, when we were separated by a person whom I understood to be your husband. My blood is hardly yet dried on his sword, and the wound on my side is yet green. I have little reason to acknowledge him as a friend."

"Then," she replied, "if a stranger to his intrigues, you can go in safety to Garschattachin and his party, without fear of being detained, and carry them a message from the wife of the MacGregor?"

I answered, "That I knew no reasonable cause why the militia gentlemen should detain me; that I had no reason, on my own account, to fear being in their hands; and that if my going on her embassy would act as a protection to my friend and servant, who were here prisoners, I was ready to set out directly." I took the opportunity to say, "That I had come into this country on her husband's invitation, and his assurance that he would aid me in some important matters in which I was interested; that my companion, Mr. Jarvie, had accompanied me on the same errand."

"And I wish Mr. Jarvie's boots had been fu' o' boiling water when he drew them on for sic a purpose," interrupted the Bailie.

"You may read your father," said Helen MacGregor, turning to her sons, "in what this young Saxon tells us—Wise only when the bonnet is on his head, and the sword is in his hand, he never exchanges the tartan for the broad-cloth, but he runs himself into the miserable intrigues of the Lowlanders, and becomes again, after all he has suffered, their agent—their tool—their slave."

"Add, madam," said I, "and their benefactor."

"Be it so," she said; "for it is the most empty title of them all, since he has uniformly sown benefits to reap a harvest of the most foul ingratitude.—But enough of this. I shall cause you to be guided to the enemy's outposts. Ask for their commander, and deliver him this message from me, Helen MacGregor:—that if they injure a hair of MacGregor's head, and if they do not set him at liberty within the space of twelve hours, there is not a lady in the Lennox but shall before Christmas cry the coronach for them she will be loath to lose,—there is not a farmer but shall sing well-awa over a burnt barnyard and an empty byre,—there is not a laird nor heritor shall lay his head on the pillow at night with the assurance of being a live man in the morning,—and, to begin as we are to end, so soon as the term is expired, I will send them this Glasgow Bailie, and this Saxon Captain, and all the rest of my prisoners, each bundled in a plaid, and chopped into as many pieces as there are checks in the tartan."

As she paused in her denunciation, Captain Thornton, who was within hearing, added, with great coolness, "Present my compliments—Captain Thornton's, of the Royals, compliments—to the commanding officer, and tell him to do his duty and secure his prisoner, and not waste a thought upon me. If I have been fool enough to have been led into an ambuscade by these artful savages, I am wise enough to know how to die for it without disgracing the service. I am only sorry for my poor fellows," he said, "that have fallen into such butcherly hands."

"Whisht! whisht!" exclaimed the Bailie

"are ye weary o' your life!—Ye'll gie my service to the commanding officer, Mr. Osbaldistone—Baillie Nicol Jarvie's service, a magistrate o' Glasgow, as his father the deacon was before him—and tell him, here are a wheen honest men in great trouble, and like to come to mair; and the best thing he can do for the common good, will be just to let Rob come his wa' up the glen, and nae mair about it. There's been some ill dunn here already; but as it has lighted chiefly on the gauger, it winna be muckle worth making a stir about."

With these very opposite injunctions from the parties chiefly interested in the success of my embassy, and with the reiterated charge of the wife of MacGregor to remember and detail every word of her injunctions, I was at length suffered to depart; and Andrew Fairservice, chiefly, I believe, to get rid of his clamorous supplications, was permitted to attend me. Doubtful, however, that I might use my horse as a means of escape from my guides, or desirous to retain a prize of some value, I was given to understand that I was to perform my journey on foot, escorted by Hamish MacGregor, the elder brother, who, with two followers, attended, as well to show me the way, as to reconnoitre the strength and position of the enemy. Dougal had been at first ordered on this party, but he contrived to elude the service, with the purpose, as we afterwards understood, of watching over Mr. Jarvie, whom, according to his wild principles of fidelity, he considered as entitled to his good offices, from having once acted in some measure as his patron or master.

After walking with great rapidity about an hour, we arrived at an eminence covered with brushwood, which gave us a commanding prospect down the valley, and a full view of the post which the militia occupied. Being chiefly cavalry, they had judiciously avoided any attempt to penetrate the pass which had been so unsuccessfully assayed by Captain Thornton. They had taken up their situation with some military skill, on a rising ground in the centre of the little valley of Aberfoil, through which the river Forth winds its earliest course, and which is formed by two ridges of hills, faced with barricades of limestone rock, intermixed with huge masses of breccia, or pebbles imbedded in some softer substance which has hardened around them like mortar; and surrounded by the more lofty mountains in the distance. These ridges, however, left the valley of breadth enough to secure the cavalry from any sudden surprise by the mountaineers, and they had stationed sentinels and outposts at proper distances from this main body, in every direction, so that they might secure full time to mount and get under arms upon the least alarm. It was not, indeed, expected at that time, that Highlanders would attack cavalry in an open plain, though late events have shown that they may do so with success.\* When I first knew the Highlanders,

\* The affairs of Prestonpans and Falkirk are probably at

they had almost a superstitions dread of a mounted trooper, the horse being so much more fierce and imposing in his appearance than the little *shelties* of their own hills, and moreover being trained, as the more ignorant mountaineers believed, to fight with his feet and his teeth.

The appearance of the picqueted horses, feeding in this little vale—the forms of the soldiers, as they sat, stood, or walked, in various groups in the vicinity of the beautiful river, and of the bare yet romantic ranges of rock which hedge in the landscape on either side,—formed a noble foreground; while far to the eastward the eye caught a glance of the lake of Menteith; and Stirling Castle, dimly seen along with the blue and distant line of the Ochil Mountains, closed the scene.

After gazing on this landscape with great earnestness, young MacGregor intimated to me that I was to descend to the station of the militia and execute my errand to their commander,—enjoining me at the same time, with a menacing gesture, neither to inform them who had guided me to that place, nor where I had parted from my escort. Thus tutored, I descended towards the military post, followed by Andrew, who, only retaining his breeches and stockings of the English costume, without a hat, bare-legged, with brogues on his feet, which Dougal had given him out of compassion, and having a tattered plaid to supply the want of all upper garments, looked as if he had been playing the part of a Highland Tom-of-Bedlam. We had not proceeded far before we became visible to one of the videttes, who, riding towards us, presented his carbine and commanded me to stand. I obeyed, and when the soldier came up, desired to be conducted to his commanding-officer. I was immediately brought where a circle of officers, sitting upon the grass, seemed in attendance upon one of superior rank. He wore a cuirass of polished steel, over which were drawn the insignia of the ancient Order of the Thistle. My friend Garschattachin, and many other gentlemen, some in uniform, others in their ordinary dress, but all armed and well attended, seemed to receive their orders from this person of distinction. Many servants in rich liveries, apparently a part of his household, were also in waiting.

Having paid to this nobleman the respect which his rank appeared to demand, I acquainted him that I had been an involuntary witness to the king's soldiers having suffered a defeat from the Highlanders at the pass of Loch-Ard (such I had learned was the name of the place where Mr. Thornton was made prisoner), and that the victors threatened every species of extremity to those who had fallen into their power, as well as to the Low Country in general, unless their Chief, who had that morning been made prisoner, were returned to them uninjured. The Duke (for he whom I addressed was of no lower rank) listened

Indeed to, which marks the time of writing the Memoirs as subsequent to 1745.

to me with great composure, and then replied, that he should be extremely sorry to expose the unfortunate gentlemen who had been made prisoners to the cruelty of the barbarians into whose hands they had fallen, but that it was folly to suppose that he would deliver up the very author of all these disorders and offences, and so encourage his followers in their license. "You may return to those who sent you," he proceeded, "and inform them, that I shall certainly cause Rob Roy Campbell, whom they call MacGregor, to be executed, by break of day, as an outlaw taken in arms, and deserving death by a thousand acts of violence; that I should be most justly held unworthy of my situation and commission did I act otherwise; that I shall know how to protect the country against their insolent threats of violence; and that if they injure a hair of the head of any of the unfortunate gentlemen whom an unlucky accident has thrown into their power, I will take such ample vengeance, that the very stones of their glens shall sing wo for it this hundred years to come!"

I humbly begged leave to remonstrate respecting the honorable mission imposed on me, and touched upon the obvious danger attending it, when the noble commander replied, "that such being the case, I might send my servant."

"The deil be in my feet," said Andrew, without either having respect to the presence in which he stood, or waiting till I replied—"the deil be in my feet, if I gang my tae's length. Do the folk think I hae another trapple in my pouch after John Highlandman's sneckit this ane wi' his joctaleg? or that I can dive down at the tae side of a Highland loch and rise at the tother, like a shell-drake? Na, na—ilk ane for himsell, and God for us a'. Folk may just make a page o' their ain age, and serve themselfs till their bairns grow up, and gang their ain errands for Andrew. Rob Roy never came near the parish of Dreepdally, to steal either pippin or pear frae me or mine."

Silencing my follower with some difficulty, I represented to the Duke the great danger Captain Thornton and Mr. Jarvie would certainly be exposed to, and entreated he would make me the bearer of such modified terms as might be the means of saving their lives. I assured him I should decline no danger if I could be of service; but from what I had heard and seen, I had little doubt they would be instantly murdered should the chief of the outlaws suffer death.

The Duke was obviously much affected. "It was a hard case," he said, "and he felt it as such; but he had a paramount duty to perform to the country—Rob Roy must die!"

I own it was not without emotion that I heard this threat of instant death to my acquaintance Campbell, who had so often testified his good-will towards me. Nor was I singular in the feeling, for many of those around the Duke ventured to express themselves in his favor. "It would be more advisable," they said, "to send him to Stir-

ling Castle, and there detain him a close prisoner, as a pledge for the submission and dispersion of his gang. It were a great pity to expose the country to be plundered, which, now that the long nights approached, it would be found very difficult to prevent, since it was impossible to guard every point, and the Highlanders were sure to select those that were left exposed." They added, that there was great hardship in leaving the unfortunate prisoners to the almost certain doom of massacre denounced against them, which no one doubted would be executed in the first burst of revenge.

Garschattachin ventured yet farther, confiding in the honor of the nobleman whom he addressed, although he knew he had particular reasons for disliking their prisoner. "Rob Roy," he said, "though a kittle neighbor to the Low Country, and particularly obnoxious to his Grace, and though he maybe carried the catheran trade farther than ony man o' his day, was an auld-farrand carle, and there might be some means of making him hear reason; whereas his wife and sons were reckless fiends, without either fear or mercy about them, and, at the head of a' his limmer loons, would be a worse plague to the country than ever he had been."

"Pooh! pooh!" replied his Grace, "it is the very sense and cunning of this fellow which has so long maintained his reign—a mere Highland robber would have been put down in as many weeks as he has flourished years. His gang, without him, is no more to be dreaded as a permanent annoyance—it will no longer exist—than a wasp without its head, which may sting once perhaps, but is instantly crushed into annihilation."

Garschattachin was not so easily silenced. "I am sure, my Lord Duke," he replied, "I have no favor for Rob, and he as little for me, seeing he has twice cleaned out my ain byres, beside skaith among my tenants; but however"—

"But, however, Garschattachin," said the Duke, with a smile of peculiar expression, "I fancy you think such a freedom may be pardoned in a friend's friend, and Rob's supposed to be no onemy to Major Galbraith's friends over the water."

"If it be so, my lord," said Garschattachin, in the same tone of jocularly, "it's no the worst thing I have heard of him. But I wish we heard some news from the clans, that we have waited for sae lang. I vow to God they'll keep a Highlandman's word wi' us—I never ken'd them better—it's ill drawing boots upon trews."

"I cannot believe it," said the Duke. "These gentlemen are known to be men of honor, and I must necessarily suppose they are to keep their appointment. Send out two more horsemen to look for our friends. We cannot, till their arrival, pretend to attack the pass where Captain Thornton has suffered himself to be surprised, and which, to my knowledge, ten men on foot might make good against a regiment of the best

horse in Europe—Meanwhile let refreshments be given to the men."

I had the benefit of this last order, the more necessary and acceptable, as I had tasted nothing since our hasty meal at Aberfoil the evening before. The videttes who had been despatched returned without tidings of the expected auxiliaries, and sunset was approaching, when a Highlander belonging to the clans whose co-operation was expected, appeared as the bearer of a letter, which he delivered to the Duke with a most profound congé.

"Now will I wad a hog'shead of claret," said Garschattachin, "that this is a message to tell us that these cursed Highlandmen, whom we have fetched here at the expense of so much plague and vexation, are going to dray off, and leave us to do our own business if we can."

"It is even so, gentlemen," said the Duke, reddening with indignation, after having perused the letter, which was written upon a very dirty scrap of paper, but most punctiliously addressed, "For the much-honoured hands of Ane High and Mighty Prince, the Duke," &c., &c., &c. "Our allies," continued the Duke, "have deserted us, gentlemen, and have made a separate peace with the enemy."

"It's just the fate of all alliances," said Garschattachin; "the Dutch were gawn to serve us the same gate, if we had not got the start of them at Utrecht."

"You are facetious, sir," said the Duke, with a frown which showed how little he liked the pleasantry; "but our business is rather of a grave cast just now.—I suppose no gentleman would advise our attempting to penetrate farther into the country, unsupported either by friendly Highlanders, or by infantry from Inversnaid?"

A general answer announced that the attempt would be perfect madness.

"Nor would there be great wisdom," the Duke added, "in remaining exposed to a night attack in this place. I therefore propose that we should retreat to the house of Duchray and that of Gartartan, and keep safe and sure watch and ward until morning. But before we separate, I will examine Rob Roy before you all, and make you sensible, by your own eyes and ears, of the extreme unfitness of leaving him space for farther outrage." He gave orders accordingly, and the prisoner was brought before him, his arms belted down above the elbow, and secured to his body by a horse-girth buckled tight behind him. Two non-commissioned officers had hold of him, one on each side, and two file of men with carbines and fixed bayonets attended for additional security.

I had never seen this man in the dress of his country, which set in a striking point of view the peculiarities of his form. A shock-head of red hair, which the hat and perwig of the Lowland costume had in a great measure concealed, was seen beneath the Highland bonnet, and verified the epithet of *Roy*, or *Red*, by which he was much

better known in the Low Country than by and other, and is still, I suppose, best remembered. The justice of the appellation was also vindicated by the appearance of that part of his limbs, from the bottom of his kilt to the top of his short hose, which the fashion of his country dress left bare, and which was covered with a fell of thick, short, red hair, especially around his knees, which resembled in this respect, as well as from their sinewy appearance of extreme strength, the limbs of a red-colored Highland bull. Upon the whole, betwixt the effect produced by the change of dress, and by my having become acquainted with his real and formidable character, his appearance had acquired to my eyes something so much wilder and more striking than it before presented, that I could scarce recognise him to be the same person.

His manner was bold, unconstrained unless by the actual bonds, haughty, and even dignified. He bowed to the Duke, nodded to Garschattachin and others, and showed some surprise at seeing me among the party.

"It is long since we have met, Mr. Campbell," said the Duke.

"It is so, my Lord Duke; I could have wished it had been" (looking at the fastening on his arms) "when I could have better paid the compliments I owe to your Grace;—but there's a gude time coming."

"No time like the time present, Mr. Campbell," answered the Duke, "for the hours are fast flying that must settle your last account with all mortal affairs. I do not say this to insult your distress; but you must be aware yourself that you draw near the end of your career. I do not deny that you may sometimes have done less harm than others of your unhappy trade, and that you may occasionally have exhibited marks of talent, and even of a disposition which promised better things. But you are aware how long you have been the terror and the oppressor of a peaceful neighborhood, and by what acts of violence you have maintained and extended your usurped authority. You know, in short, that you have deserved death, and that you must prepare for it."

"My Lord," said Rob Roy, "although I may well lay my misfortunes at your Grace's door, yet I will never say that you yourself have been the wilful and witting author of them. My Lord, if I had thought sae, your Grace would not this day have been sitting in judgment on me; for you have been three times within good rifle distance of me when you were thinking but of the red deer, and few people have ken'd me miss my aim. But as for them that have abused your Grace's ear, and set you up against a man that was ance as peacefu' a man as ony in the land, and made your name the warrant for driving me to utter extremity,—I have some amends of them, and, for a' that your Grace now says, I expect to live to hae mair."

"I know," said the Duke, in rising anger,

"that you are a determined and impudent villain, who will keep his oath if he swears to mischief; but it shall be my care to prevent you. You have no enemies but your own wicked actions."

"Had I called myself Grahame, instead of Campbell, I might have heard less about them," answered Rob Roy, with dogged resolution.

"You will do well, sir," said the Duke, "to warn your wife and family and followers, to beware how they use the gentlemen now in their hands, as I will requite tenfold on them, and their kin and allies, the slightest injury done to any of his Majesty's liege subjects."

"My Lord," said Roy in answer, "none of my enemies will allege that I have been a blood-thirsty man, and were I now wi' my folk, I could rule four or five hundred wild Highlanders as easy as your Grace those eight or ten lackeys and foot-boys—But if your Grace is bent to take the head away from a house, ye may lay your account there will be misrule among the members.—However, come o't what like, there's an honest man, a kinsman o' my ain, man come by nae skaith. Is there ony body here wad do a gude deed for MacGregor?—he may repay it, though his hands be now tied."

The Highlander who had delivered the letter to the Duke replied, "I'll do your will for you, MacGregor; and I'll gang back up the glen on purpose."

He advanced, and received from the prisoner a message to his wife, which, being in Gaelic, I did not understand, but I had little doubt it related to some measures to be taken for the safety of Mr. Jarvie.

"Do you hear the fellow's impudence?" said the Duke; "he confides in his character of a messenger. His conduct is of a piece with his master's, who invited us to make common cause against these freebooters, and have deserted us so soon as the MacGregors have agreed to surrender the Balquidder lands they were squabbling about."

No truth in plaids, no faith in tartan trews!  
Cameleon-like, they change a thousand hues."

"Your great ancestor never said so, my Lord," answered Major Galbraith;—"and, with submission, neither would your Grace have occasion to say it, wad ye but be for beginning justice at the well-head—Gie the honest man his mear again—Let every head wear its ane bannet, and the distractions o' the Lennox wad be mended wi' them o' the land."

"Hush! hush! Garschattachin," said the Duke: "this is language dangerous for you to talk to any one, and especially to me; but I presume you reckon yourself a privileged person. Please draw off your party towards Gartartan; I shall myself see the prisoner escorted to Duchray, and send you orders to-morrow. You will please grant no leave of absence to any of your troopers."

"Here's auld ordering and counter-ordering," muttered Garschattachin between his teeth. "But

patience! patience!—we may ae day play at change seats, the king's coming."

The two troops of cavalry now formed, and prepared to march off the ground, that they might avail themselves of the remainder of daylight to get to their evening quarters. I received an intimation, rather than an invitation, to attend the party; and I perceived, that, though no longer considered as a prisoner, I was yet under some sort of suspicion. The times were indeed so dangerous,—the great party questions of Jacobite and Hanoverian divided the country so effectually,—and the constant disputes and jealousies between the Highlanders and Lowlanders, besides a number of inexplicable causes of feud which separated the great leading families in Scotland from each other, occasioned such general suspicion, that a solitary and unprotected stranger was almost sure to meet with something disagreeable in the course of his travels.

I acquiesced, however, in my destination with the best grace I could, consoling myself with the hope that I might obtain from the captive freebooter some information concerning Rashleigh and his machinations. I should do myself injustice did I not add, that my views were not merely selfish. I was too much interested in my singular acquaintance not to be desirous of rendering him such services as his unfortunate situation might demand, or admit of his receiving.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

And when he came to broken briggs,  
He bent his bow and swam;  
And when he came to grass growing,  
Set down his feet and ran.

GU. MORRICE.

THE echoes of the rocks and ravines, on either side, now rang to the trumpets of the cavalry, which, forming themselves into two distinct bodies, began to move down the valley at a slow trot. That commanded by Major Galbraith soon took to the right hand, and crossed the Forth, for the purpose of taking up the quarters assigned them for the night, when they were to occupy, as I understood, an old castle in the vicinity. They formed a lively object while crossing the stream, but were soon lost in winding up the bank on the opposite side, which was clothed with wood.

We continued our march with considerable good order. To ensure the safe custody of the prisoner, the Duke had caused him to be placed on horseback behind one of his retainers, called, as I was informed, Ewan of Brigglands, one of the largest and strongest men who were present. A horse-belt, passed round the bodies of both, and buckled before the yeoman's breast, rendered it impossible for Rob Roy to free himself from his keeper. I was directed to keep close beside them, and accommodated for the purpose with a troop-horse. We were as closely surrounded by the soldiers as the width of the road would permit,

and had always at least one, if not two, on each side, with pistol in hand. Andrew Fairservice, furnished with a Highland pony of which they had made prey somewhere or other, was permitted to ride among the other domestics, of whom a great number attended the line of march, though without falling into the ranks of the more regularly trained troopers.

In this manner we travelled for a certain distance, until we arrived at a place where we also were to cross the river. The Forth, as being the outlet of a lake, is of considerable depth, even where less important in point of width, and the descent to the ford was by a broken precipitous ravine, which only permitted one horseman to descend at once. The rear and centre of our small body halting on the bank while the front files passed down in succession, produced a considerable delay, as is usual on such occasions, and even some confusion; for a number of those riders, who made no proper part of the squadron, crowded to the ford without regularity, and made the militia cavalry, although tolerably well drilled, partake in some degree of their own disorder.

It was while we were thus huddled together on the bank that I heard Rob Roy whisper to the man behind whom he was placed on horseback, "Your father, Ewan, wadna hae carried an auld friend to the shambles, like a calf, for a' the Dukes in Christendom."

Ewan returned no answer, but shrugged, as one who expresses by that sign that what he was doing was none of his own choice.

"And when the MacGregors come down the glen, and ye see toom faulds, a bluidy hearthstane, and the fire flashing out between the rafters o' your house, ye may be thinking then, Ewan, that were your friend Rob to the fore, you would have had that safe which it will make your heart sair to lose."

Ewan of Brigglands again shrugged and groaned, but remained silent.

"It's a sair thing," continued Rob, sliding his insinuations so gently into Ewan's ear that they reached no other but mine, who certainly saw myself in no shape called upon to destroy his prospects of escape—"It's a sair thing, that Ewan of Brigglands, whom Roy MacGregor has helped with hand, sword, and purse, suld mind a gloom from a great man, mair than a friend's life."

Ewan seemed sorely agitated, but was silent.—We heard the Duke's voice from the opposite bank call, "Bring over the prisoner."

Ewan put his horse in motion, and just as I heard Roy say, "Never weigh a MacGregor's bluid against a broken whang o' leather, for there will be another accounting to gie for it bath here and hereafter," they passed me hastily, and dashing forward rather precipitately, entered the water.

"Not yet, sir—not yet," said some of the troopers to me, as I was about to follow, while others pressed forward into the stream.

I saw the Duke on the other side, by the wan-

ing light, engaged in commanding his people to get into order, as they landed dispersedly, some higher, some lower. Many had crossed, some were in the water, and the rest were preparing to follow, when a sudden splash warned me that MacGregor's eloquence had prevailed on Ewan to give him freedom and a chance for life. The Duke also heard the sound, and instantly guessed its meaning. "Dog!" he exclaimed to Ewan as he landed, "where is your prisoner?" and without waiting to hear the apology which the terrified vassal began to falter forth, he fired a pistol at his head, whether fatally I know not, and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, disperse and pursue the villain—An hundred guineas for him that secures Rob Roy!"

All became an instant scene of the most lively confusion. Rob Roy, disengaged from his bonds, doubtless by Ewan's slipping the buckle of his belt, had dropped off at the horse's tail, and instantly dived, passing under the belly of the troop-horse which was on his left hand. But as he was obliged to come to the surface an instant for air, the glimpse of his tartan plaid drew the attention of the troopers, some of whom plunged into the river, with a total disregard to their own safety, rushing, according to the expression of their country, through pool and stream, sometimes swimming their horses, sometimes losing them and struggling for their own lives. Others less zealous, or more prudent, broke off in different directions, and galloped up and down the banks, to watch the places at which the fugitive might possibly land. The howling, the whooping, the calls for aid at different points, where they saw, or conceived they saw, some vestige of him they were seeking,—the frequent report of pistols, and carbines, fired at every object which excited the least suspicion,—the sight of so many horsemen riding about, in and out of the river, and striking with their long broadswords at whatever excited their attention, joined to the vain exertions used by their officers to restore order and regularity,—and all this in so wild a scene, and visible only by the imperfect twilight of an autumn evening, made the most extraordinary hubbub I had hitherto witnessed. I was indeed left alone to observe it, for our whole cavalcade had dispersed in pursuit or at least to see the event of the search. Indeed, as I partly suspected at the time, and afterwards learned with certainty, many of those who seemed most active in their attempts to waylay and recover the fugitive, were, in actual truth, least desirous that he should be taken, and only joined in the cry to increase the general confusion, and to give Rob Roy a better opportunity of escaping.

Escape, indeed, was not difficult for a swimmer so expert as the freebooter, as soon as he had eluded the first burst of pursuit. At one time he was closely pressed, and several blows were made which flashed in the water around him; the scene much resembling one of the otter-hunts which I had seen at Osbaldistone Hall, where the animal

is detected by the hounds from his being necessitated to put his nose above the stream to vent or breathe, while he is enabled to elude them by getting under water again so soon as he has refreshed himself by respiration. MacGregor, however, had a trick beyond the otter; for he contrived, when very closely pursued, to disengage himself unobserved from his plaid, and suffer it to float down the stream, where in its progress it quickly attracted general attention; many of the horsemen were thus put upon a false scent, and several shots or stabs were averted from the party for whom they were designed.

Once fairly out of view, the recovery of the prisoner became almost impossible, since, in so many places, the river was rendered inaccessible by the steepness of its banks, or the thickets of alders, poplars, and birch, which, overhanging its banks, prevented the approach of horsemen. Errors and accidents had also happened among the pursuers, whose task the approaching night rendered every moment more hopeless. Some got themselves involved in the eddies of the stream, and required the assistance of their companions to save them from drowning. Others, hurt by shots or blows in the confused *melee*, implored help or threatened vengeance, and in one or two instances such accidents led to actual strife. The trumpets, therefore, sounded the retreat, announcing that the commanding officer, with whatsoever unwillingness, had for the present relinquished hopes of the important prize which had thus unexpectedly escaped his grasp, and the troopers began slowly, reluctantly, and brawling with each other as they returned, again to assume their ranks. I could see them darkening, as they were on the southern bank of the river,—whose murmurs, long drowned by the louder cries of vengeful pursuit, were now heard hoarsely mingling with the deep, discontented, and reproachful voices of the disappointed horsemen.

Hitherto I had been as it were a mere spectator, though far from an uninterested one, of the singular scene which had passed. But now I heard a voice suddenly exclaim, "Where is the English stranger?—It was he gave Rob Roy the knife to cut the belt."

"Cleeve the pock-pudding to the chafts!" cried one voice.

"Weize a brace of balls through his harn-pan!" said a second.

"Drive three inches of cauld airn into his brisket!" shouted a third.

And I heard several horses galloping to and fro, with the kind purpose, doubtless, of executing these denunciations. I was immediately awakened to the sense of my situation, and to the certainty that armed men, having no restraint whatever on their irritated and inflamed passions, would probably begin by shooting or cutting me down, and afterwards investigate the justice of the action. Impressed by this belief, I leaped from my horse, and turning him loose, plunged into a bush of alder-trees, where, considering the

advancing obscurity of the night, I thought there was little chance of my being discovered. Had I been near enough to the Duke to have invoked his personal protection, I would have done so; but he had already commenced his retreat, and I saw no officer on the left bank of the river, of authority sufficient to have afforded protection, in case of my surrendering myself. I thought there was no point of honor which could require, in such circumstances, an unnecessary exposure of my life. My first idea, when the tumult began to be appeased, and the clatter of the horses' feet was heard less frequently in the immediate vicinity of my hiding-place, was to seek out the Duke's quarters, when all should be quiet, and give myself up to him as a liege subject, who had nothing to fear from his justice, and a stranger, who had every right to expect protection and hospitality. With this purpose I crept out of my hiding-place, and looked around me.

The twilight had now melted nearly into darkness; a few or none of the troopers were left on my side of the Forth, and of those who were already across it, I only heard the distant trample of the horses' feet, and the wailing and prolonged sound of their trumpets, which rung through the woods to recall stragglers. Here, therefore, I was left in a situation of considerable difficulty. I had no horse, and the deep and wheeling stream of the river, rendered turbid by the late tumult of which its channel had been the scene, and seeming yet more so under the doubtful influence of an imperfect moonlight, had no inviting influence for a pedestrian by no means accustomed to wade rivers, and who had lately seen horsemen weltering in this dangerous passage, up to the very saddle-laps. At the same time, my prospect, if I remained on the side of the river on which I then stood, could be no other than of concluding the various fatigues of this day and the preceding night, by passing that which was now closing in, *al fresco* on the side of a Highland hill.

After a moment's reflection, I began to consider that Fairservice, who had doubtless crossed the river with the other domestics, according to his forward and impertinent custom of putting himself always among the foremost, could not fail to satisfy the Duke, or the competent authorities, respecting my rank and situation; and that, therefore, my character did not require my immediate appearance, at the risk of being drowned in the river—of being unable to trace the march of the squadron in case of my reaching the other side in safety—or, finally, of being cut down, right or wrong, by some straggler, who might think such a piece of good service a convenient excuse for not sooner rejoining his ranks. I therefore resolved to measure my steps back to the little inn where I had passed the preceding night. I had nothing to apprehend from Rob Roy. He was now at liberty, and I was certain, in case of my falling in with any of his people, the news of his escape would ensure me protection. I might thus also show that I had no inten-

tion to desert Mr. Jarvie in the delicate situation in which he had engaged himself, chiefly on my account. And lastly, it was only in this quarter that I could hope to learn tidings concerning Rashleigh and my father's papers, which had been the original cause of an expedition so fraught with perilous adventure. I therefore abandoned all thoughts of crossing the Forth that evening; and, turning my back on the Fords of Frew, began to retrace my steps towards the little village of Aberfoil.

A sharp frost-wind, which made itself heard and felt from time to time, removed the clouds of mist which might otherwise have slumbered till morning on the valley; and, though it could not totally disperse the clouds of vapor, yet threw them in confused and changeful masses, now hovering round the heads of the mountains, now filling, as with a dense and voluminous stream of smoke, the various deep gullies, where masses of the composite rock, or breccia, tumbling in fragments from the cliffs, have rushed to the valley, leaving each behind its course a rent and torn ravine resembling a deserted water-course. The moon, which was now high, and twinkled with all the vivacity of a frosty atmosphere, silvered the windings of the river and the peaks and precipices which the mist left visible, while her beams seemed as it were absorbed by the fleecy whiteness of the mist, where it lay thick and condensed; and gave to the more light and vapory specks, which were elsewhere visible, a sort of filmy transparency resembling the lightest veil of silver gauze. Despite the uncertainty of my situation, a view so romantic, joined to the active and inspiring influence of the frosty atmosphere, elevated my spirits while it braced my nerves. I felt an inclination to cast care away, and bid defiance to danger, and involuntarily whistled, by way of cadence to my steps, which my feelings of the cold led me to accelerate, and I felt the pulse of existence beat prouder and higher in proportion as I felt confidence in my own strength, courage, and resources. I was so much lost in these thoughts and in the feelings which they excited, that two horsemen came up behind me without my hearing their approach, until one was on each side of me, when the left-hand rider, pulling up his horse, addressed me in the English tongue—"So ho, friend! whither so late?"

"To my supper and bed at Aberfoil," I replied.

"Are the passes open?" he inquired, with the same commanding tone of voice.

"I do not know," I replied; "I shall learn when I get there. But," I added, the fate of Morris recurring to my recollection, "if you are an English stranger, I advise you to turn back till daylight; there has been some disturbance in this neighborhood, and I should hesitate to say it is perfectly safe for strangers."

"The soldiers had the worst?—had they not?" was the reply.

"They had indeed; and an officer's party were destroyed or made prisoners."

"Are you sure of that?" replied the horseman.

"As sure as that I hear you speak," I replied.

"I was an unwilling spectator of the skirmish."

"Unwilling?" continued the interrogator.

"Were you not engaged in it then?"

"Certainly no," I replied; "I was detained by the king's officer."

"On what suspicion? and who are you? or what is your name?" he continued.

"I really do not know, sir," said I, "why I should answer so many questions to an unknown stranger. I have told you enough to convince you that you are going into a dangerous and distracted country. If you choose to proceed, it is your own affair; but as I ask you no questions respecting your name and business, you will oblige me by making no inquiries after mine."

"Mr. Francis Osbaldistone," said the other rider, in a voice the tones of which thrilled through every nerve of my body, "should not whistle his favorite 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.

"Good God!" I exclaimed, like one thunder-struck, "can it be you, Miss Vernon, on such a spot—at such an hour—in such a lawless country—in such—"

"In such a masculine dress you would say.—But what would you have? The philosophy of the excellent Corporal Nym is the best after all; things must be as they may—*pauca verba*."

While she was thus speaking, I eagerly took advantage of an unusually bright gleam of moonshine, to study the appearance of her companion; for it may be easily supposed, that finding Miss Vernon in a place so solitary, engaged in a journey so dangerous, and under the protection of one gentleman only, were circumstances to excite every feeling of jealousy, as well as surprise. The rider did not speak with the deep melody of Rashleigh's voice; his tones were more high and commanding; he was taller, moreover, as he sat on horseback, than that first-rate object of my hate and suspicion. Neither did the stranger's address resemble that of any of my other cousins; it had that indescribable tone and manner by which we recognize a man of sense and breeding, even in the first few sentences he speaks.

The object of my anxiety seemed desirous to get rid of my investigation.

"Diana," he said, in a tone of mingled kindness and authority, "give your cousin his property, and let us not spend time here."

Miss Vernon had in the meantime taken out a small case, and leaning down from her horse towards me, she said, in a tone in which an effort at her usual quaint lightness of expression contended with a deeper and more grave tone of

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*Dangle.*—Egad, I think the interpreter is the harder to be understood of the two.  
*Carric.*

I HAD scarce given vent to my feelings in this paroxysm, ere I was ashamed of my weakness. I remembered that I had been for some time endeavoring to regard Diana Vernon, when her idea intruded itself on my remembrance, as a friend, for whose welfare I should indeed always be anxious, but with whom I could have little further communication. But the almost unexpressed tenderness of her manner, joined to the romance of our sudden meeting where it was so little to have been expected, were circumstances which threw me entirely off my guard. I recovered, however, sooner than might have been expected, and without giving myself time accurately to examine my motives, I resumed the path on which I had been travelling when overtaken by this strange and unexpected apparition.

"I am not," was my reflection, "transgressing her injunction so pathetically given, since I am but pursuing my own journey by the only open route.—If I have succeeded in securing my father's property, it still remains incumbent on me to see my Glasgow friend delivered from the situation in which he has involved himself on my account; besides, what other place of rest can I obtain for the night excepting at the little inn of Aberfoil? They also must stop there, since it is impossible for travellers on horseback to go farther.—Well, then, we shall meet again—meet for the last time perhaps.—But I shall see and hear her—I shall learn who this happy man is who exercises over her the authority of a husband—I shall learn if there remains, in the difficult course in which she seems engaged, any difficulty which my efforts may remove, or aught that I can do to express my gratitude for her generosity—for her disinterested friendship."

As I reasoned thus with myself, coloring with every plausible pretext which occurred to my ingenuity, my passionate desire once more to see and converse with my cousin, I was suddenly hailed by a touch on the shoulder; and the deep voice of a Highlander, who, walking still faster than I, though I was proceeding at a smart pace, accosted me with, "A braw night, Maister Osbaldistone—we have met at the mirk hour before now."

There was no mistaking the tone of MacGregor; he had escaped the pursuit of his enemies, and was in full retreat to his own wilds and to his adherents. He had also contrived to arm himself, probably at the house of some secret adherent, for he had a musket on his shoulder, and the usual Highland weapons by his side. To have found myself alone with such a character in such a situation, and at this late hour in the evening, might not have been pleasant to me in any ordinary mood of mind; for, though habituated to think of Rob Roy in rather a friendly point of view, I will confess frankly that I never heard him speak but that it seemed to thrill my blood. The intonation

sentiment, "You see, my dear coz, I was born to be your better angel. Rashleigh has been compelled to yield up his spoil, and had we reached this same village of Aberfoil last night as we purposed, I should have found some Highland slyph to have waited to you all these representatives of commercial wealth. But there were giants and dragons in the way; and errant-knights and damsels of modern times, bold though they be, must not, as of yore, run into useless danger—Do not you do so either, my dear coz."

"Diana," said her companion, "let me once more warn you that the evening waxes late, and we are still distant from our home."

"I am coming, sir, I am coming—Consider," she added, with a sigh, "how lately I have been subjected to control—besides, I have not yet given my cousin the packet, and bid him farewell—for ever. Yes, Frank," she said, "for ever!—there is a gulf between us—a gulf of absolute perdition;—where we go, you must not follow—what we do, you must not share in—Farewell—be happy!"

In the attitude in which she bent from her horse, which was a Highland pony, her face, not altogether unwillingly, touched mine. She pressed my hand, while the tear that trembled in her eye found its way to my cheek instead of her own. 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 flood-gates of the heart. It was but a moment, however; for, instantly recovering from the feeling to which she had involuntarily given way, she intimated to her companion she was ready to attend him, and putting their horses to a brisk pace, they were soon far distant from the place where I stood.

Heaven knows, it was not apathy which loaded my frame and my tongue so much, that I could neither return Miss Vernon's half embrace, nor even answer her farewell. The word, though it rose to my tongue, seemed to choke in my throat like the fatal *guilty*, which the delinquent who makes it his plea, knows must be followed by the doom of death. The surprise—the sorrow, almost stupefied me. I remained motionless with the packet in my hand, gazing after them, as if endeavoring to count the sparkles which flew from the horses' hoofs. I continued to look after even these had ceased to be visible, and to listen for their footsteps long after the last distant trampling had died in my ears. At length, tears rushed to my eyes, glazed as they were by the exertion of straining after what was no longer to be seen. I wiped them mechanically, and almost without being aware that they were flowing—but they came thicker and thicker;—I felt the tightening of the throat and breast—the *hysterica passio* of poor Lear; and sitting down by the way-side, I shed a flood of the first and most bitter tears which had flowed from my eyes since childhood.