

OLD MORTALITY.

*A ROMANCE.*

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.



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# TALES OF MY LANDLORD,

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM,

SCHOOLMASTER AND PARISH-CLERK OF GANDERCLEUGH.

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,  
Frae Maidenkirke to Johnny Groat's,  
If there's a hole in a' your coats,  
I rede ye tent it;  
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,  
An' faith he'll prent it!

BURNS.

*Alora bien, dizeo el Cura: traedme, seor huésped, agustos libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el; y entrando en su aposento, sacó del una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola, halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano.—DON QUIXOTE, Parte I. Capitulo 32.*

It is mighty well, said the priest, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and, going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a padlock and chain to it, and, opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character.—*JARVIS'S Translation.*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION, (1816.)

As I may, without vanity, presume that the name and official description prefixed to this Proem will secure it, from the sedate and reflecting part of mankind, to whom only I would be understood to address myself, such attention as is due to the sedulous instructor of youth, and the careful performer of my Sabbath duties, I will forbear to hold up a candle to the daylight, or to point out to the judicious those recommendations of my labors which they must necessarily anticipate from the perusal of the title-page. Nevertheless, I am not unaware, that, as Envy always dogs Merit at the heels, there may be those who will whisper, that albeit my learning and good principles cannot (lauded be the heavens!) be denied by any one, yet that my situation at Gandercleugh hath been more favorable to my acquisitions in learning than to the enlargement of my views of the ways and works of the present generation. To the which objection, if, peradventure, any such shall be started, my answer shall be threefold:—

First, Gandercleugh is, as it were, the central part—the navel (*si fas sit dicere*) of this our native realm of Scotland; so that men, from every corner thereof, when travelling on their concerns of business, either towards our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh, or towards our metropolis and mart of gain, whereby I insinuate

Glasgow, are frequently led to make Gandercleugh their abiding stage and place of rest for the night. And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical, that I, who have sat in the leathern arm-chair, on the left-hand side of the fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life, during forty years by past, (the Christian Sabbaths only excepted,) must have seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if I had sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labor. Even so doth the tollman at the well-frequented turnpike on the Wellbrae-head, sitting at his ease in his own dwelling, gather more receipt of custom, than if, moving forth upon the road, he were to require a contribution from each person whom he chanced to meet in his journey, when, according to the vulgar adage, he might possibly be greeted with more kicks than half-pence.

But, secondly, supposing it again urged, that Ithacus, the most wise of the Greeks, acquired his renown, as the Roman poet hath assured us, by visiting states and men, I reply to the Zoilus who shall adhere to this objection, that, *de facto*, I have seen states and men also; for I have visited the famous cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the former twice, and the latter three times, in the course of my earthly pilgrimage. And, moreover,

I had the honor to sit in the General Assembly, (meaning, as an auditor, in the galleries thereof,) and have heard as much goodly speaking on the law of patronage, as, with the fructifications thereof in mine own understanding, hath made me be considered as an oracle upon that doctrine ever since my safe and happy return to Ganderclough.

Again—and thirdly, If it be nevertheless pretended that my information and knowledge of mankind, however extensive, and however painfully acquired, by constant domestic inquiry, and by foreign travel, is, natheless, incompetent to the task of recording the pleasant narratives of my Landlord, I will let these critics know, to their own eternal shame and confusion, as well as to the abashment and discomfiture of all who shall rashly take up a song against me, that I am nor the writer, redactor, or compiler, of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single iota, answerable for their contents, more or less. And now, ye generation of critics, who raise yourselves up as if it were brazen serpents, to hiss with your tongues, and to smite with your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust, and acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance, and the words of vain foolishness. Lo! ye are caught in your own snare, and your own pit hath yawned for you. Turn, then, aside from the task that is too heavy for you; destroy not your teeth by gnawing a file; waste not your strength by spurning against a castle wall; nor spend your breath in contending in swiftness with a fleet steed; and let those weigh the Tales of my Landlord, who shall bring with them the scales of candor, cleansed from the rust of prejudice by the hands of intelligent modesty. For these alone they were compiled, as will appear from a brief narrative which my zeal for truth compelled me to make supplementary to the present Proem.

It is well known that my Landlord was a pleasing and a facetious man, acceptable unto all the parish of Ganderclough, excepting only the Laird, the Exciseman, and those for whom he refused to draw liquor upon trust. Their causes of dislike I will touch separately, adding my own refutation thereof.

His honor, the Laird, accused our Landlord, deceased, of having encouraged, in various times and places, the destruction of hares, rabbits, fowls black and grey, partridges, moor-pouts, roe-deer, and other birds and quadrupeds, at unlawful seasons, and contrary to the laws of this realm, which have secured, in their wisdom, the slaughter of such animals for the great of the earth, whom I have remarked to take an uncommon (though to me, an unintelligible) pleasure therein. Now, in humble deference to his honor, and in justifiable defence of my friend deceased, I reply to this charge, that howsoever the form of such animals might appear to be similar to those so protected by the law, yet it was a mere *deceptio visus*; for what resembled hares were, in fact, *hill-kids*, and those partaking of the appearance of moor-fowl,

were truly *wood-pigeons*, and consumed and eaten *eo nomine*, and not otherwise.

Again, the Exciseman pretended, that my deceased Landlord did encourage that species of manufacture called distillation, without having an especial permission from the Great, technically called a license, for doing so. Now, I stand up to confront this falsehood; and in defiance of him, his gauging-stick, and pen and inkhorn, I tell him, that I never saw, or tasted, a glass of unlawful aqua vitæ in the house of my Landlord; nay, that, on the contrary, we needed not such devices, in respect of a pleasing and somewhat seductive liquor, which was vended and consumed at the Wallace Inn, under the name of *mountain-dew*. If there is a penalty against manufacturing such a liquor, let him show me the statute; and when he does, I'll tell him if I will obey it or no.

Concerning those who came to my Landlord for liquor, and went thirsty away, for lack of present coin, or future credit, I cannot but say it has grieved my bowels as if the case had been mine own. Nevertheless, my Landlord considered the necessities of a thirsty soul, and would permit them, in extreme need, and when their soul was impoverished for lack of moisture, to drink to the full value of their watches and wearing apparel, exclusively of their inferior habiliments, which he was uniformly inexorable in obliging them to retain, for the credit of the house. As to mine own part, I may well say that he never refused me that modicum of refreshment with which I am wont to recruit nature after the fatigues of my school. It is true, I taught his five sons English and Latin, writing, book-keeping, with a tincture of mathematics, and that I instructed his daughter in psalmody. Nor do I remember me of any fee or *honorarium* received from him on account of these my labors, except the computations aforesaid;—nevertheless, this compensation suited my humor well, since it is a hard sentence to bid a dry throat wait till quarter-day.

But, truly, were I to speak my simple conceit and belief, I think my Landlord was chiefly moved to waive in my behalf the usual requisition of a symbol, or reckoning, from the pleasure he was wont to take in my conversation, which, though solid and edifying in the main, was, like a well-built palace, decorated with facetious narratives and devices, tending much to the enhancement and ornament thereof. And so pleased was my Landlord of the Wallace in his replies during such colloquies, that there was no district in Scotland, yea, and no peculiar, and, as it were, distinctive custom therein practised, but was discussed betwixt us; insomuch, that those who stood by were wont to say, it was worth a bottle of ale to hear us communicate with each other. And not a few travellers, from distant parts, as well as from the remote districts of our kingdom, were wont to mingle in the conversation, and to tell news that had been gathered in foreign lands, or preserved from oblivion in this our own.

Now, I chanced to have contracted for teaching

the lower classes with a young person called Peter, or Patrick, Pattieson, who had been educated for our Holy Kirk—yea, had, by the license of presbytery, his voice opened therein as a preacher,—who delighted in the collection of olden tales and legends, and in garnishing them with the flowers of poesy, whereof he was a vain and frivolous professor; for he followed not the example of those strong poets whom I proposed to him as a pattern, but formed versification of a flimsy and modern texture, to the compounding whereof was necessary small pains and less thought. And hence I have chid him as being one of those who bring forward the fatal revolution prophesied by Mr. Robert Carey, in his Vaticination on the Death of the celebrated Dr. John Donne:

Now thou art gone, and thy strict laws will be  
Too hard for libertines in poetry;  
Till verse (by thee refined) in this last age  
Turn ballad rhyme.

I had also disputations with him touching his indulging rather a flowing and redundant than a concise and stately diction in his prose exertations. But notwithstanding these symptoms of inferior taste, and a humor of contradicting his betters upon passages of dubious construction in Latin authors, I did grievously lament when Peter Pattieson was removed from me by death, even as if he had been the offspring of my own loins. And in respect his papers had been left in my care (to answer funeral and deathbed expenses), I conceived myself entitled to dispose of one parcel thereof, entitled, "Tales of my Landlord," to one cunning in the trade (as it is called) of book-selling. He was a mirthful man, of small stature, cunning in counterfeiting of voices, and in making facetious tales and responses, and whom I have to laud for the truth of his dealings towards me.

Now, therefore, the world may see the injustice that charges me with incapacity to write these narratives, seeing, that though I have

proved that I could have written them if I would, yet, not having done so, the censure will deservedly fall, if at all due, upon the memory of Mr. Peter Pattieson; whereas I must be justly entitled to the praise, when any is due, seeing that, as the Dean of St. Patrick's wittily and logically expresseth it,—

That without which a thing is not,  
Is *Causa sine qua non*.

The work, therefore, is unto me as a child is to a parent; in the which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honor and praise; but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to itself alone.

I have only further to intimate, that Mr. Peter Pattieson, in arranging these Tales for the press, hath more consulted his own fancy than the accuracy of the narrative; nay, that he hath sometimes blended two or three stories together for the mere grace of his plots;—of which infidelity, although I disapprove and enter my testimony against it, yet I have not taken upon me to correct the same, in respect it was the will of the deceased that his manuscript should be submitted to the press without diminution or alteration. A fanciful nicety it was on the part of my deceased friend, who, if thinking wisely, ought rather to have conjured me, by all the tender ties of our friendship and common pursuits, to have carefully revised, altered, and augmented, at my judgment and discretion. But the will of the dead must be scrupulously obeyed, even when we weep over their pertinacity and self-delusion. So, gentle reader, I bid you farewell, recommending you to such fare as the mountains of your own country produce; and I will only further premise, that each tale is preceded by a short introduction, mentioning the persons by whom, and the circumstances under which, the materials thereof were collected.

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

TO  
HIS LOVING COUNTRYMEN,  
WHETHER THEY ARE DENOMINATED  
MEN OF THE SOUTH, GENTLEMEN OF THE NORTH,  
PEOPLE OF THE WEST, OR FOLK OF FIFE;  
*These Tales,*  
ILLUSTRATIVE OF ANCIENT SCOTTISH MANNERS,  
AND OF THE  
TRADITIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS,  
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,  
BY THEIR FRIEND AND LIEGE FELLOW-SUBJECT,  
JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

## OLD MORTALITY.

INTRODUCTION—(1829.)

THE remarkable person, called by the title of Old Mortality, was well known in Scotland about the end of the last century. His real name was Robert Paterson. He was a native, it is said, of the parish of Closeburn, in Dumfries-shire, and probably a mason by profession—at least educated to the use of the chisel. Whether family dissensions, or the deep and enthusiastic feeling of supposed duty, drove him to leave his dwelling, and adopt the singular mode of life in which he wandered, like a palmer, through Scotland, is not known. It could not be poverty, however, which prompted his journeys, for he never accepted anything beyond the hospitality which was willingly rendered him, and when that was not proffered, he always had money enough to provide for his own humble wants. His personal appearance, and favorite, or rather sole occupation, are accurately described in the preliminary chapter of the following work.

It is about thirty years since, or more, that the author met this singular person in the churchyard of Dunnottar, when spending a day or two with the late learned and excellent clergyman, Mr. Walker, minister of that parish, for the purpose of a close examination of the ruins of the Castle of Dunnottar, and other subjects of antiquarian research in that neighborhood. Old Mortality chanced to be at the same place, on the usual business of his pilgrimage; for the Castle of Dunnottar, though lying in the anti-covenanting district of the Mearns, was, with the parish churchyard, celebrated for the oppressions sustained there by the Cameronians in the time of James II.

It was in 1685, when Argyle was threatening a descent upon Scotland, and Monmouth was preparing to invade the west of England, that the Privy Council of Scotland, with cruel precaution, made a general arrest of more than a hundred persons in the southern and western provinces, supposed, from their religious principles, to be inimical to Government, together with many women and children. These captives were driven northward like a flock of bullocks, but with less precaution to provide for their wants, and finally penned up in a subterranean dungeon in the Castle of Dunnottar, having a window opening to the front of a precipice which overhangs the German Ocean. They had suffered not a little on the journey, and were much hurt both at the scoffs of the northern prelatists, and the mocks, gibes, and contemptuous tunes played by the fiddlers and pipers who had come from every quarter as they passed, to triumph over the revilers of their call-

ing. The repose which the melancholy dungeon afforded them was anything but undisturbed. The guards made them pay for every indulgence, even that of water; and when some of the prisoners resisted a demand so unreasonable, and insisted on their right to have this necessary of life untaxed, their keepers emptied the water on the prison floors, saying, "If they were obliged to bring water for the canting whigs, they were not bound to afford them the use of bowls or pitchers gratis."

In this prison, which is still termed the Whig's Vault, several died of the diseases incidental to such a situation; and others broke their limbs, and incurred fatal injury, in desperate attempts to escape from their stern prison-house. Over the graves of these unhappy persons, their friends, after the Revolution, erected a monument with a suitable inscription.

This peculiar shrine of the Whig martyrs is very much honored by their descendants, though residing at a great distance from the land of their captivity and death. My friend, the Rev. Mr. Walker, told me, that being once upon a tour in the south of Scotland, probably about forty years since, he had the bad luck to involve himself in the labyrinth of passages and tracks which cross, in every direction, the extensive waste called Lochar Moss, near Dumfries, out of which it is scarcely possible for a stranger to extricate himself; and there was no small difficulty in procuring a guide, since such people as he saw were engaged in digging their peats—a work of paramount necessity, which will hardly brook interruption. Mr. Walker could, therefore, only procure unintelligible directions in the southern brogue, which differs widely from that of the Mearns. He was beginning to think himself in a serious dilemma, when he stated his case to a farmer of rather the better class, who was employed, as the others, in digging his winter fuel. The old man at first made the same excuse with those who had already declined acting as the traveller's guide; but perceiving him in great perplexity, and paying the respect due to his profession, "You are a clergyman, sir?" he said. Mr. Walker assented. "And I observe from your speech, that you are from the north?"—"You are right, my good friend," was the reply. "And may I ask if you have ever heard of a place called Dunnottar?"—"I ought to know something about it, my friend," said Mr. Walker, "since I have been several years the minister of the parish."—"I am glad to hear it," said the Dumfriessian, "for one of my near relations lies buried there, and there is, I

believe, a monument over his grave. I would give half of what I am aught, to know if it is still in existence."—"He was one of those who perished in the Whig's Vault at the castle?" said the minister; "for there are few southlanders besides lying in our churchyard, and none, I think, having monuments."—"Even sae—even sae," said the old Cameronian, for such was the farmer. He then laid down his spade, cast on his coat, and heartily offered to see the minister out of the moss, if he should lose the rest of the *day's dargue*. Mr. Walker was able to requite him amply, in his opinion, by reciting the epitaph, which he remembered by heart. The old man was enchanted with finding the memory of his grandfather or great-grandfather faithfully recorded amongst the names of brother sufferers; and rejecting all other offers of recompense, only requested, after he had guided Mr. Walker to a safe and dry road, that he would let him have a written copy of the inscription.

It was whilst I was listening to this story, and looking at the monument referred to, that I saw Old Mortality engaged in his daily task of cleaning and repairing the ornaments and epitaphs upon the tomb. His appearance and equipment were exactly as described in the Novel. I was very desirous to see something of a person so singular, and expected to have done so, as he took up his quarters with the hospitable and liberal-spirited minister. But though Mr. Walker invited him up after dinner to partake of a glass of spirits and water, to which he was supposed not to be very averse, yet he would not speak frankly upon the subject of his occupation. He was in bad humor, and had, according to his phrase, no freedom for conversation with us.

His spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing, in a certain Aberdonian kirk, the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe, or some similar instrument which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations. Perhaps, after all, he did not feel himself at ease with his company; he might suspect the questions asked by a north-country minister and a young barrister to savor more of idle curiosity than profit. At any rate, in the phrase of John Bunyan, Old Mortality went on his way, and I saw him no more.

The remarkable figure and occupation of this ancient pilgrim was recalled to my memory by an account transmitted by my friend Mr. Joseph Train, supervisor of excise at Dumfries, to whom I owe many obligations of a similar nature. From this, besides some other circumstances, among which are those of the old man's death, I learned the particulars described in the text. I am also informed, that the old palmer's family, in the third generation, survives, and is highly respected both for talents and worth.

While these sheets were passing through the press, I received the following communication from Mr. Train, whose undeviating kindness had, during the intervals of laborious duty, collected its materials from an indubitable source:—

"In the course of my periodical visits to the Glenkens, I have become intimately acquainted with Robert Paterson, a son of Old Mortality, who lives in the little village of Balmacellan; and although he is now in the 70th year of his age, preserves all the vivacity of youth—has a most retentive memory, and a mind stored with information far above what could be expected from a person in his station of life. To him I am indebted for the following particulars relative to his father, and his descendants down to the present time.

"Robert Paterson, *alias* Old Mortality, was the son of Walter Paterson and Margaret Scott, who occupied the farm of Haggisha, in the parish of Hawick, during nearly the first half of the eighteenth century. Here Robert was born, in the memorable year 1715.

"Being the youngest son of a numerous family, he, at an early age, went to serve with an elder brother, named Francis, who rented from Sir John Jardine of Applegarth, a small tract in Comcockle Moor, near Lochmaben. During his residence there, he became acquainted with Elizabeth Gray, daughter of Robert Gray, gardener to Sir John Jardine, whom he afterwards married. His wife had been, for a considerable time, a cook-maid to Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, who procured for her husband, from the Duke of Queensberry, an advantageous lease of the freestone quarry of Gatelowbrigg, in the parish of Morton. Here he built a house, and had as much land as kept a horse and cow. My informant cannot say, with certainty, the year in which his father took up his residence at Gatelowbrigg, but he is sure it must have been only a short time prior to the year 1746, as, during the memorable frost in 1740, he says his mother still resided in the service of Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick. When the Highlanders were returning from England on their route to Glasgow, in the year 1745-6, they plundered Mr. Paterson's house at Gatelowbrigg, and carried him a prisoner as far as Glenbuck, merely because he said to one of the straggling army that their retreat might have been easily foreseen, as the strong arm of the Lord was evidently raised, not only against the bloody and wicked house of Stuart, but against all who attempted to support the abominable heresies of the Church of Rome. From this circumstance it appears that Old Mortality had, even at that early period of his life, imbibed the religious enthusiasm by which he afterwards became so much distinguished.

"The religious sect called Hill-men, or Cameronians, was at that time much noted for austerity and devotion, in imitation of Cameron their founder, of whose tenets Old Mortality became a most strenuous supporter. He made frequent journeys into Galloway to attend their conventicles, and occasionally carried with him gravestones from his quarry at Gatelowbrigg, to keep in remembrance the righteous, whose dust had been gathered to their fathers. Old Mortality was not one

of those religious devotees, who, although one eye is seemingly turned towards heaven, keep the other steadfastly fixed on some sublunary object. As his enthusiasm increased, his journeys into Galloway became more frequent; and he gradually neglected even the common prudential duty of providing for his offspring. From about the year 1758, he neglected wholly to return from Galloway to his wife and five children at Gatelowbrigg, which induced her to send her eldest son, Walter, then only twelve years of age, to Galloway, in search of his father. After traversing nearly the whole of that extensive district, from the nick of Bennecorie to the Fell of Barullion, he found him at last working on the Cameronian monuments, in the old kirkyard of Kirkchrist, on the west side of the Dee, opposite the town of Kirkcudbright. The little wanderer used all the influence in his power to induce his father to return to his family; but in vain. Mrs. Paterson sent even some of her female children into Galloway in search of their father, for the same purpose of persuading him to return home; but without any success. At last, in the summer of 1763, she removed to the little upland village of Balmacellan, in the Glenkens of Galloway, where, upon the small pittance derived from keeping a little school, she supported her numerous family in a respectable manner.

"There is a small monumental stone in the farm of the Caldon, near the House of the Hill, in Wigtonshire, which is highly venerated as being the first erected, by Old Mortality, to the memory of several persons who fell at that place in defence of their religious tenets in the civil war, in the reign of Charles Second.\*

"From the Caldon, the labors of Old Mortality, in the course of time, spread over nearly all the Lowlands of Scotland. There are few churchyards in Ayrshire, Galloway, or Dumfriesshire, where the work of his chisel is not yet to be seen. It is easily distinguished from the work of any other artist, by the primitive rudeness of the emblems of death, and of the inscriptions which adorn the ill-formed blocks of his erection. This task of repairing and erecting gravestones, practised without fee or reward, was the only ostensible employment of this singular person for upwards of forty years. The door of every Cameronian's house was indeed open to him at all times when he chose to enter, and he was gladly received as an inmate of the family; but he did not invariably accept of these civilities, as may be seen by the following account of his frugal expenses, found amongst other little papers (some of which I have likewise in my possession) in his pocket-book after his death:—

*"Gatehouse of Fleet, 4th February, 1796.*

ROBERT PATERSON <i>debtor</i> to MARGARET CHRYSSTALE.	£0 4 1
To drye Lodgings for seven weeks.....	£0 4 1
To Four Auchlet of Ait Meal.....	0 3 4

\* The house was stormed by a Captain Orchard or Urquhart, who was shot in the attack.

To 6 Lippies of Potatoes.....	£ 1 3
To Lent Money at the time of Mr. Reid's Sacrament, 0 6 0	0 6 0
To 3 Chappins of Yel' w <sup>th</sup> Sandy the Keelman,*....	0 0 0
	£0 16 3
Received in part.....	0 10 0
Unpaid.....	£0 5 5

"This statement shows the religious wanderer to have been very poor in his old age; but he was so more by choice than through necessity, as, at the period here alluded to, his children were all comfortably situated, and were most anxious to keep their father at home. But no entreaty could induce him to alter his erratic way of life; he travelled from one churchyard to another, mounted on his old white pony, till the last day of his existence, and died as you have described, at Bankhill, near Lockerby, on the 14th February, 1801, in the 86th year of his age. As soon as his body was found, intimation was sent to his sons at Balmacellan; but from the great depth of the snow at that time, the letter communicating the particulars of his death was so long detained by the way, that the remains of the pilgrim were interred before any of his relations could arrive at Bankhill.

"The following is an exact copy of the account of his funeral expenses,—the original of which I have in my possession:—

*"Memorandum of the Funeral Charges of Robert Paterson, who dyed at Bankhill on the 14th day of February, 1801.*

To a Coffin.....	£0 12 0
To Munting for do.....	0 2 8
To a Shirt for him.....	0 5 6
To a pair of Cotten Stockings.....	0 2 0
To Bread at the Founral.....	0 2 6
To Chise at ditto.....	0 3 0
To 1 pint Rume.....	0 4 6
To 1 pint Whiskie.....	0 4 0
To a man going to Annan.....	0 2 0
To the grave-diger.....	0 1 0
To Linnen for a sheet to him.....	0 2 8
	£2 1 10
Taken off him when dead.....	1 7 6
	£0 14 4

"The above account is authenticated by the son of the deceased.

"My friend was prevented by indisposition from even going to Bankhill to attend the funeral of his father, which I regret very much, as he is not aware in what churchyard he was interred.

"For the purpose of erecting a small monument to his memory, I have made every possible inquiry wherever I thought there was the least chance of finding out where Old Mortality was laid; but I have done so in vain, as his death is not registered in the session-book of any of the neighboring parishes. I am sorry to think, that in all probability this singular person, who spent so many years of his lengthened existence in striving with his chisel and mallet to perpetuate

\* A well-known humorist, still alive, popularly called by the name of Old Keelybags, who deals in the keel or chalk with which farmers mark their flocks."

the memory of many less deserving than himself, must remain even without a single stone to mark out the resting-place of his mortal remains.

"Old Mortality had three sons, Robert, Walter, and John; the former, as has been already mentioned, lives in the village of Balmacellan, in comfortable circumstances, and is much respected by his neighbors. Walter died several years ago, leaving behind him a family now respectably situated in this point. John went to America in the year 1776, and, after various turns of fortune, settled at Baltimore."

Old Nol himself is said to have loved an innocent jest. (See Captain Hodgson's Memoirs.) Old Mortality somewhat resembled the Protector in this turn to festivity. Like Master Silence, he had been merry twice and once in his time; but even his jests were of a melancholy and sepulchral nature, and sometimes attended with inconvenience to himself, as will appear from the following anecdote:—

The old man was at one time following his wonted occupation of repairing the tombs of the martyrs, in the churchyard of Girthon, and the sexton of the parish was plying his kindred task at no small distance. Some roguish urchins were sporting near them, and by their noisy gambols disturbing the old men in their serious occupation. The most petulant of the juvenile party were two or three boys, grandchildren of a person well-known by the name of Cooper Climent.—This artist enjoyed almost a monopoly in Girthon and the neighboring parishes, for making and selling ladles, cups, bickers, bowls, spoons, cogenes, and trenchers, formed of wood, for the use of the country people. It must be noticed, that, notwithstanding the excellence of the Cooper's vessels, they were apt, when new, to impart a reddish tinge to whatever liquor was put into them, a circumstance not uncommon in like cases.

The grandchildren of this dealer in wooden work took it into their head to ask the sexton what use he could possibly make of the numerous fragments of old coffins which were thrown up in opening new graves. "Do you not know," said Old Mortality, "that he sells them to your grandfather, who makes them into spoons, trenchers, bickers, bowies, and so forth?" At this assertion, the youthful group broke up in great confusion and disgust, on reflecting how many meals they had eaten out of dishes which, by Old Mortality's account, were only fit to be used at a banquet of witches or of ghoules. They carried the tidings home, when many a dinner was spoiled by the loathing which the intelligence imparted; for the account of the materials was supposed to explain the reddish tinge, which, even in the days of the Cooper's fame, had seemed somewhat suspicious. The ware of Cooper Climent was rejected in horror, much to the benefit of his rivals the muggers, who dealt in earthenware. The man of cutty-spoon and ladle saw his trade interrupted, and learned the reason by his quondam customers coming upon him in wrath to return the goods which were composed of such unhallowed materials, and demand repayment of their money. In this disagreeable predicament the forlorn artist cited Old Mortality into a court of justice, where he proved that the wood he used in his trade was that of the staves of old wine-pipes bought from smugglers, with whom the country then abounded—a circumstance which fully accounted for their imparting a color to their contents. Old Mortality himself made the fullest declaration that he had no other purpose in making the assertion, than to check the petulance of the children. But it is easier to take away a good name than to restore it. Cooper Climent's business continued to languish, and he died in a state of poverty.