

eyes mingles with, and weakens the spell; for the powers cannot brook distrust."

Unaccustomed to be addressed in a tone so peremptory, Magnus would have made some angry reply; but reflecting that the health of Minna was at stake, and considering that she who spoke was a woman of many sorrows, he suppressed his anger, bowed his head, shrugged his shoulders, assumed the prescribed posture, averting his head from the table, and turning towards the wall. Brenda did the same, on receiving a sign from her father, and both remained profoundly silent.

Norna then addressed Minna once more,—

"Mark me! for the word I speak,  
Shall bring the color to thy cheek.  
This leaden heart, so light of cost,  
The symbol of a treasure lost,  
Thou shalt wear in hope and in peace,  
That the cause of your sickness and sorrow may cease,  
When crimson foot meets crimson hand  
In the Martyr's Aisle, and in Orkney-land."

Minna colored deeply at the last couplet, intimating, as she failed not to interpret it, that Norna was completely acquainted with the secret cause of her sorrow. The same conviction led the maiden to hope in the favorable issue, which the sibyl seemed to prophesy; and not venturing to express her feelings in any manner more intelligible, she pressed Norna's withered hand with all the warmth of affection, first to her breast and then to her bosom, bedewing it at the same time with her tears.

With more of human feeling than she usually exhibited, Norna extricated her hand from the grasp of the poor girl, whose tears now flowed freely, and then, with more tenderness of manner than she had yet shown, she knotted the leaden heart to a chain of gold and hung it around Minna's neck, singing, as she performed that last branch of the spell,—

"Be patient, be patient, for Patience hath power,  
To ward us in danger, like mantle in shower;  
A fairy gift you best may hold  
Is a chain of fairy gold;  
The chain and the gift are each a true token,  
That not without warrant old Norna hath spoken;  
But thy nearest and dearest must never behold them,  
Till time shall accomplish the truths I have told them."

The verses being concluded, Norna carefully arranged the chain around her patient's neck so as to hide it in her bosom, and thus ended the spell—a spell which, at the moment I record these incidents, it is known, has been lately practised in Zetland, where any decline of health, without apparent cause, is imputed by the lower orders to a demon having stolen the heart from the body of the patient, and where the experiment of supplying the deprivation by a leaden one, prepared in the manner described, has been resorted to within these few years. In a metaphorical sense, the disease may be considered as a general one in all parts of the world; but, as this simple and original remedy is peculiar to the Isles of Thule, it were unpardonable not to pre-

serve it at length, in a narrative connected with Scottish antiquities.\*

A second time Norna reminded her patient, that if she showed, or spoke of, the fairy gifts, their virtue would be lost—a belief so common as to be received into the superstitions of all nations. Lastly, unbuttoning the collar which she had just fastened, she showed her a link of the gold chain, which Minna instantly recognized as that formerly given by Norna to Mordaunt Merctoun. This seemed to intimate he was yet alive, and under Norna's protection; and she gazed on her with the most eager curiosity. But the sibyl imposed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and a second time involved the chain in those folds which modestly and closely veiled one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the kindest, bosoms in the world.

Norna then extinguished the lighted charcoal, and as the water hissed upon the glowing embers, commanded Magnus and Brenda to look around and behold her task accomplished.

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

See yonder woman, whom our swains revere,  
And dread in secret, while they take her counsel  
When sweetheart shall be kind, or when cross dame shall die  
Where lurks the thief who stole the silver tankard,  
And how the pestilent murrain may be cured.—  
This sage advisor's mad, stark mad, my friend;  
Yet, in her madness, hath the art and cunning  
To ring fools' secrets from their inmost bosoms,  
And pay inquirers with the coin they gave her.

OLD PLAY.

It seemed as if Norna had indeed full right to claim the gratitude of the Udaller for the improved condition of his daughter's health. She once more threw open the window, and Minna, drying her eyes and advancing with affectionate confidence, threw herself on her father's neck, and asked his forgiveness for the trouble she had of late occasioned to him. It is unnecessary to add, that this was at once granted, with a full, though rough burst of parental tenderness, and as many close embraces as if his child had been just rescued from the jaws of death. When Magnus had dismissed Minna from his arms, to throw herself into those of her sister, and express to her, rather by kisses and tears than in words, the regret she entertained for her late wayward conduct, the Udaller thought proper, in the meantime, to pay his thanks to their hostess, whose skill had proved so efficacious. But scarce had he come out with "Much respected kinswoman, I am but a plain old Norseman,"—when she interrupted him, by pressing her finger on her lips.

"There are those around us," she said, "who must hear no mortal voice, witness no sacrifice to mortal feelings—there are times when they

\* The spells described in this chapter are not altogether imaginary. By this mode of pouring lead into water, and selecting the part which chances to assume a resemblance to the human heart, which must be worn by the patient around her or his neck, the sage persons of Zetland pretend to cure the fatal disorder called the loss of a heart.

even mutiny against me, their sovereign mistress, because I am still shrouded in the flesh of humanity. Fear, therefore, and be silent. I, whose deeds have raised me from the low-sheltered valley of life, where dwell its social wants and common charities—I, who have bereft the Giver of the Gift which he gave, and stand alone on a cliff of immeasurable height, detached from earth, save from the small portion that supports my miserable tread,—I alone am fit to cope with these sullen mates. Fear not, therefore, but yet be not too bold, and let this night to you be one of fasting and of prayer."

If the Udaller had not, before the commencement of the operation, been disposed to dispute the commands of the sibyl, it may be well believed he was less so now, that it had terminated to all appearance so fortunately. So he sat down in silence, and seized upon a volume which lay near him as a sort of desperate effort to divert ennui, for on no other occasion had Magnus been known to have recourse to a book for that purpose. It chanced to be a book much to his mind, being the well-known work of Olaus Magnus, upon the manners of the ancient Northern nations. The book is unluckily in the Latin language, and the Danske or Dutch were, either of them, much more familiar to the Udaller. But then it was the fine edition published in 1555, which contains representations of the war-chariots, fishing exploits, warlike exercises, and domestic employments of the Scandinavians, executed on copperplates; and thus the information which the work refused to the understanding, was addressed to the eye, which, as is well known both to old and young, answers the purpose of amusement as well, if not better.

Meanwhile the two sisters, pressed as close to each other as two flowers on the same stalk, sat with their arms reciprocally passed over each other's shoulder, as if they feared some new and unforeseen cause of coldness was about to separate them, and interrupt the sister-like harmony which had been but just restored. Norna sat opposite to them, sometimes revolving the large parchment volume with which they had found her employed at their entrance, and sometimes gazing on the sisters, with a fixed look, in which an interest of a kind unusually tender, seemed occasionally to disturb the stern and rigorous solemnity of her countenance. All was still and silent as death, and the subsiding emotions of Brenda had not yet permitted her to wonder whether the remaining hours of the evening were to be passed in the same manner, when the scene of tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the dwarf Pacolet, or, as the Udaller called him, Nicholas Strumper.

Norna darted an angry glance on the intruder, who seemed to deprecate her resentment by holding up his hands and uttering a babbling sound; then instantly resorting to his usual mode of conversation, he expressed himself by a variety of signs made rapidly upon his fingers, and as rapid-

ly answered by his mistress, so that the young women, who had never heard of such an art, and now saw it practised by two beings so singular, almost conceived their mutual intelligence the work of enchantment. When they had ceased their intercourse, Norna turned to Magnus Troil with much haughtiness, and said, "How, my kinsman! have you so far forgot yourself, as to bring earthly food into the house of the Reimkenar, and make preparations in the dwelling of Power and of Despair, for refection, and wassail, and revelry?—Speak not—answer not," she said; "the duration of the cure which was wrought even now, depends on your silence and obedience—bandy but a single look or word with me, and the latter condition of that maiden shall be worse than the first!"

This threat was an effectual charm upon the tongue of the Udaller, though he longed to indulge it in vindication of his conduct.

"Follow me, all of you," said Norna, striding to the door of the apartment, "and see that no one looks backwards—we leave not this apartment empty, though we, the children of mortality, be removed from it."

She went out, and the Udaller signed to his daughters to follow, and to obey her injunctions. The sibyl moved swifter than her guests down the rude descent (such it might rather be termed, than a proper staircase), which led to the lower apartment. Magnus and his daughters, when they entered the chamber, found their own attendants aghast at the presence and proceedings of Norna of the Fifful-head.

They had been previously employed in arranging the provisions, which they had brought along with them, so as to present a comfortable cold meal, as soon as the appetite of the Udaller, which was as regular as the return of tide, should induce him to desire some refreshment; and now they stood staring in fear and surprise, while Norna, seizing upon one article after another, and well supported by the zealous activity of Pacolet, flung their whole preparations out of the rude aperture which served for a window, and over the cliff, from which the ancient Burgh arose, into the ocean, which raged and foamed beneath. *Vifda* (dried beef), hams, and pickled pork, flew after each other into empty space, smoked geese were restored to the air, and cured fish to the sea, their native elements indeed, but which they were no longer capable of traversing; and the devastation proceeded so rapidly, that the Udaller could scarce secure from the wreck his silver drinking cup; while the large leathern flask of brandy, which was destined to supply his favorite beverage, was sent to follow the rest of the supper, by the hands of Pacolet, who regarded, at the same time, the disappointed Udaller with a malicious grin, as if, notwithstanding his own natural taste for the liquor, he enjoyed the disappointment and surprise of Magnus Troil still more than he would have relished sharing his enjoyment.



The destruction of the brandy-flask exhausted the patience of Magnus, who roared out, in a tone of no small displeasure, "Why, kinswoman, this is wasteful madness—where, and on what, would you have me sup?"

"Where you will," answered Norna, "and on what you will,—but not in my dwelling, and not on the food with which you have profaned it. Vex my spirit no more, but begone every one of you! You have been here too long for my good, perhaps for your own."

"How, kinswoman," said Magnus, "would you make outcasts of us at this time of night, when even a Scotchman would not turn a stranger from the door?—Bethink you, dame, it is shame on our lineage for ever, if this squall of yours should force us to slip cables, and go to sea so scantily provided."

"Be silent, and depart," said Norna; "let it suffice you have got that for which you came. I have no harborage for mortal guests, no provision to relieve human wants. There is beneath the cliff, a beach of the finest sand, a stream of water as pure as the well of Kildinguie, and the rocks bear dulse as wholesome as that of Guiodin; and well you wot, that the well of Kildinguie and the dulse of Guiodin will cure all maladies save Black Death."\*

"And well I wot," said the Udallar, "that I would eat corrupted sea-weed, like a starling, or salted seal's flesh, like the men of Burraforth, or wilks, buckies, and lampits, like the poor sneaks of Stroma, rather than break wheat bread and drink red wine in a house where it is begrudged me.—And yet," he said, checking himself, "I am wrong, very wrong, my cousin, to speak thus to you, and I should rather thank you for what you have done, than upbraid you for following your own ways. But I see you are impatient—we will be all under way presently. And you, ye knaves," addressing his servants, "that were in such hurry with your service before it was lacked, get out of doors with you presently, and manage to catch the ponies; for I see we must make for another harbor to-night, if we would not sleep with an empty stomach, and on a hard bed."

The domestics of Magnus, already sufficiently alarmed at the violence of Norna's conduct, scarce waited the imperious command of their master to evacuate her dwelling with all despatch; and the Udallar, with a daughter on each arm, was in the act of following them, when Norna said emphatically, "Stop!" They obeyed, and again turned towards her. She held out her hand to Magnus, which the placable Udallar instantly folded in his own ample palm.

"Magnus," she said, "we part by necessity, but, I trust, not in anger?"

"Surely not, cousin," said the warm-hearted Udallar, well-nigh stammering in his hasty disclamation of all unkindness—"most assuredly not. I never bear ill-will to any one, much less to one

of my own blood, and who has piloted me with her advice through many a rough tide, as I would pilot a boat betwixt Swona and Stroma, through all the waws, wells, and swelchies of the Pentland Frith."

"Enough," said Norna, "and now farewell, with such a blessing as I dare bestow—not a word more! Maidens," she added, "draw near, and let me kiss your brows."

The sibyl was obeyed by Minna with awe, and by Brenda with fear; the one overmastered by the warmth of her imagination, the other by the natural timidity of her constitution. Norna then dismissed them, and in two minutes afterwards they found themselves beyond the bridge, and standing upon the rocky platform in front of the ancient Pictish Burgh, which it was the pleasure of this sequestered female to inhabit. The night, for it was now fallen, was unusually serene. A bright twilight, which glimmered far over the surface of the sea, supplied the brief absence of the summer's sun; and the waves seemed to sleep under its influence, so faint and slumberous was the sound with which one after another rolled on and burst against the foot of the cliff on which they stood. In front of them stood the rugged fortress, seeming, in the uniform grayness of the atmosphere, as aged, as shapeless, and as massive as the rock on which it was founded. There was neither sight nor sound that indicated human habitation, save that from one rude shot-hole glimmered the flame of the feeble lamp by which the sibyl was probably pursuing her mystical and nocturnal studies, shooting upon the twilight, in which it was soon lost and confounded, a single line of tiny light; bearing the same proportion to that of the atmosphere, as the aged woman and her serf, the sole inhabitants of that desert, did to the solitude with which they were surrounded.

For several minutes, the party, thus suddenly and unexpectedly expelled from the shelter where they had reckoned upon spending the night, stood in silence, each wrapt in their own separate reflections. Minna, her thoughts fixed on the mystical consolation which she had received, in vain endeavored to extract from the words of Norna a more distinct and intelligible meaning; and the Udallar had not yet recovered his surprise at the extrusion to which he had been thus whimsically subjected, under circumstances that prohibited him from resenting as an insult, treatment which, in all other respects, was so shocking to the genial hospitality of his nature, that he still felt like one disposed to be angry, if he but knew how to see about it. Brenda was the first who brought matters to a point, by asking whither they were to go, and how they were to spend the night? The question, which was added in a tone, that, amidst its simplicity, had something dolorous in it, entirely changed the train of her father's ideas; and the unexpected perplexity of their situation now striking him in a comic point of view, he laughed till his very eyes ran over, while every rock around him rung, and the sleeping sea-fowl were

\* So at least says an Orkney proverb

startled from their repose, by the loud, hearty explosions of his obstreperous hilarity.

The Udaller's daughters, eagerly representing to their father the risk of displeasing Norna by this unlimited indulgence of his mirth, united their efforts to drag him to a farther distance from her dwelling. Magnus, yielding to their strength, which, feeble as it was, his own fit of laughter rendered him incapable of resisting, suffered himself to be pulled to a considerable distance from the Burgh, and then escaping from their hands, and sitting down, or rather suffering himself to drop, upon a large stone which lay conveniently by the wayside, he again laughed so long and lustily, that his vexed and anxious daughters became afraid that there was something more than natural in these repeated convulsions.

At length his mirth exhausted both itself and the Udaller's strength. He groaned heavily, wiped his eyes, and said, not without feeling some desire to renew his obstreperous cachinnation, "Now, by the bones of Saint Magnus, my ancestor and namesake, one would imagine that being turned out of doors, at this time of night, was nothing short of an absolutely exquisite jest; for I have shaken my sides at it till they ached. There we sat, made snug for the night, and I made as sure of a good supper and a can as ever I had been of either,—and here we are all taken aback; and then poor Brenda's doleful voice, and melancholy question, of 'What is to be done, and where are we to sleep?' In good faith, unless one of those knaves, who must needs torment the poor woman by their trencher-work before it was wanted, can make amends by telling us of some snug port under our lee, we have no other course for it but to steer through the twilight on the bearing of Burgh-Westra, and rough it out as well as we can by the way. I am sorry but for you, girls; for many a cruise have I been upon when we were on shorter allowance than we are like to have now.—I would I had but secured a morsel for you, and a drop for myself; and then there had been but little to complain of."

Both sisters hastened to assure the Udaller that they felt not the least occasion for food.

"Why, that is well," said Magnus: "and so being the case, I will not complain of my own appetite, though it is sharper than convenient. And the rascal, Nicholas Strumpfer,—what a leer the villain gave me as he started the good Nantz into the salt-water! He grinned, the knave, like a seal on a skerry.—Had it not been for vexing my poor kinswoman, Norna, I would have sent his misbegotten body, and misshapen jolterhead, after my bonny flask, as sure as Saint Magnus lies at Kirkwall!"

By this time the servants returned with the ponies, which they had very soon caught—these sensible animals finding nothing so captivating in the pastures where they had been suffered to stray, as inclined them to resist the invitation again to subject themselves to saddle and bridle. The prospects of the party were also considerably

improved by learning that the contents of their sumpter-ponies' burden had not been entirely exhausted,—a small basket having fortunately escaped the rage of Norna and Pacolet, by the rapidity with which one of the servants had caught up and removed it. The same domestic, an alert and ready-witted fellow, had observed upon the beach, not above three miles distant from the Burgh, and about a quarter of a mile off their straight path, a deserted *Skib*, or fisherman's hut, and suggested that they should occupy it for the rest of the night, in order that the ponies might be refreshed, and the young ladies spend the night under cover from the raw evening air.

When we are delivered from great and serious dangers, our mood is, or ought to be, grave, in proportion to the peril we have escaped, and the gratitude due to protecting Providence. But few things raise the spirits more naturally or more harmlessly, than when means of extrication from any of the lesser embarrassments of life are suddenly presented to us; and such was the case in the present instance. The Udaller, relieved from the apprehensions for his daughters suffering from fatigue, and himself from too much appetite and too little food, carolled Norse ditties, as he spurred Bergen through the twilight, with as much glee and gallantry as if the night-ride had been entirely a matter of his own free choice. Brenda lent her voice to some of his choruses, which were echoed in ruder notes by the servants, who, in that simple state of society, were not considered as guilty of any breach of respect by mingling their voices with the song. Minna, indeed, was as yet unequal to such an effort; but she compelled herself to assume some share in the general hilarity of the meeting; and, contrary to her conduct since the fatal morning which concluded the Festival of Saint John, she seemed to take her usual interest in what was going on around her, and answered with kindness and readiness the repeated inquiries concerning her health, with which the Udaller every now and then interrupted his carol. And thus they proceeded by night a happier party by far than they had been when they traced the same route on the preceding morning, making light of the difficulties of the way, and promising themselves shelter and a comfortable night's rest in the deserted hut which they were now about to approach, and which they expected to find in a state of darkness and solitude.

But it was the lot of the Udaller that day to be deceived more than once in his calculations.

"And which way lies this cabin of yours, Laurie?" said the Udaller, addressing the intelligent domestic of whom we have just spoke.

"Yonder it should be," said Laurence Scholey, "at the head of the voe—but, by my faith, if it be the place, there are folk there before us—God and Saint Roman send that they be canny company!"

In truth, there was a light in the deserted hut strong enough to glimmer through every chink of



the shingles and wreck-wood of which it was constructed, and to give the whole cabin the appearance of a smithy seen by night. The universal superstition of the Zetlanders seized upon Magnus and his escort.

"They are trows," said one voice.

"They are witches," murmured another.

"They are mermaids," muttered a third, "only hear their wild singing!"

All stopped; and, in effect, some notes of music were audible, which Brenda, with a voice that quivered a little, but yet had a turn of arch ridicule in its tone, pronounced to be the sound of a fiddle.

"Fiddle or fiend," said the Udaller, who, if he believed in such nightly apparitions as had struck terror into his retinue, certainly feared them not—"fiddle or fiend, may the devil fetch me if a witch cheats me out of supper to-night, for the second time!"

So saying, he dismounted, clenched his trusty tracheon in his hand, and advanced towards the hut, followed by Laurence alone; the rest of his retinue continuing stationary on the beach, beside his daughters and the ponies.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

What ho, my jovial mates! come on! we'll frolic it  
Like faeries frisking in the merry moonshine,  
Seen by the curial friar, who, from some christening  
Or some blithe bridal, hies belated cell-ward—  
He starts, and changes his bold bottle swagger  
To churchman's pace professional, and, ransacking  
His treacherous memory for some holy hymn,  
Finds but the roundel of the midnight catch.

OLD PLAY.

THE stride of the Udaller relaxed nothing of its length or of its firmness as he approached the glimmering cabin, from which he now heard distinctly the sound of the fiddle. But if still long and firm, his steps succeeded each other rather more slowly than usual; for, like a cautious, though a brave general, Magnus was willing to reconnoitre his enemy before assailing him. The trusty Laurence Scholey, who kept close behind his master, now whispered into his ear, "So help me, sir, as I believe that the ghaist, if ghaist it be, that plays so bravely on the fiddle, must be the ghaist of Maister Claud Halcro, or his wraith at least; for never was bow drawn across thairm which brought out the gude auld spring of 'Fair and Lucky,' so like his ain."

Magnus was himself much of the same opinion; for he knew the blithe minstrelsy of the spirited little old man, and hailed the hut with a hearty hilloah, which was immediately replied to by the cheery note of his ancient messmate, and Halcro himself presently made his appearance on the beach.

The Udaller now signed to his retinue to come up, while he asked his friend, after a kind greeting and much shaking of hands, "How the devil he came to sit there, playing old tunes in so

desolate a place, like an owl whooping to the moon?"

"And tell me rather, Fowd," said Claud Halcro, "how you came to be within hearing of me? ay, by my word, and with your bonny daughters, too?—Jarto Minna and Jarto Brenda, I bid you welcome to these yellow sands—and there shake hands, as glorious John, or some other body, says, upon the same occasion. And how came you here like two fair swans, making day out of twilight, and turning all you step upon to silver?"

"You shall know all about them presently," answered Magnus; "but what messmates have you got in the hut with you? I think I hear some one speaking."

"None," replied Claud Halcro, "but that poor creature, the Factor, and my imp of a boy Giles. I—but come in—come in—here you will find us starving in comfort—not so much as a mouthful of sour sillocks to be had for love or money."

"That may be in a small part helped," said the Udaller; "for though the best of our supper is gone over the Fifful Crags to the sealchies and the dog-fish, yet we have got something in the kit still.—Here, Laurie, bring up the *vifda*."

"*Jokul, jokul!*"\* was Laurence's joyful answer; and he hastened for the basket.

"By the bicker of Saint Magnus,"† said Halcro, "and the burliest bishop that ever quaffed it for luck's sake, there is no finding your locker empty, Magnus! I believe sincerely that ere a friend wanted, you could, like old Luggie the warlock, fish up boiled and roasted out of the pool of Kibster."‡

"You are wrong there, Jarto Claud," said Magnus Troil, "for, far from helping me to a supper, the foul fiend, I believe, has carried off great part of mine this blessed evening; but you are welcome to share and share of what is left." This was said while the party entered the hut.

Here, in a cabin which smelled strongly of dried fish, and whose sides and roof were jet-black with smoke, they found the unhappy Triptolemus Yellowley seated beside a fire made of dried sea-weed, mingled with some peats and wreck-wood; his sole companion a bare-footed, yellow-haired Zetland boy, who acted occasionally as a kind of page to Claud Halcro, bearing his fiddle on his shoulders, saddling his pony, and rendering him similar duties of kindly observance. The disconsolate agriculturist, for such

\* *Jokul*, yes, sir; a Norse expression, still in common use.

† The Bicker of Saint Magnus, a vessel of enormous dimensions, was preserved at Kirkwall, and presented to each Bishop of the Orkneys. If the new incumbent was able to quaff it out at one draught, which was a task for Hercules or Rorie Mhor of Dunvegan, the omen boded a crop of unusual fertility.

‡ Luggie, a famous conjurer, was wont, when storms prevented him from going to his usual employment of fishing, to angle over a steep rock, at the place called, from his name, Luggie's Knoll. At other times he drew up dressed food while they were out at sea, of which his comrades partook boldly from natural courage, without caring who stood cook. The poor man was finally condemned and burnt at Scalloway.

his visage betokened him, displayed little surprise, and less animation, at the arrival of the Udaller and his companions, until, after the party had drawn close to the fire (a neighborhood which the dampness of the night air rendered far from disagreeable), the pannier was opened, and a tolerable supply of barley bread and hung-beef, besides a flask of brandy (no doubt smaller than that which the relentless hand of Pacolet had emptied into the ocean), gave assurances of a tolerable supper. Then, indeed, the worthy Factor, grimed, chucked, rubbed his hands, and inquired after all friends at Burgh-Westra.

When they had all partaken of this needful refreshment, the Udaller repeated his inquiries of Halcro, and more particularly of the Factor, how they came to be nestled in such a remote corner, at such an hour of night.

"Maister Magnus Troil," said Triptolemus, when a second cup had given him spirits to tell his tale of woe, "I would not have you think that it is a little thing that disturbs me. I come of that grain that takes a sair wind to shake it. I have seen many a Martinmas and many a Whitsunday in my day, whilk are the times peculiarly grievous to those of my craft, and I could aye bide the bang; but I think I am like to be dung ower a' thegither in this damned country of yours—Gude forgie me for swearing—but evil communication corrupteth good manners."

"Now, Heaven guide us," said the Udaller, "what is the matter with the man? Why, man, if you will put your plough into new land, you must look to have it hank on a stone now and then—you must set us an example of patience, seeing you came here for our improvement."

"And the deil was in my feet when I did so," said the Factor; "I had better have set myself to improve the cairn on Clochnaben."

"But what is it after all," said the Udaller, "that has befallen you?—what is it that you complain of?"

"Of every thing that has chanced to me since I landed on this island, which I believe was accursed at the very creation," said the agriculturist, "and assigned as a fitting station for sorners, thieves, whores (I beg the ladies' pardon), witches, bitches, and all evil spirits!"

"By my faith, a goodly catalogue!" said Magnus; "and there has been the day, that if I had heard you give out the half of it, I should have turned improver myself, and have tried to amend your manners with a cudgel."

"Bear with me," said the Factor, "Maister Fowd, or Maister Udaller, or whatever else they may call you, and as you are strong, be pitiful, and consider the luckless lot of any inexperienced person who lights upon this earthly paradise of yours. He asks for drink, they bring him sour whey—no disparagement to your brandy, Fowd, which is excellent—You ask for meat, and they bring you sour sillocks that Satan might choke upon—You call your laborers together, and bid them work; it proves Saint Magnus' day, or

Saint Roman's day, or some infernal saint or other's—or else, perhaps, they have come out of bed with the wrong foot foremost, or they have seen an owl, or a rabbit has crossed their path, or they have dreamed of a roasted horse—in short, nothing is to be done—Give them a spade, and they work as if it burned their fingers; but set them to dancing, and see when they will tire of funking and flinging!"

"And why should they, poor bodies," said Claud Halcro, "as long as there are good fiddlers to play to them?"

"Ay, ay," said Triptolemus, shaking his head; "you are a proper person to uphold them in such a humor. Well, to proceed—I till a piece of my best ground; down comes a sturdy beggar that wants a kailyard, or a plant-a-cruive, as you call it, and he claps down an enclosure in the middle of my bit shot of corn, as lightly as if he was baith laird and tenant; and gainsay him wha likes, there he dibbles in his kail plants! I sit down to my sorrowful dinner, thinking to have peace and quietness there at least; when in comes one, two, three, four, or half-a-dozen of skelping long lads, from some foolery or another, misca' me for barring my ain door against them, and eat up the best half of what my sister's providence—and she is not over bountiful—has allotted for my dinner! Then enters a witch, with an ellwand in her hand, and she raises the wind or lays it, whichever she likes, majors up and down my house as if she was mistress of it, and I am bounden to thank Heaven if she carries not the broadside of it away with her!"

"Still," said the Fowd, "this is no answer to my question—how the foul fiend I come to find you at moorings here?"

"Have patience, worthy sir," replied the afflicted Factor, "and listen to what I have to say, for I fancy it will be as well to tell you the whole matter. You must know, I once thought that I had gotten a small godsend, that might have made all these matters easier."

"How! a godsend! Do you mean a wreck, Master Factor?" exclaimed Magnus; "shame upon you, that should have set example to others!"

"It was no wreck," said the Factor; "but if you must needs know, it chanced that as I raised an hearthstone in one of the old chambers at Stourburgh (for my sister is minded that there is little use in mair fire-places about a house than one, and I wanted the stane to knock bear upon), when, what should I light on but a horn full of old coins, silver the maist feck of them, but wi' a bit sprinkling of gold among them too.\* Weel, I thought

\* While these sheets were passing through the press, I received a letter from an honorable and learned friend, containing the following passage, relating to a discovery in Zetland:—"Within a few weeks, the workmen taking up the foundation of an old wall, came on a hearth-stone, under which they found a horn, surrounded with massive silver rings, like bracelets, and filled with coins of the Heptarchy, in perfect preservation. The place of finding is within a very short distance of the [supposed] residence of Norma of the Fifful-head."—Thus one of the very improbable fictions of the tale is verified by a singular coincidence.



this was a dainty windfa', and so thought Baby, and we were the mair willing to put up with a place where there were siccan braw nest eggs—and we slade down the stane cannyly over the horn, which seemed to me to be the very cornucopia, or horn of abundance; and for further security, Baby wad visit the room may be twenty times in the day, and mysell at an orra time, to the boot of a' that."

"On my word, and a very pretty amusement," said Claud Halcro, "to look over a horn of one's own siller. I question if glorious John Dryden ever enjoyed such a pastime in his life—I am very sure I never did."

"Yes, but you forget, Jarto Claud," said the Udaller, "that the Factor was only counting over the money for my Lord the Chamberlain. As he is so keen for his Lordship's rights in whales and wrecks, he would not surely forget him in treasure-trove."

"A-hem! a-hem! a-he—he—hem!" ejaculated Triptolemus, seized at the moment with an awkward fit of coughing—"no doubt, my Lord's right in the matter would have been considered, being in the hand of one; though I say it, as just as can be found in Angus-shire, let alone the Mearns."

"As I shall answer it, no," replied Triptolemus, with a cautious look around him, as if daunted by the recollection; "neither I, nor Baby, who had her wits more about her, not having seen this unseemly vision, could perceive any way by which he made evasion. Only Tronda said she saw him flee forth of the window of the west roundel of the auld house, upon a dragon, as she averred. But, as the dragon is held a fabulous animal, I suld pronounce her averment to rest upon *deceptio visus*."

"But, may we not ask farther," said Brenda, stimulated by curiosity to know as much of her cousin Norna's family as was possible, "how all this operated upon Master Yellowley, so as to occasion his being in this place at so unseasonable an hour?"

"Seasonable it must be, Mistress Brenda, since it brought us into your sweet company," answered Claud Halcro, whose mercurial brain far outstripped the slow conceptions of the agriculturist, and who became impatient of being so long silent. "To say the truth, it was I, Mistress Brenda, who recommended to our friend the Factor, whose house I chanced to call at just after this mischance (and where, by the way, owing doubtless to the hurry of their spirits, I was but poorly received), to make a visit to our other friend at Fitful-head, well judging from certain points of the story, at which my other and more particular friend than either (looking at Magnus) may chance to form a guess, that they who break a head are the best to find a plaster. And as our friend the Factor scrupled travelling on horseback,—in respect of some tumbles from our ponies—"

"Which are incarnate devils," said Triptolemus, aloud, muttering under his breath, "like every live thing that I have found in Zetland."

\* Young unbroken horse.

truly she raise to the fray as I hae seen the Lind says and Ogilvies bristle up, when Donald Mac Donoch, or the like, made a start down frae the Highlands on the braes of Islay. But an auld sless carline, called Tronda Dronddaughter (they might call her Drone the sell of her, without farther addition), flung herself right in my sister's gate, and yelocked and skirled, that you would have thought her a whole generation of hounds; whereupon I judged it best to make ae yoking of it, and stop the pleugh until I got my sister's assistance. Whilk when I had done, and we mounted the stair to the apartment in which the said dwarf, devil, or other apparition, was to be seen, dwarf, horn, and siller, were as clean gane as if the cat had lickit the place where I saw them."

Here Triptolemus raised in his extraordinary narration, while the rest of the party looked upon each other in surprise, and the Udaller muttered to Claud Halcro—"By all tokens, this must have been either the devil or Nicholas Strumpfer; and, if it were him, he is more of a goblin than e'er I gave him credit for, and shall be apt to rate him as such in future." Then, addressing the Factor, he inquired—"Saw ye nought how this dwarf of yours parted company?"

"As I shall answer it, no," replied Triptolemus, with a cautious look around him, as if daunted by the recollection; "neither I, nor Baby, who had her wits more about her, not having seen this unseemly vision, could perceive any way by which he made evasion. Only Tronda said she saw him flee forth of the window of the west roundel of the auld house, upon a dragon, as she averred. But, as the dragon is held a fabulous animal, I suld pronounce her averment to rest upon *deceptio visus*."

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"Which are incarnate devils," said Triptolemus, aloud, muttering under his breath, "like every live thing that I have found in Zetland."

"Well, Fowd," continued Halcro, "I undertook to carry him to Fitful-head in my little boat, which Giles and I can manage as if it were an Admiral's barge full manned; and Master Triptolemus Yellowley will tell you how seaman-like I piloted him to the little haven within a quarter of a mile of Norna's dwelling."

"I wish to heaven you had brought me as safe back again," said the Factor.

"Why, to be sure," replied the minstrel, "I am, as glorious John says,—

'A daring pilot in extremity,  
Pleased with the danger when the waves go high,  
I seek the storm—but, for a calm unfit,  
Will steer too near the sands, to show my wit.'"

"I showed little wit in intrusting myself to your charge," said Triptolemus; "and you still less when you upset the boat at the throat of the voe, as you call it, when even the poor bairn, that was mair than half drowned, told you that you were carrying too much sail; and then ye wad fasten the rape to the bit stick on the boat-side, that ye might have time to play on the fiddle."

"What!" said the Udaller, "make fast the sheets to the thwart? a most unseasonable practice, Claud Halcro."

"And sae came of it," replied the agriculturist: "for the neist blast (and we are never lang without one in these parts) whomled us as a gude-wife would whomle a bowie, and ne'er a thing wad Maister Halcro save but his fiddle. The pair bairn swam out like a water-spaniel, and I swattered hard for my life, wi' the help of one of the oars; and here we are, comfortless creatures, that, till a good wind blew you here, had naething to eat but a monthful of Norway rusk, that has mair sawdust than ryemeal in it, and tastes liker turpentine than any thing else."

"I thought we heard you very merry," said Brenda, "as we came along the beach."

"Ye heard a fiddle, Mistress Brenda," said the Factor; "and maybe ye may think there can be nae dearth, miss, where that is skirling. But then it was Maister Claud Halcro's fiddle, whilk, I am apt to think, wad skarl at his father's death-bed, or at its ain, sae lang as his fingers could pinch the thairm. And it was nae sma' aggravation to my misfortune to have him bumming a' sorts of springs,—Norse and Scots, Highland and Lowland, English and Italian, in my lug, as if nothing had happened that was amiss, and we all in such stress and perplexity."

"Why, I told you sorrow would never right the boat, Factor," said the thoughtless minstrel, "and I did my best to make you merry; if I failed, it was neither my fault nor my fiddle's. I have drawn the bow across it before glorious John Dryden himself."

"I will hear no stories about glorious John Dryden," answered the Udaller, who dreaded Halcro's narratives as much as Triptolemus did his music,—"I will hear nought of him, but one story to every three bowls of punch,—it is our old pac-

tion, you know. But tell me, instead, what said Norna to you about your errand?"

"Ay, there was another fine upshot," said Master Yellowley. "She wadna look at us, or listen to us; only she bothered our acquaintance, Master Halcro here, who thought he could have sae much to say wi' her, with about a score of questions about your family and household estate, Master Magnus Troil; and when she had gotten a' she wanted out of him, I thought she wad haedung him ower the craig, like an empty peacock."

"And for yourself?" said the Udaller.

"She wadna listen to my story, nor hear sae much as a word that I had to say," answered Triptolemus; "and sae much for them that seek to witches and familiar spirits!"

"You needed not to have had recourse to Norna's wisdom, Master Factor," said Minna, not unwilling, perhaps, to stop his railing against the friend who had so lately rendered her service; "the youngest child in Orkney could have told you, that fairy treasures, if they are not wisely employed for the good of others, as well as of those to whom they are imparted, do not dwell long with their possessors."

"Your humble servant to command, Mistress Minnie," said Triptolemus; "I thank ye for the hint,—and I am blithe that you have gotten your wits—I beg pardon, I meant your health—into the barn-yard again. For the treasure, I neither used nor abused it,—they that live in the house with my sister Baby wad find it hard to do either!—and as for speaking of it, whilk they sae muckle offends them whom we in Scotland call Good Neighbors, and you call Drows, the face of the auld Norse kings on the coins themselves, might have spoken as much about it as ever I did."

"The Factor," said Claud Halcro, not unwilling to seize the opportunity of revenging himself on Triptolemus, for disgracing his seamanship and disparaging his music,—"The Factor was so scrupulous, as to keep the thing quiet even from his master, the Lord Chamberlain; but, now that the matter has ta'en wind, he is likely to have to account to his master for that which is no longer in his possession; for the Lord Chamberlain will be in no hurry, I think, to believe the story of the dwarf. Neither do I think" (winking to the Udaller) "that Norna gave credit to a word of so odd a story; and I dare say that was the reason that she received us, I must needs say, in a very dry manner. I rather think she knew that Triptolemus, our friend here, had found some other hiding-hole for the money, and that the story of the goblin was all his own invention. For my part, I will never believe there was such a dwarf to be seen as the creature Master Yellowley describes, until I set my own eyes on him."

"Then you may do so at this moment," said the Factor; for, by — (he muttered a deep asseveration as he sprung on his feet in great horror), "there the creature is!"

All turned their eyes in the direction in which he pointed, and saw the bideous misshapen figure



of Pacolet, with his eyes fixed and glaring at them through the smoke. He had stolen upon their conversation unperceived, until the Factor's eye lighted upon him in the manner we have described. There was something so ghastly in his sudden and unexpected appearance, that even the Udaller, to whom his form was familiar, could not help starting. Neither pleased with himself for having testified this degree of emotion, however slight, nor with the dwarf who had given cause to it, Magnus asked him sharply, what was his business there? Pacolet replied by producing a letter, which he gave to the Udaller, uttering a sound resembling the word *Shogh*.\*

"That is the Highlandman's language," said the Udaller—"didst thou learn that, Nicholas, when you lost your own?"

Pacolet nodded, and signed to him to read his letter.

"That is no such easy matter by fire-light, my good friend," replied the Udaller; "but it may concern Minna, and we must try."

Brenda offered her assistance, but the Udaller answered, "No, no, my girl,—Norna's letters must be read by those they are written to. Give the knave, Strumpfer, a drop of brandy the while, though he little deserves it at my hands, considering the grin with which he sent the good Nantz down the crag this morning, as if it had been as much ditch-water."

"Will you be this honest gentleman's cup-bearer—his Ganymede, friend Yellowley, or shall I?" said Claud Halcro aside to the Factor; while Magnus Troil, having carefully wiped his spectacles, which he produced from a large copper case, had disposed them on his nose, and was studying the epistle of Norna.

"I would not touch him, or go near him, for all the Carse of Gowrie," said the Factor, whose fears were by no means entirely removed, though he saw that the dwarf was received as a creature of flesh and blood by the rest of the company; "but I pray you to ask him what he has done with my horn of coins?"

The dwarf, who heard the question, threw back his head, and displayed his enormous throat, pointing to it with his finger.

"Nay, if he has swallowed them, there is no more to be said," replied the Factor; "only I hope he will thrive on them as a cow on wet clover. He is dame Norna's servant it's like,—such man, such mistress! But if theft and witchcraft are to go unpunished in this land, my Lord must find another factor; for I have been used to live in a country where men's worldly gear was kept from infang and outfang thief, as well as their immortal souls from the claws of the deil and his cummers—sain and save us!"

The agriculturist was perhaps the less reserved in expressing his complaints, that the Udaller was for the present out of hearing, having drawn Claud Halcro apart into another corner of the hut.

\* In Gaelic, *thara*.

"And tell me," said he, "friend Halcro, what errand took thee to Sumburgh, since I reckon it was scarce the mere pleasure of sailing in partnership with yonder barnacle?"

"In faith, Fowe," said the bard, "and if you will have the truth, I went to speak to Norna on your affairs."

"On my affairs?" replied the Udaller; "on what affairs of mine?"

"Just touching your daughter's health. I heard that Norna refused your message, and would not see Eric Scambester. Now, said I to myself, I have scarce joyed in meat, or drink, or music, or aught else, since Jarto Minna has been so ill; and I may say, literally as well as figuratively, that my day and night have been made sorrowful to me. In short, I thought I might have some more interest with old Norna than another, as scalds and wise women were always accounted something akin; and I undertook the journey with the hope to be of some use to my old friend and his lovely daughter."

"And it was most kindly done of you, good warm-hearted Claud," said the Udaller, shaking him warmly by the hand,—"I ever said you showed the good old Norse heart amongst all thy fiddling and thy folly.—Tut, man, never wince for the matter, but be blithe that thy heart is better than thy head. Well,—and I warrant you got no answer from Norna?"

"None to purpose," replied Claud Halcro; "but she held me close to question about Minna's illness, too,—and I told her how I had met her abroad the other morning in no very good weather, and how her sister Brenda said she had hurt her foot;—in short, I told her all and every thing I know."

"And something more besides, it would seem," said the Udaller; "for I, at least, never heard before that Minna had hurt herself."

"Oh, a scratch! a mere scratch!" said the old man; "but I was startled about it—terrified lest it had been the bite of a dog, or some hurt from a venomous thing. I told all to Norna, however."

"And what," answered the Udaller, "did she say, in the way of reply?"

"She bade me begone about my business, and told me that the issue would be known at the Kirkwall Fair; and said just the like to this noodle of a Factor—it was all that either of us got for our labor," said Halcro.

"That is strange," said Magnus. "My kinswoman writes me in this letter not to fail going thither with my daughters. This Fair runs strongly in her head;—one would think she intended to lead the market, and yet she has nothing to buy or to sell there that I know of. And so you came away as wise as you went, and swamped your boat at the mouth of the voe?"

"Why, how could I help it?" said the poet. "I had set the boy to steer, and as the flaw came suddenly off shore, I could not let go the tack and play on the fiddle at the same time. But it is all

well enough,—salt water never harmed Zetlander, so as he could get out of it; and, as Heaven would have it, we were within man's depth of the shore, and chancing to find this skio, we should have done well enough, with shelter and fire, and are much better than well with your good cheer and good company. But it wears late, and Night and Day must be both as sleepy as old Midnight can make them. There is an inner crib here, where the fishers slept,—somewhat fragrant with the smell of their fish, but that is wholesome. They shall bestow themselves there, with the help of what cloaks you have, and then we will have one cup of brandy, and one stave of glorious John, or some little trifle of my own, and so sleep as sound as cobblers."

"Two glasses of brandy, if you please," said the Udaller, "if our stores do not run dry; but not a single stave of glorious John, or of any one else to-night."

And this being arranged and executed agreeably to the peremptory pleasure of the Udaller, the whole party consigned themselves to slumber for the night, and on the next day departed for their several habitations, Claud Halcro having previously arranged with the Udaller that he would accompany him with his daughters on their proposed visit to Kirkwall.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

"By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff, for endurance and persistency. Let the end try the man. . . . Albeit I could tell thee (as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend), I could be sad, and sad indeed too."

HENRY IV., Part II.

WE must now change the scene from Zetland to Orkney, and request our readers to accompany us to the ruins of an elegant, though ancient structure, called the Earl's Palace. These remains, though much dilapidated, still exist in the neighborhood of the massive and venerable pile, which Norwegian devotion dedicated to Saint Magnus the Martyr, and, being contiguous to the Bishop's Palace, which is also ruinous, the place is impressive, as exhibiting vestiges of the mutations both in Church and State which have affected Orkney, as well as countries more exposed to such convulsions. Several parts of these ruinous buildings might be selected (under suitable modifications) as the model of a Gothic mansion, provided architects would be contented rather to imitate what is really beautiful in that species of building, than to make a medley of the caprices of the order, confounding the military, ecclesiastical, and domestic styles of all ages at random, with additional fantasies and combinations of their own device, "all formed out of the builder's brain."

The Earl's Palace forms three sides of an oblong square, and has, even in its ruins, the air of an elegant yet massive structure, uniting, as was usual in the residence of feudal princes, the character of a palace and of a castle. A great

banqueting-hall, communicating with several large rounds, or projecting turret-rooms, and having at either end an immense chimney, testifies the ancient Northern hospitality of the Earls of Orkney, and communicates, almost in the modern fashion, with a gallery, or withdrawing-room, of corresponding dimensions, and having, like the hall, its projecting turrets. The lordly hall itself is lighted by a fine Gothic window of shafted stone at one end, and is entered by a spacious and elegant staircase, consisting of three flights of stone steps. The exterior ornaments and proportions of the ancient building are also very handsome, but, being totally unprotected, this remnant of the pomp and grandeur of Earls, who assumed the license as well as the dignity of petty sovereigns, is now fast crumbling to decay, and has suffered considerably since the date of our story.

With folded arms and downcast looks, the pirate Cleveland was pacing slowly the ruined hall which we have just described; a place of retirement which he had probably chosen because it was distant from public resort. His dress was considerably altered from that which he usually wore in Zetland, and seemed a sort of uniform, richly laced, and exhibiting no small quantity of embroidery; a hat with a plume, and a small sword very handsomely mounted, then the constant companion of every one who assumed the rank of a gentleman, showed his pretensions to that character. But if his exterior was so far improved, it seemed to be otherwise with his health and spirits. He was pale, and had lost both the fire of his eye and the vivacity of his step, and his whole appearance indicated melancholy of mind, or suffering of body, or a combination of both evils.

As Cleveland thus paced these ancient ruins, a young man, of a light and slender form, whose showy dress seemed to have been studied with care, yet exhibited more extravagance than judgment or taste, whose manner was a jaunty affectation of the free and easy rake of the period, and the expression of whose countenance was lively, with a cast of effrontery, tripped up the staircase, entered the hall, and presented himself to Cleveland, who merely nodded to him, and pulling his hat deeper over his brows, resumed his solitary and discontented promenade.

The stranger adjusted his own hat, nodded in return, took snuff, with the air of a *petit maître*, from a richly chased gold box, offered it to Cleveland as he passed, and being repulsed rather coldly, replaced the box in his pocket, folded his arms in his turn, and stood looking with fixed attention on his motions whose solitude he had interrupted. At length Cleveland stopped short, as if impatient of being longer the subject of his observation, and said abruptly, "Why can I not be left alone for half an hour, and what the devil is it that you want?"

"I am glad you spoke first," answered the stranger, carelessly; "I was determined to know