

The youth stood silent and astonished for a few minutes. It seemed to him that the extraordinary being he had seen, half his terror, half his protectress, was still hovering on the gale which swept past him, and that she might again make herself sensible to his organs of sight. "Speak!" he said, wildly tossing his arms, "speak yet again—be once more present, lovely vision!—thrice have I now seen thee, yet the idea of thy invisible presence around or beside me, makes my heart beat faster than if the earth yawned and gave up a demon." But neither sound nor appearance indicated the presence of the White Lady, and nothing preternatural beyond what he had already witnessed, was again audible or visible. Halbert, in the meanwhile, by the very exertion of again inviting the presence of this mysterious being, had recovered his natural audacity. He looked around once more, and resumed his solitary path down the valley into whose recesses he had penetrated.

Nothing could be more strongly contrasted than the storm of passion with which he had bounded over stock and crag, in order to plunge himself into the Corrinan-shian, and the sobered mood in which he now returned homeward, industriously seeking out the most practicable path, not from a wish to avoid danger, but that he might not by personal toil distract his attention, deeply fixed on the extraordinary scene which he had witnessed. In the former case, he had sought by hazard and bodily exertion to indulge at once the fiery excitation of passion, and to banish the cause of the excitement from his recollection; while now he studiously avoided all interruption to his contemplative walk, lest the difficulty of the way should interfere with, or disturb his own deep reflections. Thus slowly pacing forth his course, with the air of a pilgrim rather than of a deer-hunter, Halbert about the close of the evening regained his paternal tower.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Miller was of manly make,
To meet him was na mows;
There durst na ten come him to take,
Sae noited he their pows.

Christ's Kirk on the Green.

It was after sunset, as we have already stated, when Halbert Glendinning returned to the abode of his father. The hour of dinner was at noon, and that of supper about an hour after sunset at this period of the year. The former had passed without Halbert's appearing; but this was no uncommon circumstance, for the chase or any other pastime which occurred, made Halbert a frequent neglecter of hours; and his mother, though angry and disappointed when she saw him not at table, was so much accustomed to his occasional absence, and knew so little how to teach him more regularity, that a testy observation was almost all the censure with which such omissions were visited.

On the present occasion, however, the wrath of good dame Elspeth soared higher than usual. It was not merely on account of the special tup's-head and trotters, the haggis and the side of mutton, with which her table was set forth, but also because of the arrival of no less a person than Hob Miller, as he was universally termed, though the man's name was Happer.

The object of the Miller's visit to the tower of Glendearg was like the purpose of those embassies which potentates send to each other's courts, partly ostensible, partly politic. In outward show, Hob came to visit his friends of the Halidome, and share the festivity common among country folk, after the barn-yard has been filled, and to renew old intimacies by new conviviality. But in very truth he also came to have an eye upon the contents

of each stack, and to obtain such information respecting the extent of the crop reaped and gathered in by each feuar, as might prevent the possibility of *abstracted multures*.

All the world knows that the cultivators of each barony or regality, temporal or spiritual, in Scotland, are obliged to bring their corn to be grinded at the mill of the territory, for which they pay a heavy charge, called the *intown multures*. I could speak to the thirlage of *invecta et illata* too, but let that pass. I have said enough to intimate that I talk not without book. Those of the *Sucken*, or enthralled ground, were liable in penalties, if, deviating from this thirlage, (or thralldom,) they carried their grain to another mill. Now such another mill, erected on the lands of a lay-baron, lay within a tempting and convenient distance of Glendearg; and the Miller was so obliging, and his charges so moderate, that it required Hob Miller's utmost vigilance to prevent evasions of his right of monopoly.

The most effectual means he could devise was this show of good fellowship and neighbourly friendship,—under colour of which he made his annual cruise through the barony—numbered every corn-stack, and computed its contents by the boll, so that he could give a shrewd hint afterwards whether or not the grist came to the right mill.

Dame Elspeth, like her compeers, was obliged to take these domiciliary visits in the sense of politeness; but in her case they had not occurred since her husband's death, probably because the tower of Glendearg was distant, and there was but a trifling quantity of arable or *infield* land attached to it. This year there had been, upon some speculation of old Martin's, several bolls sown in the outfield, which, the season being fine, had ripened remarkably well. Perhaps this circumstance occasioned the honest Miller's including Glendearg, on this occasion, in his annual round.

Dame Glendinning received with pleasure a visit which she used formerly only to endure with patience; and she

had changed her view of the matter chiefly, if not entirely, because Hob had brought with him his daughter Mysie, of whose features she could give so slight an account, but whose dress she had described so accurately to the Sub-Prior.

Hitherto this girl had been an object of very trifling consideration in the eyes of the good widow; but the Sub-Prior's particular and somewhat mysterious inquiries had set her brains to work on the subject of Mysie of the Mill; and she had here asked a broad question, and there she had thrown out an innuendo, and there again she had gradually led on to a conversation on the subject of poor Mysie. And from all inquiries and investigations she had collected, that Mysie was a dark-eyed laughing wench, with cherry-cheeks, and a skin as white as her father's finest bolted flour, out of which was made the Abbot's own wastel-bread. For her temper, she sung and laughed from morning to night; and for her fortune, a material article, besides that which the Miller might have amassed by means of his proverbial golden thumb, Mysie was to inherit a good handsome lump of land, with a prospect of the mill and mill-acres descending to her husband on an easy lease, if a fair word were spoken in season to the Abbot, and to the Prior, and to the Sub-Prior, and to the Sacristan, and so forth.

By turning and again turning these advantages over in her own mind, Elspeth at length came to be of opinion, that the only way to save her son Halbert from a life of "spur, spear, and snaffle," as they called that of the border-riders, from the dint of a cloth-yard shaft, or the loop of an inch-cord, was, that he should marry and settle, and that Mysie Happer should be his destined bride.

As if to her wish, Hob Miller arrived on his strong-built mare, bearing on a pillion behind him the lovely Mysie, with cheeks like a peony-rose, (if Dame Glendinning had ever seen one,) spirits all afloat with rustic coquetry, and a profusion of hair as black as ebony. The *beau-ideal* which Dame Glendinning had been bodying forth in her imagination, became unexpectedly realized in the buxom

form of Mysie Happer, whom, in the course of half an hour, she settled upon as the maiden who was to fix the restless and untutored Halbert. True, Mysie, as the dame soon saw, was likely to love dancing round a may-pole as well as managing a domestic concern, and Halbert was likely to break more heads than he would grind stacks of corn. But then a miller should always be of manly make, and has been described so since the days of Chaucer and James I.* Indeed to be able to outdo and bully the whole *Sucken*, (once more we use this barbarous phrase,) in all athletic exercises, was one way to render easy the collection of dues which men would have disputed with a less formidable champion. Then, as to the deficiencies of the Miller's wife, the dame was of opinion that they might be supplied by the activity of the Miller's mother. "I will keep house for the young folk myself, for the tower is grown very lonely," thought Dame Glendinning, "and to live near the kirk will be mair comfortable in my auld age—and then Edward may agree with his brother about the feu, more especially as he is a favourite with the Sub-Prior, and then he may live in the auld tower like his worthy father before him—and wha kens but Mary Avenel, high-blooded as she is, may e'en draw in her stool to the chimney-nook, and sit down here for good and a'?"—It's true she has no tocher, but the like of her for beauty and

* The verse we have chosen for a motto, is from a poem imputed to James I. of Scotland. As for the Miller who figures among the Canterbury pilgrims, besides his sword and buckler, he boasted other attributes, all of which, but especially the last, show that he relied more on the strength of the outside than that of the inside of his skull.

The Miller was a stout carl for the nones,
Full big he was of brawn, and eke of bones;
That proved well, for wheresoe'er he cam,
At wrestling he wold bear away the ram;
He was short-shoulder'd, broad, a thick gnar,
There n'as no door that he n'old heave of bar,
Or break it at a running with his head, &c.

sense ne'er crossed my een; and I have kend every wench in the Halidome of St. Mary's—ay, and their mothers that bore them—ay, she is a sweet and a lovely creature as ever tied snood over brown hair—ay, and then, though her uncle keeps her out of her ain for the present time, yet it is to be thought the grey-goose-shaft will find a hole in his coat of proof, as, God help us! it has done in many a better man's—And, moreover, if they should stand on their pedigree and gentle race, Edward might say to them, that is to her gentle kith and kin, 'whilk o' ye was her best friend when she came down the glen to Glendearg in a misty evening, on a beast mair like a cuddie than aught else?'—And if they tax him with churl's blood, Edward might say, that, forbye the old proverb, how

Gentle deed
Makes gentle bleid;

yet, moreover, there comes no churl's blood from Glendinning or Brydone, for, says Edward"—

The hoarse voice of the Miller at this moment recalled the dame from her reverie, and compelled her to remember, that if she meant to realize her airy castle, she must begin by laying the foundation in civility to her guest and his daughter, whom she was at that moment most strangely neglecting, though her whole plan turned on conciliating their favour and good opinion, and that, in fact, while arranging matters for so intimate a union with her company, she was suffering them to sit unnoticed, and in their riding gear, as if about to resume their journey. "And so I say, dame," concluded the Miller, (for she had not marked the beginning of his speech,) "an ye be so busied with your housewifeskep, or aught else, why, Mysie and I will trot our way down the glen again to Johnie Broxmouth's, who pressed us right kindly to bide with him."

Starting at once from her dream of marriages and inter-marriages, mills, mill-lands and baronies, Dame Elspeth

felt for a moment like the milk-maid in the fable, when she overset the pitcher, on the contents of which so many golden dreams were founded. But the foundation of Dame Glendinning's hopes was only tottering, not overthrown, and she hastened to restore its equilibrium. Instead of attempting to account for her absence of mind and want of attention to her guests, which she might have found something difficult, she assumed the offensive like an able general when he finds it necessary, by a bold attack, to disguise his weakness.

A loud exclamation she made, and a passionate complaint she set up against the unkindness of her old friend, who could for an instant doubt the heartiness of her welcome to him and to his hopeful daughter; and then to think of his going back to John Broxmouth's, when the auld tower stood where it did and had room in it for a friend or two in the worst of times—and he too a neighbour that his umquhile gossip Simon, blessed be his cast, used to think the best friend he had in the Halidome! And on she went, urging her complaint with so much seriousness that she had well nigh imposed on herself as well as upon Hob Miller, who had no mind to take any thing in dudgeon; and as it suited his plans to pass the night at Glendearg, would have been equally contented to do so even had his reception been less vehemently hospitable.

To all Elspeth's expostulations on the unkindness of his proposal to leave her dwelling, he answered composedly, "Nay, dame what could I tell? ye might have had other grist to grind, for ye looked as if ye scarce saw us—or what know I? ye might bear in mind the words Martin and I had about the last barley ye sawed—for I ken dry multures* will sometimes stick in the throat. A man seeks but his awn, and yet folk shall hold him for

* Dry multures were a fine, or compensation in money, for not grinding at the mill of the thirl. It was, and is, accounted a vexatious exaction.

both Miller and Miller's man, that is Miller and knave,* all the country over."

"Alas! that you will say so, neighbour Hob," said Dame Elspeth, "or that Martin should have had any words with you about the mill-dues! I will chide him roundly for it, I promise you, on the faith of a true widow. You know full well that a lone woman is sore put upon by her servants."

"Nay, Dame," said the Miller, unbuckling the broad belt which made fast his cloak, and served, at the same time, to suspend by his side a swinging Andrew Ferrara, "bear no grudge at Martin, for I bear none—I take it on me as a thing of mine office to maintain my right of multure, lock, and goupén.† And reason good, for, as the old song says,

I live by my mill, God bless her,
She's parent, child, and wife.

The poor old slut, I am beholden to her for my living, and bound to stand by her, as I say to my mill-knaves, in right and in wrong. And so should every honest fellow stand by his bread-winner.—And so, Mysie, ye may doff your cloak since our neighbour is so kindly glad to see us—why, I think, we are as blithe to see her—not one in the Halidome pays their multures more duly, sequels, arriage, and carriage, and mill-services, used and wont."

With that the Miller hung his ample cloak without further ceremony upon a huge pair of stag's antlers,

* The under Miller, is, in the language of thirlage, called the knave, which indeed signified originally his lad, (*Knabé*-German,) but by degrees came to be taken in a worse sense. In the old translations of the Bible, Paul is made to term himself the knave of our Saviour. The allowance of meal taken by the Miller's servant was called knaveship.

† The multure was the regular exaction for grinding the meal. The *lock*, (signifying a small quantity,) and the *goupén*, a handful, were additional perquisites demanded by the Miller, and submitted to or resisted by the *Suckener* as circumstances permitted. These and other petty dues were called in general the *Sequels*.

which adorned at once the naked walls of the tower, and served for what we vulgarly call cloak-pins.

In the mean time, Dame Elspeth assisted to disembarass the damsel whom she destined for her future daughter-in-law, of her hood, mantle, and the rest of her riding gear, giving her to appear as beseemed the buxom daughter of the wealthy Miller, gay and goodly, in a white kirtle, the seams of which were embroidered with green silken lace or fringe, entwined with some silver thread. An anxious glance did Elspeth cast upon the good-humoured face, which was now more fully shown to her, and was only obscured by a quantity of raven black hair, which the maid of the mill had restrained by a snood of green silk, embroidered with silver, corresponding to the trimmings of her kirtle. The countenance itself was exceedingly comely—the eyes black, large, and roguishly good-humoured—the mouth was small—the lips well formed, though somewhat full—the teeth were pearly white—and the chin had a very seducing dimple in it. The form belonging to this joyous face was full and round, and firm and fair. It might become coarse and masculine some years hence, which is the common fault of Scottish beauty ; but in Mysie's sixteenth year she had the shape of an Hebe. The anxious Elspeth, with all her maternal partiality, could not help admitting within herself, that a better man than Halbert might go farther and fare worse. She looked a little giddy, and Halbert was not nineteen ; still it was time he should be settled, for to that point the dame always returned ; and here was an excellent opportunity.

The simple cunning of Dame Elspeth now exhausted itself in commendations of her fair guest, from the snood, as they say, to the single-soled shoe. Mysie listened and blushed with pleasure for the first five minutes ; but ere ten had elapsed, she began to view the old lady's compliments rather as subjects of mirth than of vanity, and was much more disposed to laugh at than to be flattered with them, for Nature had mingled the good-humour with which she had endowed the damsel with no small

portion of shrewdness. Even Hob himself began to tire of hearing his daughter's praises, and broke in with, " Ay, ay, she is a clever quean enough ; and, were she five years older, she shall lay a loaded sack on an *aver** with e'er a lass in the Halidome. But I have been looking for your two sons, dame. Men say downby, that Halbert's turned a wild springald, and that we may have word of him from Westmoreland one moonlight night or another."

" God forbid, my good neighbour ; God, in his mercy, forbid !" said dame Glendinning earnestly ; for it was touching the very key-note of her apprehensions, to hint any probability that Halbert might become one of the marauders so common in the age and country. But, fearful of having betrayed too much alarm on the subject, she immediately added, " That though, since the last rout at Pinkie-cleuch, she had been all of a tremble when a gun or a spear was named, or when men spoke of fighting ; yet, thanks to God and Our Lady, her sons were like to live and die honest and peaceful tenants to the Abbey, as their father might have done, but for that awful hosting which he went forth to, with mony a brave man that never returned."

" Ye need not tell me of it, dame," said the Miller, " since I was there myself, and made two pair of legs (and these were not mine, but my mare's,) worth one pair of hands. I judged how it would be, when I saw our host break ranks, with rushing on through that broken ploughed field, and so as they had made a pricker of me, I e'en pricked off with myself while the play was good."

" Ay, ay, neighbour," said the dame, " ye were aye a wise and a wary man ; if my Simon had had your wit, he might have been here to speak about it this day : But he was aye cracking of his good blood and his high kindred, and less would not serve him than to bide the bang

* *Aver*—properly a horse of labour.

to the last, with the earls, and knights, and squires, that had no wives to greet for them, or else had wives that cared not how soon they were widows ; but that is not for the like of us. But touching my son Halbert, there is no fear of him ; for if it should be his misfortune to be in the like case, he has the best pair of heels in the Halidome, and could run almost as fast as your mare herself."

"Is this he, neighbour?" quoth the Miller.

"No," replied the mother ; "that is my youngest son, Edward, who can read and write like the Lord Abbot himself, if it were not a sin to say so."

"Ay," said the Miller ; "and is that the young clerk the Sub-Prior thinks so much of? they say he will come far ben that lad ; wha kens but he may come to be Sub-Prior himself?—as broken a ship has come to land."

"To be a prior, neighbour Miller," said Edward, "a man must first be a priest, and for that I judge I have little vocation."

"He will take to the pleugh-pettle, neighbour," said the good dame ; "and so will Halbert too, I trust. I wish you saw Halbert.—Edward, where is your brother?"

"Hunting, I think," replied Edward ; "at least he left us this morning to join the Laird of Colmslie and his hounds. I have heard them baying in the glen all day."

"And if I had heard that music," said the Miller, "It would have done my heart good, ay, and maybe taken me two or three miles out of my road. When I was the Miller of Morebattle's knave, I have followed the hounds from Eckford to the foot of Hounam-law—followed them on foot, Dame Glendinning, ay, and led the chase when the Laird of Cessford and his gay riders were all thrown out by the mosses and gills. I brought the stag on my back to Hounam Cross, when the dogs had pulled him down. I think I see the old grey knight, as he sat so upright on his strong war-horse all white with foam ; and 'Miller,' said he to me, 'an thou wilt turn thy back on the mill, and wend with me, I will make a man of thee.'

But I chose rather to abide by clap and happer, and the better luck was mine ; for the proud Percy caused hang five of the Laird's henchmen at Alnwick for burning a rickle of houses some gate beyond Fowberry, and it might have been my luck as well as another man's."

"Ah, neighbour, neighbour," said Dame Glendinning, "you were aye wise and wary ; but if you like hunting, I must say Halbert's the lad to please you. He hath all those fair holiday-terms of hawk and hound as ready in his mouth as Tom with the tod's-tail, that is the Lord Abbot's ranger."

"Ranges he not homeward at dinner-time, dame," demanded the Miller ; "for we call noon the dinner-hour at Kennaquhair?"

The widow was forced to admit, that even at this important period of the day, Halbert was frequently absent ; at which the Miller shook his head, intimating, at the same time, some allusion to the proverb of Mac Farlane's geese, which "liked their play better than their meat."¹⁴

That the delay of dinner might not increase the Miller's disposition to prejudge Halbert, Dame Glendinning called hastily on Mary Avenel to take the task of entertaining Mysie Happer, while she herself rushed to the kitchen, and, entering at once into the province of Tibb Tacket, rummaged among trenchers and dishes, snatched pots from the fire, and placed pans and gridirons on it, accompanying her own feats of personal activity with such a continued list of injunctions to Tibb, that Tibb at length lost patience, and said, "Here was as muckle wark about meating an auld miller, as if they had been to banquet the blood of Bruce." But this, as it was supposed to be spoken aside, Dame Glendinning did not think it convenient to hear.