

Written for the Loyalist.

THE PREDESTINED;  
A TALE OF BRENTOR.

## CHAPTER I.

"Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,  
And part admit, and part exclude the day;  
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address,  
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.  
There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,  
Thin trees arise that sun each other's shades.  
Here in full light the russet plains extend;  
There, wrapt in clouds, the blueish hills ascend.  
E'en the wild heath displays her purple dyes,  
And 'midst the desert, fruitful fields arise,  
That, crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,  
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn."—Pope.

DURING my equestrian excursions through the rural districts of England, there is nothing in which I take more delight than in leaving my horses and servant at the town through which I may chance to pass, and taking a solitary ramble through the adjacent country. The deep lanes in spring, clothed with verdure of the brightest green, half-hidden with the sweet-scented primrose, or the wild-strawberry blossom; and the modest violet at intervals peeping from underneath its clustering leaves; whilst high above the hedges are surmounted with the prickly hawthorn, dressed in its gayest white, with its right to empire sometimes disputed by the bushy hazel, whose russet blossoms are hanging like so many velvet cords. Then on a sudden the opening gateway to a field displays a picturesque view of the surrounding country:—the green fields, the busy husbandmen, the gamboling flocks and herds, and the richly cultivated country on the one hand; and the common, the yellow-blossomed furze-brake, and distant craggy hill on the other.—The gothic Church and square granite tower, where every evening the merry bells chime harmoniously, while the happy youths whose day's toil are ended, join in this vigorous and healthy recreation, nor bestow a passing thought on their ancestors, who hundreds of years ago were engaged in the same amusement, but whose remains now moulder 'neath their very feet. The ruins of the turreted round castle of the Saxons,—its walls as solid as ever, though overgrown with ivy,—is seen in one direction, and the gloomy Mansion of the Norman appears in the distance, almost hidden from the view by gigantic trees, whose tops are blackened by domestic rooks. As a contrast to this, you turn your eyes in another direction and behold the modern Country Seat, built of free-stone in the rich Corinthian order, its rear sheltered with a shrubbery of forest trees, blended with the dark Scotch fir, which have not half attained their full growth; and in its front a beautiful variegated lawn, terminated at its further extremity by an artificial pond, where the swan proudly curbs her peerless neck of snow. Nearer yet stands the farm house, with no part of it visible but its antique chimneys, from whence the grey smoke curls like a cloud; forming a canopy to the capacious orchards now in full bloom, where the notes of the cuckoo fill up the intervals between the songs of the thrush and the goldfinch! But turn and re-enter the lane, and these sights are immediately shut out from you, and you would imagine, only for the sweet sounds which still float through the air, that you were in a world of your own, and are ready to exclaim:—

"Softly-pleasing solitude!  
Were thy blessings understood,  
Soon would thoughtless mortals grow  
Tired of noise and pomp and show."

But although I prefer the spring, it is not the *only* part of the year in which I am tempted to stray in the country. The summer has its charms:—the thriving crops—the delightful smell of new-made hay. The autumn also, with its golden fields of waving grain, and its fruit-trees bending beneath their weight. I could write for a week, and tire not, describing the rich—the glorious scenery of Old England; but to my tale.

Taking a ramble through that fine pastoral country the South of Dorsetshire, I left my equipage and servant at a little town where I had arrived the night before, and set off one morning very early on my accustomed pedestrianism. Leaving the town while most of its inmates were yet sleeping in their beds, I struck into the first bye-road I met with—a mere sheep-path—which after fifteen minutes walk led me by a somewhat steep ascent to a common. The twittering furze-lark hopped from bush to bush on my approach, and from the solitary limb of a blasted oak were pealed the cuckoo's morning notes. I turned and looked upon the town, which lay beneath me in solemn grandeur, deeply embedded among the hills. Not a sign of human life was there but the thick smoke just beginning to ascend from some half dozen houses, which told that the inhabitants were beginning to bestir themselves. But the feathered tribes were awake, and poured their morning thanksgivings to heaven in tones of ravishing sweetness, amongst which were distinguishable above the rest the thrilling tones of the blackbird and thrush, as they perched among the aromatic blossoms of fruit trees. The cow fed eagerly on the pasture found in the rich meadows on either side of the meandering stream, over whose unruffled surface the swallow glided in search of its prey. "Oh God!" I exclaimed, "is there a man who can gaze on thy glorious works, and feel no emotion within his breast of joy and holiness? What a beautiful world hast thou given us to inhabit! and can it be that man—an ephemeric worm—can tread on this fruitful soil, view this heavenly scenery, and listen to those harmonious sounds, and yet feel no gratitude towards the Creator? Yes; it must be so:—

"See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow!  
Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know;  
Yet poor with fortune and with learning blind,  
The bad must miss, the good untaught will find."

Yes; it is even so. Holy feelings are placed in every man's bosom; but they must be cherished or they will die away. But cherish those feelings and the breast will expand:—

"Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;  
His country next, and next all human race:  
Wide and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind  
Take every creature in, of every kind:  
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blessed,  
And Heaven beholds its image in its breast."

During this soliloquy I had insensibly sunk on my knees, and when I arose and again moved forward, it was with a heart softened with the tenderest emotions. I soon reached the summit of the hill, and there a new scene arose to cheer me. Sheep pastures, covered with innumerable flocks, stretched out on either hand, and in front of me for two or three miles, although frequently intersected with beautiful narrow valleys; but beyond that distance I beheld the "open, open sea," and several vessels laying becalmed, as their white sails fell listlessly against the masts. I continued my walk among the hills for an hour or more, until approaching the brink of a pretty steep declivity I found myself in the vicinity of a farm house; and being rather thirsty from my morning's ramble, the sight of some half-dozen cows, and a maiden milking, tempted me to descend and solicit a draught of the healthy beverage. Accordingly I struck into a path which led across a field, and descended. On gaining the stile which communicated with the farm yard, I paused a moment to survey the air of comfort and quiet which every thing displayed. The slate roof and stone walls, with the proud pigeons cooing in their holes, and the lively martins building their clay nests under the eaves; the snow-white drapery which half covered the windows on the inside; the shaggy sheep-dog which lay on the clean-swept flags in front of the house, enjoying the morning sun; the clustering vine trellised against the wall, the comfortable looking outbuildings, the splendid fruit trees in full bloom, the good fences, the cleanly-looking yard, the various kinds of domesticated poultry, the milch cows chewing their cud, and the blooming damsel, dressed in a short-sleeved half-gown and linsey-woolsey petticoat, nimbly plying her fingers, brought forcibly to my mind the contrast between the humble occupants of this farm and the abodes of the wealthy and great, where all is fashion, glitter, show, hollow professions, and heartlessness. But these reflections were soon interrupted by the damsel—after a low prefatory hum—striking into a song. I pulled out my tablets and pencil and was enabled to obtain the following copy of

## THE MILK-MAID'S SONG.

When th' morning sun peeps o'er the hills  
To light our lovely vale,  
I trudge across the dewy meads  
To fill my milking-pail:  
And though sometimes my heart is sad  
—To weep I feel inclined—  
I ne'er will mourn one lover lost,  
While scores are left behind.

Young Johnny won my youthful heart  
When I was scarce fifteen;  
His laugh was light, his form the best  
That graced the village green;  
And though the day he came to woo  
Was th' one for which I pined,  
Yet I'll ne'er mourn one lover lost,  
While scores are left behind.

Although the lad was smart and gay,  
Not like a country clown,  
To others oft I gave a smile  
When he would have me frown;  
At length he took a jealous fit,  
And fretting, told his mind;  
I said I'd ne'er one lover coax  
While scores were left behind.

One night returning with my milk,  
He met me at the stile;  
I bantered and I laugh'd at him  
But could not win a smile;  
He swore his eyes were opened, love  
No longer could him blind!  
I said I cared not for his loss,  
For scores were left behind.

Next morning, drest up in his best,  
He went unto the town,  
Then followed, with a gay cockade,  
The music up and down;  
They sent him off to Portsmouth, where  
In soldier's clothes he shined;  
But I'll ne'er mourn one lover lost,  
While scores are left behind.

But though I smile on every one  
No choice I yet have made,  
And that I ne'er shall love again  
Is now my constant dread—  
And though young Philip visits me  
'Tis all in vain he'll find—  
Yet why should I one lover mourn  
While scores are left behind?

The other day a letter came  
—He's ordered off to Greece—  
He beg'd his sire to pity him,  
And purchase his release;  
He said he loved me tenderly,  
Though I had been unkind,  
And hoped I still remembered him,  
Though scores were left behind!

So now I'll wait a month or two,  
Till Johnny's home again,  
\* The Ionian Isles were probably meant.

And I'll ne'er smile on others, when  
I think 't will give him pain;  
And fondly I'll carress him, with  
My arms around him twined,  
For still I love him ten times more  
Than all he's left behind!

"And this poor country maid, (thus I soliloquized) knows the sorrows of love too; and notwithstanding the words of her song are somewhat gay, they belie themselves; while her voice is singularly soft and mournful." Thus saying, I crossed the stile and stood before her. She made me a slight bow, and the blushes reddened her temples as she became conscious that I had been a listener to her lay. Modestly accosting her, I apologized for my intrusion, and bade her joy on the prospect of her lover's speedy return. "Mine!" she exclaimed in a tone of surprise, while a burst of uncontrollable merriment escaped from her lips; "La, Sir! why I learnt that song of my mother, who knew it when she was a little girl!" This simple avowal, it may well be supposed, instantly demolished the castle of romance I had been unconsciously building in the air, and I joined her in the laugh at my ludicrous mistake. At this instant I heard a step behind me, and turning round met the enquiring gaze of the farmer. He was a regular John Bull in his appearance; about fifty years of age, fat and somewhat corpulent. He wore a coarse, low-crown, wide-brim'd hat, an old-fashioned red silk kerchief around his neck, a white moleskin hunting-jacket, a black cassimere vest of an enormous length, corded-plush knee-breeches, and white-top'd boots reaching only to the calves of his legs, leaving about two inches of his white lambs-wool stockings in sight. His hands were thrust deep into his breeches pockets, and he carried what paddy would call a "thumping shillelah" under his arm. Perceiving that he expected me to speak first, I told him of my morning ramble—my call for the purpose of procuring a draught of milk, &c. and concluded by stating the apology I had just been making to his daughter (the personal likeness rendered it impossible for me to be mistaken in this) for a mistake her song had led me into. "Ha, ha, ha," said the farmer, "just like Nan, the Wench, to be singing such stuff; so I suppose you thought it was her own case, and she, the faggot going to be married next week to as jolly a young farmer as lives in South Down!" The blushes of the damsel, and the sudden start of the cow she was milking off to another part of the yard, prevented me from giving any definite reply; and on the farmer's cordial invitation, I followed him to the house. His wife met us at the door, and welcomed me by a low curtsy; she then hurried away about her household affairs, and we entered a nice little parlour, fitted up with much taste, although the furniture was generally antique, and had in all probability been heir-looms for ages. But what excited my curiosity the most, was a figure half-sitting, half-reclining, on the sofa. He bore a striking resemblance to "mine host," but it was such a resemblance as the flourishing oak of to-day bears to the same oak scathed with lightning to-morrow. He was,

"Gray haired with anguish; barkless, branchless,  
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,  
Which but supplies a feeling to decay—

Now furrowed o'er  
With wrinkles, ploughed by moments, not by years,  
And hours—all tortured into ages."

He was a personification of Lord Byron's description of the Gaiour,

"The wretched frame, the ruined mind,  
The wreck by passion left behind,  
A shrivell'd scroll, a scatter'd leaf,  
Seared by the autumn blast of grief."

"Brother," said the farmer, taking the invalid's hand with much kindness, "this is a gentleman who came all the way from A——this morning, to breakfast on a bowl of sweet milk!" The poor old man raised his eyes to mine, but with such a vacant, unmeaning stare that I immediately realized the lines of the noble poet already quoted:—

"The keenest pangs the wretched find  
Are raptures to the dreary void,  
The leafless desert of the mind,  
The waste of feelings unemployed."

And the farmer doubtless perceiving the pain with which I gazed on the wreck before me, considerably led me to another apartment. Here the promised "bowl of milk" soon made its appearance, and eggs and bacon finished the repast, rendered more than savoury by my early walk. The farmer's wife presided, and on my right sat the buxom milk-maid, while the farmer and the juvenile members of the family took their seats around the well-filled board. Every thing around me wore an air of comfort and happiness, with the exception of the invalid, and on the conclusion of the meal I could not help observing to the farmer "your brother seems to have been unfortunate sir!" "Ah! yes. He has indeed!" was the reply; but a sob at my elbow, and the words "Poor cousin Lucy!" proved that my lively acquaintance was not destitute of woman's brightest attribute,

"The heart that can feel for another."

and warned me also to make no further distressing enquiries. But my look of anxious enquiry could not be mistaken, and when I arose to take my leave amidst the pressing invitations of the wife and daughter, to "call and see them often," the farmer, taking his hat and cane, good humouredly observed that he would accompany me a part of the way back; and this was done, as I soon learnt, to tell me the story of his unfortunate brother.

## CHAPTER II.

"These two, a maiden and a youth, were there  
Gazing—the one on all that was beneath  
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her;

There was but one loved face on earth,  
And that was shining on him; he had look'd