

But though in ease and wealth reclining,
At every step he was repining—
Fame, riches, all on earth should bless,
Had not secured him happiness!
I gazed with wonder on the scene—
His costly room, his stately mien,
His beauteous children and his wife,
And then I asked him, "What is life?"

"Oh, ask me not! I know not—I
In vain would strive to frame reply.
It is not wealth—'tis not a name
It is not love, it is not fame;
'Tis something, but I know not what—
I've sought it, but I found it not.
It is not pleasure, 'tis not mirth,
I fear it is not found on earth.
Men think I'm happy! wealth and power
May make me so for one brief hour;
But though I need not have a care
Of what to eat, to drink, to wear—
No great misfortunes—they forget
What little things make great men fret!
The adventurer who tempts the wave,
Anxious his merchandize to save,
Will rage and storm with wild discord,
If one small bale falls overboard;
But let the elements arise,
And thunders roll along the skies,
The vessel caught in a sudden squall,
And sink, with merchandize and all,
Th' adventurer, 'scaping midst the strife,
Is thankful if he saves his life!
So the rich man,—things trivial, vain,
Annoys him more than real pain!
He murmurs more at 's meat o'erdone,
Than does the poor man who has none!
No, no; here's nought but troubles rife—
On earth there's no such thing as life!"

I saw an old man on his bed,
Snow-white the hair upon his head;
A hard brown crust was all his food;
Spring water in a vessel rude
Was all his drink; yet not a sigh
Escaped him. Hope lit up his eye;
His bony hands he lifted high,
And sent his fervent praise to heav'n.
That life to him had o'er been given.
I staid Death's hand—with open knife—
And said, "Old man, pray what is life?"

He gazed—words came to his relief—
His voice was thick, his answer brief:
"Tis, when with age and sorrows bent,
To look back on a life well spent—
'Tis, when afflicted by his rod,
To joy to meet a pard'ning God!
To draw o'er other's faults a blot,
And be contented with your lot.
To part from all below in love,
And hope for happiness above!"
He paused—I gazed upon the clay;
But as the spirit passed away,
Methought I heard a voice from Heaven
Sing—"This is life—to be forgiven!"

Written for the Loyalist.

THE PREDESTINED; A TALE OF BRENTOR.

CHAPTER X.

(Continued.)

"I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind; the rain beat hard on the hill. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak. It died away, like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks."—
Ossian.

I must now go back and take up my narrative where I left Monsieur Gauvin and Grimp threading the streets of Exeter, dogged by the hapless Mary, the maid of the inn. The men, immediately after leaving the inn, went to the stables attached to it, where Grimp soon produced two horses—his own and the one he had stolen for his master; they mounted and were proceeding cautiously along a street when the sound of footsteps caught their ears, and hauling up under a projecting balcony they saw, dark as it was, two slender forms pass, and heard a whispering of women's voices.

"Ah!" said Grimp, whispering in his master's ear, "that must be the two girls I saw, who, being disappointed in their midnight ride with their gallants, are returning to their lodgings; they can be upon no good on such a night as this! If you will give me leave I'll follow them."

"Aye, do, my bonhomme, and as I've excellent accommodations for a passenger—ha, ha, ha!—you might use a little forcible persuasion to induce one of them to take a ride on my pillion—the change will be but little, as the horse and pillion will be the same, and I flatter myself she will lose but little in the man."

They then arranged that while the Captain led Grimp's horse, that worthy should follow them on foot, and if possible seize one of them, when, the other riding up, they would lift her in the pillion and ride off. But their words were heard by a listener they wot not of, and Grimp had not advanced far on his mission when he saw a dim figure come out from a narrow lane, approach the pedestrians and whisper something to them hastily, and then

as suddenly disappear; but the effect was instantaneous, for the girls immediately started into a run. Grimp followed, and as they heard his footsteps on the pavement behind them they flew at their utmost speed. They gained the street in which their hotel was situated—the lights appear—it is now a race between the pursuer and the pursued—he gains upon them, but they are within a few paces of the door—they reach the steps which ascend to the front platform, and one of them bounds lightly up, opens the door and falls fainting in the passage; the other was not so fortunate, for she fell in ascending the steps, and was instantly and rudely seized in the arms of Grimp, who lifted her hastily into the pillion behind Gauvin, and then leaping into his own saddle the abductors rode rapidly away. The noise of some person falling heavily in the entry, and the wild shrieks of the maid who was carried off, roused the host, and a host of waiters. They soon discovered Lucy senseless on the floor, and comprehending that Alice Bland was missing, ran out into the street in search of her. But even if she had not been carried off on horseback the very means which they used for her discovery would have rendered the attempt abortive: not one went out but he carried a light in his hand, and those who carried lamps soon found them extinguished by the rain or wind, and groped their way back again in the darkness; while others more cunning took lanterns, and searched about for some time, as though the marauders knew no better than a bullfinch or tomtit, which flies directly to the light. As for the Captain and his accomplice they stopped for a moment or two in a lane to gag the screaming Alice, and then left the city at a smart trot, taking a bye-road which leads to the moors, leaving Bovey on one side and Moreton on the other. As they rode on, boisterous with merriment at the success of their plot, and as the pitiless rain still fell, sop sop along the narrow muddy lane came the bare feet of one who had never for a moment lost sight of them—or rather had never lost the sounds of their horses' hoofs. It is true the distance between them was increasing as she vainly endeavoured to keep up, and the sounds came at intervals so faint that she almost feared she was off the right scent; but then again would come borne upon the wind the hoarse laugh in the identity of which she could not be mistaken, and murmuring, "God grant me power to fulfil my resolves this night!" she would rally her failing strength. It has frequently been remarked that "we know not what we can do until we try," and it is very true. Many a pedestrian after confessing himself tired, has in a case of pressing emergency travelled twenty or thirty miles. Napoleon Buonaparte, when in 1814 he by a masterly manœuvre threw himself in the rear of the allies, to force them into an engagement upon disadvantageous terms, and failed; and when he heard the astounding news that they were marching upon Paris, he marched his columns of infantry sixty miles in twenty-four hours! And this poor girl, in weather of the worst description, and through roads almost impassable, followed the abductees and the abductors five or six miles without stopping a moment, or slackening her pace—the object she had in view gave her strength—it was the power of mind over matter. At length, the sounds of the fugitives' horses being no longer audible, her courage for a moment failed her, and she sat on the wet sod by the roadside—her feet at the same time dangling in a pool of water—and wept. But she sat not long before her lips moved, and in the fulness of her heart she gave vent to this soliloquy:—"Miserable being that I am, what can I do to save her? Perhaps they have turned off and taken some other road; yet if I thought I could reach it I would go on to the sheep-hut. 'Twas there he carried me on that dreadful night, when I trusted to his vows, and who knows but he intends ruining this girl in the same place? Ah, me! I cried out for help, but no one heard my cries!—no one came to save me! why then should I try to save another? Shame on me for thinking thus! I did not deserve to be saved—I listened to his flattery—believed his promises, and willingly went with him, leaving my mother—my poor lone widowed mother—broken hearted! But this poor girl—she was seized and forcibly carried off!—I will save her yet if I can!" Full of this resolution she arose and continued her journey. After toiling through the mud four or five miles further, she came in sight of a hovel situated a little off the road on an eminence, and the sparks from the turf fire within were curling gracefully and cheerfully from the chimney, and falling on the wet roof. "They are there," ejaculated the tired girl, "pray God I am not too late."

The "Sheep-hut," so called because it was originally built by a farmer as a shelter for his herds which fed on an extensive piece of upland, was built of turf, and roofed with the same material, the grass on which having grown luxuriantly it had the appearance at a distance of a green mound. With the exception of the solid walls and roof, and the chimney built of rough stones, it bore until recently a dilapidated appearance; that is it possessed neither door nor windows, and the inside possessed no comfort but shelter. But the young farmer into whose hands the farm devolved a few years previous to the date of our tale, and who from his dissolute habits it was supposed had squandered a great part of the wealth left him, and deeply involved himself in debt, suddenly appeared to be possessed of inexhaustible supplies, paid his debts, stocked his farm, and put it in good order, eschewed his wild habits, and became a thriving prosperous man; but strangely enough about the same time the solitary window place of the hut was walled up, a good substantial door placed on it, secured by an enormous padlock, and the chimney covered by an iron grating. For what purpose it was thus secured did not transpire, but the general tradition among the country people was this: that one of the young farmer's ancestors had appeared to him, and discovered to him a chest of hidden treasure, but had stipulated as a condition that the hut should be locked up and given to him for his exclusive use. In corroboration of this, belief it was stated that many a time did the benighted peasant, as he passed the hut, hear much singing, yelling, and sounds of revelry—such jingling, screaming and unearthly music, as nev-

er emanated from mortal lungs; and at length so firmly did this opinion take hold in their ignorant minds that not one of them but would walk six miles out of his way to avoid passing the hut after dusk. Now on the night about which I am treating the interior of the hut was not devoid of comfort. About half of it had been separated for the purpose of a stable, by a dead turf wall running across, and the other part was still large enough to form a room of fair dimensions. In this room, while a table and two or three rude benches stood in the centre, one side was occupied by a pile of moss, covered with a coarse cloth, which, though homely, made not an uncomfortable bed for a person tired with travelling. One corner contained a pile of peat, and a huge fire of that material lit up the apartment, sent a red glare up the chimney, and shed its congenial heat through the room.

On the morning of our narrative, about half-past two o'clock, arrived at the Sheep-hut Captain Gauvin, Grimp, and the unhappy Alice Bland. They first lifted the maiden from the horse and carrying her into the hut laid her upon the bed of moss; the horses were then led through the outer apartment into the stable, where from their neighing and munching it was evident they did not lack for fodder. This duty attended to Grimp lit up a huge fire in the chimney, and as Alice was drenched with rain, and no change of clothing being at hand, he suggested with a sardonic smile that she be stripped of her wet garments, in order that they might be dried. This suggestion was soon carried into execution spite of the tears and entreaties of the maiden, and she soon found herself denuded of all but her petticoat, stays, and under garments. Grimp then began to prepare a supper, and in a short time he produced about half of a tremendous beef-pie, a piece of ham, some bread and cheese, and two or three bottles of wine. The two men ate heartily, but could not prevail upon Alice to break her fast; but suffering much from thirst she desired them to give her a drink of water. This they refused her unless she consented first to pledge them in a glass of wine; and finding all her entreaties vain, and moreover being desirous of appearing at ease (for she meditated flight at the first opportunity) she consented. Soon after this they arose from their repast, and Grimp retired to the stable to scrub down the horses. A few minutes after Alice had drunk she felt a kind of stupor coming over her; at first she attempted to resist its influence, but it was not long before, being overcome with drowsiness, she sunk upon the rude bed and fell into a sound sleep. It seemed as if consciousness had never left her, for she soon began to dream that a hand was laid upon her, and starting up she found to her horror that Gauvin held her tightly clasped in his arms; nor was her horror lessened when he made her proposals so dishonourable in their nature that no modest damsel could for a moment listen to them. "Unhand me villain!" she exclaimed, helpless as I may seem I will die a thousand deaths rather than become the vile thing thou would'st make me. Neither am I friendless, for there is one who will punish thee severely for this!"

"Ah, ha, ha! dost thou mean the minion of our enemy? The principal is now under sentence of death, and the safety of your friend consists in his expatriation from his native land! Or may be thou dost mean our old chum Bill Jones? If so, as I am the Captain, and he but a serjeant in the same brotherhood, thou wilt do him honour after I become careless about the prize. At this time he was struggling with her, and at length when she found her strength failing she cried out in her agony, "Oh God! wilt thou permit this execrable deed to be perpetrated?" The impious and atheistical wretch sneered as he replied, "Aye, call upon thy Gods! but know that thou art now mine in spite of all the powers thou canst invoke—I defy thy God to save thee!" At that instant he felt the point of a sharp weapon glance upon his ribs, it found an opening between them and penetrated his side! his grasp loosened, his intended victim was saved even in the moment of utter despair, and springing to her feet she saw him roll over on his back, where he lay weltering in his blood!

The first rational thought which came slowly stealing over Alice Bland's bewildered brain was gratitude to Heaven for her preservation; the next was a curiosity to examine her deliverer, and ascertain who it was the Lord had sent to her relief—for in that light and no other did she then view the occurrence. There she stood, the same being already described as the inmate of the inn, but with her legs and feet bare, her coarse thin dress wet and bedraggled, her eye lit up with phrenzy, as she held a sharp knife in her hand in a threatening attitude, as if she was about again to strike. The point of the blade was slightly bent where it had grazed against the rib, and on the very extremity hung one solitary drop of blood, as though it was unwilling to drop off, but would dry there as a testimony of the guilt of the murderess, and a stain for ever on the purity of the steel!

"Ha!" said the girl, "I have accomplished both objects—I have saved thee, and I am avenged! He brought me here, on just such a night as this too! but not by force—I believed in his promises—that was my fault—but once in this horrible place he threw off the mask, and here—yes, there on that very spot he accomplished my ruin! I too cried to heaven for protection, and he sneered at it impiously—like he did just now at thy cries—but there was no one to deliver me! Oh God! I deserved it not, for I was at first an accomplice in his guilt. I forsook my poor mother, nor heeded her warning voice! But I have done it!—I have done it! Yes, I that loved him dearer than my own soul, even after all his ill-treatment of me! Oh jealousy! had he not slighted me, and sought to possess another, I could not have stabbed him;—and why should I?—why should I murder one whom I loved to save thee, a stranger to me? Nay, why shouldst thou be spared and he killed?"

From these incoherent expressions it was evident the girl's intellects were wandering, and as an angry gesture accompanied her last words, Alice stepped back in some alarm; she needed not, however, for her strange deliverer quoted the passage, "vengeance is mine saith the Lord, and I will repay it," and a sudden revulsion of her feelings seemed to take place, and she turned