

# **The Eskdale Herd-boy**

Mrs Blackford

# Table of Contents

<b><u>The Eskdale Herd-boy</u></b> .....	<b>1</b>
<u>Mrs Blackford</u> .....	1
<u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	3
<u>CHAP. I.</u> .....	4
<u>CHAP. II.</u> .....	7
<u>CHAP. III.</u> .....	11
<u>CHAP. IV.</u> .....	16
<u>CHAP. V.</u> .....	19
<u>CHAP. VI.</u> .....	22
<u>CHAP. VII.</u> .....	26
<u>CHAP. VIII.</u> .....	29
<u>CHAP. IX.</u> .....	33
<u>CHAP. X.</u> .....	35
<u>CHAP. XI.</u> .....	40
<u>CHAP. XII.</u> .....	43
<u>CHAP. XIII.</u> .....	48
<u>CHAP. XIV.</u> .....	51
<u>CHAP. XV.</u> .....	54

# The Eskdale Herd-boy

Mrs Blackford

This page copyright © 2003 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

- INTRODUCTION
- CHAP. I.
- CHAP. II.
- CHAP. III.
- CHAP. IV.
- CHAP. V.
- CHAP. VI.
- CHAP. VII.
- CHAP. VIII.
- CHAP. IX.
- CHAP. X.
- CHAP. XI.
- CHAP. XII.
- CHAP. XIII.
- CHAP. XIV.
- CHAP. XV.

EBook prepared by Ted Garvin, S.R. Ellison, Charles Franks, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

THE ESKDALE HERD-BOY

A Scottish Tale

FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS

BY MRS. BLACKFORD

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAP. I.

Description of Eskdale. History of Marion Scott and John Telfer. He loses his Parents. Mr. Martin, the Pastor, befriends him. John engaged by Mr. Laurie as his herd-boy. Helen Martin's first attempt at horsemanship. Her mother points out the advantages of perseverance and self-command.

CHAP. II.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

Excursion towards the Glen. Beautiful scenery. Account of the *Borderers*. The Minister visits David Little's cottage Rustic manners. Canine sagacity. The visitors take their departure.

### CHAP. III.

John gains the approbation of the Pastor. Visit to Mr. Elliott. His cottage delightfully situated. Helen cautioned by her father against affectation. Arrival at Minkirk. Visit at Craigie Hall. Mrs. Scott's hospitality. John dispatched on an errand. His unlucky disaster. The party returns by moonlight. Their arrival at the Manse relieves Mrs. Martin's anxiety.

### CHAP. IV.

John's reflexions on entering service. Receives advice from the Minister for his future conduct. John's good intentions the cause of great anxiety.

### CHAP. V.

Sunday morning. The family assembled for morning prayer. Interesting description of the villagers' manners on the Sabbath. Serious illnesses. John in an awkward dilemma. Hateful effects of intoxication. Miss Helen taken seriously ill. A curtain lecture.

### CHAP. VI.

Uncertainty of human events. News of Captain Elliott. An agreeable present. John gains the approbation of the Minister for his activity.

### CHAP. VII.

John enters Mr. Laurie's service. New companions. He receives instruction in his new employ. Surprising sagacity of the shepherds' dogs. Marion recovered.

### CHAP. VIII.

Arrival of Capt. Elliott. Unfavourable character of William Martin. His hasty temper the cause of uneasiness to his parents. He is placed under the care of Mr. Lamont. Helen's amiability. The party take their departure for Kelso.

### CHAP. IX.

Hospitable reception at Kelso. Interview between Capt. Elliott and his nephew William. The party return to the *Manse*. Helen's attachment to home. Capt. Elliott joins his vessel. Alarm of the family at the sudden disappearance of William Martin.

### CHAP. X.

Mrs. Martin greatly distressed by William's thoughtless and undutiful conduct. Helen shrewdly guesses her brother's plans. Information received from Capt. Elliott that William has joined him. William solicits permission to accompany his uncle to sea. His parents reluctantly consent. Mrs. Martin's death ensues.

### CHAP. XI.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

Helen's grandmother takes charge of the household. Marion Scott resides with Helen at the Manse. John Telfer gradually improves himself. Capt. Elliott and his nephew arrive in England. Their anxiety to visit Eskdale again. Mrs. Elliott's repugnance at seeing her undutiful grandson causes her departure to Mr. Armstrong's.

### CHAP. XII.

William's arrival, and interview with his sister. Affectionately received by his father. Marion narrowly escapes perishing in a snow storm. Intrepidity of William and John. The departure of Capt. Elliott and William the cause of distress and fearful forebodings. John accompanies them.

### CHAP. XIII.

Their arrival in the metropolis. And voyage to the Mediterranean. Sudden disappearance of William and the boat's crew at sea. A sea fight. Capt. Elliott killed, the vessel taken by the enemy, and the crew made prisoners. The news of these disasters cause the death of Mr. Martin.

### CHAP. XIV.

Helen vacates the parsonage, and joins Miss Maxwell's millinery establishment. They become greatly attached. John Telfer, after several years' captivity, makes his escape.

### CHAP. XV.

John's unexpected interview with Marion. They are married, and settle in Eskdale. His interview with Helen. She is induced to accompany him to Eskdale; and is finally married to Mr. Johnstone, the Minister of Eskdale.

## INTRODUCTION

The Author of this little Work, many years ago, spent a few weeks in Eskdale, the scene where she has placed the principal events of her tale. The beauty of the country made a deep impression on her mind, at the time; perhaps the more so, from its being the farthest excursion to the southward, that she had then made from her native home. She, however, by no means pretends to pourtray the scenery in the course of her narrative, with minute accuracy. Too long a period has since elapsed, and she has seen in the interval too great a variety of places, to retain an exact recollection of every spot in this delightful dale; but its general features remain strongly fixed in her memory; and she hopes that her young readers will not find her tale less interesting from any slight inaccuracy which they may discover in the local description.

The general character and manners of the inhabitants are, she believes, more correctly represented; for there is scarcely an incident, exemplifying these in the following pages, of which she has not known a counterpart in real life. The respect universally paid by the parishioners to their clergyman, and the familiar intercourse and great influence which the latter possesses, in forming their minds and morals, are circumstances which have fallen under her own observation, not only in Eskdale, but in various other parts of Scotland; and she has felt a peculiar satisfaction in describing the simple and useful life of MR. and MRS. MARTIN, from the remembrance of many worthy couples in similar situations, who might have sat for the resemblance. She has endeavoured, in relating the adventures of JOHN TELFER, the Eskdale Herd-boy, to impress on the minds of her young readers, the permanent advantages of early integrity and gratitude. In the short and unfortunate life of WILLIAM MARTIN, she has attempted to show the duty that is incumbent on all young people, to subdue that disobedient and self-willed temper, which may otherwise undermine, not only their own comfort and happiness, but those of their parents and friends, of all whom they love, and of all to whom they are dear. The character of HELEN is meant,

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

on the contrary, to illustrate the inestimable value that a dutiful daughter may be of, both to father and mother; the prudence, the steadiness, and even the energy which Helen displays, on some trying occasions, will not, it is hoped, appear to be overstrained, when her conduct is considered as the result of an education conducted on these steady principles, which insure the love and obedience of the child, by inspiring a firm reliance on the justice and affection of the parent.

### THE ESKDALE HERD-BOY

## CHAP. I.

In the year 1807 there stood on the beautiful banks of the river Esk, in Dumfriesshire, one of the most southern counties in Scotland, a small cottage. The neat white walls, well-thatched roof, and clean casement-windows, ornamented as they were with honeysuckles and roses, attracted the admiration of a few strangers, who, from the uncommon beauty and grandeur of the scenery, were tempted to turn off the direct road from Langholm to Edinburgh, and follow the windings of the river to its source. The cottages in general, in that part of the country, present a very different appearance; having too frequently a look of neglect, the windows broken, the walls dirty, and instead of a pretty garden, a heap of mud before the door. The contrast, therefore, rendered this building the more remarkable; and led people to suppose, what indeed was the case, that its inhabitants were more industrious, and had seen a little more of the customs of other countries, than their less neat and cleanly neighbours.

The names of the couple who resided on this spot, were John and Marion Telfer: their history I am now going to relate. John was the only son of an honest, industrious couple, who lived in the neighbourhood of Langholm, but who unfortunately both died of a fever, when he was little more than ten years old, leaving him nothing but their blessing, and the virtuous habits of integrity and obedience, in which they had trained him from his earliest youth. On their death-bed they entreated that the excellent clergyman, who, in spite of the malignity of the disease, continued to comfort and pray by them in their last moments, would take compassion on their poor little orphan, and find him employment among the neighbouring farmers, either as a herd-boy to some of the numerous flocks of sheep which are common in Eskdale, or as a plough-boy in their fields. Mr. Martin, for such was the name of the pious pastor, assured them that he would do all in his power for their child: and he kept his word; for as soon as they were dead, he took the boy home to his own house, and there endeavoured, by kindness and sympathy, to console him for his great and irreparable loss. For some days, all his endeavours were unsuccessful. John, though sensible of the kind attentions of Mr. Martin, still felt miserable and unhappy. All his dear mother's care and tenderness; all the pains and trouble that his kind father used to take in teaching him to read his Bible, after, perhaps, a hard day's work; the delight with which they both watched his improvement all, all rose to poor John's mind, and made him believe he never more could be happy.

Mr. Martin, at last, seeing the boy's melancholy continue, thought that a little employment might serve to rouse him. He therefore one morning called John into his study, and asked him if he would be so good as to assist in dusting and arranging some books, which were in a large chest in the corner of the room. John, from lowness of spirits, did not much like to be employed; but as he had been taught by his father always to be obedient, and to do at once whatever he was desired, he immediately set about dusting the books. The first two or three he merely wiped, and put them down without looking at them; but at last, in rubbing one, a leaf fell out, which obliged him to open the book to put it back again. The work happened to be a handsome edition of Robinson Crusoe, with very beautiful prints. Mr. Martin, who was watching him unobserved, called to him to bring the book, and then told him he might look at the pictures if he pleased. John, who had never seen any thing of the kind before, was delighted with this permission, and placing himself at a little distance, so as not to disturb Mr. Martin, began turning over the leaves; his eyes sparkling, and his little hands trembling with increased delight, at every new scene that was represented. At last he came to the one where Man Friday is saved from the savages. Here his curiosity got the better of the natural awe he felt for Mr. Martin; and he cried out, Pray, Sir, be so good as to tell me what this means! for though John had been taught to read his Bible, as well as his poor father was capable

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

of teaching, yet this was in so imperfect a way, that he could by no means read easily, and was obliged to spell more than half his words. Mr. Martin smiled good-naturedly, as John's exclamation made him raise his head from the book he was reading; and desiring him to come near his chair, he explained, at some length, what the print represented; after which he asked John if he would not like to be able to read the story himself. John immediately answered, O dear! yes Sir, that I should; but, looking down, and the tears starting into his eyes, that can never be now; for my dear father is dead and gone; and nobody else will ever take the trouble to teach so poor a boy as I am. And yet, continued he, looking in Mr. Martin's face, and brightening a little with a kind of hope, don't you think, Sir, that if I succeed in getting a place, and if I am *very, very* attentive, and always take pains to please my master, I may in time be able to save, out of my wages, as much as a penny a week, for I know if I could do that, I might go to the school at Langholm. I remember hearing my poor dear father wish very much that he could afford to pay so much money for me; as he said he was sure that Mr. Campbell would teach me to read much better than he could.

John here stopped, and seemed to wait anxiously to hear what Mr. Martin would say to his little plan. After a few minutes' consideration, this worthy man replied, my dear John, I am afraid it would be a long time before you would be able to save so much out of the very small sum that such a little boy as you can earn; but, seeing the poor fellow look disappointed, he went on to say, that he had a little scheme to propose, which he hoped John would like as well as going to Langholm school. He then added, my dear John, when your parents were dying, I promised them to take care of you, and to endeavour to find a master who would be willing to take you into his service, and treat you kindly. With that view, I have been inquiring all around, amongst my parishioners, whether any of them were in want of such a little fellow; and this morning my neighbour, Mr. Laurie, has called to ask me if I think you may be trusted with the care of a flock of sheep, up behind the hills, on the other side of the river. I told him you might certainly be trusted, as I was sure you were an honest boy; and that if you undertook the charge, after he had explained to you what your duty was to consist in, I had no doubt you would do all in your power to perform it. But, at the same time, I told him you must determine for yourself; as I would on no account press you to leave me sooner than was quite agreeable to your own feelings. Now, continued he, seeing John beginning to speak, hear what I have to propose to you. It is, that if you go to live with Mr. Laurie, I will make an agreement with him, provided you are a careful and industrious boy in his service through the day, that he shall allow you, after you have penned your sheep, to come to me for an hour in the evening; and in that hour, if we both, my dear boy, make a good use of our time, I in teaching, and you in learning, I have little doubt but that in a very short time you will be able to read perfectly, both this book and many other useful and entertaining stories. Take time to reflect on what I have been saying to you, continued Mr. Martin, and be sure that you are resolved in your own mind to be an honest and industrious servant to Mr. Laurie, so far as your strength and years will allow, before you engage with him; and if, after thinking over the subject, you believe that you can promise me to be very attentive, and strive to learn what I shall be most willing to teach you, then, my dear John, I shall consider the plan as nearly settled, and shall only wait till I have seen Mr. Laurie to make it completely so.

Mr. Martin then pointed to the green plat before the window, where his little daughter was standing looking at some beautiful crocuses, which had made their first appearance that season; and said, Go, John, now; and let me see if you are a handy lad, and can get Master William's pony ready for Helen; as I have promised her a ride up the glen, if she has pleased her mother by attention to her morning lessons; and I think, by her merry face, she must have earned her reward. I am going a couple of miles to see David Little, who, you know, broke his leg last week by a fall from his horse; and if you will go and get the pony ready, I will desire Mrs. Martin to put up a loaf of wheaten bread, which will be a rarity to him, and which he may perhaps relish more than his oaten cakes whilst he is sick; and you, John, get your bonnet (boys always wear Highland bonnets, instead of hats, in the hilly part of Scotland) and come along with us; as you can carry the basket and open the gates for Helen. To-morrow morning will be time enough for you to give me your answer about Mr. Laurie. John made an awkward bow, and a scrape with his foot, and then set off in search of the pony, which was feeding on a green flat plain by the side of a river, which sort of meadow in that country is called a *holm*. The animal appeared very quiet, and suffered John to come close to him, without attempting to move; but the moment he tried to put out his hand to take hold of him, off went the pony as fast as he could scamper. When he got at a little distance, he stopped and looked back at John,

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

who again approached and attempted to lay hold of him, but with no better success. All this was observed by Helen, for the green plat, where she stood, overlooked the holm; and though she could not help laughing at first, on seeing John's awkward attempts to catch the pony, yet, as she was a good-natured little girl, she soon ran into the house, and begged a little corn of her papa, and having put it in her pinafore, she skipped down the lane with it to the holm, where holding it out to let Bob (for that was the pony's name) see it, he instantly began trotting towards her, neighing with pleasure. She then told John to throw the halter over Bob's neck while he was eating, and he might jump on his back and ride him up to the stable, where he would find the side-saddle. John very soon appeared in front of the house with the pony neatly combed, brushed, and ornamented with a very pretty little white side-saddle and bridle, a present which Helen had received from her grand-mamma the last time she had visited Eskdale. My dear Helen, said the old lady, when she presented them to her, I have brought you this side-saddle, in hopes that it may induce you to conquer your fears of mounting a horse. I am very anxious, considering the part of the world in which you live, that you should learn to ride well; as it may be of essential consequences to you through life. Besides, added she, smiling, you know, my dear, that unless you are a good horsewoman, I can never have the pleasure of seeing you at Melrose; for your dear papa cannot afford to send you by any other mode of conveyance. Nothing but practice will ever give you the confidence that is necessary to enable you to accomplish this; and I hope that, whenever you see pony dressed in his new saddle and bridle, it will remind you of the great delight that I shall have in seeing my dear girl riding up to my door at Melrose. Helen thanked her grandmother, and said she would try if she could learn; but she hoped her papa would walk close by her side, and make Bob go very slowly at first. Nothing, she was sure, would give her so much pleasure as to go and visit her dear grandmamma. Her mother took an opportunity of speaking to her when they were alone, and told her that if, in the course of the summer, she had gained a sufficient command of her pony and a firm seat in her side-saddle, she should accompany both her parents to Melrose in August, the time when they usually made their annual visit to the good old lady.

Helen was quite delighted with this promise, and for the moment forgot what she had to accomplish before her journey could take place. However, next morning, on going down stairs, after she had finished her lessons, she found that, though she had forgotten all about learning to ride, her father had not; for before the little glass door of the study stood Bob, the pony, ready saddled and bridled, and her papa waiting anxiously for his little girl's appearance. As soon as he saw her, he called out, come Helen, my dear, I am quite ready to give you your first lesson in riding, and I hope I shall have an expert little scholar. Helen walked rather slowly towards her papa; and when he took her in his arms to put her on the pony, she looked a little pale, but as she had promised to try to learn, she endeavoured to conquer her fears, and suffered herself to be placed on the saddle very quietly. Her father took a great deal of pains to show her how to hold her bridle, and how to manage Bob; and after making him walk gently two or three times round the green, in front of the house, whilst he himself held her on, Mr. Martin ventured to leave her seated alone, and only walked by her side.

After repeating this for two or three days, Helen began to feel more comfortable, and even was glad when her riding hour arrived. In the course of a week she had ridden as far as the end of the green holm, and had begun to allow Bob to trot home. In another week she had ventured on a canter: and for the last month had improved so much as to become her father's constant companion in all his walks through the parish, when he went either to visit the sick, or comfort the afflicted; duties which are conscientiously performed by the Scottish clergy in general, and by none more regularly than they were by Mr. Martin. Helen now felt that she was rewarded for all the trouble she had had in conquering her fears; for, besides the pleasure she enjoyed in the exercise, she was by these means enabled to see much more of the beautiful country in which she lived, than she could ever have accomplished by walking; and besides, her dear father was always by her side, to point out and explain all the beauties of the surrounding scenery, as well as to relate to her many of the little local stories, which abound in that part of the country, and possess peculiar interest to the young mind. Her mother, on her return, quite delighted, from one of these charming excursions, took the opportunity of pointing out to her the advantages of perseverance and self-command, and Helen promised, and indeed firmly resolved, never again to allow herself to give way to foolish fears; nor ever to fancy it impossible to conquer what might at first sight appear difficult, until she had at least tried with her whole mind to overcome the difficulty.

## CHAP. II.

We must now return to our little party, who were setting out on their excursions towards the *glen*, that is to say, a deep and narrow opening between the hills which bound the dale.

John had no sooner assisted Helen to mount Bob, than Mr. Martin made his appearance, accompanied by Mrs. Martin, who came to see them set off, she being detained at home that morning, arranging some household affairs, which required her presence, and which would not admit of delay. After wishing them good bye, and giving Helen many charges to be careful, and keep a firm hold of her bridle, Mrs. Martin returned into the house, and the travellers proceeded to follow the windings up towards the *glen*, where David Little's cottage stood. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this walk. The holm extends above a mile above Mr. Martin's house, divided by a large and rapid river, on each side of which hills rise, almost as high as the eye can reach, covered with rich, smooth verdure, up to the very top, and seeming to shut out the inhabitants of the valley from all communication with the rest of the world. As Mr. Martin and the young people proceeded leisurely along the road, he related to them several stories, which occurred to him at the moment, and which he thought would interest and amuse them. He told them that, in former times, before Scotland and England were united, there were continual wars between the *Borderers*, or inhabitants of the country on each side of the border dividing the two kingdoms; and that, in order to check the English from coming over, and plundering the Scotch of their sheep and cattle, one of the Scottish kings, named James, was said to have brought a family of seven brothers, of the name of ELLIOTT, from the Highlands, a stout and hardy race, whom he settled all along the borders of Scotland; and the Elliotts, said he, my dears, who, you know are now so numerous all through the Dale, are said to be descended from these seven brothers. Mr. Martin was going on to tell of Johnnie Armstrong, who was one of the great chieftains of those times, and was a sad enemy to the English, when John, who had been listening with great eagerness to all he had heard, cried out, Oh! Johnnie Armstrong! I have heard of him sir, all the Dale knows about him. He was a great robber, was he not? I remember, my father used to sing some old songs about him to me; and I think I could repeat parts of the verses myself, if Miss Helen would like to hear them, and you, sir, would give me leave. Certainly John, answered Mr. Martin, I am sure Helen will like to hear them much.

John cleared his voice, and after considering a little while, began the following old ballad:

Some speak of lords, some speak of lairds,  
And such like men of high degree;  
Of a gentleman I sing a song,  
Sometime called Laird of Gilnockie.

The King he writes a loving letter,  
With his own hand so tenderly,  
And he hath sent it to Johnnie Armstrong,  
To come and speak with him speedily.

The Elliotts and Armstrongs did convene,  
They were a gallant company;  
We'll ride and meet our lawful king,  
And bring him safe to Gilnockie.

They ran their steeds on the Langholm holm,  
They ran their steeds with might and main;  
The ladies looked from their high windows,  
God bring our men well back again.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

John stopped here and said, he did not remember the whole ballad, for it was very long, but he knew that the story was that Johnnie was deceived by the king, who only wanted to get him into his power, by enticing him out of his own country; and having succeeded in this, he caused poor Armstrong and all his followers to be hanged. He would try, he said, and remember the last two verses, which gave an account of Armstrong's death.

Farewell, my bonny Gilnockhall,  
Where on Esk side thou standest stout!  
If I had lived but seven years more,  
I would have gilt thee round about.

Because they saved their country dear  
From Englishmen, none were so bold,  
While Johnnie lived on the border side,  
None of them durst come near his hold.

Just as John had finished his ballad, they turned out of the main road, up a narrow path, into the glen. On their right hand a small clear brook, or, as it is called in Scotland, a *burn*, ran down among the brush-wood; now hid from view, now showing its white foam, bursting over the stones which obstructed its passage. The walk from this till our little party reached David's cottage was extremely beautiful, amongst natural woods, varied hills, and bold rocks, over which the burn kept continually pouring, with a loud but pleasing noise. A wooden bridge, which might, indeed, more properly be called a plank, was thrown across the burn at the narrowest part, and rested upon the rock on each side, a little above which stood the remains of an old watch-tower. Altogether the scene was so beautiful, that, whilst Helen dismounted, and John endeavoured to coax Bob across the bridge, Mr. Martin took out his sketch-book and made a drawing of it.

When they had crossed to the other side, the road took a winding turn amongst the hills; and their minds were so impressed with the grandeur of the scenery, that, from the time they quitted the bridge, they ceased speaking; only pointing out to each other, as they advanced, any new beauty that suddenly presented itself. The cottage was built about half a mile above the bridge, on a shelving bank, which they could only reach by ascending a little path with steps cut in the rock. At the bottom of these rude stairs Mr. Martin desired John to fasten Bob to the stump of an old tree, which grew conveniently near it. When they reached the top of this ascent, they found a small clay-built hut, thatched with furze, erected close under the shelter of an immense rock, which hung with frowning grandeur over it, and seemed to threaten to crush it and its inhabitants to pieces. About a hundred square yards of ground were cleared from the surrounding brushwood, part of which David had cultivated, as a little garden, and had planted it with vegetables, as an assistance in the support of his family. The rest formed a pasture, in the middle of which was feeding a goat, confined from ranging far by a cord fastened to one of its feet, and tied to a piece of wood driven into the ground.

On Mr. Martin's appearance, the shepherd's dog set up a loud and shrill bark. Two or three ragged children ran into the house, calling out, that the *Minister* was come, (the name which the Scottish clergy generally receive from their parishioners). On hearing this joyful information, their mother soon appeared, and having obtained silence, both from the dog and the children, proceeded to welcome her visitors in the most hospitable manner, assuring Mr. Martin that her husband had greatly desired this favour. She added, that the surgeon had seen him that morning, and had assured her that, could he refrain from fretting, and be left undisturbed, he did not doubt of David's being able to walk in a few months as well as ever. That, I fear, continued she, is next to impossible; for when he sees his dear little children going without their usual food, which they are now obliged to do, as I cannot get more for my work than will supply them with one good meal a day, he must fret and regret his being laid aside, and prevented from going to the hill to earn their suppers for them. However, Sir, I am glad that you are come, for I am sure a word from you will comfort him, and make him easier than he has been since he met with this unlucky accident. Mr. Martin immediately went into the hut, desiring his daughter and John to wait for him on the outside.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

While the worthy clergyman was with David, Helen remained talking with his wife. The children were so shy, that they could not be prevailed on to come forward and speak to her, but stood wrapping their little heads up in the corner of their mother's apron, taking a sly peep at the strangers, when they thought they were not observed. Helen at last recollected her basket, and asked John to give it to her. As soon as she began to unfold the snow-white napkin in which her present was wrapped, the little heads gradually approached nearer and nearer to the basket; and when Helen took out a few cakes of *parliament* (a kind of gingerbread very common in Scotland), and gave each of them one, the little creatures began jumping, shouting, and clapping their hands with delight. She then presented to their mother a loaf of bread and a bottle of currant wine, which last, she said, she was desired to tell her was for herself, as wine was not good for David. No, no, Miss Helen, said Mrs. Little, that will never do. I cannot think of drinking our good madam's wine myself, I assure you; I will just put it by the spence, (*spence* means *cupboard*) till David is beginning to get about again, and then I think it will help to strengthen him. Do what will give you most pleasure, Mrs. Little, said Helen; I dare say my mother will be satisfied.

She had scarcely finished speaking, when she felt a little hand take hold of hers. It was the eldest of the shepherd's children, a boy about seven years old. When he found that she observed him, he pulled her gently down, to whisper to her, that if she would like to see his hen and chickens, he would show them to her. The chickens, he said, were only two days old, and were very pretty creatures. Helen replied, that she should like to see them much. Away skipped Tom, as fast as he could run, to the end of the cottage, and lifting up an old rug, that lay over a coop, displayed the young brood and their mother to the admiring eyes of the visitors. Tom was quite delighted to find the lady amused with any thing he had to exhibit, and told her, that if he succeeded in rearing them, he would ask his mammy's leave to come down himself to the *Manse* (the name always given to the parsonage house in Scotland), and bring her a chicken as a present; for they were all his own; his daddy had given him the hen long ago, and he had watched and fed her, all the time she was sitting, with part of the porridge which he got for his own breakfast. Helen asked him how he could spare any of his porridge, as she supposed that, now his father was sick, he got nothing else to eat all day. Oh, said he, it is but little she eats; and though, to be sure, I am sometimes very hungry, and could eat it all myself. I keep thinking how happy I shall be if I can have some pretty chickens to give my mammy to lay eggs; for, then, you know she can sell them up at the hall, next August, when the English gentry come. The English, continued he, looking up at Helen with a very grave face, must be very fond of eggs; for do you know they gave my mammy a whole white shilling for a dozen last year. Helen thought as Tom did, that the English must indeed be fond of eggs, if they gave so much money for them. She had never seen her mother give more than fourpence or fivepence a dozen; and she thought she would ask, when she got home, whether it could really be as Tom said.

Whilst they were looking at the chickens, the dog, that had been lying at the door, rose leisurely, shook himself, and walked after them. He stood close by Helen, wagging his tail and looking pleased; but when she stooped down to take one of the chickens in her hand, he began to growl at a terrible rate. Down, Colly, down! said Tom; he won't bit you, Miss, for he is the best natured creature in the world; he is only afraid you may hurt the chicken. We always liked Colly very much, but now more than ever; for it was he, poor fellow, that came and told mammy that daddy had fallen down. Stop, Tom, cried Helen, take care what you say. How could a dog *tell* any body what had happened to your father? Do you know what a naughty thing it is to fib? Yes, I do know very well, Miss, that it is wicked to tell fibs;" answered Tom, stoutly, but mammy can assure you, that what I am saying is true. Yes, indeed, said his mother, Tom speaks the truth; though perhaps he should not have used exactly the word *told*, for the dog certainly did not speak, he only barked. If you please, I will tell you what he did; and then I think you will believe Tom, and love poor Colly too.

It was in the evening of last Wednesday se'nnight: David was just come home from the hill, where he had been with his sheep. He was wet and tired with being out in the rain all day; and I had just got him some dry clothes, and made up a nice blazing fire, to boil some potatoes for his supper. The two youngest children had climbed up on his knee, poor things! Tom and Colly were lying at his feet on the hearth. We were saying, what a dreadful night it was. The rain and wind were beating against the cottage, and making it almost shake; when, between the

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

blasts, I thought I heard the sound of a voice, calling David. I listened, and very soon there came a violent knocking at the door. Who can be out at this time of night, and in such weather? said I, as I went to open it. 'Make haste, David,' said Peggy Oliphant, our master's little herd-girl, as she stepped into the house. 'Come away as fast as you can: there is a horse ready saddled for you, down at the farm; for our master is taken dangerously ill, and my mistress thinks, if he has not immediate advice, he will die before morning; so she begs you will lose no time in riding to Langholm, for Mr. Armstrong. It is a dreadful night, to be sure, she says, to send you out; but it is a work of necessity.' David scarcely waited to hear her out. He took his *maude* (a woollen plaid cloak which the shepherds wear), and wrapping it closely round him, set off as fast as he could run, telling me to put the children to bed, and he would be back as soon as he could. He would soon ride to Langholm; it was not more than four miles and a half; and he would gallop all the way. Well, Miss, away he and Peggy went; and I sat waiting and listening all night, but no David appeared.

I had just dropped into a kind of sleep, when I was awakened by Colly barking most piteously. Up I jumped, glad to think that David was come back; but, on opening the door, only Colly was to be seen. The moment he beheld me, he took hold of my apron, and tried to draw me out of the house. I could not think what he wanted; and pulling my apron from him, went back towards the fire to stir it; but before I could get half way to the fire place, Colly had laid hold of me again, pulling very hard, and looking up in my face, howling. I then began to think that something must be the matter; so I determined I would go with him, and see what it was. He held me fast till he got me down the steps, and then he ran a little before me, looking back every minute, to see if I followed him, and running on again, till we were about half a mile down the glen. Oh, Miss! I shall never forget the fright I felt when I saw my master's horse standing grazing by the road side, and the saddle turned quite round under him. I began, then, to run after Colly, as fast as my trembling limbs would let me; and in about five minutes I came to the place where my poor husband was lying on the grass. Colly was standing close to him, licking his hand, just as if he had been telling him that help would soon come to his relief. David tried to make the best of his misfortune to me, and said he did not think he was very much hurt; only his leg was sprained, he believed, for he could not walk. He bade me go directly to the farm, and get some of the men to come and carry him home. I did as he desired me; and the men servants very readily went to his assistance. Just as I was leaving the farm, Mr. Armstrong, who had been up with our master, came out into the yard, and seeing the men running, asked me what was the matter. He very kindly said he would go with me to the cottage, and see where David was hurt; and very well it was that he did so, for when we got thither we found that David had fainted from the acute pain he felt when they began to move him. As soon as we got him into bed, he recovered himself a little, and Mr. Armstrong then found that his leg was *broken*, not sprained as he had told me. You may be sure that this was bad news for me. The setting of the bone put him to great torture, but he bore it better than could have been expected; and Mr. Armstrong now says he will do very well, if he be properly taken care of; and to help us to get what was necessary, he was so kind as to give us half a crown out of his own pocket; God bless him for his goodness to poor distressed creatures as we are! He has seen him every day since; and I am sure I do not know what David and I can ever do to shew our gratitude towards him.

Now, cried Tom, Miss Helen, what do you think of Colly? Did I not tell the truth? Yes, my dear, I think you meant to do so; but my mamma always bids me be sure to be very particular how I express myself when I am relating a story, for fear of being misunderstood; and if you had said Colly barked to let your mother know that your father was hurt, then I should have understood you better, and not have suspected you of an untruth, which I am very sorry for having done. I think Colly deserving to be loved very much, by every body that hears the story. I will tell it to papa and mamma; and I am sure they will admire Colly's sagacity and affection for his master.

Mr. Martin now made his appearance at the door of the cottage, and called to John to make haste and get the pony ready, as he thought they would have time to go up the river, as far as Craigie Hall, one of the oldest family seats in Eskdale. The gardener had promised to give him some curious flower seeds, and the time was now come for saving them. He therefore, took leave of Mrs. Little; Helen shook hands with Tom, and bade him be sure to remember his promise of coming to the Manse to see her. That I will, cried Tom, and bring my chicken with me whenever it is big enough to leave its mother, if mammy will give me permission.

**CHAP. III.**

When Mr. Martin and the young folks had got to the bottom of the steps, Helen once more mounted her pony, and they proceeded down the glen till they nearly reached the beginning of the green holm, when they again turned up the public road, by the side of the river; Bob chose here to make a stop, to drink some of the clear sweet water of the burn, before he crossed it; and while he was gratifying his taste, John observing that the late rains had washed away some of the stepping stones, which served to prevent passengers from wetting their feet in getting to the other side, began to bring the largest he could carry, for Mr. Martin's accommodation; and by the time that Bob had finished his drink, had made quite a dry path for him to cross. As for himself, poor fellow, stepping stones were not necessary; for the boys in his rank in life in Scotland wear neither stockings nor shoes during the week; only on Sundays are they indulged with this piece of finery. Mr. Martin looked pleased with this attention.

Thank you, John, said he; that is being both a useful and observing boy. Such little civilities to those around you, my dear, will make you beloved by everybody; and turning to Helen, he continued, This is what your dear mother calls natural politeness, and which she loves so much to see in young people; as she says it is the mark of a good disposition. Bob now moved on, Mr. Martin and John by his side, conversing upon different subjects. Just after they had crossed the burn, they reached the farm-house of David Little's master, Mr. Elliott, which stood on a rising ground, at no great distance.

There was nothing remarkable in the house itself; but its situation was extremely beautiful: the little burn running on one side of it, and the more majestic Esk on the other; the garden in front extending quite to the edge of the rock, at the bottom of which a narrow path had been cut, barely sufficient to allow the small carts of the country to pass along. Here, said Helen to her father, pointing to it, is the loveliest spot in the whole dale for a residence. Were I rich, I should like to buy that house and garden, and live in it with you and mamma; would you like to live there, papa? asked she. Why, returned he, my dear Helen, I think you have certainly shown your taste by making choice, in the event of being rich, of Mr. Elliott's cottage; for I have often thought as you do, that it is the most beautiful situation in the dale; but I am not sure, for myself, that I should like to live there, in preference to the snug comforts of my own little manse. Custom has endeared my present home to me, and I own that to me it would be a painful sacrifice, to be obliged to move out of it; even were it to go to a rich home of yours. However, my dear, continued he, though I may, with the blessing of God, hope to end my days in my present peaceful abode, yet, in the natural course of events, you probably will have to look out, at some future time, for another place of residence; and should you become rich, which at present is not very likely, you then may be able to gratify your ambition, if a knowledge of the world should not produce in you a change of mind, in regard to this object.

Helen was silent for some minutes, considering what was meant by saying she might be obliged to change her place of residence; and when her father's meaning broke upon her mind, the tears stole gently down her cheeks. Poor girl! it was almost the first painful thought her dear parent had ever raised in her mind; and it was with great difficulty she suppressed her emotion. She knew, however, that her kind mother was extremely anxious, and indeed had spared no pains to teach her the necessity of controlling her feelings, as she had a great dislike to that sickly kind of sensibility which many children are in the habit of indulging, by giving way to tears on trivial occasions; a habit which two years before she herself had found great difficulty in overcoming. The judicious management of her mother, aided by her own sincere desire to please so good a parent, had now nearly corrected this habit. Of what great and essential service this was to her happiness through life, will appear in the course of this little tale. John had heard all that passed, but did not quite comprehend what was meant. He walked on, however, in silence, considering in his mind how much he should like to be rich enough to gratify Miss Helen. Little did he think, poor boy, that the day would come, when, in that very cottage, he would receive Miss Helen, and watch over her declining health, with all the respect and affection of a brother.

Mr. Martin, observing that his conversation had thrown a little gloom over the faces of the young folks, said cheerfully, Come, my dears! let us think of something that will amuse us. Helen! suppose you sing us a song!

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

John has given us one already; and I heard you telling your mamma last night that you had learnt a pretty new one; I should like to hear you sing it very much. Well, papa, said Helen, I will try to please you; but I am afraid I am not quite perfect yet. I hope you will excuse me, if I make any blunders. She then began the following lines, which she sang in a sweet, clear and natural voice:

I.

My brother's a shepherd, so artless and gay,  
Whose flock ranges over yon mountain,  
And sweet is his song at the close of the day,  
By the echoing rock of the fountain.

II.

With him, how delightful, to stray o'er the lawn,  
When spring all its odours is blending!  
Together to mark the sweet blush of the dawn,  
Or the sun in his glory descending!

Soon after her little song was finished, Helen's attention was caught by a green plat of ground, about fifty or sixty feet in breadth, surrounded by circular earthen walls; and pointing to it, she asked her father what *that* was. He told her it was called a *birren* in that country, where there were several of them, and that they were supposed to have been intended for places of safety for the cattle at the time of the border wars. They were now arrived at Muirkirk, a small church, which belongs to the parish adjoining Mr. Martin's. It is pleasantly situated on the banks of the river, near a stone bridge, consisting of three arches. The building is very neat, and adds greatly to the beauty of the country. Near it is the mausoleum of the family of Craigie Hall, a very elegant piece of architecture. The manse stands at a little distance from the church. Mr. Martin called on his friend the clergyman, but found the family were all gone on a visit farther up the dale; so our party did not stop, but went on to Craigie Hall to get the flower-seeds.

When they reached the hall, they fortunately found Mr. Scott, the gardener, at home, who received them with great pleasure, and invited them, as the family were not at home, to walk into his own house and take some refreshment before he showed them the garden and grounds. Our young people were glad to find him so considerate, for they began, particularly John, to be rather hungry. Mrs. Scott produced a nice bason of cream, some excellent butter, oaten cakes, and a beautiful large ewe-milk cheese. She invited Mr. Martin and Helen to sit down and partake of her humble fare, which they very readily complied with. John was not forgotten, for she had put a pretty good portion for him on a seat at the outside of the door, her small house not affording two sitting apartments, and she conceived it would not be respectful to the Minister to bring the herd-boy inside the house. Mr. Scott, as they sat eating their luncheon, told them that a curious thing had occurred that morning, about a mile up the dale, at the *Roman camp*. This is a place, the like of which is to be found in many parts both of England and Scotland, being a small grassy hill, on the top of which are long ditches and mounds of earth, seemingly intended for fortifications, and supposed to have been made by the Romans, when they first invaded Britain. Near this spot, some labourers had been employed digging a piece of ground, and one of them, in the course of his work, struck upon something hard, which, after much labour, he succeeded in raising, when it proved to be an urn, or large sort of earthen vessel, in which were a number of gold and silver coins and other rarities. Mr. Martin, who had found great amusement in his retired manner of living, in collecting whatever was curious in the neighbourhood, said, he should much like to see this urn, and inquired of Mr. Scott if he thought it were possible to get a sight of the labourer who found it. Oh yes, Sir, answered Mrs. Scott, that you may easily do, for it was Archie Kerr who found it, and his mother lives only about a mile and a half from this place; but I think, if your honour wants to see it, you had better send up to him at once, for it is most likely that some of the neighbouring gentry will buy it from him, as soon as they hear of it. Mr. Martin thought she was very right, and

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

began considering how he could send a message, as he felt it was rather further than he liked to walk. At last he determined on sending John upon the pony, Mrs. Scott assuring him he could not miss his way to Jenny Kerr's, it being the first house he came to after passing the *Shaw rigg*, where a large stone stood on his left hand. John was no sooner applied to, than he willingly undertook to deliver the message, and taking Miss Helen's side-saddle off, and throwing one of Mrs. Scott's horse-rugs over the pony's back, jumped upon it very alertly, and trotted off with a grin of delight on his face, proud at heart in being trusted to ride Miss Helen's pony. As soon as it was gone, Helen asked her father what was the reason of calling the place where the great stone described by Mrs. Scott stood, the *Shaw rigg*? Her father told her the tradition of the country was, that it took its name from *Shaw*, a Pictish king, to whom that part of the land belonged. I am glad, my dear, added he, that you take care to ask about what you do not perfectly understand. Many children are so foolish as to be ashamed to let those they converse with discover that they do not comprehend every thing said to them, by which means they often imbibe erroneous ideas, and perhaps remain in a state of ignorance on many essential subjects, when, by questioning their relatives or friends, they might easily have obtained correct information.

Mr. Scott now proposed a walk in the garden, which was planted in the Dutch style of stiff walks with high hedges, and was, according to the present taste, any thing but admirable. Its appearance, however, was extremely curious, contrasted with the natural and luxuriant beauties of the country by which it was surrounded. The house was small, considering the rank and consequence of the family to whom it belonged. It is said that they originally came from Clydesdale, and brought with them a thorn, which still grows on a little mount before the door, though they have been settled there several centuries. The gardener, after leading them through the garden and grounds, took them into the greenhouse to notice some curious plants, such as the aloe, that blossoms only once in a century; the beautiful oleander, a native of Spain and Italy, which thrives in British greenhouses; the prickly pear, which is without a stem, the leaves growing out of each other; they are large, broad, and thick, and covered with prickles. In warm climates, this plant grows wild, and may be trained to form an almost impenetrable fence. It bears a sort of fruit somewhat resembling a pear, to which the natives are partial, but strangers generally consider it insipid, and not worth the trouble of getting at it.

On quitting the greenhouse, they began to wonder at John's not returning. Mr. Scott advised them, after their fatigue, to enter the house and seat themselves with his wife, while he would walk towards the *Shaw rigg* in search of John. On their entrance they found with Mrs. Scott a little girl, about seven years old, whom she introduced to them as her daughter Marion. Helen begged she would go on with her work, she having timidly risen to quit the room; and as a little encouragement to her, Helen asked what she was doing; Marion immediately came to her, and showed her part of a shirt she was making for her father. Helen was surprised to see it so neatly done, as needlework is very little practised by the peasants in that country; the children, both girls and boys, being employed till the age of sixteen or eighteen in tending their father's or their master's sheep. Mrs. Scott, observing Helen's surprise, said, Marion is a good needle-woman, Miss; she has to thank the housekeeper at the hall for teaching her that and many other useful things. Mrs. Smith is an Englishwoman, and has taken a great fancy to Marion. She has persuaded her father and me not to send her to the hills, like the other children around; assuring us, that if Marion does not forget in the winter what she has learnt in the summer from her, she has no doubt, when she is old enough, to be able to get my lady to take her to wait on one of her daughters; and indeed, Miss, I shall like this much better, if we can make it out, for Marion is not strong; she is our only child, and it would break both her father's heart and mine should any evil happen to her; such as falling down the rocks, being frost-bitten, or lost in the snow, which happens sometimes to our neighbour's children, who are sent out herding in the winter. Helen said she was very glad that Marion was not to be sent to the hills; and Mr. Martin added, if Mr. Scott considered Marion able to undertake the walk to his house, he would lend her some improving books to read. For though Mr. Scott was competent to instruct his daughter in common reading, writing, and arithmetic, which sort of knowledge all gardeners in that country acquire while young, his collection of books was not altogether calculated to improve a child's taste or understanding.

Meanwhile, Mr. Scott had walked nearly a mile without seeing any thing of John. At last, on turning a corner of the road, he perceived him at a distance, not mounted in triumph as he had set off on his excursion, but walking

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

slowly, and leading Bob, who did not seem at all inclined to quicken his pace. As soon as he thought he could be heard, he called to John to know what was the matter. John did not answer very readily, but waited till he had got quite close to Mr. Scott before he said a word. Then dropping his head, and looking very confused, he gave the following account of himself. He said that Bob trotted nicely about half a mile, after which he could not get him to go a pace faster than a walk; he tried all he could do to make him move, but Bob was so obstinate, that he became afraid of keeping Mr. Martin waiting. He then wished for a spur, and after thinking and thinking, he recollected having some large pins stuck in the sleeve of his coat. He thought they would do, could he contrive to fix them on his feet, but how to do this he did not very well know, as he had no shoes to fasten them to; at last he thought he would try to fix them on with a piece of twine which he had in his pocket, and after many attempts, succeeded so far as to drive one of his pins into poor Bob's side, who by no means relishing this method of coercion, set off instantly at a hand gallop. John courageously kept his seat, holding fast, first by the bridle, but, as the velocity of the motion increased, at last by the mane; when perceiving a good wide ditch cut in the road, he flattered himself that Bob would stop, and would content himself with going at a quieter pace the rest of the way. Scarcely had he formed this wise resolution, when Bob cleared the ditch at one spring; the jerk came so suddenly, and was so little expected by John, that he made the finest somerset in the world over Bob's head, and was set down quite safely on his feet, about four yards beyond the ditch. Bob, in the mean time, seemed quite satisfied with the revenge he had had, and stopped directly; and he was busy regaling himself on the fresh grass that grew around him by the time John had regained sufficient composure to know where he was.

As soon as he could think, he became convinced he had been a very foolish boy; and, therefore, determined he would mount Bob no more that day, as it was better for Mr. Martin to wait a little longer for him, than to risk giving him the trouble of nursing him with a broken leg, like poor David Little. He therefore took hold of the bridle and led Bob along the road, till he reached Jenny Kerr's, where he found that Archie was not at home, but gone up the glen as far as Mr. Hume's, to show him the urn and the coins. John thought he could not go back and have nothing to tell but his own disaster. He therefore begged Jenny to direct him towards Mr. Hume's; and, having fastened Bob up safely, he set out on foot in search of Archie. As he had to cross the water in order to get to Mr. Hume's house, Jenny advised him to take Archie's stilts, two long pieces of wood, with a sort of step fastened on each, about the middle, wide enough to hold a man's foot, and which are in common use among all ranks in that country for crossing the river, where the depth will not admit of stepping stones. She said, he must on no account attempt crossing the river without them, for the danger was increased by the rains which had swollen the river considerably.

John had never before *stilted* the water, as it is called, but he determined that, as he had acted very foolishly in the affair of Bob, he would take great care with the stilts, and, therefore, when he arrived at the edge of the river, he mounted cautiously, as Jenny had advised him to do. For the first half of the way, he went very well; but, when in the middle of the stream, he found her precautions very necessary, for the water was nearly above his feet, and the current was so rapid as to require all his strength to move the stilts. As the difficulty increased, he was obliged to stop and rest himself. Aha! said he, a fall here would be worse than even over Bob's ears. Surely this is a bad beginning for my practice in service. I think if I meet with many days like this, I am likely to have but little comfort in it; however, my poor father has often told me, there is nothing like perseverance, and I am sure I found it in learning my letters; for, when I first began, I thought it nearly impossible that I should remember the names of those crooked ill-shaped things, and yet I became sooner acquainted with them than I thought I should; so I will even try again to get out of this scrape. So resolving, he began to move forward, and at last, by taking great care, reached the opposite side in safety.

He soon ran on to Mr. Hume's where he found Archie, and delivered Mr. Martin's message. Archie said he could not go down so far as Craigie Hall that day, being obliged to finish his day's work at the Roman Camp. He had already spent all his spare time with Mr. Hume; but he promised faithfully to bring his new-found treasure down to Mr. Martin's the next evening, after work hours; and he bade John tell Mr. Martin that he would not part with the urn, or any of the coins till he had seen them. He then good naturedly said he would see John over the river, for it was not safe for such a little boy as he to cross it alone, while it was so full and strong. As soon as John got

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

over the water, he set off as fast as he could walk to Jenny's for the pony, and putting the bridle round his arm, he contrived to coax Bob into a gentle trot, which he kept up till he came in sight of Mr. Scott, when remembering what a story he had to relate of his own mishaps, he slackened his pace, and began to feel very foolish and unwilling to tell what had happened to him.

It is but justice to say, that, however unwilling he felt to have his folly known, he never once thought of disguising the truth. He had been too well taught for that. At the time when John's father was living, there was no race of men, of any rank or country, that took more pains, (if indeed so much,) as the Scottish peasantry did in instructing their children, both in their moral and religious duties; and John had been taught early, that the shadow of a lie was contrary to the duty of a Christian, and that a child who, in the slightest degree, deceived his parents, masters, or companions, would never merit or obtain the character of an honest and just man. Well, my lad, said Mr. Scott, after he had heard his story, I think you have got wonderfully well off, considering your rash conduct; you should be thankful to Providence that you are alive to relate it: I only hope it will be a warning to you never to be guilty again of the like folly: so, cheer up, we will say no more about it, if you promise to behave better the next time you are sent on an errand. John said, what he very sincerely thought at the time, he would never again try to wear spurs: he had had quite enough of them, and he hoped Mr. Martin would not be very angry, or that would be the worst thing he had met with yet, and what with the pony and the stilts, he had had quite enough for one day.

Mr. Martin and Helen now came to meet them, for they had become seriously alarmed for the boy: but when the disaster was related, Helen could not refrain from laughing at the comical figure John must have made when flying over Bob's head; and even Mr. Martin, though he tried to look grave, found it difficult to keep his countenance while he represented to him the impropriety and hazard of his late conduct. Little Marion, who had come out to the door to see the pony, was the only person that seemed to enter into John's feelings. She sidled up to him, and said, never mind, John, Mr. Martin is not very angry, and you are not hurt; but, continued she in a whisper, you have torn the sleeve of your coat; I don't think any of them have seen it yet; slip into the stable, and I will run and get a needle and thread, and soon mend it, so that it can never be seen. It will be done before the pony finishes his corn, that I saw my father taking to him.

John followed Marion's advice, who, from that day, was enthroned in his heart, and considered by him as the best little girl he had ever been acquainted with. Bob having eaten his corn, and Marion having mended John's coat, quite to her own satisfaction, John led him out, ready equipped, for Miss Helen, who mounted him directly. Now, my dears, said Mr. Martin, we must make a little haste, for I am afraid your mother, Helen, will be getting uneasy at our long absence. Only look! there is the moon rising. We shall be quite late before we reach home. By the time they got near the holm, the moon was shining in full grandeur. Her rays played beautifully on the sparkling waters of the Esk, occasionally intersected by the branches of the trees which grew on the banks of the river. The night was clear; the stars shone above their heads with brilliant splendor. Altogether Mr. Martin was so entranced, that, forgetting the children were his only companions, he broke silence, repeating the following lines: a translation of his own from Homer's Iliad:

As when around the full bright moon, in heaven,  
The stars shine glorious; breathless is the air;  
The lofty watch-towers, promontories, hills,  
Far off are visible; the boundless sky  
Opens above, displaying all its host  
Of fires; and in the shepherd's heart is joy.

Mr. Martin, when he had finished, smiled internally at his own enthusiasm: the children were too much fatigued with the various adventures of the day to offer any remark. They therefore continued silent till they arrived on the green plat before the Manse, where they found Mrs. Martin waiting most anxiously for their appearance. Where can you have been, my dear Helen? asked her mother, as she assisted her to alight. I really began to be afraid

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

some accident had happened to some of you. No accident, my dear wife, at least none of any consequence, said Mr. Martin, glancing a look towards John, who made a hasty retreat with Bob into the stable. But ask no questions to-night, Helen will tell you all her adventures to-morrow morning; at present she is too much fatigued to be kept out of her bed longer than is necessary to eat her supper; let her have it directly, if you please; and if you will give me a cup of tea, I think it will refresh me. I am almost tired myself, which is not a usual thing. Helen ate her supper, Mr. Martin had his tea; and, after a prayer by the Minister, at which, as was customary, the whole family were present, they all retired to bed.

### CHAP. IV.

As soon as John awoke in the morning, all the occurrences of the previous day passed in review through his memory; at last he recollected that he was to give Mr. Martin an answer as to Mr. Laurie. Well, thought he, I suppose I must go to the farm, but I would much rather stay with the Minister and Miss Helen; for it was very pleasant walking with them yesterday, and I liked very much to hear them converse and Miss Helen sing; she surely has a pleasing voice. I wonder whether Marion can sing. I am not sure whether I shall much like going to the hill every day, for it is a tiresome life to be so many hours alone; but then, continued he, I cannot stay with Mr. Martin, for he has a herd-boy that has lived with him some time; and I am sure I should not wish to make him lose his place, for he, poor fellow, has no father any more than I have; and besides, added he, I am to have leave to come home every night to learn to read. I shall take the place, if it be only for that; and again, continued he, after thinking a little, if my poor father were alive, he would think it such an honour for the Minister himself to take the trouble of teaching his son, and, now that he is dead, I am determined never to do any thing, that he would have disapproved. However, I am glad that I have got summer weather to begin with: I shall understand the business better before the winter comes on, and, perhaps, be more reconciled to it.

After coming to this wise determination, John sprang out of bed and dressed himself as quickly as he could. When he came down stairs he was surprised to find that all the family were up and at work. The study bell rang, just as he got to the kitchen-door, and the maid said, it is well, my man, you are down before the bell has rung for prayers. See what the Minister would have said, if you had been in your bed then? but come away now, for we must not keep our master waiting. Accordingly he followed her into the study, where all the family were assembled, once more, to render thanks to their Creator for the blessings of a new day.

Helen gave her mother, during breakfast, an account of all she had seen and done the day before; and when she had finished her recital, she said, Mamma, I have been thinking this morning that I have a half-guinea that my grandmamma Elliott gave me, when she was last here, to buy a new gown; at present I do not particularly want one, and I should like very much that you would allow me to go down the water as far as Langholm, to buy some coarse cloth to make frocks for poor David Little's children; they are almost naked, and I do not think their father will be able to procure them clothes for some time, while he is lying on a sick bed. Helen, said her mother, you may do exactly as you please with your half-guinea, it is your own; but I would have you think the subject well over before you act. You know I have promised that you shall go with your father and me to Melrose this autumn. Now, perhaps, you would like to have a new gown to wear whilst you are there. It is but fair to tell you, that I shall not be able to afford to buy you one this summer, having spent all I can conveniently spare, in fitting out your brother for school. Therefore, my dear, you must choose whether you prefer going to Melrose in your old gown, in order to have the pleasure of dressing these poor little creatures, or expend your money and appear smart, when you make your first visit from home. Helen looked very serious for some minutes, and then said, my dear mamma, if you please, I will wait till to-morrow before I give you my answer; for, at present, I really do not know what to do. I should certainly like to be dressed neatly when I go to see grandmamma; because I know that that would give her pleasure; but when I think of the poor little naked children, they make my heart ache. Very well, my dear, be it so, go now, and begin your morning lessons.

Mr. Martin then desired the servant, who was taking away the breakfast things, to send John into his study, and

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

giving Helen a kiss, and telling her to be very attentive to her mother's instructions, left the room. On entering the study, he found John standing ready to receive him. Well, John, what answer am I to give to Mr. Laurie? asked Mr. Martin, will you be his servant and my scholar, or have you any objection to the plan? Speak out, and don't be afraid. If you dislike being a herd-boy, I will endeavour to think of something else, that may suit you better.

Thank you, Sir, from my heart; I did intend only to say, yes, I will be Mr. Laurie's herd-boy; but since you ask me if I have any objection, I will tell you, Sir, all that has passed in my mind. I have been thinking how lonely it will be up in the hills all day, and how cold and dreary I shall feel when the winter comes on; but just as I had determined to tell you, I would rather not be Mr. Laurie's servant, I remembered my poor father, and how proud he would be, if he knew that you would teach me to read yourself. That thought put all about the hill quite out of my head; and, therefore, if you please, I will go to Mr. Laurie's whenever he wishes it. That is acting like a good and sensible boy, said Mr. Martin, and I hope you will have no reason to repent of your decision. I shall go now and call on Mr. Laurie, and make an agreement for your coming to me in the evening; and I think you had best come along with me and hear what he wishes you to do. John went for his bonnet directly, and walked after Mr. Martin, keeping near enough to speak to him, but still far enough behind, to show his respect. Sir, said John, as he walked along, do you think Mr. Laurie will give me a holiday on Handsel Monday? (the first Monday in the year, and the only holiday the Scottish peasantry ever allow themselves, except, perhaps, in the case of a wedding). Really, John, that is a question I cannot answer; but if he does, how would you like to employ it? The thing I should like best to do would be to take another walk with you and Miss Helen. Oh, indeed, Sir, I never was so happy in my life as I was yesterday; and besides, somehow it seems to have done me a great deal of good, for I felt so miserable and unhappy from the time I lost my father and mother, that I had no heart to do any thing; and it seemed quite a trouble to me to move. Yesterday, when you first showed me that great chest of books, and bade me dust them, I had nearly burst into tears; but now, Sir, I feel as brisk as ever, and am sure I would do any thing in the world to please you. I am very glad to hear it, John; only I think if you take another walk with us, we must bargain to have no spurs. No, no, said John, laughing, you may be sure of that; I had enough of them yesterday.

They found Mr. Laurie at home; who very readily agreed to the proposal of John's learning to read at the Manse, and promised that he should attend regularly. He said, he must come into his service on the next Tuesday morning, and, as he required him to set off by four o'clock for the hill, he thought it would be best for John to sleep at the farm on Monday evening. He promised to send his own shepherd along with him, for the first day or two, to show him the method of managing the sheep; and also to train the dogs to obey him readily. John was greatly pleased with this promise, and returned to the Manse, in high spirits. Helen had finished her lessons and was walking out with her mother; but it being Saturday, Mr. Martin, as was his constant custom on that day, shut himself up in his study, to prepare for the duty of the Sabbath. John, therefore, amused himself as well as he could, by running down to the holm, and fishing with an old fishing-rod, he found in the stable; and though he was not very successful, he yet found sport enough to be pleased.

At dinner, Helen complained of a bad headache, and was obliged to go and lie down. Mrs. Martin was rather uneasy, as she had observed Helen's eyes to be heavy, and feared it might arise from fever. Helen, however, was much better after a short sleep, and got up to tea. As they were sitting round the table, John put his head in the door, and said, Archie Kerr was come down the dale, with the curiosities which he had found. Mr. Martin desired him to walk into the parlour; and added John, my lad, you may come in, and see them too, if you like. Mr. Martin examined them, and found them exceedingly curious. He was looking at one of the coins at the window, when Mrs. Martin kindly enquired of Archie, how all his neighbours were, up the dale. Thank ye, ma'am, all are well, excepting Mr. Scott's family at Craigie Hall, where poor little Marion is very ill. I am going, when I leave the Minister, to Langholm, for Mr. Armstrong; as her father was so distressed, that Mrs. Scott was afraid to let her husband come himself. If that is the case, Archie, said Mr. Martin, coming forward, I won't detain you another minute. Put up all your coins, and leave them in my care till your return; and if you find Mr. Armstrong at home, tell him he will oblige me by calling here, on his way, to let us know how the poor little girl is. For the sake of her parents, I trust she will shortly recover.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

Archie set off immediately, and Mr. Martin and his family sat conversing together till the usual hour of going to supper, when one of the servants looked in, and said, if you please, Sir, did you send John any where? No, indeed; answered Mr. Martin. is he not in the kitchen? No, Sir, answered the maid; and I cannot find him any where; the herd tells me, that, as he was driving his sheep home, he saw John run down the lane as fast as he could, and then down the holm. Colin thought he had forgotten his fishing-rod, and was gone to fetch it, but he must have been back long before this time, had that been his errand. This account seriously alarmed both Mr. and Mrs. Martin; for it was very possible, that, in looking for the fishing-rod, he might have fallen into the river. Mr. Martin, therefore, anxiously took his hat and went in search of him. He had become most truly attached to the boy, and would have been grieved to the heart had any harm befallen him. After searching all along the river, for nearly a mile, he was on the point of returning to get some assistance to drag for him, when he heard the sound of feet as of some one running. He listened; for the moon was not up, and the night was too dark to enable him to see at any distance. The steps approached, and in a few seconds, he was convinced that it was John running as fast as he could. He called to him, but John was too much out of breath to answer. Mr. Martin's mind now felt eased on the certainty of the boy's safety. He sat down on the bank, to recover himself, being completely overpowered, and for some minutes could not articulate a word; but silently offered up his thanks to Providence for relieving him from such a state of misery, as well as for the boy's safety. John, who had stood still, when he reached Mr. Martin, could not think what was the matter, but seeing his master sitting on the damp grass, entreated him to tell him if he was ill, and wanted to run on to the house, for assistance. No John, said Mr. Martin, you have run enough for one night. Where have you been to give us all such a fright? Indeed, Sir, I am sorry if I frightened any of the family, replied John; I did not think of that, but I will tell you the whole truth if you will only rise; for I am sadly afraid, you will catch cold by sitting on the grass. You are right, my dear, I will rise immediately; and do you tell me where you have been, for we thought you were drowned. Why, Sir, he said, I was looking at that curious urn which Archie found, when I heard him tell my mistress that poor Marion Scott was ill, and that he was going to Langholm for Mr. Armstrong. Now, sir, when I used to live with my father and mother, near Langholm, I many times observed Archie come down there, and though I should be sorry to be a tale-bearer, yet I cannot help explaining to you my reasons for acting as I did. I often saw him in the public-house, and my father used to say he was sure Archie would never do any good, if he did not mend his habits; for his custom was to stop and drink spirits at every place where a dram was to be had, all the way down the dale, and repeat the same on his return home again. I remember once he was a whole day and night getting from Langholm to the *Shaw rigg*. I thought, therefore, if Archie played his old trick of stopping by the way, perhaps poor Marion might be dead before Mr. Armstrong could get near her; so I determined that I would just run myself; for she was kind to me yesterday, much kinder than you know of; for, when you were all laughing at me, (which I very well deserved) Marion came and whispered to me that my coat was torn, and that, if I would go into the stable, she would mend it. I thought the least I could do, in return, now that she is in trouble, was to try to get her some advice.

I luckily found Mr. Armstrong, and he assured me, that as soon as his horse was saddled, he would go to her; and only think, Sir, when I came back again, I saw Archie sitting in Robert Miller's house, drinking with another man, I was so happy that I had gone myself! but now, Sir, that I find I have frightened you and my mistress and dear Miss Helen, who was not very well before, I do not know whether I ought to be glad that I went or not.

You are a good-hearted grateful boy, said Mr. Martin, and have acted very properly, only you should have told some of us where you were going, and then all would have been right. I could not do that, Sir, for I did not wish to tell of Archie's tricks; and I made quite sure that I should be back long before the hour of prayer; I thought you would not miss me till then. Very likely I should not, had not Nelly come in search of you; but it was very natural for her, and very proper, when she discovered you were missing, to inform me of it.

Here we are, my dear wife, all safe, cried Mr. Martin, when he came near the green plat, where Mrs. Martin stood with a lantern prepared, and Nelly ready to search for her master and John also; all is right. John has been on a very needful errand, and no harm is done, save the unnecessary alarm we have been put into; he has promised me, however, to be more careful, in future, in letting us know before he sets out on any of his errands; so let us go into the house for some supper, and give me a glass of raspberry whisky, to keep me from taking cold, as I have been out too long in the night air, and feel chilled with the damp of the river. Helen was gone to bed by

her mother's advice, but she could not sleep till she heard that John had returned safely.

## CHAP. V.

Next morning, when the family assembled in the study, for the morning service, Mrs. Martin observed, that Helen still looked pale and unwell; but Helen said she did not feel ill, only as if she was very tired, and had caught a cold. Her mother replied, then my dear, you must not go to church this morning; for though I disapprove very much of people absenting themselves from the public worship of their Maker, upon every light and trivial excuse, I think it wrong, when they are really ill, to go out, even to church; as by that means they often endanger their lives. Such a sacrifice is not required of us; and we act much more wisely by remaining at home, in such cases, nursing ourselves, and taking care to spend our time, not in idleness, but in our own private devotions.

In Scotland, the observance of Sunday is strict, but nor morosely severe. It is considered by the peasants as their grand day of innocent recreation. Nothing that is trifling, or that can any how be done on Saturday, is left for the Sabbath. The men are all shaved on Saturday evening; and they would even scruple to gather a cabbage out of their garden, on the Lord's day.

Mr. Martin's parish church was about half a mile from the Manse. The walk to it was pleasant, and presented a most lively scene, as Mr. and Mrs. Martin set out, accompanied by the whole of their household, excepting only one maid, who was left at home with Helen. John walked at Mr. Martin's back, carrying the Psalm books and Bible.

As they turned down the holm, the path, as far as the eye could reach, was sprinkled with men and women, dressed in the usual costume of the country, which consists of a woollen plaid, of a black and white small checked pattern, very simply thrown round the women's shoulders, as a scarf. The men wear it over the right shoulder only, and tied loosely under the left arm. The women seldom wear bonnets; they have either a beaver hat, like a man's, or else wear a snow-white cap, tied under their chin, and usually ornamented with a showy ribbon.

As Mr. Martin's family passed, every group stood still, making their bows and curtsies in silence, for it would be reckoned rude to speak to the Minister on his way to church; their greetings of enquiry being always reserved till the service is over, when the older men and heads of families look upon it as a sort of privilege, which they possess, to shake hands with their pastor, enquire after his health, talk of the news of the day, and not unfrequently give their opinion of the sermon he has just been preaching. And indeed they are often much better qualified to judge of such subjects, than the same class of society in other countries; which arises from their having all been taught to read, as their fathers before them had been, for several generations; and what has a most material effect upon both their morals and conduct is, that their reading has been properly directed to the study of the Holy Scriptures.

After church, Mr. Martin having paid his compliments all around, and Mrs. Martin having enquired who was sick, and if any one required her particular attention, the family returned to the Manse, in the same order in which they left it. They there found Mr. Armstrong, who had called on his way from Mr. Scott's. He told them that Marion's complaint had turned out to be the measles; and that, at present, she was extremely ill; but that he hoped, in a few hours, there might be a favourable change. Mrs. Scott had desired him to inform Mrs. Martin of these circumstances, as she was anxious to know whether Miss Helen and John had had the disorder.

Mrs. Martin immediately became alarmed, for Helen had never had it. Having been rather a delicate child, she was kept out of the house, with a friend in Langholm, at the time the disease had affected her brother. She therefore begged Mr. Armstrong to step up to the bedroom, where Helen was lying down, as her headache had come on again very violently. Mr. Armstrong, on seeing her, pronounced that she had undoubtedly caught the infection, and ordered her to be put to bed. On enquiry about John, they fortunately found, that he had had the

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

disease; which they were glad of, as an illness, at present, must have prevented his going to Mr. Laurie's.

The surgeon now took his leave, promising to call next morning at the same hour; and saying to John, who stood at the door holding his horse. You must take another walk, my lad, to Langholm to-night, to bring some medicine for Miss Helen, for I cannot well manage to send up myself; and it is of consequence that she should take it in the evening. I will do that, Sir, with the greatest pleasure; or any thing else that is in my power for Miss Helen; but I hope you do not think that either she or poor Marion Scott is likely to die, endeavouring to conceal the tears that were trickling down his cheeks; I am sure I should feel as much, if that were to happen, as I did when my own dear father and mother died; and oh, Sir! that was a dreadful time. I hope, my little fellow, there will be no such bad doings as that; answered Mr. Armstrong, at least, we must try all we can to prevent it; so do you come down to me when the evening-service is over, and I will have every thing ready, that you may not be detained. He makes a better messenger, continued he, turning to Mr. Martin, than Archie Kerr, who has not yet returned from Langholm, though Mr. Scott sent him off yesterday morning. I suppose I shall meet him on the road as I ride down, for he will be sure to be home in time for his work to-morrow morning. To do him justice, he seldom forgets that; though, when he can find an excuse to leave it, he is a sad tippling fellow.

The family now went to dinner, which on Sunday seldom consists of any thing but eggs, bread and cheese, and such cold meat as may be in the house. When they had finished their simple meal, Mr. Martin and the servants returned to evening-service; but Helen's illness prevented her mother from leaving her. When the service was over, John set out to Langholm, promising to make all the haste in his power back to the Manse.

He soon arrived at Mr. Armstrong's, and receiving the medicine, set off on his return home. He walked very quick till he got upon the green holm, not having met a single creature the whole way; for walking is considered a very improper way of spending the Sabbath evening, unless when going upon necessary business, as that is the greatest portion of time the peasantry can bestow on catechising their children, and reading portions of Scripture to their families. John was, therefore, rather surprised to see a man walking before him, at a distance. As he himself went quick, he soon came near enough to perceive that the person, whoever he was, instead of going straight forward, kept moving from side to side of the road, in a very extraordinary manner. I do believe, thought John, that this must be Archie Kerr. Well! what will become of him, if, by any chance, the minister should come out to look for me? Though he is a tipsy fellow, and has behaved so ill about Marion, I should not wish any thing so bad as *that* to happen to him. I think I had best run as fast as I can and get up the lane, and then Mr. Martin, when he sees me, will never think of coming to the holm to-night. So saying, he began to hasten as fast as he could; but just as came within a stone's throw of Archie, to John's great alarm, Archie lost his balance, and fell, with his whole force, across the road. John ran to endeavour to help him up again, but, when he got close to him, he perceived that his head had struck against a stone, and that it was bleeding profusely. What shall I do now? said John.

Pray, Archie, try to raise yourself up, if you can; for I have not strength to move you, and I cannot leave you lying here; for if a horse or cart were to come by, you would be crushed to pieces. Archie spoke not, but John continued pulling him as hard as he could, without the least success; and now, becoming seriously alarmed, as he found his temple still bleeding in spite of the neckcloth which John had taken from Archie's neck and tied round his head, he thought the only thing he could do was to run home and prevail on old Sandy, the shepherd, to come and help to remove Archie to a place of safety. But I will get as quietly as I can in at the back door of the manse, thought John, that the minister may know nothing about it; for I don't know what would be the consequence, if he were to learn that there was such a disgraceful sight, just before his own door, on a Sunday evening.

With this intention, John ran up the lane, and had just got his hand upon the latch of the back door, which he was lifting gently up, when he heard the study bell ring for prayers, which on Sunday were always before supper, in order that the children and servants of the family might be examined on what they had heard at church; an excellent practice, as it induces them to be more attentive while there, and gives them an opportunity of being instructed on points which they may not have perfectly understood. John had no time to deliberate. He went in, and saw the tail of the shepherd's coat, just going into the parlour. He sprung forward, in hopes of drawing him

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

back, without being observed; but Sandy was too intent on what he had to say to the Minister to understand any of the signs that John was making. He therefore only thought the boy was playing some monkey tricks; and being greatly scandalized at such conduct, so near the presence of his master, he, with one jerk, pushed poor John into the middle of the room. A shriek, from Mrs. Martin, made her husband, who was sitting at the table, with the large family Bible open before him, raise his head. A most terrific sight was presented to him John standing directly opposite, as pale as death, his face and hands stained in various places with blood, his clothes in disorder, and trembling from head to foot. What has happened, child? asked they all with one breath. What have you been doing? John stood undetermined what to say. He stammered; and, at last, bursting into tears and turning to the shepherd, cried, Oh, Sandy! why did you not stop, when I pulled your coat? then I should not have been obliged to tell upon poor Archie; but now I cannot save him from disgrace. Speak distinctly, my dear, said Mr. Martin, taking hold of his hand, and bidding him compose himself. Something serious must have happened. Don't think of Archie's disgrace: but tell me at once what it is. John now saw that he could not avoid unfolding his tale, and therefore began, in a very confused way, to relate what had happened. Mr. Martin, however, soon gathered that Archie had fallen down and was hurt. He therefore waited no longer than to get a lantern lighted, and with old Sandy, set out after John, who ran before them to show them where Archie was.

When they got near the place, they heard him groaning most piteously. They raised him up, and tried to get him to walk between them; but though he was sensible of the pain of his head, as they supposed by his groans, he was so completely overcome by liquor, that he could not assist himself in the least; and after various trials, Mr. Martin desired John, as the only method of getting their burden to the Manse that he could think of, to go and bring Bob down some difficulty they at last succeeded in conveying Archie safe to the house; and the maids, in the mean time, having made up a bed for him in the kitchen, Mrs. Martin proceeded to examine his wound. She found it was a pretty deep cut; but not likely to be of any serious consequence. She therefore, after dressing it, ordered Sandy to put her patient to bed, and leave him to sleep off the effects of his intoxication. The family then returned to the parlour, Nelly having first washed John's face and hands, and made him a little more fit to be seen; and Mrs. Martin observing that he was still pale from the fright, gave him a glass of currant wine before he began his catechism.

After the duties of the evening were over, the supper was brought in, which on Sunday evenings is usually the most abundant meal of any during the week, and in general the most cheerful; but this night poor Helen's illness through a damp over the spirits of her parents; and the nicely-roasted fowl, with fried eggs, Mr. Martin's favourite dish left the table almost untouched; to the great displeasure of Nelly the cook, who supposing it arose from a different cause, declared in the kitchen, that it was scandalous shame for that wicked varlet, Archie Kerr, to disturb her good master, and keep him from eating his wholesome supper after the fatigues of the day, by thinking on his great wickedness. Was there no other place for him to break his head but just before the Minister's door? She was sure if she had seen him fall she would have let him lie.

Hush, Nelly, said Sandy, you would have done no such thing. You are only angry because your supper has not been eaten to-night; but I dare say Archie has nothing to do with that; it is more likely to be Miss Helen's illness.

I did not think of that, indeed, said Nelly. May be Archie is not to blame about the supper, and he has enough to answer for without laying that to his charge; but, good night, continued she, it is time we were all gone to bed. Remember, Sandy, that Archie must not leave the house till our master has seen and talked with him. I was desired to tell you to be very particular about this. I am thinking the Minister will read him a lecture. I am sure I would not be in his place for the best new gown in Langholm. So saying, they all separated for the evening.

Through the night poor Helen suffered considerably; and her anxious mother never left her till towards morning, when Mr. Martin took his wife's place, and insisted that she should lie down for a few hours. We shall have you ill too, my dear, if you do not take care; and then what will become of us? Pray, mamma, said Helen, (who had heard what her father said,) do go to bed. I promise you I will lie quite still, and give papa no trouble that I

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

can help. Mrs. Martin was at last persuaded to leave them; and after a sleep of three hours, found, on her return to the room, that the measles had made their appearance, and that Helen felt rather better than when she had left her.

On going down stairs, Mr. Martin enquired for Archie Kerr, of Nelly, who was laying the cloth for breakfast. He is pretty well, Sir, this morning, but wants sadly to get away to his work. At least, that is what he says; but I think he is afraid to see you, after what happened last night. When he discovered where he was, Sandy tells me, he grew quite pale, and said, 'This is the worst scrape I have ever got into. I think I would almost as soon have fallen into the river as have been brought to the Manse, for how shall I ever face the Minister?' Send him in to me, Nelly; and don't disturb us, till I ring the bell. Nelly did as she was ordered; and Archie made his appearance with his head bound up, and one of Sandy's woollen night-caps half drawn over his eyes, as if he wanted to hide them from the good man, who was now going to address him. As, however, the door was shut immediately, and there were none present but himself and the Minister, what Mr. Martin said to him never transpired; only when he left the study and passed through the kitchen, in his way to go home, Nelly observed that his eyes were red with weeping; and as he shook hands with John, he said, I shall have reason, my little fellow, to bless the night you found me, and got me brought to the Manse, all my life long, if I can but remember what the minister has been saying to me; and, after his kindness, I shall be an ungrateful villain indeed, if ever I forget it; and that I would not be for all the whiskey in Eskdale. Farewell! And, my man, if ever you should be tempted to drink more than is good for you, think on Archie Kerr, last night, and I am sure that will restrain you.

## CHAP. VI.

When Mr. Armstrong made his appearance, after breakfast, he said, Helen was doing as well as he could wish. She was likely to have the disease very easily; and he hoped, in a few days, would be quite well. I wish, added he, that poor little Marion Scott may do as well. She is a delicate creature, and her fever ran very high when I left her yesterday. He added, he was going higher up the dale, and would not return till the evening, and that he would see Helen on his way back. He spoke this on the step of the door, as he was going out. John heard it, and, running up to Mr. Martin, asked him if he might go up with Mr. Armstrong as far as Mr. Scott's, just to hear how poor Marion is, this morning, Sir. Certainly, my dear, I am glad that you thought of it; for I am very anxious to hear of her myself. But, stop a moment, I will get you something for her that may be useful; as it is not likely that Mrs. Scott should have any herself. So saying, he went up to his wife, and asked her for a pot of black currant jelly, of which a country clergyman's wife always takes care to have a good supply, for the benefit of her poorer neighbours. John having got his affairs carefully packed by Nelly, in a wicker basket, set out at a good pace after Mr. Armstrong. As he walked along he could not help remembering in what very different circumstance he had walked that very road, only three days before. Dear me, said he to himself, who could have thought that so very happy a day should have produced such melancholy events? Here are we, all in sickness and anxiety, instead of singing and conversing so pleasantly as we then did. I may just as well be at the hill now, as with the Minister; for, even though Miss Helen should get well, (which I hope and trust she will,) there can be no long walks for a great while again. I remember, when I had this troublesome disease, I was not able to run about, strongly, for nearly three months. As he passed by Mr. Elliott's cottage, he gave it a look, and said, Well, I wish Miss Helen could live at that pretty place, when she grows to be a woman; but I don't see how it can well happen, unless, indeed, Master William should become a great man, (as why should he not? He is my master's own son; and he is surely the best man in Eskdale;) then, to be sure, he may very likely buy the farm, to please his sister, and live at it with her; oh, dear! how I should like to see that day.

With such like airy castle building John amused himself till he reached Mr. Scott's where he heard that Marion still continued very ill.

I am so glad you have brought us the jelly, said Mrs. Scott, for her throat is very sore, and our own minister's family are all gone to Edinburgh. The General Assembly is coming on, and he is a member this year. The

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

*General Assembly* is a meeting of clergymen, chosen from the different districts of Scotland. They assemble at Edinburgh once a year, to judge and determine on the church affairs, that are brought before them, from all parts of the country.

John only waited to hear how Marion was, and then with a sorrowful heart, prepared to depart, when he saw Mr. Scott coming towards him. Mr. Scott had a bunch of cuttings, from the hot-house plants in his hands, and, holding them out to John, he said, Here, yonker; You may have these, if you like to take the trouble of carrying them; and, if you take pains and put them into pots, they will grow and be very pretty; but you must water them regularly, and in cold weather keep them within doors. I dare say Mrs. Martin will thank you for them. If you will step with me into the tool-house, I will give you some pots; for, perhaps, there may not be any at the Minister's house.

John very thankfully accepted this offer, and Mr. Scott putting half a dozen within each other, contrived to stow them into the wicker basket. At first the delight which John felt at bringing home such a treasure, prevented him from feeling the great weight of the basket; but he had not walked far before he was obliged to put it down and stop to rest. He took it up again, but the further he walked the oftener was he obliged to stop; for Mr. Scott had considered more the size of the pots that his plants required, than the strength of the carrier. Oh, dear! said John, at last, I do believe I shall be kept as long upon the road, with this heavy basket, as Archie Kerr was in going to Langholm. What shall I do with it? I cannot be so very ungrateful as to leave it on the road, after Mr. Scott has been so kind as to give the pots to me; and how I shall get it home, I am sure, I do not know. It will be dark night before I can reach the Manse.

Just as he took it up, to proceed a little farther, he heard the voice of some one singing near the spot where he was: he listened, and thought it came from the river side; but the trees that grew in that direction prevented him from seeing. He therefore put down his basket and ran across the road, to try if he could discover whether it was any one he knew; and, to his great delight, found it was Tom, David Little's son. Tom, as soon as he saw John, skipped up to him and shook hands most cordially. I am so glad to see you, said he, for you will tell Miss Helen that my chickens are all alive yet; and mammy says if they live another week, I shall then be pretty sure of rearing them, if I take care always to shut them up at night, to prevent the fox from getting at them. They are nasty, greedy, cruel creatures, these foxes and mammy says, I cannot be too watchful to preserve my chickens from them; for they are very cunning, and are always ready to seize the first opportunity of snapping up any thing that is left in their way. John agreed, that all Tom said was quite true; for he remembered, he had suffered himself from the depredations; having had a whole brood of young ducks devoured in one night, when he lived near Langholm. He then told Tom the distress he was in about his basket. Tom immediately cried, O, I will tell you how we will manage. Do you take out three of the pots, and give them to me; and I will carry them as far as the Manse for you; for my mammy will not expect me home for two hours. She bade me go out and give Colly a walk; for he is quite stupid, and even ill, for want of his usual exercise on the hills; so I thought I would come down the glen and see the place where my daddy fell; and, do you know the sensible beast ran directly up to the place, and lifted up in his mouth my daddy's whip, which had been left there, I suppose, ever since that terrible night. Look at it. It is a good whip, and my daddy will be glad to have it back again; for he gave a shilling for it the last time he went to Langhold with his master's cart; and surely he grudged the price, but he was obliged to have it, for he could not drive the cart home without it. Well, said John, if you really think, Tom, that your mammy won't be frightened at your being so long, I shall be much obliged to you to help me with my load; and I shall perhaps be able, some day, to do you a favour, when you stand in as much need of assistance as I do now.

Having divided the load, they found they could now very easily get along; and they went on chatting, till all at once John recollected the measles. My dear Tom, asked he, pray, tell me, have you ever had the measles?

No, replied Tom, I have never had them, and mammy is very particular in telling me, never go into any of the houses in the glen when they are there. All the children, round us, had them last summer, but mammy never let us go down the steps till they were quite gone, and so we escaped; but why do you ask?

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

John was silent for a minute, thinking how nearly he had led the poor little fellow into a danger his mother had taken so much pains to guard him against: he then said, Tom, we must stop, and you must go home directly. I dare say I shall manage to get the basket home some way or other; but you must, on no account, go near the Manse. Miss Helen has got the measles and is very ill. Besides, continued John, poor Marion Scott has got them very bad indeed, and I think you had best go home directly and tell your mammy, for the disease will soon spread all around, and I think you will be safest up the steps at this time, as you were last summer. I shall not like that at all, said Tom, I was so tired living up there. I was just as Colly is, and I dare say it will be the believe, John, you are right; for it would never do for any of us to be ill when my daddy is in the bed, and we are all obliged, till he is better, to sleep on some straw, in the inner room, that we may not disturb him. But tell Miss Helen all about the chickens, and that I am very sorry to hear she is ill. Good bye to you, I hope you may meet somebody else who has had the measles, and then they need not be afraid of helping you home with the basket.

John was really glad when he saw Tom fairly gone. The consequences of the poor child catching the disease, at this time, appeared to him dreadful; and he began to think how fortunate he had been in recollecting the measles before he had brought him into the Manse. With this comfortable reflection, John trudged on with the basket, and, occupied with this own thoughts, he did not feel the weight so overpowering as he had done before he met Tom; he was however, obliged at last again to stop. As he was resting himself, he saw a girl, about twelve years old, running down the holm towards him. When she came up, she said You don't know me, John Telfer; but I am Peggy Oliphant, Mr. Elliott's herd-girl, that lives up in that cottage, (pointing to the very cottage John had been planning for Master William,) and Tom Little, whom I met as I was coming down, asked me to run forward and help you with your basket, as I am going as far as Langholm, on an errand of my mistress; you need not be afraid to let me go to the Manse, for I have had the measles, and so has all my master's children; we all had them last year.

Thank you, Peggy, said John, it is very kind of you, and very attentive, in such a little boy as Tom is, to think of me and my basket; I am sure I shall be glad of your assistance, for I am quite tired with it. Oh! answered Peggy, I shall do it with the greatest pleasure, that, or any thing else, for any one that belongs to our good Minister; I was sorely vexed to hear that Miss Helen was so bad. But have you heard the news? No, answered John, what is it? As I was taking away the breakfast things this morning, Nanny being busy about something in the kitchen, I heard my master read in the paper, that Capt. Elliott, your mistress's brother, had been fighting with a French frigate, and had taken her; and that he had brought her into some port in England, but I forget the name. My master said he was glad of it, for the Captain was a brave fellow, and an honour to the name of Elliott: and my mistress added, now Mrs. Martin will get a sight of her only brother; in the last letter he wrote to her, he promised that the first time he came into port, he would endeavour to get leave of absence, to come down and see his old mother, from whom he had been absent now for ten years.

This is news, indeed, Peggy, replied John. I am sure I wish it may be true. I only hope he may not come before Miss Helen is better, for that would spoil all my mistress's pleasure. Peggy and John went chatting along till they reached the Manse, when they parted, John thanking her very heartily for the assistance she had given him in carrying the flowerpots.

As soon as he got in, he went and tapped at the study door. Come in, John, said Mr. Martin, I heard your voice in the kitchen. Pray, how is Marion? Very bad, indeed, Sir. Mrs. Scott said she had not slept all night, and was quite delirious this morning. Mr. Armstrong said, that he hoped the measles would be fully out by the evening, and he thought she would then be better. After John had finished delivering his message, he stood still and seemed hesitating whether to go or remain. Mr. Martin at last observed this, and asked him if he had any thing more to say. Why, yes, Sir, if I thought that it would be right to tell you what I have heard; but as it was only Peggy Oliphant that told me, I am afraid it may not be true; as, I think, you or my mistress would have had a letter yourselves, if the news had been really what she says. What is it, my dear, that you have heard? Peggy Oliphant's news I think cannot be of any great consequence. Yes, but it is, Sir, should it be true; for she says her master read in the paper this morning that Capt. Elliott has taken a French ship and has brought her safe to

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

England. That is indeed important, John, and I must lose no time in ascertaining the truth of it. Have you mentioned this story to any one but me? No, Sir, not a word; I thought it best to come and tell it to you directly. That is right, my man; now you must promise not to tell any other person a word of the matter till I return; I shall go up to Mr. Elliott's and see the paper myself, before I say any thing to my wife, least it should prove some mistake of Peggy Oliphant's.

Mr. Martin set out immediately for Mr. Elliott's, saying to his wife, he was going to take a little walk. And John, having asked how Miss Helen was, and heard she was continuing better, set about planting his greenhouse slips. He found he had two or three different kinds of geraniums, a rose-bush, and one or two myrtles. O, said he to Nelly, who stood by while he planted them, I wish they may thrive, I shall have such pleasure in giving them to Miss Helen, when she is better. Do you think the Minister would let them stand in the study window, if I was to ask him? for the sun shines best there, and I will take great care not to make any dirt when I water them in the evening; you know, Nelly, I am to come here every night to read to the Minister, and I can water them then.

You come here every night to read to the Minister! You are surely dreaming, child; what can you mean? Indeed and in very truth, I am saying nothing but what he told me himself; and besides that he has settled it all with Mr. Laurie; I am sure it is very kind of him: but, Nelly, do you know, I am half afraid to come to him as a scholar, for when my poor father used to teach me, I was sometimes very stupid and could not understand what he told me? Now, if I should be so with the Minister, what will become of me? I cannot expect him to have the patience with me that my father had; and if he should be very angry with me, I shall be so frightened I shall wish I had refused his kind offer; it must be a fearful thing to make the Minister angry. It is both a fearful thing and a wicked thing, answered Nelly; but there is one comfort for you, it is not very easily done. If it really is as you say, that master his own self will condescend to teach you, James Telfer, the shoemaker's son, to read! you must try, with all your might, to learn as fast as you can, that you may give him as little trouble as possible. Refuse, indeed, such an offer! you would have made him angry in good earnest then, I believe, and with some reason. But, continued she, above all things, be obedient, and do all he desires you. Then, after being silent a little, she said, as if to herself, I should think he might have had enough of teaching, after all the trouble and sorrow his own son cost him. I am sure, if that little violent monkey had not been sent to school, he would have been the death of my master. I never wish to hear of his teaching boys again, so little like sweet Miss Helen; but it is all out of charity, I see that very well; just like his kind heart.

Nelly proceeded now to prepare for dinner, and John, after planting his slips, carried them to the green, and set them all in a row, that Mr. Martin might see them, and give him an opportunity of asking his leave to place them on the outside of his window. He had but just got them all ready, when seeing Mr. Martin walking very quick up the lane, he ran to open the gate. It is all true, John, said his master. Capt. Elliott has really gained a great victory. It will be quite a cordial to your mistress in the midst of her present uneasiness. So saying, without observing John's plants, he hastened into the house, and went up to rejoice his wife's heart with the good news. Helen was too unwell to be told any thing of the matter at that time, as her mother was afraid of agitating her.

After dinner Mr. Martin observed from his window the flowerpots standing on the green. Where can these great flowerpots have come from? asked he. Look at them, my dear, I cannot think who can have put them there.

I am sure I don't know, said she, how they came there, but we can soon ring and ask. John was upon the watch, and as soon as he understood what was wanted, came forward and made his request. Certainly, my dear, you may place them where you please; they are very pretty, and I think from their appearance, they are likely to do you credit. Helen will be very proud of her present; but how did you get the pots? I really did not know I had such a thing in the garden. I brought them with me from Mr. Scott's, said John. He gave me them with the plants. Why, you surely did not carry these heavy pots all that long way. No, Sir, I cannot say that I carried them *all* the way, for Tom Little carried some of them, until I thought of the measles, and then I sent him back. Peggy Oliphant helped me down the holm, and it was then she told me the story of Capt. Elliott. Upon my word, John, you are a very active little fellow, and deserve to succeed in what you undertake, you are so persevering; I only hope I shall find you equally industrious when you begin your reading lessons with me; you remember we are to keep school for the first time tomorrow evening. Yes, Sir, I shall be sure to remember,

said John as he left the room.

## CHAP. VII.

In the evening he took leave of Mr. Martin's family, with a very sorrowful heart, and set off for Mr. Laurie's. When he reached the house, the maid bade him come in and sit down near the fire. The other servants began to assemble, and in about ten minutes the supper was ready. It consisted of boiled potatoes and whey, the common supper for farm servants. Jeannie, the cook, then pressed John to eat: he is shy yet, poor thing; but you need not be afraid, if you are a good boy. Our master will be very kind to you; and Will, the shepherd, is one of the drollest and best natured fellows in the dale, and will keep you laughing all day long, when he goes to the hill with you. You had best take care of his tricks, however, for he is very fond of playing them off upon people, but they are always harmless. Just as she finished this consoling address the door opened, and in came Will, the shepherd. He was a stout, sun-burnt, good-looking man of about thirty years of age, fun and good nature being strongly expressed in his face. Ah! have you all begun, and not waited for me? I think that is not very good manners, considering that I am the life of the company, he said, laughing, as he drew his chair near the table: and whom have we among us in this corner, looking so grave? I dare say it is my new herd-boy, that our master was talking about this morning. Come, man, cheer up, we shall be as merry as grigs to-morrow on the hill. You'll never have a grave face in my company, I promise you, long together. I have been telling him, Will, said Jeannie, I was sure you would be kind to him, so that he had no need to be frightened. And indeed, continued she, in a sort of whisper, who would not be kind to a poor orphan boy like him? Now my lad, said Will, I must try what you are good for, and send you on your first errand. Go into the stable for me; it stands on the left hand as you go out, and at the back of the door you will see a coat hanging up; put your hand in to the pocket, and bring me a whistle you will find there. I have been making it, Jeannie, for your nephew, Tom Little; poor fellow, he was so good natured the other day, in running down to help me to drive the sheep over the hill; he is too young yet to be a herd; but if he live he will be a fine, active, spirited fellow, some day. I promised him a whistle, and I never break my word.

John found the whistle where Will had directed him to look, and brought it to him. Now, that is a clever fellow; and I think the least I can do, in return, is to play you a tune. I hope you like music; it is the chief pleasure we shepherds have; and it seems to me that it never sounds so sweetly as it does up among the hills. So saying, he began to play a pretty Scotch air upon Tom's whistle. When he had finished, John, whose eyes were sparkling with delight (for he did, indeed, like music), lost part of his timidity, and starting up said, And did you make that whistle all yourself? That I did, my man; and I am glad it has made you find your tongue; for I began to be afraid that master had got a dumb boy for a herd; and that would not suit me at all. If I find you a brisk, merry fellow, that can sing a song, and dance a reel at times, you shall have a whistle too; and, perhaps I may teach you to make it yourself; but it will all depend upon your good behaviour. If you were always to look as grave as you were when I first saw you, I don't think I should ever trouble my head about you; but we had better go to bed. Mind that you be ready for me tomorrow morning; I do not like to be kept waiting.

In the morning, John took good care not to keep Will waiting; but was up and standing at the door when he made his appearance. So you are ready, I see, my lad; that's well: but take care you continue alert; for that stupid boy, Sandy Laing, whom we had last, was the plague of my life, he never was ready; and somehow he contrived always to put me out of humour before we began our day's work; and then all went wrong. Will led John across a little wooden bridge that was near the farm, and after walking three miles over the hills, they came to the place where the sheep were penned. Another shepherd had been left with the dogs to guard them through the night, who, immediately after giving up his charge, set off to bed. After letting the sheep out to feed, and giving John all the necessary instructions how to manage both them and the dogs, which, when well-trained, are of the most singular importance to the shepherd, Will asked John what he had brought with him to do all day? John very innocently said, he never had thought of doing any thing, but watching the sheep. Watching the sheep! cried Will, that to be sure you must do; but, if you take care to direct the dogs right, they will do that, without giving you much

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

trouble. It will never answer for you to have nothing but that to employ yourself on. You must either bring a book with you, if you can read well enough, or else you must learn to knit, or make a whistle; or, in short, any thing but being idle. No herd of mine, that I care a farthing for, shall ever be a lazy fellow if I can help it; so, if you can keep a secret, I will tell you one. I have in my pocket some knitting needles and some worsted, which I will lend you. Knitting is easily learnt, and you may then help me to work some stockings for David Little, that met with that ugly accident the other day. When he begins to go about, he will want stockings to keep his poor broken leg warm. But you need not speak of this down at the farm; mind that, or I shall never trust you again with any of my secrets; it would spoil all the pleasure of my present. John promised faithfully to be silent, as to the stockings; and, having accepted the offer of being taught to knit, succeeded far better than he had expected himself, as he was a willing boy. Very well, John, said Will, you will make a famous knitter in your time; and you will, perhaps, thank Will Oliver all your life, for having taught you to be so useful. When you have become expert at it, you may always keep yourself neat and tidy about the legs, on Sundays and handsel Mondays. Besides, you will dance the better, when a wedding comes round; and I should be ashamed, at my wedding, which will perhaps be sooner than some folks know of, added he, laughing, if my herd were to dance in any thing but hose of his own working.

Thus encouraged, John persevered; and, by dinner-time, he had learned the stitch perfectly. Meanwhile, the sheep had wandered farther up the hill, and Will thought it proper to follow them; so, sometimes whistling, sometimes singing, he beguiled the time, till they reached the very top of the highest hill. When John had got thus far, he was surprised, on looking down, to see that he was almost directly opposite to Mr. Scott's, at Craigie Hall. Oh dear, said he, what would I give to know how poor Marion is. What is that you are saying, boy? said Will, Do you know any thing of Mr. Scott's family? That I do, said John; and immediately related all that had passed the day he had been there with Mr. Martin. He hesitated a good deal when he got to that part of the story about the spurs; but Will, who saw there was some sort of secret in the way, soon contrived to get it out of him, and laughed so loud and so long at poor John's mishap, that the latter was vexed at having said any thing about it. But when Will had his laugh out, he said, Well, John, since you are anxious to hear of Marion, I will wait for you here; and you can easily run down the hill. You will find stepping stones across the river, almost exactly opposite the house, so that you may go and be back to me in half an hour. Off with you, my boy, and let me see if you can be trusted. John lost no time in reaching Mr. Scott's, where he learnt, to his great consolation, that Marion was now doing well, and that Mr. Armstrong considered her out of danger.

When John returned, Will, making a known signal to the dogs, ordered them to bring in the sheep, that they might be penned for the night; and John, to his surprise, saw the two dogs instantly set off to execute their task, with extraordinary sagacity. The sheep were scattered all about the side of the hill; and the dogs *wore* them in (for such is the word used to express this curious operation), by running all round the outside of the flock, barking, and driving the stragglers towards the centre, but never hurting one of them; and thus, at length, every sheep was got safe into the fold; the shepherd merely overlooking his dogs, and giving them, from time to time, the necessary word of command. You are surprised, said Will, to see the dogs understand so well what I say to them. They have been well-trained, and are of a particular breed, only common on these hills. I can make them bring me any one particular sheep that I describe to them out of the flock directly. We never should be able to bear the fatigue, if we had not these faithful creatures with us. The going up and down the hills so often after the sheep, would wear out any man's strength, long before the day was over. You will soon learn the way of managing them; and they, in time, will become accustomed to your voice. At present, they know the sheep, and will allow no harm to happen to them.

Will now sent John home, as he himself was to remain till the other shepherd came to his relief. John reached the farm, when it was nearly dark, and having washed his face and hands, set out for the Manse. He found Mr. Martin waiting for him in the study. Well, John, how do you like herding? asked he, as his young scholar entered the room. Very well, Sir; much better, indeed, than I expected: the shepherd has been very kind to me, and shown me every thing I have to do; and I think, Sir, I shall be able very soon to learn the business. I have no doubt, if you take pains, you will very soon do so; but come, let us begin our evening task. When this was over, John

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

asked how Miss Helen was. She is much better, John; and I hope, in a few days, she will be able to come down and admire your pretty flowers. I really think they are taking root. John was glad to hear this; and having watered them, and shaken hands with his friend Nelly, he told her he should never again be afraid to encounter his reading; for, said he, the Minister has so much patience, and explains every thing to me so clearly, that I must be a dunce indeed not to understand him, and a very bad boy if I do not take pains to remember what he says.

John continued this kind of life without interruption for two months, in the course of which time he had become very expert in the management of his sheep; and Will was so much pleased with his diligence, that he taught him both to make and also to play upon the same sort of whistle on which he was himself so skilful a performer. John could now play, very tolerably, the old Scottish air of *the Ewe-buchts, Marion!* a very particular favourite of his, although Will said he thought it rather the name than the tune which had caught the boy's fancy. His reading had likewise improved wonderfully. Mr. Martin had lent him a common copy of Robinson Crusoe (for the elegant one with the plates was too valuable to be carried to the hill), and this book, which had first excited his desire of learning, now became the constant companion of his leisure moments. Indeed it would have entirely driven the whistle, the knitting, and everything else out of his head, if Will, who was somewhat proud of his scholar, had not insisted on his continuing to work at his stockings some part of every day, and to display his progress in music to his fellow-servants every evening.

Helen and Marion had by this time both recovered, though Marion was still delicate. The latter, however, had found out that John's sheep grazed very often just opposite to her father's house; she therefore, more than once, made her way across the water to listen to John's whistle, which she greatly admired; and she at the same time convinced him that she could sing, and, according to his taste, very sweetly.

Little offerings of friendship were continually passing, on these occasions, between the children. Sometimes Marion would save the fruit which her father was permitted to give her out of the hall garden, and she would carry it over, in a cabbage-leaf, to share it with John. He, in return, wishing to procure a basket for her greater accommodation, got his friend Will to teach him how to make one, like that which the shepherds in general use for carrying their provisions to the hill, and which is shaped something like a pouch, and slung by a strap over the shoulder. To make the basket the more acceptable, John filled it with the prettiest mosses that he could find on the hills. These mosses are remarkably fine in Eskdale, and very much in request among the ladies, who ornament their garden seats and bowers with them. The frames being made of a sort of basket-work, the moss, when fresh gathered, with the roots unbroken, is twisted into the frame so as to leave the green part only visible. Thus they take root, and if carefully watered, in a very little time have the appearance of having grown there naturally. They are called *fogg houses*, and are very common. Seats and tables are likewise added, as furniture to the fogg house, and for this purpose the most beautiful moss is always reserved. The greater the variety of shades, the more it is prized; and they are sometimes seen shaded, from the darkest green to the most beautiful rose-colour. This last colour is the most rare, and is only found on one particular moor, at the top of a distant hill. John contrived, one afternoon, to coax Will to take his place with the sheep, and let him go in search of his much-coveted prize; which, having succeeded in obtaining, he arranged all the various sorts he had picked up in the basket, taking care to place the rose-coloured just at the top, and carried it over to Mr. Scott's.

On John's arrival, it was unluckily damp, and Marion's mother had desired her not to go out. He therefore peeped around the house a long time to no purpose, and was at last obliged to go up and knock boldly at the door, in order to deliver his present; otherwise he would have had to take it home and return another day with it, which he thought would be a pity, as the beauty of the moss would be impaired if immediate precaution were not taken to prevent it. Mrs. Scott opened the door herself. John Telfer, I declare! cried she. What can possibly have brought you here so late? I hope no accident has happened that you are not gone to the Minister's as usual.

No, said John, there is no accident; the minister could not have me to read to-night, for the family are all occupied with the arrival of Capt. Elliot. He was expected to dine there to day, and I took the opportunity, with Will Oliver's leave, to go up to the black moor to get some moss for Marion. She told me she wanted to make a table for her bower, and I have brought her this, which I hope she will accept.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

Oh! cried Marion, who had been reading to her father, what a beautiful sight! Did you ever see so much pink moss together? Indeed, said Mr. Scott, taking the basket out of his hand, I have seldom seen so fine a specimen. I think, if you take pains with your table, it will surpass that which the ladies at the lodge have made, and theirs is reckoned the most beautiful in the country. I am sure, John, you must have had a great deal of trouble and fatigue to get at this. Pray, wife, give the boy something to eat, he must be hungry. I don't mind the trouble a bit, said John, if Marion is pleased; but I can't stop to eat any thing, for it is growing late, and I must run home as fast as I can, that I may be in time to play to Will, or he will be angry, and never let me go again. So saying he ran off, and scarcely slackened his pace till he reached Mr. Laurie's.

### CHAP. VIII.

Captain Elliott, mean time, had arrived at the Manse. He was a fine good-looking young man, excessively attached to his sister and her family; and having been absent so long from his native country, had so much to hear and see, that he completely occupied every moment of their time. Helen was only a baby in arms when he left the country, but William was between three and four years old. After talking to them all some time, he turned to Mrs. Martin and said, but where is young Pickle, that I do not see him? My mother wrote me something about his being a violent-tempered boy; but I suppose it is nothing else but that, having a little more spirit than his father, you think him a dragon. There never was in the world, I believe, so even-tempered a man as my good brother-in-law, and Helen looks as if she were his own child. While he was speaking, Mrs. Martin became quite grave, and her brother fancied she changed colour. Her husband, however, looked pleased at this remembrance of William; and taking her hand, said, Come, come, my dear, you must not, by looking so serious, make your brother fancy William worse than he really is. The truth is, he has given us a great deal of uneasiness by the violence of his temper; but Mr. Lamont, with whom he is, at Kelso, writes me word that he has good hopes of getting the better of the boy's little failings in time. He is a most excellent scholar, always at the head of his class, which is a large one; and, in short, I trust he will do very well by and bye. God grant you may not be deceived in your hopes, my dear husband, said Mrs. Martin, solemnly; but I have my fears. His little faults, as you call them, were great ones in a boy of his age; at least they appeared in that light to me. I hope I may be mistaken. The truth was, William, when a child, had been the idol of his parents' hearts; quick, lively, and entertaining, full of trick and fun, they had no idea of contradicting him in any of his whims, they were so amused with what they called his little oddities. But, in a short time, his mother, who was of a very superior understanding, thought she perceived symptoms of a spirit beginning to appear in him of a most alarming tendency. His father, who was indeed the mildest of human beings, would not believe that there were the slightest grounds for her fears; and for several years he retained that most dangerous of all errors which parents are apt to fall into, namely, delaying to correct faults, under the notion of a child's being too young to understand its duties. At last, one morning, his sister, who was three years his junior, happened to take up one of his playthings, and was amusing herself with it in one corner of the room, when William, who had a book of prints to look at from his father, suddenly perceived her, and called out in a very peremptory tone to order her to lay it down. Poor Helen, who was not more than three years old, did not immediately obey him. He suddenly started up; and with eyes and face flaming with rage, he caught hold of her and dashed her poor little head, with all the strength he possessed, against the wainscot. His father, who was writing, had scarcely observed what was going on, till Helen's screams drew his attention. What a sight met his eyes, when he looked towards where his children stood! Helen lying on the carpet, her head streaming with blood, and William standing beside her, silent, and frightened at what he had done! This was, I may say, the most painful moment that Mr. Martin had ever endured. It completely opened his eyes to the violence of William's temper; and from that day, for the next four years of his life, he laboured indefatigably in endeavouring to control a spirit that was likely to have so pernicious an effect on his son's future happiness.

It unfortunately happened, that, about this time, Mr. Martin had a very serious illness, which rendered it impossible for him to continue his instructions and watchful vigilance. On this account Mrs. Martin's mother, who doted on her grandson, persuaded them to send the child to her; and added, as an inducement, that he might attend

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

the school at Melrose. Mrs. Martin very strongly opposed the plan. She knew her son, and she feared the effects of the good old lady's indulgence; but at last, as her husband seemed to fret, and continually regret that his boy would forget all he had learned, she was persuaded to send him to his grandmother, an event which, in all probability, finally fixed the destiny of William. He remained at Melrose two years, attending the school regularly, and sleeping and eating at Mrs. Elliott's. For the first year, though often very obstreperous, he yet stood in some degree of awe both of his master and grandmother; and on his promising good behaviour for the future, Mrs. Elliott very unfortunately forbore mentioning to his parents, either by letter or when they paid their annual visit in August, any part of his bad conduct; and as he took care to appear to them, whilst they remained, a very good boy, they went home quite delighted with the thoughts that he was entirely cured of his bad habits. In the course of the next year he became so perfectly unmanageable, that at last his grandmother, though greatly unwilling to complain of him, as well knowing he would be removed directly, thought it her duty to impart the real state of the case to his parents. They hastened their visit on this account, and went to Melrose a month sooner than they were expected; and before William had an opportunity, by better behaviour, which he had planned in his own mind (going home being the last thing he desired), to prevail on his indulgent grandmother to entreat that he might be once more left with her.

On his return to the Manse, his father again began the arduous task of subduing a temper, which was likely to be of such fatal consequence, both to his own happiness, and likewise to all those connected with him. But William was now twelve years old, and had indulged himself in such uncontrolled liberty of spirit for the last twelve months, that, though Mr. Martin tried every means he could think of, endeavouring sometimes to convince his reason, laying before him the baneful consequences that must ensue from such conduct, and at other times by more violent methods, yet he made very little or no progress towards a cure; so that, at last, Mrs. Martin became perfectly convinced that, if William remained at home much longer, the father would be sacrificed for the son, as she saw that the continued struggle and exertion he was obliged to live in began materially to affect his health. In this state of affairs, she thought at last of consulting Mr. Lamont, the schoolmaster at Kelso, under whom her brother had been educated. He was a man of superior understanding, had long been in the habits of teaching, and had, as he very well merited, acquired great celebrity. Both Mr. and Mrs. Martin had a high opinion of his judgment, and knew that, when the truth was full laid before him, he would give them his candid advice on what was best to be done; and Mrs. Martin hoped he would be able to convince her husband, that it became a duty in him not to sacrifice his own health in an attempt which, it was quite evident, could obtain no success.

Mr. Lamont's answer was, that without seeing the boy he could not so well judge; and that, as his holidays were just commencing, he would come over and spend some days with them at the Manse. Accordingly he came, and remained a fortnight, during which time he was fully convinced that what Mrs. Martin apprehended would infallibly be the case; that Mr. Martin's health was already injured, and that, if a speedy remedy were not found, in all probability it would end fatally. He therefore one morning, when walking out with Mr. Martin, took the opportunity of some reference which his father made to William's unhappy temper, to propose to undertake the charge of him for the next twelve months.

I am well used to all kind of tempers, said he; and though William has great and alarming faults to combat, yet I am not without hope that I shall be able to succeed in managing him better than you are doing. He knows the mildness and affection of your nature, and most ungenerously takes advantage of it to torment you, in hopes of wearing you out, and making you, in the end, cease from opposing him. It will be quite a different thing with me; he will find one uniform system of restraint and punishment, in my school, practised towards all those who dare to act otherwise than they are all directed. No violence or opposition on his part will ever be able to make me yield in a single instance. One stipulation, however, I must insist on making, that no excuse is to be strong enough for taking him away from me, till I can with safety assure you that I can trust him from under my own eye. Mr. Martin said he would consider over the subject with his wife, and give him an answer next day; telling him, at the same time, that he fully appreciated the kindness of the offer, for he knew too well, that this poor unhappy boy was not a pupil from whom Mr. Lamont was likely to derive much credit. He is, however, added he, a good scholar, and, as far as his lessons go, you will never have any fault to find. It is his temper alone that is in fault, at

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

least I hope so; I do not think there is any thing wrong in the heart. I hope you are right, answered Mr. Lamont, my dear Sir; by we must lose no time, for, unless this temper be corrected, it will soon lead to corrupt both heart and principles.

Next morning, Mr. Martin informed Mr. Lamont that he found Mrs. Martin so extremely anxious for removing William, that he would very thankfully accept his offer. It was therefore settled that Mr. Lamont should remain a few days longer at the Manse, and that Mrs. Martin would, during that time, get her son ready to accompany him; which accordingly took place.

William had now been at Kelso nearly a year, and his conduct, upon the whole, was rather better than Mr. Lamont had expected; the latter, however, put a decided negative upon his pupil's visit, either to the Manse, or, what he more ardently desired, to his grandmother, during the ensuing holidays; a determination which excited the greatest possible indignation on the part of William. A day or two after Captain Elliott's arrival, while they were sitting at breakfast, Nelly came in and said, Miss Helen, a little boy wishes to see you. He has a basket in his hand; but he won't tell me what is his business. He says, he must see you your own self. Helen rose and went out to speak to him, wondering who it could be. When she got to the door, she found it was Tom Little. Ah! Miss Helen, said the boy, you see I have kept my word, I have brought the chicken I promised you; and mammy thought, as you had company at the Manse, you would like two; so, here they are; and nice plump things indeed. I am very glad, Tom, said Helen, to see you here, and very much obliged to you for your chickens; but I won't kill them. I shall keep them to lay eggs; for I am very fond of eggs, though I should not like to give so much money for them as you say they do at the hall. Come in, and let mamma see your pretty present. Tom stepped forward, and stood at the study door till Mrs. Martin called to him to come in. He then displayed his chickens, and told the company that their mother laid more eggs than any fowl in the dale; and that he was very glad to hear Miss Helen say she would not kill them, as he thought it would be a pity, they were so very beautiful. Helen then said, How lucky it is, mamma, that Tom has come down here to day; for I was thinking I must find time to ride up to his father's cottage, with my little present this morning; and I have so much to do, I did not well know how to manage it. Now Tom will take it, when he returns, and save me the trouble! She then went up stairs, and returned, bringing a couple of frocks, of coarse woollen stuff, which she had made herself, and a little jacket and trowsers, made out of an old coat of her brother's which she presented to Tom, telling him that it was for him to wear when he went to church. The frocks were for his two little sisters; and Mrs. Martin added an old gown of her own, for his mother.

Tom was in such an extacy of delight, that it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed on to stay to eat some breakfast; though he owned he had come away before his porridge was ready. Helen, however, insisted on his going with her into the kitchen, and getting Nelly to supply his wants. Whilst he was eating, Helen enquired after his father. He is a great deal better, Miss Helen, and begins now to walk about with the help of a stick. Only think how kind Will Oliver has been, and John Telfer, that was with you at the cottage. They came up the glen, last Monday evening, and brought each of them a pair of nice warm worsted stockings, for my father, of their own working. Was not that kind? And Will says that, when I am big enough, he will take me to his herd, and teach me to knit stockings, just as he had done John. I should like to be Will's herd better than any other shepherd's in the dale; he is such a merry fellow, and so good natured. He made me a whistle a little while ago, but I cannot play on it so well as John does yet. Will says John is very clever, and can do every thing well. I suppose that is with the Minister's teaching. Don't you think it is? Helen laughed; but she very much doubted whether the Minister's teaching had much to do with John's playing on the whistle. When she returned to the parlour, her mother said, Now, my dear Helen, you must go and pack up your little parcel, that we may be all ready for our journey early to-morrow morning.

Your uncle and I are going in the stage to Kelso, as he wishes to see your brother, and I am glad of an opportunity, too, my dear, of seeing William. Oh, said Helen, how much I wish that poor William could be with us; for when he was here, he was always speaking of uncle Elliott, and what he would do when he came home. On saying these words, Helen left the room. She soon returned, holding a frock in her hand. See mamma, said she, I have trimmed up my frock with a piece of new ribbon. I think it looks very neat. I am so

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

glad that I did not buy a new dress, instead of the frocks for the poor children. How happy they will be when Tom gets home! My dear child, said her mother, they will be happy, I have no doubt, with your present; but I think you must feel much more so, from the reflection that you have clothed them by your own self-denial. I have been very much pleased with your whole conduct, for you have bought them what is essential, and nothing more; and, at the same time, have tried to make yourself neat, to please your good grandmother. I am glad, mamma, I have pleased you. I am sure I am a very happy girl; and she kissed her mamma as she said so. Two or three years before she would have cried, with the same feelings she now had; but Helen was quite cured of shedding tears upon every occasion, and she now only pressed her mamma closely round the neck, and then ran off to pack up her parcel, and was heard singing all the morning afterwards.

In the evening, Mrs. Martin and Captain Elliot proceeded to Langholm, to wait for the stage; and early the next morning, Mr. Martin, accompanied by Helen on her pony, and a little boy to carry the parcel, left the Manse; and, directing their route across the hills which separate Eskdale from Ewesdale, reached the small village of Ewes in time for breakfast. There was no inn here, but merely a small public house. Our travellers, however, did not require to go thither for the clergyman having heard that they intended coming that way, was upon the look out for them all the morning. After breakfast, Helen again mounted, and continued talking on many different subjects all the way to Moss Paul. The road runs along the course of the Ewes, between a double range of mountains, quite green, and covered with sheep; but there is very little variety in the scenery; and, altogether, from scarcely a cottage being to be seen, it has a very desolate appearance. Moss Paul, where they were obliged to stop, is one of the poorest small inns that are to be met with in Scotland. The contrast was so great from the richly wooded cheerful dale which Helen had always lived in, that she told her father the very looking at those hills made her melancholy; and she was sure, if Melrose was not more lively than Moss Paul, her grandmamma had much better come and live in Eskdale altogether. For her own part, she almost wished herself back again already. After an hour's rest they again moved on; and, in a little time, the country began to wear a more favourable appearance. They now descended into the dale, watered by the river Tiviot; and passed by several gentlemen's country houses, which, being seen from the road, added much to the beauty of the view. Mr. Martin pointed out to Helen *Carlinrigg*, the place where, John's song said, Johnnie Armstrong was executed. Soon afterwards, Helen beginning to feel fatigued, her father said he thought they had better stop at the next small inn they should come to, and rest till the afternoon. They were to sleep at the town of Hawick, and he thought they had plenty of time. Helen at last, with some difficulty, made out her day's journey; and was very happy to find herself in a comfortable bed, at Hawick. In the morning, Mr. Martin thought it best that she should rest that day, and not proceed to Melrose till the next, as she was more fatigued than he had expected. Mr. and Mrs. Murray, the clergyman and his wife, did all they could to make the day pass pleasantly. Mrs. Murray walked out with our travellers towards Wilton, to admire the banks of the Tiviot, which are very beautiful. The country is fertile and rich, and the view more extensive than any that Helen had ever seen. She thought it pretty; but still it did not seem to her to equal her native Eskdale. Next morning she and her father left Mr. Murray's early, and reached Melrose to dinner. Nothing could equal Helen's surprise when she came in sight of the Abbey. It is deservedly the most admired remain of gothic architecture in Scotland, and has, indeed, been since celebrated by one of the first living poets, in one of the most beautiful of his descriptive passages, which Helen, long afterwards, copied into her memorandum book, as recalling to her recollection a scene endeared to her, not only by its own beauty, but by the happy days which she had spent with her beloved grandmother. The old lady's house was almost close to this venerable pile; and the window of the little room appropriated to Helen, commanded a view in which she could distinguish all the striking parts of the building, so picturesquely described in the *Lay of the last Minstrel*.

The moon on the east oriel shone,  
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,  
By foliated tracery combined;  
Thou wouldst have thought, some fairy's hand,  
'Twixt poplars straight, the ozier wand,  
In many a freakish knot had twined;  
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,

And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.

## CHAP. IX.

When Mrs. Martin and Captain Elliott arrived at Kelso, they went directly to Mr. Lamont's. They were received in his study, by himself and his wife; and William was immediately summoned to attend them. He was playing at *golf* (a game something resembling cricket) on the school green, and came in glowing with health, and the exercise he had been taking; his colour, perhaps, a little heightened by the pleasure he felt in seeing his mother. Mr. Lamont, wishing to give him an agreeable surprise, had not mentioned Captain Elliott. When William entered the room, his uncle was perfectly astonished at his appearance. He was tall and proportionably stout for his age; his features almost too regular and delicate for a boy; with large sparkling eyes, which spoke the greatest delight and affection for his mother. Altogether, Captain Elliott thought he had never seen so fine a creature; and could not help conceiving, in his own mind, that what had been told him of his nephew's disposition must have been greatly exaggerated.

When William had kissed his mother, almost a dozen times, he suddenly turned round, and said, but, where is my dear father? I thought he was here also: and, looking in his mother's face, with a transient blush, would he not even come and see me? My dear, answered his mother, your father will be here to-morrow, or next day; he is gone to Melrose, with your sister. It would have been too far for her to ride all this long way round, and so he will place her in safety first, and then join us here; but you take no notice of this gentleman, who has kindly brought me to see you. I am sure, said William, I am very much obliged to you, Sir, and beg your pardon for being so rude as not to speak to you before; but, really I was so delighted with seeing mamma, and thinking about papa, that I did not remember there was any one else in the room. Oh, your apology quite gains my forgiveness, William; but now, that you have found me out, let us shake hands and become friends. You have few warmer ones, I assure you, than I am inclined to become: who do you think I am, that have come so far to see you? William looked some time at him. There was a particular expression in Captain Elliot's face, when he smiled, which strongly resembled that of his sister. William caught it, as he was considering; and instantly sprung forward to him. It is my own uncle Elliot, I am sure. Charmed by such an artless, affectionate recognition, his uncle pressed him to his breast with feelings of the warmest affection; and from that moment an attachment, as strong as it was lasting (for it was broken only by death) took a firm hold of both their minds.

William, during the two years he had spent with his grandmother, had been in the constant habit of listening to the praises of this her only son. He was the best, the bravest of men; and there was no wonder that he should have been the principal subject of conversation between the good old lady and a grandson whom she so much wished to resemble him. It was, therefore, the first object of William's ambition, to see this wonderful uncle; and no sooner were his wishes accomplished, than he determined to leave no means untried to be allowed never to quit him.

He pretty well knew that both his parents would oppose his going to sea, but he hoped, by a private application to his uncle, to get him round to his side of the question; and, in short, he had resolved to gain his point by some means or other. When Mr. Martin joined them at Kelso, he found William and his uncle on the best terms possible. He was a very clever boy, had read a great deal for his age, and, as he possessed a happy turn for sketching from nature, he had drawn several of the beautiful scenes near the junction of the Tweed and Tiviot. The venerable abbey of Kelso, too, though not so light and elegant a structure as that of Melrose, had also furnished exercise for his pencil; and he presented his uncle with a very well executed drawing of this ancient pile. These little attentions, together with the constant good humour and propriety of behaviour which William was careful to maintain in the presence of a relation whom he so much wished to please, did not fail of their intended effect. Captain Elliott was absolutely charmed with his nephew, and was almost affronted that neither father nor mother could be prevailed on to alter their determination, of not taking William to Melrose. Mr. Lamont was decided in his opinion; and therefore they justly thought, that, in fairness to him, they ought not to

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

yield. They however extended their stay at Kelso to a day longer than was at first intended.

That day William and his uncle set out on a walk by themselves, Mr. and Mrs. Martin being engaged to pay some visits with Mr. and Mrs. Lamont. They were no sooner out of the town, than William ventured to make his wishes known to his uncle, of going to sea with him. Captain Elliott was too much attached to his sister and her worthy husband, to listen a moment to this proposal. He combated all his nephew's arguments with the greatest possible gentleness. William, however, remained perfectly unconvinced; and finding that he could make no impression upon his uncle by any arguments he could use, he thought it best to pursue the conversation no further, resolving in his own mind to gain his point in another way. Indeed, he felt it politic to change the subject, as his passionate temper was within a hair's breadth of displaying itself; and he was well aware that *that* would not tend to accelerate his wishes. He therefore began talking on different subjects, and managed matters so well, that his uncle, who had observed his heightened colour, and was prepared for a gust of passion, was quite convinced he had now gained a command over the only failing he had ever heard he possessed. When they returned home, Captain Elliott took an opportunity of congratulating his parents on what he had observed, but he did not mention the subject which had given him an opportunity of noticing the improvement.

On taking leave the next morning, his uncle shook hands with William, saying he should expect him to be a constant correspondent. Oh, certainly, answered William; but, that is well thought of pray give me your address in London, for I shall have plenty of time to write to you in the vacation; and since I must remain here, it will be the greatest amusement I can have. I am glad, then, answered Captain Elliott, that I thought of it; here is my address, giving him his card, and here is likewise something to buy paper and pens (slipping a guinea into his hand). The oftener I hear from you the better I shall be pleased.

After spending a very happy fortnight at Melrose, old Mrs. Elliott's visitors were obliged to take their leave, Captain Elliott being to join his ship by the middle of September. Helen found the journey home more pleasant than her first excursion across the hills; but when she came in sight of her native dale, she exclaimed Oh, my dear papa, there is nothing after all like our own dear home, in the whole world! Her father smiled, and said, Long may you think so, my sweet child. Had I the power of choosing for you, I should wish you never to leave it; but as that is not the case, you should accustom your mind to contemplate the possibility of a change, and always remember, that the foundation of happiness in this world, is to reconcile our minds to the events which the great Author of our being thinks fit to bring to pass, and endeavour to be contented in whatever situation we may be placed.

Capt. Elliott remained only a couple of days at the Manse; the parting was a melancholy one. He expected to be sent to India, where he was sure to remain at least six years. He had heard twice from William, since leaving Kelso; and at his departure, he put a letter into Helen's hand directed for her brother, which he desired her to be sure and forward by the next day's post. I promised him, poor fellow, that I would be sure to let him hear from me the very day I left Eskdale, and I must keep my word. Then, shaking his sister's hand, he added, I prophecy that William will be both an honour and a comfort to you yet, for all his trifling faults and imperfections.

About a week after Capt. Elliott had left the Manse, the family were sitting at tea, conversing very comfortably together, when the study door opened, and to their astonishment Mr. Lamont walked in. All expressed their surprise at so unexpected a visitor; Mrs. Martin alone sat still, her eyes fixed on Mr. Lamont's face, seeming to dread what she was to hear. Mr. Lamont, however, spoke cheerfully, and after looking round the room sat down, only saying a little private business required him to come unexpectedly into Eskdale. Mrs. Martin was not satisfied; she remained silent a few minutes, and then said, Mr. Lamont, I know something has happened: tell me at once what it is, I cannot be deceived; this state of suspense is intolerable. Madam, I find it is impossible to blind the eyes of a mother so anxious and attached as you are; William has given me a little uneasiness, but I hope there is no occasion for serious alarm. He was proceeding when he perceived Mr. Martin almost gasping for breath; he handed him a glass of water, and when Mr. Martin had drank it, he waited about a minute, and then said, Pray Mr. Lamont proceed, I am prepared now to hear what you have to tell us. Mr. Lamont then began by

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

saying that, from the time they had parted from William at Kelso, he had observed a most remarkable change in the boy. He no longer opposed any thing he was desired to do, however disagreeable it might be to him; he was never out of his place; his lessons were always attended to; in short, he had flattered himself that an impression had been made on the boy's mind which promised to be lasting. About a week ago, continued Mr. Lamont, I observed him to be uncommonly grave, and once or twice he complained of a head-ache, and asked leave to go to bed earlier than his usual hour. Mrs. Lamont, upon one of these occasions, being anxious about him, happened to go into his room to enquire how he was before she went to bed. He told her the next morning he was much obliged to her for her attention, but that she had awakened him by the light of her candle, and he had not been able to sleep any more all night. Last Friday evening he complained in the same way of his head, and went to bed, saying, as he left the room, 'Pray, madam, don't awake me to-night if you please, for my head aches more than usual.' Accordingly, when we went to bed, we did not go into his room, but only in passing shut the door gently, observing, it was odd he had left it open when he was so much afraid of noise. Next morning, when the school assembled, William did not make his appearance. I became alarmed lest his headache had increased, or been the forerunner of some other complaint, and I therefore hastened in search of him; when, to my great dismay, I found his room empty, and the bed evidently bearing the appearance of never having been slept in. After a general search through the house and the town, and making every possible inquiry of every creature we could meet with, we heard from a man who had been fishing in the Tiviot the evening before, that he had seen one of my scholars walking quickly along the road to Edinburgh, with a small parcel in his hand, much about the time when William pretended to be going to bed. Mr. Lamont went on to inform the miserable parents, that, on this information, he had traced William as far as the end of Princes Street, in Edinburgh, but there he had lost him; and though both himself and one of the ushers had continued their search for two days, they had not yet been able to get the slightest intelligence of him; that he had then thought it his duty to come himself to inform Mr. Martin, in order that they might consult together what was best to be done.

## CHAP. X.

When Mr. Lamont had made an end of his narration, Mrs. Martin (who had borne up while he was speaking), seemed so overpowered as to be quite unable to make any remarks; she sighed heavily, and Mr. Lamont thought she would have fainted. Mr. Martin spoke to her, but she returned no answer; at last, after using every means they could think of to get her to shed tears, they became so alarmed that, though they by no means wished to let William's disappearance be known, they thought it absolutely necessary to send for Mr. Armstrong. Helen ran and called John (who was just come in for his usual lesson) to go off directly to Langholm, as he was a quick messenger, and could be trusted.

When Mr. Armstrong arrived, he deemed it proper to have Mrs. Martin bled, which being done, she seemed to take more notice, but still spoke not, lying perfectly quiet, only sighing often. Her husband felt that to leave her in that state was impossible; he was therefore obliged to trust to Mr. Lamont's exertions to search for the wretched boy who had been the cause of all this misery. The worthy schoolmaster accordingly left the Manse early the following morning, by which time Mrs. Martin was in the height of a brain fever, knowing no one, and screaming every instant for William. Poor Helen now found the lessons which she had been early taught, of subduing her feelings, were but too necessary to be put in practice. Her father never quitted her mother's bed-side; and in all probability would have fallen a sacrifice to the unremitting fatigue and anxiety he was enduring, had not Helen, with persevering good sense and composure far superior to her years, waited on him herself, watching every favourable moment to bring him nourishment, and using all the little winning ways she could think of or remember to have seen her mother employ when she thought he required that sort of attention.

A whole fortnight passed in this sort of way; Mrs. Martin's disease had in some measure subsided, but it left her in such a state of exhaustion as to give them very little hope of ultimately being able to save her life. Her husband, worn out both with fatigue and misery, almost dreaded to hear her able to ask a question, for fear that that question should be one which he could not answer, for no accounts yet came of William. Helen, dear Helen, was

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

his only comfort; dreading, even more than her father, lest some fatal accident had happened to her brother, for the innocency of her own mind did not allow her to think for a moment that he had intentionally inflicted this misery upon them all, she had nevertheless the courage to conceal her apprehensions from her father, and kept continually cheering him, by whispering that she was sure William would be heard of very soon.

One evening, when almost despairing of being able to comfort him, as he seemed almost ready to sink under his accumulated misfortunes, a thought crossed her mind, and she caught her father's arm, saying; My dear papa, what if William has gone in search of uncle Elliott's ship? My darling comforter! cried her father, starting from the chair in which he was sitting, and effectually roused from the stupor in which he seemed sunk, that thought has never once occurred to me, and yet it appears by far the most probable thing that has been suggested; but how can the unhappy boy ever reach his uncle, without money, and without a guide? said he, despondingly.

Perhaps, papa, answered Helen, William was not entirely without money; for I know that grandmamma sent him a guinea on his birthday, as an encouragement for the good account you brought her of his behaviour, and to make up, in some degree, for his disappointment in not coming to Melrose: and uncle Elliott gave me a guinea when he went now I think it very likely that he gave William the same, so that I doubt not he must have at least two guineas; and perhaps he may have saved up some of his usual pocket-money besides. It is therefore very probably, that he may have had money enough to pay his passage up to London, or nearly so, for I heard the housekeeper at the hall telling Mrs. Scott one day that it cost her three guineas to come by the smack; perhaps they might take a little boy for less. Mr. Martin, struck with the good sense of Helen's reasoning, folded her to his heart, the tears streaming down his cheeks. Yes, my Helen, you are right, William has certainly gone to his uncle. Whether he will succeed in arriving at his intended place of destination in safety still remains a doubtful point, for there are many difficulties in his way; at all events, my mind is greatly relieved, by having some clue to his conduct. I will write to his uncle and Mr. Lamont directly; the one will make every enquiry in London, the other may perhaps pick up some information at Leith, whither in all probability he went; Mr. Lamont at least may learn what ships sailed about that time. Do you sit down here by your mother, and watch her, while I go and write my letters, for not an instant must be lost.

Helen sat down as her father directed, her mind dwelling on the possibility that William was really gone to her uncle. In thinking thus, she shuddered, and blamed herself for having so wicked a thought as to suppose her brother could have been guilty of premeditated cruelty to such indulgent parents as they were blessed with. Engrossed with her own thoughts, she was startled by hearing her mother, in a weak low voice, pronounce her name; she listed, and it was again repeated. It was the first time she had spoken distinctly from the commencement of her illness. Helen drew aside the curtain, and perceived that her dear mother knew her. Mr. Armstrong had warned her father, in Helen's hearing, to be extremely careful, whenever this should happen, not to allow her to speak more than could be helped, and to keep the room as still and quiet as possible; she therefore stooped down and kissed her cheek, and then was going to close the curtain. Her mother looked anxious, and whispered, Not yet. Helen thought she said your father. Helen immediately answered, He is writing, mamma, down stairs; he is quite well. Her mother then endeavoured to articulate a William. This was a trying moment for the poor girl; she scarcely knew how to act; but seeing her mother's eyes watching her, she said, We hope with uncle Elliott; but, mamma, I must not speak. She had said these words so low, that her mother had only heard the sound of her brother's name, and therefore believed Helen had said William was really with him; she raised her eyes to heaven, and seemed inwardly to thank God: no more was said, and she remained quite quiet. From that moment it was evident that she was gaining strength, but so slowly as to be scarcely perceptible. Her sweet little girl now became almost her only nurse; none administered her medicines, none shook her pillows, none understood her looks so well and so quickly as Helen. Her father, who was constantly in the room with them, watched his darling's attention with the most lively feeling of delight, and thanked God he was the father of such a child.

Two days after Mr. Martin had written to Capt. Elliott, Helen came up into her mother's room in the morning. She opened the door very gently, and made a sign for her father to go down stairs; she then sat down by her mother, and endeavoured to compose herself. This was no easy task, but she felt it was necessary, therefore she had the

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

resolution to sit quietly for nearly half an hour, without ever showing the slightest impatience, though she knew there was not only a letter from her uncle below in the parlour, but likewise, she firmly believed, one from William himself. It was a great trial of patience for a girl little more than eleven years old; but Helen's mind was so habituated to be ruled by reflection and duty, that she acted entirely as she thought her mother would have done under similar circumstances.

Her father at last came up stairs; he seemed very much agitated, and, as if afraid to speak he pointed to Helen to leave the room. She almost flew down stairs into the study, where lay the two letters on the table, which her father had placed there for her inspection, a confidence she had well earned by her dutiful and affectionate conduct.

Capt. Elliott informed Mr. Martin, that on calling at his agent's one morning, he was told that a boy had been enquiring for him the day before, and that they had given him his address on board the *Amazon* frigate, at Chatham. Upon asking still further, he was told that the boy was a genteel good-looking lad, and one of the clerks remarked that he spoke with the Scottish accent. I know not, continued he, what put it into my head, but William rose to my thoughts. I believed it next to impossible that it could be he, yet I felt a sort of uneasiness, which induced me to return to Chatham that night, contrary to my intention in the morning. On going on board, I made enquiry whether a lad of that description had been there. The lieutenant, who commanded in my absence, said, 'Yes, he has been here, Sir, but he would neither wait for your arrival nor give his name, but promised to call again to-morrow morning.' I really could not sleep for anxiety that night, as the description which I received from all who saw him almost confirmed my suspicions. I gave orders to be informed the moment he came next day; and accordingly, about nine o'clock in the morning I was told he was come alongside. I desired he might be sent into my cabin, and in a few minutes William himself stood before me.

I begged to know what was his business with me, treating him exactly as I would have done a perfect stranger. My young gentleman was rather confounded with this reception at first, but he gradually took courage, and informed me he had made up his mind and nothing would alter his determination of going to sea; that if I was resolved not to receive him, nor to allow him to remain in my ship, he could not insist on it, but he would certainly go on board another, and he had no doubt he would find other captains who would not reject him. I told him that his conduct had been so extremely cruel and unfeeling, that it would be serving him as he richly merited to throw him off, and let him provide for himself in any way he chose, and that if he alone were considered I would certainly do so; but as his parents were too dear to my heart to allow me to act in this manner, the only thing I felt I could do was to write to you information of what had passed, and be entirely regulated by your answer in what way he should be disposed of. He has appeared extremely sulky. I am told, ever since (for he is not permitted to enter my company), but you may be quite satisfied I take good care he shall not escape. Capt. Elliott then went on to say that, if he might offer any advice on the subject, he thought it might perhaps be best to yield to the boy's wishes of making the sea his profession; nothing else would satisfy him, and in all probability he would do better in that line than he ever could now do ashore. He then finished by earnestly desiring an answer as soon as possible, and by giving his sister every assurance of his care and affection for the boy; at the same time, he added, I must break this *disobedient* spirit, or he will do no good any where, and it appears to me that the discipline of a ship is as good a remedy for bad temper as any other that can be found.

Helen shed many tears over this long letter. Poor William, said she aloud, he little knows how nearly he has been the death of mamma, and how much he has made us all suffer. Oh! if papa do let him go with my uncle, how much I wish he may be allowed to come home and see us all before he sails; I am sure he can never be happy to go away for six whole years without having one kiss of forgiveness from his dear parents. She then took up the other letter, it was indeed from William; he told his father that he hoped he would forgive him, but that he had quite resolved to chuse the sea for his profession; that, having done, so, he despaired of being able to procure either his or his mother's consent to it, as he had accidentally overheard a conversation some time before, in which they both declared that nothing could induce them to agree to such a thing. He therefore thought it the best and surest way to proceed as he had done, knowing that, if he lost this opportunity, he would most probably have to go entirely with strangers, which he supposed would be still more disagreeable to them than his being with his

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

uncle. He had gone to Leith, and got on board one of the smacks, which was just sailing as he got to the pier; and finding that his funds did not allow him to be a cabin passenger, he had gone into the steerage; in short, he had only one sixpence left by the time he saw his uncle. He finished by imploring their forgiveness, promising that if they would in this instance gratify him, he would never again give them the least reason to complain of him.

Helen folded up the letters, and sat for a few minutes considering on their contents. Her own good sense and feelings of *obedience* to her parents pointed out to her in how very improper a style her brother wrote; but her love and affection for William made her try to excuse him. Boys are so different from girls! thought she, William has been away so much, too, from home; and besides, he must chose a profession, and it would be hard not to leave him at liberty to be what he thinks himself fit for.

In the evening of this day Mrs. Martin felt herself better, and, for the first time since her illness, spoke to her husband on the subject of William. Mr. Martin told her he was with her brother, and likewise that he had heard from himself; he then stated what Captain Elliott had said as to William's being allowed to remain with him, but owned he was very averse to this plan. Mrs. Martin answered very calmly: My dear husband, as far as my judgment goes, I perfectly agree with my brother. I would not certainly have chosen that William should be a sailor if I could have prevented it; but, as he has acted, I think it is the best thing we can now do. He will be under my dear brother's care; and I shall now, continued she, looking at her husband with tenderness, die in peace on his account, convinced that Elliott will exert every means to correct and improve my poor boy, the last legacy of a dying sister. Mr. Martin, quite alarmed by this address, asked her if she felt herself worse, and rose to send for Mr. Armstrong. She laid her hand gently on his arm; My dearest love, said she, I am not worse; but I own I have been watching for an opportunity of preparing your mind for what I believe myself to be inevitable; I do not say I shall die immediately, yet I am convinced my constitution is so shattered, that a very short time will now be allowed me to prepare for my awful change. I have thought that, by letting you know what my own opinion is, your mind would be better able to bear the stroke when it happens than if it came upon you suddenly; beside, my beloved husband, I have much to say to you with regard to Helen. At present, I must have done, my strength will not permit me to continue the conversation; only write, my dearest love, to my brother, and tell him I consign my son entirely to his management, and I trust he will endeavour to guard his father from all future anxiety on his account; he has cost him quite enough already. The last words were spoken so low, that they were evidently not meant for her husband's ear.

He had remained quite motionless all the time she was speaking. When she ceased, he became almost convulsed with agony for some minutes; but a violent shower of tears relieved him, and most probably saved either his reason or his life, or indeed perhaps both. Helen's coming into the room showed him the necessity of composure; and hastily passing her, saying he must send answers to his letters, he left the room and shut himself up in his study, there to implore compassion and resignation from a being, who is never deaf to the petitions of the humble and sincere believer.

A few days showed plainly that Mrs. Martin knew her own situation but too well; she appeared gradually, though slowly sinking. One evening, she asked her husband to raise her up a little; and then, desiring Helen to bring her pen and ink, she insisted on being allowed to write a few lines. I shall write very little, said she, but it is a duty that must not be longer delayed. She then wrote what appeared to be only a short note, which she sealed, and addressed to William; and putting it into her husband's hand said, send this, my love, when all is over, not before. It may comfort him, poor fellow; he will require comfort then.

Mr. Martin now felt it his duty to inform his dear Helen, of the state her mother was really in, but it was some time before he could gain sufficient courage to break it to her. One evening, however, seeing his wife worse than usual, he was apprehensive that, should her death take place while Helen was unprepared, it might have fatal effects upon the poor girl's health. He therefore followed her into her room, when she went to prepare for bed, and there in the gentlest manner informed her of the truth. Helen at first was in such a state of violent grief, that she could listen to nothing her father said, and indeed for some hours was utterly incapable either of reasoning or

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

exertion; but at last, lifting up her head, and seeing her poor father, pale and exhausted, leaning over her, she started up, and throwing herself into his arms, cried Forgive me, my dearest father, for being so selfish! I will indulge in this almost criminal conduct no longer. Leave me for a few minutes; you may trust me; I will then join you, and endeavour to perform my duty, both in attending the last moments of my precious mother, and in being a comfort, not a burthen, to my equally dear father. Mr. Martin thought it best to comply with her request, and retired to try and subdue his own feelings, that he might be able to attend to his wife.

In half an hour Helen and her father were at Mrs. Martin's bedside; she smiled faintly when she perceived them. Holding out her hand, she thus addressed her husband: My dear, I wish much to see my mother; pray write for her, she will, I am sure, gratify me. Mr. Martin immediately left the room, to send off a messenger to Melrose. Mrs. Martin then took hold of Helen's hand, and said, My dearest girl, I wish to say a few words to you, but it must be when you are composed enough to listen to me. I have endeavoured, both by precept and example, to fortify your mind; and you will not, I trust, now disappoint my hopes, of having made you capable of overcoming your feelings for the sake of those most dear to you.

Helen, whose heart was almost bursting, pressed her mother's hand. Give me a few moments, mamma, and then I will attend to all you have to say. I will not occasion you an uneasy thought, if I can help it; you shall be convinced, that your lessons have not been thrown away. She then retired to the window, and in about five minutes returned to her mother with her features perfectly composed, and sitting down, said, Now, mamma, if you wish to speak to me, I am ready. Her mother made no comments, but immediately began by saying, it was her ardent desire that she might be able to prevail with Mrs. Elliott to give up her house at Melrose, and come and live at the Manse. She, my dear girl, will best supply my place, both to you and your dear father. At present, my love, you are too young to take the charge of the family. My mother is still active, and loves you both with the truest affection. Should I be so fortunate as to succeed in settling this plan, I shall be comparatively easy; but you must promise me, my dear, the most perfect obedience to her wishes and directions in every particular, even though they may appear to you to differ from what you have been accustomed to receive from me; and if it please God, my child, you must likewise promise to supply my place to her in her old age. I need not, my dear, desire your attention and obedience to your father; on that point I am easy. Your whole conduct through life, and more particularly during my long protracted illness, has convinced me that I have nothing to fear there, and it would be only harassing you to say a word on the subject; but there is one more point that I must mention, I mean your feelings towards your brother. Never, my own love, allow yourself to dwell a single moment on conduct which may appear to have shortened my life: I have forgiven him from my heart, and left him a mother's blessing. I make it my last request to you, that you never will either evince by your behaviour, or harbour in your inmost thoughts, the slightest resentment towards him. And now, my love, continued she, preventing Helen from speaking, I have only to add my advice as to your own personal conduct. In all circumstances be guided by your father's wishes and opinions, at least as long as it pleases Providence to spare him to you; and never, my beloved girl, separate from him or your grandmother, while they require your dutiful attention.

Helen now, in a quiet composed voice, went over every circumstance her mother had enumerated, and added a sacred promise never to disobey her last commands, in thought or deed. When she had so done, her mother, clasping her in her arms, gave her in a solemn manner that most precious of all gifts to a dutiful child, a dying mother's blessing. She then asked for a little jelly; and, on her husband's coming into the room, advised Helen to take a turn in the garden and recruit herself by getting a little fresh air. She obeyed, and after a shower of tears became composed enough to return to her mournful duties within doors.

Mrs. Elliott arrived the next day, when Mrs. Martin had the satisfaction of gaining her consent to give up her house at Melrose, and come to live at the Manse. Mr. Martin assured her that she should ever be considered by him as his own mother. His wife joined their hands, exclaiming, My work is finished in this world, I have now only to look forward to another and a better. Her work in this world did indeed seem finished. The next day, without any apparent change for the worse, as her mother and Helen were sitting by the bed-side, and her kind anxious husband was supporting her in his arms, she laid her head on his shoulder and seemed to fall asleep: it

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

was some minutes before he was aware that she was gone for ever.

Thus perished one of the best and most exemplary of mothers, entirely from anxious solicitude about a son, who, in spite of all admonition and remonstrance, had allowed the growth and practice of *disobedience* for several years to embitter his kind parents' lives; and whose headstrong violence and self-will at last brought the being whom he most loved on earth to a premature grave!

### CHAP. XI.

For some days after this melancholy event had taken place, the family, and indeed all the inhabitants of the dale, were in the utmost state of distress. Mrs. Martin had been universally beloved by all ranks in the neighbourhood of her residence; and there was not a single individual for ten miles round, that did not, in some way or other, show a sympathy in the minister's affliction.

Helen struggled with her feelings; and this exertion was of infinite service both to herself and her father, who, struck by seeing so much fortitude in so young a girl, felt it his duty to encourage her by example, at least in her presence; and Helen, aware of this, took good care to be with him continually.

Her grandmother was perfectly astonished at her conduct; and took every opportunity of praising her when they were alone. My Helen, would she say, you will be the means, through the blessing of God, of saving your father's life. I really feared for him for the first week or two; but he begins now to look more like himself, and I think, by a continuance of the same attention and unobtrusive kindness, you will in time reconcile him in some degree to his loss, and bring him again into his former habits of employment and usefulness.

On one of these occasions, Helen caught her grandmother's hand, saying Hush! no more, dear madam; I cannot hear praise on this subject. I am only endeavouring to follow the precepts and example of the best and most beloved of mothers. Her advice, and the solemn promise I gave her a few hours before her death, are never out of my mind; but it is a subject too sacred for me to bear hearing it talked of; and straining her clasped hands across her chest, she added solemnly, No! that I cannot do. Her grandmother folded her to her breast, saying, My Helen, pardon me, I will never distress you on this subject again; we now perfectly understand each other.

Helen for many months continued the same mild, quiet, but unceasing attention to her father; who at length had acquired composure, and even began to smile at his daughter's little sallies of humour. She had become his pupil in drawing, and this tempted him to resume their usual walks and rides when the weather would permit, so that by the end of the summer, content, and even cheerfulness, had in some degree again appeared at the Manse. Helen, however could never bring her mind to mention her mother's name to any one but her father; and only to him, from observing that it would deprive him of a great enjoyment, which he evidently had, in talking of her and her virtues.

William had sailed before he heard of his mother's death. For the present, therefore, he had been spared the punishment of his disobedience; but Mr. Martin had written both to him and his uncle, and inclosed his mother's last legacy. Helen likewise had thought it her duty to write to William, and assure him how kindly and affectionately her mother had spoken of him before her death, and how much she wished to impress on both their minds love and confidence in each other. She then entreated him to write soon, and often, as their father was not in a state to bear much anxiety; she durst not say a word about her grandmother, for the old lady had positively refused to allow her name to be mentioned to him, and it evidently gave her pain whenever she heard Helen and her father conversing about him.

At this time, Mrs. Scott, the gardener's wife at Craigie Hall, was obliged, by the sudden illness of her father, to go to Edinburgh. Her husband was to accompany her, and leave her there if necessary, but they knew not exactly

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

what to do with little Marion. Mr. Martin and Helen happening to call in one of their daily walks, he asked them to send Marion to the Manse. She will be much better with us, Mrs. Scott, than being left here; and I am sure my daughter will take care to make her attend to all that she has learnt from you during your absence. Helen, also, was quite pleased with the plan, and pressed Mrs. Scott to agree to it. I am sure, Sir, said Mr. Scott, my wife can have no objection, unless it be the thought of giving you and Miss Helen trouble: but Marion is a good little girl, and will trouble you as little as possible; and therefore, as you are kind enough to ask her, Sir, I really think we ought to accept the offer; the advantage of being near so good a daughter, and seeing how she conducts herself, may be of use to her all her life. Accordingly, the next day Marion was brought down to the Manse by her father; and John was not a little surprised and pleased to find her established there when he came in the evening. Marion was but a short while under Helen's care, when her grandmother perceived she was of the greatest use, both to her health and spirits; she was a tractable child, with a very feeling heart. She had heard from her parents the continued praises of Miss Martin's conduct, from the time of her mother's death, and Marion fancied her the first of human beings; she therefore had the greatest ambition to please her. She watched even her looks to anticipate which she thought might be her wishes, and if ever a cloud of sorrow came over Helen's face, Marion was sure, by some little winning attention, to endeavour to direct her thoughts into a different channel. She remained at the Manse nearly three months, and returned home, to the great regret of all the family; from that time, however, she was a constant visitor, and a sincere attachment took root between her and Helen, which has lasted all their lives.

Very little change took place in the dale after this, for the space of several years. Mr. Martin had in some degree recovered his health and spirits; but a shock had been given to his nerves, which rendered him more delicate, and requiring more care than he did before; and it was not likely, Mr. Armstrong said, that he would ever be otherwise. Mrs. Elliott still enjoyed good health, though from rheumatism she was obliged to live more within doors. Helen was their comfort and support; she was now fast approaching womanhood, and never was there a more amiable creature; her dear mother's lessons and instructions had *indeed* not been thrown away. She had unfortunately known sorrow in early youth; but it had acted upon her for good, in teaching her the proper regulation of her mind and she now felt the comfort of having done so, by being the friend and confidant both of her father and grandmother.

John had gone on under Will the shepherd, performing his duty as a servant in the day, and improving his mind with Mr. Martin in the evening; for though he had learned all that was necessary for him to know, yet Helen encouraged his constant attendance in the study, as she thought it amused her father's mind. John was now becoming a stout lad, almost too big for the hills, and on some occasion, when Mr. Martin happened to mention that he thought he must begin to consider whether he meant to be a shepherd all his life, John answered directly, No, Sir, not if I can help it; but recollecting himself immediately, he added, in that as in every thing else, I feel it is my duty to be regulated by your advice. I certainly have formed a wish to see a little more of the world, and if I could go into the service of some gentleman who would have patience with my awkwardness, I think I should prefer that, at least for a few years, to settling here immediately for life. I have wished to speak to you, Sir, upon this subject, as my time is out next summer with Mr. Laurie; but if you think I am wrong, I will give up all thoughts of leaving the dale, and hire myself out as a shepherd. I have no doubt any of the farmers around will engage me, as I am well known among the hills; and Will's herd-boys are always preferred, as he takes so much pains to teach us our duty. Mr. Martin replied, My dear John, I am rather unprepared to give you an answer; but I will think of the subject, and talk it over with you before your time is out with Mr. Laurie. You are a good lad, and will, I am sure, be guided by reason.

The day after this conversation took place a letter arrived from Capt. Elliott, saying that he was safely arrived in England; that he was now at Portsmouth, and he hoped in a very few weeks to be in Eskdale. He gave a most flattering account of William, who was now all that his warmest friends could wish. His poor mother's death had had a most astonishing effect upon his whole conduct. When he first received the sad tidings, he was so affected, that his uncle feared for his reason, and could scarcely ever trust him out of sight; but at length he became calm and composed, and from that time was never seen, even in a single instance, out of humour. For the first two years

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

this appeared to cost him great mental exertion, his colour often rising when any thing displeased him; but he always on those occasions left the cabin, or retired to a corner away from every one, and on his joining the company again appeared with a placid countenance. Now all appearance of passion, or any thing approaching to it, had entirely vanished; his uncle entreated that his father, for his own sake, would allow him to come down with him to the dale, as he was quite sure he would be delighted to witness so complete a reformation.

Mr. Martin immediately answered this letter, by requesting William to come to him as soon as he could be spared from the duties of his ship. As Capt. Elliott found he should be detained in town longer than he at first expected, he thought it cruel to keep William from going to his father a day longer than was necessary; he therefore despatched him off by the mail, about a week after he had heard from Mr. Martin.

As soon as this news had reached the Manse, both Helen and her father felt the greatest anxiety; wishing, yet fearing to see one who would recall so many bitter thoughts to their minds. The having a few days to prepare themselves for this meeting was of great service to them: for, long before the time of his arrival was come, the delight of once more seeing a being so beloved had overcome in their minds all unpleasant reflections. Not so with Mrs. Elliott. When his arrival in England was first mentioned to her she made no remark, not even when it was told her that he was coming down with her son; but, as soon as she understood that he was coming alone, she informed Helen she was determined to go away before he arrived, and would take that time for paying a long promised visit to some friends at Melrose. Helen was absolutely in despair when she heard this. Her grandmother had been very far from well for some time, and was in her opinion quite unable to take such a journey; she therefore used every argument she could think of herself, being very unwilling to let her father know any thing of the matter if she could possibly help it, but all was in vain. She was therefore obliged, at last, to tell him what was her grandmother's intention. Mr. Martin was excessively distressed. He joined Helen in her entreaties, representing, in the mildest way, the great necessity we all have for forgiveness from our heavenly father, and that therefore it becomes a first-rate duty to forgive those who injure us. Poor William, now that he was sensible of his former bad conduct, was in fact an object rather of pity than of dislike; since in all probability he would never in this life be able to forgive himself. All their arguments were however vain, till Helen said, Well, my dear grandmother, since you really are determined to act in this cruel manner, it must deprive me of the pleasure of enjoying my brother's society whilst he is here; for, in the state of your health, I consider my self bound, both by affection and the solemn promise I gave my dearest mother on her death-bed, never to separate from you while you require any assistance; and I never will, however much it may cost me. My father will receive William, and I hope will explain to him the great sacrifice I am taking in not remaining to welcome him; I have no doubt my brother will come and see me at the inn at Melrose; for I know not how I could bear to be entirely deprived of seeing an object, endeared to me, both by natural affection, and by the strong injunctions of one whom, I trust, I have never yet intentionally disobeyed. You are right, my dearest girl, said her father, your grandmother must not be permitted to go alone in the present state of her health. It is a great sacrifice we must all make to part at this time; but to you, my sweet child, it is even of more importance than to any of us, as it must in a great degree prevent that intimacy and friendship taking place with your brother, which I think of essential consequence to the happiness of you both, and which you may not have another opportunity of forming for many years; but we must act (according to our best judgment) up to our duty, however much that duty may be unpleasant to us. Mrs. Elliott said she would on no account agree to this arrangement; but finding that nothing could shake Helen's resolution, she then proposed going only into Langholm, where she thought she might easily procure lodgings. I can, I am sure, said she, get Marion Scott to come and be with me, when you are in the Manse; and by this plan you can both see me every day. And besides, Mrs. Armstrong will then be near me, if any thing should be the matter. Will you, my dear son, agree to this plan? I cannot, indeed I cannot see William and live, added she, in great agitation: at least I feel quite unable to bring my mind to it: I bear him no ill will; on the contrary, I shall ever be thankful to God for his reformation and prosperity, but I feel I was myself greatly to blame in my conduct towards him whilst under my charge; and to see him now would bring the recollection of my own culpability so strongly to my mind, that I am persuaded my life would fall a sacrifice to the acuteness of my feelings. Mr. Martin and Helen now thought it improper to press her further upon the subject; but they agreed that it would be much more satisfactory to them to adopt the plan of going into Langholm, than that at the present season (for it

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

was now December) she should take so long a journey as Melrose. Helen proposed speaking to Mr. Armstrong on the subject who, as he was an unmarried man and had a good house, she did not doubt, for the few weeks her grandmother might require it, would offer to receive her at his own home.

Mr. Martin liked the idea very much, and said he would walk into Langholm and endeavour to arrange something immediately, as they had very little time, William being expected in the course of two days. Helen in the mean time got her pony and rode up to Mr. Scott's, to make her request concerning Marion. She felt that if she could succeed in this her mind would be quite at ease, as Marion was extremely handy and attentive, and what was of equal importance, a great favourite of Mrs. Elliott's; she might therefore with safety and satisfaction to herself be able to be a great deal at the Manse, without feeling any anxiety at leaving her grandmother. Mrs. Scott cheerfully agreed to her request. I am sure, Miss Helen, said she, any thing that Marion can ever be able to do for you or your worthy father she will have the greatest pleasure in doing; and I cannot, my dear miss, wonder much at the old lady's disliking to meet her grandson. Being a mother myself, continued she, looking at Marion with affection, I do not think I could ever bear to see any one who, however innocently, occasioned the loss of my child. Oh, no! (shuddering at the bare thought of it). I am sure I could not. We must and ought to forget and forgive, Mrs. Scott, answered Helen. Poor William was but a boy when he brought so much distress upon us; but he is quite an altered character now I do assure you, and I am certain would not give any of us a minute's uneasiness. I am rejoiced to hear you say so; the sight of him will then be a cordial and a blessing to our dear and esteemed friend the minister; pardon my presumption in styling him so, but a friend in the truest sense of the word he is to us, and indeed to all that are in the dale. Helen now wished her good morning, she having promised to send Marion down in the evening. I shall send John up early, said Helen, that he may carry her parcel, and take care of her, for it gets soon dark at this time of the year. That will do nicely, said Mrs. Scott; I was just thinking how unlucky it was her father was not at home to-day; he is gone down as far as Canonby this morning, and it will be late before he returns.

Mr. Martin had settled with Mr. Armstrong, that Mrs. Elliott and Marion were to be his visitors, as he would not for a moment hear of their going anywhere else; and Mrs. Elliott, when informed of the arrangements, expressed herself perfectly satisfied. I am glad it has happened, my dear, said she to Helen, that Mr. Armstrong can take me into his own house, for now you and your dear father will feel satisfied that I am quite comfortable. It has given me the greatest distress that I have been obliged to vex you both as I have done, but you must pardon an old woman, who has not strength now left, either of body or mind, to make the exertion that would have been necessary to have acted otherwise. Had I attempted it, I think it would have brought on you more serious evils than the little inconvenience of my changing my residence for a few weeks.

The following morning, a chaise, which Mr. Martin had ordered from Langholm, arrived to carry Mrs. Elliott and Marion to Mr. Armstrong's. Helen went along with them, and having stayed to see them safely settled, and all her grandmother's little comforts placed around her, she returned home to her dear father, well knowing that he required her society at that moment even more than the old lady.

## CHAP. XII.

About six o'clock in the evening, William arrived, with a countenance, oh, how unlike that which we formerly described, when he entered Mr. Lamont's parlour to meet his dear mother and uncle! Instead of that elastic step which expresses health and happiness, instead of the sparkling eye and rosy cheek which he possessed when they last parted with him, Helen, who had flown out on the green to meet him, as much to give her father time to compose himself as to show her brother her eagerness to see him, beheld by the light which John held up a dark sun-burnt young man, standing as if he was trying to gain courage to come forward, with his arms folded and his eyes fixed on the ground. On hearing Helen's voice, he started forward and caught her in his arms, My own sister! this is kind indeed. I do not deserve this reception; but you was ever kind and good from your earliest days. Where is my father? Oh! said he, convulsively, how can I enter that door? how can I see my much-injured

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

parent? My dearest brother, said Helen, recalled in a moment to her self-possession, for that parent's sake endeavour to be composed. Let this much-desired meeting be conducted with as little agitation as you can possibly give him. He is not able to endure violent emotion, not even suspense; let me therefore hasten you into his presence. You will find him all goodness and affection towards a so-long absent son. Thus saying, she hurried him into the study, and before he had time to know almost where he was, he found himself clasped to his father's heart. He soon disengaged himself, and falling on his knees covering his face with his hands, implored his father would pronounce his forgiveness and blessing before he would dare to look him in the face. Mr. Martin immediately, in a most emphatic way, and with much more composure than his daughter believed he could command, pronounced both; and having done so held out his hand, saying, Now, my dear boy, for my sake as well as your own, and as you value the blessing you have just received, let no reference to past circumstances ever be made during your short visit here. We must now endeavour to be happy, and enjoy the blessing which is granted to us by a kind Providence, of once more meeting together, without embittering our present hours by reflections which can answer no good purpose, and only tend to make us wretched. So saying, he added, cheerfully, look at your sister, William; she is much grown since you saw her, and I shall be quite disappointed if you do not admire her. No fear, my dearest father, that I shall fail either in admiration or love to such a sister, answered William; I owe her too much gratitude not to be prepared to find her little short of perfection; she has been, continued he, kissing her, my comforter and adviser for the last six years; and I am sure her correspondence with me during that time deserves to be published, to show sisters how to treat with effect a brother who required admonition coupled with tenderness. They now sat down to tea; and upon the whole spent a more cheerful evening than Helen had dared to hope.

William was still extremely handsome: his complexion had suffered by exposure to the sea-air and the heat of the climate he had been in, but this circumstance, in his sister's eyes, seemed to have improved him, by giving him a more manly appearance than his years would otherwise have admitted of, as he was now barely twenty. His large sparkling eyes, which formerly used to flash at every sudden turn of temper, were now softened down to a mild, placid expression, occasionally brightened by good humour and warm feelings to those around him, particularly to his sister, whom each succeeding day rendered more dear to him; but the common expression of his face was decidedly mournful, and Helen saw plainly, that his lamented mother was never for one moment absent from his mind.

Captain Elliott arrived about ten days after William. He was inexpressibly surprised to find his mother not at the Manse. Where is my mother, exclaimed he, as he looked round, that she does not come to welcome her long absent son? is she ill? asked he, turning to Helen. No, my dear brother, answered Mr. Martin, I will explain to you the reason of her absence when we are alone; you will see her soon. So saying, he led him into the next room to inform him where she was; for Helen had entreated that her brother might be spared the agony of knowing she had refused to see him. As she had never been mentioned, by her own particular desire, in any of their letters, further than that she continued well, he had not an idea but that she remained at Melrose, and he felt rather surprised that his father had not proposed his going over to see her; but he satisfied himself that he was waiting till his uncle arrived, and therefore asked to questions about it. When his father and uncle retired, he looked at Helen, and said, My dear sister, what is this secret about our grandmother? How came my uncle to fancy she was here? Has she left you lately? Helen was much distressed, but with infinite presence of mind answered, My brother heard that my father did not choose to explain before him my uncle's questions; therefore, I am sure, he will not press me to say any thing my father did not wish known. All I can tell you is, that our good grandmother is well, and that she was here lately, but is now gone. William remained silent a few moments; then, taking his sister's hand, said, My grandmother will not see the wretched cause of so much sorrow; she has not forgiven me; I see and understand the whole now. I am sure I do not blame her, poor dear woman; she may, perhaps, be brought to forgive me in time, but it is what I never can hope or even wish to do myself. Helen was silent; she could not deny that what her brother suspected was indeed the truth, but she would not confirm it, by which means he remained in ignorance of the near residence of Mrs. Elliott. Helen and her uncle spent usually the greatest part of the day at Langholm, whilst Mr. Martin, delighted with his son, seldom ever separated from him till their return. William had been made by his uncle to attend to his studies every moment he could be spared

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

from his duty in the ship, and being naturally clever, and in fact fond of his book, had gained considerable information on most subjects.

The father and son now seemed exactly formed for giving pleasure and delight to each other; and it plainly appeared to Captain Elliott, that it would be difficult to say which of them would suffer most when a separation became necessary. One very stormy evening, Mr. Martin and William were sitting alone in the study, Helen and her uncle having remained to dine with Mrs. Elliott; as the wind howled in the chimney; William said, I cannot think what takes Helen so much into Langholm; I am glad, however, that my uncle is with her, for I really do not think it is a night for her to be out in. I am not uneasy, answered her father; your uncle will bring her safe, in some way or other. Helen does not mind a little wind or rain; she is not a fine lady. I shall return her, however, answered William, laughing, one of her lessons to me on prudence. It is not often I can catch an opportunity of showing my superior wisdom, and I won't lose this one, I can tell her.

Just as he finished this speech, John opened the door. Sir, if you please, said he, in the utmost agitation, I know not what to do: in coming down the hill I called at Mr. Scott's to walk to Langholm with Marion, as Miss Helen gave her leave to go and spend the morning with her mother. It was so boisterous a night, I meant to try to persuade her to stay there, and allow me to go and tell Miss Helen she had done so; but her mother told me, when I got into the house, that Marion, seeing the storm coming, insisted on setting off, as she said her absence would vex Miss Helen very much; I therefore ran down the road, as fast as the wind and drifting snow would allow me, but she has never arrived at Langholm, Sir, nor can I hear a word of her at any of the houses, all along the dale. The very thought of what may have happened to her drives me almost distracted; what can I do, Sir? I have come to you, as perhaps you may be able to think of something that I may yet do to save her. Both William and his father started up, and began buttoning their coats to go in search of the poor little girl. William, however, remonstrated against his father's attempting to expose himself to such a storm; but Mr. Martin, more intent upon doing what he conceived to be his duty than mindful of his own health, still persevered in his preparations, till William firmly, though respectfully, said My dearest father, it is a thing I cannot possibly consent to. John and I are strong healthy lads, that are both used to disregard either wind or weather. You may be certain that we shall both make every possible exertion for this girl's safety; but if you persevere in your intention of exposing so precious a life, where, I am sure, your strength can be but of little use, I feel it be my duty to remain where I am, and guard my father from distressing both myself and my excellent sister. Could she ever pardon me, were I to permit you to quit your house on such an errand, and on such a night? Even were it herself that was to be sought for, I would act exactly as I am now doing; therefore, unless you give me a solemn promise not to quit this room till I return, I cannot assist John in his search. Mr. Martin, seeing he was resolved, wisely took off the great coat he had been buttoning on, whilst his son was speaking. Well, William, I believe you are right, said he, I am not at liberty to expose a life so precious to my children. Go with John; I promise you, I will not stir from this fireside till you return. I need not entreat of you to make every exertion for poor Marion. She is little less dear to me than my own child, and it is in our service that she has got into this difficulty. I know I can trust to John to do all that is in his power, in this cause.

William and John left the house, well wrapt up in maudes, and each carrying a lantern. For nearly two hours they searched all along the holm, which they thought the most likely place to find poor Marion; for there the wind seemed to beat with such violence, as to render it impossible for a girl of her years to have strength to withstand it. The snow by this time was a foot deep, and in some places it was drifted so much as to be nearly up to their knees. Again they returned up the river, but still without the slightest success. At this time John thought he heard a dog howl, near a turn of the road about half way between Langholm and the Manse; and following the sound, William sprung forward, and with very great difficulty forced his way through some brushwood entirely covered with snow, towards an excavation in the rock which terminated the holm, and almost reached the river, only leaving room for the road to wind round it. As he approached this place the dog was distinctly heard; and John, exclaiming, It is Trusty's voice, Marion must be here, pushed before William, who was not so well acquainted with the ground as he was. When he got quite close to the excavation, Trusty, who had heard footsteps, sprung out and barked, running back again. John followed, calling on Marion, and at length, holding up his lantern, he beheld

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

Marion indeed, but she appeared to him to be quite dead. She lay under the rock, her head resting on a stone, and a small bundle firmly clasped in her hands. John stooped to try to raise her, but he trembled so much, and was so persuaded that they had come too late, that his strength entirely failed him; he could only cry, Mr. William, she is gone for ever! and sunk almost insensible by her side. William by this time had raised up her head, and felt her pulse, and perceiving that it still beat, though very languidly, was persuaded that if they could get immediate assistance she might be saved; he therefore said, Rise, John, and let us lose no time in reaching Langholm; there is need for the greatest exertion; Marion may yet be saved, if we can only manage to carry her to Mr. Armstrong's. Do you take the lantern, and I will carry her in my arms; I am stronger than you, and not quite so nervous: so move, and remember, her life may depend upon a very few minutes' delay. John, recalled to himself by the prospect of saving her, went on as fast as the wind and the snow, drifting in his face, would allow him, and with incredible fatigue and difficulty they succeeded in reaching Mr. Armstrong's door in less than half an hour, with their apparently lifeless burthen. John knocked, and the door being opened, William waited not an instant, but pushed forward into the first room he could find, calling loudly for Mr. Armstrong. He laid Marion on a sofa that stood near the door, and then threw himself on the carpet, quite exhausted from the fatigue he had undergone. On opening his eyes, he found his sister rubbing his face and hands, with every mark of alarm in her countenance; and directly opposite to him sat his grandmother, gazing on him so earnestly that her countenance seemed absolutely convulsed with agitation. Where, oh where have you brought me, exclaimed he, my dear Helen! Why did you let my grandmother see me? Look, she is dying; the sight of me has killed her.

On William's fainting, Helen was too much frightened to think any thing about her grandmother, but had continued bathing her brother's temples and rubbing his hands till he became sensible and uttered the above sentence. His words recalled her to her recollection, and looking up, she was indeed frightened to see the agitation of her countenance. My dearest grandmother, speak to me I beseech you, said she; William shall leave the room the moment he is able to stand; he knew not that you were here. Mrs. Elliott at last struggled to speak, and said, Oh! I thought never again to have seen that face, as a punishment for my own faulty indulgence; but now that an unforeseen accident has thrown him before me, I have not strength to resist, and I hope I do not act very criminally in indulging myself once more by clasping my idolized unfortunate boy in my withered arms; God knows what I have suffered by refusing myself this consolation. William did not wait to hear her finish the sentence, but threw himself on his knees before her, imploring her once more to receive and forgive him all his offences.

This reconciliation seemed to remove a load from her mind; for from the time she had left the Manse she never had been seen to smile, and a restless watchfulness, instead of her usual quiet and composed manners, had led Helen sometimes to suspect she had repented of having persevered in leaving her home; but still she would not allow the slightest hint to that effect, and had never even asked a word about William.

Meantime Marion had been laid on a bed, and every means having been used to bring her out of the trance into which she had fallen, after nearly two hours' exertion she showed signs of recovery. Mr. Armstrong insisted on her being left perfectly quiet; and they now thought it would be best for John to return to the Manse and ease Mr. Martin's mind as to her safety. I will do that with pleasure, said John, and I must likewise try to get up to Craigie Hall, for her poor mother will be almost distracted if she hears by any accident that she was missing. I went twice and looked in at her window to see if her daughter had returned home, but I did not go into the house for fear of alarming her, so I hope as yet she knows nothing of the matter. William now rose and said he must go home to his father; I pledged myself to return, said he, as soon as Marion was in safety, and I must keep my word; good night, my dear madam, I hope to-morrow morning Helen may prevail with you to return to the Manse. So saying he kissed her, and then taking an affectionate leave of his sister, left the house accompanied by John, who was not perfectly satisfied at being obliged to go without seeing Marion himself; however, Mr. Armstrong promised that he should have that gratification the next morning.

They found Mr. Martin and Captain Elliott waiting impatiently for their return. The accounts William gave them of what had passed imparted the greatest satisfaction to Mr. Martin, who, after making them eat something,

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

insisted upon their going to bed immediately. He would not allow John to go to Craigie Hall that night, but promised to send his own herd-boy up to Mrs. Scott's in the morning.

Nothing very particular, from this time, happened during William's stay in Eskdale. Mrs. Elliot was prevailed on to return to the Manse, and spent three weeks in the midst of all that was now dear to her. Marion recovered, after a few days' illness. She told them, when she was able to come to the Manse, that, on leaving her father's house that dreadful evening, she thought from the look of the skies she should be able to get to Langholm before the storm began; but it increased so rapidly, that, after she was beyond the Manse, she repented not having gone in there, yet still she had no great alarm. However, about half way down the holm, the snow fell so thick as completely to blind her, and the wind drove her backwards and forwards so violently, that at last, she did not know where she was. The last thing she recollected, was finding herself under the rock; and as it sheltered her a little, she thought it best to sit down and regain her strength before she attempted to turn round the point of the rock. As she was doing so, she felt Trusty close beside her, which, she said, comforted her in her distress. She supposed that she fell asleep while she was sitting, and fell down, for she had no recollection of lying down, where, if assistance had not arrived, in a very little time longer all aid would have been in vain.

Captain Elliott now began to say he must think of leaving Eskdale. William dreaded the very thoughts of a separation from his father; but he had carved out his own destiny, and there was now no alternative. Poor Mr. Martin seemed to fear, every time his brother opened his mouth, that he was to hear the sentence of William's banishment. It had been settled some time, that John was to accompany them, as Captain Elliot wished to have a servant from that country, and Mr. Martin immediately thought of John. You can never, said he, have a more careful, active lad, nor one who will conduct himself with greater propriety and honesty than my poor orphan boy will do; but you must expect a certain degree of awkwardness at first, which I really believe he will soon get the better of; and I confess, added he, since I must part from my dear son, I shall be more comfortable in knowing that he will have another attached, though humble friend, in the ship with him, on whom I can in all difficulties rely for attention and fidelity to any one who belongs to me.

Every thing was now prepared for our travellers; and, much as Helen felt in separating from her friends, she even now wished that they were gone, on her father's account. He neither ate nor slept, and seemed in a continual state of agitation. At last, the day was finally fixed for their departure; Mr. Martin heard it in silence, but, from that moment, never suffered William out of his sight; indeed, poor William was equally unwilling to move from his side. They often sat together for hours, holding each other's hand, not daring to utter a sentence. The morning of the departure produced a most affecting scene, and it required almost all Captain Elliott's strength of mind and resolution to separate the father and son. They clung to each other again and again, as if they had a presentiment that they should meet no more. Poor John was almost as violently affected: his master, as he always called Mr. Martin, was as dear to him as a father. He stood by, witnessing this heartbreaking struggle, overpowered with his own feelings, and wretched at seeing his dear respected master undergoing such a trial. Ah, Miss Helen, whispered he, what would I give to get one kiss of my master's hand before I leave him! But do not intrude on him: I would not add to his distress for any satisfaction it might give me. Do not tell him I ever mentioned it. Helen thought, however, it might perhaps divert her father's attention into another channel. She therefore said, loud enough for him to hear her, John, Sir, wishes to take leave of you, will not you let him kiss your hand? My poor fellow, replied Mr. Martin, come to me and receive my blessing. A dutiful and affectionate boy I have ever found you, since you have been under my care; and now remember, all the love and affection you have shown me I entreat maybe continued to my son; be a dutiful and obedient servant to your master; be sure and write to me on every opportunity; and now, God bless you! So saying, before John was aware of his intention, he clasped him in his arms and kissed him. John from that moment fancied himself raised in his own estimation, far above any thing he could have looked to. He flew out of the room to conceal his feelings; and, in a few seconds, the travellers had left the Manse.

## CHAP. XIII.

Soon after their arrival in London an order for sailing arrived, and they were all obliged to get on board, without having time to show John much of the wonders of the metropolis. They however had the satisfaction of receiving good accounts from the Manse. Helen wrote to this effect, that, within a few days after the parting was once fairly over, her father recovered in a great degree his spirits, and that she had great hopes of seeing him soon as cheerful as ever. Marion wrote to John, and told him that she had been with Miss Helen for some days, and that she thought they were all much better than she had expected to find them; but, she added, the dale now looks so melancholy, I can scarcely believe it the same place.

The Amazon was now sent into the Mediterranean, therefore it was seldom that letters could pass between our navigators and their friends in Eskdale. About a year after they had left England, Captain Elliott received a letter, on putting into Gibraltar, from Mr. Martin, informing him of the sudden death of his mother. He said she had been complaining a few days, but they were not in the least alarmed till the day before her death, when Helen thought she perceived a change in her manner of speaking, and sent for Mr. Armstrong, who immediately saw she had had a stroke of the palsy. Nothing could be done; and before the next morning, another stroke carried her off. From the time she became seriously ill, she never quitted Helen's hand; having her near her seemed her only consolation.

Every letter that Mr. Martin received was filled with John's praises, Captain Elliott affirming he was a perfect treasure to him as a servant, as well as a great acquisition to the ship's company, and that he was such a happy good-tempered fellow that he was beloved by every one on board. William wrote regularly to his father, and his letters constituted the chief enjoyment of Mr. Martin's life. John sent him an account of all he saw and heard, that he thought would in any way serve to amuse either him or Helen; and, at the same time, he never forgot to send a letter to Marion in every packet.

This kind of communication had continued about two years, when one afternoon the sailors on board the Amazon discovered a strange sail at a distance, and Captain Elliott gave orders to give chase to her directly. As she was but a slow sailer they soon gained on her, and when they came near enough, William was ordered into the boat, to go alongside and discover what she was. The wind blew rather fresh, and the clouds looked lowering. John, who was standing on deck, took alarm at the weather, and coming up to William as he was preparing to enter the boat, endeavoured to persuade him to speak to the Captain before he went. He has not looked at the sky, I am sure, said John, or he would never send you on such an expedition. Pho! pho! answered William, we must have no fresh-water sailors here. Go I must; so there is no alternative. My orders are explicit. Then, Sir, permit me to go with you, said John. I am an expert swimmer, which you are not; and I really feel so very wretched and uncomfortable at seeing my master's son go out in such a night, that if you won't take me otherwise, I will run and get the Captain's orders to be of the party, and then you cannot refuse. No, John, said William, if there really is danger, I shall not needlessly expose more lives than I can help. God bless you, my lad. See that you have a dry shirt for me, when I come back; for I think we are likely to have wet jackets. Here is my key. Mind your orders! So saying, he jumped into the boat; and though John ran as quick as he could, to get the Captain's permission to accompany him, the boat had left the ship by the time he came back. John staid on deck, watching with a glass all the boat's movements; he saw it safe alongside the other vessel, where it was detained nearly half-an-hour, he then had just light enough to see it leave the ship on its way back.

Oh! what an anxious hour was the next! The wind had been gradually rising, and by this time nearly blew a hurricane. John could conceal his uneasiness no longer; he ran down below to the Captain, who had been unwell, and was lying in his cot. Captain Elliott, exclaimed he, for God's sake get up, and see if any thing can be done to save Mr. William. Good God! John, said Captain Elliott, starting up from a sound sleep, it blows a hurricane. How long has the boat been out? Why was I not called before? John said that the sailors on deck, even now, did not consider there was any danger; but that the boat had been parted from the other ship above an

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

hour, and he could not help feeling very uneasy. The night was excessively dark, and it rained in torrents.

Captain Elliott got on deck instantly; he was perfectly convinced that John had not been alarmed without good cause. Every expedient that could be thought of was tried. They hung out lights at every part of the ship, to direct the boat in its course; but alas! no boat appeared. Such a night of wretchedness did Captain Elliott and John spend, as cannot possibly be related. When day broke, it required force to prevent John from throwing himself into the sea, as if he meant to search the ocean for his dear master's son. He absolutely screamed with agony, when a boat that had been sent out in search of the one missing returned, bringing a hat, with poor William's name inside of it. There was not a shadow of hope. Captain Elliott, who till now had never quitted the deck, fainted away at this confirmation of the ruin of all his poor brother's happiness, and indeed of his own.

William had been as dear to him as a son, almost from the moment he had seen him; and for the last eight years they had scarcely ever been separated. He was carried down to his cabin insensible, whilst poor John's equal, though more violent grief, attracted the attention of the first lieutenant, who had him taken to his own cabin, and endeavoured in every way he could think of to soften the misery he could not remove.

Several weeks passed over their heads, and no opportunity offered of writing to England. Indeed both Captain Elliott and John dreaded the thoughts of putting pen to paper to give this intelligence. It will kill his father, said the Captain; but I shall never live to hear it, most probably. John asked him if he felt unwell; I am not well, John, answered he; my complaints were but trifling till this unlucky affair; my head and soul were wrapt up in that boy, and to lose him in such a way has quite ruined my constitution. Take my advice, John, added he, return to Eskdale as soon as you have an opportunity. Now that poor William is gone, you will be a comfort to his father, should he survive the blow, which I do not believe; but in all events, you may be of serious use to my poor niece, who, God knows, will require a friend. Promise me, John, that you will be this friend, and I shall feel more comfortable in looking forward to my own death. John gave him the promise required; and there was no opportunity of resuming the subject.

The very next morning after this conversation, an engagement took place with two large French frigates. Captain Elliott and his crew performed prodigies of valour; but at last, unfortunately, Captain Elliott received a shot through the heart, which killed him on the spot. He fell into the arms of John, who stood behind him, and was carried below, in hopes that the wound was not mortal; but the surgeon only shook his head; all was over.

When the ship was taken possession of by the French, John was found sitting on the floor of the cabin, by the side of his captain's body, perfectly insensible to all that was passing around him. He took no notice of any thing, till they attempted to move the body. He then threw himself on it, and entreated they would bury them together; saying he now no object to live for. As he repeated this, a sudden flash of recollection crossed his mind. Yes, exclaimed he, I have still a great and important duty to perform to Miss Helen and my master! He then suffered them to remove the captain, and became more composed from that moment.

When the ship was carried into Toulon, John and the other prisoners were ordered immediately to Thoulouse. Mr. Murray, the first lieutenant, who had been so kind to John at the time of William's death, still felt a great interest for him. He was a kind-hearted young man, and seemed to enter into all John's feelings. He endeavoured, on their long and wearisome march, to keep him near himself; and when they reached Thoulouse, he prevailed on his guard to allow John to remain with him as his servant. He was a man of considerable property, and being allowed to draw on England for remittances, had it in his power to obtain many favours and advantages denied to his poorer companions.

Meantime Mr. Martin and Helen were looking forward with the hope of seeing their sailor friends very shortly. William, in the last letter his father had from him, said he thought the ship would most probably be sent home in the course of the next autumn, and that his uncle had promised to give him leave of absence for a fortnight; and in that time, he added, I shall try hard to get another peep at my friends in Eskdale.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

One morning, as they were at breakfast, Helen said, Surely that is Mr. Scott, from Craigie Hall; what can have brought him here? and rising, she opened the glass door. Mr. Scott came in and sat down. He did not seem to have any thing particular to say beyond common occurrences, yet still he remained; and Helen wondered what could be the meaning of the visit. As she rose to move something from the table, she observed him make her a sign to leave the room unobserved by her father: a cold chill came over her. What can be the matter? thought she, as she entered the parlour.

In a few minutes Mr. Scott quitted the study, and going out at the front door, beckoned at the parlour window for her to follow him.

What can you have to say, Mr. Scott? said Helen, as she approached him; and, suddenly struck with the look of woe that was in his face, would have fallen if he had not supported her. William? uttered she, and could say no more. Mr. Scott then said, the family at the hall receive many of the London newspapers, and sometimes the housekeeper sends them in for me to read. The family are all gone on a visit from home for some days, consequently the paper was sent me early. I have, my dear Miss Helen, read a very unpleasant account of the Amazon: but it may not be correct; and even if it is so, Mr. William may yet be safe, for his name is not mentioned. My uncle's is then, said Helen, greatly agitated; Thank God! my grandmother did not live to hear this: but wait a moment, Mr. Scott, I shall be able to hear it all presently. She leant against the gate for a few seconds, and then begged Mr. Scott to read the paragraphs. He did so; and then said, I thought, Miss Helen, it was best to tell you this dreadful news in the first place, that you might consider how our good Minister can be informed of it; for he will certainly hear it in the dale from somebody, and I think it will be better to break it to him by degrees. Helen thought so too. But how can I tell him, said she, weeping, both my dear uncle's death and William's imprisonment, all at once? It seems more than he can ever bear, and recollecting John, suddenly said, poor Marion, too, will feel for John. All, all our friends at once, is too much to bear. Mr. Scott was a very sensible man. He allowed her to weep for some time and then, seeing her a little more composed, said, You must, my dear Miss Helen, endeavour to moderate your grief, for the sake of your father. I see him coming toward the green, and if he observe us he will be alarmed. Helen replied, I will do all I can, but I cannot possibly see him just yet; so I shall get into the house without meeting him, if possible. Leave me the paper, and good morning!

It required all Helen's gentleness and caution to inform her poor father of this afflicting news. Notwithstanding all the precaution and care with which she broke it to him, he fainted before she could finish the narration; and though he endeavoured to regain composure, it was evident to Helen that his strength was sinking. Nothing, however, seemed to bear so hard upon him as the uncertainty of the fate of William. Nothing had been mentioned of him, and indeed nothing could be known, for there had been no communication from the ship between the time of his accident and that of their being all taken prisoners. The winter passed on: a long a dreary one it was to Helen and her father. Marion, likewise, looked ill and melancholy; she had loved John as a brother, and his loss was severely felt. Early in the spring, Mr. Martin had occasion to go to Langholm; Helen insisted on accompanying him. After finishing his business, they were passing the inn where the mail stops. Just as they got to the door of it, the landlord was standing speaking to a sailor, a good-looking man, and seeing Mr. Martin, he said, hastily, Oh, Mr. Martin, this person is just returned from Thoulouse, in France; he has made his escape. Perhaps he may be able to give you some account of Mr. William! Mr. Martin, on hearing this, turned to the man, and asked him what ship he had belonged to, and how he became a prisoner. I belonged, Sir, to the Amazon, and was taken with the whole ship's company that remained after the battle. Tell me, said Mr. Martin, quickly, was William Martin, Captain Elliott's nephew, at Thoulouse when you left it? Oh, no! said the man, he was drowned six weeks before the battle. Mr. Martin heard no more; he fell as if a shot had passed through his heart. The landlord carried him into the inn, and sent for Mr. Armstrong; his poor daughter, almost in as pitiable a state as he was, still endeavoured to exert herself to save her father. She undid his stock, rubbed his face and hands with vinegar, and tried every means her experience had ever found useful, at last Mr. Armstrong made his appearance. He was excessively alarmed, and begged Helen would leave the room; but she answered, firmly, No, Mr. Armstrong, I never will quit my father whilst a spark of life remains. He is not dead yet, for I

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

feel his pulse; therefore do not talk of my leaving him, even for an instant. In the evening Mr. Martin just opened his eyes, fixed them on Helen, and said, My poor girl: and drawing a long sigh, was removed from all his sufferings.

### CHAP. XIV.

Poor Helen, having no longer any motive for exertion, sank down by her father's side. Mr. Armstrong had her removed while she remained insensible; and knowing her attachment to Marion Scott, he sent off a messenger with the fatal news, and requested Mrs. Scott would allow her daughter to come down and be with Miss Martin. Mrs. Scott not only gave permission to her daughter, but came herself, and for many days watched by the bedside of Helen. When she became composed enough to think and act, she found that her dear father had been buried by the side of her mother and grandmother; Mr. Armstrong had acted for her, and settled all matters of business, that she might have no trouble on that account, further than going to the Manse for a little while, till a successor was appointed to her worthy father. Mr. Scott insisted on her permitting Marion to remain with her for some time, though Helen said she should feel happier, she thought, if she could be left alone. It is impossible to describe what the poor desolate girl felt on returning to her melancholy home. The time is now indeed come, said she to herself, when I must prepare to look out for another place of residence; and when that will be, God alone knows. Her grandmother, before her death, had been very uneasy on account of Helen's prospects in case of her father's death; and more than once mentioned to her, that she wished she could make up her mind to go to Edinburgh, and apprentice herself either as a dress-maker or as a milliner; as she knew her father had very little to leave her, she herself had only an annuity, which would cease with her life. Her father did not like the plan, and told her that her uncle had promised to support her till William was enabled, by promotion or prize-money, to do it himself. Now both these resources were cut off for ever; and, after mature deliberation she thought her grandmother's plan was the only rational thing she could do; she therefore, in her own mind, determined, as soon as she knew who was to be her father's successor, to adopt it.

Having come to this resolution, she communicated it to Mr. Scott, who offered to go himself into Edinburgh and endeavour to find a situation for such as she wanted. Accordingly, he went on this errand, about three months after Mr. Martin's death. On enquiry, he was recommended to a Miss Maxwell, a lady who had very meritoriously in her youth followed the same plan that Helen meant now to pursue, and had succeeded so well as to be able to support an aged father and mother, and give great assistance to the rest of a numerous family. The agreement was soon settled, and Helen was to be received as an apprentice the following October. She was to live in the house with Miss Maxwell, who even held out hopes to Mr. Scott, that if Miss Martin gave satisfaction during her four years of learning the business, she would have a good chance of being taken into partnership in the concern, as Miss Maxwell thought she might be inclined to retire much about that time, provided no unforeseen accident occurred to prevent it. Early in September, Mr. Johnson was appointed to succeed Mr. Martin. He was a young man of good connections and excellent character. He came to the Manse on his nomination, merely to look at the house, and see what preparations it might require, as he was on the point of marriage with an amiable young woman to whom he had been long attached. He behaved in the kindest manner possible to Helen, and saved her a great deal of trouble and difficulty, by proposing to take the whole of the furniture just as it stood, and at a fair valuation. Mr. Armstrong, who had managed all her business, accepted the proposal; and Helen, at his particular request, agreed to remain in the house till the time she had fixed for removing to Edinburgh. He seemed anxious to settle every thing the way that would be most pleasing to her feelings. Nelly and Sandy were to be retained in his service, and left in charge of the Manse, as he did not expect to be able to take possession himself much before Christmas. On going away he shook hands with Helen, and said he hoped she would allow him a continuance of her friendship, and assured her, that as the daughter of so respectable a father as well as from what he had seen of herself, he should ever feel the interest of a brother for her. Poor Helen's spirits gradually sunk as the time rapidly approached for her to quit her native dale, and take leave of all those amongst whom she had lived from her birth. Marion Scott had remained constantly with her from her father's death, and was now so endeared to her, that to separate from her appeared as if breaking the last earthly tie she possessed. She saw, however, it was inevitable;

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

the whole of her property, when every thing was sold, only amounted to three hundred pounds; and even if she could have lived on this in her native dale, she thought, on reflection, it was her duty to go into a more active line of life, at least for some years. Mr. Armstrong was decidedly of the same opinion; a change of scene and of habits he thought would amuse her mind, and prevent her dwelling on events which, from the melancholy attending their recollection, and the retirement in which she would live, might have a pernicious effect on her health.

On the tenth day of October Helen left her once happy home, to engage in new scenes and occupations, so different from any thing she had ever formed an idea of, that for some days after her arrival at Miss Maxwell's, she could scarcely believe it possible she could endure such a subordinate state of existence and laborious fatigue. Miss Maxwell was kind to her on her arrival, and whenever she had a moment to spare endeavoured to cheer Helen, by telling her that she would soon get accustomed to the confinement, and that she had no doubt, with her application and perfect command of her needle, she would be able to promote her in the course of a twelvemonth to a less laborious department of the business. Helen felt the kindness, but believed, from the present state of her feelings, that she would never live that twelvemonth out. Broken-hearted and dispirited, shut up in a small uncomfortable room with half a dozen silly uneducated girls, with whom she had not a single idea in unison, she began to feel her life a burthen, and had almost resolved to give up her situation and return to Eskdale. The first Sunday morning, however, gave her better hopes. Miss Maxwell, who had a great respect for Mr. Scott, and from whom she had heard the whole of Helen's meritorious conduct while she resided in her father's house, was much interested for her; and though, from the great pressure of business in which she was constantly engaged, she could spare very little time to amuse or comfort her through the weeks, she was ready on Sunday morning, as soon as she came out of her room, to receive her in the parlour, and said, with a cheerful smile, as she entered, Come, my dear Miss Martin, this is our own day, and I promise to myself a great deal of pleasure for the future in having a companion with whom I can converse, and who will join me in spending the Sabbath, as it is undoubtedly intended we should do, in making a day of rest and sober enjoyment. The other young people all go home to their friends, we shall therefore be at liberty to enjoy ourselves in our own way. Helen endeavoured to return a smile to this address, but her heart was heavy, and her head ached from want of sleep. Miss Maxwell, who well understood her feelings, took no notice, but filled her out a nice comfortable cup of tea, and began telling her of the churches that she meant to show her, and the merits of the different clergymen. This was a subject to interest Helen, as she was well acquainted with most of their characters, from having heard her father talk of them on his return from Edinburgh, when he had been a member of the General Assembly. She therefore very readily agreed to accompany Miss Maxwell to the morning service at St. Andrew's church, and in the evening she attended likewise at the West church, for the clergymen of both these churches had been particular friends of her father.

On her return home in the evening, she expressed herself much pleased with all she had seen and heard through the day, and thanked Miss Maxwell for giving her so great a gratification. They then sat down to tea, after which Miss Maxwell opened a closet which stood at one end of her little parlour, and displayed a small but well-selected library. As she pointed to it, she said, I never, my dear Miss Martin, permit myself to open this my greatest treasure except on this day; for I am so fond of reading, that I could not insure my own attention to the duties of business were I to allow myself the same gratification through the week. I have had a second key made which I mean for you, as I well know, from experience, that you require, in your present irksome employment, as much relaxation as the nature of the business will admit, to reconcile you to the great change in your situation and habits; but I think I can trust that you will never abuse this kind of confidence, but confine your use of it to the few spare hours which occur to you in the course of the season; and Sunday in my house is invariably your own. She then gave Helen the key, and desired her to select what she pleased for her evening's reading. This was a great addition to Helen's comfort. She found there were many spare moments that would, without this resource, have been spent in vain regrets and recollections of the past, which only served to weaken her mind and prevent her performing her present duties.

With the prospect of this enjoyment before her, she found the hardship of sitting at work for so many hours daily appear less formidable, and her Sundays always passed so pleasantly and so much to own satisfaction, that in a letter which wrote to Mr. Scott, about a month after she had been absent in Edinburgh, she expressed herself

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

much more reconciled to her situation than her friends in Eskdale had dared to hope.

She received a letter soon after this from Marion, saying that Mrs. Smith, her friend at the hall, had been ill, and felt herself not quite able to get through her business in the family so well as she used to do, and had therefore got permission from her lady, with whom she had lived many years, to hire an assistant; that Mrs. Smith had at last prevailed with her father and mother to spare her, and it was now fixed that she was to accompany the family to London soon after Christmas. Her mother added a postscript, in which she said that poor Marion had fretted so much since Miss Helen had left the country, that both her father and she were more reconciled to her going under Mrs. Smith's care than they otherwise would have been; and besides, added Mrs. Scott, I really am afraid Marion will never get over John Telfer's loss, at least till something certain is heard of him. She often tells us she would feel much happier if she knew he was dead, than she does by being in such a state of uncertainty. She fancies she will be more likely to hear from him by going to London, than by remaining here in the dale. Helen was too much attached to Marion not to feel greatly interested in this new arrangement for her. Dear girl; said she, as she read the postscript, I am afraid nothing but disappointment awaits you on the subject of poor John. He must have been killed with his master, or more likely, perhaps, drowned with my dear William. John, I am sure, would not willingly separate from him, and may perhaps have lost his life in trying to save that of his master's son; at all events, I have not the slightest hope of his being alive, and wish most earnestly I could make Marion as much convinced of this as I am myself. I think, answered Miss Maxwell, her parents are acting very prudently in sending her from home. A change of scene is the best thing for her in the present state of her mind; and perhaps, by making inquiries, she may come to hear something certain about the young man, though I am inclined to be of your way of thinking as to his death.

Nothing particular occurred during the four years of Helen's apprenticeship: she daily improved in knowledge of the business she was learning, and between her and Miss Maxwell so entire an attachment was formed, that it would have been a severe trial to either had they been obliged to separate.

When Helen's time was out, Miss Maxwell determined to take her into partnership. The business was a very good one, though, from various causes, Miss Maxwell had been able to save very little money. For twenty years she had supported her parents, who had been unfortunate in life: she had also assisted several brothers, who were now all dead; and two sisters, after having been associated with her in the business, had died of declines.

The first object she had now in view was, to secure a friend on whom she might rely for assistance and kindness in her declining years. She made no secret of her motives; and Helen, who loved her with truest affection, agreed to become that friend.

Marion had continued under Mrs. Smith for three years, living in London one half of the year, and returning to Craigie Hall in the summer. She corresponded constantly with Helen, but they had never met from the time of their first separation. Still Marion wrote of John, though she could obtain no information of him, even in London; and though Helen, almost in every letter, endeavoured to convince her that all hopes of his being alive must by this time be over. Marion, on the contrary, declared that her mind would not admit a belief of this, without more positive proof than any she had yet obtained. Her last letter said, that the lady's maid had lately been married, and that, on Mrs. Smith's recommendation, she was promoted to the vacant place.

We must now revert to poor John Telfer, who remained in captivity, and still in the service of Mr. Murray. The prisoners of war were treated with extraordinary rigour; and the officers, instead of being indulged, as is usual in such cases, with residing in a town on their parole, or word of honour not to escape, were separately confined under a military guard, in the old chateaux, or country seats of the ancient nobility, who had been expelled during the Revolution. This harsh treatment induced many of them to attempt their escape, which, of course, they would not have done if they had promised not to do so, for a promise voluntarily given to an enemy ought to be held as sacred as if given to the dearest friend. However, the success of a few eluding the vigilance of their guards, increased the severity afterwards shown to the others. No interest that could be used was of sufficient weight to

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

procure Mr. Murray his liberty, or even information as to his family or friends. His draughts, however, for money, were always answered; and he hoped, from this circumstance, that his friends were well. John tried many ways of endeavouring to send a letter to the dale, but never received a line in return; indeed, as has been seen, not one of his numerous letters ever reached their intended destination. Years rolled on in the same unvaried kind of existence; sometimes he fancied that Mr. Martin had entirely forgotten him; sometimes the recollection of Captain Elliott's assertion, that William's death would kill his father, threw him into the most violent state of misery. What would become of Miss Helen if her father was indeed dead, was continually in his mind; and at one time had made so strong an impression on him as to convince him it was his duty to endeavour, even at the risk of his life, to make his escape.

The situation in which he and his master were confined, was in some respects not unfavourable to the prosecution of such a scheme. It was in a very old and ruined building, on the banks of one of those rivers which rise in the Pyrenean mountains and fall into the Upper Garonne. The turret allotted to the prisoners commanded a view which, under other circumstances, John would have admired as reminding him of the wild scenes in his native country. Almost close to the building was a noble cascade, formed by the river rushing over the rocks which it encountered in its course; and beyond the woods on the opposite bank arose abrupt declivities, overtopped by the lofty summits of the distant mountains. John had laid his plan, and meant to have put it into execution, when, on the very morning of the day he intended to have made the attempt, Mr. Murray complained of being very ill. This was a severe blow to John: he had been under too many obligations to Mr. Murray to think of leaving him while in want of his care; at the same time, the opportunity of escape might never again offer. He had a severe struggle; but Mr. Murray's illness increasing rapidly, determined him to delay at least his intended flight, and finally fixed him to the side of his sick couch for nearly five years. How often, during his long and painful illness, did the suffering lieutenant bless God that he had been favoured, in the midst of his distress, with such a good and faithful servant as John was to him! How often did he assure him, that if they ever reached England he would make him comfortable for life! Alas! every day lessened the chance of his living to fulfil these promises; and John, in the event of his death, durst scarcely hope now to be able to effect an escape, as the prisoners were watched with redoubled vigilance.

One morning, after John had been absent in search of some dainty, which he fancied Mr. Murray particularly wished for; on his return his master put into his hand a sealed paper, saying, John, I feel that my situation becomes every day more critical, I have no individual, besides yourself, on whom I can rely; will you, my kind friend, take charge of this packet; it contains some papers of infinite consequence to my family. I wish you to promise me never to part from them out of your possession, till you deliver them in safety to my brother's own hand; I have given you his address: he lives in Portman Square, in London. If you ever reach England, lose no time in seeing him should he be still alive; and in the event of his death find out my sister, and give the packet to her. Will you promise me to do this? It will greatly add to the comfort of my dying moments. John gave the required promise, and took the packet immediately under his care. Mr. Murray lived a very few days after this; and John, by his death, once more felt himself left alone in the world. Mr. Murray had with kind consideration given him twenty guineas, which he desired him to conceal, as it might be of use to facilitate his escape, and in all probability he would not be permitted to retain it if it were seen after his death. The event proved that this precaution was very necessary, for Mr. Murray was no sooner dead than every article about him was seized by his inhuman jailors.

When John had seen his master laid in the grave, he immediately set about contriving means to get to England; and, in six months afterwards, he succeeded in quitting his place of confinement, in the disguise of an old, tattered French soldier.

## CHAP. XV.

After many hair-breadth escapes from detection, John reached Boulogne in safety, and in a small open boat

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

crossed over to Dover, having very nearly expended the whole of his little store in bribing the fishermen to carry him out of the French dominions. Upon his landing, he found his finances would not allow him any other mode of conveyance than his feet to reach London; and though worn out and exhausted with his long march through France, he determined to pursue his walk to the metropolis without delay. He reached London in three days, and found no difficulty in obtaining a direction to Portman Square. Sir James Murray's name was still on the door, which the direction on the packet pointed out. John knocked very humbly, and in a moment it was opened by a well-dressed footman. John asked if Sir James was at home and could be seen? He answered very civilly, that Sir James was at home, but particularly engaged with company, and he did not think he could possibly see him that night. My business, answered John, is very particular. I am just arrived in London and have something of great consequence to deliver into his own hand. I very much wish I could see him to night, as I am a perfect stranger in this great city, and, to tell you the truth, I am afraid of keeping it in my possession longer than I can help. While he stood talking at the door, a well-dressed genteel-looking upper servant maid came up the steps, and was hastily passing them when, turning round to answer some question that her fellow-servant asked her, she fixed her eyes on John, and giving a violent scream, exclaimed John Telfer, I am sure! John was too much surprised to be able to answer; but the man-servant held a light up and said, I am sure you must be mistaken, recollect yourself, and was going to lead her away. John, however, no sooner heard her voice, than all his senses returned in full power, and straining her to his breast, he said, Marion Scott alone could recognize a poor worn-out wretch, after so many long mournful years of absence, and in such a miserable plight as I am now. The servant, when he heard John pronounce her name, was convinced that it must be the very John Telfer he had heard her lament the loss of so often, and very kindly begged him to walk into a small parlour near the door. Marion had fainted at the sound of his well remembered voice, and it was some time before she became sensible; but when she did, nothing could equal the transport and delight they both felt in once more so unexpectedly having met. She informed him, that one of the young ladies of the Hall, had married Sir James Murray, and that her mother wished Marion to live with her, as she could be trusted, and her daughter was very young. She had been in her service nearly two years; but, continued she, I mean to leave this place soon, for I am now deprived of the pleasure of seeing my dear parents in the summer, as I used to do with my old lady; and though I am in other respects very comfortable, I cannot on any account remain here much longer. Just as she had given this little history of herself, the footman came in and said that he had informed his master that John wished to see him; and, as soon as I told him who it was, he desired me to send you up to him immediately, as he said he knew you belonged to the same ship as his brother did, and therefore he concluded you could give him some information concerning him. John followed the servant into a superb room, where he found Sir James anxiously waiting for him. The moment he entered, Sir James asked him if he knew any thing of his brother. John said, Indeed I do Sir: I have come to you by your kind brother's desire. He made me promise to deliver this packet into your own hands. He died about nine months ago, and I have never suffered it to be out of my bosom since he gave it to me. Sir James was excessively affected. He took the packet, and telling John to wait where he was, went into the next room to examine it. In about half an hour he returned, and taking John's hand said, My dear unfortunate brother has left it in my charge to repay his debt of gratitude to you, for your faithful services and long attendance upon him in his severe illness. You shall ever be considered by me, in the light of his comforter, and from this moment you must make this house your home. He has left you in his will five hundred pounds, which shall be paid you whenever you please to draw upon me for it; but in the meantime, I must see to get you properly nursed and recovered from the fatigue you must have undergone in your long march. The papers you have brought me are indeed, of very great importance, and come at a particular fortunate moment, as they in all probability, will save me from a very vexatious lawsuit, with which I have been threatened. So saying, he rang the bell, and desired the servant to take John into the housekeeper's room, and to see that every possible attention was paid him. John, after having had some refreshments, began to wonder that he did not see Marion again. He asked where she was, and the housekeeper told him she would be there presently, and desired one of the other maids to call her. When she appeared, it was evident she had been in tears. She spoke however cheerfully to John; and the housekeeper rising said, I am sure you must have much to say to each other, after so long an absence, so we shall leave you together till supper time, which I think Marion must be earlier to night than usual, as your friend must require rest after all his fatigues. With these words she left the room.

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

They were no sooner left alone, than John, taking Marion's hand, said tell me, my dear friend, how are my master and Miss Helen? Marion, in a faltering voice, related the melancholy detail of poor Mr. Martin's death. She was going on to tell him about Miss Helen, when surprised that he had made no remark on what she had told him she looked up, and to her great alarm, she saw him leaning against the wall, pale and ghastly, his eyes fixed, and evidently gasping for breath. She spoke to him, and at last, after making a violent effort, he pronounced his master's name. The truth was, that though Captain Elliott had suggested the probability of Mr. Martin's death, John, in the bottom of his own heart, would not allow himself to believe that he never should see his dear master again; and, even unknown to himself, the hope of being able to comfort and attend upon him in his old age, had been the chief support and motives for exertion through so many years of trial and suffering. To be in a moment fatally convinced, that all such hopes were at an end quite overcame him, and for some time he wept like a child, and could not be comforted, even by Marion. At last he became more composed, and begged Marion to tell him some tidings of dear Miss Helen. Marion repeated what we have before mentioned, and then added, that Miss Helen had joined in the partnership with Miss Maxwell, and for some time they went on very well; but that, about two years past, Miss Maxwell had fallen into bad health, which had gradually increased so much as to confine Miss Helen almost constantly to her bedside; the consequence of which she said, had been that their business had decreased very much. Miss Maxwell was just dead, and had left Miss Helen all that she died possessed of; but, from what she had written her, the property was very small. However, she writes me, added Marion, that she has serious thoughts of getting out of business, as soon as she can wind up her affairs, and living in retirement, upon what little property she may find herself possessed of; but I am much afraid that her health is the cause of this determination, for I think there is a degree of despondency in the style of her last letter, which I never observed in any other, notwithstanding the various afflictions she has gone through.

In a few days, John had quite recovered from all his fatigues, and appeared, in Marion's eyes, the best looking man she had ever seen. One evening, when they were conversing about Miss Helen, and talking over various plans that could be followed, to assist in recovering her health, Marion, said John, there is a plan I have thought of, and which would certainly be the very best thing I could do, to be of use to her; it is to get married, and go down and settle in Eskdale. Mr. Murray's legacy gives me the means of taking a farm, and I have no doubt that with the knowledge I possess of the management of sheep and cattle, I shall be perfectly able to support a wife, and have a comfortable home for Miss Helen. What do you think of my plan? Will you be my sweet little wife, and help me to show my gratitude to my dear master's daughter? Marion's heart was full, she could not speak, but her eyes did not say no; and John was delighted to find he had at last hit upon so admirable an expedient. He instantly wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Scott, soliciting their consent to the marriage, and begging of Mr. Scott to look out for a small farm, such as he thought would suit him; and added, that he wished much to marry and bring down his wife as soon as possible, that they might get a home ready for Miss Helen, before they let her know of his arrival in England: for Marion thought she was not in a state of health to be kept in suspense. If she knew he was arrived, she might wish to see him sooner than it was possible for them to get their affairs settled, so as to marry, and he did not like to separate any more from Marion, but meant to bring her down himself to Eskdale as his wife.

Great was the surprise and joy this letter occasioned to the worthy couple in Craigie Hall; and it would scarcely have gained complete credit, had it not been accompanied by one from Marion herself, confirming all its intelligence. Mr. Scott answered it by return of post, giving his unqualified consent to the match, which he thought the sooner it took place the better, and added, Have no concern about your farm, I know of one that will exactly suit, and shall take care to have it in proper order, both for yourselves and our dear young lady, whom, I trust, you will be able to prevail with to return amongst us again; and then I think I may once more see Eskdale look cheerful before I die, which I am sure it has never done since you left it. Marion and John were accordingly married, and took leave of Sir James and Lady Murray, loaded with every mark of kindness and good wishes.

Mr. Scott had desired that they might come directly to Craigie Hall, and said he would take them to their own house in the evening. Accordingly they managed to drive up the dale, in the morning, both with a wish to please Mr. Scott, and to gratify themselves by a view of all the well-known scenes, among which their infant years had

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

been spent. John, even in the midst of happiness, wept bitterly, when he came within sight of that house, which had been a home to him in his orphan state; and which from the kind treatment and instruction he had received within its walls must ever be dear to him. Marion, though possessing an equal warm heart, was just at that moment too much ingrossed with the delight of seeing her parents, and of presenting to them, as her husband, that very John they had so often tried to persuade her was no more, to enter exactly into his feelings. She sat looking out of the carriage, from side to side, watching every turn and bush she formerly knew, to see if they looked as they did when she left them; and at last, when they were approaching Mr. Elliott's cottage, she could keep silence no longer. Look, dear John, cried she, what a beautiful place this is made! Surely there must be new comers there now. Mr. Elliott would never have built these two pretty bow windows; and only see what lovely flowers are placed in them! It looks like a perfect paradise. It really does, answered John, with a sigh, thinking at the moment of poor Helen's wishes, on that memorable walk, which he first took with his dear master. I should have preferred living at that house, thought he, if I could have afforded it; but he did not express this, as he was determined to be contented with whatever house Mr. Scott had chosen for him.

All was happiness on their arrival at Mr. Scott's; an excellent dinner was prepared for them, which they were too happy to do much justice to. Soon after dinner, Mr. Scott proposed going with them to their own house; and said he hoped they had not forgotten how to walk, as he should expect a visit from them every day, and their house was a little distance from Craigie Hall. They laughed, and continued chatting with him and Mrs. Scott all down the river, till they came to the very cottage they had admired so much in the morning. Pray, Sir, asked John, who lives here now? Mr. Elliott I think must have left it, for he was not very famous for keeping his house in such excellent order. He is dead, answered Mr. Scott, and it has been lately sold to a gentleman that has come from foreign parts. The family are not yet come down to it, but I believe are shortly expected. Would you like to look at the inside of the house? it is very well worth seeing; for, according to my taste, it is as pretty a neat box as you will meet with any where. Marion said she should like to see it of all things; they therefore turned up the little path that led to the door. Mr. Scott knocked, and it was opened by Peggy Oliphant, dressed in her best Sunday's gown; she curtesied and looked eagerly at John, who shook hands with her on entering.

They went over every room, and all the different adjoining offices, Mr. Scott seeming to take particular pleasure in pointing out all its superior qualities. John thought he never had seen so complete a thing and almost wished he had not examined it, for fear of finding his own much inferior. At length when every thing had been admired, Mr. Scott taking John's hand, said, Now, my dear son, Marion, long ago, let me into a secret about this cottage, and when your joyful letter arrived, a thought came into my head, that I would surprise you. Mr. Elliott had been dead some time, and I knew his heirs wanted to dispose of the farm; I therefore made them an offer, which was accepted. I have fitted it up according to what I think will be pleasing, both to you, my dear children, and even to your intended guest. I have only to add, it is my wedding gift to my daughter, who I hope, will never again quit her native dale, at least during her mother's life and mine. John and Marion were so overcome with their own happiness and Mr. Scott's kindness, that they could only answer him with their tears; Marion threw herself into his arms, calling him the best and kindest of fathers. Oh, at last said John, had I known what a fortune Marion was, I scarcely think I could have had courage to ask her to be my wife. I am very glad you knew nothing about it then, said Mr. Scott, for we should have been all in the wrong without you, Marion would never have had any other man; you know she has been in love with you ever since you jumped over Bob's ears; and to own the truth, I approve her taste from the bottom of my heart; and I would rather see her your wife than any other man's in Eskdale.

Two day after they were settled in their favourite cottage, John left Marion to get every thing in order, and proceeded to Edinburgh, with a firm determination of not quitting that city, without conducting back to her native dale the last surviving remnant of his dear master's family.

On his arrival in Edinburgh, he wrote a few lines to Helen, saying that one of the crew of the unfortunate Amazon had been so lucky as to find his way back to his native country, after many years of captivity; and expressing a desire to be permitted to see her, if it were not too painful to her feelings. Helen had just come to the final

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

resolution of retiring from business her health had been greatly injured by the close attention and fatigue she had undergone during Miss Maxwell's illness; and she now found herself unable to sustain the kind of life she was forced to lead, in order to make it an object worth her while to pursue.

On the receipt of John's note she was greatly agitated; at last, summoning all her resolution, she said, I will see this person, if it be only for Marion Scott's sake; he may, perhaps, be able to set her mind at rest about poor John; so saying, she answered his note, desiring to see him immediately. John trusted she would not recognize him, for he was greatly altered, had grown considerably taller and stouter, and his complexion, from being fair, was now almost as dark as an Indian's. She cannot possibly know me, thought he, Nobody, but Marion, could ever know me, I am quite sure; and in this hope, he walked boldly into the little parlour, in Prince's Street, where sat Helen ready to receive him. On his entrance, he almost betrayed himself by his surprise; for in her, he almost thought he saw his own dear master himself, Helen's features resembled, in so strong a degree, those of her father; but she was now thin and pale, and evidently out of health.

John looked at her a few minutes without speaking, but at last made some apology for his intrusion. He said he had promised Captain Elliott to deliver her a small miniature of her mother. He then approached her, and kneeling presented her picture. Helen was surprised, but she put out her hand to receive it; on her arm she wore as a bracelet, a miniature of her father; John saw it, and for a moment prudence was forgotten; he snatched her hand, and kissed the resemblance of his master. Helen, astonished, fixed her eyes upon him, and the next moment, exclaiming, Oh! it is John himself! leant upon his shoulder and wept bitterly. John succeeded in soothing her into composure, and spent the evening in relating all the particulars of the loss of her poor brother and uncle, which till now were unknown to her; he then proceeded to prefer his request that she would return with him to Eskdale. I consider myself, dear Miss Helen, as pledged to your uncle (independently of all I owe to my own master, and that is far more than I ever can express), never to leave you nor separate from you so long as you have no other protector; I have a comfortable home to offer you, and a wife who will strive with me to see which of us can pay you most attention; oh, do not deprive us of the delight of having you under our roof. You are married, then, said Helen mournfully, thinking of poor Marion's constant attachment, pray who is your wife? a foreigner, I suppose. And could my master's daughter know so little of John Telfer? Could she think he would ever do such a foolish thing as to bring a foreigner into Eskdale, or ask Miss Helen to live with a stranger? No lady, it is your friend, Marion Scott that was, now my own Marion Telfer, that invites you through me to come to her, and let us all once more be happy; you will not surely refuse us, Miss Helen, you cannot be so cruel. Helen felt she could not be so cruel, either to herself or to the honest affectionate couple, who now offered her a home. I will come to you, John, said she, the moment I have finished the arrangement of my affairs: in a few weeks I shall be at liberty; I am not much richer than when I quitted Eskdale, yet I have enough to prevent my being a burden to you and uncomfortable to myself: I have only one agreement to make with you: you must both, from the moment I enter your house, consider me in the light of a sister, nothing more, or I cannot remain with you. It shall be in that and every thing else, said John, exactly as you please; our only wish is to see you comfortable.

John insisted on remaining in Edinburgh while Helen was detained, and she found him of the greatest service in assisting her to arrange her business; she had her precious library carefully packed up and sent on before her to Eskdale, and at the end of three weeks was ready to attend John to his peaceful home.

With what a variety of different feelings did Helen once more enter her native dale! She wept violently all the way, till she had passed the Manse, when, recollecting that she was actually unkindly to the good and proved friend who sat beside her, she endeavoured to compose herself and to appear cheerful on meeting his wife, the long attached and faithful Marion. How Mr. Elliott's cottage is improved! said Helen, but she had scarcely uttered the sentence, when on the green before the house Marion appeared running towards the gate to let them in. And do you indeed, my kind friends, live here? said she, almost overpowered. Marion flew into her arms, exclaiming, I was sure he would bring you; you would never refuse to come to us; now we shall be happy again; so saying, she led Helen into a neat little room, with a bow-window at one end, and a book-case, well

## The Eskdale Herd-boy

filled with books, at the other; the furniture perfectly neat and comfortable, but nothing fine nor out of its place; and what amazed and pleased Helen more than can be described, over the chimney-piece hung, in a small size, the portraits of her father and mother. John had, when in Edinburgh, borrowed from her the miniatures of her parents, and carrying them to Mr. Raeburn, the celebrated artist, prevailed on him to take copies of them, and afterwards forwarded them to Eskdale. This is kind, indeed, said she, and taking John's hand, while she laid her head on Marion's bosom, now I do feel I am again at home.

In a few months, John and Marion's care of their dear guest was amply rewarded by seeing her health completely re-established; her spirits had resumed their former cheerfulness, and the dale did indeed look more like itself, as Marion expressed it, than it had ever done since poor William's elopement.

Meantime Mr. Johnstone, the clergyman, paid them daily visits; he had become a widower, and was left with one child, a little girl; but how to bring her up was a great source of anxiety to him. On becoming acquainted with Helen, he thought it would be very desirable that she should undertake the charge of his little girl's education; with this view, he made a point of seeing her constantly, that he might be able to judge of her abilities; on a more intimate knowledge of her good qualities, he began to wish he could give his child such a mother, and in a very short time made her proposals of marriage. Helen both loved and respected him; she frankly told him so, and, in little more than a year after her return to Eskdale, she became Mrs. Johnstone, and was conducted to the home of her childhood, by her happy and affectionate husband, amidst the rejoicings of the inhabitants throughout the whole dale.

John and Marion continue now to live in the cottage in the greatest comfort and happiness; they have three children, the eldest, named William Martin, is the idol of Helen, and from choice she would scarcely ever let him leave the Manse; but the recollection of her poor brother's fate prevents her from indulging her favourite wish.

No, said she to his father, I will not trust myself with the care of that dear infant; he will be much safer under your and Marion's eye; and remember, my dear friend, to train him from his earliest days in the habits of *obedience*, and then in your old age he will be your comfort and support. Oh! what misery did one act of *disobedience* produce in this cheerful happy dale, as well as to my dear unfortunate brother himself! May we, in rearing our children, never forget the mournful, but instructive lesson!

\* \* \* \* \*

And now, my dear young readers, let the author of this little tale address you as a friend and a mother. What think you of the Eskdale Herd-boy? You have become acquainted with him, from the time that he was a poor distressed little orphan, fatherless, motherless, without means of support, with nothing but the first rudiments of instruction, not enough to enable him to read the Holy Scriptures, and to learn his duty to his neighbour, or his duty to his God. He had only those little seeds of virtue, from which, if they are steadily and constantly cultivated, good actions spring up in after life; I mean affection, gratitude, industry, and obedience. God Almighty raised up to him a friend in the worthy Minister of the parish; but that friend could do little or nothing for him in the way of money; he could only teach him to read and direct him in reading what was suited to his capacity; he could recommend him to a master, to be employed in such work as was fit for his age and station in life; what would all this have availed, if he had been indolent and inattentive, if he had been sulky, ill-tempered, ungrateful, or disobedient? The wretched little creature would then have been entirely lost; perhaps have fallen into temptation, crime, and infamy in this world, and endless misery hereafter. Instead of this, you see him going on gently and quietly, but steadily and firmly, in the path of his duty; rendering himself beloved and respected by all who knew him, gradually raising himself in life by good behaviour in every station that he filled; and at last made happy in his native dale, by discharging the debt of gratitude to his benefactor's daughter, obtaining the respect and esteem of all his friends and neighbours, and enjoying the pure affection of one whom he had loved in childhood, as the sweet-voiced and kind hearted little Marion.