

you are surely too good-natured to disappoint me." Little risk of that, I thought. I had, in fact, become thoroughly enamored of the warm-hearted benevolence and fascinating conversation of my companion, and acquiesced with the best good-will in the world.

We had threaded the course of the river for several miles. It runs through a wild pastoral valley, roughened by thickets of copsewood, and bounded on either hand by a line of swelling, moory hills, with here and there a few irregular patches of corn, and here and there some little nest-like cottage peeping out from among the wood. The clouds, which during the morning had obscured the entire face of the heavens, were breaking up their array, and the sun was looking down in twenty different places through the openings, checkering the landscape with a fantastic though lovely carpeting of light and shadow. Before us there rose a thick wood, on a jutting promontory, that looked blue and dark in the shade, as if it wore mourning; while the sunlit stream beyond shone through the trunks and branches like a river of fire. At length the clouds seemed to have melted in the blue, — for there was not a breath of wind to speed them away, — and the sun, now hastening to the west, shone in unbroken effulgence over the wide extent of the dell, lighting up stream and wood and field and cottage in one continuous blaze of glory. We had walked on in silence for the last half-hour; but I could sometimes hear my companion muttering as he went; and when, in passing through a thicket of hawthorn and honeysuckle, we started from its perch a linnet that had been filling the air with its melody, I could hear him exclaim, in a subdued tone of voice, "Bonny, bonny birdie! why hasten frae me? I wadna skaith a feather