

at full was rising over the Cumnock hills, and casting its faint light on the trees that rose around us, in their winding-sheets of brown and yellow, like so many spectres, or that, in the more exposed glades and openings of the wood, stretched their long naked arms to the sky. A light breeze went rustling through the withered grass; and I could see the faint twinkling of the falling leaves, as they came showering down on every side of us.

“We meet in the midst of death and desolation,” said my companion; “we parted when all around us was fresh and beautiful. My father was with me then, and — and Mary Campbell; and now” —

“Mary! your Mary!” I exclaimed, “the young, the beautiful, — alas! is she also gone?”

“She has left me,” he said, — “left me. Mary is in her grave!”

I felt my heart swell as the image of that loveliest of creatures came rising to my view in all her beauty, as I had seen her by the river-side, and I knew not what to reply.

“Yes,” continued my friend, “she is in her grave. We parted for a few days, to reunite, as we hoped, for ever; and ere those few days had passed she was in her grave. But I was unworthy of her, — unworthy even then; and now — But she is in her grave!”

I grasped his hand. “It is difficult,” I said, “to bid the heart submit to these dispensations; and oh, how utterly impossible to bring it to listen! But life — your life, my friend — must not be passed in useless sorrow. I am convinced — and often have I thought of it since our last meeting — that yours is no vulgar destiny, though I know not to what it tends.”

“Downwards!” he exclaimed, “it tends downwards! I