

unoccupied. I find the bachelor's wife delicately drawn in one of the posthumous poems of poor Alexander Bethune, as a "fair being,"—the frequent subject of his day-dreams,—

" Whose soft voice  
Should be the sweetest music to his ear,  
Awakening all the chords of harmony;  
Whose eye should speak a language to his soul,  
More eloquent than aught which Greece or Rome  
Could boast of in its best and happiest days;  
Whose smile should be his rich reward for toil;  
Whose pure transparent cheek, when press'd to his,  
Should calm the fever of his troubled thoughts,  
And woo his spirit to those fields Elysian,—  
The paradise which strong affection guards."

It may be always predicated of these bachelor's wives, that they never very closely resemble in their lineaments any living women: poor Bethune's would not have exhibited a single feature of any of his poor neighbors, the lasses of Upper Rankellour or Newburgh. Were the case otherwise, the dream maiden would be greatly in danger of being displaced by the real one whom she resembled; and it was a most significant event which, notwithstanding my inexperience, I learned by-and-by to understand, that about this time my old companion, the "bachelor's wife," utterly forsook me, and that a vision of my young friend took her place. I can honestly aver, that I entertained not a single hope that the feeling should be mutual. On whatever other head my vanity may have flattered me, it certainly never did so on the score of personal appearance. My personal strength was, I knew, considerably above the average of that of my fellows, and at this time my activity also; but I was perfectly conscious that, on the other hand, my good looks rather fell below than rose above the medial line. And so, while I suspected, as I well might, that, as in the famous fairy story, "Beauty" had made a conquest of the "Beast," I had not the most distant expectation that the "Beast" would, in turn, make a conquest of "Beauty." My young friend had, I knew, several admirers,—men who were younger and dressed better, and who, as they had all