

The Nikkur Holl

By Robert Pearse Gillies

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In one of the outer Skerries of the Shetland Islands there dwelt many years ago, two fishermen, who, from their having both been left when young without parents or protectors, had formed an intimacy which subsisted throughout their lives. By their joint exertions they had managed to possess themselves of a boat, which led to a mutual good will or partnership, extending itself over all their other property in trade; for, as each inherited the cabin of his ancestors, there were two separate domestic establishments, though these existed more in appearance than reality. The difference in the ages of this pair was not great, but their persons and tempers were as unlike as a sealgh and a sillock. Petie Winwig was a thickset, Dutch-built, heavy-headed calf, with a broad, swollen, grinning countenance. His cheeks rose like two lumps of blubber on each side of his nose, almost concealing that, as well as his little eyes, when he laughed. A perpetual smile of good humour and acquiescence sat upon his face, and his well fattened limbs and body showed that care and discontent never prevented his stomach's doing its duty in an able manner. If, instead of having been born in this needy land, he had been the son of an English trader, he would have become one of those sleek, oily, fullbottomed swabbers, whom I have seen marching down Wapping High Street as if they were heaving an anchor at every step; and who, when they come aboard to look after stores, oblige us to lay a double plank from the quay to the gangway, for fear they should snap a good two inch deal asunder with their weight.

"Ay!" said Captain Shafton, "I know one who could raise a ton at least — perhaps you have seen him — old Fodder?"

"Fat Fodder!" cried Shipley, laughing, "I know him well — they say he measures three yards round the waist. I have seen the watermen refuse to take him across the river, for fear of swamping their boats. I wanted him to let them tow him astern, like a dead fish, for there would be no fear of his sinking."

"I can tell you a merry jest of old Fodder," said the first mate, "if you'll put me in mind of him another night — at present I'll continue the laird's story."

Petie Winwig was not only fat, he was lazy and sleepy; and, had not his station compelled him to daily exertions and nocturnal watchings, he would have been the greatest though the most harmless drone in the islands. On the other hand, his associate and partner was a perfect wasp, both in appearance and activity. He was "a lean and hungry looking" rogue, a complete "spare Cassius" in his way. His figure was tall and bony, with a length of arm fit for a king, and an eye as quick as a "donkey's." His looks were prying and inquisitive, and the shrewdness of his features was greatly heightened by a long and hooked nose, which obtained for him amongst his countrymen, who had been, (as most of them have,) in the Greenland seas, the designation of the Mallema¹. This title he indeed well sustained, for he was as rapacious, and as constantly on the wing, as that unwearied bird; but he might as justly have been called a Solan, or a pelican, for if he could not poise himself in the air and plunge down, like one of them on a shoal of fishes, he knew no bounds to his desire to obtain them; nor would the possession of all the inhabitants of the deep have satisfied his covetousness. His real name was Daniel, but he was most commonly called Spiel Trosk, the hardest driver of a bargain who ever brought goods to Lerwick; and, if he did not openly cheat and delude his customers, it was only because he had not been brought up according to the newest and most liberal system of education. He was, indeed, as much in the dark in this particular, as if he had lived through the whole of one of the dark ages, and though Petie Winwig, his comrade, as well from indolence as from stupidity, never questioned his dealings, but left the management of the money entirely in his hands without suspicion, he was not enlightened enough to think of swindling him. This ignorance was indeed deplorable; for Petie preferred sitting in doors, making fishing lines and mending nets, to plying in the market, and was, besides, fully convinced both of his own incapacity for business, and of his companion's talents; so that, but for this want of illumination, Spiel might have bilked him out of the profits of their mutual labors. There were, however, no unfair dealings between them, but, on the contrary, perfect confidence and friendship. They tilled one plot of ground, and sowed it with the same seed: they assisted each other in digging peat, and in making or repairing every shed or utensil which the necessities of either required; and they knew no need of asking when they wished to borrow. In fact, the division of their huts was the only distinction that existed

¹ Pronounced "Mollymawk."

between them, and as these were situated close together, on a slope lying under the lee of a rocky hill, apart from the rest of the village, this separation was merely nominal.

To their lonely and isolated situation may perhaps be traced the commencement of their union; and in such islands, where every want beyond the capacity of the individual to supply, must be obviated by the assistance of a neighbor, close intimacies must necessarily be produced. Similarity of temper and inclination may be essential to matrimonial connexions, but the friendships of either sex exist most strongly between those of different dispositions and pursuits; and he who considers that jealousy, envy, and avarice, are the rocks on which most friendships are wrecked, will not be at a loss for the cause.

The love of gain, which Spiel Trosk nourished as the dearest affection of his heart, increased, like all other inordinate desires, in strength and magnitude, till it became a monster. He grew discontented with the spare profits of his occupation, a creel of sillocks brought him but a trifle, hundreds of ling and tusk were sold without filling his purse, and the mittens and caps, which he and Petie knitted at spare hours, or whilst watching their lines, hardly repaid the cost and the labor, and to dig and carry peat was absolute waste of time. — In fact, his thoughts were directed towards obtaining large sums of money, such as he had heard were amassed by the southrons, whose ships passed occasionally before his eyes. He had sailed in a Greenlandman, in his youth, and he now dreamed of the wealth the owner must have possessed to fit out such a vessel; he thought of the shoals of bottle-noses he had seen killed in his native voes, and he calculated the produce which the laird had enjoyed — Money became the only theme of his thoughts, his idol, and he might be said to worship Mammon in his heart. At length he became possessed with a strange idea, he fancied that he was destined to be rich — not rich like Magnus Horrick, the fish salter, who traded to Spain; nor like Davis Steinson, the spirit dealer; but rich as Gilbert Maclure of Leith, who, it was said, could buy all Shetland; or as a merchant of London, whose ships came yearly to Lerwick, on their way to the whale fishery, and returned, in their homeward course, laden with the ransom of a monarch.

For some time the idea which Spiel had conceived, of his approaching state of affluence, was of great benefit to the firm of Winwig and Trosk; for the fisherman had believed that his riches were to be the result of unparalleled exertion and

success. He had accordingly become more energetic than ever, and he began to attract much notice at this period, from his constantly going about in search of gain. He knew no rest by land or by sea, his nets and his lines were always in the water, and his fish were never wanting in the market. Petie now was of greater importance than he had ever been before, and his hours were well engaged in netting and twisting lines; for Spiel had doubled his demand for tackle, and employed two sets of fishing gear instead of one.

But it was not from fish only that Trosk expected to obtain his wealth; he became a speculator, and at the close of the summer bought the surplus grain of his neighbors, and added it to an extraordinary quantity which he and Winwig had raised by their own exertions. This he intended to carry in his boat to the surrounding islands, when corn might be dear, and he talked of stretching over to Orkney, if he could hear of a good market. At the departure and return of the Greenland fleet, he was one of the most diligent visitors to the vessels in Brassa Sound, whither he always repaired in due time, with lambs, poultry, eggs, mittens, hose, and every other saleable commodity; but, unlike his brethren, instead of preferring to receive the value of his merchandise in meal, split pease, and pieces of beef or pork, he would never part even with a muscle unless for money, for the only delight he knew was the possession of cash.

Another source of revenue to the firm was down, collected during those times when the weather rendered fishing impracticable, and Spiel was soon known as the most adventurous climber amongst precipices who had ever plundered a nest. Even the eagles of Sumburgh were not safe from his depredations, when engaged in scaling the heights of the mountains — no man could strike down a shag or a gannet like the Skerry fisherman, nor could any one boast of having killed so many wild swans.

With all his diligence and dexterity, after a year and a half spent in anxious labor and peril, Trosk found that the accumulated profits of twice fifty such terms, would not produce the wealth he had allotted to himself in his dream of avarice; and, instead of questioning the justness of his impression that he was to become rich, he concluded that some strange and unprecedented good fortune was to befall him. This fancy wrought in the mind of Spiel till he could not contain it, and it was spread abroad through the medium of Winwig, who, finding his friend did not mean to make it a secret, took delight in telling what he began to believe as truth,

for his opinion of Trosk's sagacity was great, and his own weakness of mind was not trifling. To the simple declaration which Petie made, the neighbors added their own comments, and incorporated them with the text. It was said, that Spiel had been visited by his infernal majesty himself, who had offered to make him a rich man, on certain conditions, and that only the consent of the fisherman was wanting to render him wealthy. Several even recollected the time of the proposal, and were almost sure they had seen the evil one pull the latch of the cottage, and enter during a storm. A description of the Devil became familiar with the gossips of the Skerries, and from thence found its way to Lerwick; and at length "Mess John, the pastor," made some allusion to it in the kirk on a Sunday. Others had a different way of accounting for the foretold riches of the fisherman. He was the orphan of an orphan, and that was sufficient to ensure him luck. This assertion, however, did not contain enough of the wonderful to give general satisfaction; and, accordingly some declared that Trosk had discovered the means of propitiating the lost race of brownies, and of obtaining their long withheld kindness; while still another party said, that the prophet, who had predicted the future riches of the fisherman, was a being without name or description, which had risen up from the bottom of the sea one moonlight night, when Spiel pulled his line, thinking he had hooked a large fish, and which had told him explicitly, that he should possess more pieces of gold than he had ground "aits in the mull."

Which of these reports is correct, is not for me to state, but an occurrence soon took place which induced Spiel Trosk to believe and hope in secret, that that portion of them which referred to the quantity of gold he should amass would prove correct. It is one of the attributes of superstition to give credit to relations which are totally at variance with our own experience and knowledge, provided they promise something improbable and supernatural; and, although the fisherman at first declared that he had neither seen the devil, nor propitiated a brownie, nor fished up a demon from the depth of the ocean, he suddenly altered his manner, and hinted that the report of his having communication with beings of another world was not altogether without foundation.

The desire of wealth, which at first had prompted Spiel to exert every muscle in the pursuit of profitable occupations, now rose to a height which rendered it, like all other overstrained passions, injurious to its entertainer. By his unrivalled diligence and foresight, and the obedience and docility of Petie, Trosk and Winwig

were already spoken of as the most flourishing fishermen within the isles. On them Magnus Horrick, the mighty fish curer, depended for a greater supply than on any four others, and from their nets and lines the gastronomes of Lerwick obtained the choicest offerings of the seas. Their fame, too, began to be attached to other articles of commerce; Spiel had disposed of his barley and oats with great success, having carried them to the neighboring isles at a season when they were greatly needed, for which the laird of Calk had presented him with a fizgig or small harpoon.

Petie's mittens and caps were in great esteem amongst traders and sailors, and were thought equal to those of Fair Isle, and their boat was always welcome alongside of every ship in the sound, since, as I have said, they were not civilized enough to know how to cheat. In this thriving condition, when they were considered as the most monied men in the Skerries, and had contracted for more land for raising barley, and feeding sheep and horses, than any other tenants of the laird, Spiel Trosk became discontented, and possessed with the belief that his riches were to be the result of some fortuitous circumstance. His mind grew uneasy and anxious, and instead of wearing the air of an active man of business, with a keen and decisive glance of the eye, he showed the restless and haggard countenance of a person bereft of his property. He began to prowl and roam about now, more in hopes of meeting with the gifts of chance, than in pursuit of any determined object, and his looks grew rapacious from avarice, and angry from disappointment; still he did not neglect any of his former occupations, though he performed them with less alacrity of spirit and gratification than before; but he was wont to fall into reveries and calculations upon the nature of the event which was to fill up the measure of his covetousness, if, indeed, such a desire can be satiated.

Dangerous is the precipice that hangs over the gulf of futurity, and fearful is his situation who attempts to look steadily down it. The meditations of the fisherman, on the possibility of gaining money without labor, gave birth to strange fancies and desires in his mind. The gossip of the old women often recurred to his thoughts, and when at night the wind whistled around his cabin, and the sea poured into the voe near which it was situated, and broke among the rocks, his ear listened, almost without his consent, for some unusual and portentous sound. What it was he expected to hear, or to behold, he knew not, and wished not to think, but the heavy pattering of rain often sounded to him like footsteps, and when a gust shook his door, he looked at the latch, with the fixed yet haggard eye of one who firmly

awaits the arrival of a terrible visiter.

The mind of Spiel was likewise perpetually disturbed by the recurrence of a singular circumstance, whenever he sought repose on his pillow. At the moment of dropping off to sleep, he was awakened by a word whispered in his ear, which notwithstanding all his endeavors, he could not perfectly recollect, although it seemed as if the mention of one letter of it would have enabled him to remember the whole. It was not a word he had ever heard before, nor uttered in a tone like the voice of any being he knew; but, to whatever language it belonged, or however it was spoken, it was distinctly pronounced, and nothing but the want of a cue to begin with prevented his repeating it. He held it in his mind, and felt it as it were at the end of his tongue, but all his attempts to give it utterance were unavailing, and he might have forgotten it, but that, when he least thought of it, the same syllables were repeated near to him — not constantly, but from time to time, just as his eyes closed, and he lost the consciousness of his situation.

Still this was a circumstance of no consequence, and he strove to look upon it as a curious annoyance, which caused him more uneasiness than it deserved. It was the omen of nothing; for nothing took place that had not happened before. No good or evil fortune crossed his path, but the neighbors, with natural malignity, remarked that success had not made Trosk happier; and pithy hints, about the blessings of poverty and contentment, were dropped in his presence. But the malicious insinuations of his countrymen were less heeded by Spiel than the froth of the sea; his thoughts were on bags of money, and his attention was engaged with things to come.

Winter had now fairly set in, short days succeeded the long nights of that season, and the northern ocean was dashed in huge billows upon the shores. The blasts, which swept the icy sea of Spitzbergen, came laden with triple coldness, and withered the vegetation of the valleys through which they passed. The spray no longer merely whitened the rocks along the beach; it rose in showers upon the breeze, and smote the face of the wanderer far within the land. The wild fowl forsook the coast, and gathered together upon the sheltered lochs and pools among the hills; and squalls of hail and sleet drove along in rapid succession.

At this season little opportunity offered to the fishermen, to pursue their avocations; they were, for the most part, confined to their cottages, and employed

themselves in refitting their tackle for the ensuing spring. Not so Spiel Trosk: if the sea would yield him no fish, it might give him drift wood, or the spoil of a wreck, or curious shells for the Greenland doctors, or even sea weed, or he might light upon a seal sleeping on a rocky nook, or surprise a solan within reach of a stone, or he might find something which would add to his possessions, and eventually be converted into money; for, like Ben Franklin, he well knew that, after lying by for seven years, many things at last turn to account. With this view, Spiel was accustomed to make a tour of the beach early every morning, and he seldom returned without a trifle of some kind in his hand.

In one of his rounds he stopped to observe a speck floating on the water, which, as it drew near, he found to be a seal by its diving. He stood for a little while, in hopes it might crawl out upon the shore, and give him an opportunity of striking it, and whilst thus engaged, just within the verge of the flood tide, which was rising, he occasionally turned his eyes upon the pebbles that were driven forward by the force of the waves. A billow, more heavy and more angry than the rest, rolled towards him, and as it rushed up the strand, it brought, amongst a cluster of wreck and sea moss, a yellow pellet, which it left at his feet. From habitual inclination to appropriate every thing to himself, the fisherman at first picked it up as an uncommon stone; but his fingers soon contracted with spasmodic firmness, when he discovered that he held in his hand a piece of pure gold. After a momentary ecstasy, he again looked at it, and saw that by the action of the water it had been rolled to and fro at the bottom, till it had become as round, and about as large as a musket bullet.

From ruminating on his wishes, and on the reports that had been framed concerning their accomplishment, the mind of Trosk had acquired a tinge of superstition. He gazed again and again at the golden pebble, and thought of the bullets of precious metal which he had heard in his childhood were sometimes shot at witches, and he felt a slight thrill through his frame, when the idea of a bait being laid for him by the infernal foe crossed his brain.

The consideration of the weight and value of this little ingot, however, soon put weak fancies to flight, and he sat himself down to form some conjecture as to the manner of its arrival on that coast, while he carefully watched the waves for another such gift.

Long and abstract were the meditations of Spiel Trosk, as he patiently awaited the ebbing of the tide, in hopes the retiring waters would leave a second ball of gold for his reward. He reflected that, unless his prize had been cast into the form of a bullet, a supposition which he would not seriously entertain, it had probably formed the centre of a large piece of gold, which had been worn away to the size he now found it; and, with a sigh, at the loss of so many precious grains, as deep as if they had been drawn from his own pocket, he strove to estimate what might have been the bulk of the original ingot.

I cannot tell you how he set to work; but he was interrupted by a heavy squall of rain, hail, and snow, which drove with blinding fury over the ocean, full in his face, and though he cared little for weather, he thought it as well to seek shelter in a kind of cavern in the rocks, not far from where he was standing, foreseeing that the tempest would not last long. Hither, then, he retreated, not by entering at its mouth, for the sea constantly poured in at that opening, but by descending down a wide gap in its roof, which led by craggy steps to the cavity within. A dark and dreary retreat was this cavern, and of unusual formation, for it was not a blind cave, penetrating directly into the cliff, but a vast gallery or tunnel, which opened on one side of a steep headland, and pierced through to the other, allowing the waves to rush and tumble along its gloomy gulf, till they foamed out at the end opposite to that at which they entered. From the position of the external rocks, a constant succession of waves were directed through it, and a perpetual roar reverberated in its hollow bowels. Few but adventurous and thoughtless lads had ever ventured within its interior, and their curiosity led them not far; while the more mature, who had no motive for encountering its difficulties, were contented with warning their children not to fall down the rift that led to it, which gaped amidst a cluster of heather at the back of the promontory, and with handing down its name of the Nikkur Holl, as they had received it from their fathers.

Trosk left the low beach, and hurried round the hill, to the opening that conducted to the chasm; for the storm came pelting down more angrily than he had expected, and so thickly fell the sleet, that he could scarcely see to pick his way through the peat bogs, that lay at the foot of the acclivity, deluged as they were with the little rills that descended into them. He had not sought "the yawn," as the mouth of the rift was called, since he had been a youth, but he found it with little difficulty. On entering, however, he perceived that its gulf was much less

practicable to him now than he had been used to consider it, when younger and more venturesome; and though he was the most expert climber within the Skerries, he felt no inclination to penetrate farther within its abyss, than was requisite to screen him from the driving of the tempest. At about ten or twelve feet below the edge, there was a shelf formed by the projection of a ledge of rock, and to this he let himself down, and having seated himself, at length, under the lee of a block of stone, he drew out his piece of gold from his pocket, and renewed his contemplations.

His chief endeavor was to recollect if he had ever heard of a vessel having been cast away near the Skerries; for to some such occurrence he attributed the presence of the golden bullet, and he wished, besides, to flatter a hope he had conceived, that this prize was only the harbinger of a greater treasure; but, with all his retrospection, he could recall no tradition of a shipwreck near his native isle, and he remained lost in amazement and doubt. Meanwhile, the face of the heavens became less obscure with clouds, the wind no longer howled over the mouth of the gulf, and the deep echoing bellow of the troubled surge within the Nikkur Holl was the only sound distinguishable. The fisherman, however, did not awaken from the reverie into which he had fallen, but remained sitting, almost unconsciously, on the ledge within "the yawn." He was calling over in his mind the names of several old persons, from whom he meant to inquire what vessels had been lost on the coast within their memory, and was scarcely aware that he was not seated by his own hearth, when a voice whispered slowly in his ear, "Car- mil-han."

"Good God! " cried Spiel, starting up and looking fearfully down the abyss, from whence the sound seemed to come, "this is the word that haunts me in my sleep! what can it mean?" What is Carmilhan? he would have said, but he felt unwilling to pronounce the strange term, though he now recognised it as that which he had so long endeavored to utter. He continued a few moments gazing into the dark void beneath, and listening to the roaring waves, which seemed to wrestle unceasingly within the craggy entrails of the hill, till a degree of alarm overcame him, and he turned to ascend the sides of the rift; but, just as his last foot was withdrawn over the upper edge, a slight breath of wind passed out, and muttered, " Carmiihan." " Carmilhan! " repeated Trosk with violence: "Gracious Heaven, why is this unknown word thus spoken to me! " He then rushed down the hill, and stopped not till he had hastened a great way towards his cottage.

It must not be supposed, from this behavior, that Spiel was a coward; he was, on the contrary, one of the bravest of his countrymen, but the singular coincidence of the same sound, ringing in his ears at unexpected moments, and the dreary place in which he had last heard it, combined to agitate his mind. He felt, too, a degree of nervous irritability gain upon him, as his desire of wealth grew stronger; for that powerful impulse was opposed by a consciousness, that the encouragement he gave it was criminal, and he had, besides, constantly remarked, that the word which annoyed him always followed his reveries and dreams of riches.

By the time he reached his cabin, which he did at a swift pace, Trosk felt inclined, to smile at his own folly, at scampering through burns and bogs at the rustling of the air from an outlet in the rock. He now half doubted that he had heard any thing more than a gust of wind; for, though he was confident that "Carmilhan" was the word he had fancied spoken to him in his sleep, and which he had in vain endeavored to recollect, he attributed the supposed repetition of it in "the yawn," to his having remembered it unexpectedly, at the instant the "sough" rose up through the tunnel. In fact he burst out into a laugh, as he looked at his breeks, splashed with the oozy puddles through which he had hurried, and he fondled "Sealgh," the dog who guarded both the cottages, in a more playful manner than was natural to him. Not having been at home to light his fire, he went to Winwig's hut, in hopes of getting some warm burgoo for breakfast, and, on entering, he found Petie fast asleep, sitting with his back propped against a chest, by the side of some smoaking peat, that lay amidst a heap of white ashes on the raised hearth, in the midst of the room. In each hand he still held a knitting needle, with which he had been at work, and a kitten was playing with the worsted ball attached to them, whilst Petie's head occasionally nodded forward, as if in mute approbation of its antics.

The fisherman entered the cottage of his comrade, with the intention of showing him the piece of gold he had found, but Winwig did not awake with the noise he made, and Spiel seated himself by the fire, and warmed his pannikin to prepare his meal in silence. At another time he would have roused Petie, who had fallen into a doze, as he was wont when unengaged in any very active employment; but now he felt some doubts of the prudence of letting his friend know his good fortune, since that harmless and simple being might take delight in spreading the news among the neighbors, who would be continually on the watch

for other prizes of the same kind, and who might also adopt a measure he had contemplated himself. At length he resolved not to make his partner acquainted with "his luck," but to pursue his own counsels, till he had satisfied himself that there would be no danger in risking the disclosure; and he continued eating his crowdie with good appetite, and admiring the full, sleek, and torpid countenance of Winwig, and wondering how any being capable of making money by exertion could resign himself to such a state of unprofitable inaction. There was, however, in the blubber swollen cheeks and massive double chin of Petie, an air of contentment and happiness that offered the best reply to the sarcastic reflections of Trosk; and could a stander-by have beheld the broad, smooth, rounded features of one, half smiling in sleep, while his head nodded at ease, unable to sink far, from the rolls of fat that encompassed his neck and pillowed it up, and at the same glance could have viewed the sharp and care-marked visage of Spiel, with its deepening furrows, its wrinkled front, its thin projecting nose, curved over its compressed lips, while its hue of lived brown was rendered still more lurid by the gleams of its haggard eye, which shone behind its contracted brow of stiff black hair, like the glance of a tiger through a bush, he would have required no time to decide which person he would have chosen to be.

Petie's slumber was ended by the kitten, which, after taking sundry gamesome wheels round the room, ran scrambling up his clothes, till it mounted his head, from whence, when the "man mountain" moved, it leaped off in alarm. Not less alarmed was Winwig, who, clapping both his hands on his crown, where the beast had left several scratches, started up and staggered about, with his eyes half open, and his senses yet asleep; but a loud laugh, which Spiel was provoked to utter, recalled his recollection.

"Heigh! Spiel," cried the drowsy loon, rubbing his eyes. "I am very glad you are safe; for I have been dreaming strange things about you. "

" About me, do you say?" replied the other.

" Ay, indeed, hinney," said Winwig, "I but now thought I was yourself, and, though I knew I was not you, I still fancied I was, and at the same time I thought I was a fish, and that I saw a bait which I wanted to take, though I knew there was a hook in it, that would lay hold of me. It was a yellow bait, and the more I looked at it the more I longed for it, and something seemed to mutter "take it, take it," in my

ear, till at last I snapped at it, and was caught, and I felt as if being; drawn along by the hook when I awaked; but all the while I thought I. was you, and not me, though I imagined I was close by at the time."

" Pheugh! dreams are but dreams," said Spiel: "you felt the cat's claws in your head, and you imagined the rest to account for it. Has Steenson been here to-day?"

" No," replied Petie; "I think the squall has kept him away. It was so thick for a time that I could not see, and just then I dropped off. "

" Where were you in the storm?"

" I was under shelter of a rock," said Trosk, turning the conversation, and, shortly after, he left the cabin.

From this time Spiel became more moody and discontented than ever. The sight of the gold, which he used to contemplate several times a day, seemed to infect him with an insatiability and restlessness, that kept him constantly from home. In spite of frost and snow, and storms and tempests, he was always on the beach; and whenever the boat could live on the sea, he put off shore, on pretence of fishing, though many old craftsmen made it their business to inform him that it was not the season for catching fish. But Spiel gave them some evasive answer, and they grew tired of imparting wisdom to no purpose to a self-willed adventurer.

Trosk's real object, in pretending to fish, was to use a grapnel he had constructed, in hopes of laying hold of something at the bottom, which would prove of value, or, at least, confirm him in his idea that some ship had foundered near the spot where he found the piece of gold. He had in vain inquired, of the oldest inhabitants of the isle, whether any vessel had been wreck ed at any time near the Skerries. No one knew of a loss so near; and, though many could tell him of all the catastrophes of the kind that had happened amongst the Shetland Islands, since the time when the Spanish Armada appeared off them, he could hear of nothing that had taken place where he expected.

Spring appeared, and yet Spiel had met with no second piece of gold, although he had paced the beach till he had almost numbered every stone that lay upon it. He had raked the bottom with his grapnel, for a mile along the coast and for the depth often fathoms, but had found nothing. He had watched when the waves were most rough, and the surf most violent, in hopes of seeing another

rounded mass of precious metal thrown on the strand, but in vain, and now it was time to return to his usual duties — to drain the land, to till and sow, and dig peat, and set his tackle in order. Yet, without neglecting the business of the firm, he resolved to continue his researches for more gold. He felt convinced, that one lump of that substance could not have'come alone to where he found it, and he persuaded himself, that he had not hitherto struck upon the place where the wreck had happened. To avoid wasting the time necessary for his other occupations, he regularly went out at night with his boat, and this he did for a long time in private; but, when his proceedings were noticed, he still continued the practice, declaring that he could not sleep, and that it was better to run the chance of catching something, than to be awake and idle in bed. By degrees, however, he let his desire for acquiring the supposed lost treasure overcome his prudence, and, instead of returning ashore to renew his labors in the field, he remained, pretending to fish, for the greater part of the day. Unfortunately, the place near which he had found the bullet was notorious for its want of fish; and, when his countrymen saw him toiling in such a barren spot, they were amazed at his pertinacity in dropping his lines where no prey had been taken for years. This obstinacy was the more conspicuous, because quantities of sillocks, herrings, mackerel, cod, ling, and tusk, were to be met with in other places; and the sagacity for which Spiel had formerly been remarkable began to be questioned, while the property he had accumulated daily dwindled away. At the same time, in consequence of all these meditations and considerations, and painful watchings, Trosk himself grew leaner, and more avaricious, without becoming more rich. Indeed, he was now much poorer; his features put on a more greedy and sharpened appearance, his eyes seemed capable of piercing through every thing at which he looked, and his cupidity was without control. Instead of Spiel Trosk, the money-maker, he was now called "Dan Bottlenose;" — not that any one dared apply such a name to him in his presence, for his blows were never tenderly given, nor slow in forthcoming, but his wilful folly in "fishing for blobs," as his neighbors used to term his labors, had become the jest of the island.

He was not, however, forsaken by Petie, though he brought home no fish, nor struck down wild swans as before; nor though Gustave Guckelsporn and Chriss Mienkei endeavored to persuade him that Spiel was daft or possessed, and that it was sinful to have anything to do with him, while there were so many other good

fellows in the island, to whom he could unite in partnership, as he had done with him. But so well was Winwig persuaded of the superior sense and conduct of his companion, that he adhered to his fortunes as firmly now as when they were more prosperous, and never even questioned Trosk concerning his motions.

Spiel himself, at length, began to doubt the rationality of his conduct, and looked back with regret on the months he had wasted in vain; yet, the poorer he became, the more earnest grew his attempts to recover some of the hidden wealth. He now loaded a large stone with tallow, and let it sink quickly to the bottom, in hopes of bringing up a pellet of gold attached to it, as stones and shells are found clinging, by the same means, to the sounding lead; but he drew from the bottom nothing but pebbles, starfish, and sea urchins, and this contrivance proved as unsuccessful as his grapnel had formerly done.

Whilst labor and disappointment exhausted the strength and the patience of the infatuated fisherman, a more obscure and indefinable misery preyed upon those moments which he was constrained to allow for rest. Still, from time to time, as he resigned himself to sleep, the same strange unearthly voice whispered in his ear the unknown word, to which he could find no interpretation, and still he doubted the evidence of his drowsy senses, and endeavored, when awake, to persuade himself, that by continually thinking of a sound, which had been at first only the creation of his fancy, he had rendered its recurrence habitual. Yet, while his reason strove to contradict his feelings, his mind became influenced by superstitious misgivings; he listened to tales of kelpies and water fiends with attention, and began to attribute his torment to a call from an evil spirit. He now could account for his hearing "Carmilhan" repeated in the "yawn," by believing that the Holl was haunted by these beings, and he thought of applying to the minister for advice. Then, he paused to consider whether charms would not drive them away, and would have taken council of an old woman, famous in those isles for her necromancy, had not his better feelings told him that the practice was unchristian; but an occurrence took place which overthrew his scruples, and brought him to the brink of the deep pit.

The moon appeared one night, when he was prosecuting his research with his grapnel. It rose full from behind a deep black cloud, whose skirt rested on the horizon, while its upper edge floated like a vast black pall in the mid heaven. The wind had gone down, and left the sea unruffled, but heaving with a heavy ground swell, rising and falling in large smooth billows, like the dance of a host of hills.

Spiel continued his occupation, in spite of the uneasy motion which the water communicated to his boat; not without some hope, that the agitation of the ocean might lay bare or detach some portion of the treasures for which he was seeking. The position he occupied at the rising of the moon, was not far from the entrance to the Nikkur Holl; for he had investigated almost every other station, and when the moonlight threw the broad shadow of the cliffs upon the water, he could not help turning his head to mark the grotesque image of the noss, or headland, through which the tunnel ran. Its shade was stretched upon the surface, like the figure of a huge monster, while the roaring of the surge through the cavern seemed to imitate its bellow. Around it spread a field of brilliant light, but, far beyond, the sea was buried in the deepest gloom, beneath the sable cloud from which the moon had glided. Trosk, while his boat drifted, and drew the grapnel along the bottom, gazed first at the fanciful shadow of the Nikkur Holl, and then at the promontory itself, till his attention was fixed by his seeing something move on its summit. What it was he knew not, but at first he thought it was a pale flame, then it looked like a winged creature, dancing with extended pinions, and he fancied he could see its features, which were human. He looked to see if its shadow was reflected in the water, but nothing was visible on the image of the noss. He turned his eyes again towards the top of the cliff, and a chill sweat crept out of his skin, when he beheld the little being leap up distinctly from the brow of the hill, and fall down repeatedly on its taper legs.

A thousand strange and superstitious feelings arose within the mind of the fisherman, as he gazed on this realization of the gossip tales he had once despised. This, then, was a sea sprite or kelpie, and was no doubt the demon that tormented him with its unceasing whisper. This it was, which had muttered Carmilhan in the yawn; this was the little imp, Still Spraakel, which had always been said to dwell in the Nikkur Holl, and whose visits boded both good and evil, though no one could tell which till it happened; this was the moonlight in which it loved to appear. Spiel was running on thus in his fancy, while he looked at the object of his conjectures, till it made a third vault and vanished, and at the same time the grapnel caught hold of something at the bottom, and brought up the boat. The fisherman forgot the spirit for a moment, in the hope that this might prove some part of the treasure, and he began to haul with care upon his line. He pulled with force, but the hooks still clung firmly to the bottom, and though the swell of the waves jerked hard upon the

rope, it kept its grasp. Spiel pulled still stronger, and brought his skiff close over the spot by his tugging; but the grapnel kept its hold. He grew uneasy, and feared his line might break, and he looked back to the noss, to see if the apparition was there. It was not there, but he beheld the black cloud advancing on all sides from the horizon, while the moon looked pale in the space in which she yet shone, in the centre of the heavens. The shadow of the headland was gone, and darkness was fast closing around him. The wind began to rise, and the bowels of the Nikkur Holl roared more loudly than before, while the heaving of the sea grew more troubled. His boat rocked, and he leaned over its side, and pulled with violence, resolved upon breaking his rope, or bringing up the spoil, be it rock or kist of gold. Again he strained hard, just as the clouds were about to shut out the light of the moon; the impediment gave way, and he believed the line had broken, for he felt no weight; but in an instant something large and dark rose up above the surface of the water, over which he bent, as if disposed to spring into the boat. He fixed his eyes upon it, with his hands extended to grasp it, whatever it might be; and as the water, which had now assumed a sparkling appearance, separated to give it passage, he saw inscribed upon a round black mass of something, though what he could not define, the hateful word, "Carmilhan." It stopped scarce half an instant above the surface, and again sunk, as quickly as it had risen; but Trosk, rendered desperate by this repetition of his torment, plunged his arm swiftly after it, and caught it by its hair. This gave way, and the rest was gone. He drew back his hand, but the moon had disappeared, and he could not see what sort of slippery matter remained in it. A groan of despair, urged almost to madness, burst from the lips of the fisherman at this defeat, and he gnashed his teeth and tore his hair with vexation; but presently, loud claps of thunder, followed by heavy drops of rain, foretold the onset of a storm, and he was compelled to take to his paddles, and make for the shore. A raging tempest succeeded, and Spiel, though cooped beneath a ledge of rock, was drenched with rain and spray; but, notwithstanding his situation, and the occurrences he had witnessed, he fell asleep before the day dawned over the ocean. His dreams were but a repetition of what he had shortly before beheld while awake, though aggravated by the wild delusions of unbridled fancy, and he was disturbed from his repose by an imaginary disappointment, similar to that which he had really suffered. When he opened his eyes, the first rays of the sun were gleaming over the waters before him. The billows had dwindled to little waves, leaping and dancing along the surface, with glittering crests and pale blue bosoms.

A soft mist occupied the horizon, extending towards the island, and gleaming in many places with imperfect rainbows, which gradually seemed to melt away in the morning sunbeams. Of wind there was scarcely a breath, and one small black cloud floated alone upon a sky of milky azure.

The fisherman lay for sometime looking at the mild features of the new-born day, and comparing them with the hideous scowl of the preceding night. His view stretched over a wide expanse of sea, swelling in joyous motion, from the foot of the rocks, in which he had found protection, to the light veil of vapor which hung before the distance. He saw, at intervals, the restless gulls glide along the face of the deep, and the glittering fishes leap from its bosom; but yet he did not stir, and he wondered what feeling of idleness now bound his hitherto unwearied limbs.

After remaining a little longer thus stretched at ease, he was about to arise and take to his boat, when he fancied he could see, at the utmost verge of vision, something floating on the water. It was, indeed, but a speck, but it was a speck of hope, and Spiel never neglected the slightest chance of acquisition. It was something, and it might be something valuable, and that idea was sufficient to engage his attention. He resolved, therefore, to make towards it, lest any one else should have it in his eye, and secure it before him, and he was every moment on the point of creeping from his recess, but yet he felt willing to stay an instant longer. This instant was spent in a fresh conjecture on the nature of the floating body, and the succeeding instant was similarly occupied. In the meanwhile, the object of his consideration drew sensibly nearer, and became more visible; and as he concluded, by its progress, that it possessed more means of making way than the action of the winds and the waves, he began to suppose that it might be a skiff. That it was a boat, he in a short time became convinced, for he could mark its outline, and descry a figure sitting in it; but his surprise at the rapidity of its advance was increased, by his not being able to descry either the sails or oars by which it was propelled.

Having determined to remain where he was, Spiel drew himself as far back as possible within his hiding place, and kept his eyes fixed upon the bark. He now fancied that its quickness of motion had decreased, and that it came forward very slowly indeed. This he considered natural enough, as it evidently had no source of motion but the uncertain action of the waves, and he attributed his former supposition to the incorrect vision caused by the fog; but still he was astonished to

observe it glide on, on end, with the stem towards the shore, instead of driving along with its broadside to the wind; because he could see that the person aboard paid no attention to the rudder, if it had one, but was seated rather more forward than aft. He noticed another circumstance, that excited his wonder, which was, that a small string of petrels, or Mother Carey's chickens, followed the wake of the bark, and flew at times around the head of the stranger; though it is well known that these birds never appear except in storms, of which they are considered both the harbingers and the spirits; yet just then the weather and the ocean were remarkably calm. Again, he was at a loss to account for the boat being directed immediately towards the spot in which he was secreted, for there was no inlet or landing place for some distance along the coast, but a bluff, rocky margin, till you come to Dummafrith's Voe.

This circumstance, however, he attributed to ignorance of the shore, or want of power to manage the boat, and he had time to form a thousand speculations while he lay ensconced in his nook.

At length, Spiel could make out something of the features and figure of the person who occupied the bark, and he found him to be a little withered old man, who sat quite stiff and upright on the rowers' bench, and neither moved his head nor body to the right nor to the left. His face was thin and sharp, and covered by a dry, wrinkled, tawny skin, stretched tightly over the stringy muscles which formed his cheeks and lips. His dress was of bright yellow canvass, or something like it, and a red night-cap covered his head, with its point sticking upright in the air, while in his hand he held a kind of instrument, that resembled a harpoon at one end and a blubber fork at the other.

"This is a very odd little fellow," thought Trosk to himself, as the boat came up towards him, "he looks as old and as stiff as if he had been dead and dried like a salted tusk for this fifty years — he certainly is not alive now."

This conjecture, indeed, seemed true, for the skiff having run up against the boat of the fisherman, which lay beneath his recess, remained stationary, and Spiel could see plainly enough, that the eyes of the little figure were closed, and that its mouth was shut, as if a long time had passed since it had been opened, and that there was no perceptible respiration going on.

Spiel, having advanced to the edge of his retreat, sat for some time looking

down upon the immoveable little figure before him, in wonder at the situation and attire of the man, and at the kind of boat which had brought him; for the whole was unlike any thing he had ever before beheld or heard of. But, after striving in vain to account for what he saw, he became impatient, and in a tone somewhat influenced by a kind of awe, which he felt creeping into his mind, he called out to the stranger to know if he was asleep. He might as well have called to the Nikkur Noss for any answer he received, though he repeated the question several times, each louder than the last. But, growing more bold or curious, he descended into his boat, and grasping the boat hook gave the little oddity a smart push. This was of no avail, and he pushed again harder than before, to as little purpose; and he was about to fasten a rope to the head of the skiff to tow it round to the voe, by the side of which he resided, thinking it fit that the authorities of the island should take cognizance of the dead body, for such he now considered it to be, when it slowly began to move. Its eyes opened, but at first they were lifeless, and void of sight, and turned in their sockets with a ghastly rolling, which, if it did not terrify the Shetlander, made him push off the strange boat from his own with a feeling of horror. Shortly after, the lips quivered, and were drawn apart into a fearful grin, which showed gums large and toothless, and expanded into a frightful gape, from whence a deep sigh, or rather groan, issued, along with a blast of vapor, more like the smoke of gunpowder than the steam of breath. Upon seeing this, Spiel mechanically shipped his oar over the stern of his boat, and began to skull her a little way off; but, reflecting that he was acting like a coward, he put her head about again

In the meanwhile, life seemed to have taken possession of the stranger, and he turned his eyes towards Trosk, and said, in a voice of uncommon expression, "Where am I?"

This was uttered in Dutch, and the fisherman, who was partially acquainted with that language, from having associated with whale-catchers and traders from Holland, exclaimed in the same tongue, "Who are you?"

"I am one sitting in a boat," answered the stranger, somewhat sharply, "to whom it would have been better for you to have given an answer than a question."

"Why?" said Spiel drily, for he was not a man to be lectured.

"Because," said the other, "I could have satisfied questions you might have liked to ask."

"You have not satisfied one which I asked just now," cried the fisherman; "but I have no mind to wrangle with you. You are at one of the Shetland isles — one of the outer Skerries — Whence do you come? and why do you come in this strange fashion?"

"What is strange to you is not strange to me," replied the little man. "I came over the sea to look for the Carmilhan."

"For the Devil!" ejaculated Spiel.

"I have no need to look for *him*," said the stranger.

"In the name of God! what is the Carmilhan?" cried the fisherman fervently.

"I answer no questions put in that manner," exclaimed the little man, wriggling about as if in pain, and groaning as if he growled.

"I say, what is the Carmilhan?" repeated Spiel, not heeding the anguish of the stranger.

"The Carmilhan is nothing now," said the other; "but once she was as brave a ship as ever bore a mast."

"A ship!" cried Trosk.

"Yes, a ship," repeated the stranger; "and when she was lost among these islands, she carried more gold than had floated in any vessel before her."

"Where was she lost, and when?" exclaimed the fisherman.

"It is nearly a hundred years since she was wrecked," replied the little man, "and it was in the night: so that, though I was on board her at the time, I know not the precise spot; but I am come hither to discover it."

"A hundred years ago!" cries the Shetlandman — "You on board a ship a hundred years ago! Pray, how old are you?"

"Old enough to have sailed in the Carmilhan," replied the stranger. "But why do you marvel? — Pray how old is Chriss Mulrill?"

"A hundred and ten, I am told," said Spiel; "yet how come you to know her?"

"I knew her when a child," said the other.

"What can you want with the treasure?" cried the fisherman — " what need has a man of your years of money ? — Teach me how to find the gold; I will take the trouble of raising it, and we will share it between us."

"Yes, and how shall I be sure of your keeping your engagement?" said the little man sneeringly.

" Be always with me, " answered the other. "We will divide the money as we obtain it; and should I offer to wrong you, do you reveal the secret to my enemies. The fear lest another should learn the situation of the wreck, will be a bond sufficiently strong to ensure my fidelity."

"Well, be it so," replied the stranger. "But art thou a man of courage?" The first step requires a strong heart, Spiel Trosk."

"You know my name, old carl!" cried the fisherman in amazement. "How comes this?"

"I knew your father, though you did not," answered the little man in his evasive way; "and I know more than you could demand, though you sat here to question, and I to make replies, till another century were added to my age. I ask you — are you a man of courage?"

"Try me, and learn," replied the Shetlander.

" You must try yourself," said the man in the red cap, "and if you follow my directions you will learn the spot where the riches of the Carmilhan lie hidden. You must go, just before midnight, to the most remote and desolate place in yon island, and you must take a cow with you, and having killed it, you must get some one to wrap you up in her fresh hide. You must then be laid down, and left alone on the wild heath, and ere the clock strikes the first hour of morning your desires will be satisfied."

"That is how old Engrol's son was lost, body and soul!" exclaimed Trosk, in a tone of abhorrence. " Thou art Satan!" continued he, again skulling his boat away — "Thou art Beelzebub, old tempter, the Prince of darkness — Aroint thee, demon!— I defy thee! "

"Thou art an utter fool," bawled the old man to Spiel, as he fled hastily from him. "A bubble-blinded bottlenose! — May the curse of avarice hang over thee !

May the thirst of gold choke thee. May the —" but the fisherman having taken to both his oars, was soon too far from the little man to hear his exclamations, and he gained the point of the Nikkur Noss before he checked his way, or turned to look after the detestable being he had quitted. When Trosk did look for the object of his terror, he perceived him sitting as motionless and as rigid in his skiff as when first he approached to the island, and with as little signs of animation. The boat was moving forward, as if in pursuit of him, and round it flew the petrels, whose presence was so singular, as though in attendance on the little being. Although the Shetlander was by no means deficient in courage, but gifted with rather more than the ordinary race of men, he did not feel willing to have another meeting, alone, with one who seemed possessed of supernatural powers; and, after making himself certain that the strange creature was actually running down upon him, he set up his sail, and again plied his oars with vigor. In this way he shot swiftly round the Noss, and stood down to the bottom of the Voe; but, though he kept a keen eye upon the promontory, he never saw the little man's skiff come past it.

Spiel Trosk had now passed the summer in dragging for ingots and ducats; but, as I have already said, instead of becoming richer, the wealth he had before accumulated was greatly diminished. With his property his reputation for sagacity and success likewise began to decrease, and his countrymen attributed to nothing less than infatuation his obstinacy of persisting to fish in places which were well known to be unfrequented by the inhabitants of the deep. It was in vain that he heard of shoals of herrings, ling, and tusk, being seen and caught in unusual quantities, round various points of the islands; his pertinacity yielded to none of his former objects of avidity, and his boat nightly returned to his cabin as clean of fish as it had departed in the morning. "The Skerry fisherman" had for some time ceased to be the principal contributor to the market of Lerwick, and no one had supplied his place, for no one possessed the energy and resolution which had led Spiel to cast his nets by night and by day, because probably no one was urged by the same incentive — avarice. Instead of daily adding to their store, the necessities of the partners had daily subtracted from it, till no store remained. Want succeeded to comparative affluence; and, from the want of the conveniences, they soon sunk to the want of the necessaries of life. But, though this painful alteration was evidently owing to the strange obstinacy of Trosk, Winwig never for a moment deserted or upbraided his partner: he still placed the same unbounded reliance upon his

superior powers as he had done when his exertions were successful; and, though now the whole task of supplying the means of existence had devolved upon him, he was never heard to complain.

These circumstances seemed to add another pang to the torments Trosk already endured, and his feelings were still more embittered by a belief that now began to infuse itself into his mind, that he was, as his neighbors declared, wasting his time; yet such was his madness, that the poorer he became, the longer and more strenuously did he continue his luckless fishery for gold and jewels. To add to his mental misery at his want of success, the fiend-like whisper of Carmilhan still annoyed his hour of sleep, at intervals, though it would leave him for a time; but it did not fail to return when he had begun to hope he should never experience it again.

At length poverty and disappointment, combined with avarice, actually unsettled his brain; for to nothing else than insanity can be attributed the desperation which determined him to follow the instructions of the little man, who had accosted him on the morning before-mentioned. The charm proposed by this strange being was not unknown to the islands of Scotland, but it was known as a snare which had entrapped many to their fearful destruction, and the tales connected with it were of a kind appalling to the listener. But nothing now could influence the fisherman against his resolution to retrieve his fortunes, or perish — not even the pagan origin attributed to the spell; for it was alleged, and perhaps truly, that the slaughter of the victim was a sacrifice offered to the powers of darkness, as a propitiation for their good will, and all the abomination of a heathen and an idolater was imputed to the deed.

It was in vain that Petie Winwig, who was, (for a fisherman,) a devout kirk-going man, especially when it is considered that he loved to sleep on Sundays, endeavored to dissuade his friend from pursuing his purpose. Useless were his representations, that they should certainly manage, somehow or other, to get through the winter, and that it was sinful to tempt Providence by sleeping all night wrapped up in a cow-hide in the open air, when he might repose comfortably in bed beneath a rain-tight roof. Neither his arguments nor his entreaties had any effect upon Spiel, who seemed to grow more obstinate in proportion to the endeavors made to convert him from his design, and the fat good-natured fisherman's persuasions ended in his yielding to the violent harangues of his

associate, and agreeing to accompany him to the desert place where the charm was to be effected.

The hearts of both were wrung with pain when they fastened a rope round the horns of a beautiful cow, which they had brought up from a calf with all the kindness usually shown to a favorite. She was the last remnant of their former prosperity, and had been retained till now, though they had frequently wanted a meal, which the sale of Luckie would have supplied. They could not part with her, they could not see her the property of another, but the delusion of Trosk made him ready to sacrifice every other feeling, and his overruling spirit damped the opposition of his comrade.

It was now September, and the long nights of the long Shetland winter had commenced. The clouds of evening rode heavily on the gusty winds, which rolled them around, like huge icebergs eddying in the Malestrom; deep shadows filled the glens and valleys between the hills, and the moist peat bogs, and the murky channels of the rills, looked black and fearful, like yawning gulfs and gaping, crevices in the earth. Spiel led the way, and Winwig came after, shuddering at his own temerity, and following his companion more from habit than from inclination. A thousand looks he spent upon the beautiful cow, which walked to execution like a young criminal, showing more youthful as his death draws nearer. It was of that small and graceful breed, whose sleek fat sides, and glossy coats, offer so strong a contrast to the shaggy lank limbs and pendant pot bellies of the savage horses that browse on the Shetland hills. Her face wore the quiet and confiding expression which domesticated animals show towards those who caress and feed them; and when she turned, as she sometimes did, towards Petie, as if in expectation of a root, or a tuft of hay, his feelings overcame him, and a tear passed across his eye, if it did not trickle from it. Often was he on the point of begging Spiel to spare their favorite beast, and exchange her for one less loved; but an awe, which never before had chained his tongue, now bound it, and he mechanically traced the footsteps of his friend, as though he had been his slave.

The spot to which the desperate fisherman bent his course was as desolate as his soul could desire. It was a shallow valley, between two hills, but it was a mountain glen, and was elevated above other vales, which led descending from it towards the coast. The summits of its barren sides were shrouded in dull gray mist, and the patches of heather, and the blocks of stone which lay scattered along the

slopes, were imperfectly visible in the gloomy light, which entered rather from the dell beneath than from the sky above; many slow creeping streams stole darkling down the hills, and fed a boggy rivulet, which flowed oozing and slumbering through the swampy bottom, till, gathering in volumes, it fell into the succeeding dales, and terminated in the sea, which, by day, was visible at the end of the range of highlands, though now the waves could only be heard bursting furiously over the rocks and headlands that opposed it, or rolling mournfully among the pebbles that formed its bed on the level shore.

The only route which would allow the cow to attain the scene of her intended slaughter was along the edge of the stream, which brought its darkened waters from the upper glen. When the fishermen first joined it, near the beach, it was a full and headlong current, tumbling from the little basins it had worn among the rocks, with a quick pace and a brawling sound. In some places it wore its way through beds of disjointed stones, and gushed, in varied forms, between the opposing fragments; in others it sped unseen between banks of bright green moss, which hung over its silent course, almost concealing it; and, again, it appeared bursting out from a black cavity in the peaty soil, to fill a murky pool, or spread through a swampy hollow. Further up the valley, its progress was less distinct, and its voice scarce more than a murmur; but the verdant hue that marked its path along the glens, and the deep brown tint of its sometimes stagnant surface, offered a strong contrast to the pale, withered purple of faded heath, and the yellow mosses of the surrounding hills. No vestige of man was seen in these wild solitudes, and silence was only broken by the noise of water, and the cries of birds. The hoarse bellow of the ocean rose at times upon the blast, which rushed, but spoke not, through the barren dells, and the last late shriek of the fierce sknaw was mingled with its echo.

Not more unwilling could have been the march of the victim, had it known the fate to which its progress tended, than were the steps of Petie Winwig, as he followed the crooked track which the bogs and rivulets compelled his comrade to adopt. Opposing feelings of every description rose in his mind against the deed to which he lent himself an accomplice. Friendship exclaimed, that he was aiding the companion of his youth in the worst species of self-destruction, the destruction of the soul; humanity and gratitude upbraided him with abandoning the harmless animal, which he had taught to look upon him as a protector, and which had returned his kindness with its milk and its offspring; and religion whispered, that

even he himself was about to participate in an unhallowed and fiendish sacrifice! — a rite of Baal! — a propitiation of the grace of Satan! — an offering of blood on high places! All the denunciations he had heard or perused against the sin of worshipping idols, and bowing to Beelzebub, came across his mind; all the stories to which he had listened, of the fatal ends of those who dabbled in the damned mysteries of witchcraft, rose fresh, but more terrible, upon his memory; and when his feet sunk, as they often did, in the fresh loose peat, that sometimes formed their path, his soul shook with fear, that the earth was about to gape and swallow him. But Spiel Trosk strode steadily forward, leading the unfortunate "Luckie," with the air and energy of one who deems that nothing which may follow can exceed the misery that has passed.

His tall gaunt form, and long swift stride, gave him the look of a sorcerer, stalking supernaturally along to the perpetration of some devilish action, and could any uninitiated eye have seen the little procession which wound and mounted up the wild defile, leading from the sea to the highest glen, it must have considered it, (as it really was,) hastening to perform in secret some infernal ceremony of necromancy.

The Skerry fisherman entered upon the last stage of the mountain valleys with the firm step and the daring feelings, which accompany the untamed criminal to the scaffold. With all his usual strength and nerve, he turned to help the breathless victim, whose unassisted efforts could not enable her to climb over a rocky ledge, that separated the lower from the highest glen; and without heeding the tottering gait and pallid countenance of Petie, he led her away towards the centre of the area, with a pace quickening as he proceeded. Winwig, though he trembled, followed; and well might it have been supposed, from his drooping and abandoned aspect, that he too was about to be sacrificed with his favorite. As he crept onward, he felt the earth shake beneath him, and he perceived that Spiel was proceeding over a quaking bog, whose wide surface of closely woven moss seemed floating on a pool of water, and vibrated at every step, with a motion truly symbolic of his own sensations.

Even Luckie now seemed fearful to proceed, and looked back, and lowed with a hollow sound, which was as unlike the rejoicing bellows she used to utter by the side of her native voe, as was her situation and her destiny. If any thing were wanting to fill to the brim Petie's cup of misery, it was a murmur from his beloved

knowt: — a gush of tears forced themselves to his eyes, and started over the lids; but, though they fell like rain drops on the ground, he did not speak. He was, with all his weakness, resolved not to oppose the measures of his friend, nor to add, by the expression of his own sorrow, to the high wrought agony of mind which he knew, from what he saw, Spiel was silently enduring.

In a few minutes Trosk reached the place where he had resolved to make trial of the efficacy of the charm. It was a small circumscribed spot, in the midst of a wide morass, whose trembling treacherous carpet spread around over the greater part of the valley, I call it a valley, because it was enclosed by hills, but it was rather a vast platform, near the summit of the mountains, whose highest ridges surrounded it like an amphitheatre, leaving open one side, which looked down into the dells beneath, and over them out to sea. The streamlets, that trickled from the acclivities, had penetrated the bed of moss, which had been gathering in thickness over the peat for ages; and the tough dense matwork quivered above the moist ooze, without permitting the foot to pierce it.

The gloom of evening had greatly increased, whilst the Shetlanders had been making their way Up the ascent of the long defile, and its obscurity was augmented by the blackness of a cloud, which had slowly floated above their heads, till it had settled round the neighboring eminences. The mist, which ever accumulates about the tops of the Zetland mountains, had begun to fall in a thick drizzle, and there was so little light to help them, that they advanced close to a large gray stone, which stood up from the bosom of the marsh, without perceiving it to be tenanted. The moans of "Luckie" gave the alarm, and were answered by the loud scream of an eagle, which slowly spread its dusky wings, and swept off from the rock on which it had been seated. Petie started, but Spiel approached, and laid his implements on the rough fragment. Winwig turned round, and cast his eyes down into the valley, at the extremity of which the sea might be heard, tumbling and roaring among the crags of the coast; he looked up to the sky, and along the summits of the hills, and saw that the dim atmosphere was darkened by the overhanging volume of heavy vapor, that seemed increasing above him; he listened to a low rumbling sound, that issued from the murky cloud; he turned again, and found that Trosk had drawn the rope, that held the head of Luckie, round the base of the stone — he beheld him raise a poleaxe over his head — he could not bear this! — With his hands clasped, or rather clinched, he fell upon his knees, and exclaimed — "In the name of God,

Spiel Trosk, spare yourself and Luckie! Ay, hinney, spare her! — spare yourself, and me! — spare your soul! — spare your life! and if this deadly sin must be, wait till the morrow, and bring some other creature than our own dear kine."

"Petie, art thou daft!" cried Spiel, staring upon him with the eye of a madman, and with the weapon still uplifted in the air. "Shall I spare Luckie, and perish?"

"You would not perish," answered Winwig, rapidly — "you would not perish! Whilst I have hands, Spiel, what need you fear to perish? Stay, hinney, stay! and let me work from break of day till fall at night, rather than plunge your soul into perdition, and slay the poor dumb beast."

"Then take this axe," exclaimed Spiel, with vehemence, "and drive it through my brain! — I will not quit this spot again, unless I have my will. — Can your hands work up the riches of the Carmilhan? — Can your fingers supply more than the vilest necessaries of life? — But let them end my misery! — Here, take my place, and I will be your victim."

"Spiel," cried Winwig, starting on his feet, and in an agony, "Strike! — spare nothing! — But ah, Trosk, it is your eternal life for which I fear! — know you not that this is the 'Peghts' aultar stone?' — and that you are about to offer up a sacrifice to the demon they worshipped?"

"I know no such thing," cried the other Shetlander loudly, and with a grinning laugh, that showed he was determined to know nothing, or to think of nothing, contrary to his purpose. — "I know no such thing — I mean no such thing, Petie Winwig, I tell thee. — You are mad, man, and you will drive me mad. — But Luckie shall not die — you shall have her instead of me!" — and he dashed down the axe, and clutched the knife from the stone, with the intention of plunging it into his bosom.

Petie, the feeble-minded Petie, was in an instant at his side; he wrenched the instrument from his grasp, and in the next moment he seized the poleaxe, and whirling it round his head, he let the blade fall full on the skull of Luckie, with such force that he cleft it in twain, and she rolled dead, without a struggle, at the feet of her masters.

A flash of lightning, accompanied by a clap of thunder, followed this action, and Trosk stared at his companion, as a man would stare if he beheld a child

accomplish what he should fear to attempt. Not that he could not have shown as much bodily strength himself; but that the mild and passionless Petie should have assumed a part so energetic, and so contrary to the spirit of his former life! But Winwig neither started at the thunder, nor looked at his companion, nor spoke, but instantly made use of the knife he had seized, to flay his favorite; and he proceeded as quickly and as dexterously as if she were only a seal. In this occupation he was joined by Spiel, after he had recovered from his surprise, though he felt as much reluctance now as eagerness before, and his heart sickened at the hot steams that arose from the carcass. Ere the hide was taken off, the mist had gathered so densely around the hills, that the fishermen were both enveloped in clouds, and drenched with rain. The fog rolled along the little plain in revolving billows, but slowly; for, though the wind was heard rushing through the dells below, and struggling with the distant surge, it was not yet amongst the mountains. The rumbling of thunder grew louder around them, and came nearer at times, exploding among the highest eminences, and descending at times upon the plain. Bright flashes and coruscations darted across the moss, and played about the "Stane," appearing to settle for a moment upon its summit, and then gliding swiftly over the surface of the swamp; and more than once the Shetlanders started, and looked up, as they fancied they heard the flap of a wing close above their heads.

At length, the skin being stripped off, it was stretched out upon the ground, at a little distance from the carcass, and Spiel laid himself upon it. Without breaking the silence that had been maintained since the fall of Luckie, Winwig proceeded to envelope his companion in the covering, still warm from the body, leaving only his head unswathed. He then bound the rope round the outside, and, having completed the operation as fully, as he could devise, he stood for a moment looking down upon Trosk, whose features were now scarcely visible through the darkness of night. He then spoke — "Spiel," said he, "can I do anything else for you?"

"Nothing more," replied the other, "fare thee well!"

"Farewell! " returned Petie, "and may God protect and forgive you, as I do."

These last words were uttered in a less firm tone than that in which he had before spoken, and in an instant he was gone from the view of his associate.

The simple fisherman had scarcely left his more daring partner exposed upon

the wild peat bog, than, as if his departure had been a signal concerted with the demons of storm and desolation, a tempest broke forth, to which neither the experience of Spiel, nor his recollection of the reports of others, could find a parallel. It began with a glare of lightning, which exposed to his view, not only the crags and hills in his own neighborhood, but the valleys beneath, and the sea, and the small islands which lay scattered out beyond the bay. He saw them but for a moment, but he could perceive their rocks whitened with the foam of tremendous billows, which were bursting over them; and he believed he beheld what appeared to him the vision of a large strange-built vessel, driving along, dismasted, upon the ocean. He scarcely did believe, and half doubted, that he had seen this latter object, for its figure and its crew, (whose frantic gestures he had also imagined he had distinguished,) were such as were to him before unknown. But if this sight were a mere phantom, what could have brought it before his eyes? The darkness that succeeded this wide gleam was of the deepest dye, and the peals of thunder that broke around him were as loud as though the heavens had burst in its discharge. A shower of fragments was scattered from the mountain tops, and poured down their sides, with a din and clatter more terrible than the noise of the elements. Spiel expected every moment to be crushed to pieces, or buried beneath a mass of rock, and his helpless state was now to him a source of the greatest anguish. Some of the pieces dashed nearly up to him, and others bounded past, and rushed headlong over the declivity into the dell beneath, where he could hear them rolling and splashing through the deep morass. It rained when Winwig had left him, but now a body of fluid fell down upon him scarcely divided into streams, for of drops there were none, and in an instant the surface of the quaking bog on which he lay became deluged. He suddenly found himself surrounded by water, which covered his lower extremities, leaving his head and shoulders free; for Petie had raised them on a tuft of moss, which, had he not done, Trosk would have been totally immersed. Still he felt the inundation rise, for the waterspout, or whatever else it was, continued to descend, and as he was unable to stir, either hand or foot, he gave himself up to death. He would have called upon heaven, but the reflection of the iniquity in which he was engaged, choked his prayer. He would have invoked the powers of darkness, but a deep-felt horror thrilled through his frame at the idea. He endeavored to struggle, but the hide of Luckie seemed to cling more closely to him, with an avenging embrace. He thought of Petie — where was Petie? He shouted Petie! Petie! with all his strength, but his voice was drowned in the rush

and turbulence of the flood, and he strained it till its sound was only a hoarser scream. A hoarser scream replied to him, or was it echo? He screamed again, in greater agony, half hoping, half in terror; but the water filled his ears, and he knew not if he were answered. " Gracious God, I perish! " murmured Spiel as the fluid touched his lips, and passed over them; but, in the next instant, a rush, like the hurried tumble of a cataract, faintly reached his hearing, and he felt the deluge sink from him, and leave his mouth uncovered. It subsided, however, but a little, yet enough to give him hope, and his dismay grew less. The pouring down from the clouds likewise diminished, and the pitchy blackness of the atmosphere was less intense. Gradually the fall of water became converted into heavy shower, which continued to grow less, and glimpses of dull light broke through the mass of darkness. Spiel blessed the sight, and found his courage return; but he felt as exhausted as if he had been struggling with death, and he longed to be released from his confinement.

Still the purport of his sufferings was unaccomplished, and with reviving life he felt his avaricious desires reenter his heart, and this even whilst the water was still above his shoulders. He was sensible, however, that it passed away, and he conjectured rightly that its sudden rise had been owing to one of the fragments of stone having rolled to the outlet of the stream, and stopped its passage into the glen, through the rocky ledge: but the weight of the accumulating body of water had moved it from its position, and allowed sufficient opening for the stream to escape, and this drew off the inundation by degrees.

Midnight passed and Trosk, though he knew not the time began to doubt the efficacy of the charm. He was tired and weary of his situation, and he would have preferred an incantation of a more busy kind. Rest with him was only appropriated to sleep, and that he granted with reluctance; but now that he was compelled to be quiescent, he felt a sense of drowsiness. Whether this was the effect of habit, or fatigue, or cold, I cannot say, but so it was, and it so overpowered him, that, in spite of his situation, he lost at times all consciousness. The ebbing of the flood had nearly left him dry in the space of half an hour, and, believing morning to have advanced two hours at least, he resolved to give himself up to sleep, as the best way of passing the hours till he was released.

He closed his eyes, and slept; but how long he knew not. He was awakened by what at first he thought something passing across his face, but he was soon

sensible that it was a violent gust of wind. It was again nearly as dark as before, and repeated blasts rushed past him, with an angry murmur. There was but little rain now falling, and that came more like spray upon a gale than a shower, but he felt even more chilled than when he was surrounded by water. He heard the rage of the ocean more distinctly than he had done, and he fancied that it forced its stubborn waves much further into the valley below than the beach. An inexplicable turbulence seemed mingled with the usual uproar of billows bursting on a rocky shore, and the dells seemed more the seat of the confusion than of the echo. He could have imagined that the sea had overcome its boundaries of ages, and was taking possession of the conquered land. A rush of water was certainly coming towards him — he longed to be able to see. Another glare of lightning, like the first lit up all the horizon, and he saw for a moment the ocean and the islands looking more fearful than before. Even in that instant he strained his eyes to catch one glance of the ship he had thought abandoned to the fury of the elements, and he again believed he beheld it, raised on the back of a huge billow, which dashed it down at the foot of a distant promontory, and closed over it. The headland was the Nikkur Noss, which he knew well, as the scene of his mispent labors. He might, perhaps, have looked longer, for the lightning continued to flash so fast that there was scarcely an interval of darkness, but with a tremendous gush a column of foam rose up, from beyond the craggy ledge of the platform on which he lay, and, whirling round in the air, came towards him.

What passed during a few succeeding moments, Spiel could not well remember. He felt himself raised from the moss, and borne along above it, and he saw the Peights' Aultar Stane twisted out of the earth. He heard a raging struggle, as of wind and water fighting for mastery, and he was hurled against a bank with violence, and deprived of his senses.

When he recovered, the tempest had ceased, the heavens were clear and bright with a vivid illumination, and the air was still. He was lying, not where Petie had left him, but at the foot of the ridge of eminences, bounding the little plain, and his frame seemed shaken and more powerless than before. He could now distinguish the roll of the waves on the shore, flowing as they were wont in calm weather, and he attempted to discover the time by the rise of the tide; for there was not the least sign of dawn, though the sky was brilliantly enlightened. He listened attentively, and heard not only the brawling murmur of the sea pouring among the

shingles, but a burst of solemn music mingled with it, yet so faint that he was not convinced of its reality. A pause ensued — again a strain of harmony floated on the untroubled air — and again it was lost as a gust of wind swept up the dell. Again he heard it louder than before, and he fancied it approached him, and, as it continued, he believed he could distinguish the tune of a psalm he had heard sung by the crew of a Dutch herringbuss, which had been off the Skerries in the preceding summer. Nay, he fancied he could perceive voices occasionally join the notes, and sing the very words he had formerly heard; for as I have said before, Trosk understood the language. Although, when the winds rose he always lost the sounds of this singular concert, yet, whenever there was a lull, he was satisfied that it gradually drew nearer, and he could now trace its advance, winding slowly up the glens from below, towards that in which he was extended.

At length it was so distinct, that he was persuaded it must have crossed the ledge that bounded the brink of the plain, and he endeavored to raise his head, so that he might gain a view of the source of this extraordinary melody. There was a loose fragment of stone near him, and by dint of wriggling and pushing himself along like a seal, he contrived to elevate his head upon it, and, looking forth, he beheld a long and gleamy procession approaching towards him, over the quaking bog on which he had at first been laid. Sorrow and dejection were marked on the countenances of the beings composing the troop, and their habiliments appeared heavy with moisture, and dripping like fresh sea weeds. They drew close up to him, and were silent. First came the musicians, whose instruments he had heard so long and so anxiously, but he could not scrutinize them much, for, as they advanced opposite to him, they wheeled off to the right and left, and took their stations on either side. The front space was immediately occupied by a varied group, who appeared, by their deportment, to precede some object of great distinction, which, when they parted and filed off in the same manner as the band, presented itself to view.

This was a tall, bulky, though well built man, whose capacity of belly was properly balanced by the protuberance of that part which honor has assumed to herself. His head was not little, and his face appeared rather swollen. His shoulders were wide, and were clothed in a full coat of broad cloth, fashioned after the manner of the fourth generation past. Its skirts reached below his knees, round which they curved. It was collarless, but sleeves, vastly deep, hung from the arms,

the cuffs of which were adorned with cut-steel buttons, of great circumference and brightness. Broad bands of rich gold lace covered every seam and edge, more glorious in the eyes of the beholder than the setting sun, and the lapels of a quilted vest hung down from the immense orb of his bowels, heavy with the precious metal that braided them. His thighs were arrayed in breeches of scarlet velvet, silk hose disguised his legs, and large square-toed shoes covered his feet, and lent their thongs to support gold buckles of great breadth, which glittered with precious stones. On his head was placed a long, flowing, flaxen, curling wig, surmounted by a small three-cornered cocked hat, buttoned up with gold bands, and a long, straight, basket-hilted sword hung, suspended in a broad buff-embroidered belt, by his side. In his hand he held a gold-headed clouded ground rattan, of great length and thickness, and close by his side walked a black boy, bearing a long, twisted, grotesquely fashioned pipe, which he occasionally offered to his lord, who stopped and gave a solemn puff or two, and then proceeded.

When he came immediately opposite to Spiel, he stood still and erect, and a number of others ranged themselves on his right hand and on his left, whose dresses were fine, but not so splendid as their superior's, and they bore pipes of common form only. Behind these drew up a group of persons, many of whom were ladies, some bearing infants in their arms, others leading children by their hands, all dressed in strange and gorgeous apparel, though of fashions unknown to him who beheld them; and, lastly, came a body of men and lads, with big loose trowsers, thick heavy jackets, and red worsted night-caps, whom Trosk instantly knew to be Dutch sailors. Each of these had a quid of tobacco stuck in his cheek, and a short blackened pipe in his mouth, which he sucked in melancholy silence.

The fisherman lay still, and saw this grim troop assemble around him, with feelings of mingled alarm and wonder; his heart did not sink, for it was kept alive by fearful curiosity, but cold sweats gathered upon his brow. Presently, the principal figure looked round, and seeing his attendants all in their stations, he took his long twisted pipe from the hands of the negro, and began to smoke in long and deep-drawn whiffs; and this seemed as a signal to the rest to follow his example, for, immediately, every mouth was in action, and which ever way Spiel cast his looks, he beheld nothing but glowing tubes and gleaming eyes turned towards him, while wreaths of smoke rose up from the multitude, and formed a dense cloud-like canopy above them. Nevertheless, though he could, plainly distinguish the features

and the dresses of this ghastly crew, he could also see the stars clearly glimmering through them, and now gleams of fire and electric flashes began to shoot across the heavens, and the sky grew more vividly bright than it had been. Still, though Trosk could behold all these appearances through the bodies of the phantoms, he could also perceive that his ghostly visitants were closing slowly upon him, that their ranks grew more dense, and the space between him and them more narrow, while their puffs became more violent, and the smoke rose up with redoubled velocity.

The Shetlander was naturally a bold and, indeed, a desperate man, and he had come to the glen with the desire of conversing with beings of another world; but when he beheld this fearful, strange, and unintelligible multitude crowded round him, and pressing nearer and nearer as if about to overwhelm him, his courage yielded, his frame, shook, and the sweat ran copiously down his face. The appearance of the black boy occasioned him more terror than all the rest; for, never having seen a negro in those far distant isles, he believed him to be a little devil, and his white teeth and whiter eye-balls looked terrific against his sable face; but his terror redoubled, when, on turning his eyes up to look at the sky above, he perceived close behind his head that little dry withered man who had accosted him in the skiff, sitting now as rigidly upright as before, but with a pipe in his mouth, which he seemed to hold there as if in grave mockery of all the assembly. Trosk started convulsively, and a choking sensation seized upon his throat; but, summoning all his energy, he mastered it, and directing himself to the principal person before him, he exclaimed, "In the name of him ye obey, who are ye? and what want ye all with me?"

The great man gave three puffs, more solemnly than ever, upon this adjuration, and then, taking the pipe slowly from his lips, and giving it to his attendant, he replied, in a tone of chilling formality, "I am Aldret Janz Dundrellesy Vander Swelter, whilome commander of the good ship Carmilhan, of the city of Amsterdam, homeward bound from Batavia, in the east, which being in northern latitude, 60°, 10", and 17°, 5', longitude east, from the island of Ters, at 12 p. m. on the night of the 21st of October, 1699, was cast away on the inhospitable rocks of this island, and all on board perished. These are mine officers, these my passengers, and these the mariners forming my gallant crew. Why hast thou called us up from our peaceful bowers, at the bottom of the ocean, where we rest softly on beds of ooze, and smoke our pipes in quiet, listening to the songs of mermaids? — I say,

why hast thou called us up?" Spiel had expected to commune with spirits, good or bad, but he had not anticipated a visit from the captain of the vessel he wished to rifle; and, indeed, the question he had to propose was rather an awkward one to put to Mynheer Vander Swelter, for ghosts are in general tenacious of hidden treasure, and a Dutch ghost was likely to be more tenacious than any other, and, in particular, the spirit of a commander in whose charge a treasure had been placed, since he might still think he had a right to preserve it for the true owners, or at least for their heirs lawfully begotten and duly qualified. But this was no time for deliberation, and the prospect of gaining his wishes poured like a reviving cordial over the soul of the fisherman, and washed away his terror. "I would know," replied he, "where I can find the treasure with which your ship was laden."

"At the bottom of the sea," answered the captain with a groan, which was echoed by all his crew.

"At what place?" said Spiel,

"In the Nikkur Noss," replied the spectre.

"How came they there?" Inquired the Skerryman.

"How came you here?" answered the captain.

"I came here," said Spiel.

" 'T is false!" exclaimed the Spirit, "you came no further than the Peghts' Aultar Stane."

" I did not think of that," cried Trosk, whose eagerness for wealth did not allow him to think of any thing else; "but how shall I get them?"

"A goose would dive in the Nikkur Noss for a herring, thou idiot," answered Mynheer Vander Swelter; "are not the treasures of the Carmilhan worth a similar exertion? — Would'st thou know more?"

"Yes, how much shall I get?" said Spiel.

"More than you will ever spend," replied the captain, and the little man grinned behind Trosk 's head, and the whole company laughed loud.

"Hast thou done with me?" said the commander.

"Yes, I have," answered Spiel Trosk. "Thanks, and fare thee well!"

"Farewell, till we meet again," said Mynheer Vander Swelter, facing about and marching off, preceded by his musicians, and followed by his officers, passengers, and crew, all puffing their pipes in majestic solemnity.

Again the grave music was heard winding down the dell accompanied by the words of the psalm, and the fisherman marked the notes grow fainter and fainter, till at length they were lost in the murmur of the waves.

All the rest of the night Spiel spent in struggling to get free from his envelope, for he was anxious to commence his search for the treasures by the break of day. At length, towards dawn, he extricated one arm from its confinement, and with that unbound the ropes that encircled the hide.

The pleasure with which he once more rose upon his feet was considerable, but it was lessened when he perceived an eagle tearing open the bowels of the ill-fated Luckie, and recollected the grief of Petie for her death, and his strange behavior on the occasion. The intention, however, of enriching this friend of his youth, seemed to him ample compensation for his loss, and he looked for the Stane, which was not now by the side of the carcass. He saw nothing but fragments of rock lying around, and supposing that it had been shattered to pieces, though scarcely waiting to think at all, he hurried towards the cabin of his partner with the greatest precipitation.

Petie was lying on the ground, in a state of stupefaction; he was clothed, and Trosk, from a glance at his bed, perceived that he had not been in it during the night and imagined that he had sunk on the earth the instant he had reentered the cottage. It was not without infinite difficulty that the impatient fisherman recovered his gentler partner, and, when he did revive him, the joy of Winwig knew no bounds. Even Luckie — poverty — every thing, was forgotten in his delight at seeing Spiel alive and well. But the narrative, or rather the broken and disjointed sentences uttered by Trosk, soon dissipated this glimpse of happiness. "Dive in the Nikkur Noss! — dive like a cormorant in the Nikkur Noss!" was all he could exclaim, while his cheek resumed its paleness, and his teeth again became set firmly against each other. "I would dive into a whirlpool," cried Spiel, looking round upon the bare walls of the cottage, now deprived of all the marks of humble affluence they had formerly shown, "rather than see this. — No," he continued,

"whether you follow or desert me, I will go;" and with these words he seized a torch, a tinderbox, and a rope, and darted forward.

Petie immediately set out after him, calling to him not to obey the counsel of the fiend, and reiterating all he had said on former occasions; but to little purpose, for Spiel resolutely kept so far ahead of him as not to hear his arguments, and, having reached the yawn, he leaped down to the shelf, where he had formerly rested, and pulled off his jacket. He then lit his torch, made fast the rope, and by its aid was beginning to descend, when Petie arrived. By this time the resolution of Winwig had again given way to the haste and energy of Trosk, and, without speaking, he also was prepared to descend; but he was stopped by his companion, who, in his usual commanding manner, bade him stay where he was, and aid him to go down by holding and steadying the rope.

A man less daring and determined than Trosk, would, under any circumstances, have found the descent impossible; the crags were slippery, and the rocks crumbled in his grasp, but avarice was his spur, and hope his guide, and by dint of perseverance and resolution he passed by every obstacle. The Nikkur Noss was at all times a retreat for turbulent waves and murmuring winds, which seemed to seek its obscurity, to vent their rage in secret: but now unusual quiet reigned through the long tunnel, and when the Shetlander alighted on a projecting ledge, just above the level of the water, there was less uproar echoing through the vault than he had ever known. He immediately trimmed his torch, and looking down upon the stream that poured through the channel saw nothing but a dark flow of water, eddying along, covered with froth and large bubbles. For a moment he considered how he should proceed, and he looked up to the high rough arched ceiling, in wonder at its craggy surface, and at the pendant stalactites that hung dripping from every point. He turned again to the water, and saw along its edge large sea-nettles, whose red and blue tentacula glittered in the light that he held in his hand. At length, with the impatience that had brought him there, he resolved to dive and search the bottom, through the whole of its length, and he laid his torch on the rock to prepare himself. Whilst stripping, he fancied he saw something gleam through the water beneath where the link was placed, and being ready he plunged at once, and grasped a heavy body which he brought up.

It was a small iron bound box, but the rust had eaten into its hinges, and applying force the lid came off, and discovered a mass of golden coin. There was

enough to have enriched the finder and his partner for their lives, and Petie loudly entreated Spiel to ascend, and tamper no longer with danger; but Trosk only looked upon what he had gained as the first fruits of his long labors. He drew in his breath for another dive, though a rush of angry waves had rolled through the gulf, and the wind had begun to bellow. He stepped down to the water's edge, but started for he heard the word Carmilhan uttered with a titter, as he had often heard it whispered. He looked round and saw nothing, and smiled at his own imagination. He cast his eyes on the casket of ducats, and felt reanimated. Again he disappeared beneath the surface of the water — but he never rose again. A wild laugh re-echoed through the vault as he went down, and only a few bubbles came up at the place where he had plunged in.

Petie returned alone, but he returned an altered man. His mind had given way under the repeated shocks it had received, and he gradually sunk into a state of idiocy. He paid no more attention to fishing, or to husbandry; every thing about him went to decay; he sold his boat and all he possessed, to support himself, and his only pleasure or recreation consisted in wandering about the sides of the Voe, or ascending the Nikkur Noss, muttering to himself, or looking anxiously into vacancy, as if he expected to see the spirit of Mynheer Vander Swelter start up from behind every stone. From this conduct he soon acquired the name of daft Petie, and he became an object both of pity and of terror to his countrymen, who, however, quickly abandoned the coast, to which he used principally to resort, as a place infested by beings of another world.

Now comes the most singular part of my story; for it is so well attested that I know not how to doubt it, though it is so improbable that my reason will not allow me to give credit to it. One dark and windy night, a fisherman had been driven by stress of weather to take shelter in the Voe, near which the cottage of Winwig was situated. He had just moored his boat, and was preparing to cross the heath to the village, when he saw a vessel bearing down towards the coast, avoiding all the rocks and shoals, and standing as boldly in as if she could sustain no damage from those dangerous and secret enemies.

The fisherman stood amazed at this unexpected sight. Heaven only knows how many ideas of storm ships and flying Dutchmen crossed his mind. At length he recollected himself sufficiently to be aware, that whatever the stranger might be, he had time enough to get out of the way, and he was preparing to fly when he saw a

figure, which notwithstanding the darkness, he recognised as Petie, moving along in the path he intended to have pursued, brandishing his arms, and muttering to himself, as was common with him in his nocturnal wanderings.

The superstition of the islanders had attached a degree of terror to the person of Petie, which certainly, his still portly form and mild countenance would not otherwise have inspired; and the fisherman, alarmed and hesitating between the two objects of horror, had only sufficient sense left to throw himself on the ground, and crawl behind a small rock, which stood upon the shore, at a little distance from the foot of a cliff, where he hoped he might lie concealed till the danger was over. From this confined situation he could neither see nor hear any thing for some time, during which the winds arose and the sea became more agitated. At length, he, too, fancied he heard voices on the air, and shortly he found himself surrounded by a ghostly crew, who encircled him with glowing pipes and gleaming eyes, but in unbroken silence.

For a long time this sight so terrified the Shetland fisherman, that, his tongue so cleaved to the roof of his mouth, that, though he longed to mutter out a prayer or an adjuration, he felt himself unable to articulate, and, when he did speak, he could not recollect one word of the exorcism he had been meditating, but could only inquire, in the most brief and hurried terms, who his visitors were. He was answered immediately. — A figure, which he instantly recognised as Spiel Trosk, followed by another, which he knew to be Winwig, stepped before the rest and said, — "I am Spiel Trosk, boatswain's mate of the good ship Carmilhan— will you enter among our crew?" At this instant, and before the Shetlander could find words for his intended refusal, a loud laugh resounded behind his head; he turned his eyes involuntarily, and beheld the little figure in the yellow jacket and red cap, grinning diabolically. — This was too much — he could not bear it, and he fell back in a swoon.

When he revived the morning had broken, but there was no trace left of the Carmilhan and her crew. The man, who is always described as a sensible and steady fellow, was so well convinced of the reality of his vision, that he voluntarily made oath of it before the proper authorities; but he was not believed, or at least he was supposed to have fallen asleep, and dreamed of ghosts, till it was observed that Winwig was missing. This, indeed, made some stir, and the strictest inquiries were set on foot for him; but he could never be found; and it was supposed by the

judicious, that in a fit of insanity he had thrown himself into the sea; but the superstitious maintain that he, too, was at length, persuaded to dive for the treasures of the Carmilhan — that he perished, and that his ghost now forms one of the spectral crew; and, in proof of this assertion, it is said that both he and Trosk, together with a motley crowd of Dutchmen, have been seen more than once haunting the Voe and the promontory of the Nikkur Noss.