

MEMOIRS AND RESOLUTIONS
OF
ADAM GRAEME
OF MOSSGRAY.

INCLUDING SOME CHRONICLES OF THE BOROUGH
OF FENDIE.

BY

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"AT HIS GATES," &c.

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"So he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman." — TENNYSON.

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ADAM GRAEME OF MOSSGRAY.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XV.

Saucy fortune, did'st thou smile,
I perchance would little heed thee;
Think'st thou when thou frown'st, the while
For myself I dread thee?
Nay, not I—I only vow,
If one falls, it shall be thou.—ANON.

“I am a man now,” said Halbert Graeme, with something of the pride of his years; “and, thanks to your goodness, Sir, I have education enough for any ordinary profession. If only I could make a beginning—”

“You would certainly succeed,” said the Laird of Mossgray, with his pleasant, kindly smile.

“I do not know,” said Halbert, modestly; “but I think that men who are content to work hard and persevere must surely have some measure of success. I am not very ambitious—that is—”

“I shall not quarrel with you, Halbert, my man, for your

Adam Graeme. II.

ambition," said the gentle kinsman, whom Halbert had feared as stern.

"Well, Sir," said the youth, with renewed confidence, "I should like to rise, no doubt; but I am willing to work hard for it, and quite content to begin as humbly as you think it proper I should. I have no right, I know, to such help, where I have already received so much; but I have the claim of blood on no one I have ever known, and I thought I might ask advice from you."

It was his second day at Mossgray, and Halbert remembered his last walk up the Aberdeenshire glen, a week ago, with Menie Monikie, and his declaration to her—

"I will tell him, I don't come to ask anything from him, Menie—I know he has been kind to me already—but he must know the world better than we do. Your father says he has been in India—and if I could but begin to maintain myself—*then*, Menie!"

And Halbert remembered what followed this *then*—the breaking of that slender golden coin, one half of which hung by Menie's blue ribbon, was warm against his own strong youthful breast, and the following farewell, with its tears and smiles, and visions of reunion; and Halbert's honest heart beat something loudly, and he grew bold and eager—if he only could begin.

"Halbert," said Mossgray, gently, "your father and I did not part friends. I thought he had not dealt truly by one whom I cherished as a sister, and it was in consequence of that, perhaps unwisely, that I denied myself the

satisfaction of seeing another Graeme grow a man in this old house of Mossgray; but you say truly that it is time to decide on your future profession. Are you very impatient for this beginning?"

The kindly eye of Mossgray could not see through the warm double-breasted waistcoat, with which the care of Mrs. Monikie had provided Halbert for his journey. The Laird had no knowledge of the mystic half of the broken coin, nor had ever heard the musical name of Menie. He thought therefore that this beginning was not so very momentous, and that it might be put off for a time without any particular disadvantage; and Halbert stammered as he answered. His kinsman thought it was but the natural shyness of youth.

"You must let us know you better," he continued, "and I shall qualify myself to advise; in the mean time, Halbert, remember that you are at *home*. You have all the beauties of your ancestral district to see, and I promise you they are not few. While you learn to know them and us, we shall consult on this important matter. Are you content?"

Halbert could not be otherwise than content; the grace of the old man's kindness charmed the young fresh spirit, and it was no penance to remain a member of that household of Mossgray, even though the fortune was not yet begun to make, and Menie Monikie disconsolately wandered in the Aberdeenshire glen alone. So Halbert took possession of his father's former room, and wrote pleasant letters to the North—letters, on receipt of which the