

CHAPTER VII.

Hagley Parish Church. — The Sepulchral Marbles of the Lytteltons. — Epitaph on the Lady Lucy. — The Phrenological Doctrine of Hereditary Transmission; unsupported by History, save in a way in which History can be made to support anything. — Thomas Lord Lyttelton; his Moral Character a strange Contrast to that of his Father. — The Elder Lyttelton; his Death-bed. — Aberrations of the Younger Lord. — Strange Ghost Story; Curious Modes of accounting for it. — Return to Stourbridge. — Late Drive. — Hales Owen.

THE parish church of Hagley, an antique Gothic building of small size, much hidden in wood, lies at the foot of the hill, within a few hundred yards of the mansion-house. It was erected in the remote past, long ere the surrounding pleasure-grounds had any existence; but it has now come to be as thoroughly enclosed in them as the urns and obelisks of the rising ground above, and forms as picturesque an object as any urn or obelisk among them all. There is, however, a vast difference between jest and earnest; and the *bona fide* tomb-stones of the building inscribed with names of the dead, and its dark walls and pointed roof reared with direct reference to a life to which the present is but the brief vestibule, do not quite harmonize with temples of Theseus and the Muses, or political columns erected in honor of forgotten Princes of Wales, who quarrelled with their fathers, and were cherished, in consequence, by the Opposition. As I came upon it unawares, and saw it emerge from its dense thicket of trees, I felt as if, at an Egyptian feast, I had unwittingly brushed off the veil from the admonitory skeleton. The door lay open, — a few workmen